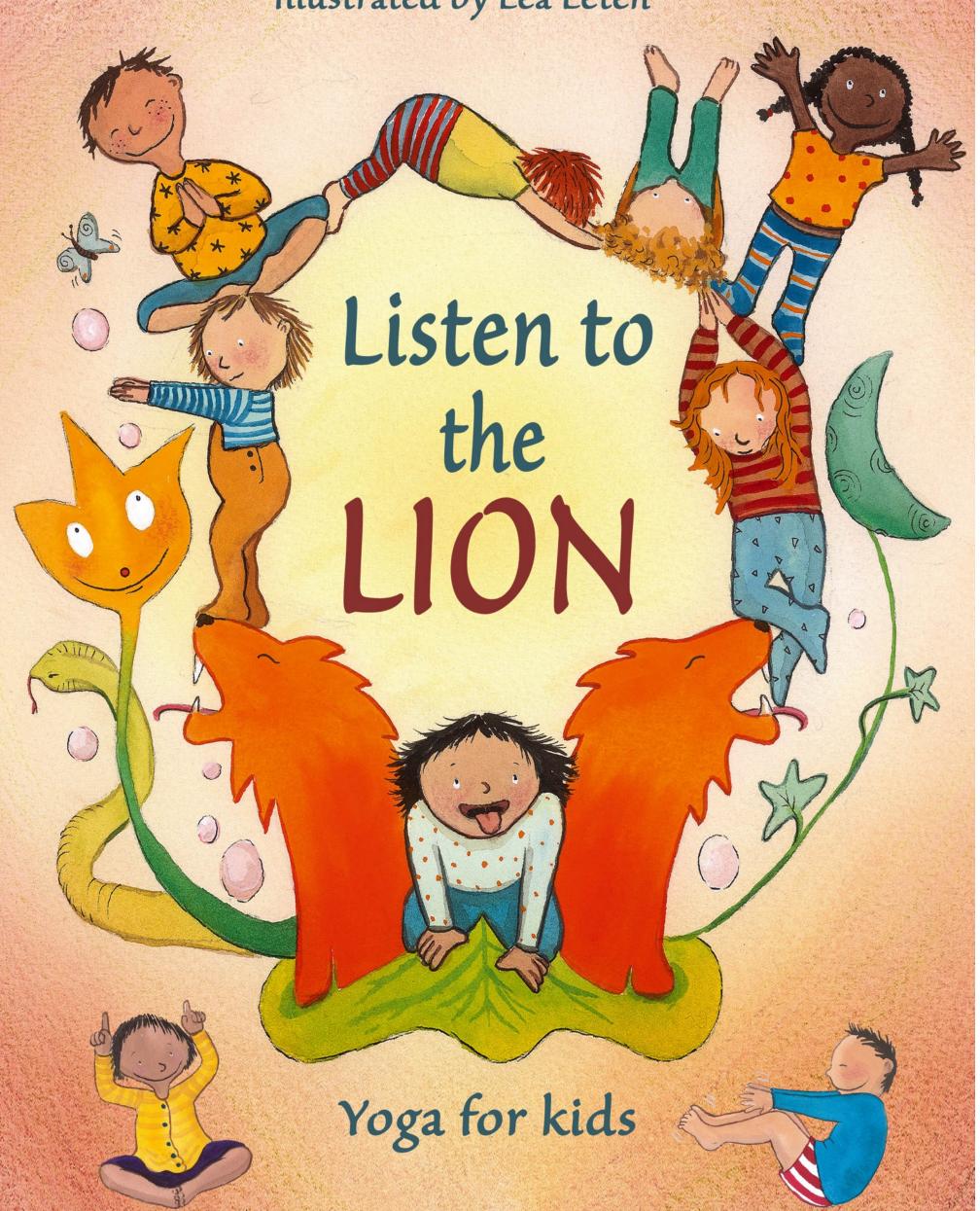
Lotte Salling & Emmamaria Vincentz Illustrated by Lea Letén



The poses. In alphabetical order:

| Airplane page 18 |
|-----------------------|
| Beetle page 40 |
| Boat page 7 |
| Bridge page 37 |
| Butterfly page 14 |
| Candle page 38 |
| Cats and cows page 25 |
| Chair page 12 |
| Child page 24 |
| Cobra page 19 |
| Crocodile page 21 |
| Dog page 26 |
| Eagle page 30 |
| Elephant page 36 |
| Fish page 39 |
| Flower page 16 |
| Frog page 13 |
| Grasshopper page 20 |
| Half moon page 27 |
| Kite page 28 |
| Lion page 6 |
| Lotus flower page 42 |
| Mermaid page 15 |
| Mountain page 4 |
| Rocking horse page 22 |
| Sandwich page 10 |
| Sea lion page 29 |
| Sleeping yogi page 43 |
| Stork page 34 |
| Table page 11 |
| Teapot, funny page 33 |
| Telephone page 9 |
| Tiger page 23 |
| Tree page 8 |
| Triangle page 32 |
| Turtle page 17 |
| Volcano page 5 |
| Warrior page 31 |
| Wind mill page 35 |
| Woodchopper page 41 |





Why yoga for children... page 2-3 General tips page 44

Why yoga for children?

For thousands of years, yoga has been known to build strength, flexibility, and mental wellbeing. This can also benefit small bodies! Yoga for children should be adapted for children's growing bodies and for their attention span. It is primarily about letting children experiment with their bodies and explore their physical and emotional skills. Yoga for children supports the child's development, joy of movement, body awareness, and capabilities for silence and concentration.

Yoga can help kids:

develop better body awareness and better motor skill
relax the body and sleep better
calm the mind and clear the brain
increase and support their attention and concentration
maintain a flexible and strong body
stimulate spoken language
support emotional development and impulse control
strengthen sensory integration

Why make yoga rhymes

The rhymes help the child get a deeper experience of the various yoga poses through imagery and storytelling. They also build stamina by encouraging a child to remain longer in the pose. Children learn and remember through movement, and when we combine the rhythm of the rhymes with a playful approach to the yoga practice, we work with all aspects of the child's development – and thereby strengthen both language and motor skills.

How to use the book

The book has 40 poses inspired by the world around us. That is, animals and natural phenomena that children will recognize and which appeal to their curiosity and imagination. You can use the book as a full yoga class or simply pick the poses you would like to do.

The initial pose in the book is mountain pose, and this is the basis of all standing poses. The final pose is a resting pose, which can be used at the end of a yoga session to allow body, mind, and emotions to relax and recharge.

Meet the children where they are

Always adjust the pose to the child, and not the other way around.

Yoga is supposed to be fun, not perfect!

The poses have different expressions and energy levels, so for children full of energy, poses like Lion and Volcano are perfect to vent the energy. Every pose has points of focus that give you an idea of how it works – that is, whether it provides calmness, energy, or balance, etc. It is also important to notice when the children are "full" and then stop, while it is still fun. You can start off with a short program and then add more poses as the children get familiar with the practice.

Space and ambience

It is a good idea to create a nice atmosphere around the yoga practice, so the children will begin to understand what to expect. You can choose a specific room, dim the lights, put on soft music, and suggest bare feet and comfortable clothing. Yoga mats are not a must, but they can help create a personal space for each child. You can use other types of mats, but make sure that they are non-slippery.

