

Ecd Forum

A NEW WAVE IN EDUCATION

Empowering Educators, Nurturing Young Minds

www.ecdforum.org



**The Role Of Early
Years Educators in
the New Normal**





An Initiative of DN Acharya Foundation for Children and Women Welfare

The Early Child Development Forum (ECDF) launched in 2019, is an initiative of the DN Acharya **FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN AND WOMEN WELFARE (DNAF)-2014**. ECDF endeavours to work towards empowering children from all cross sections of the society and create a bonhomous environment for children in their early childhood years, so that they grow up to be sensible, happy and confident individuals. Early Child Development Forum family believes that it can be done only, if all the stakeholders work in a synchronised way towards this goal.

VISION

To bring all Preschools, NGO's, Children Activity Centres, Parents, Educators, Balwadi's, Anganwadi's, Corporate entities, Media Houses, Companies dealing in Children Products and anyone related to children in their early years of growing, to come together to Brainstorm, Advocate, Interact, Exchange Ideas and to bring about a coherent change in the domain of Early Childhood Care and Education. It is a platform where we ideate, initiate, innovate and implement the best practices in ECCE. The Forum essentially endeavours to assist children from the economically challenging sections of the society, both from the urban and rural areas, in attaining quality early childhood education and care.

MISSION

To empower **EDUCATORS, PARENTS, CHILDREN AND OTHER STAKE HOLDERS** by sensitising them and then facilitating them with training programs, awareness campaigns, leadership programs, Workshops, seminars and webinars and community activities that would enable them to become positive contributors in the domain of Early Childhood Care and Education. We work towards capacity building of individuals, organizations and communities in delivering early childhood development and care programs.

GOAL

Early childhood education can be defined as "...warm, nurturing care and enriched learning experiences designed to simulate a child's development in all key developmental areas."

Early Childhood Development interventions include sensitising, educating and supporting parents, delivering services to children, developing capacities of caregivers, teachers and children, using mass communications to enhance parents and caregivers knowledge, practices and by counselling the stakeholders. Our programs for children are center or home-based, formal or non-formal, and also include parents' education.

MEMBERSHIP

Any Preschool, NGO working in the domain of early years, Children Activity Centres, Parents, Educators, Corporate entities, Media Houses, Companies dealing in Children Products and anyone related to children in their early years of growing can be a member of the forum. For further details contact us at ecdinfo2019@gmail.com or visit www.ecdforum.org



DN ACHARYA FOUNDATION
FOR CHILDREN AND WOMEN WELFARE

EdCLAN

A NEW WAVE IN EDUCATION

Empowering Educators, Nurturing Young Minds

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FOUNDER & CEO: Dr. Vasavi Acharya

EDITOR: Dr. Vasavi Acharya

ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Indrani Choudhury Deka

DESIGNING TEAM:

Layout Design: Amarjyoti Baruah

Cover Page : Puja Dewan

MARKETING TEAM

Himangshu Sharma

Sunny Choudhury

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED:

BOOKBELL

27, 2nd Floor Opp : ICON Academy

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Early Child Development Forum (ECDF) AND
D N Acharya Foundation for Children and
Women Welfare (DNAF)

Address: Krishna Magnum Opera Tower 1, Zoo Tiniali,
R.G. Baruah Road, Guwahati-21

ED CLANNING

Dear Readers



We have stepped into another year and this is indeed a time to celebrate, leaving behind any thoughts or fears that stops us from dreaming big, setting new goals and working towards them. I feel all educators of this new year are more aware, more informed, more technically pro, more connected than ever before. Yes, of course, that is what 2020 helped us become- emerge stronger, like never before.

Thinking about it, my personal journey in the year 2020, has been quite challenging. The sudden shove out of my comfort zone left me bewildered for the first few days, almost leaving a feeling of numbness in me. But as the days passed, I put myself together and geared up to face all that was lined up in the days and months ahead of me. Well, in these times meditation, exercise and quiet time helped me a lot to focus and stay grounded. In the work front the challenge was even bigger. We had to brainstorm, ideate and plan new strategies to cope with the change in consumer behavior and expectations, change our working style and much more. I feel that 2020 has metamorphosed me into a multi-tasker, an astute planner, a resilient being and a more compassionate soul. I thank the year gone by for enabling to discover and unveil, a different and stronger me.

