



aeced  
ENGAGE

Volume 5 Issue 1:2019-20

# *The Child in the 21st century*



# Index



## From the Editor.....

Dear Readers,

### WELCOME TO 2020!

Such a nice lyrical sound to it, signifying hope, continuing pursuit of dreams, renewed focus and action to our cause and purpose of being.

### Let's pause at the start... take stock... & forge ahead

For many of us, as 20th century natives, the 21st century vision has been about cutting edge gadgetry, super mechanized ways of being, newer jobs and innovations that lead to exponential changes every moment around us - so many jobs that existed so far are getting obsolete and new ones we never thought of are being created even as I write. In the larger context of education, be it primary, secondary, tertiary and specifically in early learning, somehow literacy and numeracy and "content" linked to sciences continues to be considered as most vital as per prevailing trends. This is seen to come most times by paying the price of exclusion of developmentally appropriate methodology, wholesome learning and building skills for life – the very ingredients for a recipe that will sustain in this exponentially changing and challenging world. Few prevalent examples underscoring this trend are the growing culture of screen usage in schools and homes alike at the expense of play connections, relationships and interactions with self + others + natural environments, and also pushing primary school learning agendas to kindergarten and preschool years.

This century, also thus far, has been about continued intolerance that is widespread across the globe, our backyard no exception too going by recent spate of events. Also, this period has been characterised by the disturbing trend of depletion of environmental resources that can lead to spiralling us into a steep and almost irreversible decline. Even more stark is the lack of preparedness on employability of the sea of people moving within our demographics into the work zone – something that can potentially make them struggle economically pushing them into conflict. With so many conflicting paradigms that exist, we engender continuation of an adverse environment to grow in for our youngest.

In the remaining decades of the 21st century world, it is imperative that we foster learning environments that encourage critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving, communication, collaboration, global awareness, and social responsibility in ways that are relevant and appropriate for young children, our resilient beings of today and impactors for tomorrow.

Closer home, we are fortunate to have the **Draft National Policy of Education 2019, Government of India** ([https://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload\\_files/mhrd/files/Draft\\_NEP\\_2019\\_EN\\_Revised.pdf](https://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/Draft_NEP_2019_EN_Revised.pdf)), which takes cognizance of this changing world by emphasizing for the very first time, the criticality of early childhood education and the persistence of its advantages throughout an individual's life.

Noteworthy is restructuring of the school curriculum and pedagogy in a new 5+3+3+4 design with the first five years of education looked at as foundational inclusive of three years of pre-primary and grades 1 and 2.

### P4.1.1.

**Restructuring school curriculum and pedagogy in a new 5+3+3+4 design:** The curricular and pedagogical structure of school education will be reconfigured to make them responsive and relevant to the developmental needs and interests of learners at different stages of their development, corresponding to the age ranges of 3-8, 8-11, 11-14, and 14-18 years, respectively. The curricular and pedagogical structure and the curricular framework for school education will therefore be guided by a 5+3+3+4 design:

- 5 years of the **Foundational Stage**: 3 years of pre-primary school and Grades 1,2.
- 3 years of the **Preparatory** (or **Latter Primary**) Stage: Grades 3,4,5.
- 3 years of the **Middle** (or **Upper Primary**) Stage: Grades 6,7,8.
- 4 years of the **High** (or **Secondary**) Stage: Grades 9,10,11,12.
- a. The Foundation Stage will comprise five years of flexible, multilevel, play-based, activity-based, and discovery-based learning, continuously incorporating the latest research in ECCE as well as the various time-tested Indian traditions for cognitive and emotional stimulation of children.

### Ref: Draft NPE 2019

Of course, policy finalisations and their roll outs could take time, but we can hereon, continue our work with renewed vigour knowing that we shall also have a policy which believes in what's right for the 21st century child. Looking forward to the roll out of this policy milestone soon.

We are grateful to our diverse contributors in this new decade's first AECED Engage edition which brings forth some of the better ways practitioners can approach teaching-learning for the precious ones in our care – this is in distinct alignment with our theme of **"The Child in the 21st Century"**.

Sad to share that Shirin Dara Choksey, Ex Principal of Udayachal Pre Primary and Primary Schools, Erstwhile Executive Committee member IAPE and AECED, passed away on the 23rd of Jan 2020. A visionary educator, an inspiring leader, a gentle friend, an unrelenting guide and a champion for children and childhoods, Shirin shall be dearly missed by all of us in the field of Early Childhood Education in India and her IAPE and AECED friends who were fortunate to have interacted with her. A tribute to her starts this newsletter. May her soul rest in eternal peace.

We end the newsletter giving you AECED updates on the vibrant year of contribution and change that was, but first begin with articles that bring in with gusto the focus on some effective methodologies of play through movement, drama, socio-emotionally rich classrooms, a community led storytelling movement and families shaping up as co-creators of stories with the child's sense of wonder and curiosity as the catalyst. It's all happening folks in the child's ecosystem, and this is what true learning is about, replete with the inclusion of numbers, letters and science in different ways that children learn effectively from.

I hope you find something here that truly inspires and invokes, even more, the 21st century Champion in you in whatever myriad ways you contribute to Early years!

Love, peace and warm hugs,

Monisha Singh Diwan

Editor- Engage

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### AECED ENGAGE #

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'The Child in the 21st century'

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## We Fondly Remember



### Shirin Dara Choksey (16/09/1940 - 23/01/2020)

Former Principal of Udayachal Pre Primary and Primary Schools; Erstwhile Executive Committee member IAPE and AECED, passed away on Thursday, Jan 23, 2020. She was 79 years old.

She was a progressive educator, a champion for play led learning and pushed it unrelentingly into the primary years too in her school. She was commended nationally too for her contributions to education through the President's Award that she received in 1993. For many of us who joined in

the crusade for Early Childhood getting its focus, it was her and her compatriots who inspired with their unrelenting focus on child rights.

