

10 TIPS FOR TEACHING 'WILD ASANA' TO KIDS

- 1- Begin each yoga session with an introduction that grounds you in place and time. Name the location and the season in which you practice. I like to share a favorite nature memory or recent wildlife sighting and ask kids to do the same.
- 2- Define yoga in simple terms. For example: "We practice yoga when we move our bodies and breathe to learn more about ourselves, others, and the world around us."
- 3- Explain that yoga is a tradition that comes from India, and that people have been practicing yoga outside in nature for a long time. For example, I explain that the Himalayas are important to many people who practice yoga. The Himalayas are the newest and highest mountains in the world, located thousands of miles away. I live in Virginia, so we talk about how the Appalachians are some of the oldest and shortest mountains in the world. Although the two mountain ranges are very different, they are both beautiful and important for the people, plants, and animals who live nearby.
- 4- Emphasize that no matter where in the world we practice yoga, **we should always keep ourselves safe.**
- 5- Incorporate accurate animal sounds and vocalizations. Do frogs really say "ribbit?" Do cats really say "meow?" This encourages closer attention to what kids actually hear compared with what they are told animals 'say.'
- 6- Make animal poses more 'realistic' by including lots of dynamic movement.
- 7- Let kids venture away from their mats, and encourage experiences of bare feet directly on the earth.
- 8- If you practice with children who are already familiar with yoga, be aware that they may have been exposed to different pose names. You can preface your teaching with, "These are the names that I use for the poses, but you may have heard different ones!"
- 9- Don't let limited access to nature impede your ability to practice and share wild asana. You can practice indoors or in urban areas and still inspire connection to nature.
- 10- Be silly and laugh often!