

When I first started my yoga journey, I was a college student at Louisiana Tech University. I just happened to stumble upon a free class provided by the University. What a great chance encounter! I enjoyed the challenges each pose provided and learning what positions I could morph my body into. Not to mention, I had a great excuse to add all of the cute athleisure wear added to my wardrobe. It didn't take long for me to realize that this "yoga thing," which at first seemed like a fad, would soon be incorporated into my everyday lifestyle. I became fascinated with all of the benefits I was gaining from both my body and mind.

I received my Bachelor of Science in Family Child Studies, with a concentration in Child Life. Armed with a college degree and a commitment to working with children, I really had no specific direction to go. Although I had gained so much experience with working with youth in summer programs, children with critical medical needs at LSUMC, I wasn't sure how I was going to incorporate my experience and knowledge into a specific career. I had a natural gift for connecting with young people and plenty of experience—but how would I narrow that down?

With searches of what to pursue next, I began to think of the benefits I had been given through my short yoga experience. I thought what this could do for youth today and what a difference an introduction to yoga would have made to a much younger Juliana.

In 2016, I completed my first kids yoga training. I was mesmerized when I opened my training book to a random page. It was material I had studied for years, but never through the eye of a yogi. I couldn't believe how the world of yoga and children's medicine intertwined and made sense. It was as if my heart, my career, and my commitment to children could finally come together.

When I finished my first weekend of training, I was ecstatic to kick off my children's yoga journey. After a few months of teaching at Breathe Yoga Studio, leading events in my community, and working with children at local schools, I knew that I wanted to dive deeper into my understanding of the craft of kids yoga. I knew that I needed to continue to boost my confidence and skills and add to my teaching repertoire.

As I researched the paths and studios that could support my growth and vision, I received the recommendation that I should go to YY4K. Even in my first class, I realized how much I would gain through my time with YY4K. This was exactly what I needed to perfect my craft as a kids' yoga teacher. I was given a new view of teaching, so many crucial tools, love from my classmates and teachers, and the support to continue my quest.

As I continue to teach children's yoga, I use the time with my students to practice balance, confidence, mindfulness, and being a connected citizen—all lessons that came to me as I went through and reflected on my time with YY4K. I believe that all children deserve to grow up living happy and healthy lives, and I have renewed energy to be a part of this movement. I am thankful to continue to teach as I look forward for what is yet to come.

With Joy,
Juliana