



Websites for further information

Centre for Research in Autism and Education

Check out the CRAE website for updates about their work

crae.ioe.ac.uk

Special Yoga Centre

This research was run with the support of The Special Yoga Centre

specialyoga.org.uk

Further information on this study

If you have any questions or would like more information about this study email Lorcan Kenny at The Centre for Research in Autism and Education - l.kenny@ioe.ac.uk

Next study

Our plan now is to take what we found in this research and use it to design (and secure funding for) a bigger piece of research that can tell us if doing yoga in the classroom gets children ready to learn.

Does yoga therapy help children with autism 'get ready to learn'?

Dear Parent/Carer,

CRAE is a partnership between the Institute of Education, University of London, the leading centre for education and social research in the UK, and Ambitious about Autism, the national charity for children and young people with autism.

CRAE recently ran a study that was designed to help work out if it is possible to measure the effects of a yoga programme that is carried out in the classroom.

This report summarises the findings of the study which we hope you will find interesting.

What we were trying to find out

Pupils took part in a study to find out

- i. Is it possible for schools to run daily yoga sessions in the classroom?
- ii. What kind of outcomes should we measure in a research project like this one and how should we measure them?

How we did it

Before starting the yoga sessions

- Teachers attended training at the Special Yoga Centre
- Students' level of attention was observed in class
- Questionnaires were completed by parents and teachers
- Students completed some activities with a researcher

During the time that yoga sessions were being carried out

- 40 students took part in daily DVD Yoga sessions in 5 London classrooms
- Yoga instructors from the Special Yoga Centre visited each class to support the teaching staff in delivering the yoga sessions
- Teaching staff completed weekly reports of how many sessions were completed and any issues they had with the yoga that week

After 12 weeks of yoga

- A recording of a yoga session was taken in each classroom
- Each child's attention was observed in class
- Questionnaires were completed by parents and teachers
- Students completed some activities with a researcher

Who was involved in the study?

- The students ranged from 7-11 years of age
- All of the participants had a diagnosis of ASD

What did we find out?

- It is possible for schools to run daily DVD yoga sessions in the classroom
- Children received an average of 39 sessions
- Some of the questionnaires we used were not precise enough for what we wanted to measure
- Our in-class observations were a better indicator of change

Parents'/carers' views

- Some parents reported an improvement in their child's ability to regulate emotion at home
- Some parents reported a potential improvement in their child's sleep
- Although some parents told us that it was difficult to answer some of our questions about their child because it was difficult to know the answers due to their child's communication style
- Some parents felt that a yoga programme with more 1:1 input would benefit their child more

Teacher's views

- Teachers in some classrooms reported that the yoga helped them to be calm
- Some teachers enjoyed time to bond with students without the pressures of teaching
- In some classes, staff felt that a programme that could be modified to more closely match ability would be more suitable

Implications

- This research has shown that a larger study to test the effectiveness of yoga is possible
- We have learned a lot from students, teachers, and parents about how to improve our research