AECED had felicitated her in 2014 for her contributions to Early Childhood Education. At that time, she had shared her belief that children are the best role models to learn from. She found her long tenure in IAPE-Indian Association of Preschool Education (AECED's earlier avatar) as a great learning experience and always reiterated that young children need mentors, guides and champions so AECED should continue working for the young child.

As **Binaifer Choga**, Principal Udayachal Pre Primary & Primary School and long-time friend and colleague put it succinctly, "She brought hitherto unknown methodologies into Udayachal. To her, the child was at the centre of the education process in the true sense of the word. A fair disciplinarian, she created a great school culture and made Udayachal an oasis, for educators to partake of her ideas. She was open to new learning and continuously thought of novel ways to help children learn. She brought about a smooth transition from the pre-primary to primary school by carrying forward the informal methodology into the primary years. She had a heart of gold and had helped several families in their time of difficulty."



**Nalini Chugani**, former President of IAPE Mumbai and AECED Mumbai and a fellow crusader for child rights for decades with Shirin remembers her as a dear friend and inspiration. She says, "I had known Shirin since our student days at Faculty of Home Science, MS University, Baroda. Our friendship flourished when we worked as a team for Indian Association of Preschool Education (IAPE), Bombay branch. Shirin played a key role in setting up the branch with the support of other professionals under the guidance of Mina Swaminathan who was the national secretary of IAPE. Shirin was a woman of substance totally committed to the cause of the young child. In her opinion there could be no compromises on issues related to the Rights of children. She was a committed and forceful crusader for child's right to play and learn through hands on experiences in a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment. Our best homage to Shirin is to continue the crusade for the preschool child's rights with the professionals and the parents".



**Purnima Contractor**, President AECED, found Shirin Choksey's knowledge of children gigantic and mind boggling. She shared, "Shirin was a teacher, guide and mentor par excellence! Behind the strict disciplinarian that she was, lay a fierce patriot, a gentle teacher, motivating us to work for the cause of the children of our country! Rest in peace Shirin, for your Creator will know the rich legacy you leave behind and how you have illumined the minds of thousands of children, teachers and parents in this life of yours!."

**Dr. Sujata Sriram**, Secretary AECED National shared that she has been touched by her wisdom and grace. Her acquaintance with her was brief, but her influence was great. **Dr. Vidhya Satish**, Exec. Com. Member, AECED Mumbai started her work journey under Ms. Choksey's guidance and shared that in her tutelage, every teacher blossomed with creativity and innovativeness and adopted developmentally appropriate practices in their classrooms. She made teachers feel as leaders of their classroom and develop utmost responsibility and accountability towards their children, the Institution and themselves. **Dr. Shobha Bharat**, Vice President, AECED Mumbai remembered Shirin as a gentle, soft spoken person who staunchly believed and propagated innovative child centred practices. Her school was a model of excellence to observe developmentally appropriate practices. Her wonderful contributions to IAPE as an executive committee member set the ground for the work we are doing now.

Shirin shall be dearly missed by all of us in the field of Early Childhood Education in India and her IAPE and AECED friends who were fortunate to have interacted with her. The indelible legacy she leaves behind shall remain for eternity. A teacher in the truest sense, a thousand salutes to the forever young ECD crusader who laid the pathway for so many of us. May her soul rest in eternal peace.

## Theatre for Early Years



- Shaili Sathyu

Theatre and Performing Arts for children in India has mainly focused on children between 6 and 12 years. When we think of children below 6, the first thoughts that come to mind are parents and teachers as performers, as vehicles to deliver stories, songs and rhymes. Though, few parents and teachers are now delegating this interaction to tablets, smartphones and machines.

### Children's lived experiences include:

- Dramatic experiences in everyday life
- Storytelling by family members and teachers
- Teacher-in-role
- TV programmes using theatrical forms
- Theatre and puppet shows by professionals visiting the school
- Performances related to festivals and rituals followed by their families

If we look at the content and artistic forms being served to children below 6 years, these are most often hand-me-downs from things given to older children, no doubt 'simplified'. Performances are often unscripted and the spoken word is extempore. Primarily children below 6 years are left out of the cultural landscape in society. They are not considered a legitimate audience that is capable of receiving and engaging with expressions and aesthetics.

### Why theatre experiences are needed for early years?

Performing Arts for Early Years has been a part of the early learning environments for over 4 decades in Europe, and more recently in Korea and Japan.

This approach believes that all children have the right to be viewed as spectators of today and not only of tomorrow, even the ones below 6 years. Children are born with the right to culture, which is generally called Cultural Citizenship and the onus to fulfil these needs lies with artists, educators and parents.

### Excerpt from 'Charter of Children's Rights to Art and Culture'

(Courtesy <http://www.testoniragazzi.it>)

The idea of "**children as citizens**" is the foundation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the United Nations.

Citizens who, since the beginning of their lives, have **the right to experience and enjoy the physical and mental spaces that art and culture can offer**, sharing with adults a condition of closeness and belonging.

A sense of belonging to a land, a people, a town, **opening up to the world**.

### Children have the right:

- To access art in all its forms: theatre, music, dance, literature, poetry, cinema, visual and multimedia arts
- To experience artistic languages as "fundamental knowledge"
- To be part of artistic processes that nurture their emotional intelligence
- To develop, through their relationship with the arts, their physical, symbolic and cognitive intelligence
- To enjoy high-quality artistic products, specifically created by professionals for each different age-group
- To have a relationship with arts and culture as sensitive and competent "subjects" not as "consumers"
- To take part in artistic and cultural events on a regular, not random, basis during their school and pre-school life
- To share the pleasure of the artistic experience with their families
- To experience art and culture guided by their teachers, necessary mediators who can support and give value to their perceptions

What emotions will a 2-year-old feel?

What does a baby understand?

Do they have complex thoughts and feelings?

Aren't they too small to comprehend a performance?

