


Yoga & Mindfulness for Children Part I


Includes; Anatomy of a Yoga Class, Sun Salutation, Teddy & Butterfly Yoga, Breathing exercises and yoga poses.



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Workshop Description

 If you want to learn how to teach yoga and mindfulness to preschoolers, then this training is for you. Learn the benefits of yoga and create a routine of practice specific to your unique program.

 This workshop will offer ideas on how to implement fun yoga play based activities and breathing techniques for children as young as two, providing tools that help them relax and self-regulate.

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Discover	why yoga is important for children in our world today	Objective
Identify	the 7 strategies of yoga and learn how to teach yoga to children that will give them the skills that will last for life.	
Practice	the best breathing exercises, poses, and techniques to help children remain calm and focused on their daily activities.	
Learn	the best mindfulness tips and relaxation techniques for children.	

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Audience

Why do you believe yoga and mindfulness is important for children.

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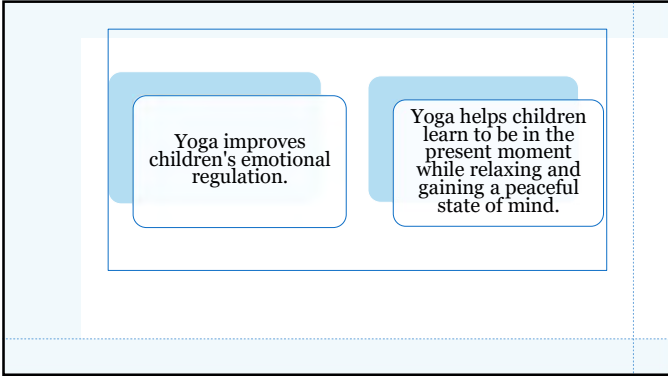
Why It is Important to Teach Children Mindfulness & Yoga

According to an article published by Harvard Medical School, studies show that yoga can provide myriad benefits for school-age children.

It can improve balance and strength, reduce stress and anxiety, boost self-esteem, hone their focus, and improve academic performance and behavior. It can reduce symptoms of ADHD.

I believe that it is just as important to teach yoga to preschool children and I will show you how to help young children begin their mindfulness and yoga practice.

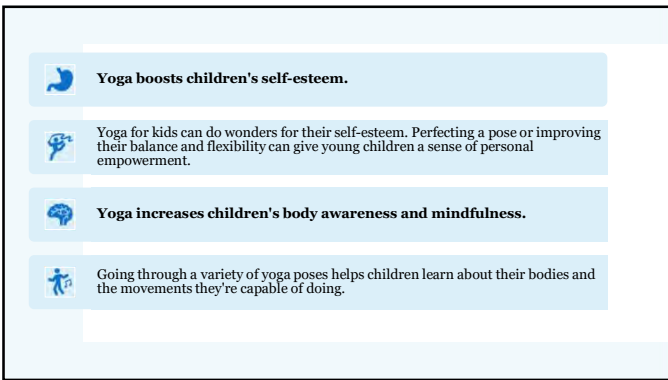
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Yoga improves children's emotional regulation.

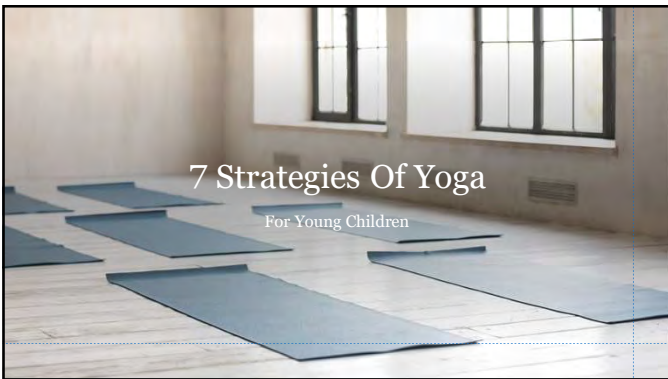
Yoga helps children learn to be in the present moment while relaxing and gaining a peaceful state of mind.

