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Real Life & Real Experiences Please!

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QUALITY EDUCATION
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EDITORIAL....



THE year is 1964. And it witnesses the birth of a new organization. The INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOR PRESCHOOL EDUCATION. As a young girl, I watched from the sidelines. Every so often, I would get caught up in the excitement of this new venture. Professionals in the field of Child Development and Education were rooting for long term changes in the way we worked with children. Early stimulation and enriched environments were relatively new concepts then. And this roll call of distinguished professionals was keen to have the benefits accrue to children across the length and breadth of India.

Cut to the year 2004. Today we stand at the crossroads. Where did that vision falter? Where / Why did we lose out on weaving essential and ongoing modifications into that vision? What has kept us, even today, from building a network that cuts across disciplines? What has held us back in being truly responsive to the needs of INDIAN children in a fast changing world? Is this the reason we exist only in name in many parts of the country?

40 years down the line – and we are still relying heavily on western frameworks and western research. At least now, it is time to ask and ACT. Is this the reason we are faltering today? We really must question the 'how' and 'why' of what we choose to do in the context of 'whom', 'when' and 'where' it is planned for.

A patch-up job will no longer do. It's time for a complete overhaul of the system. When institutions and centres catering to various aspects of child-care and education first began to be set up, parents had to be convinced about the need for such inputs and stimulation. But we failed to contend with the vast population that would be in need of such services once they were convinced! So anybody and everybody thinks that they have it in them to start up a 'centre'. Parents need at least the custodial part of the care and hence we have a rampant situation of children being sent to centres that, far from being promotive of child development are actually quite detrimental to it. In fact, even those centres, [and

parents] who are purportedly 'quality conscious', have a rather narrow vision of 'excellence'. In most cases this is limited to the 3 'R's – a mockery even of the concept of academic excellence!

And where is it all leading – to primary and secondary, even infant [some centres even have the audacity to talk about 'brain development' activities in the same breath] schools that admit children on the basis of this narrow concept of achievement. Children who can rattle off their "ABC's" and count from 1 to 100? But can they think, take decisions, empathize with others, be responsible citizens?

Is this the vision we have for our children, our future?!!! Will such children really be capable of facing the challenges of the coming centuries?

The terms "diversity" and "need-based" roll glibly off our tongues but have we stopped to consider that we only pay them lip service when we lay down diktats about what programs should be like [whether they are for child or teacher education], what they should contain, what their duration should be, what their methodology should be etc. etc. etc.... Is this yet another reason why we have been unable to be truly responsive?....

We may need to consider the entry of corporates into the educational arena. As with most things it has its pros and cons. An event of some months ago beset me with questions. I was leafing through the invitation and the accompanying brochure for the opening of a new school... Glossy paper - lots of photographs. But what did it contain? Information pertaining to equipment, air-conditioned classrooms, patrons from the fields of business and politics etc. What was missing? The philosophy that the school was going to be based on, who were going to be the teaching faculty, what kinds of backgrounds were they from and so on? Think about the implications...

IAPE was envisaged as a platform that would allow professionals from various disciplines directly related to children's development [health & nutrition included] to work towards creating

environments in which this development would be fostered. This broad vision encompasses program content, methodology and facilities, training of personnel, community involvement and a whole lot more. So how do we find ourselves restricted to the education through the formal system of children between the ages of 3–6? Where do we find ourselves today? For one reason or another, good programs have faltered in their tracks, others find themselves banging their heads against an unresponsive bureaucratic, formal education system, others even folding up under this pressure, and equally worrisome – many, many programs springing up that are, only in name, concerned about the child.

It has been a matter for concern for sometime now, and introspection is called for. In the present scenario where is IAPE headed? Plans for restructuring have been mooted. Several branches have discussed the possibilities...

Perhaps it is not enough to think of mere restructuring. Perhaps the vision itself needs overhauling. Perhaps we need to acknowledge that the felt need of the 1960's is vastly different from that of the 2000's. Can we reinvent ourselves in a new 'avtaar', or is it time to step aside and allow the birth of a new one. Currently IAPE branches across the country appear to be groping for the answer. I hope we find it before it's too late...

As we gear up to register under a different name, we need to be clear of our mandate, our interrelationship with other disciplines, the variety

of levels that we need to reach out to and the manner and for a through which we achieve this. So it doesn't end here. This is the time to make yourself and your ideas heard. So we are hoping that many of you will be present and participating in the National Conference to be held in Baroda in September 2005.

About this issue in particular...

Since Independence, we have witnessed a tremendous rise in the number of institutions catering in one form or the other to ECE. But what of the quality and functioning of such programs, schemes, centres? To a large extent this growth has been uncontrolled and unregulated. What can be done to ensure at least a minimal level of quality? But perhaps that is the beginning of some of our problems. MINIMAL – perhaps it indicates our willingness to settle for less than excellence. Perhaps it is time we set our sights higher up – and go in search of real quality. The merely adequate will follow as a matter of course!

So this issue looks at quality in ECCE programs. Quality of the program, the practices, the curriculum, the practitioners and the training they receive.... Issues related to Accreditation & Licensing... And much more.

I would like to acknowledge the help provided by Dr. Reeta Sonawat and her team in collecting several of the articles included in this issue.

Dr. Suneeta Kulkarni
Editor



& let's not forget – these are real children we are interacting with





Double helix of education

AZIM PREMJI

Text of the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Lecture delivered by Azim Premji, Chairman of Wipro

Courtesy: The Indian Express

Very early in my life I learnt that Character is Destiny. That character of an individual, an organization or a society is the most important determinant of success. When I use the word character I use it in the broad meaning of the word, the indescribable mix that an individual is: thoughts, words, feelings and above all actions. And the heart of character is values.

If you consider Wipro as a successful organization, I would rate values as the foremost contributors to its success. At the outset we decided that character is one factor that will guide all our actions and decisions. We defined a set of values and beliefs for the organization in the early '70s before it was fashionable to do so. We decided that upholding those values was more important than achieving business success. Let me also confess that upholding these values has not been easy, especially in the early years. But we stuck on. And as the years passed we realized that what started in the realm of idealism not only held true in reality, but proved to be a unique, tactical competitive advantage. Customers wanted to buy from us because we honored our commitments.

I believe it is our responsibility to build our nation, build character and integrity in our children and the future generation. I believe the one concerted area that wittingly or unwittingly can shape the personality and character of a society is education — and I refer to fundamental education at the primary school level. Our education system as it stands today is in need of transformation and transforming our education is the key to transforming India's destiny.

I am aware I am neither an educationist nor an academic person. All that I understand is what kind of people have the potential to be more successful in business and what kinds of people make successful employees. A lot of work has been done by us, as by many others, to determine the kind of citizen the nation ought to be looking for at the end of an education cycle. Let me place before you some characteristics of such an individual: a person who has the ability to relate rationally to fellow beings and their environment; a person who has an inherent sense of curiosity and interest beyond his/her own life; a person who perseveres in the face of odds; a person who is not blindly obedient but can act on the basis of independent thought and exercise judgement; a person who is able and willing to continuously learn and change; a person who is excited by challenges; a person who sees diversity and plurality as strengths; above all, a person who will stand firmly by a set of values which will guide him/ her through life.

The almost factory-like efficiency of the end school exam seems to drive everything in the system, unifying all participants around the single objective of "doing well in exams". This makes the system thrive on churning out standardized children like graded "products" in a factory. It fosters individuals who are programmed to obey and conform, who have limited life skills and need continuous direction. It's only a tribute to the undying human spirit and some balancing social structures that all the qualities of success are not completely obliterated in the vast majority of our youth. It is not that the importance of education is underestimated in our country; public discourse and debate keep it very much a part of everyone's agenda. However, this consciousness and resulting actions revolve mainly around what I would term as "access"

to education and concentrate on issues of enrolment, attendance, dropout rates, discrimination, physical conditions and facilities, all of which doubtlessly merit attention. But equally deserving of urgent and immediate attention is the quality of learning.

It is true that quality of learning cannot be addressed in a vacuum caused by absence of schools, or absence of teachers from schools, or absence of basic facilities from schools. Nor can it be addressed divorced from the socio-economic context of the child. Indeed quality and access and, therefore, equity are inextricably entwined. But it is critical to appreciate that in our complex socio-economic system, as much as access impacts quality, so does quality impact access. It is like the double helix of the DNA, never complete in itself but complete together, the DNA of education runs on two strands of quality and access.

A lot is stated about poverty and socio-economic conditions as important causes for families deciding not to send their children to school. Our consistent experience is that from families with identical poverty levels and socio-economic backgrounds, almost 50 per cent of parents send their children to school while the balance 50 per cent don't. There is an important lesson in this. To us it simply means all of them are families that have potential to send their children to school. It is just that many do not find the education and the quality of learning in schools relevant to their lives. So we have a situation where sections of both the elite and economically backward find education in a large measure irrelevant to their needs. In other words, the quality of public education is so poor that it does not incentivise us to overcome odds and send our children to school.

The irrelevance of what is taught in schools, both in the immediate context of the child and what it may mean to the child and her family in the foreseeable future, is glaring in the rural areas and in schools which primarily educate the children of the under-served part of society. My conviction that quality of education must get an equal share of the national action agenda has

grown significantly over the last few years after we started working closely in 4,000 habitations in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh in the Azim Premji Foundation and about 100 urban elite schools under "Wipro Applying Thought in Schools" programme. While the Foundation works in rural government schools that have a preponderance of under-served children, most schools where Wipro works are for the privileged. Their desire to participate in the programme stems from their conviction that they must do something about the quality of education, in an attempt to overcome the constraints of "system".

Let me also say that I sense a simmering consensus around the issue of quality of education. We need to develop the "simmering consensus" through informed public debate into a strong visible consensus and real action on the ground. This alone would achieve positive transformation rather than a mere tinkering of the existing system.

When we speak of the "quality of education", it becomes imperative to address the important issue of "what kind of education"? Education, to my mind, is an organized system that facilitates learning so that each individual imbibes the process of understanding and becoming what he/she can be and wants to be.

How do we envision the individual our education system should strive to create? In moving words from the *Discovery of India*, Nehru says: "We can never forget the ideals that have moved our race, the dreams of the Indian people through the ages, the wisdom of the ancients, the buoyant energy and the love of life and nature of our forefathers, their spirit of curiosity and mental adventure, the daring of their thought, their splendid achievements in literature, art and culture, their love of truth and beauty and freedom, the basic values that they set up, their understandings of life's mysterious ways, their tolerance of other ways than theirs, their capacity to absorb other peoples and their cultural accomplishments, to synthesize them and develop a varied and mixed culture; nor can we forget the myriad experiences which

have built up our ancient race and lie embedded in our sub-conscious mind."

