



## **Yoga in the classroom**

*by Jessica Lilo*

Yoga is a science that stems back thousands of years. Among other things it includes poses and movements that benefit the functioning of the body. Through slow breathing the relaxation response, which is the opposite of the fight and flight response, is activated. The slow breathing used in yoga activates the body's relaxation response, which is the opposite of the fight and flight response. In our fast paced society many of us spend the better part of the day in a stressed state. Unfortunately, this is also true for children and young people. Research has shown that those who practice stillness change the brain and body patterns and cope better with life. School children who practice yoga and stillness regularly enhance their ability to concentrate and learn, and they gain self-confidence and self-control. Overall they are healthier than other children. The Dream of the Good yoga program is designed for grade school students and works well in a classroom setting. It consists of large, powerful movements in combination with effective focus inspired by nature. The exercises awaken dormant strengths in the children, promote the connection between the inner and outer environment and contribute to the creation of a loving relationship with nature and fellow human beings. The movements help the body open up and resolve tensions and they are especially good for the spine. At the same time they stimulate circulation and support the inner organs. The full program takes about 30 minutes but can be done in 10 minute-sessions.

An example from the program

### **The Seed**

Stand with your feet hip width apart. Bend your knees and let the trunk hang down towards the floor. Your body feels heavy and warm. Notice your breath and let your shoulders become heavier with each exhalation. Catch your elbows and carefully rock your arms from side to side as if you were cradling a baby. Your back feels longer. Let your arms hang down towards the floor again and switch the weight to the front of the feet. Stretch your legs carefully. Bend your legs again and slowly roll up to standing.

Focus: You're a seed in the ground, surrounded by soft, warm earth. The life forces awaken. The seed is full of possibilities and can become anything. In the small seed a beautiful flower, a straw of grass or maybe a big tree is hiding. Slowly the seed starts to grow out of the ground.

The instructor training is mainly intended for teachers and enables them to safely guide children through the program. A Cd guiding the program is in the making and will available shortly. With the CD the teacher only has to demonstrate the exercises to the children.