Instructions for each pose

Sit down in easy pose (starting position) and take a few, long breaths. Read the verse out loud – maybe say it together, either before you do the pose or while you do it. Take plenty of breaks to notice how the practice affects you or to take some more deep breaths. For some of the poses, it is a good idea to count up from or down from 3, 5, or 10, both before your start and while doing it. This gives the children an idea of the duration of the pose, and it strengthens their stamina and their ability to wait and focus. It is more relaxing when you count down, than if you count from 1 and up.

Lotte Salling is a trained psychomotor therapist, who has worked with developing the language and motor skills of children for 25 years. She has written a long line of rhyming children's books and non-fiction books about dialogic reading, language, and physical exercise.

Emmamaria Vincentz is a trained yoga teacher for both children and adults, and she specializes in yoga for children, young adults, and families. She is a pioneer of children's yoga in Denmark, and she trains teachers and childcare professionals in using yoga as a tool for learning and building skills. Her mission is to help create creative and fruitful spaces for learning.

Mountain

Mountains reach so very high. Some will even touch the sky.

Focus of the pose: grounding, focus and good posture.

Stand with feet slightly apart
and with equal weight on both feet.
Bring your hands together
in front of your heart.
Say the rhyme, while bending
slightly to one side, then
bending your knees slightly,
and reaching your arms up as
high as you can (maybe
even stand on your toes)
and then once again let your
hands meet in front of your heart.
Stand still with eyes closed and
get "a good feel for the mountain".

Tips:

After the pose, the children can practice "earth quake alert", making themselves heavy as a mountain. The teacher then walks around and "pushes" the children gently on the shoulders and upper back, like an earth quake. The children will try not to move. This gives them a good sensory experience of being grounded.



Volcano

When volcanoes start to wake, they will crack and burn and shake.



Focus of the pose: release of excess energy.

Stand with your feet hip distance apart.

Let your hands meet in front of your heart, while saying the rhyme.

Then, while taking a slow, deep breath, move your hands upwards and let them "explode" to each side while breathing out and bring them back in front of your heart.

Tips:

Ask the children what erupted from their volcanoes. It could be anything from flowers and sunshine to anger, joy, etc. The volcano does not have to be loud. You can make the pose a quiet exercise to dampen the children's energy and give them a sense of self control.

Lion

Little lion, can you roar? Try it, on the count of four.



Focus of the pose: getting a sense of inner strength, stretching tongue and facial muscles, and relaxing face, neck and body.

Sit down on your knees with your legs spread, resting on your calves.
Then lean forward, placing your hands between your legs. Fingers are pointing forward.
You can also place your hands on your knees. After the second line in the verse, put your tongue out as far as you can. Then look up and roar like a lion with your tongue hanging out.

Boat

Find your boat – it's time to go. Keep your balance while you row.



Focus of the pose: stability, balance, and strength in stomach muscles and thighs.

Sit down with legs bent and the soles of your feet on the floor. Your hands are also resting on the floor. Then, lean back slowly, while lifting and stretching your legs and stretching your arms forward. Find your balance in this position. If it is too hard, put your hands back on the floor for support. You can also pretend to row your boat, while you balance – just for a little while, before your put down your "oars" and legs.

The children can row both forward and backward. You can also make one big boat by sitting in a circle, holding each other's hands. Children usually enjoy "falling in the water" (rolling backwards).

Tree

Trees can stand so proud and tall. They may bend, but rarely fall.



Focus of the pose: balance, concentration and "standing firm".

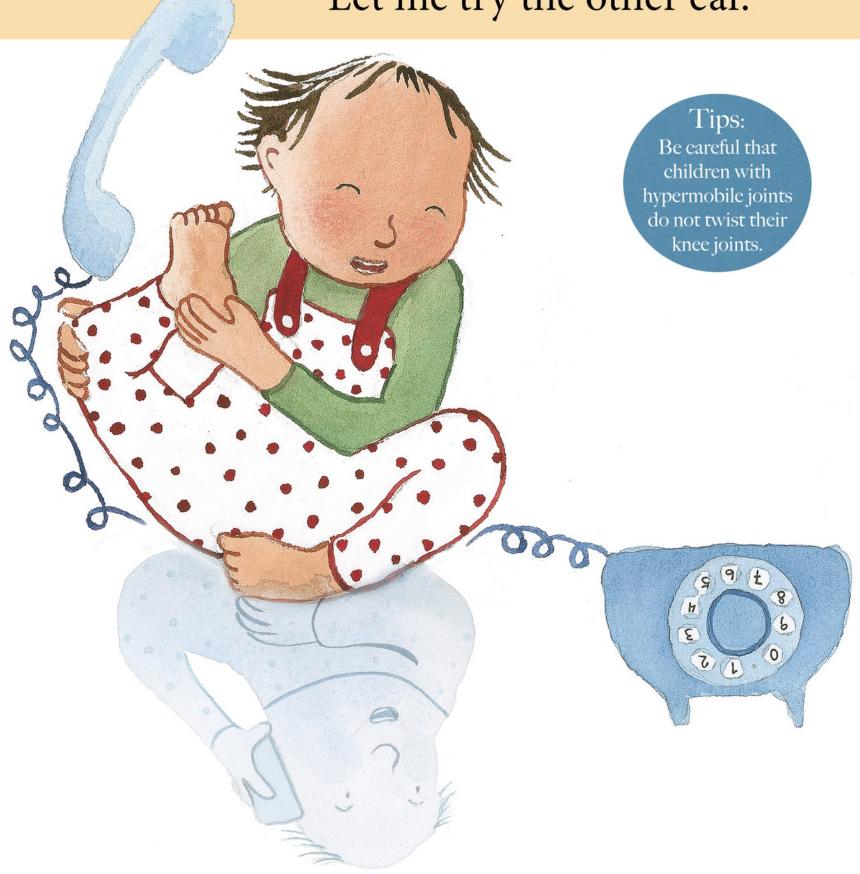
Start in mountain pose and place your hands in front of your heart palm to palm.

Then, lift one heel or place your foot on the inner calf of the other leg. Find your balance and then stretch your arms up and outwards. Repeat the pose on the other leg.

Important: Children should not place their foot directly on the knee, since this creates instability in the pose.

Telephone

Yes? Hello? - I cannot hear. Let me try the other ear.



Focus of the pose: concentration, stability, flexibility, and stretching.