We all know that approaches to early learning and capabilities of young children are constantly evolving the world over. Learner led curriculums are understood to be more appropriate, as opposed to adult led learning environments that are conformist. Similarly, approaches in theatre for early years stem from some ideas like:

- Children are thinking human beings; they can feel and make others feel.
- We can empower children to relate to the world around them, instead of only giving information about it.
- Children and young people are here today; they are full citizens of our present.
- With their amazing unpredictability, they keep reminding us that all we have to do is to listen. Or we will lose them.
- Children have amazing logical and analogical thinking that they are constantly capable to offer us - provided that we observe and listen to them with respect and with the curiosity for what we do not know.
- Children observe the adult world constantly, because it is by watching and listening to the adults that they learn and build their knowledge.
- Every child has his or her own ways, every age its own timing and urgency.
- The urgency of very young children is crystal clear; there are so many things to know, too many things to be amazed at.

### Theatre for Early Years in India

A recent trend, especially since 2015, has been the creation of performances specifically for children between 0 and 6 years, called Theatre for Early Years, which includes Toddler Theatre and Theatre for Babies.

This work has been mostly restricted to metro cities including Mumbai, Bangalore, Kolkata and Delhi. A list of theatre companies is given at the end of this article.

Performing Arts for Early Years is still at a nascent stage in our country.

We are at a stage that needs for artists and educators to collaborate and develop performances, conduct research and eventually contribute to a culturally diverse and rich learning environment for young children in India.

### Some things to keep in mind while making Theatre for Early Years

- Make the experience stimulate their perceptions and multiple perspectives
- Encourage curiosity and imagination
- Make the content age appropriate
- Keep in mind that there is more to the arts than delivering concepts and stay away from hand-me-down content from the primary section
- Children below 3 years respond to concrete ideas and not as much to linear narrative texts
- Apart from the spoken word, we can work with expression using the body, creating forms and using space. Non-verbal expression is very impactful.
- Exploring objects and materials found in children's surroundings. To build the relationship between material, space and people.
- Learn techniques of material theatre and object theatre to enhance our engagement with things around us.
- Identify and relate to lived experiences
- Arts are perceived in a multi-sensorial manner, so our arts engagements should respond to this and not focus only on text.

### How can educators contribute to the field?

- Collaborate with artists to create performances and arts based engagement for children.
- Advocate for making theatre skills a part of Early Years Teacher Training Courses.
- Invite performances (including plays, music and dance) to your schools and learning centres.
- Visit theatres to watch performances and also encourage parents of your students to do the same on a regular basis.

#### Weblinks for reference:

Small Size website <http://www.smallsize.org/>

#### THEATRE COMPANIES TO LOOK UP:

##### International

- La Baracca (Italy) <http://www.testoniragazzi.it/>
- Helios (Germany) <https://www.helios-theater.de/>
- Teatre Tre (Sweden) <http://www.teatertre.se/>
- TeaterFot (Norway) <http://teaterfot.no/english/>
- Oily Cart (UK) <http://www.oilycart.org.uk/>
- Theaterhaus Ensemble (Frankfurt - Germany)

##### In India

- Samta Shikhar, Bangalore
- Kat Katha Puppet Arts Trust (Delhi) <http://katkatha.org/>
- Gillo Repertory Theatre (Mumbai) <http://gillogilehri.blogspot.com/>
- Think Arts (Kolkata) <http://www.thinkarts.co.in/>
- Theatre I-entertainment, Delhi contact [imran.ientertainment@gmail.com](mailto:imran.ientertainment@gmail.com)
- Mann Mela, Mumbai <https://www.mann-mela.com/>
- Contact: [gillogilehri@gmail.com](mailto:gillogilehri@gmail.com)

Shaili Sathyu is the co-founder and Artistic Director of Gillo Repertory Theatre. With a repertory of 15 artists, having produced 19 plays for children from diverse age group, she regularly conducts workshops, drama clubs and has also staged more than 400 performances. Her key focus areas are developing and showcasing original Indian content, developing value for performing arts, and making theatre more accessible for children.



#### **Editor's Note**

**TEY- An idea whose time needs to come NOW**

Can TEY (Theatre in Early Years) be a part of regular meaning making for young children instead of surfacing only in adult controlled, annual "puppet show, or costume performances as observed generally?

What stops you? What compels you? When was the last theatre you were engaged in, on stage, back stage or as an audience?

How process or performance oriented was it or should have been?

Can TEY be a strategic way to advance cultural literacy, to enhance complex socio emotional skills, to actually make language or STEM happen more effectively too?

How do we raise ourselves to the level of young children, to their capacity of curiosity, empathy, imagination and absorption?

## "The Talking Butterflies"



- Purnima Contractor

It was a lovely Sunday morning. Five year old Siddharth was on his Naani's lap on the rocking chair and his Mom was on her chair relaxing in the balcony overlooking their little garden.

All of a sudden, a yellow butterfly and two grey and black butterflies came fluttering by. All three of them experienced a "Look! Look!" moment simultaneously. We watched them in wonder as they played on and around the bright orange coloured Ixora flowers.

Siddharth's Mom (an IB teacher) took this moment to turn the experience into verbal story creation time!

Mom: "Let's make this wonder moment into a story! What title shall we give our story?" she asked.

"The talking butterflies!" was the unanimous decision!

We were all given our roles to play in making of the story.

Naani had to give the characters (that was the easy part!)

Naani: "So there was one yellow butterfly and two grey and black butterflies!"

Siddharth was in charge of the setting:

Siddharth: "In a big jungle with many rain trees, where there was light at some places and dark at some places." He called it the "Rain Forest"

Mom was in charge of the beginning! And so the story creation started.....

"In a far far away land there was a little yellow butterfly and two grey and black butterflies. They were friends and played happily in the rain forest. Soon they came across a few boys (Siddharth, Aarish and Aarush) camping over there. The boys were busy in their tent while dad was trying to start the camp fire.

