



April 2014



**association for early childhood
education & development**

Mumbai Branch

This issue

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Welcome to AECED-Engage, Mumbai, a newsletter initiative of the Mumbai Branch of AECED to connect people interested in and contributing to the Early Years ☺☺

It aims to be interactive, sharing news and views, inspiring reflection and action. We look forward to your involvement in sharing your thoughts and experiences; ideas which worked well or were not so effective but most importantly promoted some learning; anecdotes about your children at home and school and anything that would be of, for and by the Early Years. Tell us which themes you would like discussed, your concerns about issues related to children, schools, families and much more.

This first edition focuses on introducing AECED and its Mumbai branch to all our members and well-wishers; you shall also get to know the key initiatives AECED Mumbai has taken in the year 2013-2014, some compelling writings around labeling, overdose of screen time, inclusion and child protection will give us food for thought and scope for discussions we can extend to others within our Early Years Ecosystem. Some musings past and present in the form of poems and quotes shall delight us further alongwith informative book reviews and web links.

Please cascade this newsletter to others who could benefit by engaging with Engage...

Best wishes,

Editor @ Engage: AECED-Mumbai

We are happy to introduce AECED and its Mumbai branch to all our members and well –wishers.

The Association for Early Childhood Education and Development (AECED) is a national body registered in 2008. The Mumbai branch came in existence in 2010, its membership comprises of professionals in early childhood education and institutions.

AECED was formerly known as the Indian Association for Preschool Education (IAPE), which was founded in 1964 with the intention of bringing together professionals in the field of preschool education, child development and child welfare. Due to the committed efforts of various pioneers and professionals, IAPE had made significant contributions to the field of early childhood education in India.

The members were involved in the formulation of the 'New Education Policy (1986), ECE Curriculum framework initiated by NCERT, Delhi in 2005, they strongly advocated the inclusion of children below six years in 'Right to Education' regulation by networking with other similar thinking organizations such as FORCES- an advocacy and networking organization in the field of early childhood education and development, and EFA-'Education For All'.

IAPE-AECED: A journey

Nalini Chugani

It was instrumental in empowering concerned adults in creating a joyful childhood for children in various settings through professional development workshops, refresher courses, seminars and annual conferences.

Considering the diverse demands of the fast paced socio-economic changes and increasing aspirations of parents and teachers it was imperative to extend the scope of the organization's efforts for the young child. This led to the emergence of a new association- AECED.

In its present formation AECED has a broad mandate to include rights based approach as well as a larger outreach to parents, children, functionaries and other stake holders in early childhood education to provide for quality education and holistic development of all the children in diverse social, cultural and economic environments.

NALINI CHUGANI, a guiding light for Early Years for more than five decades in the country is a staunch advocate for best practices in the Early Years and a spirited contributor @AECED



We can live with our D;
can you live with your A?

Deepika Shetty

I have come back from work & my son has asked me for something rather unusual. "Ma, will you write about something for me?" This is the kind of question that makes mothers across the universe worried & this is when we ask: What happened? "Ma, the boys in school are bullying me. They call me the D boy. They say I repeated kindergarten. They say I am stupid. They say I am an idiot."

He is none of the above. He is a street-smart lad. He has an impeccable sense of humour. When he runs, he is Forest Gump. He plays deadly cricket. He can make his own pizzas. He can bake his own bread. He can fry his own Bombay duck. He is also dyslexic. On his bad days, he can't tell his m's from his n's, his d's from his b's. As parents we have known this since his first month in nursery. The fantastic Mrs. Roshmi, his first teacher who had taught children like him, spotted the issue and we got him help. Over the years, he has improved but he has his good months and his bad months. Like the rest of us.

His report card does not read like his sister's, which does not mean that he is any less special. Yes, he gets his Ds and that is nothing to be embarrassed about. If all the straight As of this freaking universe could save this world, it would be such a perfect place. There are many mothers like me across this globe. Our children get diagnosed with many things, some more critical and debilitating. As I type this, I know there are children suffering from cancer. There are children who have Down's syndrome. There are 100s of other things - some of which are

obvious illnesses, others which are not. They are all special. These children.