I will take the risk of articulating what education could be like. One, every child is an individual with a right to respect. This respect for the child must translate into providing a non-intimidating and exciting space in which the child learns. Schools need to identify and eradicate every element of threat — physical, mental and emotional — that stifles learning and growth.

Two, the right learning environment ought to be contextual to the learner and to the community. For instance, a blind child needs non-visual learning tools; hunger is a physical threat detrimental to learning in underprivileged communities. It follows that the local community has a responsibility in creating a feasible environment in and outside the school.

Three, there has to be this clear understanding that learning occurs everywhere and that all learning can be interesting. It would build on the operating principle that each child constructs her own learning.

Why is it so difficult for us to accept that every child learns differently, at different depths, at different speeds? Some children learn best when doing things with their own bodies; some learn better in peer groups; yet others learn best by emulation.

Five, let me ask you, under what subject should the eruption of a volcano in Japan be covered? Geography? Physics? Maybe chemistry? Geology? It is all of this and more. Nature is inherently whole. Then why is the

curriculum boxed into subjects, modules and chapters? We ought to think of "integrative" and wholesome learning.

Six, this form of education will not stop at "content". The child would continuously develop life-skills. This would include physical development, vocational skills, creative and critical thinking and abilities such as risk-taking and coping with change. The child's learning would be grounded in an individual, social and human value system imbibed from self-discovery.

Caring for children and feeling responsible for the holistic progress of every child would form the basis for all decisions. Such education will invest in teacher development, better assessment systems, community participation, and in a culture built on the imperative of the learner. It would be an education system, which would continuously refine the dynamic balance between being the key agent of socialization and being the driver of social change.

The stage is set. It is for us to choose which play will be staged. This will depend substantially on what choice we make on our education system. Will we continue with the present blinkered system? Or will the key stakeholders join together and transform the system to facilitate true, lasting and relevant learning for every child which inevitably will lead to a turbo charging of our unique human resource pool?

The choice clearly is ours to make. And the future clearly is ours to construct based on these choices.

- Development Services)
- 2. Government run- TINP (Tamil Nadu Integrated Nutrition Project)
- 3. NGO – (Non Governmental Organization) run with financial assistance from Government under specified schemes.
- 4. Private management, run with no financial assistance from government, but collecting fees from parents.

The four main **tools** used were:

- Tamil Nadu Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (TECERS) (Seven Components)
- Child Learning competency Test (CleCT) (four domains)
- Parent Interview Proforma
- Teacher Interview Proforma

The first two are capable of being numerically scored, in order to enable statistical comparison. Two teams of investigators (one rural and one urban) collected data. In each team, one person rated centres and interviewed teachers, while two others tested children and interviewed parents. The two parts of each team functioned independently.

STRATEGY FOR ANALYSIS

To investigate the relationship between the quality of ECE centres and children's learning competencies, the main research strategy was to identify the most powerful family and social predictors of children's competencies, and then, after controlling for them, to investigate the contribution of centre quality components to children's learning. The patterns of association of the family, the centre, and finally the community, in this case identified by the rural or urban location.

Profile of the Families

The families belonged to low income communities, and the parents were of low educational and occupational status. Fifty percent studied up to Class 5 or less, twenty five percent being illiterate (fathers 18%, mothers 31%).

Rural fathers were significantly better

educated than urban fathers. Rural families were on the whole in lower occupations, with more than half (56%) of the fathers in the lowest occupations. Half the mothers were not economically active, while 80% of working mothers were in the lowest occupations (40% of all mothers). Two thirds of the families (67%) were nuclear, and two thirds (65%) had 2 or less children. Forty five percent lived in semi-pacca and 17% in katcha housing, and rural families were in significantly in poorer housing. Seventeen percent owned no consumer items, 30% had one item, and 53% two or more. Rural families had fewer consumer items.

Profile of the Centres

This profile is based on the characteristics scored with the help of the TECERS (Tamil Nadu Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale). The distribution of scores of the total TECERS for the 45 centres was normal; with a mean score of 48.2 and a range of 69 (from 15 to 84). The component personal care and routine had the highest mean score (64.7) and the component physical learning aids had the lowest mean score of 29.4.

Profile of the Teachers

Of the 45 teachers, 13 teachers had no training of any kind, while 8 had training unrelated to ECE, thirteen had undergone the regular three month job provided by ICDS, and 11 had recognized ECE training of varying duration. Sixty percent had received some kind of orientation after starting to teach, ranging from a few days to up to 3 months.

Profile of the Children's Competencies

The children's learning competencies in four domains were measured with the help of the child learning competency test (CleCT) and the distribution of the scores for 193 children were normal. The mean score was 57.8 and the range 82 (from 8 to 90). The domain language skills had the highest mean score (73.4) and the domain cognitive skills the lowest (45.0). Rural children performed significantly better than urban on the whole, and in all domains except language.

Relationships

Of the ten family characteristics studied, the following four were found to have a significant positive association with children's competencies.

- Fathers education
- Mothers education
- Fathers occupation and
- Housing quality.

The results confirmed by two methods, correlation and multiple linear regression show that fathers education is the strongest of all predictors, because the variables are so inter-correlated that some of them lose their significance when others have been taken into account earlier. Hence, in all later analysis, fathers' education was partialled out.

When TECERS was correlated with children's scores, a positive relationship was found between the quality observed in the centres and children's performance. To put it plainly- quality makes a difference! Children in low quality centres (as measured by the TECERS), in general did not fare so well as their luckier peers in high quality centres, even after allowing for the effect of fathers education. The relationship between the two was a moderate one (although statistically significant) because other factors are also important in influencing children's development. The correlation between TECERS scores and mean children's competence scores was $r = .27 (p < 0.01)$ and $r = .22 (p < 0.01)$ when rural-urban location was also taken into account. Positive relationships between the various TECERS components and total child competence, as well as individual domains of development, were found. Fine and Gross Motor Activities, language and reasoning experiences and social development activities showed the strongest positive relationships with child competence suggesting the importance of active learning. These results also confirmed by two methods are not surprising, since the role of activity/ play in children's learning, as well as the specific role played by sensori-motor activities in concept development, have long been known. The findings once more empirically

validate the conclusion that in layman's language "All work and no play makes jack a dull boy".

As regards rural urban differences the superior educational levels of rural fathers in the sample is likely to be one of the reasons for the better performance of rural children. Other possible reasons need further study. A comparison of the five highest and five lowest scoring centres threw light on the relationship between the stimulation and nurturance components of the environment. The correlation between TECERS and specific individual learning competencies of children was also studied. As teacher behavior was integrated into the TECERS tool, the teachers' role was not separately studied. While available data about teachers training did not lead to firm conclusions it reinforced evidence from other studies about the links between teacher attitudes and perceptions, programme quality and child performance. Lack of training was not perceived as a problem by most teachers. Salary and working conditions dissatisfaction with which is likely to affect motivation and morale, were the most often mentioned problems, and lack of materials, facilities infrastructure and cooperation were next in importance.

CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

1. The TECERS tool

The relationships found between TECERS scores and children's competencies have concurrently validated the TECERS tool for use as an instrument to measure the quality of ECE centres and to identify and isolate the components. The tool has now been made available for use, not only for research but also, for several other purposes such as training monitoring and evaluation and accreditation.

2. Quality Of ECE

The study has established.

- The significant relationship between the quality of ECE as measured by the tool and the level of learning competencies of young children even after allowing for the effects of

QUALITY MATTERS! None of us would argue with that. And we would also agree that it needs to be contextualized. Here is one study that includes in its objectives the development and validation of tools to assess ECE program quality and children's learning competencies in the Indian context. Editor.



Understanding the Relationship between Quality of Early Childhood Education and Learning Competencies of Children

M. S. SWAMINATHAN RESEARCH FOUNDATION: (June 2000). An Exploratory Study in Tamil Nadu: Research Report No.4. web site at: <http://www.mssrf.org>

A SYNOPSIS OF THE REPORT

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

The main goal of Early Childhood Education (ECE) is to ensure the optimal development of the young child. Extensive research evidence shows the positive impact of early interventions and the long term effects of early childhood education, and indicates links between the educational and care processes on the one hand and children's development outcome on the other. Very few studies in India have taken stock of the nature of ECE experiences vis-à-vis its impact on the learning competencies of children. Some micro level studies have emphasized that it is the quality of ECE curriculum, which makes the difference, but there is little evidence from India available in the literature establishing this link empirically. In this context, it was thought desirable to explore the relationship of various variables related to the quality of inputs in an ECE centre and the background variables (home and social environment of the child) with the learning outcome for the child.

OBJECTIVES

1. To develop and validate a tool for measuring components/characteristics considered crucial for quality ECE programme/services.
2. To contextualize and validate a tool for measuring learning competencies of children in Tamil Nadu.
3. To explore the relationship between, various components/ characteristics of ECE and other family and socio-economic factors on the learning competencies of

children, such as perceptual-motor skills, language and cognitive skills and socio-emotional development.

VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

The **Dependent Variables** (outcome variables) were the child's

- Cognitive (including numerical)
- Language.
- Socio- emotional and
- Perceptual -motor abilities.

The **Independent Variables** (the predictor variables) were

- Family characteristics(father's education, mother's education, father's occupation, mother's occupation, type of house, number of consumer goods, family type, number of siblings, caste and religion)
- Centre characteristics (Infrastructure, personal care and routine, physical learning aids, language and reasoning experiences, fine and gross motor activities, creative activities and social development activities.)
- Teacher's characteristics (age, education, experience and training)
- The location of the family (rural or urban)

METHODOLOGY

The study was conducted in two regions, one rural, (Dindigul district) and one urban, Chennai. The study drew a representative sample of 193 children (95 urban and 98 rural) aged 4 years belonging to the lower socio economic groups in rural and urban areas who were enrolled in 45 centres from among the four prevailing of ECE models in Tamil Nadu, these being:

1. Government run- ICDS (Integrated Child

home and social background.

- The links between the identified and isolated components of quality and the various domains of children's learning.
- That active learning involving perceptual and motor skills is the key to developing children's learning competencies at this age.