The yellow butterfly was happy to see the tent and called out "Hellooo! Any one there?"

(Siddharth was put in charge of taking the story further by adding some problem to the story! Also called the middle part of the story)

Siddharth: "The yellow butterfly came in the tent and sat near the youngest boy. They both ran out of the tent to play. "Meet my friends grey Titli and black Titli" said the yellow butterfly. "Will you play with us?"

"Siddharth called out to Aarish and Aarush and they ran after the butterflies that were making them go up and down! They were all playing happily!"

"Suddenly, they saw the flakes from the camp fire close to them and the butterflies got scared." "It's so hot" they cried! "Our wings will catch fire! Help!Help!"

(Naani was in charge of the ending of the story)



Naani: "Then all of a sudden the youngest of the boys; the small 5 year old boy quickly took water and poured it on the fire. The fire was out. The butterflies said, "Thank you little boy! You saved our lives!" And they began playing again."

The oral story didn't cease there. Siddharth now wanted to draw out the story.

A definitive illustration of making connections between real life wonder moments and self driven language development.



### Editor's Note

**Story Making - Joyful literacy strategy**

Characters, events and settings too, Beginning, middles and ends provide the story glue, Adults and children as partners is the goal, Literacy take a bow, with this strategy you will rock and roll.

Think through the process and how you can incorporate and extend this in your classes and homes.

Purnima Contractor is the President of AECED, Mumbai Chapter and has been working for Early Childhood Education for almost four decades. She is the Founder of Giggleberry Creative Solutions and Principal of Greenfields Pre-Primary School. Purnima is a preschool consultant, teacher trainer and parent coach. She regularly conducts workshops on Music and Movement, Eurhythm, Phonics, Playway and Project method of learning.

## Once Upon A Time - "The Story Tellers"



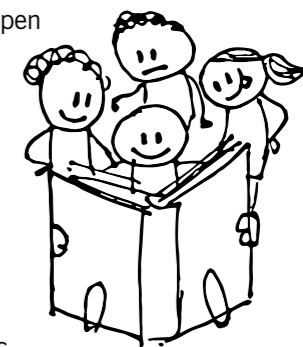
- Alka Deshpande

It all began with a group of young mothers despairing the fact that their children, somehow, did not show much inclination towards reading or exploring books. The addictive spell of the fascinating and fast paced electronic media and devices has adults and children alike, in its grip. They all felt the need to bring their children to the magical world of books and reading. And thus, was born the idea of 'The Storytellers'.

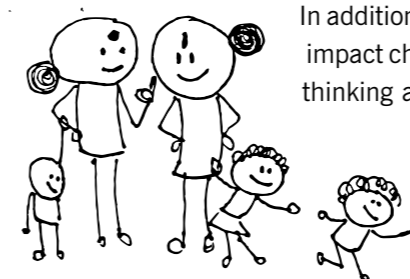
When we started the storytelling sessions at our housing complex, the challenge lay in how to make books interesting for children. All the world loves a good story, so that, then, was our starting point. The agenda was simple:

- To gather the children and narrate stories to them using books and print media, instead of electronic devices of any kind.
- To develop their listening and language skills
- To encourage them to seek out and make time to look at books
- To have some follow up activities, so children are not just passive participants
- To give them a conducive environment to engage in discussion and dialogue
- We do not narrate stories with "morals"

And finally, the storytelling sessions would be an entirely free activity that was open to all children of the housing complex. To date, it remains a free and voluntary enterprise.



We began the storytelling sessions at Diwali, with a completely new and original story, "Raghu's Diwali Lantern" that I wrote, especially for this occasion. The children loved the story and there has been no looking back ever since. After two very successful years of narrating stories, we believe that, if given the opportunity, gentle encouragement, resources and a non-threatening conducive environment, children will voluntarily engage with books. This has proved to be true as our most successful and popular events are the 'Open Air Storytelling and Book Browsing' sessions. At these sessions, all the members of the group pool in whatever children's literature they have. The books are then divided into age wise lots and displayed on tables for children and parents to browse through. The session is held in the garden on a Sunday morning, and everyone is welcome. It is indeed a heartwarming and delightful sight to see toddlers and children (often many parents and grandparents too) comfortably sprawled on chatais, lounging on chairs or huddled together in small groups, engrossed in the books they are reading



In addition, we do try and create awareness, discuss topical issues we feel would impact children, create a platform for them to air their views, encourage positive thinking and responsible attitudes towards themselves, their families, friends, environment and finally the world at large. Carefully curated creative activities and experiences reinforce these efforts. Above all, we have a lot of fun. For learning that happens with happiness, enjoyment, participation and immersion is learning for a lifetime.



These are a few of our favourite tales...



Tell me a story...



Brave Tanaji



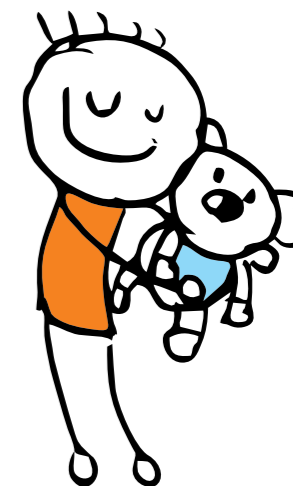
Happy Diwali



Have book, will read!!

Over the course of the past two years, we have had many amazing interactive sessions, some of which were:

- **Creating awareness about snakes as they are often seen around the complex during the monsoon**
- **The national bravery awards for children. The children had to search for and narrate these stories**
- **A dramatized retelling of the capture of Sinhagadh fort**
- **Stories that deal with issues like fear of the night, homeless children, children with special needs, sibling rivalry and more.**
- **Creating stories using clues or props**
- **Completing a half narrated story or solving a mystery/puzzle embedded in the story**
- **A fabulous treasure hunt**



We are constantly surprised by the awareness, information, lucidity, clarity of thought, energy and confidence of the children we engage with. They certainly keep us on our toes and compel us to search for and research well the stories and information we present to them. The past two years have been an enthralling, exciting, surprising, rewarding, learning and, above all, a deeply satisfying journey for all of us.

