

## Kids Yoga-Be a Warrior/Jedi

### **Exercise Outcomes:**

★ Promotes Flexibility and Balance

🤸 Develops strength

### **Nutrition Lesson(s) Supported:**

-Any, but particularly those where "balance" is part of the message or "building strength" (including protein in snacks, meals, etc.).

**Supplies Needed:** None

### **Length of Time to Complete:**

5-10 minutes

**Audience (grades):** K-5

**Background:** Yoga is a healing spiritual, mental and physical practice to promote balance in life. It is a combination of breathing exercises, physical postures, and meditation that has been practiced for more than 5,000 years. "Warrior poses" help the body to connect with the earth and feel the strength and balance that comes from supporting the body in an aligned way. "Warrior" poses can help to build confidence as the poses themselves striking and powerful, without being violent.

**Directions:** Have each child stand in a spot where there is at least 2-3 feet of open space ahead and behind him/her, and at least an arms length of open space on each side. Start with a few stretches, such as arms overhead and touching the toes in order to warm up the muscles. Then have them start slowly moving through the "warrior" poses. Kids that have seen the movie "Star Wars" might enjoy envisioning themselves as a Jedi, since these poses mimic fencing (sword play) stances. Have fun, and remember that the Jedi are keepers of the peace, not promoters of violence.

**Warrior 1 (variation):** After a quick warm up, step one of your feet forward with a bent knee. Make sure your hips and torso (middle area) are facing the same direction as your front leg. Be careful not to overextend your knee beyond a 90 degree angle. Raise your hands above your head, while keeping your shoulders down and relaxed. Pull in your tummy to keep your back strong. You will transition right to Warrior 2.



**Warrior 2:** Now spread your arms wide, turning your torso to face the side. Make sure both feet are flat on the floor, one pointing ahead (on your bent knee leg) and the other parallel to where the front of the mat would be. Look out over the 3<sup>rd</sup> finger of your outstretched (front) hand, and feel the power and strength of your being!



**Warrior 3:** From Warrior 2, shift the weight towards your front leg and slowly and carefully reach out both hands forward. Be prepared to fall! Even Jedi lose their balance sometimes and have to re-group. Keep practicing and it will get easier as you get stronger.

