



Nature Yoga integrates storytelling — children are encouraged to use their imagination when doing the poses



Yoga poses help to enhance children's focus and concentration



A yoga practice in session with adult facilitation

ALL NATURAL MOVES

FOCUSING ON FUN AS WELL AS FORM, PPIS BUKIT BATOK'S NATURE YOGA PROGRAMME HELPS CHILDREN ACHIEVE STRONG BODIES AND CALM MINDS.



Three times a day, preschoolers at PPIS (Persatuan Pemuda Islam Singapura) Bukit Batok stretch like a cat, squat and jump like a frog, mimic a flower in bloom and strike other poses inspired by flora and fauna. The centre's Nature Yoga programme was launched this year to enhance its existing nature curriculum which includes activities such as weekly trails to a park or garden, and using natural materials such as leaves and twigs to support children's learning experiences.

"We find that children are calmer when they are surrounded by nature," says Ms Zulaihabe Binte Talip, Acting Assistant Head, Operation, Pre-School

Development. This inspired the decision to add a yoga programme that will introduce 20 nature-inspired poses progressively throughout the year.

Nature Yoga is conducted after assembly to help children become more attuned to the activities for the day ahead, before naptime to help them calm down, and at the end of the day before they go home.

BODY AND MIND BENEFITS

"Children can learn yoga as early as four years old," says Ms Zulaihabe. "Regular practice strengthens the muscles on the arms, back, legs and core, and builds balance and flexibility which reduce the risk of injury."

With adult facilitation, yoga helps children to manage negative emotions like anger and agitation by helping them to relax, while encouraging quieter children to open up. It also enhances focus and concentration.

"Nature Yoga differs from regular yoga in that it integrates storytelling, games, music, language and other skills," explains Ms Zulaihabe. "For instance, when children are adopting a 'tree' pose, they are encouraged to imagine what the tree will look like when it grows, prompting some to extend their hands upwards or outwards."

MOOD AND ENERGY BOOSTER

Since the centre introduced Nature Yoga, teacher Ms Rabihton Selamat has observed positive changes in the children.

They are more energetic and alert, calmer and sleep better during nap time. For children who are anxious, stressed or unable to control their emotions, yoga has provided them with practical techniques to do so. It has helped channel the energy of children who are restless, and boosted the confidence of shy children. ●

“ Practising Nature Yoga boosts memory. Teachers have observed that with calmer minds, children are more organised in their thinking and can easily recall what they have learnt.”

MS RABIAHTON SELAMAT,
Teacher at PPIS Bukit Batok

“ I find that my child is calmer after practising Nature Yoga. This makes it easier for me and my husband to address her behaviour issues, and reason things out with her.”

MDM NURSUHAILAH BINTI ABU SAMAT,
Parent of Nur Humaira Binte Khairulah, 4

THANK YOU, TEACHER!

IN THIS TEACHERS' DAY TRIBUTE, **BEANSTALK** MEETS THREE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS WHO COMBINE PASSION AND PROFESSIONALISM DOING WHAT THEY LOVE.

Former nurse Ms Siti Khairunnisa Octavia made a career switch eight years ago and hasn't looked back.

Known as Teacher Nysa to the children and their parents, she believes educators make a big impact in the infancy and toddler years through their one-to-one interactions. This is how very young children learn.

Participating in the Professional Development Programme (Educarer) has given her further insights. "Infants can't fully express themselves. The course helped me to observe their cues and even gestures. It has also sharpened my skills to be responsive to their needs, reciprocate, and treat them respectfully."

As a first-time mum with an eight-month-old daughter, motherhood has also influenced Teacher Nysa's perspective as an educator. She says, "I am more

“Teacher Nysa is a committed and passionate educator who takes the time to understand our child's needs. We can always count on her to give us sound and practical parenting tips, from food allergies to managing behavioural issues. We are heartened to see Marcus blossom under her care. Thank you!

MR TAN CHOON GUAN

Father of Tan Hongyu Marcus, 6



LEFT: Teacher Nysa in a session with the centre's parents

RIGHT: Teacher Nysa with her 8-month-old daughter



MS SITI KHAIRUNNISA OCTAVIA

Senior Infant Educarer
Agape Little Uni
@ Gambas
Pte Ltd

open in expressing my affection easily, which is fundamental for a child's well-being. I find that I am also better able to understand the infants and toddlers better."



MS SITI ROHAIZAN BINTE ABDUL RAZAK
Centre Leader
Harmoni Preskool
@Yishun

With 13 years in the early childhood sector, Ms Siti Rohaizan Binte Abdul Razak observes that the traditional role of teachers has evolved.

"As an educator in the 21st century, we must be open to change and continually adapt. It is important to learn, unlearn and relearn," she says.

Ms Siti is thankful for the professional courses which are readily available. As a result, she finds herself better equipped to guide and support her teachers.

Together with them, she is able to design more enriching and engaging curriculum experiences for the children.

For example, the Professional Development Programme (Leader) gave her the tools to be a better leader and mentor to her teachers. "It helps early childhood leaders like myself to broaden our perspectives and hone competencies in areas of professional interest."

Her passion is recharged whenever she meets former colleagues and parents who express appreciation and thank her for her guidance and efforts.



Ms Siti Rohaizan celebrating Teacher's Day with her colleagues



CELEBRATING OUR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS

It is not only on Teachers' Day that we recognise the contributions of our early childhood educators. Scan this QR code and join us in appreciating their hard work through the years!



MR JACOB TAN

English Teacher
The Caterpillar's Cove
Child Development
and Study Centre
@ Jurong East

Interacting with the children gives me the opportunity to build a positive connection with the children," says Mr Jacob Tan, who has been teaching for five years. He has a Diploma in Early Childhood Education and a Bachelor's in Early Childhood Education.

Among the early challenges he faced as a preschool teacher

was adjusting to the rapid and ever-changing pace. "Beyond the skills needed to plan and conduct experiences for the children, I learned to manage and consider the needs of learners with differentiated abilities, to engage them by seeing each moment as a potentially meaningful conversation, and to build important partnerships with families," he shares.

Mr Tan feels he has made a difference as an early childhood educator when he sees the 'eureka' moments when children discover something for themselves, their sense of accomplishment as they grow in their abilities, and when they remember and reflect important values he has shared with them.



“With his calm, patience and empathetic warmth, Mr Jacob is a fantastic role model for children who are at an age where they are learning to regulate their emotions and negotiate social relationships. As parents, we always have concerns about our children and Mr Jacob takes the time to discuss their development with us. He has been a fantastic partner and guide in our son's preschool journey!

MS AGNES CHEW
Mother of Anselm Simons, 3½

“It takes a big heart to shape little minds. Teachers play an important role in Uzair's life by planting the seeds of knowledge that will take strong roots. Ms Siti has helped to mould his mind and encourage him to become a thinking and a caring person. Uzair loves going to preschool and shares the wonderful things he is learning. Most important of all, Uzair is happy.

MS NORHIDAYAH BINTE ISHAK
Mother of Uzair Sng, 4