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-  **Yoga boosts children's self-esteem.**
-  Yoga for kids can do wonders for their self-esteem. Perfecting a pose or improving their balance and flexibility can give young children a sense of personal empowerment.
-  **Yoga increases children's body awareness and mindfulness.**
-  Going through a variety of yoga poses helps children learn about their bodies and the movements they're capable of doing.

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Strategy I Start When They're Young.

- Introduce children to yoga when they're young as possible. Through fun, simple practices, they can develop core strength, body awareness, better breathing, and the ability to focus and turn their attention inward.
- Learning these techniques help children, return to these practices when dealing with mental-health issues, trauma, and other challenges, because they know it will help them.
- To introduce young children to yoga, use themes and activities that are familiar to them. Teach them poses named after animals and natural objects; invite them to sing their favorite songs; and weave rhythmic movement into their practice.

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Strategy II Give Them Practice They Can Master.

Make the practices developmentally appropriate. For example, instead of asking a preschooler to meditate for five minutes on day one, ask them to close their eyes and enjoy 10 seconds of quiet time.

- Ten seconds of meditation for a 4-year-old can turn into 30 seconds or a minute for an older child. Teach them practices one layer—and one level—at a time.



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Strategy III Let Children Practice With Their Peers.

- Children begin learning social skills from a young age. Toddlers often gather in play groups to learn how to share and interact with peers. Preschool children begin to pull away from their families as they enter academic settings for the first time
- Children progress to elementary school, continue to learn important social skills like making friends, sharing, and dealing with conflict. Sports, clubs, and after school activities are great places to practice social skills in a relaxed environment.
- Children who participate in yoga classes learn to interact positively with other children and adults in a safe environment.

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Strategy IV Introduce Children to Breathwork.

- There are lots of tools, props, and games to teach children about breathing, which we will review.
- The breathing exercises and relaxation techniques learned from practicing yoga can help children with stress management.
- Teaching children how to reduce stress in a healthy way is an important life skill that will help them as children and as adults.



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Strategy V Introduce Children to Multisensory Rest Time.

- After a child has been coached through fun, engaging yoga poses, a good practice is to calm down with focusing breathwork which is a segue way into rest time.
- Rest is an important part of yoga practice for both children and adults.
- Create a calming multisensory environment with soft music; soothing scents like lavender, and dim lights or candles.
- When appropriate, offer the child some calming, grounding touch.



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Strategy VI Teach Them How To Take Their Internal Temperature.

• Help children tune into their bodies, breath, minds, and emotions, and “take their internal temperature.” For example, you can ask them to lie in Savasana (final resting pose at the end of all yoga practice) and take a few deep breaths. Then ask them, “How are you feeling? Are you tired, anxious, hyper, or happy? How does your body feel right now?” By learning to take regular “windows of quiet,” children learn how to be more present and in tune with themselves.

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Strategy VI
Teach Them How To Take Their Internal Temperature.

- Teach children how to use different poses, breathing exercises, and other yoga-friendly practices to bring themselves back into balance, or simply to “rest, recharge, and cultivate inner calm. “You’re giving them a toolbox that they can use anywhere, anytime.

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Strategy VII
Offer A Child Friendly Form Of Meditation

When teaching children yoga, most of the time you want to get them moving and keep them active; a yoga sequence can be a great way to do that.


You also want to give them time to relax, breathe, and feel calm.

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Anatomy Of A Yoga Class

- Opener/greeting
- Warm up
- Big movement
- Longer Relaxation
- Mindfulness and breathing
- Mindfulness and breathing activities can be added anywhere but are ideal after some movement.
- Mindfulness Closing

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Teddy Bear Yoga Class

- Props are optional, However, props create a whole new level of joy and learning for children.
- They can give a real visual example of what you are trying to teach.

Props for Teddy Bear class are: Little Yoga Mat, Teddy bears for children.
Sun Lamp or other light source.

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Teddy Bear Sequence

- Opening/greeting: Namaste Song.
- Warm up: Fast or Slow Teddy Sun Salutation.
- Mindfulness/Breathing Bear Breath.
- Big movement; Dancing Bear.
- Mindfulness/Breathing Baby Bear Breathing.
- Cool Down: Slow Teddy Sun Salutation.
- Relaxation Bear on a Chair.