We all are fighters and survivors, and this issue of ED Clan is a testimony of what we all have gone through in 2020, all that we have learnt in this journey and the path forward. This issue consists of articles from experts in the field, educators and education leaders from all over the world, sharing their learnings and experiences. We are glad that the 4th issue has for the first time included an interview section 'Q & A with...' which from now on will feature educationists and education leaders of repute.

Wishing you all a Sparkling New Year....

Happy Reading!!

Signing off

Dr. Vasavi Acharya

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DR. KATHRYN MURRAY

Dr Kathryn Murray has over 35 years of experience in the education sector, working in schools, early learning centres and university. She has written and published numerous articles for teachers and parents in magazines and research journals. She is a published author featured in the Change Makers book for inspiring women.

Kathryn's qualifications include: Doctor of Education, Masters in Learning Management, Bachelor of Education, Diploma of Teaching (Primary/Preschool), Certificate IV Training and Assessment as well as numerous certificates in education based professional development.

Dr Kathryn Murray is the CEO and founder of Future Strong Education, a global education consultancy business based in Australia. She works with teachers, parents and educators from around Australia, New Zealand, Indonesia, Asia, America and Europe. Kathryn speaks at conferences by invitation locally, nationally and internationally. She provides workshops, professional development and coaching online and face to face with parents and early childhood educators to refine classroom practices.

MOVING FROM UNCERTAINTY TO HOPE AFTER COVID-19 -THE EDUCATORS ROLE

Harvard Paediatrics Professor, Jack Shonkoff said recently that some of us may think that children have not been affected by the corona virus. Generally, children have not contracted the virus so may be considered as not being 'touched' by the effects of the pandemic. However, many families have been under extreme stress. This could be caused by insecurity of finances, housing, employment, schooling, lack of interaction with others, potential domestic abuse, alcohol or drug abuse. Children are a part of those families and see and hear all that occurs – both positive and negative.

Across the world, attendance at schools and early learning centres has been inconsistent with restrictions of social distancing, hand washing, numbers of children and changing and burnout staff. Children and families have experienced long periods of not seeing their friends, not freely playing outside, and spending a lot of time in front of screens. Parents have spent time trying to find a way forward to manage having the whole family home every hour of every day for weeks and months. Trying to work from home or look for work has put incredible strain on the family unit.



Uncertainty about the future and worries about health have made it very difficult to find hope in a changing landscape. Whilst some families have embraced the opportunity of a slower pace, with everyone home and reconnecting the family bonds – some families have really struggled.

As early learning centres get back to normal routines and build back up to full attendance, children and educators continue to be mindful of Covid safe procedures. This too can cause stress. We often say that children are adaptable and don't fully consider the impact an uncertain life has on them. Educators have always been in the position of detecting signs of family abuse and because there has been less opportunity for this, there is a danger that some children may be in difficult circumstances without support.

WHAT CAN EDUCATORS DO?

Educators **MUST** look after their own wellbeing before supporting anyone else – both at home and at work. This is really important to prevent overwhelm and burnout. Take time for yourself, go into nature, deep breathe, smile and spend time where you feel a sense of belonging. All of these pursuits release endorphins in the brain and make us feel better and change our perspective.

None of us are alone when we are trying to normalise the day and provide a stable environment for the children in our schools and centres. Network with other teachers to share strategies, frustrations, concerns and joyful experiences that happen in the classroom.

Young children cannot clearly articulate how they feel or what's making them act in a certain way. So, as educators, we must read between the lines so that we can be proactive and put preventative measures in place to support each

child. Signs of anxiety in children (or adults) impact the way they self regulate. Punishing behaviour doesn't help and can make things worse if a child is already agitated. So instead, use all of your skills to redirect, distract, support and calmly manage any behaviours.

WHAT ARE WE DEALING WITH?

