



Transforming School Culture One Breath at a Time

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The Challenge

As a school social worker, Nicole wanted to build positive relationships with students beyond her traditional role while helping children develop focus, listening skills, and emotional regulation tools they could use throughout their school day.



Action

- Started teaching yoga to kindergarten students for 15 minutes before their special classes.
- Integrated breathing techniques like "Rainbow Breaths" into regular yoga sessions.
- Focused on building solid, positive relationships through fun, engaging yoga practice.
- Collaborated with teachers and other school professionals to track student progress.



The Results

- Students developed stronger relationships with Nicole in a positive, fun context.
- Listening skills and focus improved dramatically, especially for students who typically struggled.
- Students began independently using breathing techniques in other classrooms and with different adults.
- Teachers saw such positive impact they requested program expansion for the following year.
- Other school professionals noticed and commented on students' improved regulation skills.

In Nicole's Words

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"It was SO AMAZING to hear from another professional, in a formal meeting, about one of my students using one of the techniques I taught him outside our yoga session... It was beautiful and really made me realize how big of an impact I was having on my students."

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Why?

Why It Worked

- Built relationships first through fun and play before expecting academic or behavioral changes.
- Gave students concrete, memorable tools (like "Rainbow Breaths") they could use independently.
- Created consistency across different school settings and with various adults.
- Focused on practical skills students could apply immediately in real situations.



A Takeaway for You

The true measure of success isn't what happens during your yoga session—it's when students independently use the tools you've taught them with other people in different situations. Start with relationship-building through play, then give children concrete techniques they can remember and use on their own.