Mere establishment of ECE centres may not be of much use in terms of promoting children's learning. Only quality can provide results, as far as learning competencies are concerned. Practitioners and service providers in various types of programmes must seriously consider whether the principles of active learning are being followed to encourage children's learning and if not, make serious efforts to encourage and promote change and strengthen quality components. Baseline information is required about the various types of centres and hence it is recommended that a large scale study be undertaken with the help of an objective and validated tool, in order to provide useful information and evaluative insights about the quality components of the various types of centres as a step towards policy improvement. Different policy measures would be required for the various types of centres. For the large number of ECE centres in the public sector (a majority of those serving the poorer sections), Government will have to take steps to make improvements in the quality of the services offered, by strengthening the various quality components. However a large number of ECE centres are in the private sector while a smaller number are in the voluntary sector and here a package of regulatory and supportive measures is needed to improve quality in these sectors, in such areas as curriculum, teaching method and teacher/ child ratio.

3. Rural Urban Differences

The significant differences in the performance of rural and urban children were partially explained by the differences in the home background of the rural and urban children in the sample. There is a need to explore and explain these differences in terms of other possible reasons.

4. Perceptions Of Quality ECE

A disturbing social trend, which emerged as a byproduct of the study, was evidence of the drift of children from one type of centre to another. In urban areas most children were being taken out of ICDS and even NGO centres by about the age of four and placed in private centres; in rural areas, this trend was less visible but complicated by the recruitment of four year old children for enrolment in primary schools in the state sector. These movements no doubt reflect the views and preferences of parents. Teachers and managements of private schools and their perceptions of children's needs and the quality of ECE. However these judgements of quality may not be the same as quality defined and measured by a tool developed on the basis of principles of child development and ECE. There is hence a need to create widespread public awareness, especially among parents, about the components of quality in ECE and its relationships to children's learning and development.

5. Role of Teachers

Though the data on teachers did not lead to firm conclusions it suggested that training is not the only factor affecting quality of the programme which is also influenced by teachers job satisfaction and perception of problems. There is a need to study in more depth and detail the qualitative aspects of the teachers role in providing quality education to young children, and the linkages between programme quality teacher characteristics and children's learning. In conclusion while it is possible that some ECE of any kind may be better than none it is equally possible that it may not. The evidence here however suggests that low quality or bad ECE may not do much more for children's learning than no ECE. There is no doubt however that "good" ECE leads to good results. Very simply, quality matters!

*To get more information about this research and other projects write to M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation, Third Cross Street, Taramani Indl. Area, Chennai 600 0113, India.
Web : <http://www.mssrf.org>*



Quality ECE Programmes : Whose responsibility

DR. VRINDA DATTA

A. INTRODUCTION

Children whose earliest years are blighted by hunger disease or whose minds are not stimulated by appropriate interaction with adults and their environment, pay for these deficits throughout their lives- so does the society. Such children are far more likely than their more fortunate peers to do poorly in school, to drop out early, to be functionally illiterate and to be only marginally employable in today's world of work" (Choksi, 1969). Considering this very significant role that early childhood programmes have for children and the nation investment in early childhood are crucial for a nation's human resource development. The efforts in India in reaching out to the young child have indeed been significant. The basic inputs started in the fifties with the setting up of the Central Social Welfare Board, through the grant in aid programmes. The preschool programme and also the creche programmes were set up through this board. The launching of the Integrated Child Development Services Schemes (ICDS) in 1974 gave a new impetus to ECCE programmes in India and by the beginning of the new century it is hoped to be universalized. Further the priority to early childhood development in India can be seen in the ratification of the Convention on Rights of the Child, National Plan Of Action for children (1992), National Policy on Education, Plan of Action (1994) and even the national nutrition policy of 1993. The contribution of non governmental sectors (NGO's) strengthening early childhood in India is remarkable, while the private sector has been the only source of ECCE programmes for the fee paying. In spite of all these efforts the statistics regarding the young child in India are indeed very depressing. Morbidity, mortality malnutrition, school dropout on all these indicators India's figures are very high so, where are we going wrong?

How do we address our issues in an effective way? How do we ensure our investments give us maximum returns?

B. UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT

The socio economic changes: The past decade has seen the emergence of the new economic policy under the structural adjustment programmes. These changes have affected the social sector and particularly the child development programmes in terms of scaling down of the projects changing patterns of financial resources and changing composition of child development programmes (Saleth, 1992). Today the central government is passing on most of the social sector issues to state government who are already burdened with financial crises, thus creating a situation where early childhood programmes will be further marginalised.

New Literature: Studies on investment in early childhood have shown that these investments give positive lasting outcomes. Further the brain research has further given importance to the very early years as the very crucial years for maximizing children's growth and development. Such scientific evidence makes it imperative that early childhood years be considered by the nation as an essential investment so that social and financial liabilities in later years may be reduced. Global Pressure: The UN convention on Rights Of Child, the Education for all declaration, are important happenings which have forced nations to look at the social sector and particularly women and children. Today human development index is considered to be an important measure of a country's progress. The human development index rates the countries progress on indicators like child mortality, morbidity, malnutrition, child labor, child enrollment etc. Thus such global pressures are at least keeping the child on the

political agenda. Auspices of programmes: Early childhood programmes are run by governments, NGO's, individuals, private institutions and large schools. Therefore to come to a consensus on programmes is very difficult. But it has also become an excuse and a reason to have poor ineffective programmes. Lack of Pedagogy: Except for the Montessori system there is no other pedagogy which is clearly defined and which is used in programmes. Therefore we have early childhood programmes that are perhaps need based evolved programmes with no systematic inputs for children's development. This leads to unrealistic curriculums and misplaced training. Lack of ownership: Considering the diversity of programmes that come under early childhood, the ownership of such programmes also lies with a variety of government departments, individuals, organizations. But who are all these people answerable to? There is no machinery within the government or outside it, which takes responsibility for how these programmes are run. There is no regulation governing these programmes, nor any systematic methods for quality assurance. Thus though we have accepted that an early childhood programme is an essential input in children's development, many factors in today's context are creating challenges to reach the children. It has become clear through research that mere attendance in early childhood programmes will not result in positive outcomes for the children but the quality of the programme is the important determinant of the programme outcome. Thus it has become imperative that we provide for programmes, which are quality programmes, that is programmes that provide opportunities for maximizing children's growth and development. Quality early childhood programmes have several dimensions. The view is that it is an extension of family function and from this perspective the early childhood programme must provide a nurturing and safe environment. The second dimension is that quality must promote child's social, cognitive, physical growth using developmentally appropriate practices. The third dimension in

quality is that early childhood programmes cannot be provided in isolation but must be a part of a broader range of service to children and families. But who is responsible to provide quality programmes and how do we achieve it?

C. THE ROLE OF THE PRACTITIONER

Accepting the fact that children are learning all the time, the practitioners have the responsibility of deciding what and how to teach them, giving opportunities for independence in a nurturing environment and offering stimulation through a well thought out developmentally oriented curriculum. For such an education to take place the right environment needs to be created. Well planned environments with adequate adult/child ratio, group, size, are conducive to constructive learning. Materials are selected to appeal to specific ages and available to children to explore and learn in a meaningful way. Thus the role of the practitioner could be discussed at two levels. The first level is the most important where the management/ organizations develop policies for the functioning of the programmes that are child- appropriate. Such an understanding will automatically take care of factors like group size, adult-child ratio, curriculum, materials and equipment. If these basic indicators are child friendly then the teacher will be able to function effectively. The second level of the role of the practitioner therefore is the effective programme implementation by the teacher. Both these levels have to be recognized if quality programmes have to evolve.

D. THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNMENT

The government could have many functions in relation to early childhood. It provides directly services like ICDS or provides services through grant in aid programmes like the creche scheme. Another important function that the government must perform is that of regulating services. The state has to set up standards for programmes and decide on the machinery that could help regulate the

standards. As of today in India there are no guidelines laid down by government regarding early childhood programmes. One can visualize many difficulties in developing some uniform guidelines considering the diversity of context in which these programmes function. But not having any standards or regulatory mechanisms creates dangers for indirectly accepting programmes to function at levels at which they are harmful for children. It is now time to debate what methods can be adopted that will be manageable and acceptable at all programmes. The attempt of Maharashtra Preschool admission act of 1996 was definitely a step forward in regulating certain aspects of programme functioning. However the acceptability of such laws will be possible when all stakeholders get involved in the development of such regulations. Another important role the government has is in setting standards for educational competencies for staff in early childhood programme. We still go with notion that anyone can be a preschool teacher and some orientation to jobs is enough and so we have personnel who have undergone training which could be of a few days or last even a year. The government has to recognize institutions that conduct teacher training and also set guidelines on how these programmes need to be conducted. The third area in which the government has a vital role is in providing policy leadership. Here again the Maharashtra government has been one of the first to have a special committee- the Ram Joshi committee to apprise the government of the existing situation and to suggest policy measures to enhance the status of early childhood. The state unfortunately fails to give commitment to implement the many meaningful suggestions given by the committee.

E. THE ROLE OF THE RESEARCHER

It has been observed that in many developing countries the effective interface between policy practice and research has resulted in quality programmes. It is research which has told us that there are positive outcomes of investments in early childhood,

that certain aspects of programming impact on quality and therefore child outcomes. This research feeds into practice and research feeds into policy also. It is not there is lack of research in the field of early childhood in India but what is absent is the understanding that research can give serious inputs in policy and practices. The government neither commissions researches; nor acknowledges the contributions made by outside organizations. We therefore get into policies, which are not appropriate; nor are we able to influence practitioners to accept changes in their practices.

F. THE ROLE OF PARENTS

It is now accepted by most parents that early childhood programmes are important for the child. The uneducated poor parent views these programmes as those which give food, health, care, to her children while the educated parent views it as an essential input in the child's educational process. But most decisions of parents regarding choosing early childhood programmes are related to availability, accessibility and affordability. It is very rare that parental choices are based on educational pedagogy or other factors associated with quality programmes. Many educated parents who want to give the best to their children are confused as to how and what to select. Informed choices are very important. But this can happen only if parents get information on what are appropriate programmes for children so that they can evaluate for themselves, what are the existing programmes and make the correct choice. When such a process starts it will automatically weed out programmes that are out of poor quality. The second level at which parents become responsible for quality programmes is by being active, participating consumers. When parents have the correct information on what programmes should offer, they will be able to demand quality services from the programmes. Perhaps that is the reason why most schools keep parents at a distance and have only formal relations through PTAs.

G. ROLE OF THE CHILDREN

A young child of less than six years may not be able to express his opinion or needs from a programme. But a lot gets communicated through his reactions, interactions, learning and expressions about what the programme is doing to him. The important point is that the significant adults recognize these signals and evolve the programme to lead the child to optimum development through developmentally appropriate programmes.