Children (or adults) who are struggling with anxiety could be:

- Being bossy and trying to control others
- Not sleeping well, which leads to irritability
- Being angry and possibly aggressive toward others
- Showing challenging behaviours and being uncooperative
- Avoiding participating in activities or not wanting to go to school at all
- Having pains in the tummy or headaches
- Not paying attention or ability to focus
- Being over emotional and crying or yelling when it's not appropriate

(adapted from www.pathways2success.com)

Meditation, deep breathing exercises, Yoga for kids, going outside into nature, promoting dramatic play so children can 'practice' life, all provide ways to release emotions and anxiety in young children. The set up of the classroom environment plays a role in

the flow of the day and the experiences provided for each child. Try to divide your classroom into several smaller 'rooms'. Build smaller learning spaces and encourage pairs or small group to engage in dramatic play so that children can 'play out' and understand the life changes they have witnessed or experienced. Teach as though all children are traumatised. Develop strong routines, have organised and fun transitions from one part of the day to the next. Use a visual timetable to help with transitions so children can see the different parts of the day. It's very important to spend quality time with the children. Read books about friendship, play games, sing songs, laugh and be sensitive to those who may not want to join in. Make sure that children are eating, drinking and resting as you monitor their emotional and physical health – make sure you look after your mental and physical health too!

It is so very important to recover and reconnect with each child. When a child feels loved and supported, emotional strength will develop so that learning can take place. Social and emotional wellbeing **MUST** come before academics. Take your time, allow children to have choices and let them work out the solutions to problems. This helps to build self confidence and healing by feeling empowered after possibly feeling disempowered during the uncertain time of the pandemic.

RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

There is a lot of research that expands on the balance of protective and risk factors to support the development of young children in the developmental domains - physical, cognitive, social, emotional and language growth.

Risk factors are said to be events that could lead to negative outcomes or potential harm for the child. They are largely determined by the environment, children find themselves in. Risk factors that influence a child's disposition and development can also be determined by *biological factors* (low birth weight), *cognitive factors* (learning issues), *social and emotional factors* (aggression or anxiety), *family or*

community factors (violence or alcohol/substance abuse, poverty) or a *global pandemic*. A pandemic can certainly be seen as a risk factor for children's growth and development and covers many areas of concern.

Protective factors decrease the possibility of poor outcomes for children and mediate the influence of the risk factors. Protective factors could include, high quality parenting, high levels of intelligence, strong family relationships, friendship groups and connections, stable family income, security in the classroom. Protective factors help to add to the resilience of the child. In our classrooms, we can ensure that children have the opportunity to experience many forms of protective behaviours to support the growth in each of the developmental domains. We do this by identifying the needs of each child and addressing them in a positive way.

When we think about Bronfenbrenner's Bio Ecological Model, we know that the child can influence their environment just as the environment can influence the child's health and well being. As educators, it is part of our role to monitor, notice, support, facilitate, and direct the environment to ensure that children have the best possible start in life. It comes with the territory that we support the parents too. Modelling protective behaviours in the classroom may instill an understanding of strategies within the parents.

UNCERTAINTY TO HOPE

As we reflect on 2020 and the changes that have occurred across the globe and locally, we notice that there have been major challenges. The role of the educator in moving children from uncertainty to hope can be confronting. But it can also be so very rewarding when we see children physically and mentally calm themselves, play, laugh and relax as young children should, as they engage with the world. We can learn a lot about every child's inner state by observing how they play and how they process the world. Let's allow time for play and healing as we move toward a strong and hopeful future for each child.

EXPERTS SPEAK



**DIANA
MORELLO**

Over the past 20 years, Diana has worked as teacher, administrator, coach and consultant in both public education, non-profit organizations and private education. She has been an Early Learning Educator and Advocate for most of her career and has designed her education and experiences intentionally to span the cultures between birth to 5 and school-age programming and leadership. Prior to coming to UD, Diana was a Regional Early Literacy Specialist for State Support Team Region 12 in Ohio. Diana holds a Doctorate Degree in Educational Leadership from Duquesne University Pittsburgh, Master of Arts in Early Learning from Concordia University St. Paul, Literacy Specialist and Reading Endorsement from Ohio as well as Principal and Teacher License.

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR NORMAL, IT IS OVER THERE

If you are looking for normal, it is over there”, I remarked to a small group of kindergarten mothers who were talking outside of the Early Learning Center on an abnormally warm fall day in Delaware. Near the adjoining side yard, a group of five-year-old boys were playing a game of chase. If you were not aware of it being early October 2020 and the entire world was in the mist of a global pandemic, you would have thought everything, was as we might say, “just another normal day”. Strange as it seems to most adults, in our “new” normal, the three boys had just finished their day on Zoom calls with a kindergarten teacher they have yet to meet.

