



Jodi Beth Komitor, founder of
Next Generation Yoga

teach your children well

by sarah gregory

At 29 years old, Jodi Beth Komitor, founder of Next Generation Yoga in New York City and author of *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Yoga with Kids*, sits—or rather stretches—at the helm of the only studio in the United States dedicated solely to the art of children's yoga.

The term “art” is well deserved. The studio itself is a fantastic gallery, with a *Wizard of Oz*-inspired yellow brick road floor pattern, sheer rainbow curtains, and nylon flowers and butterflies. “I wanted it to look like the scene where Dorothy steps into the Land of Oz,” Komitor says.

In this fun atmosphere, children can lie on their bellies and pretend to swim or lead imaginary voyages to outer space. But beneath the fun and games, Komitor teaches some very valuable skills.

“Jodi stimulates these childrens' minds,” says Ron Rubin, 39, who attends Next Generation's Daddy & Me classes with his 3-year-old daughter, Evan. The classes have sparked Evan's imagination. Not only does she spend more time gazing at clouds and searching for the animals and shapes that lurk within them, she's also able to maintain better concentration during swimming lessons by imagining pink

elephants on the ceiling while learning the back float, Rubin says.

“Jodi runs a very good class,” says Alice Shulman, 43, whose 5-year-old daughter has been studying with Komitor since July 2002. Komitor's approach is important to Shulman because her daughter suffers from hypotonia, a low-muscle-tone disorder. “Jodi knows how to teach special-needs kids without being overly stern or too indulgent. She has a lovely rapport with them. Yoga is good for my daughter on many levels, and Jodi provides a safe place for her. She works out while she practices important skills—listening, following directions, taking turns. Several of her school teachers have observed the classes, and all of them have been deeply impressed.”

In addition, Next Generation trains about 200 children's yoga instructors a year, some of whom plan to open their own children-only yoga centers. But Komitor embraces the competition. “I've been teaching yoga to kids for five years now and have been blessed with good publicity, book deals and studio happenings,” she says. “I believe in karma, and trust that as I plant seeds in our Next Generation Yoga kids, I, too, am blessed.”