

COMMUNITY

Why You Should Teach Your Kids to Meditate

Investing in Your Child's Wellness Is Easier Than You Think

by [Lisa Roberts](#), **Lisa Roberts**



Kids need meditation and relaxation

[Why You Should Teach Your Kids to Meditate](#)

by Lisa Roberts E-RYT200, RCYT

Children learn skills from adults daily, from basic necessities such as tying one's shoes to more complex proficiencies such as managing money. Many of the vital and necessary skills children acquire are taught in stages as the child becomes developmentally ready to learn a particular skill. A young child with undeveloped fine motor skills is not ready to learn how to tie her shoes, that development is supported with activities such as playing with play-dough, drawing with crayons or holding a paintbrush. Eventually she is ready to handle a shoelace, perhaps on a cardboard cut-out with shoelaces laced through punch holes, or on her own shoe when she is not wearing it, and finally, on her own shoe while wearing it.

It would be absurd to expect a four year old to grasp the concept of retirement investment funds, yet children learn money management skills beginning with the humble piggy bank, graduating from there to earning and managing an allowance, finding a summer job, and learning to make wise spending choices with those hard earned dollars. All parents want their children to grow up to be responsible, smart, savvy, strong, independent, and happy. Yet there is a vital life skill that is often overlooked when raising kids; meditation.

Unlike the skills acquired incrementally, aligned with appropriate developmental milestones, most parents wait until the need for coping strategies arises –and the child is experiencing a crisis or exhibiting stress or anxiety related symptoms and behaviors—to explore this simple, valuable tool. As a pediatric yoga specialist working with hospitalized and critically ill children, I can assure you it is extremely challenging to teach self-regulation skills during the peak of crisis or pain. Doesn't it make sense to equip children with this vital life skill from an early age, before a crisis hits?

Beyond coping with a crisis, providing kids with meditation as a tool encourages lifelong, healthy habits with oodles of benefits: Meditation improves your child's ability to focus and learn in the classroom, and the self-regulation skills developed through a meditation practice can elevate your child's mood, improve sleeping habits, and help him to regulate emotions, reactions and responses, resulting in reduced stress and anxiety levels. A reflective practice, meditation redirects kids from reflexive or impulsive thought and behavior patterns. And of course, by

teaching your child meditation, basic coping mechanisms are in place should she experience pain, trauma or challenges.

Fortunately, you can begin to teach your child meditation skills from a young age. The secret lies in meeting your child where she is developmentally, adapting fun and engaging focus based activities to introduce the concept of meditation, and incrementally building on those skills as your child becomes ready. Investing in your child's wellness is a lot easier, and a lot more fun, than you may think.

Here's a sample meditation, suitable for school-age children, from my new book [Teach Your Child Meditation](#). This visualization technique can help to clear the mind of stubborn thoughts and help your child to focus.

Melting Snowflakes

- Close your eyes and take 1-3 breaths – breathing in through the nose and exhaling with an open mouth sigh. Let go a little bit more with each exhale.
- Breathe normally and allow your attention to settle on your thoughts.
- As each thought arises, imagine it as a beautiful, delicate snowflake, gently falling from the sky.
- Imagine that snowflake falling all the way to the ground and melting completely. Allow the thought to melt away along with this image of the snowflake melting.
- Keep repeating this visualization as each new thought arises. If several thoughts arise at once, simply choose one and follow the above steps to melt that thought away.
- This technique may sound easy, but it can be very challenging! Be patient with yourself. Thoughts may storm at you initially, but with patience and practice, you will master them.
- Practice, practice, practice. The more you work on this technique, the easier it will become. You will enjoy longer gaps of peaceful meditation between those pesky thoughts.

· Each time a pesky thought does arise, know that it is okay – and very normal. Simply reimagine it as a snowflake and allow it to melt away.

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[HEALTH AND WELLNESS](#), [MEDITATION](#), [CHILDREN](#)



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Lisa Roberts is a registered yoga teacher, registered children's yoga teacher, and holds a certificate in pediatric yoga therapy. She has worked in the pediatric wellness field since 2006 and currently runs the in-patient yoga program at a major mid-western children's hospital.

Lisa offers professional trainings teaching kids adaptive and accessible yoga to pediatric professionals, parents, and yoga teachers. She is the author of two children's yoga books, three guided relaxation cd's, and has developed a line of teaching tools for pediatric yoga teachers, parents and kids.

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– MARCUS AURELIUS

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