Just because you have raised your child telling him or her that straight As are the answer to everything does not mean your child is a genius. Because this straight A child of yours is bullying a child like mine. And when he does this, this is what happens, his stammer returns. Then, a mother like me has to spend weeks trying to tell her child that everything will be alright. That there is a whole wide world out there that isn't bound by the limitations of m, n, b, d. That when he grows up, these letters will not matter. What will matter is how he treats people and that treatment should always be right. What will matter is his ability to laugh at himself and to make others laugh. And that is something he must never lose.

He has asked to write this. My lad. Because this is what he said: "Ma, you can write it in my diary. You can tell my teacher. But if you don't write it, it will happen to someone else." If this is not genius; I don't know what genius is...

DEEPIKA SHETTY is a Singapore-based Indian journalist and literary blogger.



To screen or not to screen, that is the question!

A literary review

Monisha Singh
Diwan

The early childhood community have known for years that for healthy development, young children need safety, food, belongingness, love and care; that for optimal learning, they need to explore with their whole bodies and their senses; that they need warm and positive interactions with caring adults and need to be held. Children flourish when they are spoken to, read to and played with. When they engage with hands-on play, both active and creative as well as interact with other children and adults. They blossom when they connect with nature and have opportunities to discover and explore their world in the care and guidance of caring and responsive adults. Modern science validates that and so do our observations and experiences as early years educators of how children learn.

In the last few decades, research on the brain and neuroscientific evidence has reiterated why the early years of life are so critical. The human brain begins developing prior to birth and continues through life. Early experiences shape how the brain architecture develops. There is critical need therefore for a strong foundation in the first 8 years of a child's life as that increases the chances for positive outcomes later.

Babies begin life with loads of neurons, some connected to each other, some not. Experiences decide which neuron gets connected to which other one. Repeated experiences strengthen these connections shaping habits, values, responses etc. The experiences children don't have also effect brain development. Neurons that are not used are pruned away. This means that how children spend their time has lifelong implications. Screen time in the form of television viewing, cell phone apps or computer games can become a compelling habit for life.

Research links many of the health, social and emotional problems facing children to excessive screen time:

- * **Lessening of essential creative play and time spent in interacting with caring adults:** Screen time erodes the chances of engaging in creative, hands on play and essential conversation with adults, two activities so essential to the early years. (*Vandewater, E. A., Bickham, D. S., & Lee, J. H. (2006). Time well spent? Relating television use to children's free-time activities. Pediatrics*)
- * **Deteriorating learning and peer relationships:** For children under 3, research demonstrates that screen media are a poor tool for learning language and vocabulary and suggests that they are actually linked to delayed language acquisition. By the time children turn 10, every additional hour of television they watched as toddlers is associated with lower math and school achievement, reduced physical activity, and victimization by classmates in middle childhood. (*Chonchaiya, W. & Pruksananonda, C. (2008). Television viewing associates with delayed language development. Acta Paediatrica*)

...Continue Reading

Continued from Page ----

- * **Childhood obesity:** Right from the early years time with screen media is an important risk factor for childhood obesity. The more time preschoolers spend watching television, the more junk food and fast food they are likely to eat. In fact, for each hour of television viewing per day, children, on average, consume an additional 167 calories. *(Tavaras, E. M., Sandora, T. J., Shih, M. C., Ross- Degnan, D., Goldmann, D. A., & Gillman, M. W. (2006). The association of television and video viewing with fast food intake by preschool-age children. Obesity)*
- * **Sleep Disturbance:** Hours with television are linked to irregular sleep patterns in infants and toddlers and to sleep disturbance in preschoolers and children ages 6 to 12. *(Garrison, M. M., Liekweg, K., & Christakis, D. A. (2011). Media use and child sleep: The impact of content, timing, and environment. Pediatrics)*

While we need more research to be conducted on the effect of media and screen time and especially in the Indian context, there is enough evidence to draw these conclusions:

Many young children are spending too much time with screens at the expense of other more important activities.

There's no evidence that screen time is educational for infants and toddlers, and there is some evidence that it may be harmful.

Some carefully monitored experience with quality content can benefit children over 3.

But what is most important for children is lots of time for creative and active play, more interactions with caring adults and time in nature. And, irrespective of content, excessive screen time harms healthy growth and development.