H. ROLE OF NETWORKING ORGANISATIONS

When there are many stakeholders parents researcher, practitioners and government to arrive at a consensus on the complex issues of quality in early childhood programmes is indeed a very difficult task. While all of us in our own way acknowledge the need for quality programmes the move towards it will take

place when all fronts are active. This is where the role of networking organizations becomes important. They have to use their platform to bring all players together, help arrive at a consensus on what is acceptable as quality early childhood programmes and persuade each one of us to carry out our roles simultaneously. Such an organization therefore has to have the recognition and acceptance as an important organization.

I. CONCLUSIONS

The goals of quality early childhood programme cannot be reached unless all of us the practitioners parents researchers and government come together recognize our roles and make our very sincere efforts to identify the inputs we need to give and contribute to this common goal of quality early childhood programme.



A POEM ON 'FLOWERS'

Zakiya I. Motivala

Early in the morning with drops of dew,
 Oh flowers, how beautiful are you
 First of all you are a bud,
 Then you slowly grow from the mud
 You smell very good,
 That changes a bad mood
 You have so many types,
 That everybody likes
 Though there are thorns, you live so happily,
 It seems as if you all stay in one family
 Lilies, roses, lotuses and sunflowers,
 Give a lovely look of different colors
 Bringing joy in your own style,
 You give people a reason to smile

IAPE Mumbai & Maharashtra FORCES organized a workshop on "Developing A New Perspective for Early Childhood: The Changing Role of IAPE".

Among the material circulated at this workshop were the global guidelines put forth by the ACEI. For the detailed document visit the following web site

<http://www.udel.edu/bateman/acei/wguides.htm>

These are guidelines for the field of ECE in the coming century. Much of it relates to principles that we have all been concerned about for many years now. But perhaps it is a reflection on the state of ECE, the world round that we still need to reiterate these again and again for we are still a far cry from genuine implementation of many of these!

Implementation of these guidelines is a precursor to quality in ECCE settings and call for an interdisciplinary as well as international cooperation. The reason to highlight this is that we need to be careful about picking up ideas that may or not be relevant to specific settings and sub settings within our own nation. Far too often these days, we are witnessing a misuse of the term 'multicultural'. More often than not it amounts to an expectation that a predominant culture be adapted to rather than a blending of practices from all. And the 'developed' nations are as guilty of this as any of the 'third world' countries. So read ahead and implement keeping in mind the ground realities of the situations we deal with.

Here, we present a summary of the guidelines and request members to consider these in the context of their specific settings.

- Editor



Global Guidelines for Early Childhood Education and Care in the 21ST Century

OVERALL PHILOSOPHY, GOALS & POLICIES

Every child should have the opportunity to grow up in a setting that values children, that provides conditions for a safe and secure environment and that respects diversity. Attention to health, nutrition, education, & the psychosocial development of children during their early years is essential for the future well being of nations and the global community.

This involves:

- Assessing the extent to which it has carried out commitments made previously to support the education and development of children.
- Developing and implementing a range of policies to advance the provision of an interrelated and flexible continuum of early childhood services.
- Allocating resources from national governments, development agencies, governmental and non-governmental

organizations, private and voluntary groups to provide quality services

- Collaborating reciprocally across nations to advance the interests of young children

The areas identified by the ACEI for purposes of providing a comprehensive network of early childhood services are:

• Environment & Physical Space

1. Safe environment & physical setting
2. Developmentally stimulating environment

Safety in the environment relates to both physical & psychological safety. Protecting the child from health hazards as well creating an environment to which they can belong and in which they can explore freely are both essential.

• Curriculum Content & Pedagogy

1. A curriculum document
2. Curriculum content
3. Pedagogical methods
4. Learning materials

5. Assessment of children's progress
6. Evaluation of programs

It is important that curriculum be planned keeping in mind children's developmental levels as well as the cultures they come from and live in. A holistic perspective of development leading to competent and caring world citizens is in today's context particularly important. And this calls for deep thought and careful planning while designing learning experiences.

- **Early Childhood Educators & Caregivers**

1. Knowledge & performance
2. Personal & professional characteristics
3. Moral/Ethical dimensions

This guideline is based on the recognition that those who provide care and education for young children assume one of the most demanding and crucial responsibilities and that they must be prepared and trained to take it on.

- **Partnership With Families & Communities**

1. Communication with families
2. Ethical responsibilities and behaviors
3. Training/Education policies
4. Recognition of diversity
5. Transition of children from home to the ECCE setting
6. Opportunities for family & community participation
7. Inter-professional collaboration

Constructive partnerships with families and the community at large in providing care and education to young children is an area that we cannot – must not – ignore. Children belong to their families and the community, not they are the community; and to ignore this basic fact is to be an ostrich with its head in the sand!

- **Services For Young Children With Special Needs**

1. Access to & equity of services
2. Basic health & nutrition
3. Common philosophy and common aims
4. Staff & service providers
5. Adaptations to indoor & outdoor environments
6. Service delivery
7. Responsiveness to individual needs

Children with special needs run the entire gamut from those with disabilities to those at risk because of developmental delays or socio-economic disadvantages as well as those with exceptional talents. All of them need special support services to ensure that they develop to their fullest potential and are able to contribute to society in their own unique manner.

- **Accountability, Supervision, & Management Of Programs For Children**

1. Policies for quality standards
2. Service delivery
3. Professional associations for educators & caregivers & policy makers
4. Program & educator responsibilities

It really is time that the field of ECCE is looked at as a profession, not as something for somebody to just because it was convenient activity or they had nothing else that they were capable of! And that means ACCOUNTABILITY for what we provide. This means creating appropriate supervision and management channels.

For more details on these guidelines you can visit the (Association for Childhood Education International) ACEI home page on the web!

Yet another interesting report that we located on the net... Vandell, Deborah Lowe, & Wolfe, Barbara. Child care quality: Does it matter and does it need to be improved?

For more details you can visit <http://aspe.os.dhhs.gov/hsp/ccquality00/ccqual.htm>

Here's a summary of the sections pertaining to the measurement of child care quality and recommendations for improving it....

Editor



Measuring the Quality of Child Care

Researchers have measured quality in a variety of ways. These include -

- **Observing process** – actual experiences occurring in the child care setting [participation in activities, interaction with material, interactions with peers & adults etc.]
- **Recording structural & caregiver characteristics** – these typically refer to features such as **the child:adult ratio, class size, formal training the caregivers have etc**
- **Assessing health & safety provisions** – these include practices related to promoting health / hygiene / sanitation as well as safety measures

The question then arises as to how these indicators should be assessed. Some of the **tools** that are in use are:

ECERS: One way of measuring process variables related to childcare is the Early Care Environment Rating Scale developed by Harms & Clifford, 1980. *Elsewhere in this issue you will find an article that relates to how this has been used in Tamil Nadu.* This tool comprise 37 items covering 7 aspects of child care provided in centers with reference to children between the ages of 2 ½ to 5 years. The areas covered are personal care routines, furnishings, language reasoning experiences, motor activities, creative activities, social development, and staff needs. Detailed descriptors are provided for each item, which is then rated on a 7-point scale, and ratings are to be based on a minimum of a 2-hour-block observation in the classroom.

ITERS: This measure (The Infant/Toddler Environment Rating Scale) (Harms, Cryer, & Clifford, 1990) is related to the ECERS but focuses on children younger than 2 ½ years of age.

FDCRS: Keeping in mind the uniqueness of child care provided in home settings Harms & Clifford, 1989 developed the Family Day Care Rating Scale. While some of the items parallel those in the ITERS & the ECERS, others are relevant to family day care. This measure comprises 32 items.

While these measures have been used widely in childcare research, it is particularly important to recognize the limitations arising from the use of global composite scores. This makes it difficult to pin point the specific effects related to the functioning of the centre with respect to different areas. Also to be recognized is the inappropriateness of these measures for assessing in-home care provided by 'ayahs' or grandparents/relatives.

ORCE: The Observational Record of the Caregiving Environment focuses on the central role played by the caregiving adults, and the experiences they provide. This uses both time-sampled behavioral counts of caregiver actions [e.g. speaks negatively, asks questions etc.] as well as qualitative ratings [on a 4 point rating scale] of those behaviors over time. These are made on the basis of a minimum of 4, 44 minute observation cycles spread over a 2day period.

Other measures of process include **The Assessment Profile** (Abbott-Shim & Sibley,

1992), the **CC-HOME Inventory**, the **Belsky-Walker Checklist** etc.

What may of course be a necessary course of action for researchers and professionals in India is to develop their own tools or, at the minimum, adapt these to ensure that the items, what is considered positive and hence rated as such, and their focus are appropriate to our own settings.

The ultimate goal:

And there would be no point in losing sight of the basic focus of any assessment of quality in childcare programs – Improving them!! This means acknowledging the links between interventions and quality; and that includes

combining these with parent resources. In this context the term intervention is broad based, extending to various systemic factors like the provision of information, licensing, regulation, certification or accreditation requirements, wages and other compensations for child care workers, training programs for care providers pre-service as well as in-service, including subsidies to be able to avail of such training; even schemes that make it possible for families with limited incomes to be in a position to avail of such care. What of this is possible in India and how we can work towards it or other appropriate interventions needs careful consideration, but a look at the full report on Child Care Quality (Vandell, D. & Wolfe, B.) might provide some ideas.

If you missed reading the Announcement

Here it is again

ANNOUNCEMENT

*The National Conference of the **INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOR PRESCHOOL EDUCATION** will be held at **Vadodara**.*

Dates :

2nd - 4th September, 2005

Theme :

Child's Right to Participation with focus on Listening to Children

Brochures and Details will be mailed to all branches in the near future.

An ECCE program may be marvelously conceptualized but we cannot afford to underestimate the channel through which it is implemented, i.e. the teacher / the caregiver. And that throws up all kinds of questions. And we may need to ask, first and foremost whether we are paying lip service to all aspects of quality! Read on for Dr. Kamath's perspective on this...

Editor



Issues in the Teacher Education for the Pre-Primary Level

Dr. RAVIKALA KAMATH

The issues of concern for teacher education at the pre-primary level emerge primarily in the context of the nature of the very young learner, whose holistic development is at great risk if the formative years are not adequately and appropriately appreciated. It is this perspective that needs to be taken cognizance of by teacher educators in preparing students for their future tasks as early childhood educators. In fact, the major issue of concern in teacher education for the pre-primary level is the crucial difference in the age and stage of the learner (the very young child) and the differential individualistic needs of children.

These issues of concern may be categorized into 4 areas. Viz. Approaches to teacher education, Personnel, Curriculum contents, and Norms and standards for teacher education contexts or settings.