To mark our 2nd Anniversary, this year, we decided to put together favourite stories from our childhood and compile it into a book for children. All the Storytellers contributed one of their most beloved childhood stories, and added a few lines to say why the story was so special to them. The result was a book that was unique and very well received.



Have we succeeded in bringing the children to books? I honestly don't have an answer to that question. What I do know with certainty though, is that our sessions are eagerly awaited and we get overwhelming responses to each new session that is announced. And yes, we have definitely brought books to children- that is a good beginning.....

Alka Deshpande has been involved with young children, teachers, trainee teachers and parents through various initiatives, programmes and workshops relating to Early Childhood for almost 30 years. Starting as a preschool teacher, she worked with NIMH, Kharghar and NIOS as a Teacher Trainer. At Mumbai Mobile Creches, the Creche programme (0-3 years) as well as the Balpalika Teacher Training programme was revamped under her guidance. Currently, she freelances as an ECD Consultant and spearheads the extremely successful and popular "The Storytellers" initiative.

### Editor's Note

Community initiative for children  
Why did this Community Collaboration of Storytellers work in your opinion?  
What could be the potential impact if this initiative continues and spreads?  
What are the other community initiatives you know about which could be good models to emulate?

# Embodied Pedagogy: Creative movement in the classroom

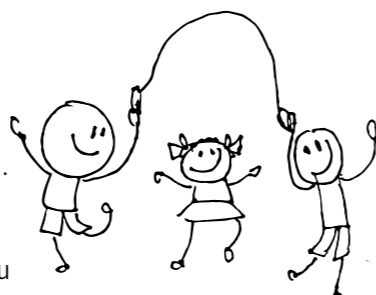
- Shabari Rao

## The body has a role to play in learning:

We only learn through experience. The experience might be of reading a book, listening to a lecture, or working with our hands; but the learning is happening through an experience. And the body is the place where experience happens. We collect experience through the body. Therefore the body has to be present and active for learning to occur! It's as simple as that! However, conventional educational wisdom tells us that the body gets in the way of learning; that the body is a distraction. In practice, we can clearly see that if we ask students to sit still for any length of time, it results in a build up of energy that leads to disruption, distraction and is no fun for anyone. So, what if we were to integrate the body into the learning experience more fully, and more meaningfully, thereby making learning fun, engaging and effective.

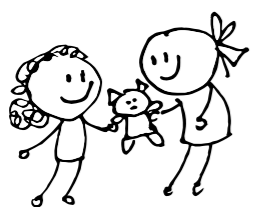
## What is creative movement?

Creative movement is not dance. The term 'dance' evokes the image of steps, choreography, and for many of us some degree of tension, because we have always been bad at it! Creative movement can be thought of as *aesthetic* (that is paying attention to form), *expressive* (that is seeking to communicate), and *creative* (that is generative in nature). In other words, movement where you pay attention to what your body is doing (and that can be anything), you try to connect with another through this movement, and you are making it up or creating it. Creative movement is not restricted by technique, training, or talent, but rather is shaped by the body and intention of the person doing the moving. This makes creative movement fundamentally accessible: to any teacher and to any student, no matter what.



## Any body can use movement in education: you don't have to be a dancer!

So if we put aside the three scary Ts (Technique, Training and Talent) and understand creative movement, we are ready to integrate movement into the classroom. The basic process is the same as creating any learning experience for your students: you articulate the learning outcome for the session based on the larger goals of the programme, and then you come up with a task that involves the body in space. Again, it's as simple as that! The only thing blocking us, is our own inhibitions and ideas of learning. But once we begin to experiment with embodied pedagogy, it's not so difficult and scary after all! As you go along, you will probably have more ideas to experiment with that make learning and teaching fun.



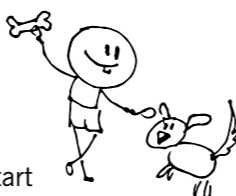
## Creative movement for Social Emotional Learning:

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) has been established as a necessary component of learning. It has been shown in multiple studies and even through our personal experience, that if students feel secure and comfortable in the learning environment they are more capable of engaging, making the learning more effective. Below are a few principles from SEL with a few ideas on how to incorporate movement. This is just the beginning!

### Getting comfortable with one's body:

In today's world of body shaming, it is crucial that we reconnect with our bodies in a non-judgemental way.

Find a spot in the space and bring your attention to your breath. Very gently start moving on your out-breath, and pausing the movement on the in-breath. You can begin



by just moving one arm, then add the other arm, add your head, then maybe your legs, and spine and pelvis. Moving on the out-breath, pausing on the in-breath.

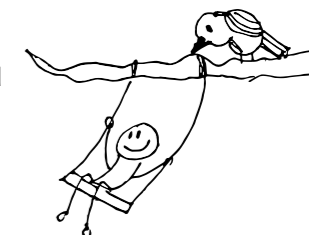
Find a spot in the space. Imagine your hand is a brush and there is a very large canvas in front of you. Use your hand to paint your name in very large letters onto the canvas. Now move the brush to other parts of your body, maybe your knee, or the tip of your nose, or your foot. And the canvas is all around you!

## Being able to connect with others:

It's a basic human need to connect and yet, it seems to be getting harder and harder!

Walk around the space. Look at each other, make eye contact and smile. Next, pause in front of another person in the space and touch all your finger tips with theirs. Hold this moment and then move on.

Find a partner and do a simple mirroring exercise. The leader makes sure that the partner is able to follow, and the follower pays detailed attention to the leader, without making any assumptions. Change roles. Then change roles without breaking the flow.



## Working in groups:

Walk around the space. Imagine you have a bubble around you. This is your personal space. Make sure you don't bump into another person's bubble.

Walk around the space, call a letter from the alphabet. Without talking, students arrange themselves into the letter – creating that letter in space.