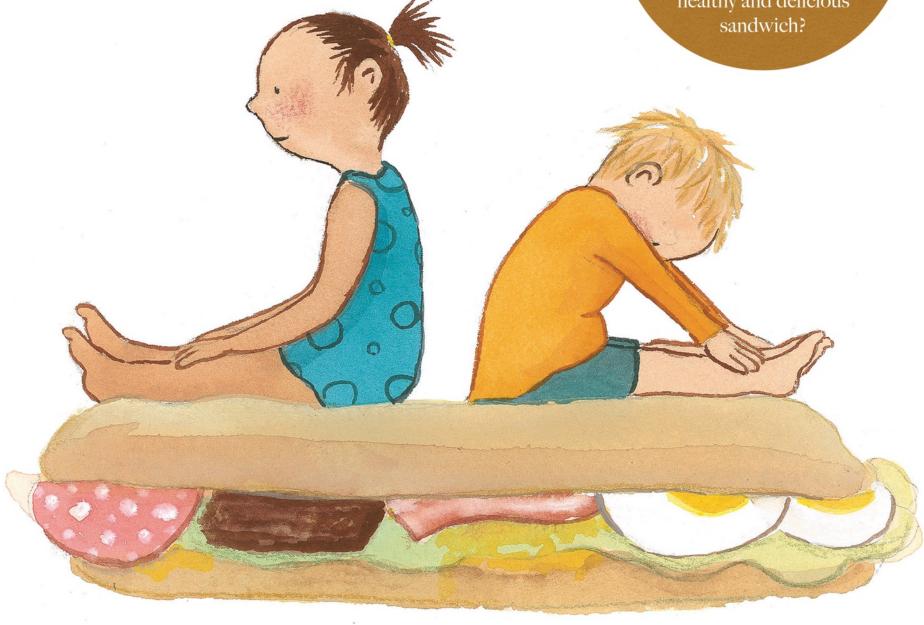
Sit with your legs crossed and a straight back.
While saying the verse, grab one foot with both hands and gently pull it to your ear.
Keep your back as straight as you can while pulling. Repeat with the other foot.

Sandwich

Make a sandwich for tonight. Butter, ham – and then a bite!

Tips:

Talk about what else to put on your sandwich – what is each child's favorite sandwich? Do they like it with veggies as well? How do we make a both healthy and delicious

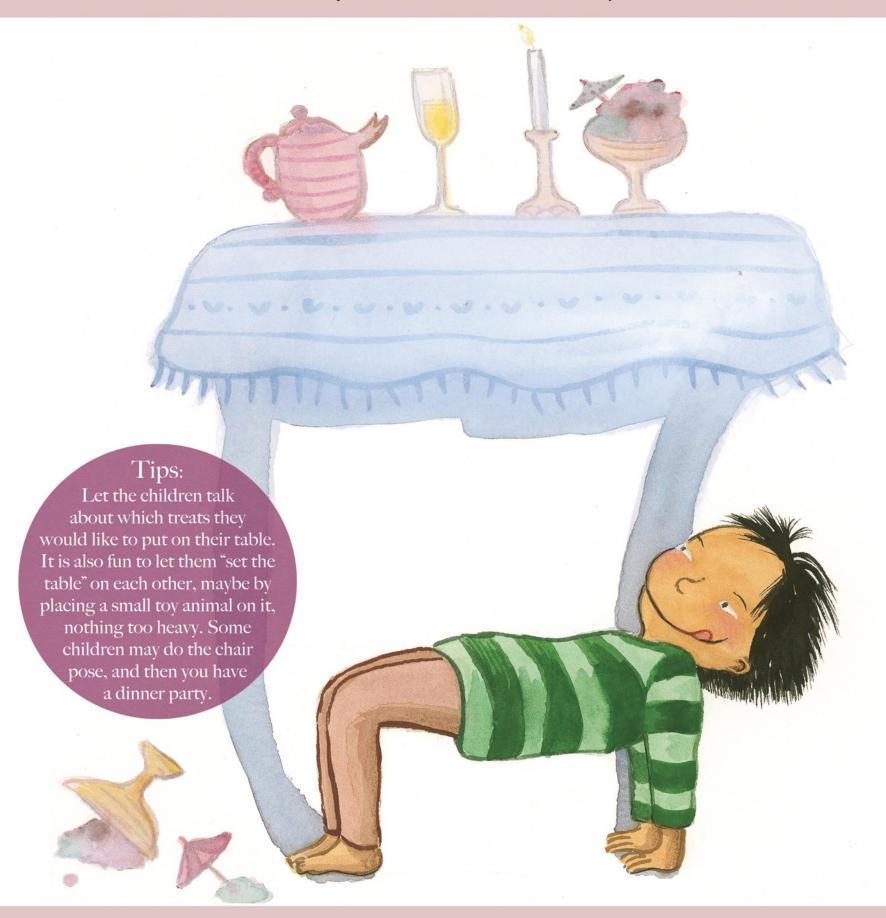


Focus of the pose: calmness, stretching, and digestion.

Start by sitting like the girl to the left. While saying the verse, bend forward. Put "butter" on by stroking your legs and then put "ham" on by clapping them. Finally, you bend forward as far as you can to "take a bite".

Table

Tables must be nice and flat. Try to make one – just like that.



Focus of the pose: stability in shoulders, strength, and stamina.

Sit down, ready to move, with your knees bent and your hands placed on the floor behind your back, fingers pointing forward.

Lift your hips and behind and make your upper body and thighs as straight and flat as a table. Keep your head up in line with your body, not hanging down.

Chair

Grab a chair and have a seat. Can you balance on your feet?



Tips:

Pretend to sit in many different chairs: high chair, small chair, easy chair. How does it feel to sit in the different chairs? You can also be a rocking chair by rolling back and forth on your back, and once in a while get up again to stand with knees bent and arms stretched.

Focus of the pose: stamina and strength in legs and back.

Start in mountain pose. Make the armrests by stretching your arms forward and up alongside your ears. Lower your behind as if you are sitting in the air. Stay in the chair pose for a little while before getting back up.

Frog Hungry frogs can jump so high, when they see a buzzing fly.



Focus of the pose: stability, mobility, and strength in legs.

Sit as illustrated in the drawing with hands flat on the floor and arms between your legs.

You can also put your fingertips on the floor instead.

After saying the verse, take a deep breath, and jump forward with a croak.

Butterfly

Butterfly, come let us play. Stay a while, then fly away.

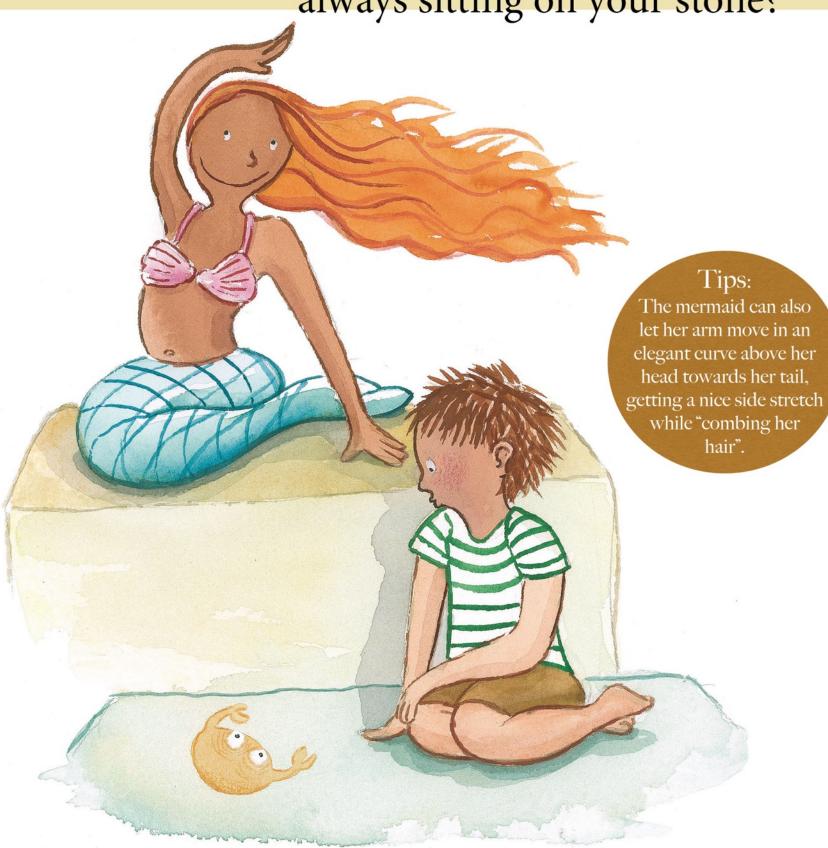


Focus of the pose: posture, flexibility and coordination.