✓ Food for thought:

Discuss in your varied early years settings and share thoughts with us- mail aecedmumbai@gmail.com

- 1 What is your stand on screen time as teachers, parents and caregivers?
- 2 How much is "too much"?
- 3 A 2 year old punching the keyboard- image of the next Einstein?
- 4 Multisensorial vs. multimedia! What's your choice for your child and children in your care?
- 5 What is your screen time like?

MONISHA SINGH DIWAN is a teacher- educator, and development professional. She focuses on bettering childhoods through advocacy and programmatic interventions.

AECED Mumbai: 2013-14

A report by Purnima Contractor and Nalini Chugani

2013-2014 - an active year of thinking anew and organizing an enriching medley of programmes for different emerging needs in Early Childhood Education and Development.

We welcomed early years' professionals from varied spaces to join in and further their professional development in the quest to learn, share and grow together.

This was a year of reaching out to the child's ecosystem by engaging with teachers, parents, school management, support staff, and advocating for discussions around child protection and safety.

Our journey began with AECED partnering with FACSE (Forum against child sexual exploitation) to address the growing concern of child safety and protection issues. Sensitizing sessions were held for school managements, teachers, school support staff including bus drivers and attendants at various schools across the city in the quest to make the school ecosystems safer and supportive for our children.

Four professional development opportunities were held through the year stemming from a felt need in the teaching community of Mumbai. These workshops engaged teachers in the quest of providing better quality education to the children in their care.

Also parents were guided on the "learning through play" bringing in an understanding of needs, milestones and age appropriate play stimulation.

It was also a year of reflection on how AECED, Mumbai would like to develop further to support Early Years in 2014- 2015.

Purnima Contractor is an early years professional for more than 30 years and an ardent contributor to the AECED initiatives. She is the honorary secretary of AECED Mumbai while Nalini Chugani is the president. They both are also contributing to the AECED National initiatives.

Contd...

AECED Mumbai: 2013-14 A report by Purnima Contractor and Nalini Chugani

Music and Education-Learning through music by Kamakshi Khurana

- **Focus:** *Blending sound, music and education and crafting creative methods of introducing people to the magic of rhythm and sensitivity of sound.*
- **Participant Learnings:** Music and play are very important in the early years of a child; Very effective, interesting, lively, energetic, enjoyable, useful; New techniques of teaching; Learnt many songs, rhythm and beat; Stimulated creativity, imagination and improvising
- **Implementation Plan:** By using the rhythm technique; Starting of the day with songs; Use age appropriate songs; Be lively; Compose own songs

Circle Time – Time to Encircle: Building Self-Esteem & Inclusion by Monisha Singh Diwan

- **Focus:** *Circle time process as a democratic, responsive and respectful pedagogy to develop social and emotional skills and build a positive class and school culture.*
- **Participant Learnings:** The circle is a sacred space; See it working with children, parents, school team and family; My teacher bag is full of tips and tricks; Loved the high energy, creativity, analysis and action; There was so much laughter and play and yet the day was intense; My mind is already full of ideas on how I shall use the circle for learning, sharing and problem solving
- **Implementation Plan:** By dedicating at least one session a week for quality circle time; Planning our circle time methodically; Respecting ourselves and others; Keeping Relationships and interactions as much a main focus of learning as our learning outcomes; Focusing on our own development

Mythological Stories in Parenting by Maya Gaitonde

- **Focus:** Looked at parental activities through the prism of **mythological stories**. It was a lively interactive session open to parents, care givers and teachers. Maya interpreted commonly known stories from Ramayan, Bhagwat and Mahabharat and positioned their relevance in modern times.
- We have partnered with BMRF since 2011 when we successfully conducted a six day Master Training program for teachers from NGOs and private preschools under the guidance of Ms. Maya Gaitonde.
- The training was based on the 'Learning Through Play' calendar which has been developed by Hincks Dellcrest Children's Centre, Toronto, Canada and adapted by BMRF, Chennai, to suit Indian conditions. The calendar identifies the developmental milestones of children and their corresponding needs. It provides simple messages to sensitise parents, caregivers and teachers about young children by suggesting simple activities which promote optimal development.

