Yoga Storytime 101
Katie Scherrer, MLIS, RYT
www.katiescherreryoga.com
Today We Will:

Define physical literacy

Explore how yoga-inspired movement and stillness can enhance early learning

Experiment with several basic yoga shapes appropriate for sharing with kids ages 3—6

Connect with several picture books easy to adapt for physical storytelling
Let’s Move!
Happy Spines!

Modifying movement instruction for preschool age children
Why Yoga?
What is Yoga?

“Yoga is a union of the body, heart, and mind; yoga is what we experience when these seemingly disparate parts of the self are brought together.”

*Stories, Songs, and Stretches! Creating Playful Storytimes with Yoga and Movement*
Yoga Offers a Model for Whole-Child Engagement
Physical Literacy - Body

“…the ability to move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments that benefit the healthy development of the whole person.”

- SHAPE America
Social-Emotional Learning - Heart

CASEL Competencies
• Self-awareness
• Self-management
• Social awareness
• Relationship skills
• Responsible decision making
Self-awareness

The ability to accurately recognize one’s own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one’s strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a “growth mindset.”

- Identifying emotions
- Accurate self-perception
- Recognizing strengths
- Self-confidence
- Self-efficacy
Early Literacy - Mind

What children know about language, books and reading before learning to read.

- Every Child Ready to Read (ECRR)
Body, Brain and Heart Grow Together

- Neuroplasticity
- Cross-lateral development
- Automation
- Self-awareness
The Synergistic Effect of Teaching a Combined Explicit Movement and Phonological Awareness Program to Preschool Aged Students

Deborah Callcott, Lorraine Hammond, and Susan Hill

*Early Childhood Education Journal*, 2015

“Findings suggest that teaching pre-primary aged children early literacy and movement in tandem is more beneficial than teaching either in isolation.”

A Quasi-Experimental Study of a Movement and Preliteracy Program for 3- and 4-Year-Old Children

Chloe Bedard, Emily Bremer, Wenonah Campbell, John Cairney

*Frontiers in Pediatrics*, 2017

“The results of this study show that participation in a direct instruction, community-based, parent-oriented movement and preliteracy program can significantly improve movement and preliteracy skill levels of preschool children with typical development.”

If We Care about Early Literacy, We Have to Care about Physical Literacy
Key Concepts

Emphasis on play over perfection

- No “fixing” postures
- Children can participate at their own comfort level
- Lots of imagination (books, stories, songs, and games)
- Be inspired by yoga shapes, not constrained by them!
- Modify poses to work best in kids’ bodies (i.e. balance and core strength considerations)
- Don’t forget the stillness
Embodied Play in Storytime
Opportunities Are Abundant!
Call Me Tree / Llámame árbol
Maya Christina Gonzalez
Published by Lee and Low
Bilingual
Own Voices
Gender Neutral
GORGEOUS!
Let’s Grow from Seeds to Trees!

Child’s Pose
Extended Child’s Pose with Twist
Hero Pose
Wide Leg Seated Pose with Side Bend
High Kneeling
Extended Mountain
Tree Pose
Peaceful Warrior
Mindful Eating

Give each child an apple slice

Have them first hold the apple slice in their hand, noticing what it looks and feels like

Next ask them to smell the apple slice and notice what happens in their body

Then have them take a small bite, noticing taste, feelings, and physical sensations

Finally, allow them to finish the apple slices as they talk with caregivers about the experience
A Closer Look: Physical Literacy

S1.E1: Locomotor and Stability

Performs locomotor skills (hopping, galloping, running, sliding, skipping) while maintaining balance. (S1.E1.K)

Performs jumping and landing actions with balance. (S1.E3.K)

Maintains momentary stillness on different bases of support. (S1.E7.Ka)

Forms wide, narrow, curled and twisted body shapes. (S1.E7.Kb)
Curled Shape

Twisted Shape

Temporary Stillness
A Closer Look: Early Literacy

TALK – parts of a tree and kinds of trees; what trees are part of your life?

SING – “Apple Tree” by Bari Koral; “Autumn Leaves Are Falling Down”

READ – Call Me Tree / Llámame árbol

WRITE – Weight-bearing on hands (table top pose) and stretching of hands (peaceful warrior) builds muscles needed for writing

PLAY – acting out the life cycle of a tree
A Closer Look: Social-Emotional Learning

Self-Awareness / Self-Management / Relationship Skills
Yoga-inspired movement and embodied play support young children’s early learning in BODY, HEART, AND MIND when we intentionally choose books and movements that encourage the development of physical literacy, social-emotional learning, and early literacy skills.
Program Template

30-45 minutes; Ages 3-6 and adult caregiver(s)

Opening Song
Warm Up Movement
Book with Movement
Song with Movement
Breathing Break
Book, Story, or Game
Mindful Moment
Listening Story
Rest
Rest
Most important pose – don’t skip it!
30 seconds to 2 minutes for this age
There will be fidgets and sounds; that’s fine!
Any shape that is comfortable
Include yourself in the rest
Personal Considerations

- This is a physical program – be mindful of your own abilities and limitations
- Practice and feel comfortable with all movements and shapes you are using in advance
- Demonstrate all shapes in an age-appropriate manner
- Take a mindful minute to set your own intention before every session
- Go with the flow; there is no “perfect”
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www.connectedcommunitiesconsulting.com

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