

FALL 2016

FALL FUN

Jill Walson, M.S., CCC-SLP



Fall is a fun season to engage in creative and meaningful language activities with your children. Here are a few ideas to get you thinking about the season:

- Bake together. This is a great time to have your child follow instructions while having fun together. Think about making Halloween treats for school or pumpkin bread for family, teachers or friends.
- If your child is hesitant about trick or treating on Halloween then doing some things ahead of time may be helpful. Have your child put on their costume and role play. You can practice knocking on doors and saying "trick or treat" and "thank you." Some children respond well to social stories about Halloween or using pictures to sequence the events. Keep it short and sweet, going to just a few houses may be plenty to have a positive experience.
- Go apple picking or pick out pumpkins at the local pumpkin patch. There are some wonderful farms in Brentwood, CA.
- Separate summer clothes and fall clothes with your kids. Talk about clothes that are more appropriate for hot and cold weather.
- Decorate the house together. Homemade art work with pumpkins, leaves and scarecrows are fun. Pinterest has some crafty ideas to get you started!

HAVE YOU HEARD?

The Star Autism Conference is scheduled for Saturday, October 22, 2016, at 8:00 a.m. - 2:30 p.m.

Orinda Community Center - 28 Orinda Way, Orinda, CA 94563



Our next Communicate with Care support group is scheduled for November 30, 2016.

- If your child is young and you do not want to carve pumpkins, think about painting pumpkins with your child using acrylic paint. Step out of your comfort zone and use bright colors and fun patterns. Your child may enjoy painting faces on the pumpkins.

Have fun and happy fall!

THE YOGA SPEECH CONNECTION

Arezu Moshirian, M.S., CCC-SLP & Certified Rainbow Kids Yoga Instructor

As a Speech-Language Pathologist, I help children with a variety of delays and disorders spanning from mild articulation delays to more complex disorders such as Autism, Down Syndrome, hearing impairment, motor speech disorders, and other developmental delays. These include articulation skills/speech intelligibility, expressive language, receptive language/listening skills, speech fluency/stuttering, voice/resonance,



social/pragmatic language, cognitive communication skills, augmentative/alternative communication (AAC), swallowing/feeding issues, and education/empowering parents on how to best help their child.

If you are a yoga enthusiast, such as myself, you know the benefits of incorporating yoga into a child's life. I have recently been trained and certified by Rainbow Kids Yoga to teach yoga to children. I have started to use yoga activities in my speech sessions, and WOW, not only do the children love it but I clearly see the interest, engagement, participation and progress in each child with a few simple additions to what we were already doing. Once they start, they don't want to stop!



Although children with developmental, genetic, or neurological disorders all have unique therapeutic needs, yoga as a therapeutic intervention is beneficial for all children. Yoga

supplements traditional therapeutic interventions to improve fine and gross motor strength, breath support, concentration, and communication skills.

The principles of yoga combine relaxation, physical postures, and imagery, allowing almost all ages and ability levels to benefit from its focus. There are many reports highlighting the therapeutic benefits of yoga for children with Down Syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorder/Pervasive Developmental Delay, Cerebral Palsy, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, and Sensory Processing Disorders.

Yoga teaches children to breathe effectively, thereby increasing the amount of oxygen moving to the brain, and therefore improving concentration, learning and vocal support (speech and voice), as well as encouraging deep relaxation which helps calming and self-regulating techniques. Additionally, effective breathing enhances postural stability, as the same muscle groups are necessary for both activities.

Yoga also teaches body awareness. Yoga uses slow and fluid movements which bring awareness to

the muscles we use when practicing different poses. As a child practices a pose, he/she increases muscle strength, range of motion, and flexibility. A child's ability to know where his/her body is in space is dependent on awareness of the midline of the body and where to position various body parts in relation to midline. Using yoga positions, the child works on aligning the trunk, limbs, neck, and hips to improve midline awareness. During yoga practice, the child moves and then holds his/her body in different positions, thus bringing attention to which part of the body is working and how to move and hold it correctly in relation to the midline.

It is easy to incorporate yoga into daily activities with children, as well as therapy sessions, via games, reading of stories, and use of imagery for relaxation. When doing yoga with children with special needs, you will find over time that children will improve imitation skills, increased skills in eye contact, sitting tolerance, non-verbal communication skills and receptive communication skills. Also the practice of yoga brings more awareness to social cues such as facial expressions, actions, and social behaviors thus bringing more awareness to children's emotions and how they are feeling. The practice of mindful breathing, guided imagery and poses that calm the nervous system can support these children in developing coping skills, self-regulation skills and more effective responses to stress, both emotionally and physically. Calming their nervous systems and releasing tension in their minds and bodies supports better sleep, digestion, mood, behavior and overall health and well-being. Last but not least, along with the many benefits listed above, the practice of yoga can support ALL children in developing self-confidence and self-esteem.