1. Teacher Education for Early Childhood Educators

The focus of teacher education for very young children must per force be child centered (and not content focused). It cannot be overemphasized that teacher educators must be child-development oriented professionals with a firm grounding [both attitudinal and informational] in the dynamics of growth, development and socio-cultural and family influences on developing children. There is indeed, a growing wealth of research and field-tested documentation of successful interventions and strategies for early childhood education. Teacher educators need to, not only, access this fund of information, but also develop

the commitment to enhance all round development of children; recognizing that cognitive and academic domains are only small parts of the whole. Thus, the instructional approach must necessarily be less pedagogical and more developmental. It is most conducive for early childhood learning to **have a more informal, stimulatory, play-oriented approach that provokes learning interest and evokes responsive behavior rather than knowledge/information focused inputs.**

The challenge confronting early childhood professionals in the typical urban milieu is to **arrest the downward extension of the formal education system into preschool centres.** In fact, the whole arena of pre-primary education is being loaded with the burden of formal school pressures leading to an overburdened preschool life in a typical urban competitive setting. Hence, the possibility of a 'formal pre-primary teacher' with pedagogical approaches that befit a 'formal primary school' for instance, is a threat to be guarded against in teacher education at the pre-primary level.

Such an approach has at its forefront, a strong commitment for child advocacy with the conviction that developmental needs and perspectives need to be coupled with technical expertise in non-formal play-way initiatives in early childhood education.

2. Personnel for pre-Primary Teacher Education

The emergent scenario of teacher education is paradoxical. On the one hand, it is beset with

an upgradation of 'status', in view of its inclusion under the NCTE network. For the first time, the unprecedented growth of teacher education/training classes (including 'no contact with the children' correspondence courses (!)) is being formally addressed by academia and a formal, educationally committed and empowered body. On the other hand, the field of early childhood education has suddenly opened up to the 'formal educators from the formal systems'. They are undoubtedly experts in the educational field but require tacit child development orientation with greater sensitivity for handling the developmental needs of individual children grappling with the throes of separation from parents and family in the early years.

The resultant outcome of this situation is that teacher education for the pre-primary level, tend to lean towards structured, formal lessons rather than the stimulatory, short span sessions appropriate for young children.

Therefore, the personnel for pre-primary teacher education should be drawn from the field of child development professionals equipped with methodological and content requirements for ECCE settings. Such expertise is particularly available among degree holders of Child & Human Development specializations from among the various Home Science discipline groups in various universities. They must be called in to give inputs that can be utilized to ensure the quality of teacher education for early childhood years.

3. Curriculum Content for pre-Primary Teacher Education

The curriculum for pre-service teacher education for the pre-primary level must chiefly address the young learner characteristics of short attention span; an appreciation of flexibility balanced with firm regimens to establish routines; cognitive language enhancement; creative activities for developing readiness for later school requirements etc. The

pre-primary teacher needs to be well prepared and trained to meet the challenges of children from various socio-cultural and linguistic backgrounds entering into centres, as well as be able to identify and provide adequate support for the special needs of special children. Other requirements include the honing of skills for music, story telling, puppetry, and communicating with parents' etc. Thus, well-conceived curricular inputs enable the early childhood educator to provide developmentally appropriate stimulative experiences for children.

4. Development of Norms and Standards for Teacher Education Institutes

This issue is perhaps a major challenge particularly in the wake of the fact that any organized effort in this direction has always been complicated. Nevertheless, the need for developing minimum standards (and optimally desirable characteristics) would enable quality gradients for recognition and accreditation. It is vital to note that a realistic understanding of return-on-investment and cost benefit ration would facilitate enforcement of minimum standards for recognition and subsequent accreditation of such organizations. Drawing up normative indicators based on teacher education institutes for primary and secondary levels may not serve the purpose, since pre-school education is yet to be brought under any ambit of minimum service conditions or scales of pay. Thus, investment intensive demands for standards in teacher education institutes tend to vitiate the financial viability of such institutes. This is, indeed, a crucial concern in the present context of norms evolved for pre-primary teacher education institutes.

In conclusion, the paper is a plea for favorable consideration of the issues confronting teacher education at the pre-primary level. Having brought this vital section of pre-school teacher education under the purview of the formal academic structure, it is essential to preserve its unique features to ensure quality educators for the early childhood years.



Building the Brain: Clues for Quality Learning

DR. VIDITA A. VAIDYA

Department of Biological Sciences, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research

The brain which we identify as the seat of learning, thought, emotion, creative surges and indeed with our identity of self, is just a mass of collected cells that somehow string together to create symphonies. How then is the brain generated to allow us humans to perform immensely complex tasks? This process starts in-utero and is not entirely complete even well into puberty. Although when a baby is born, the brain looks pretty much like a miniature version of the adult, it is actually like a canvas with the frame put together but the art still to come. By now, parts of the brain know what functions they will perform, for example, that part of the brain which interprets the smell of milk is already in place and pretty much broad divisions of the brain are all set. However, the fine tuning so that groups of cells can function together like an orchestra will continue now to be set in place well until the baby is a teenager. This then tells us that how wonderful a symphony our brain produces, is determined by the environment, nurture and nourishment right from when a baby is in utero up until the child is a young adult. Although this seems intuitively obvious to most of us it is only in the last 2 to 3 decades that we have come to understand the immensely important role of environment and correct approaches to learning that will go on to define how the brain is built.

Let us start with one such concept from neurobiology that has an immediate application to learning in young life. There is one key point made by Donald Hebb "Hebbs Hypothesis" that can be summarized as two inputs that activate a recipient nerve cell simultaneously get strengthened, whereas two inputs out of sync in their activation of a recipient nerve cell get weakened or even removed. To simplify this think about the developing brain as a mass of

billions of nerve cells that have to figure out who to connect with, which connections to keep and which to prune away. Let us now use this and illustrate this principle vis-a-vis learning. Let us say you want to convey the image of a banana to a young preschool child- you could just show a book with a drawing of a banana - that's one sensory input 'sight' taken care of. However to strengthen this learning simultaneously along with showing an image in a book if you allow a child to feel a banana, taste a banana, smell and mash a banana. What has happened is that now several sensory systems have been simultaneously activated in sync. Simply put, this would be following the Hebbian principles of synapse formation. This becomes particularly relevant to be in sync. You can't expect multisensory approaches to involve showing a drawing of a banana today and eating a banana, smelling it several days later. Especially with young children, it has to be within minutes of each other. A synapse is a connection between nerve cells and activated synapses are maintained and those that are not activated tend to get pruned- much like a gardener creating a landscape. What this tells us is that childhood learning in particular ideally must involve multisensory approaches to allow the process of learning to be long lasting and not transient.

One realizes the value of multisensory approaches to learning and this is further emphasized by the other side of the same coin in which sensory deprivation can actually result in a substantial defect in brain development. This cannot be emphasized enough- indeed we are born with considerable potential - our canvas is in place but it is the sensory environment, nurture, nourishment and encouragement that result in the building of

genuine learning and creativity. What happens when all of these important factors or indeed even some of them are missing – the canvas does not produce art. When couched as a metaphor of a canvas this fact is not hard hitting but when thought of as a human life its consequences can be devastating. To take an example children completely deprived of touch have long lasting consequences of growth retardation and behavioral impairments - these can be reversed only if the damage is corrected fast. There is a critical period in which brain development of different types of sensory, motor and indeed even behavioral circuits takes place. If deprivation is felt throughout this critical period then reversal of this damage later is not possible. Early life stressors in children can set up a vulnerability to several kinds of behavioral disorders in adulthood- this is likely a result of persistent changes that result in the brain due to stress in early life.

Given that the brain is a structure unlike the kidney for example that gets patterned in part by environment it makes the role of individuals closely interacting with children that much more critical. Parents and teachers of young children can start now to think of themselves as critical components that will contribute to the development of the child's brain. So if one was to suggest some practical key concepts to follow and some critical mistakes to avoid they could be summarized as follows:

KEY CONCEPTS:

1. Learning has to be child driven and not imposed by some external force. Attention is critical in any learning process and attention is largely derived from interest. Parents and teachers need to get rid of un-necessary concepts like syllabi and agendas when dealing with young children under 7. So to start with, it would be best to avoid any 'formal' teaching until 6-7. For a child learning is really about putting his/her environment into context and parents/teachers would do well to use a child's environment as inspiration to convey teaching.

2. To make learning fun and meaningful for young children the multisensory approach to learning strengthens concept formation in young kids. It is critical to not persist in asking young children to perform or remember - that should not be the bottom line goal of parents/teachers as it applies a constraint in how a child learns. It is through reinforcement and repetition (the word force is the least relevant here!!) of a learning that young children eventually remember. Performance anxiety gets instilled very early and it is critical to remove evaluation when dealing with young children.

CRITICAL MISTAKES

1. The one mistake parents/teachers have to avoid is to realize that they are not in charge here. They are to think of themselves as facilitators of the process of early childhood learning. If this principle is followed then the problems associated with evaluation, anxiety, ranking, and performance start to disappear. It is in such an environment that learning is at all possible. We ask why is creativity not blossoming - it is because we would impose standards and ask children to conform to what we consider learning or creative. You can't teach anyone creativity and parents/teachers would do well to realize that they are more likely to be receiving in this arena rather than giving. If they use their children/pupils as inspiration to creatively impart ideas and to make it fun then the process of teaching can be joyous to both children and parents/teachers otherwise it can be dull and worse still it can actually drive a child to wanting to run away/avoid such an environment.
2. A mistake to avoid is to associate performance with affection. This is a mistake that parents/teachers must avoid at all costs. It does nothing other than harm and is probably the single greatest deterrent to a child learning to enjoy learning.

Zakiya Motivala shares one more of the songs she has composed... Many of you may wish to make your own poems/songs for the children you work with. Some of you may wish to adapt songs that you come across, sometimes the tune sounds great but you aren't too happy with the words. At other times you may just wish to select from what is available.

In all these situations, remember to adapt the songs to suit your purposes and settings. Sudha Kulkarni's 'Balgeetanchya Duniyet' provides several relevant criteria.