In Safe Hands

- **Focus:** empowering our teachers to create safe learning spaces and to be responsive to children's concerns. It initiated the process to develop policies and procedures for child protection in the school. It was divided into two sessions:
- **Session 1: Resource Team-SAFE BABY** focused on child safety and to prevent accidents amongst children. The workshop helped teachers identify and reduce the risks of accidents inside and outside the school, how to prevent common accidents & prepare them for emergencies whether in school or during special occasions such as field trips and school functions.
- **Session 2: Resource Team- FACSE**
- "Child's right to protection" is one of the rights in U.N. Charter of child rights. This session explained the meaning and effects of child abuse, role of adults in safeguarding children at school specifically the role of teachers in empowering children against abuse, identifying sexual abuse & helping children overcome the trauma of any kind of sexual abuse.
- Both the sessions were very informative & hands on and very well received by the participants.

Parenting Parasol" by AECED

- For Parents based on 'Learning Through Play' calendar which has been developed by Hincks Dellcrest Children's Centre, Toronto, Canada and adapted by BMRF, Chennai, to suit Indian conditions.
- Parents took keen interest & greatly benefitted from the same.

"Read to me " a colourful poster developed by AECED Mumbai :

- This was given **free of cost** to schools , parents, Pediatricians , counselors to be displayed. It reaches out to parents to read to and with children as a means to developing reading skills rather than teach through formal letters.



Pen a Poem

A Good Childhood

I want my kids to play outside with other neighborhood kids every day.

I want them to create their own games and rules.

I want them to play big, complex games with large groups of kids, and simpler games one-on-one with a best friend.

I want them to decide for themselves what to play, where, and with whom.

I want them to settle their own disputes with their friends.

I want them to create their own private clubs with secret rules.

I want them to make lasting physical artifacts that show the world that this is their place.

I want them to laugh and run and think.

Every day.

That's what I had.

It's my standard for a good childhood.

It's my goal for my kids.

~ Mike Lanza, founder of Playborhood

"QUOTE UNQUOTE": Inspiring quotes

What the best and wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all its children.

—John Dewey, U.S. philosopher and educator

"Play is the highest expression of human development in childhood, for it alone is the free expression of what is in a child's soul."

-Friedrich Froebel

"Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited, whereas imagination embraces the entire world ..."

- Albert Einstein

"When we make a child afraid, we stop learning dead in its tracks."

- John Holt

To reach real peace in the world, we will have to begin with the children."

- Gandhi

"In early childhood you may lay the foundation of poverty or riches, industry of idleness, good or evil, by the habits to which you train your children. Teach them right habits then, and their future life is safe."

- Lydia Sigourney


"The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to the age of six."

- Maria Montessori

"It takes a village to raise a child."

- Nigerian proverb

Telltale



A teacher in New York was teaching her class about bullying and gave them the following exercise to perform. She had the children take a piece of paper and told them to crumple it up, stamp on it and really mess it up but do not rip it. Then she had them unfold the paper, smooth it out and look at how scarred and dirty it was. She then told them to tell it they're sorry. Now even though they said they were sorry and tried to fix the paper, she pointed out all the scars they left behind. And that those scars will never go away no matter how hard they tried to fix it. That is what happens when a child bullies another child, they may say they're sorry but the scars are there forever. The looks on the faces of the children in the classroom told her message hit home.

✓ Food for thought:

This activity can be carried out with Teachers and parents too to reflect on the impact of their words and actions they choose to use with others and especially children...



KID Bytes (Anecdotes)

A little girl asked her mother, "Can I go outside and play with the boys?" Her mother replied, "No, you can't play with the boys, they're too rough." The little girl thought about it for a few moments and asked, "If I can find a smooth one, can I play with him?"

In our Sr.KG class we were doing the "e" family words & came across the word "Yen". I went on to explain that how we have rupees as our currency, in America they have dollars, similarly in Japan they have "yen" as their form of money. 5-year-old Kavya with a frown on her face asked "teacher, is it something like Black money?"

Conversation overheard at a zoo, where a young kid was looking at a wolf:

Kid: "Look Dad, dog!"

Dad: "No, not a dog. Remember, we talked about what this is?"

Kid: (thinks) "Dog!"

