Population of children with Special Needs

yoga can support

- ASD (Autism Spectrum Disorder)
- Fragile X
- Prader Willi
- Down Syndrome
- Learning Disability
- ED (Emotionally Disturbed)
- ADD/ADHD
- SPD – Sensory Processing Disorder or difficulties
- Landau Kleffner
- OHI – Other Health Impairment
- Children with behavioral challenges
- LPD – Language Processing Disorder or communication difficulties
- Anxiety Disorders
- All children, any and all abilities!
Common features and challenges of children with special needs

- Anxiety
- Difficulty with expressive and receptive language or LPD Language Processing Disorder
- Difficulty regulating and expressing emotions.
- Difficulty with self-regulation of their arousal states
- Lack of coping skills
- Limited body awareness
- Sensory challenges or SPD – Sensory Processing Disorder
- Limited social skills
- Irregular sleep patterns
- Digestive Problems
- Limited fine and gross motor skills
- Difficulty with focus and concentration
Benefits of yoga for children with Special Needs

- Self-Regulation
- Balance
- Coordination
- Flexibility
- Increases Self-Esteem
- Improves Concentration and Focus
- Hand-Eye Coordination
- Coping Skills
- Social Skills
- Increases strength

- Self-Confidence
- Increases language and communication
- Supports healthy digestion
- Increases energy
- Supports fine and gross motor skills
- Decreases anxiety
- Supports more regular sleep patterns
- Supports healthy expression of emotions
Fight/Flight

Sympathetic Nervous System

• Breast breathing/hyperventilation
• Impulsivity
• Impaired cognition
• Sleep difficulties
• Impaired communication
• Anxiety, Frustration, Anger
• Acting out
• Difficulty focusing
• Poor health
Calm/Relaxed

Parasympathetic Nervous System

- Improved focus and concentration
- Better Sleep
- Self-Regulation
- Decreased anxiety, anger, frustration
- Improved communication and expression of emotions
- Overall improvement in physical and emotional health and well-being
How to incorporate yoga for children with special needs in your program

- Pictures of poses/breaths posted in the environment
- Yoga word walls with pictures
- Laminated yoga schedule with removable PECS
- Yoga thematic unit – All about yoga
- Video of children or adults doing yoga (make a yoga video)
- Visuals to support memory and imagination for poses, breath-work and guided imagery.

- Yoga games
- Chair yoga breaks
- Yoga corner/relaxation space (space in the room for yoga breathing and poses)
- Yoga emotions/breaths choice board
- Art projects
- Teach Body Parts and directional concepts such as left/right and top/bottom.
Breathing to support communication, self-regulation and expression of emotions such as anger and anxiety

- **Bee Breath**
  Energizes the brain

- **Balloon Belly Breath**
  Calming, soothes nervous system.

- **Let it Go breath**
  Release worry/anger/fear/tension or uncomfortable emotions.

- **Volcano Breath**
  Release anger or frustration.

- **Snake Breath**
  Release fear or tension/worry
Chair Yoga

- Seated mountain
  Stretches upper body, increases focus/concentration

- Apple picking
  Crosses midline, balances two hemispheres of brain, supports brain/body connection

- Open book/close book
  Opens up front of body, calms and centers the mind

- Tug-o-War
  Strengthens muscles in fingers/hands, calms nervous system

- “I don’t know. Let it go.”
  Releases tension, worry or fear of making mistakes
Yoga poses to increase balance, strength, focus and self-confidence

• Mountain Pose (Tadasana)
• Warrior 2 (Virabhadrasana II)
• Tree Pose (Vrksasana)
• Airplane (Dekasana)
• Flamingo
• Star pose (Utthita Tadasana)
• Triangle pose (Trikonasana)
Yoga poses and breathing to calm, rejuvenate and energize the body and mind

- Cat/Cow pose (Marjariasana & Bitilasana)
- Shark pose (Salabhasana)
- Bridge Pose (Setu Bandha Sarvangasana)
- Frog Pose (Malasana)
- Cobra (Snake) Pose (Bhujangasana)
- Sun Salutation (Surya Namaskar)
- Elevator Breath
- Bee breath
- Bunny Breath
Yoga poses and breath to decrease anxiety and encourage relaxation

- Child’s Pose (Balasana)
- Rock (Balasana with arms to side)
- Rag Doll (Uttanasana)
- Butterfly (Badha Konasana)
- Progressive Relaxation
- Resting Pose (Savasana)
- Ujjayi (wave) breath
- Balloon Belly Breathing
- Let it Go Breath
- 3 part Breathing
- Alternate Nostril Breathing
Contact Me

Shawnee Thornton Hardy
yogabyshawnee@gmail.com
Websites: www.asanasforautismandspecialneeds.com and www.yogabyshawnee.com

*Please do not copy or distribute materials or images provided in this workshop

© 2014 Asanas for Autism and Special Needs
All Rights Reserved