## Creative movement for numeracy and literacy:

In many countries across the world, there has been an effort to integrate the body into learning curricular content. Not only does it address issues of multiple intelligence and inclusion, it also engages the body and stimulates the mind in a very different way, from the chalk and talk methodology that we are more familiar with. Here are a few ideas to get started and get moving!

## Sorting and Sequencing:

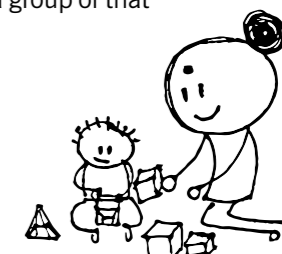
Sorting can be done with any discreet category such as number of siblings; colour of clothes/bag/water bottle; number of cities you have lived in etc. Sequencing can be done with anything that is a spectrum such as: distance travelled to get to school; age; height etc. Students walk around the space and when a category is called, they organise themselves into the appropriate arrangement.

## Symmetry / Asymmetry:

Get students on their feet, explain the concepts of symmetry/asymmetry. Now ask them to make shapes with their body that is symmetric or asymmetric. Next, call a number, in a group of that number ask them to create a combined shape that is symmetric or asymmetric.

## Skip Counting:

Stand in a circle. If you are skip counting by 5, every fifth child does an action like jump. This can be adapted to different numbers and also you can try doing two numbers at the same time!



### Opposites:

Call a word, ask students to do it physically. Now do the opposite. Now, when the word is called, students do the opposite. For example, if you call stop, students should move; if you call sit, they should stand. We might find that there is more than one opposite for a word!

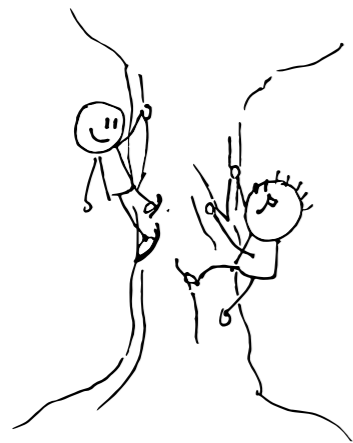


### Naming body-parts:

Move around the space. Call two body parts (eg. hand and shoulder) Each student has to put their hand on someone else's shoulder. Try different body-part combinations. Notice how the SEL component of the work is both supporting and being strengthened by these activities.

### Action words:

Have a list of action words that students can play with and have fun! Each action word can be interpreted physically by students to see the diversity in creatively. Make a sequence of action words and create a small dance.



### **Conclusion:**

I have come to the conclusion that children in schools, especially early years students, do not need my inputs. They are already connected with their bodies and are using their bodies in the learning process. It is teachers who need my inputs, because we, as adults, have been schooled to silence and hide our body as much as possible. We have been taught by society that the body is an embarrassment, is shameful, is dirty. We have been taught by our educational systems that the body is a distraction. And therefore it is not surprising that we have lost our connection with the body. It is us adults, who need spaces and opportunities to reconnect and rediscover the potential of the body and then it's not difficult at all to find meaningful and creative ways to bring it back into our classrooms and into learning.

### **Editor's Note**

**Movement- a natural process of life for children and essential for mind body connection**

How do you understand creative movement for children?

How often do you move? How often do you purposefully plan for movement in your learning hubs?

What stops you? What compels you?

Can the body be used as an effective tool for learning?

How can creative movement promote Socio Emotional skills like conflict resolution or empathy?

Shabari Rao is an artist, educator and researcher. Practice-based research that focuses on the relationship between body, performance and learning is her forte. As a teacher and performer she has extensively presented her work in National and International conferences, festivals, residencies and publications. More of her work can be found at [www.shabarirao.com](http://www.shabarirao.com).

## Creating an Affective Class Room

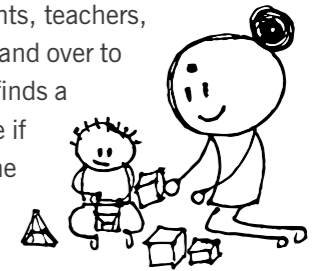


Dr. Sudha Srikanth

**"Knowledge which is acquired under compulsion has no hold on the mind. Therefore do not use compulsion, but let early education be a sort of amusement; you will then be better able to discover the child's natural bent."**

Plato

Goleman (1996) states that emotional intelligence begins to develop in the earliest years and can be taught to children. All the small exchanges children have with their parents, teachers, and with each other carry emotional messages. These messages repeat over and over to form the core of a child's emotional outlook and capabilities. A little girl who finds a puzzle frustrating might ask her teacher for help. The child gets one message if her teacher expresses clear pleasure at the request and quite another if she responds with a curt "Why don't you just play- I've got important work to do." Such encounters mould children's emotional expectations about relationships, outlooks that will influence their functioning in all realms of life, for better or worse.



The Report on Mental Health (WHO, 2001) estimates a global burden of 'Serious Emotional Disturbances' in children and adolescents up to 15%. A survey by Nagpal and Prasad (VIMANS, Delhi) stated that:

- In India - children and adolescents constitute 40%-44% of over 1000 million of the population.
- 10-12 % of < 18 years suffer from disorders in behaviour, learning and development.
- ICMR (2001) study found 12.8% of children and adolescents suffer from mental and behavioural disorders.
- Child mental health care received scant attention in service, research and training aspects in the national context, despite sound policy guidelines.

Schools have an important role to play in raising healthy children by fostering not only their cognitive development but also their social and emotional development. Yet schools have limited resources to address all of these areas and are experiencing intense pressures to enhance academic performance. Given time constraints and competing demands, educators must prioritize and effectively implement evidence-based approaches that produce multiple benefits.

Affective education seems to be the most appropriate solution to provide holistic learning.

