

**Using Yoga to Reduce Anxiety in Children: Exploring School-Based Yoga
Among Rural Third and Fourth-Grade Students
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Background: Among children & adolescents, there is a high prevalence of psychological & emotional disorders including anxiety, which negatively affects executive function leading to issues with social and academic performance. So, there is a strong need for interventions like yoga-based strategy as positive behavior support promoting healthy lifestyle skills from an early age of schooling.

Objective: To explore the impact of **10 min of yoga** on anxiety in 3rd & 4th graders during school weeks over 8 weeks.

Design : Students were assigned the intervention & comparison group as per willingness of homeroom teacher to implement yoga in the classroom or not.

Intervention: A specially designed yoga sequence - a set of yoga poses & breathing exercise (www.jpmedhc.org.) - adapted from the Yoga for Kids program. All students completed the Screen for Child Anxiety Related Emotional Disorders (SCARED) screening tool twice during the 8-week program: once before starting the Yoga for Kids program and then again after the completion of the program.

Inclusion criteria: Third- and fourth-grade students (Aged 8-10 years).

ACADEMIC P.E.A.R.L.S

Pediatric Evidence And Research Learning Snippet



Exploration of School-Based Yoga among Mid-school Children

Results : Total 71 children from Grade 3 & 4 of rural Arkansas school participated. Sixty in intervention & 11 in comparison group with no substantive differences between the groups.

Anxiety: Paired sample t test noted a significant difference between pretest and posttest raw scores in the category of generalized anxiety disorder. Participants had significantly decreased raw anxiety scores after completing the program (mean = -0.0308), $t(60) = -3.137$, $p < .05$. No significant differences in the pretest and posttest raw scores for total anxiety, separation anxiety, social anxiety or significant school avoidance in any group.

School behavior: Participants in the Yoga for Kids program had significantly improved academics after participation in the program than they did before they participated in the program ($M = -0.0308$), $t(60) = -3.137$, $p < .05$.

Conclusion: Yoga practiced as little as 10 min a day over 8 weeks can have a significant impact on decreasing anxiety in children aged 8-10 years.

Key Message : This study focused on a yoga intervention incorporated in the classroom by homeroom teachers as part of the daily curriculum without disrupting other learning activities. This short yoga routine integrated with classroom activities could decrease anxiety and could improve academic performance in elementary school children.

EXPERT COMMENT



“Children are experiencing more anxiety, particularly during crisis events, resulting in a change of routine. Ten minutes of daily yoga may help decrease anxiety in the school setting & assist in the promotion of pediatric mental health. Teachers can easily be taught to guide students through yoga routines. The practice of 10 min of daily yoga may be transferable to the home setting”

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Reference

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