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Greeting

- Start Yoga class with a greeting, we begin our class with Namaste "The light in me sees the light in you."
- Explain the phrase to the children and gather them into a circle, after we pass the light, we sing the Namaste song using the tune "The more we get together the happier we'll be."

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Children Singing Namaste Song

- Namaste Ivy, Namaste Mason, Namaste Ivy, we're glad to see you.
Namaste Mason, Namaste Ella, Namaste Mason, we're glad to see you.

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Teach What You Practice

- Practice everything before you introduce routine to the children to ensure your yoga program is a success.
- Move the furniture and practice the moves out loud at least 2 times.
- Introduce a few activities with the children and practice in real time.

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Learn Poses to Teddy Bear Sun Dance

- Step 1: Watch the tutorials to learn each of these poses
- Mountain Pose
- Rag Doll
- Plank Pose
- Snake Pose
- Downward Dog



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Mountain Pose works on balance, posture & focus

- Stand tall in press your legs firmly into the ground
- Put equal pressure on both feet
- Let your spine be long and your head reach up to the sky, so legs are strong, and spine is long.
- Press your hands firmly into prayer hands and stay rooted into the ground like a strong mountain.
- Breathe in and out and in and out, encourage children to keep their mountains strong.



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Rag Doll Pose

releases tension in the back, calming the mind, and stretching the ham strings

Stand with your feet hip width apart and bend forward at your waist.

Let your head drop toward the floor and your arms dangle down like a rag doll.

You can gently sway from side to side to let your spine release and keep a slight bend in your knees.

You can modify rag doll and come into a half lift like we did in our sun salutation.

You can grab opposite elbows to deepen the weight of your arms and deepen your forward bend, come up slowly.

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Plank Pose or Dolphin Pose

Tones the core muscles, belly, chest, low back, arms and shoulders.

- Start on your hands and knees, place your shoulders over your wrists, walk your legs back and raise them off the floor.
- Push your heels away from you, your body should be a long straight line like the top of a push up
- Press into your hands and out of your legs strongly activating your belly.
- Breathe in and out and in and out, try to hold this pose for 30 sec, 1 min or longer
- To modify come to hands and knees, but keep the belly lifted to get the benefit.

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Snake Pose Works on flexibility and stretching the shoulders chest and belly.

- Place your hands flat on the floor by your shoulders and slowly lift up your chest. Keep your head neck, shoulders and legs long. Let your legs be long as a snake.
- Take some calming breaths, breathe in and out and in and out. Depending on age of flexibility, some children may be able to lift their chest higher while keeping the post with legs on the floor breathe in and excel ssssss



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Dogward Dog stretches the hamstrings, spine, while building strength in the shoulders, arms and legs.

In our sun salutation we may leap to our hands from downward facing dog.

Start on your hands and knees, press your hands flat, keep them firmly on the floor, be careful not to balance on your fingertips.



Gently stretch your legs back, tuck your toes, left your hips to the sky. Imagine you have a tail, let it reach to the sky, your arms and legs work equally. Use your strength to push back on your legs, your hands stay firmly on the floor, and head should not touch the floor.

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Teddy Bear Sun Dance Steps

- Step 2** Practice each pose on its own.
- Step 3** Watch video and see how poses go along with music, Watch several times if necessary.
- Step 4** Practice each pose on its own in sequence to get children familiar with all the poses.
- Step 5** Practice pose with the song.


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Relaxation


Mindfulness relaxation is like the period at the end of the sentence

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Relaxation



Traditionally, a yoga class ends with relaxation which is the most important part of yoga. Children lie down, which is different from most other forms of exercise or fitness.




The systematic forward and back bending, core work, twists and breathing bring fresh oxygen into the body and prepare us to relax. It feel like we put all the ingredients into our yoga cake and now it's time to bake it!


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Set The Expectations For Relaxation

Explain to children that this is a quiet time and try not to move too much so they can rest their bodies.