Sit as illustrated in the drawing with a long, straight back. Your fingers can be antennas on your forehead, while your arms are fluttering, and your legs are moving up and down. You can also get up and flutter about. Instead of making antennas, you can hold on to your feet. Work with opposites by asking the children to be a slow, fast, or quiet butterfly. You can also ask them what color their butterfly is, and where it is flying to.

Mermaid

Mermaid, do you feel alone, always sitting on your stone?



Focus of the pose: posture, stretching and inner calm.

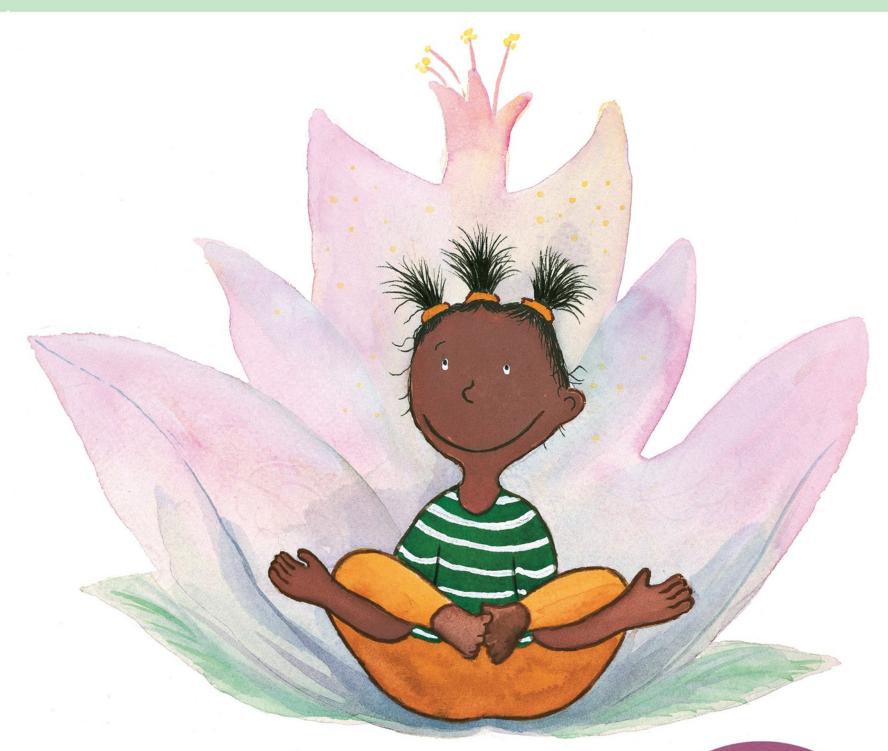
Sit on your lower legs with your hands on your thighs.

Slowly slide your behind to one side of your bent legs, while putting your hands on the floor and twisting your upper body to the opposite side of your legs, as shown in the drawing. After the verse, see if you can move your legs up and down and back and forward while you sit like the mermaid.

Use your hands for support. Do the pose to the other side as well.

Flower

In the soil, a sprout will show. Then, a flower starts to grow.



Focus of the pose: Balance, attention, and strength.

Sit huddled up like a flower bulb.

After the verse, let the flower sprout and grow by straightening your back. Put your hands under each knee from the inside of your legs as shown. Balance in this position, while lifting your palms and soles of your feet upwards.

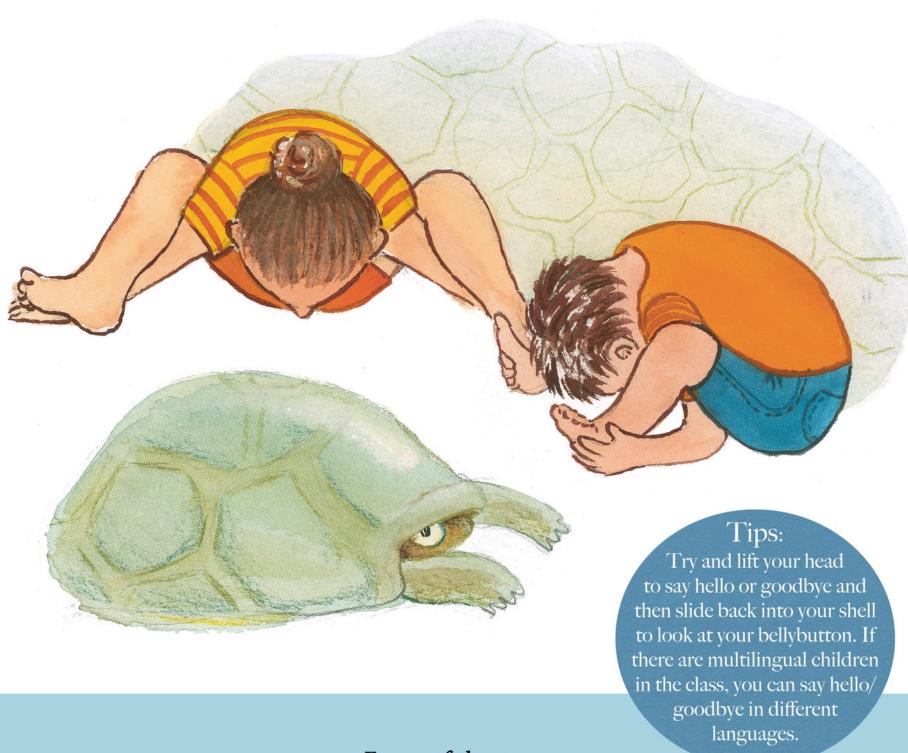
Your feet can also rest against each other.

Tips:

To awaken their imagination and make the pose more real, you can place a little flower – real or cloth – in the children's open palms.

Turtle

Little turtle, I can tell: You feel safe inside your shell.

