

Yoga at Mindstretch Preschool Brought by Lionhearted Kids

By Lauren Pech

As our worlds become increasingly complicated by technology, social media and global developments, the demands on our awareness and attention increase. In trying to adapt, some of us just get busier and more stressed, until we have little quality downtime for ourselves — or for our children. Life becomes a white water rafting adventure without time to pause and reflect.

Originating in the east, Yoga has become popular in the west due to its beneficial effects on the minds and bodies of both adults and children. Practicing yoga allows us to pause and reconnect with our internal worlds. This promotes the optimal brain, immune and physiological functioning that is needed for us to grow and to meet life's challenges. With Yoga, we can also teach our children how to navigate their internal worlds, and so enable them to meet challenges with trust and confidence. This is what we do at Mindstretch Preschool through weekly yoga classes offered by Lionhearted Kids.

What is included in a Kid's Yoga session?

'Yoga' means 'Union' — to bring together or to integrate. Yoga practice includes intentionally connecting the mind and body through the use of postures, movement, breathing, attention and awareness. Each Kid's Yoga session is unique as



Finding inner stillness.



Lauren guiding a Lionhearted Kids Yoga class at Mindstretch.

children present with different needs on any given day. Our teachers typically combine breathing, yoga postures, music, singing, brainteasers and relaxation in a session. Aligned with the principles of Lionhearted Kids, our teachers use a mindfulness-based approach, with mindfulness being the unconditional awareness of the present moment. In this way, the teacher allows space for children to move into themselves and explore their inner worlds — including the emotional, mental and physical — in a supportive environment.

What are the proven benefits of yoga for children?

- ✓ Cultivates attention and awareness of the child's inner world
- ✓ Promotes body and emotional regulation
- ✓ Enhances connection to self and others
- ✓ Develops empathy
- ✓ Helps balance reactivity
- ✓ Develops intuition and insight
- ✓ Strengthens the nervous and immune systems
- ✓ Promotes memory and learning

About Lionhearted Kids

Lionhearted Kids is a non-profit organization. We nurture resilience in children and families. We do this by providing counselling and mindfulness-based therapies using play, yoga, art, music, therapeutic touch and support services to children, families and those who have a role in their lives. Lionhearted Kids envisions communities living to their fullest potential. For more information, please visit www.lionheartedkids.org.