

***Yoga for Children* by Lisa Flynn.**
Avon, Massachusetts: Adams Media, 2013
A Book Review

By Robin Gregg

During the summer months, many school counselors and other school staff spend time in healthful practices: hiking, biking and swimming, gardening, walking--rejuvenating ourselves. Some of us find that we take more time during the summer for yoga, exercise, meditation, reflection and mindfulness practices than we do during the busy school year. Our students also have more time during the weeks of summer vacation to ride their bikes, marvel at nature, float in lakes and ponds, climb mountains, explore coastal tide pools and just sit and enjoy some unstructured "dream time" and quiet.

As our students return to their busy classrooms and the stresses of the school year and we return to our over-scheduled work lives, we can help bring some of the joys and peacefulness of summer into our schools. We can do this by providing quiet, peaceful time for students in our offices, and by integrating reflective practices and movement into our small groups and classroom lessons.

Lisa Flynn's new book, *Yoga for Children*, intended primarily for families, is a great resource for school counselors. Flynn, the founder of *ChildLight Yoga* and *Yoga 4 Classrooms (Y4C)*, is known to many New Hampshire school counselors. She led a well-attended and highly regarded workshop at the NHSCA 2011 Fall conference, and school counselors in New Hampshire have participated in her one-day professional development workshops; *ChildLight Yoga* training; and/or *Yoga 4 Classrooms (Y4C)* training. (Full disclosure: this writer participated in a one-day professional development workshop and the *Y4C* professional Schoolsite trainer intensive.)

Yoga for Children includes clear, easy-to-follow instructions and delightful color photographs of children engaged in practices and poses familiar to any yoga practitioner. A feature that contributes to the book's accessibility is its engaging tone. Another is in the names Flynn gives to the poses: "dog breath," "lizard on a rock," "airplane," "reclining butterfly." Additional aspects of the book that make it so helpful for school counselors and families include the author's debunking of "some myths about yoga" in the first chapter. (No, "yoga is not a religion"; and no, "one does not have to be super flexible or in great physical shape to practice yoga," for example) and the inclusion of some developmental "tips" about teaching yoga to children and teenagers of different ages in the second chapter. The book includes visualization exercises and sample sequences of yoga poses aimed at particular time periods or outcomes (e.g., "Good Morning Sequence," "Focus/Calm Sequence") and some songs and games.

Yoga for Children, unlike Lisa Flynn's *Yoga 4 Classrooms* curriculum which is explicitly designed for classroom use in schools, is not intended as a school resource, per se; but school counselors with yoga experience and training who already include yoga in their work with students will find this book a welcome supplement and helpful resource. School counselors who wish to begin to integrate yoga into their work with students as well as those who wish to initiate or recharge their own yoga practice will find the book a great inspiration and an excellent introduction.

As Lisa Flynn notes in the book's preface, "A few deep breaths, mindful movement or stretching, opportunities to connect and share...and moments for quiet introspection are quick and easy ways to reset the mind/body system to a calm, focused, connected state." (p.10) All of us—school counselors, our colleagues, and our students—surely can benefit from any strategies, practices, and resources that help promote calm, focus, and connectedness. In *Yoga for Children*, Lisa Flynn has provided a powerful, most welcome and invaluable resource.

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