Give them a choice to listen to a story or music to help relax but first play a game.



Play a game asking questions, Is my mouth relaxed, move mouth and then ask is it relaxed now? Wave arms and ask: Are my arms relaxed, are they relaxed now? Move legs, are my legs relaxed, are they relaxed now?

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- As you read this relaxation story aloud, have the children breathe in and breathe out with you, slowly. The best breathing rhythm for this activity is to silently count to 4 for each inhale and exhale.
- Invite children to lie down or sit up with their eyes closed as they follow along. You can demonstrate this slow, calming breath holding a teddy bear.
- I'm going to tell you a story and we're going to breathe along with the bears. Every time I say breathe in you're going to breathe in slowly, to a count of 4 and every time I say breathe out you're going to breathe out slowly, to a count of 4.


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- One day a baby bear poked his head out for the first time. He stepped outside into spring. The air was warm, the grass was green, and the trees were budding. He breathed in and out. In and out.
- He did not see his mama, but he saw some paw prints leading into the forest. He decided to follow them. He breathed in and out. In and out.



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- The forest led to a large stream. He looked into the pool of water and saw his face for the first time. He breathed in and out. In and out.
- In the corner lay mama bear. She had fallen asleep near the big tree. Baby bear laid his head on his mama's belly. He could feel her breathing. She breathed in and out. In and out.
- When you are ready open your eyes.



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Anjali Mudra

- When saying Namaste, we typically bow the head slightly and bring the hands together at heart center in a 'mudra' Anjali Mudra. In yoga, we use hand mudras to connect the mind and body and to deepen our yoga practice. Using Anjali Mudra when we say Namaste can help us connect to the intention of expressing respect and gratitude and also help us internalize the meaning and energy behind the word.
- You can use Anjali Mudra alone or along with bowing the head to express the meaning of Namaste without actually speaking the word aloud.

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Beautiful Translations

- One of the most common translations of *namasté* is "The divine light in me bows to the divine light within you."
- I honor the place in you where the entire universe dwells.
- I bow to the place in you that is love, light, and joy.
- When you and I bow to our true nature, we are one.
- My soul recognizes your soul.
- We are the same, we are one.
- I honor the place in you that is the same as it is in me.

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Namaste

- There are actually many different ways to interpret the word Namaste.
nah – muh – stay.
- When we say things like 'Thank you,' 'I appreciate you,' 'I respect you' and 'I honor you' we are essentially saying the same thing.
- Namaste is the most commonly used word amongst yogis
"The light in me honors the light in you"

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When Should You Use Namaste

- You should not feel obligated to use the word Namaste if it makes you uncomfortable.
- Just like your body might not be ready to transition into a challenging yoga pose, your mind might not be ready to say Namaste.
- Only you can decide if incorporating Namaste in your practice makes sense.
- You can most certainly convey the intention behind Namaste without ever speaking the word, if you so choose.
- Honor yourself and meet yourself where you are. If and when you're ready to say Namaste, you'll know.

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Is Yoga & Mindfulness For Toddlers

Group Discussion

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Yoga & Mindfulness For Toddlers

- Yoga for toddlers is growing in popularity and many child care programs are adding it to their daily schedules.
- Yoga programs are play based; this is how children learn best.
- Children use their imaginations while learning important breathing techniques and poses in a fun way.
- Toddlers learn to use yoga, mindfulness, and even breathing techniques to cope with their emotions.
- Yoga for toddlers help them learn how to share and improve their social skills.

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Fly Like A Butterfly

- While most of what we have covered is suitable for all young children, there are certain songs and activities that work particularly well for toddlers like Fly like a butterfly.
- Butterfly pose opens the hips and is grounding for children. They sit like a Butterfly and do butterfly poses and stretches such as stretch, sleep, twist and roll.



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Creating The Environment

Yoga & Mindfulness Practice

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Setting Up Your Home Classroom For Yoga.

A wall can be named a Quite wall

Children can lie down or sit up

They can close their eyes or keep them open

They can relax on their belly or back.

