



Yoga helps kids develop strength, flexibility, calm minds, open hearts and give them tools for regulating emotions. To start practicing with the kids in your life, check out the following kid friendly and fun [yoga poses](#):

**1. Take Five Breaths:** This calms and centers kids and can be used off the mat (before tests, when stressed or in conflict.)

How To: Sit in a comfortable position (often "criss-cross applesauce", raise one hand like a power-to-the-people fist, and extend your fingers while inhaling to the count of five. Then, exhale to the count of five while curling your fingers slowly back in. Slowing the breath slows the mind and creates focus and relaxation.

**2. Tree Pose:** This is a classic and fun balancing pose. Kids love the challenge of balancing on one leg.

How To: Standing on one foot, bring the other foot to rest on the standing leg, above or below the knee. Think of your standing leg as a tree trunk rooted into the ground and extend your arms like tree branches. For fun, try slowly moving your arms like branches in the breeze for "windy tree" while keeping balance. Or, try closing your eyes for "Tree at Night" without falling over. Two trees can hold hands and make a forest.

**3. Relaxation Pose:** Kids are often as overbooked as adults and need downtime to relax.

How To: Lie on your back with legs and arms flopped open and relaxed. Try not to move or wiggle, but get very very still. For variation, try "Starfish pose" in which you lie with arms to the side in the shape of a star. Think of having suction cups on the bottom of your arms and legs and being stuck to the bottom of the ocean floor. This will help you stay still.

**4. Downward Facing Dog:** Another classic pose. Even the littlest of yogis can go upside down in this way and look through their legs for a change in perspective.

How To: Make your body into an upside-down V shape with hands placed shoulder-width apart and feet hip-width apart. Have you seen a dog stretch in this way? Turn it into "Walk the Dog" by walking in your down dog, trying to keep your arms and legs straight.

**5. Candle:** This is a [Shoulder Stand](#) in adult yoga, and is a great, safe way for kids to go upside-down. As one of my kid yogis says, its fun to "rest your feet."

How To: Lying on your back, bring your hands to the small of your back and push your legs up into the air. Try moving your feet like a flickering candle flame. For variation, move your legs into tree position for "Upside Down Tree."

Combine these [poses](#) into a mini-practice! Begin with Take Five Breath to center and focus. Then try Downward Facing Dog, moving into Walk the Dog. Then practice Tree for balance and Candle for upside down practice. Then rest in Relaxation. In this short practice your child has learned a breathing skill for relaxing and slowing down the mind, has practiced balance, worked on upper body strength, went upside down in a safe way which is [restorative](#) to the body, and has some rest time. Remind kids that yoga is a "practice not a perfect" and the point is to try your best and have fun.

## 5 Great Yoga Poses for Kids

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Kids' bodies and minds are still developing so teach them some ways to keep them balanced, strong and flexible.

Story by [Sarah Herrington](#), originally published June 2010 on [MindBodyGreen](#).