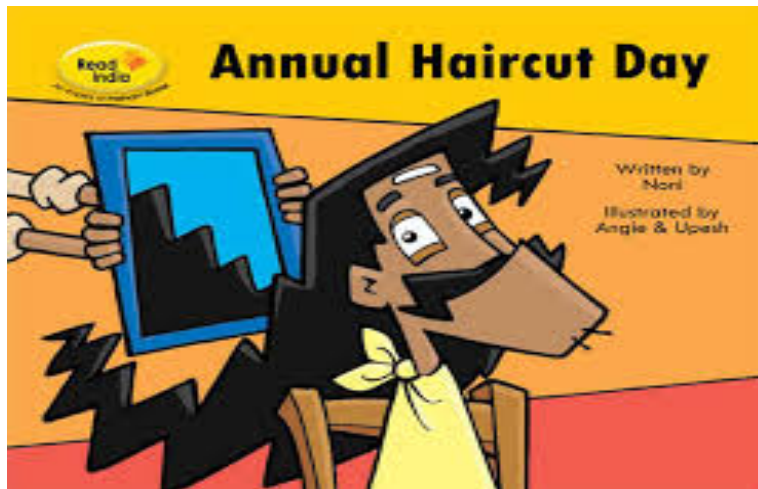
Dad: "Noooo. It starts with a 'w'."

Kid: "W...w...w...wdog!"

Tell me when you're asleep, ok?" - 5-year-old son, overheard talking to his 3 year old brother

Book Nook

Section focusing on book reviews and tips on reading



Book Review by Rekha Menon

Book: Annual Haircut Day	Publication: Pratham Books
Author/Illustrator: Noni/Angie & Upesh	Age group: 3-6years
Languages: English, Hindi, Kannada, Urdu	Price: Rs 30

This is the story of a man named Sringeri, who decides to cut his long hair. He chooses to cut them only once a year. It was that day of the year when he decided to cut his hair, however he soon realizes that neither the barber nor his wife, the tailor or the carpenter has time to cut his long hair. Sad and desperate Sringeri walks off to the nearby jungle, only to encounter an adventure. By the end of the adventure Sringeri accomplishes resolving his situation in a hilarious way.

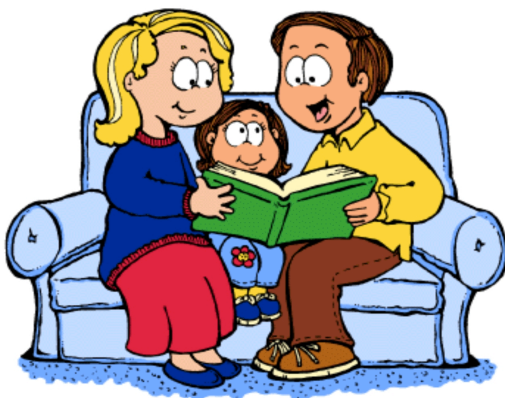
Some children may not have had pleasant experiences of cutting hair, however easily connect with Sringeri and the hilarious turn of events. Post

REKHA MENON is an educational coordinator for Mumbai Mobile Crèches and has been contributing to preschool education in India and overseas.

Print and Post



- I love listening to stories.
- I begin to enjoy the magic of words.
- I observe letters, words and sentences.
- As you read, pictures form in my mind.
- I enjoy listening to the same story as I remember & recall.



- I am curious to know more.
- I love books with big and clear pictures.
- Together we discover new words.
- I feel Loved.
- You are helping me to take my first steps towards reading.

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Get set for the holidays 😊😊

The final word...

Raise your words,
not your voice.
It is rain that
grows flowers,
not thunder.

—Rumi



Engage...

Issue 1: April 2014

Mailbox

To submit feedback or articles, anecdotes, queries related to the early years that you would like to share with other members for the next edition, email aecedmumbai@gmail.com by 15 May 2014.

The theme for the July Newsletter is:

Back to School

The Annual Membership (April to March of a financial year) of **AECED Mumbai (2014 – 2015)** is open to individuals and institutions. If you are not a member, get networked now by becoming a member...

Individual Membership

1 year – Rs. 500/-

3 years – Rs. 1,200/-

5 years – Rs. 2,000/-

Institutional Membership

1 year – Rs. 1,000/-;

3 years – Rs. 2,500/-

5 years – Rs. 4,000/-

Fee waived off for N.G.O's

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<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Association-for-Early-Childhood-Education-and-Development/398785576022>

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