The Early Learning Center at the University of Delaware is a full day early childhood program providing care and education for young children birth through grade 5. The center supports the learning and development of approximately 250 children and collaborates with University of Delaware faculty to support the mission of the College of Human Development and Family Studies. When the COVID pandemic hit us fast and furious in March of 2020, we did not have time to think, plan or hesitate. We worked with University Leadership to alert all families as a result of the pandemic, the ELC would be closed until further notice. Not realizing at this time this would result in a three month suspension from face to face interactions with

children, the ELC teaching staff was thrust into a world of virtual education and rose to the occasion in support of children and families. The leadership team quickly pivoted to online leadership supports for early educators who were somewhat hesitant to use technology. The leadership team worked to minimize fear and support anxiety that may have caused us to flee or freeze. We decided it best to work through the difficult and lean into courage. Many of us who follow Brene Brown, realized we were putting into practice many of the topics we have read about in her writings. We learned to support each other even when we were confused, and things felt more than chaotic. On July 1, 2020, we resurfaced as an in-person program ready to enact our intentional, well thought out COVID reentry plan and continue our quality learning curriculum with half of the young children, we would typically support and an abundance of school-age children who we would typically only see during our before and after care programming.

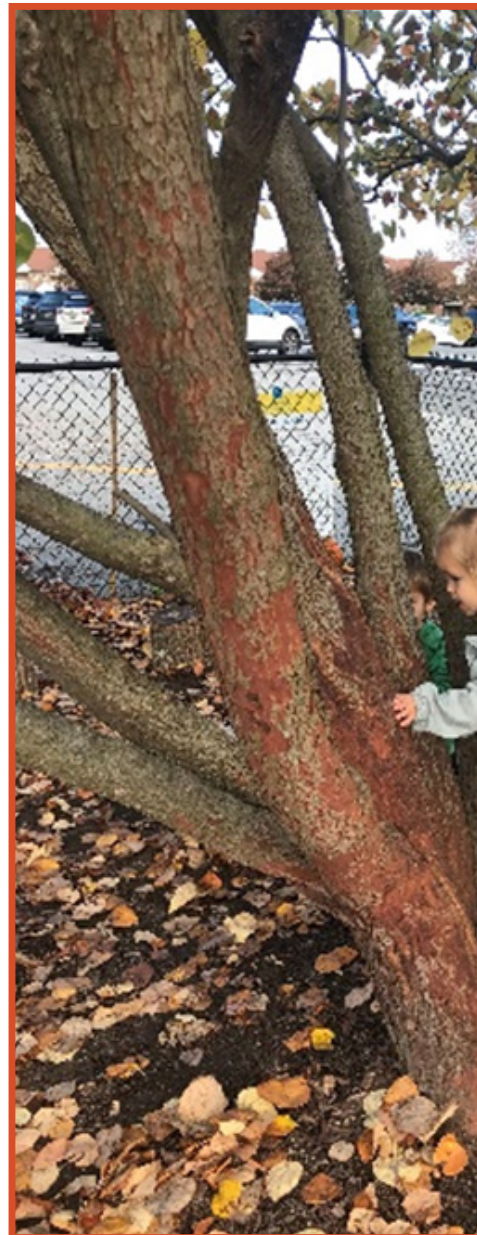
Opening the Center Before receiving children into the learning center, we had a two-week window to re-open and re-imagine our space. Immediately, staff began to “think together” developing action plans to design and develop ways we could spend more time in our very large outdoor learning area and keep classrooms of children separated. Fortunately, The ELC has classroom doors opening to the outdoor learning environment; this allows for easy and intentional transitions.

Teams of teachers quickly started weeding our outdoor gardens, which seemed almost jungle like after a four-month absence. We further developed the mud kitchen areas, music and dress up area, climbing zone and archeological digging area, all with clear yet non limiting boundaries between interest areas. Teachers also worked together to develop learning spaces, just outside their classroom doors so children could experience a free flow of activities between the inside and outdoor environment; the ideas we started to explore with Elizabeth Jarman pre-COVID, of Elizabeth Jarman Communicative Friendly Spaces UK. We were

pleased with our newly designed spaces and hoped the children would also find them interesting and easy to navigate. We are happy to report they did!