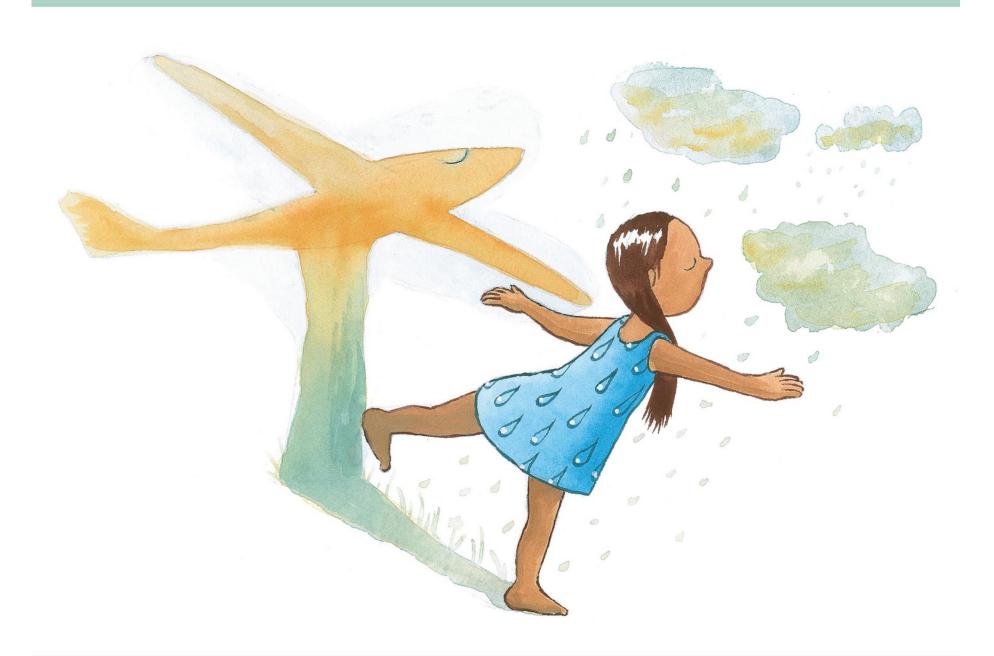


Focus of the pose: feeling calm and stretching the back side of the body.

Sit down with your feet on the floor and your legs slightly bent, a little more than hip distance apart. Your hands are resting on the floor between your legs. As the turtle withdraws to its shell, you let your upper body sink forward towards the floor, while you slide your arms under your knees and look towards your belly button.

Airplane

Airplane, how I wish one day to take off and fly away.



Focus of the pose: balance and concentration.

Start in mountain pose, and then stretch your arms to each side. Say the verse and then slowly lean forward while you gently lift one leg behind you. Hold your balance. Then try the other leg.

Tips: Ask the children how rain smells, and why we need the rain. You can also talk about where you can travel to in an airplane.

Cobra

Cobra, what a scary sight, when you lift your head to bite.



Focus of the pose: strength in back and breathing.

Lie on your stomach with straight legs and hands resting on the floor, ready to lift your upper body. After the verse, you lift your upper body and hiss like a snake. Keep your bellybutton touching the floor.

Grasshopper

Grasshopper, I hear your sound, as you hide or jump around.



Focus of the pose: stability and strength in upper and lower back.

Lie on your stomach with your forehead touching the floor and your arms resting alongside your body with legs straight and feet together. When the grasshopper lifts its legs, you also raise your upper body, arms, and head. Hold this position while counting to three, then rest for a few moments, before you do it again.

Crocodile

Careful, when you cross the Nile. You could meet a Crocodile.



Tips:

Older children with better balance can lie on their side with arms stretched over their head and "smack" both their jaws and tail.

Focus of the pose: concentration, balance and coordination.

Lie on your stomach with your arms straight in front of you, hands palm to palm, ready to snatch a prey. Open your jaws by lifting the topmost arm up high. Smack your hands together as you bite.

Rocking horse

Rocking horse, you rock my day. Are you ready? Rock away!

Tips: Some children will not be

able to rock in this pose, or they
will find it uncomfortable. Only do
this pose, if it feels good. A good
complement to this pose is letting them
rest on their stomach with one cheek
resting on the floor. If you do rock, you
can rock to the rhythm of the verse.
(arms and legs) at the same
time.

Focus of the pose: strengthening shoulders and back, digestion, and breath, as well as giving energy.

Lie on your stomach, forehead touching the floor, legs straight, and arms down your side. Grab your ankles with your hands (or, if it is too hard to reach, leave your arms at your side).

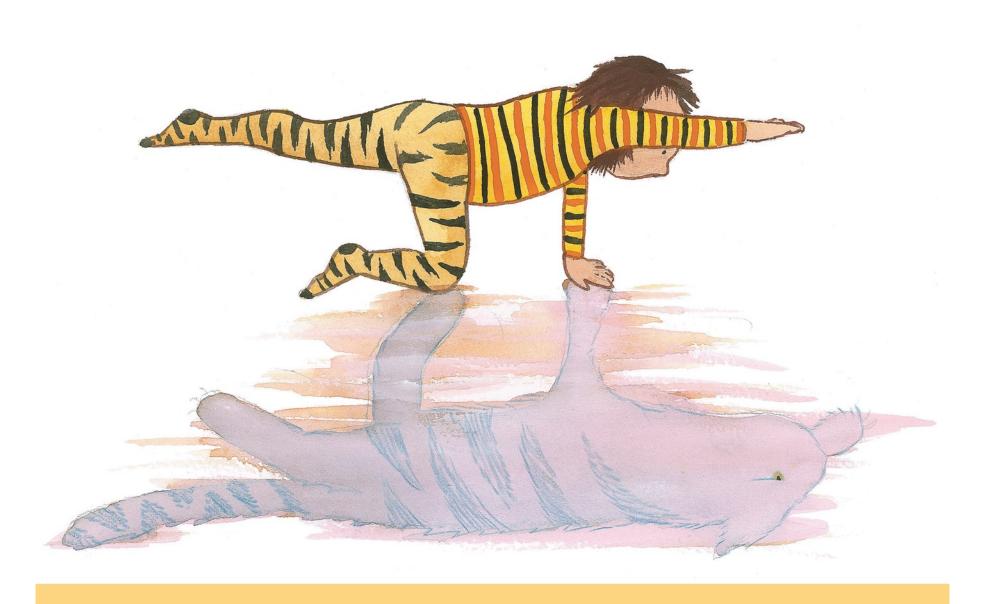
Breathe in and lift your upper body, lower body, and legs.

Then, breathe out, and arch your body like shown in the drawing.

Your big toes stay together during the entire pose.

Tiger

Little tiger, be on guard! Hunting prey is very hard.



Tips:
You can also do the pose by first pulling leg and arm toward each other before stretching back and forward.

Focus of the pose: cross-body motor skills, coordination, and stability.

Start on hands and knees. After saying the verse, lift and stretch one leg and stretch the opposite arm in line with your ear. Lift your head slightly. Hold the pose a little while, then change leg and arm.

Child

Close your eyes and go to sleep. Let your breath turn slow and deep



Focus of the pose: calmness and relaxing the back side of the body.

Sit on your calves. Gently put your forehead on the floor, letting your arms rest alongside your legs as shown in the drawing. You can also use your hands as pillow. After the verse, take a deep breath and listen to your body and your heartbeat.

Tips:

This pose is a favorite among many children, because it gives them a much-needed breathing space. If a child needs even more calming, you can put a blanket over her back. If the children are comfortable with you and with being touched, you can go around and gently put a hand on their back or give a soft massage on upper back and shoulders.

Cats and cows

Have you seen how cats and cows stretch and bend with muhs and meows?



Focus of the pose: flexibility and coordination

Start on hands and knees. Then arch and sway your back, either while saying the verse or afterwards. "Meow" when you arch, and "Moo" when you sway.

Dog Come on, doggie, stretch and yawn. Wag your tail, it's early morn.