Editor

POEM ON 'SUMMER'

ZAKIYA .J MOTIWALA

HDFS Department, MSU Baroda

Oh little children,
Summer has come,

Oh little children,
Summer has come,

The sun has bought,

Rays very hot

So keep your winter coats, And wear thin clothes
Heat will increase your thirst, So have water first

Have tasty, tasty fruits Or drink some juice
Water melon, grapes and mangoes, Here where the fruit seller goes
You will like cold things, Shakes, puddings and ice creams
Oh thank you dear sun, The vacation has come

But don't play in hot sun, Otherwise your feet will burn
So go to play in the evening, Enjoy, play and sing

Sing, sing-sing a song,

Oh little children
Summer has come

Summer has come,

One of the keys to quality in ECCE programs is ensuring that the inputs we plan and provide are developmentally appropriate. But it is a term much misunderstood and even less accurately implemented. Here, Nalini Chhugani, the present President of the IAPE Interim Committee elucidates on the concept.

Editor



Developmentally Appropriate Active Learning Practices

NALINI CHHUGANI

The goal of early childhood education is the integrated and balanced development of children. To achieve this goal, it is necessary to take a holistic view of children's development, their needs and the learning process they go through as they progress at each stage.

A developmentally appropriate approach meets the needs of all children. The curriculum is comprehensive and it supports all round development of young children, as it is based on sound principles of child development, about how children grow and learn. It is an established fact that children learn best when they are actively involved in the process of learning. They are provided experiences, which are activity oriented and begin with manipulation of concrete objects.

Recent research has indicated that the human brain is a pattern detector. It functions most effectively when processing meaningful information. We also know that strong neuron connections are formed when sensory stimulation is provided. It is important to incorporate this information to facilitate learning which prepares children for the world of tomorrow. In vocational situations, importance is given to qualities such as teamwork, problem solving, inter- personal skills, oral communication and listening. (Fortune 500, list of 1990). No longer there is a demand for workers who just follow directions. Hence it is our responsibility to enable children to survive and thrive in the rapidly changing world.

Based on the comprehensive theories of Piaget (1952), Vygotsky (1978), Erikson (1963), Sue Bredekamp and T. Rosegrant, the National Association for education of young children (U.S.A.) has highlighted these fundamental assumption which form the basis of developmentally appropriate active learning approach in early childhood education.

- Children learn best when their physical needs are met and they feel psychologically safe and secure.
- Children are continuously acting on and organizing experiencing mentally. They construct knowledge through repeated experiences involving interaction with people and materials.
- Children's learning reflects a cycle that begins in awareness, moves to exploration, to enquiry and finally utilization.
- Children learn through social interaction with supportive adults and other children.
- Children's interests and strong curiosity motivate learning.
- All children pass through certain stages of development, which are characterized by individual variation.
- Children learn naturally through play or being active in which they are motivated to be involved wholly and spontaneously without external pressure.

Underlying the developmentally appropriate active learning approach are certain broad curriculum goals for children.

- ★ To develop a positive self- concept, self-control and self-confidence.
- ★ To develop a sense of belonging, relationship of mutual trust and respect for adults and peers.
- ★ To develop the body skills to be used effectively in daily living, learn the care of their bodies and maintain a desirable level of health and fitness.
- ★ To develop a curiosity about the world, their own creative and imaginative ability to use language to communicate effectively.
- ★ To learn and use skills of reading, writing and number work to function effectively as literate person.
- ★ To think critically, to reason and solve problem.
- ★ To construct an understanding of relationships among objects, people and events.
- ★ To construct knowledge of the physical world and to understand cause and effect relationships.

These goals can be realized by carefully planned, child friendly environment as well as suitable strategies and techniques. The materials, equipment and methods need to be in harmony with developmental stages of children and this learning process.

It is a well known fact that children proceed from concrete to semi- concrete to abstract level of thinking, hence opportunities must be provided for children to explore, experiment, discover, ask questions, draw conclusions, make

connections, express ideas and feelings with the help of trained and supportive adults.

Role of the Teacher in a Developmentally Appropriate Active Learning Approach

- * Plan the programme carefully keeping in view of the children's developmental characteristics, needs, learning, patterns and curriculum goals.
- * Organize the classroom appropriately.
- * Collect necessary materials.
- * Make required teaching aid
- * Encourage children to work in groups and at an individual Level.
- * Encourage co-operation and responsibility.
- * Appreciate children's efforts, without using comparison or competition.
- * Provide a variety of stimulating and satisfying experiences to children.
- * Provide a balanced programme of active and quiet activities.
- * Encourage communication between children and with adults.
- * Respect the children's individual needs and interests.

To facilitate planning, which is age and stage appropriate a chart with developmental characteristics needs and appropriate methods is enclosed for initial direction. It is important to remember that development follows a sequence, which is common to all children. However children do not go through the stages at the same time, there is a wide age range within which a particular ability appears in children, hence these developmental stages need to be used as guidelines and not as rigid norms.



NEWS FROM THE BRANCHES



CUDDALORE

The branch shifted from Neyveli township in the last year to Cuddalore, the district headquarters. This decision was taken because of the increased awareness and interest among the schools of the surrounding towns as a result of the year long extended course conducted last year.

As a follow up of the extended course, a workshop on story telling techniques and teacher-made books was conducted by Ms. Uma Shankar on 11th August 2001 at Buds and Blossoms School Cuddalore. 37 teachers from 6 schools attended the session. The participation was excellent. As a sequel to this session on story-telling a two day workshop on making puppets and building self-esteem in teachers was conducted by Ms. Prema Daniel, the president of IAPE Chennai branch at St. Joseph's of Cluny Matriculation Higher Secondary School Neyveli on 12th and 13th October 2001. The branch was shifted following this and as a result not many activities were conducted over the next few months.

A felicitation ceremony was held to congratulate the President of the branch, Ms. UMA SHANKARI on her return from Israel after attending a course on 'Bilingualism and Multilingualism in Early Childhood Education'; and the Vice president Mr. Balagurunathan on his being awarded the NCERT award for Innovative project in science in January 2002. The Secretary of the branch Ms. C. K. Vijayalakshmi, and the president Ms. UMA SHANKARI attended the IAPE Conference in Mumbai held at TISS on the 1st and 2nd of July 2002.

A workshop on - 'What is activity based education?' was conducted by Ms. Uma Shankari on 28th July at Buds and Blossoms Play schools, Cuddalore. A conference on 'Holistic Development in Early Childhood' was conducted by the branch at Buds and Blossoms Schools CUDDALORE on 31st AUGUST, 2002 which 200 delegates are expected to attend. Future plans of the branch

include sessions for parents, selected workshops and another extended course.

The term of the present Committee expired in January 2002, hence it was necessary to elect a new team.



LUDHIANA

The IAPE LUDHIANA branch organized a workshop for school going children (aged 10 to 15 years) during the summer vacation. The title of the workshop was 'Boosting Life Skills in Young Children' and was held from 13.6.2001 to 26.6.2001. Sixty-five children from various schools of LUDHIANA participated in this workshop. Lectures - cum demonstrations were given by experts on the topics like - Personal Grooming, Proper Garbage Disposal, Environmental Pollution, Road Skills, Self-help Skills, Community Services, How to Achieve Success in Life, and Arranging a Party.

Competitions/ quizzes were organized by experts on topics like Dental Hygiene, First Aid, Personal Safety and knowledge regarding immunization. Children were fully involved and they actively participated in discussions, demonstrations, competitions and quiz. Prizes were also given to the winners. The faculty of the department of Human Development was actively involved in organization and conduct of the workshop. The faculty members also delivered lectures and gave demonstrations on gift wrapping, covering books, shoe polishing, folding of clothes buttoning and hemming, how to entertain Guests and proper use of telephone. Contents and discussions about all topics covered in the workshop were compiled in the form of a manual "Boosting Life Skills in Young Children." Each participant was given a copy of the manual at the end of the workshop. At the end of the workshop children were asked to express their opinions regarding the workshop and return gifts were also given to children.



United Way of Baroda

9th Floor, Sidcup Tower, Race Course, Vadodara-390007. Phone : 5527715 / 5527716 Fax : 2339298

The United Way of Baroda, started in 1986 with tripartite participation of Baroda Citizens Council, United Way International and UNICEF for an initial period of five years, has since been serving as an important link between the donors and ultimate beneficiaries through its support.

- For over 145 Health, Education and Human Care Organization in the city;
- For initiatives that advance the community and its culture;
- For projects that address significant areas of civic life.

All this is done through the proven and well-established United Way System of organization local resource mobilization, need-based allocation, pooled common services, dissemination of useful information, training and management assistance & networking efforts to form a forum or a federation.

REACHING OUT TO TOUCH MANY LIVES

Over the years, United Way of Baroda has given need-based assistance to the extent of Rupees 470 lacs to support a wide range of much needed programmes and services in the city.

SOME OF THE PROGRAMMES SUPPORTED BY UNITED WAY OF BARODA

- Many needy peoples live through affordable / free modern and holistic health care services. "In formal and non formal education opportunities for children and youth". Services for differently abled children / people.
- Women empowerment opportunities
- Environment protection programmes
- Services for senior citizens. "Animal Welfare Activities". Networking among the NGOs.
- United Way Mela giving opportunity to the NGOs to showcase their activities " Organizing inter school Essay & Debate competition to create awareness among the students.
- Various Forums of NGOs.
 - Forum on Disability
 - Forum on Solid Waste Management
 - Forum of Senior Citizens
- Management Assistance Training Programmes for NGOs.

CITY PROJECTS

- Free Screening of Diabetes, Hypertension and ECG
- Employment Opportunities for persons with disability
- Working on alarming changing Sex Ratio of the girl child
- Adoption of Dr. Keshav Udhyan at Karelbaug for labour maintenance contract work

United towards a better Vadodara, with your support

Balak

Special Issue Quality Education 2004

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ANNOUNCEMENT

*The National Conference of the **INDIAN ASSOCIATION FOR PRESCHOOL
EDUCATION** will be held at **Vadodara**.*

Dates :

2nd - 4th September, 2005

Theme :

Child's Right to Participation with focus on Listening to Children

Brochures and Details will be mailed to all branches in the near future.

