

BENEFITS OF CHILD MEDITATION

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A meditation movement for children is emerging in schools, clubs, churches, Yoga studios and community centers. Various reports are appearing in newspapers, magazines, books and other media touting the benefits of child meditation.

Sarah Wood facilitates child meditation and in her book **Sensational Meditation for Children**, explores the many advantages of teaching children to meditate. *Sensational Meditation for Children* contains various meditations that parents can use to guide their children through the process at home.

Teachers who build meditation into lesson plans report their classroom environments being more peaceful and attribute this to their students' ability to express compassion to each other, according to Wood.

Therapists have told Wood that meditation reduces test anxiety, builds positive peer relationships and enhances anger management skills. Scientists have found that meditation decreases blood pressure and helps other physical functions.

Parents say meditation raises their children's self-esteem, helps them relax in the doctor's office, wind down at bedtime and stay healthier, notes Wood. Children say meditation helps them "prepare for tests and sports events, as well as improves their relationships with their friends, parents, brothers and sisters." Other children tell Wood they enjoy meditating because it makes them "feel good when they are sad" and because it's fun.

Guiding your child in the process of meditation is not only good for the child, but offers parents rewards as well. Seeing their children at peace within themselves can be empowering to an adult. Knowing that they've contributed to their child's spiritual growth is immensely gratifying.

"The transformation we as adults experience when we become partners in learning with our children" is exhilarating, says Wood, who also observes "learning a meditation practice is a journey in growth, whether it is spiritual, emotional or mental."

Meditating with your older children can bridge the emotional distance that can develop between a parent and child. For younger children, the process might be able to ward off the onset of child rebellion and build strong connections between families.

Children can start meditating by the age of five, states Wood. She reminds us that “meditation is an adventure just the blink of an eye away” and is for any child who “dares to journey into his incredible imagination.” Meditation should be fun for a child and is a time to “laugh and giggle, sing or shout for joy.” Because of the ease with which a child is able to meditate, it can be done in almost any setting—classroom, swing set or “in a tent made of couch cushions and blankets.”

Research shows teaching meditation to children can only benefit them. Meditation is non-denominational and though it can be considered a spiritual practice, follows no religious guidelines. Meditation is a win-win experience for children and their parents and has positive consequences that will last a lifetime.