



# **Family Yoga Storytime @ New Hanover County Public Library By Susan Wood**

While it may seem like a bit of a stretch at first, storytime is a great opportunity to introduce yoga to kids! Yoga adds a little movement, fun, and variety to storytime while fully engaging kids and parents. Over time yoga can have a calming effect and improve concentration. This in turn can enhance literacy skills.

I am a Yoga Alliance registered teacher (*RYT 200*) and Child Light Yoga certified. I began offering Yoga Storytime occasionally in place of regularly scheduled storytime in December 2009. It was simply advertised as a special treat and comfortable clothing was suggested. No mats or props needed, just the floor! It soon grew in popularity and is now offered every Friday and most families bring yoga mats or beach towels. I have an email list of over 100 families who have participated.



Each yoga storytime session is a little different- it's important to be "flexible" and modify plans based on the ages of the participants. I encourage the parents to participate and most do. I incorporate general stretching, deep breathing, songs, and traditional yoga poses. Many yoga poses (*and children's books*) are based on animals and nature such as downward facing dog, cat, and tree. At times we do the poses while reading the story, other times after the story. Use your imagination! Unlike traditional yoga classes, exact pose names and perfect form are not important. Body awareness, movement, learning new vocabulary, and encouraging parent and child interaction are.

Here is an abbreviated sample of a typical Yoga Storytime:

3 deep calming breaths while seated (inhale & lift arms overhead, exhale & lower arms)

Read and act out *From Head to Toe* by Eric Carle

Tell a story about a trip to park while acting out movements and yoga poses: ride bicycle to park, tree pose, see-saw (parent & child face each other, hold hands and see-saw back and forth) boat pose while singing *Row Your Boat* and crossing the pond; jump like a frog from lily pad to lily pad

Read *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*: stretch to show size differences among the 3 bears; "test" each bed to see which is most comfortable; end in baby bear's and rest for relaxation pose while counting to ten

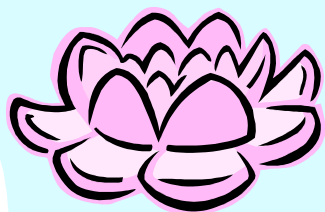
3 deep calming breaths seated or standing



You don't need to be a yoga teacher to offer yoga storytime. If you want to try a similar program, begin by searching your collection for yoga resources and ideas. Start small; try one or two yoga poses and/or a calming breath between stories. Contact local yoga studios, many yoga teachers are happy to volunteer their time for a good cause.

Many ideas for the baby and toddler poses came from the book *Itsy Bitsy Yoga* by Helen Garabedian and required interaction between parent and child. The favorite among the kids (and best workout for the parents) involves deep wide-legged squats on an exhale breath while holding the child with their back to the parent's chest. Expect lots of smiles and laughter! For the older kids, we practiced more traditional poses. The following link has excellent photographs and descriptions of poses from the book *Storytime Yoga: Teaching Yoga to Children through Story* by Sydney Solis <http://www.storytimeyoga.com/lotus/resources/asanas.pdf> .

Family Yoga Storytime has been a well-received addition to regular storytime for babies, toddlers, and preschoolers. The photographs are priceless! We have received excellent feedback from parents, with the most common question being, "When are you going to do this again?" Namaste! (*Sanskrit salutation*)



## Yoga Books & DVDs for Working with Children

### 1) Books for librarians & parents:

- *YogaKids: Educating the Whole Child Through Yoga* by Marsha Wenig **613.7042 W**
- *Yoga for the Special Child* by Sonia Sumar **613.7 S**

- *Structural Yoga Therapy* by Mukunda Stiles **613.7 S**
- *Itsy Bitsy Yoga: Poses to Help Your Baby Sleep Longer, Digest Better, and Grow Stronger* by Helen Garabedian, **649.122 G**

### 2) Books for kids:

- *ABCs of Yoga for Kids* by Teresa Power **J 613.7 P**
- *Babar's Yoga for Elephants* by Laurent Brunhoff **J 613.7 B**
- *A Yoga Parade of Animals: A First Fun Picture Book of Yoga* by Pauline Mainland, **J 613.7 M**
- *Yoga for Fun!* by Jana Studelska, **J 613.7 S**

### 3) DVDs for everybody:

- *YogaFit Kids!*, **DVD Juv. 613.7 Y**
- *Yoga Ma, Baby Ga*, **DVD 613.7 Y**
- *Yoga for Families*, **DVD 613.7046 Y**

### 4) Books & Songs to use during Yoga Storytime:

- *From Head to Toe* by Eric Carle (1997)
- *The Three Bears* by Byron Barton
- *Stretch* by Doreen Cronin and Scott Menchin (2009)
- *If You're Hoppo* by April Sayre (2011)
- *Wheels on the Bus*
- *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*
- *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*

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# Yoga & Learning!