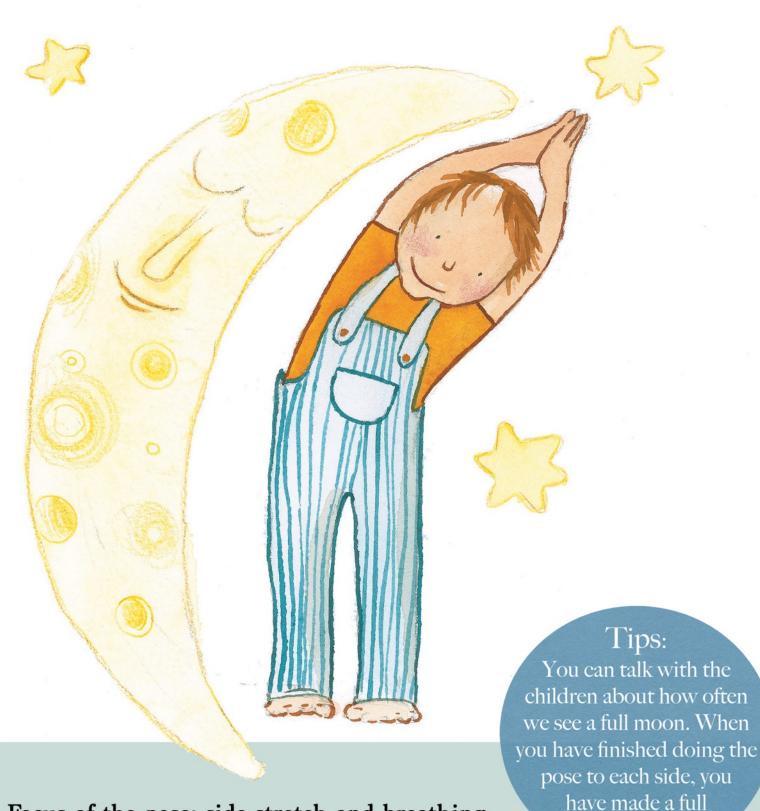
Focus of the pose: grounding, centering, and increasing blood flow to the brain.

Stand on both hands and feet. After the verse, lift your behind up as high as you can and stretch arms and legs. Hold the pose for a little while, before you lie down and relax.

You can also let your dog "pee" when you start or finish the pose by lifting first one leg and then the other, before you stretch. Maybe the dog even farts.

Half moon

Look, the moon is half tonight, bending, while it shines so bright.



Focus of the pose: side stretch and breathing.

Start in mountain pose, then stretch your arms above your head and let your hands meet palm-to-palm. Sway slowly to one side, while you say the verse, then to the other while repeating the verse – like the waning and waxing moon.

moon.

Kite

We are kites above the ground. Feel the wind, and dance around.



Focus of the pose: balance and concentration.

Stand on one leg. Lift the other leg to the side and stretch your arms to the side as well. Sway a bit in the "wind". After saying the verse, take a deep breath and blow at each other to make all the kites dance in the wind. Then, do the pose with the opposite leg.

Sea lion

Sea lions can play like kids, as they bark and clap their mitts.



Focus of the pose: concentration, balance, strength in back and stomach.

Sit down with knees bent and hands resting on the floor. At the end of the verse, lift your hands and feet and balance on your behind.

Clap your hands back to back and clap with your feet.

Make sounds like a sea lion.

Tips:

Clap together in different rhythm patterns and with different speed while you count. This strengthens the body and encourages the children to stay in the pose a little longer, and it is also fun. You can also try and "throw" a soft ball between you with your feet like a sea lion in a circus.

Eagle

Watch the eagle flying up, landing on the mountaintop.



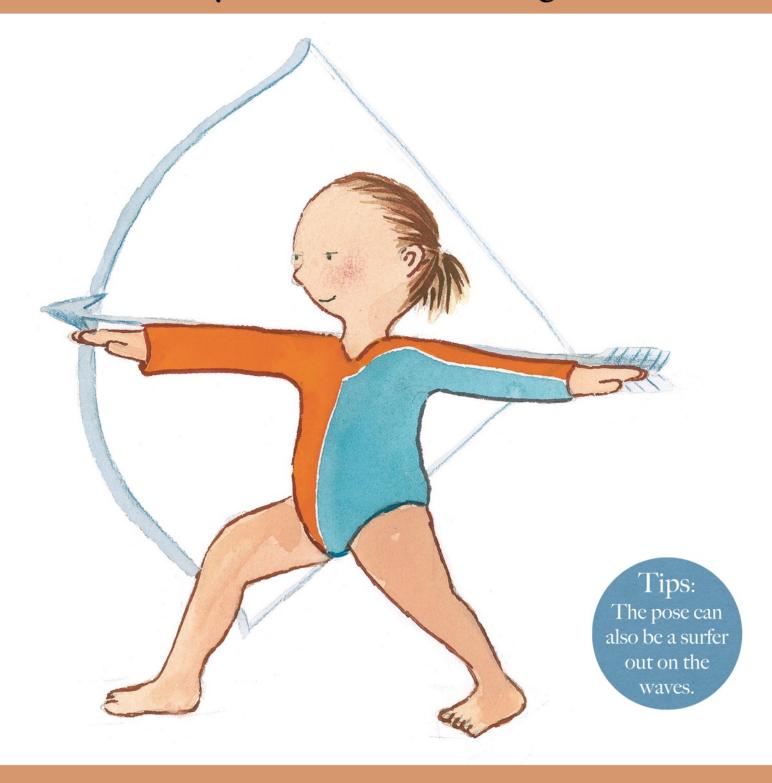
Let the children fly around the room for a bit before getting back in their spot. They can then lay down and curl up like an egg in a nest. Call out their names to tell who has landed.

Focus of the pose: balance, cross-body motor skills, and coordination.

Start in mountain pose, but cross one foot in front of the other as you can see in the drawing. Stand on your toes and stretch your arms to the side. Say the verse, stand still and balance on one leg. Finally, fold your arms around yourself.

Warrior

Little warrior, grab your bow. Point your arrow – let it go!



Focus of the pose: strength, power, and self-confidence.

Hop and land with legs and arms out to the side.

Turn one foot 90 degrees outwards and the other foot 45 degrees towards the front foot.

Look at the drawing for inspiration. Turn your head to this side as well, looking in the same direction as the front foot is pointing. Slightly bend the front leg.

Tighten your bow by pulling back the same arm as the back leg and let the other arm point forward. Hold for a bit and then release to shoot.

Triangle

Triangles have lines that go

up and down and toe to toe.

Focus of the pose: strength, energy and stretching

Start in mountain pose.

Make a little hop and land with legs out to the sides, toes pointing forward, and your arms straight out to the sides.

Now, turn one foot so it points to the side, and lean your body sideways towards this foot while the opposite arm reaches upwards. Stay here a bit – then try the other side.

Tips:

Have the children do
a bit of geometry in pairs by
"counting triangles" on each
other. One counts, while the
other is doing the pose. (There
are 3 triangles: one between
arm and leg, one between the
legs, and the whole body
is one as well.)



Funny teapot

Let us have a cup of tea. Pour a cup for you and me.



Focus of the pose: strength, energy, and stretching.

Start in mountain pose. Make a little hop and land with legs spread out, toes pointing forward, and your arms straight out to the sides. Now, put one hand in your side and lean your body sideways towards this arm while the opposite arm reaches over your head. Stay here a bit – then try the other side.