### **What is affective education?**

Affective education or humanistic education is a psychological curriculum designed to inform students understanding of their emotional and social behaviour, enabling them to change where appropriate. It also encourages them to understand these behaviours in others. Affective education is concerned with beliefs, feelings and attitudes of students. For a student to perform well, he has to have a sound mind and a sound environment. Those professionals who advocate affective education believe that academic learning should go hand in hand with social and emotional development. Affective education can take place at 3 levels: Individual, Group and Institution.

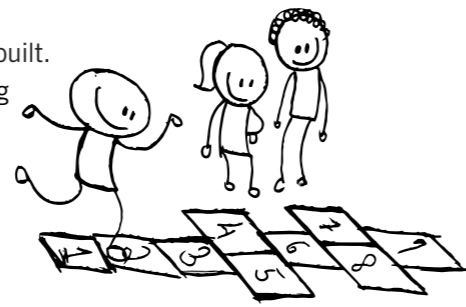
### The Novel Psychological vaccine for an Affective Classroom

EQ skills are a platform on which other essential life-skills are built. These have to be learnt and continually practiced. Being Emotionally Intelligent is the art of mastering the skills of perceiving, understanding, utilizing and managing emotions for the purpose of emotional and mental well-being.

EQ: The Novel Psychological Vaccine is a term coined by Dr. Sandeep Kelkar (Founder and Managing Director, Equipoise Learning, India) in 2013 and presented at Nexus EQ conference, Harvard University, Boston, USA. It is an effective and scientific set of skills to be introduced age appropriately, to help cope with minor challenges that come up in life. This developmental period is actually a 'Window of Opportunity' for all the care givers to influence proper development of emotional intelligence skills in children with optimal training and right parental practices. But the problem is, if these skills are not nurtured in kids during this window of opportunity, they may disappear, predisposing them to various emotional difficulties and problems in childhood and adolescence.

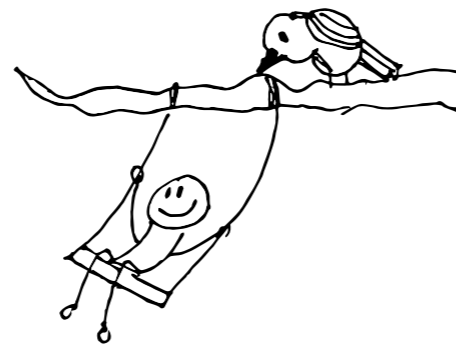
The Psychological Vaccine for pre-schoolers is a set of skills that needs to be introduced to the children age-appropriately, to equip them to deal with the various challenges in life. They are: Emotional literacy skills, managing emotions in self, empathy, relationship skills, managing emotions in self, empathy and relationship skills

EQ skills are a platform on which other essential life-skills are built. These have to be learnt and continually practiced.



### Creating an environment for affective education

In an affective learning environment, all children are respected as individuals, with empathy and are encouraged to do their best. To achieve this, the teacher must have a very good understanding of each student, their individual needs, emotional as well as academic. There are times when a student only needs a little help to master a certain concept. Few words of encouragement and a patient listening can work wonders, without having to go on a solution providing mode.

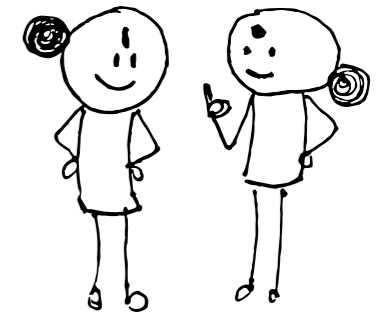


### Role of teachers

As the child enters school, his/her emotional well being is also influenced by the School's Emotional Climate and Positive Classroom environment .The relationship between the child and the teacher and relationships between children in the classroom has a direct influence upon emotions and effective learning. The teacher has a major role to play in identifying and dealing with an emotionally disturbed child in the school. It requires the teacher to be aware of the powerful effect of their own emotional intelligence skills to be utilized in the classroom as Emotional First-Aid. The teacher needs to be aware of the impact of her/his tone of voice, body language and feelings on children's thoughts, feelings, actions and behaviour. In a



real sense, their 'Actions speak louder than words'. The BEST approach (**B**ody language **E**xpressions **S**peech **T**one) is a very effective method to communicate.



There is no area where the ability of the teacher matters so much, since how a teacher handles his or her class is in itself a model, a de facto lesson in emotional competence - or lack thereof. Whenever a teacher responds to one student, 20 or 30 others learn a lesson, and these lessons can be useful (for example, learning in the earliest school years to control impulses or recognize feelings). You can teach about the most basic emotions, such as happiness and anger, to the youngest children and later introduce more complicated feelings, such as jealousy, pride, and guilt. The basic information that children must learn about emotions is that all feelings are okay to have; however, only some reactions are okay.

### A preschool teacher shares:

I have been telling my little ones that they can express themselves through words rather than getting physical or crying immediately. Today during free play, 2 boys (3 year olds) playfully tried to lift the frock of a 3 and a half year old girl. She immediately told them, "Eh! frock nahi uthane ka! I don't like it! "The girl communicated assertively, the boys got the message and all was well again! Emotional Intelligence works!!!

Dr. Srikanth is a passionate teacher, teacher trainer, counsellor and entrepreneur working closely in the area of enhancing emotional intelligence in children, youth, parents, teachers and professionals. She is a Keynote speaker at various national and international conferences. She has published papers in recognised journals and has a few awards to her credit.

### Editor's Note -

Focusing on Affective learning environments

How does this focus impact you, the early learner, different groups in your institution, parents and your institution as a whole?

How effective are your affective environments currently?

What stops you from focusing on this ? What compels you to focus on this?

What would you like to continue doing, stop doing or start doing?

## AECED UPDATES



- Purnima Contractor

"We don't accomplish anything in this world alone ... and whatever happens is the result of the whole tapestry of one's life and all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something.