Development Characteristics	Needs of Children	Active techniques Learning
1) Rapid development of large muscles, so children are constantly on the move, practicing body skills	1) Uncluttered and safe space to move about. Appropriate equipment such as climbing apparatus, balancing board, slide, rope and balls. Adult encouragement to take challenges.	1) Teacher provides plans and conducts Space Equipment Sufficient time and freedom for movement Rhythmic movement, dance, games Balance of vigorous and quiet activities.
2) Slower development of finer muscles, awkward when younger, gradually acquire precision and body control. Children gain independence in routines such as eating, wearing clothes and going to toilet.	2) Manipulative material opportunities to practice skills of fine motor co-ordination.	2) Activities such as : Threading beads Variety of drawing and painting Play work Manipulative Toys Large and small blocks Paper Work
3) Children are learning and using new words. They progress from speaking simple, short to complex and long sentences. Express their needs verbally. Love to talk, narrate experiences and ask a variety of questions, show interest in written.	3) Listen to a variety of sounds, words, instructions. Converse with attentive adults, Interact with children Be exposed to written script.	3) Listening to stories Narrating stories Reading stories with adult Singing songs and rhymes Games and activities to develop auditory and visual discrimination. Clearly written children's names.
4) Children are imaginative, mix fantasy and reality. Use simple reasoning and problem solving skills. Generally perception bound, they believe what they see. Understand simple concepts related to familiar situations. Able to concentrate for about 10-15 minutes by age 5 in an activity.	4) Concrete experiences and using senses to understand the concepts. Freedom to experiment, make mistakes and discover solutions. Challenging and stimulating experiences. Freedom to select the activities in which they want to be involved.	4) Field Trips. Activities involving shapes, sorting, grouping, classifying, later number values by working with simple objects. Simple Science experiments conducted by children, Water block play puzzle
5) Learn to control and express feelings in acceptable manner. Seek adult approval at times defy or test adult authority. Slowly starts sharing materials, so-operates with peer group shows sympathy and concern for other children at times egocentric in thinking.	5) Many avenues to express feelings Acceptance, appreciation and emotional support from adults, Firm guidance and clear limits for what children can and cannot do. Opportunities to work individually and in groups.	5) Many different unstructured art activities such as Painting clay drama music puppets dance collage work, Water play, home corner with a variety of dolls and props for pretend play.

- Each participant was blindfolded as they stood in a group. Then part of a thick rope was pushed into their hands. Now they were asked to form a 'U' with the rope. A total confusion of shouted instructions followed for some 10 minutes after which we were asked to remove our blind folds. We saw a sort of circle which we had formed. Conclusion: As teachers any one of us should have taken up the responsibility and asked for silence, then directed each section. This would have brought about the end result. Another point was made by this game. We as teachers sometimes forget to treat our students as individuals and instruct them left, right and centre and the students blindly follow these instructions. Is it fright, obedience or simply trust which makes them do so?
 - We were all asked to form a straight line with the shortest in front and tallest behind. Then we were just asked to fall backwards. Did everyone do so? If not Why? Did we not expect her/him to save us from falling? Conclusion: Give trust to receive trust. Mr. Siddharth Kapoor stressed on skills for preschool that: the teacher must be an appraiser, advisor, forecaster, facilitator and enabler.
 - With all their points many test papers to check mental power, confidence, problem solving skills etc. were also given that the participants could judge themselves.
 - He stressed on the need to innovate different methods to educate children without suppressing their personality. Before reaching any conclusions participants were invited to express their views in following group discussions.
4. Participation of IAPE at the United Way Mela 2003. United Way of Baroda, was established in Baroda in 1986. In addition to several activities such as helping the needy, and helpless, mobilizing and entertaining the people of Baroda with their ever-popular Garba every year. It also helps NGO's in many different ways. One such way is by organizing the United Way Mela 2003 to give the local NGO's a platform to portray themselves and

become known to the people of Baroda. IAPE Baroda branch as members of the United Way of Baroda, had a stall at the United Way Mela 2003 which was held on 3rd, 4th, and 5th Jan 2003 at the Navlakhi Ground Dandia Bazaar, Baroda. 5 main activities were carried out by IAPE: Creativity Corner. Fishing for the lucky dip. Face painting, Tattoo, Mehendi, The wheel of knowledge. All our member schools pooled in their efforts by donating gifts for the stall, sparing personnel to man the stall and special entertainment by their students for the public.

Activities in the year 2003-2004 included :

1. Workshop for Teachers on 'Learning Difficulties, If not Identified & Corrected in Time Could Become Learning Disabilities'

In the last 2 decades there has been a great rise in the children who are finding it difficult to coordinate their actions to the demands of the class, whether it is playing gross motor games, cognitive games, building blocks, singing Rhymes & jingles, talking in sequence, following directions, etc. etc. In short they have displayed Learning Difficulties.

It is preferred such errors be corrected in their early stages, because if not intervened, they can lead to Learning Disabilities and more difficulties in their progressive life.

Such correction can be done by the class teacher who is the first evaluator of children in their growing years. However, a teacher should not over see normal activities as problems either. Therefore it is advised one should know what the pointers of Learning Disability are when a child has Learning Difficulties.

The objective of this workshop, conducted by **Dr. Pubali Basu, professional psychologist at Shri Bhallalbhai Amin Anand Bal Marg, Darshan Kendra**, was to enhance understanding the deficits in the areas of visual perception..... affecting reading ability; visual motor function.... affecting writing ability; auditory perception affecting listening properly; spatial relationships.... affecting mathematic; concept formation..... affecting reasoning, memory & behaviour.

The response was overwhelming. We are planning to repeat this same workshop for those schools who could not be included in the first work shop.

2. Participation at the United Way Mela

IAPE Baroda branch, as members of the United Way of Baroda, had a stall at the 'United Way Mela 2004' which was held on 30th, 31st Jan. & 1st Feb., 2004 at the Polo Ground, Baroda.

Five main activities were carried out by IAPE member schools: (1) Creativity Corner; (2) Fishing for the Lucky Dip, (3) Face painting or Tatoo, (4) Mahendi, (5) Selling 'The Wheel of Knowledge'.

All our member schools pooled in their efforts by donating gifts for the stall, sparing time to man the stall and special entertainment by their students for the public. Hence made this event a great success.

About 140 NGOs took part at this Mela. The theme was "Be Friendly to the Differently abled". We are the proud winners of the Consolation Prize for the stall display.

3. School Assessment Programme

A task force has been formulated at the National level to develop an assessment check list for Early Childhood Development. The initial draft developed for the same, with due modification, is being used for this School Assessment Program.

This assessment accreditation check list will help to judge the strengths as well as the areas that need improvement for the schools, so as to strengthen the curriculum. The assessment process has been completed and the report will soon be available.



KOCHI

A two day workshop on Child Education, Imaginative Play, Constructive Activity, Puppet Making and Puppet Show was organized by the Indian Association for Preschool Education, Cochin Chapter in Chinmaya Vidyalyaya, Vaduthala in June. Mrs. Gladys Wilson (Rtd. Principal Balsevika Training Centre, Child Welfare Council, TVM and Mrs. Shyama P. Nair both eminent personalities in the field of preschool education were the resource persons. Mrs. Maya Mohan, president IAPE (Cochin Chapter) outlined the ideals behind IAPE and stressed the need for teachers to be innovative and enthusiastic and hence the need for such workshops.

Teachers from different schools participated. Mrs. Nair showed them how to make various

kinds of puppets – cone puppets, stick puppets, glove puppets, and puppets from waste materials. She demonstrated why puppets should be made an integral part of pre-school – how they can be used to teach alphabets, numbers, story or rhyme.

Mrs. Gladys Wilson said that children learn most while they play. She stressed the importance of various kinds of play – organized games, creative imaginative play. Each is important in its own way. Each participant was given a do-it – yourself kit comprising of puppet parts for the making of 3 kinds of puppets. The various groups organized a puppet show at the end of the session and certificates were distributed. We are planning to conduct another workshop during the course of the year.



PARBHANI

2002 – 2003

As per the decision taken in the executive body meeting held on 9th Feb. 2003, a one-day workshop on 'Preschool Child's Physical And Mental Health' was organized on 2/3/2003 for the anganwadi workers and other local preschool teachers in the auditorium, ZP Parbhani. The workshop was inaugurated by Dr. V N Pawar Hon. Vice Chancellor, MAU Parbhani in the presence of Shri Vikaschandra Rastogi CEO, ZP, and Parbhani.

Nearly 150 participants were benefited by this one-day workshop on the preschool child's physical and mental health. Many renowned pediatricians, physicians, child development experts guided the preschool teachers on various important topics like neonatal health, intensive care of malnourished children, preventive measures of child ill health, anthropometric indices of preschool children and their analysis, preschoolers' emotional development and fulfilling their needs, conducive home environment for all round development of preschoolers, low cost recipes on weaning and supplementary foods etc.

At this time, the former executive Vice President Prof. Visala Patnam, secretary Fauzia Khan (MLC Parbhani), treasurer Jaya Bangale of the IAPE National Branch were felicitated for their devoted work for preschool children.



MYSORE

The inaugural meeting of the Indian Association for Pre-school Education, Mysore branch was held on June 23-2001. The office bearers for the year 2001-2003 were elected. Mrs. Mahalakshmi gave the detailed information about Indian Association for Preschool Education and its rules and regulations. It was resolved to have workshops on different subjects to give information and knowledge to parents and teachers of the pre-schoolers.

Several workshops included held during 2001 to 2004 were:

1. Two workshops on music and movement were conducted by the secretary Ms. Mahalakshmi where the members were exposed to many action songs and also composed their own songs.
2. A workshop on 'Domains of Development' was organized and the resource person was Ms. Uma Shankari, President of the Cuddalore Branch. The workshop was well attended and there was active participation.
3. Two workshops on Number concept for pre-school children, phase 1 and 2 were conducted by Dr. T Padmini, Department of Education, University of Mysore. She enlightened the teachers on how to introduce number concept and how not to teach numbers. A group discussion on existing syllabi of L. KG AND U.KG in the city of Mysore was held.
4. On 14th December 2002 at University Conference Hall – Resource person Mrs. Indra Swaminathan. About 35 members attended.
5. On 15th March 2003 at ABC Montessori, a workshop on pre-reading and pre-writing, painting was held. The resource persons Dr. Prema, Dr. Gowramma, Mrs. Swapna and Mrs. Mahalakshmi. About 35 members were present.
6. On 10-01-2004 a workshop was held at Alpha Montessori – resource Person- Dr. H.S. Venkatesh Kumar, Psychologist. Dr. Krishna and Dr. Padmini gave lecture on "How to use Proverb's in daily life"
7. On 13-03-2004 a workshop at INCHARA Play

Home was held on Basic painting and drawing. The resource person was Mr. Akhilanka Manasa Sarowara Pushkarani.

Mrs. Mahalakshmi, Secretary Mysore Branch, attended the two-day meeting held at Bombay on 1st and 2nd July 2002. The second annual general body meeting was held on 25th March 2003 and new office bearers were elected. In the meeting, it was resolved to conduct survey of play homes and pre-Nurseries. A workshop in this connection was held at SHISHAY play Home.