Stork

Mother stork has laid an egg. She keeps watch on just one leg.



Tips:

You can put a small stuffed animal or a small beanbag on top of the head to help the balancing and keep the back straight.

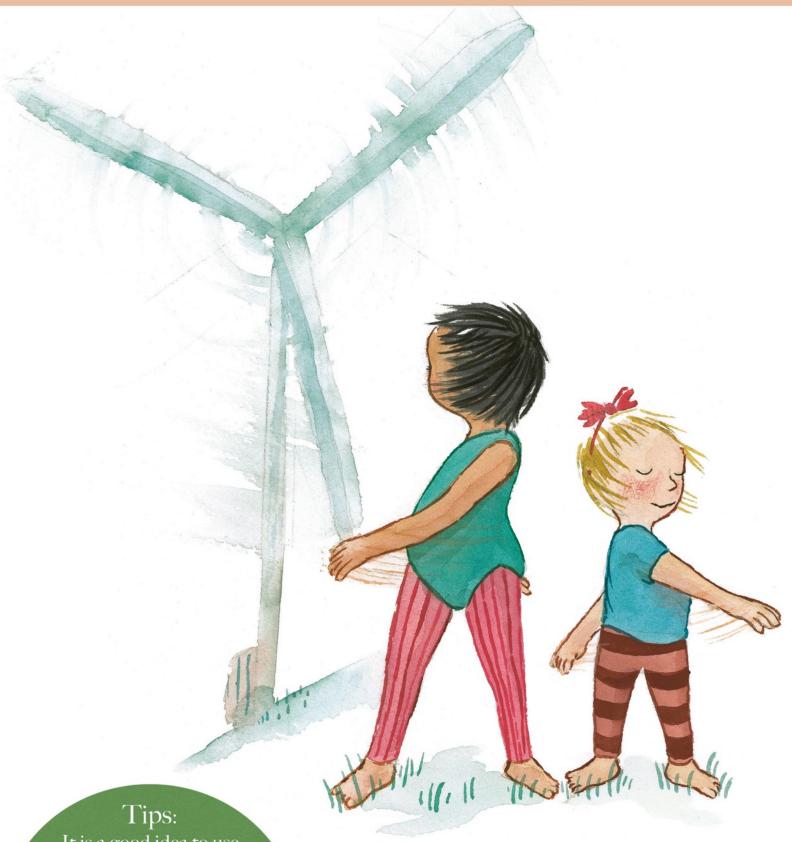
Focus of the pose: breath, balance, and cross-body motor skills.

Stand on one leg, while bending and lifting the other up like you can see in the illustration.

Bend the arm and wrist on the opposite arm to make a beak with your hand. Now, stand still and take deep breaths for a bit, before you change sides.

Wind mill

Wind will make a wind mill turn, light your lamps, and make them burn.



It is a good idea to use your breath to indicate the speed of the movement. Breathe in and out through your nose, so the children can hear it clearly. You can also try swinging your arms all the way around if you can ... but be careful with the

shoulder joint.

Focus of the pose: spinal flexibility and cross-body motor skills.

Start in mountain pose, but with legs slightly spread. Let your arms swing gently from side to side.

Elephant

Elephant, come show your trunk. Let it swing and make it honk.



Focus of the pose: energy, strength and stretching.

Swing your arms in front of you like an elephant swinging its trunk. Fold your hands and bent forward to suck up water with your elephant trunk.

Tips:
Have a water
fight and pretend to
splash each other
with your trunks.

Bridge

Build a bridge across the river. One that doesn't fall or shiver.



Focus of the pose: strength, stability, and breath.

Lie on your back with your arms along your sides.

Bend your knees, put your feet on the floor as

close to your behind as possible.

Then, lift your hips as high as you can

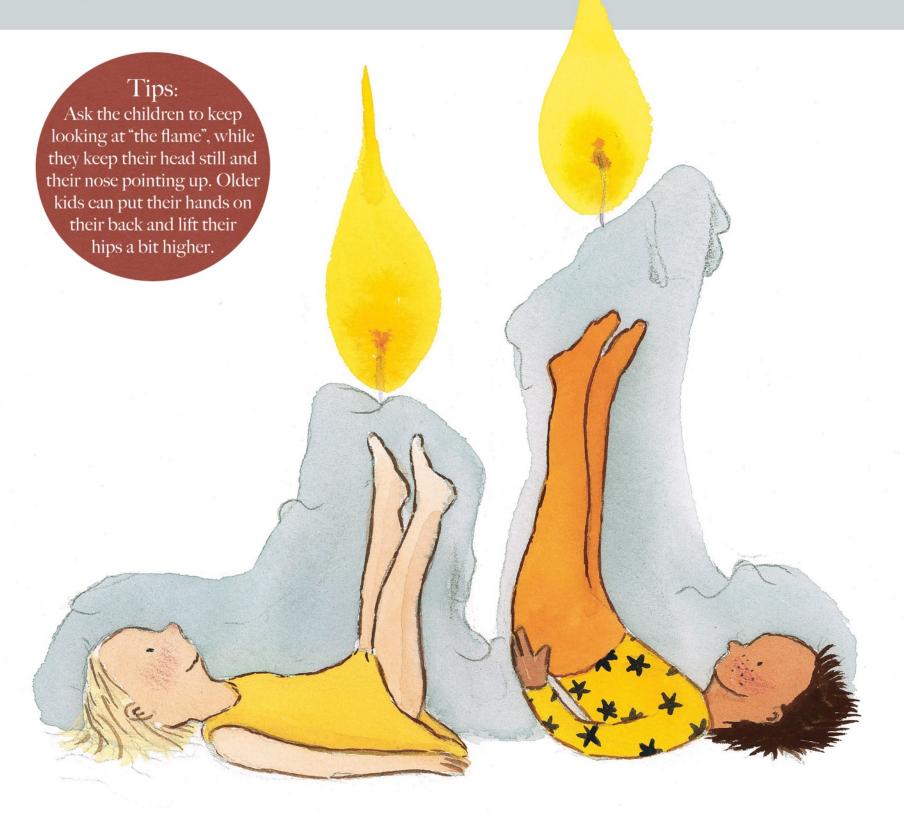
- stand as a bridge for cars to drive over.

Tips:

You can use a toy car or boat – and let it drive over the bridge or sail under it – if the kids are laying in a line or a circle. Older kids can pass along the toy on their own. You can also use a ball.

Candle

In the darkness of the night, light a candle, nice and bright.



Focus of the pose: calm, attention, and concentration.

Lie on your back with arms along your sides and legs stretched. Keep your legs together and straight and lift them slowly toward the ceiling. Blow your candle and move your feet up and down like a flickering flame.

Beetle

Roll, my beetle, never stop. If you do, can you get up?



Focus of the pose: balance, calm, and relaxing the lower back.

Crawl around like a beetle, and then roll onto your back, while you stretch your arms and legs in the air.

Now, bend your knees and grab your feet under the soles.

Then, lie here and roll and shake a bit, before you become completely still.

Woodchopper

Cutting trees is not too hard. Grab your ax and let us start.