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A meditation space can be as simple as setting out a cushion.
The whole point of meditation is to remove stress, so don't create extra stress by trying to perfect your meditation space.
Dim lights for a calming effect, Lighting also helps a child know where they are in class, for example lowering the lights lets children know it's calm down time.

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Create A Visual

- If space is large enough, create a circle on the floor using masking tape or mats. This give children a visual and helps them all move in the same direction when playing yoga games.
- If your space is limited, have children run or jump in place. Set the expectations for that and let children know what the rules are. For example, put tape shaped like an X on the floor and them to stay on their X.



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Adding Music

- We have all had the experience of getting home from an incredibly stressful day, our muscles tense, jaw clenched, and mind racing. We turn on quiet music, and soon the physical effects of stress lessen. We begin to relax. Our mind quiets and our pulse slows.
- Music has that calming power. Educators can use the magic of music to help their children relax and be calm, too.
- Choose meditation music that can help you relax. This means finding music that you enjoy listening to.

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- If you don't enjoy classical music, don't choose it, look for music without lyrics. Music with lyrics can be distracting and can engage your conscious.
- Select music that has a slower tempo, to tap into the part of the brain that we hope to slow down.



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Mindfulness Relaxation & Yoga Review

- After every yoga song and activity make sure you do some breathing or mindfulness come down and transition to the next activity. This will teach everyone self regulation and leave children calm and focused.
- Breathing or a mindfulness activity will improve almost all transitions.
- Remember mindfulness relaxation is the period at the end of the sentence

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When To Practice Mindfulness

- Consistency is key
- Choose the same time of day to practice to get into a routine
- If not possible, practice whenever you can
- Practice mindfulness after physical exercise such as yoga
- During circle time/small group
- Before rest
- At regular intervals during the day

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How To Practice Mindfulness

- Not all children will want to close their eyes so encourage them to look down.
- If children appear jumpy gently encourage them non verbally (rub their back or....) You can ask for volunteers or have a relaxation helper.
- Dim lights for a calming effect if possible.
- Most breathing practices repeat the breath 3-5 times.

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Follow 80-20 Rule

- Mastering relaxing activities will take repetition so choose activities you like and repeat them often, even as you add or introduce new things.
- Follow the 80-20 rule, Repeat 80% of what you taught last time and add 20% new content which will ensure a good amount of repetition and give children a chance to master activities.

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Candle Breath

This is a very easy breath to start with children as early as 18 months. Taking three breaths can help them feel calmer, cooler, and more relaxed. Help children imagine a candle or candles and follow their breaths.

- Hold one finger in front of your mouth like a candle and inhale
- Exhale slowly, blow out the candle, then inhale.
- Exhale slowly, blow out the candle.
- One last time, inhale and exhale slowly, blow out the candle



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Ocean Breath

- Let's close our eyes and imagine your belly is full of water, like the ocean.
- Inhale, let the waves rise in your belly.
- Exhale let the waves fall.
- Inhale, let the waves gently rise, and exhale the waves fall.
- Take some calming ocean breaths in and out.
- When you are ready, open your eyes.

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Extension/Suggestions

- Add more visualizations, imagine your belly is filled with blue water just like the ocean
- Inhale, the waves gently go up and exhale, the waves gently go down.
- Inhale the waves go a little higher, exhale the waves go down.
- Just like the moon pulls on the ocean water to make it rise and fall, you can use your breath to make your belly rise and fall.
- Inhale and make your belly rise
- Exhale to make your belly fall.

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Benefits Of Yoga & Mindfulness For Toddlers:

- Mindfulness and social skills are particularly important when you consider that social and emotional development are two of the most important aspects of preschool.
- While academically prepared for kindergarten, preschoolers often don't succeed because they lack the social and emotional skills needed for elementary school. And, according to research, mindfulness positively affects the mood and stress levels of children who practice it.

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Final Thoughts.....

- As FCC Educators, we must take a gentle, nonjudgmental peek in the mirror and ask ourselves, are we taking a few moments throughout the day to be mindful?
- Remember, we model for our children constantly.
- If you have not made the time to bring mindfulness and yoga activities and strategies into your program, now is the time to do so!

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