Yoga, the art of bringing together the body and mind for improved strength, flexibility, and self-esteem, can also help decrease stress levels, improve academic performance, and self-confidence in school children. Yoga can be an effective way to help school children be more active, relieve stress, and enjoy a non-competitive and non-judgmental atmosphere that encourages movement and learning. It provides experiences that help improve mental alertness, academic performance, readiness to learn, and enthusiasm for learning.

Tummers, Nanette. "Yoga for Your Students." *Strategies: A Journal for Physical and Sport Educators* 19. (2004): 35-37. ERIC. EBSCO. Web. 11 Mar. 2010.

By being actively involved, children understand the meaning of words, and sentence constructions are enhanced.



Britton, Lesley. *Montessori Play & Learn: a Parents' Guide to Purposeful Play from Two to Six*. New York: Crown, 1992. Print



Yoga means “unite.”

Helen. *Itsy Bitsy Yoga: Poses to Help Your Baby Sleep Longer, Digest Better, and Grow Stronger*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2004. Print.



***Yoga is a physical activity that is rich with language including directions and descriptions.***

*Susan Wood, NHCPL*

**A Review of *Nevermore* by Kelly Creagh  
by Christina Wilder  
Jackson County Public Library**

At first glance, *Nevermore* seems like the usual fare from YA paranormal romances; pretty girl gets matched up with weird guy for a school assignment, strange things start happening, and somewhere down the line, a romance blossoms. What separates *Nevermore* from all the others, though, is a sincere and believable love story interwoven with references to Edgar Allan Poe.

Isobel Lanley seems like a typical cheerleader at first – she’s popular, she’s dating football star Brad, and she’s freaked out at the prospect of spending time with Varen Nethers, a quiet goth boy her English teacher has paired her up with. Varen isn’t too pleased at the idea of them working together either, and soon the two of them are exchanging insults while researching Varen’s favorite author, Edgar Allan Poe.

As anyone who’s been to high school can attest, social cliques can be brutal, and Isobel and Varen start to feel that when they begin work on their project. Isobel’s fellow cheerleaders and jocks feel betrayed when Isobel ditches them to study with Varen, and Varen’s goth friends mock Isobel every chance they get. Neither Isobel nor Varen are stereotypes, though, and they even call each other out on their misconceptions of each other as they get to know each other better. Isobel eventually dumps her jerk boyfriend and spends more time with Varen to finish their assignment, and she finds it harder to deny that there’s something about Varen that she finds captivating.

Then things start to get weird.

Isobel feels like she’s being followed, and then hears about an odd occurrence at school when Varen tries to stop Brad from breaking into Isobel’s locker. Isobel’s Poe book starts to move from room to room, and Isobel starts having bizarre dreams featuring a mysterious character named Reynolds. Strange characters pop out

at random, wreaking havoc on Isobel's life, including a character named Pinfeathers who is one of the creepiest individuals I've ever encountered in fiction.

Isobel is no shrinking violet, however, and Varen proves himself to be sweet and caring. It's impossible not to root for them to get together even though they face disapproval from parents and friends. Their relationship grows realistically, so there's no Insta-love and lack of chemistry, although you might find yourself wanting to yell "Just kiss already!" while you read it.

Between the supernatural happenings and a blossoming friendship that leads to romance, *Nevermore* doesn't slack on the pace. Plus, it's never predictable. When the demonic spirits that tortured Poe come for Varen and Isobel, the journey that ensues is horrifying and fascinating. Fans of Poe will be able to spot some familiar characters, and those who haven't read him will be intrigued by the end of the book.

Lucky for us, there is a sequel, but we have to wait until August for it. Still, you won't regret reading *Nevermore*, as it's in a class by itself. If you're looking for something different, something romantic but truly scary and exhilarating, check out *Nevermore* (and beware of Pinfeathers).