Participants at Mysore - Music & Movement workshop



BARODA

A variety of programs were organized in 2002-2003. These included:

1. Organizing training programmes for teachers of Anganwadi / Municipal schools in story telling techniques, songs, and in the use of our teaching aids so they could use the same from our Dr. Murlidharan Library.
2. Teaching aids competition: Theme: Story Techniques.
3. Seminar by Mr. Siddharth Kapoor. Theme: The brain Tank- Changes Challenges and opportunities in the field of education. The seminar with Mr. Siddharth Kapoor started with the topic Paradigm shift in lateral thinking, concerning leadership. Subsequently attitude, determination, changing approach etc. were discussed. So with the help of clippings, group discussions, individual presentations, questions by the participants and games the seminar made a very interesting impact on one and all. Some very interesting points were emphasized with a few games played by the participants. Among the games played were:



COIMBATORE

2003 - 2004

The Coimbatore branch held several workshops:

1. Interface for Parents & Teachers on Health and Nutrition for School-going Children. This was conducted jointly with the Avinashlingam Deemed University
2. Joy of Parenting
3. Creating congenial classroom environments, writing positive remarks in progress reports, relationships between teachers, students, and parents.



PUNE

Just a note:

Rather than sharing specific programs of which there was in any case a dearth, I think it might be helpful to share some of the insights we gained in the process of trying to set up these workshops. A session on Parent Involvement in the Pimpri Chinchwad area was well attended over 40 participants. A similar one in Marathi at that organized at Garware Bal Bhavan, right in the midst of the city saw only 4 people turning up. One of the reasons given was that most people had not believed that IAPE Pune was conducting anything in Marathi!! Food for thought and perhaps a change in direction called for. The Annual General Body meeting saw less than 25 participants. However, when letters were sent out to specific schools (not because they were member schools of the IAPE) for a teachers workshop by Vishwas Parchure that explored issues of learning styles, team learning and teaching, experiential learning; the response was overwhelming. We used the same strategy again (i.e. targeting specific schools – not member schools) for the early April 2004 workshop on curriculum development conducted by Nalini Chhugani and Jana Mahadevan and were again pleasantly surprised with the response. Perhaps there are some lessons here to be learnt! Who are we there for and what should we be aiming at apart from the how, where and when of such programs!

Coimbatore Participants at the Interface on



Nutrition and Health



Teacher Skills



MUMBAI

Annual Report 2002-03

The year 2002 to 2003 was hectic year for IAPE Mumbai branch. Besides being involved with empowering pre-primary teachers with different skills it was decided to reach out to the parent community and invite experts in the field of pediatrics, child psychology and child development for better parent - child relationship. All this was possible because of all our active EC and non-EC members. A very special thanks to all the institutions that gave us space to conduct the workshops and seminars at their institutions. We hope this partnership will grow in the future.

MEETINGS AND WORKSHOPS

2002-2003

3rd to 7th June, '02 : Refresher Course - "Kismif - keep it simple make it fun".

A refresher course on **Science, Math's and Educational Technology** by Dr. Routella; Head Nehru Science Centre and his team of Science Experts and Ms. Jana Mahadevan and Ms. Nalini Chhugani, Senior IAPE Resource persons. The programme held at Nehru Science Centre involved activity-based learning, use of technology in classroom education and 2 hrs. 30 minutes of computer training everyday on 1:1 basis.

17th August, 2002

Two Simultaneous Workshops:

- (a) S.V.D.D. English School, Ghatkopa, "**Project method**" by Ms. Shanta Borkar where she provided related activities and experiences for an in depth study of a topic covering all areas of learning.
- (b) New Era School, Hughes Road : "**Preparing for reading & spelling - the Phonics Way**" by Mrs. Tanee Trivedi. She emphasized on the sounds of the alphabets and the stages that the children must go through to understand the sound of the hard and soft consonants and vowels.

20th August 2002

"Building Partnerships with Media for advocacy for the Young Child" at the Hall of Quest, basement, Nehru Planetarium, Worli.

I.A.P.E. and Maharashtra FORCES (Forum for Creche and Child Care Services) both bodies of professionals working in the field of early childhood care and development in collaboration with **Department of Post-Graduate Studies & Research in Home Science S.N.D.T. University** organised an interactive meet with the media to take up the cause of the young child in the field of early childhood, care and education and present a holistic perspective of the varied issues in the field.

21st September, 2002

Repeat the above workshops at:

- (a) New Era School : "**Project Method**" by Ms. Shanta Borkar.
- (b) S.V.D.D. English School, Ghatkopar "**Preparing for reading & spelling - the Phonics Way**" by Mrs. Tanee Trivedi.

30th November, 2002

Udayachal School, Vikhroli. A full day workshop on "**Language Development**" by Ms. Myrtle Nazareth. Listening, speaking, reading and writing, the 4 basic components of language were taken up and related experiences and activities were provided.

15th February, 2002

Two simultaneous workshops

- (a) At Arya Vidya Mandir Juhu : "**How children learn**" by Ms. Joyeeta Sengupta.
- (b) New Era School, Hughes Road : "**How children Learn**" by Ms. Nalini Chugani and Ms. Jana Mahadevan, an interactive workshop where participants learnt how children learn through sensorial experiences, trial & error and imitation.

ANNUAL REPORT 2003-2004

The year was once again hectic and eventful. The EC members worked hard to make the two Parent Interactin Programme titled "Parent Fun -03" and "Parent Fun - 04" a resounding success ! We were very happy to have reached out to atleast 1,000 parents and realised how much more needed to be done in this area ! Sincere thanks to all the EC members and other members of IAPE Mumbai. Kudos to all of them!! The Indian Airlines Staff Residents Association was our organizing partner for the Parent Fun -03 and Swami Vivekananda School, Borivili for Parent Fun -04. We thank them for their support.

12th & 13th April, 2003 :

"PARENT FUN 2003" - Venue : Indian Airlines Ideal School, Kalina; Santacruz, West.

There were talks by renowned **Psychologist Dr. Harish Shetty, Pediatrician Dr. Poddar and Neuroscientist Ms. Vidita Vaidya** followed by Question-Answer sessions. These were attended by over 500 parents over 2 days and the programme highly appreciated by them. Information was also given about appropriate books, food and toys for children.

About 500 children enjoyed the Puppet shows, painting activities, story sessions and games organised for them.

27th September, 2003 :

Two simultaneous full day workshops :

Theme : "**Guidelines for forming Preschool Syl-**

labus", Venue : Royal Girls High School, Mira Road, Dist. Thane, Resource Persons : Ms. Nalini Chugani & Ms. Farida Baria.

Venue : Udyachal Primary School : Vikhroli, Resources Person : Ms. Binaifer Chooga, there were 50 participants at each workshop.

22nd November, 2003 :

Two simultaneous full day workshops :

Theme : **"Emotional Quotient"**, Venue : Swami Vivekananda School: Kandivili, Resource Persons : Ms. Joyeeta Sengupta.

Theme : **"The art of Story Telling"**. Venue: New Era School, Hughes Road, Resource Person : Ms. Nandita Jhaveri, there were 50 participants at each workshop.

10th & 11th January, 2004 :

Parent Fun - 2004

Venue : Swami Vivekananda International School, Borivili - 4 Talks and Question & Answer Sessions

each day. Dr. Nivedita Rawal on **"Discipline for Children"**, Mr. Anish from BNHS - slide show on **"Children & Environment"**, Ms. Varsha Desai on **"Dev. Concentration in Children through Yoga"** Ms. Joyeeta Sengupta on **"Influence of Media & TV"**, Ms. Charlette Fernandes on **"Pressures on Children"**, **"Dental Hygiene"** by Dr. N. Tandel, **"Nutrition and health"** by Dr. S. Vaidhya, **"How Children learn"** by Ms. Nandita Jhaveri.

A projection of IAPE preceded every talk. There were puppet shows, paintings activities and story sessions for children.

7th February, 2004 :

Two simultaneous workshops :

Theme : **"Music and Movement"**, Venue : New Era School, Hughes Road, Resource Person : Ms. Aloka Dutta Gupta.

Theme : **"Emotional Quotient"**, Venue: Springfield School, Resource Person : Ms. Joyeeta Sengupta, there were 50 participants at each workshop.

The Publication of this issue of Balak is partly sponsored by **United Way of Baroda**.

United Way of Baroda has also supported the Publication of Gujarati version of Balak.

IAPE Baroda Branch has published both English & Gujarati issues of Balak - 2004.

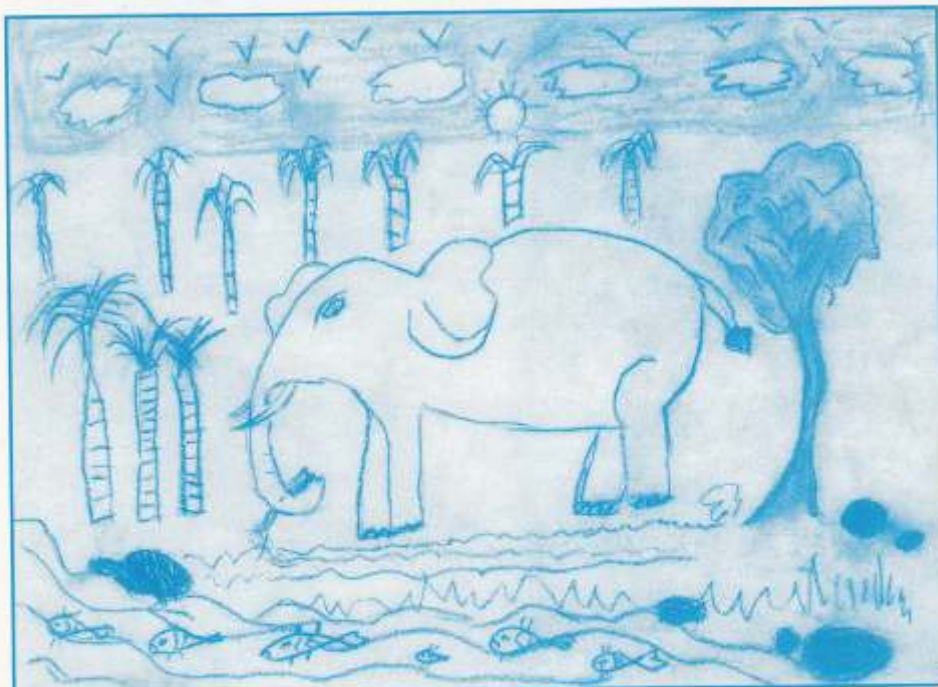
Veena R. Mistry

President - IAPE, Baroda Branch



Shriti Shah

Balbhavan, Baroda



Raunak

Balbhavan, Baroda