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MOVE THROUGH YOGA
ADAPTIVE METHODS FOR ALL MINDS AND BODIES

Expanding Access to Inclusive and Evidence-Based
Wellness Practices in Special Education



Who We Are

Move Through Yoga is a nonprofit organization providing adaptive, trauma-conscious movement opportunities tailored for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD) across the lifespan. We emphasize choice, predictability, accessibility, and dignity in all programming.



Key Takeaways From the Session

- Regulation is foundational to learning and inclusion.
- Movement and breathwork are evidence-informed educational tools.
- Adaptive yoga aligns with IEP goals and inclusive design principles.
- The same practice can be accessed in multiple ways for diverse learners.
- Sustainable inclusion requires embedding wellness into daily routines—not adding it on.



What Is Adaptive, Trauma-Conscious Yoga?

Adaptive yoga is a movement-based, evidence-informed approach designed to meet students where they are—physically, cognitively, and emotionally.

Key principles include:

- Accessibility first: All poses begin from a chair with multiple access points.
- Choice-based participation: Students choose how and whether to engage.
- Trauma-conscious design: Predictable structure, clear cues, and an emphasis on safety.
- Regulation over performance: The goal is nervous system support, not perfect form.

Why This Matters

For many students with intellectual, developmental, and physical disabilities, access to learning is directly tied to nervous system regulation. When students are dysregulated—due to stress, sensory overload, trauma, or motor planning challenges—attention, communication, and social engagement are compromised.

- **Movement is not a break from learning.**
- **Movement is a pathway to learning.**

Regulated people can help regulate people

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What the Research Tells Us

Research in adapted physical activity, yoga, and disability-focused movement interventions shows that structured movement can:

- Improve emotional regulation and self-management in students with intellectual disabilities
- Reduce anxiety and repetitive or dysregulated behaviors in autistic individuals
- Support body awareness, proprioception, and participation
- Improve engagement and readiness to learn

These outcomes align directly with common IEP goals related to self-regulation, attention, motor skills, and social participation.



How Adaptive Yoga Supports Special Education

MTY Adaptive yoga can be integrated into:

- Special education classrooms
- Unified and Adapted PE
- Transition and post-secondary programs
- Inclusive higher education and day programs

Benefits observed in educational settings include:

- Increased use of self-regulation strategies
- Greater student engagement and participation
- Reduced social isolation
- Improved staff confidence supporting regulation



Simple Strategies You Can Use Right Away

You do not need special equipment or a yoga background to begin.

Small, consistent practices embedded into daily routines make the greatest impact.

Try these high-impact practices:

- 60-second breathing resets to support calm and focus
- Chair-based movement breaks for grounding and proprioceptive input
- Isometric holds and presses (hands to chair, wall push-ins)
- Group regulation practices that build connection and co-regulation