

Yoga, Children, Parents and Schools

Brandon M. Eggleston PhD MPH MCHES CPH RYT

Department of Community Health at National University in San Diego, California

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to explore the health benefits of young children in Montessori Schools.

Significance

We teach kids how to add and subtract, but not often how to self-regulate their bodies, minds and hearts. Along with other educators, we wondered if and what benefits would result among teachers and students by integrating mindful movement associated with MOSST into classrooms

Yoga Program



Getting Started:

- Three classrooms served as experimental groups
- Participating teachers received 3-hour in-service and MOSST educational kits
- Program implemented in classrooms over a eight week period (including Spring Break)
- Teachers had freedom to choose how to implement

Parents Literacy

- Parents' definition and familiarity with the term mindfulness varied
- Parents did not understand what asana was
- Parents did not understand what pranayama was
- Parents did not understand why yoga would help their children be better students

Comments of Children

"Yoga is a good thing because it's fun doing it."

"Yoga is a relaxing sport. I do not think it is hard at all unless I try to do poses I am not ready for."

Students reported that yoga helped make them feel calm and relaxed. They were able to listen to the teacher better. Students learned a lot of different poses and enjoyed sharing them with their friends and family members. Students reported that when they are angry or unhappy they do Flower Power Breath and feel happy again or, as one child stated, **"yoga makes me feel my best."**

Sample Characteristics

Variable	Yoga Group (n = 44)
Female	64 % (n = 28)
Male	36 % (n = 16)
White-Caucasian	62% (n = 28)
Minority	38% (n = 17)
Age (mean in years)	4.38
Range of ages	2.9 to 6.2
Like or think yoga poses are fun	68% (n = 30)
Students feel positive about yoga	95% (n = 43)
Support from others to do yoga	91% (n = 41)
My teacher makes it easier to do yoga	55% (n = 24)

Teachers Literacy

- Teachers did not understand the directions for the yoga program
- Yoga program was used more by some teachers and sparingly by others
- The term mindfulness had many different meanings according to interviews with teachers

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