



## YOGA FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS AND CHILDREN ON AUTISTIC SPECTRUM

### SUCHETA CHANDEGAVE INTRODUCTION

I take great pleasure in inviting you to experience, exciting journey into joyful world of yoga through postures, movements combined with breath awareness and relaxation techniques.

Researchers have shown that it benefits all, including children and adolescents on autistic spectrum disorder, attention deficit disorder or children with special needs.

Yoga is a great tool in dealing with the above mentioned symptoms, which gives skills that can be used by these children in everyday life.

### BENEFITS

Therapies like Music, Art and Occupational etc have varied effect on children's personality. Yoga as a therapy is the only one which works on physical, mental, and **spiritual** development of an individual.

- **Counters low tone** (poor muscle coordination) that is the characteristic of many children with ASD's
- **Calms the mind and eases tension**, which may help counteract perseveration (such as hand flapping). Certain asanas or breathing techniques may be more suitable substitutes for disruptive preservations.
- **Ease caregiver stress** Yoga teaches children, coping mechanisms which he/she can use himself/herself. Children can use them without the help of a parent/ an aide.
- Yoga is **non-competitive**, even with one's self. Children with ASD's may shy away from physical activities where they feel inferior to their peers, hence Yoga helps them.
- Balancing poses are excellent for **improving concentration and focus**. Also, the main goal of yoga is to 'Do What You Are Doing'; focusing on your yoga asana and how you are feeling only. This is great practice for reigning in wandering thoughts typical of ADD/ADHD kids.
- Yoga helps in **stimulating the various senses** from within the body which in turn motivates them to maintain eye contact and stimulate the speech organs.
- YOGA works towards improving the posture, strength, flexibility, balance, concentration, self-esteem and willpower. Thus Yoga helps in improving the **quality of life**.

### GROUPS

Workshop can be conducted for children as well as for teachers and parents. The target groups are as follows:-

#### CHILDREN

##### Age group: 3-5 yrs.

In the beginners group aspects of Yoga are taught in the gentlest way by primarily focusing on concentration, body awareness and confidence.

##### Age group: 5-8 yrs.

Children in this age group are able to do some postures and can balance poses and series of backward and forward bends, which benefit their young body and mind.

##### Age group: 8-12 yrs.

In this age children accept challenges and are more dynamic. The postures designed for this age group consider their increased concentration, developing strength and ability to hold pose for longer time.

#### TEACHERS / PARENTS

In the classes/ workshop in this target group teachers and parents will be taught how to conduct Yoga for their children as a fun filled activity. In addition Teachers can include yoga in the everyday timetable at school.

Parents can plan Yoga for their children as a part of their day-to-day activities.

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