Tips:

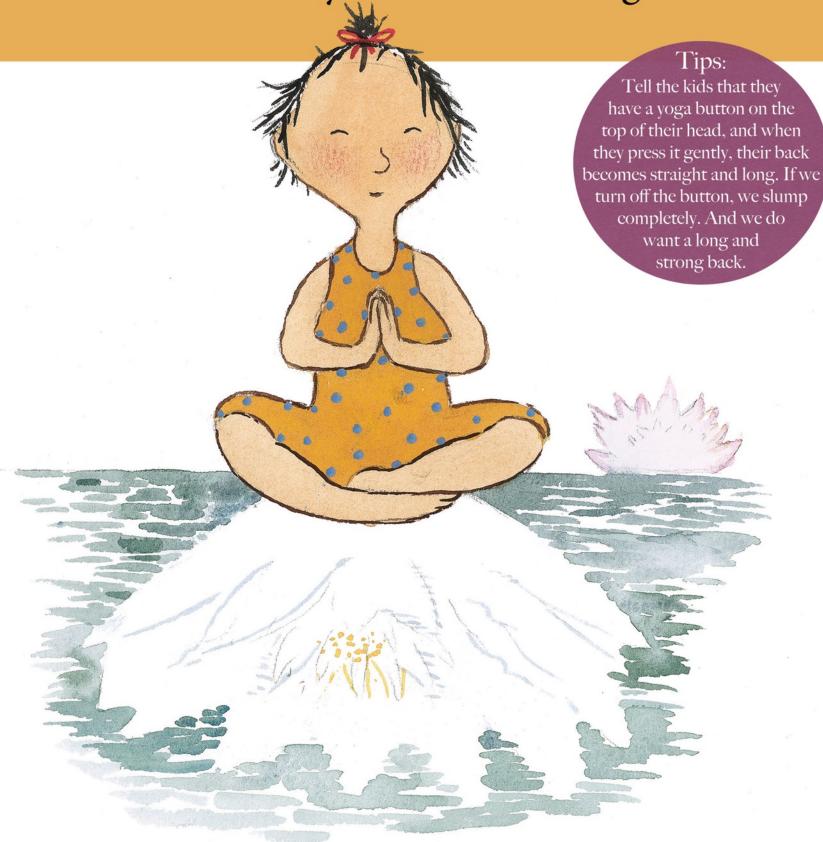
You can add the sound "HA", while you chop. You can also ask the children to imagine that they are chopping things like wood, ice on a lake, grain, porridge, etc. The different visualizations will give a different input to the body and create different experiences.

Focus of the pose: strength, grounding, chest and shoulders, and "letting off steam".

Hop to stand with legs spread a little more than hip-wide. Lift your hands above your head as if holding an axe ready for chopping. Bend slightly backwards, then bend forward and chop by letting your arms swing between your legs.

Lotus flower

Lotus flower, pure and white, look at how you bloom so bright.



Focus of the pose: calmness and concentration.

Sit down with your legs crossed in a classical yoga pose for beginning or ending. You may put one leg in front of the other instead of crossing them.

Hands meet palm to palm in front of your chest.

After the verse, look at each other and smile.

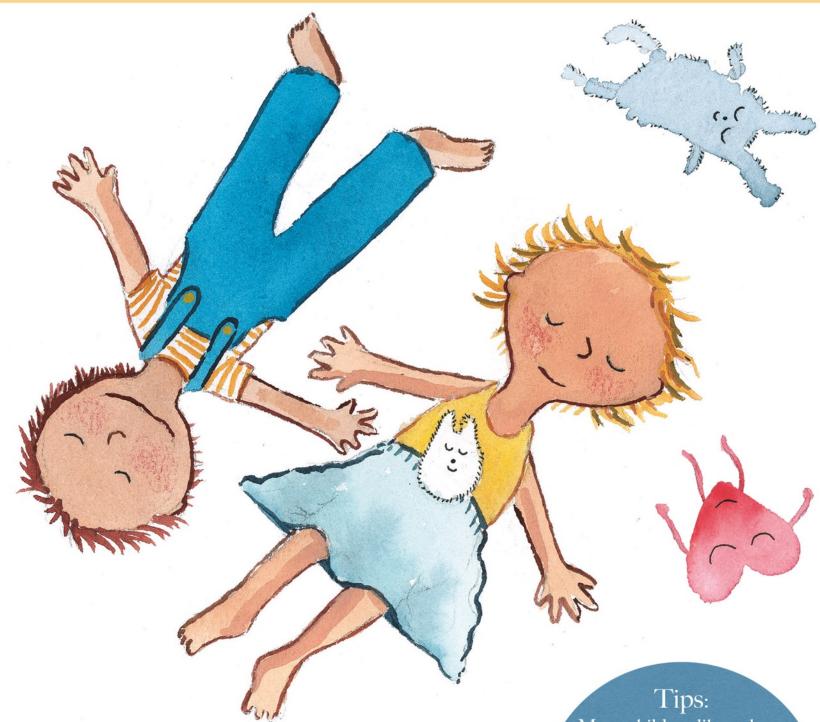
Sleeping yogi

Thank you for a lovely day.

We have no more words to say.

Close your eyes, breathe in and out.

That's what life is all about.



Focus of the pose: relaxation and calmness.

The children lie on their back and close their eyes, while the teacher reads the verse quietly and slowly, so the children have time to feel their breath and let their body relax.

Many children like to have a little stuffed animal to put on their stomach while they rest.

This gives them comfort, and it focuses their attention here and allows them to breathe deeper and become more calm and relaxed.

General tips for doing yoga with children:

Flexibility

Some children have difficulty stretching arms and legs. This is natural, while they are growing. Keep an eye on children with hypermobile joints in the extremities of the poses.

Breath

Preferably breathe through your nose. This gives you a good sense of control and calmness. Avoid telling the children to "breathe in, breathe out". Just let your own breath be audible, and they will tune into this rhythm naturally.

Two sides of the body

Some of the poses should be made to both sides, such as Teapot. Here, we first bend to one side and then to the other. Try to make the poses last equally long to each side.

Hop

When you hop into position in the poses, with legs out to the side, you get a natural distance between the feet, because the legs only stretch as far as they can. If you push your legs out, you often push them further than what is good for the natural flexibility of our body.

Open or closed eyes

Children age 2-5 may have a hard time keeping their eyes closed, since vision is one of our primary senses. It is a good idea to practice having closed eyes in the poses that focus on inner calm.

Bare feet or socks

It is generally recommended that you do yoga in bare feet to increase stability and strengthen the sensory-motor skills. However, some children are sensitive and may not want to take off their socks. Let them make their own choice.

The philosophy of yoga

Yoga is an ancient health practice and discipline from India. It is said to be more than 5000 years old, and its purpose is to develop, strengthen and calm the individual as a whole being and thus create greater self-awareness, happiness, harmony, and quality of life.

It is told that the wise yogis lived in harmony with nature. They imitated the animals and natural phenomena they encountered and lived with, and this is what we know today as the physical poses. This gave them a sense of connectedness with and respect for our eco system, and the idea that we are all connected.

For more information:

Authors' homepages: www.lilleyogahus.dk / www.lottesalling.dk

Other websites: www.yogakids.com

Equipment for yoga: www.herbal-animals.com / www.thelittleyogamat.com