-Sandra Day O'Connor

### New Year Greetings to all.

The year 2020 marks a new beginning for the freshly constituted executive committee at the AECED - Mumbai chapter. However, as the above quote mentions, the beauty of this whole tapestry lies in the many contributions of each individual thread. We recognise, honour and acknowledge the contributions of the outgoing members who took up their roles meticulously in driving the purpose of the organisation.

#### Ms. Nalini Chhugani:

It is with profound respect and admiration that we acknowledge her contribution towards working diligently for the rights of young children as the President of the association. She has been associated with AECED (formerly IAPE -Indian Association for Preschool Education) since 1964, the year of its inception.

#### Ms. Mala Subramaniam:

With immense pride and gratitude we write about her painstaking work, in the key role of maintaining the financial accountability of the organization. Mala has been a part of this association since 2002.

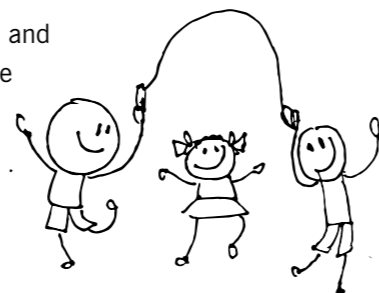
#### Ms. Pragna Maniar:

An ardent practitioner, her dedication to detail, age appropriateness and fine nuances of early childhood development sets her apart. She has had a long association with the organisation since 1990.

The new committee has been constituted with their best wishes and guidance.

- Ms. Purnima Contractor, President
- Dr. Shobha Bharat, Vice President
- Ms. Archana Jamdar, Secretary
- Ms. Monisha Singh Diwan, Joint Secretary
- Ms. Meera Mahendra, Treasurer
- Ms. Rekha Menon, Joint Treasurer
- Dr. Vidhya Satish, Executive Member
- Ms. Moon Devdas, Executive Member
- Ms. Archana Jain, Executive Member
- Ms. Swati Bhatt, Executive Member

The year 2019-20, was earmarked to explore early years learning and development opportunities in 'Performing Arts' and 'Action Research' for the benefit of practitioners, professionals and student teachers. These day long workshops which were offered at two venues, in collaboration with Smt.P.N.Doshi College at Ghatkopar and SIES Institute at Nerul, saw an overwhelming response.



#### Theatre for Early Years by Ms.Shaili Sathyu and Ms.

**Nishna from Gillo Repertory:** This workshop informed educators on techniques of incorporating drama in their curriculum. Classroom practices to help stimulate a child's senses, ways of seeing and experiencing the world and to engage in social-emotional skills were explored. These insights were found to be innovative and useful by participants.



#### Qualitative Research Methods (Action Research to support children better) by Dr. Sujata Sriram and Dr.Rajani Konantambigi of Tata Institute of Social Sciences:

This workshop was divided into 2 sessions. The first session introduced quantitative and qualitative research, and how it is a systematised method of organising knowledge - a way of knowing, and creating meaning. The aim was to predict, control behaviour and to strengthen the understanding of a topic and concept. The second session introduced the principles of action research with the aim of developing research proposals.

The objective was to help ECE practitioners document

systematically some of the work that is done in the classroom and with families, and to help develop scientific rigor using the principles of action research. The importance of observation and its role, tracking changes in the classroom through research to bring in statistically sound solutions thereby improve methods of teaching, were learnings shared by the participants. Further the participants were offered an opportunity to develop their research work for which they would be mentored in follow-up workshops.

#### Embodied Pedagogy: Creative Movement In the Classroom by Shabari Rao:

Shabari, an artist, educator and researcher conducted the workshop where she emphasized the use of movement in language, socio emotional learning and cognitive capacities. She suggested ways to move away from the tendency of shouting and screaming to the usage non-verbal clues for bringing in silence and discipline the class. For children to stay alert, movement should be allowed and space provided to open up. Participants engaged in different kinds of group work



and making formations in symmetrical and asymmetrical shapes. They found the session and the many activities enriching: wonderful integration of body movement into daily activities of a preschool classroom, opportunities of non-vocal activities, movement and meditation during transition time or circle time, teaching academics in an innovative way - to the extent of calming children and bringing out the child's creativity.

We now look forward to more exciting workshops throughout the year, a seminar on leadership and conference in November 2020!

For further details click [www.mumbaiaeced.org](http://www.mumbaiaeced.org)

## MEMBERSHIP

The Annual Membership of AECED Mumbai (2020-2021) is open.

Please do renew (if applicable) and pass the buzz to help the ECD network grow.

### Individual Membership

- 1) 1 year – Rs.500/-
- 2) 3 years – Rs.1,200/-
- 3) 5 years – Rs.2,000/-

### Institutional Membership

- 1) 1 year - Rs.1,000/-
- 2) 3 years - Rs.2,500/-
- 3) 5 years - Rs.4,000/-

### How does one become a member?

1. Choose your membership- Annual/Three years/ Five years.
2. Download the form from the website ([www.mumbaiaeced.org](http://www.mumbaiaeced.org))
3. Send it with the payment to the address mentioned. Payment options are NEFT/D.D./Cheque/Cash.
4. D.D./Cheque/Cash can be couriered or hand delivered to Meera Mahendra 2A/104; Jal Tarang, A.S. Marg; Powai, Mumbai 400076.
5. NEFT in favour of AECED Mumbai; BANK OF INDIA; VILE PARLE EAST BRANCH A/C NO. 004610110007460; IFSC CODE BKID 0000046. A soft copy of the transaction needs to be emailed clearly showing the member/participant's name.



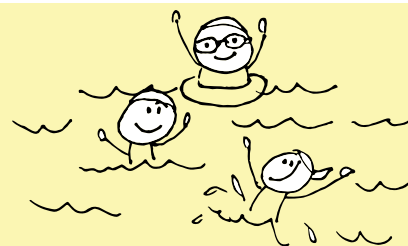
### All members will receive a unique Registration Number

#### AECED Mumbai

[aecedmumbai@gmail.com](mailto:aecedmumbai@gmail.com)

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