Learning how to Pivot Just as many other schools and businesses had to learn how to quickly adjust, we found ourselves doing the same. We learned how to pivot and pivot quick. Our School-age program existing of no full time staff person prior to COVID, emerged as a four classroom operation with five full time staff who quickly “pivoted” from their usual preschool curriculum into supporting the online learning of approximately 60 children from kindergarten through fifth grade. There were times when we were making decisions in the moment and times when we spent hours creating schedules for children attending approximately six different schools. We spent time zooming with administrators of various school districts, emailing teachers for clarification, and supporting parents as they too were learning how to pivot with their child and the various organizations.

There were times when we would look at each other and say, “What is happening here?” and the next thing you know, a family would send an email thanking us for supporting their school-age child and themselves through the “new normal”. There were also many times when children



would need social-emotional support and we were fortunate to zoom with parents to partner with them during this confusing time. As we continue to move through the end of this year, we will continue to pivot with schools, teachers, administrators, children and families, to make sure when we pivot, we do not topple.

Things We Miss and Things We Cherish

Seeing faces, as a child remarked after seeing me from my car window after I removed my mask while social distancing, Ms. Diana, “I can see your face”

The long and intense struggle to be as explicit as possible about health and safety protocol and anticipating it will work out when enacted as we anticipated in the planning.

“No More Zoom” signs from the kindergarten children!

The joy of children playing together. Helping each other navigate technology and showing interest in what each other are doing.

Playing with the Guinea Pigs.

The struggle of kindergarten children trying to maneuver their new school experience while remaining at the preschool they love. Longing to feel like a “big kid” but it does not seem to be happening like grown-



ups once described.

The multitude of masks found on the ground.

Feeling tense while waiting for the COVID result of a co-worker, parent or child Families no longer permitted to navigate hallways and being creative about ways to meet them in various locations around the outside of the building. Trying to provide a sense of engagement in the world of early learning they once remembered.

Pandemic Pause We are all discovering how our many strengths help us navigate in times of uncertainty and in times of celebration. We are striving to maintain local, state and federal protocols to reduce the risk of spreading COVID while at the same time providing children, families and staff with the experiences they deserve. We are supporting the development of all children, infant through school age and are also supporting all the adults who participate in our program. We have had tears, cheers and disappointments, but pausing to remember our mission and vision as we navigate has been a way to stay focused and renewed. Our hope is all Early Learning programs will find the opportunities hidden in the trials we face and as we navigate the wave of uncertainty, we will all find each other more resilient in our work with children and families.



EXPERTS SPEAK

WORKING WITH CHILDREN IN CHANGING, AND CHALLENGING TIMES

DR. SUE
ALLINGHAM

EdD MA BA (Hons)

'An inspirational trainer who listens'

Sue's career started as a teacher, finally becoming a Senior Early Years Lead in a Primary School and Lead Teacher for her Local Authority. Moving into research Sue gained an MA then a Doctorate, both in Early Childhood Education, from Sheffield University. This led to becoming a Local Authority Early Years Adviser enabling her to develop her practice working with provision across the EYFS. As an Independent Consultant, Author and Trainer, Sue is known for her practical style of working

through coaching, mentoring, modelling, training and working alongside.

As Consultant Editor of EYE (Early Years Educator) her writing is familiar to many, and she has written two books that support practice across the Early Years and into Key Stage One – *Transitions in the Early Years* and *Emotional Literacy in the Early Years*. Both published by Practical Preschool Books.

It could be said that working in Early Childhood Education is ever changing and often challenging, but experiencing a pandemic has heightened our awareness of this. Who knows where we will be by the time this article has gone to print and is read. Hopefully the world will be back to a more familiar place and Covid 19 will be behind us. However, we do not go through change without it causing us to reflect on what has gone before, what is happening now, and what will happen next. We will all have learnt something from these challenging times. And this includes the children we work with. No matter how young they are, all the children will have noticed something. Not least of which will be that they haven't been able to attend their settings or see familiar people in real life. Of course you may have interacted with your families through video links, but touch and closeness is missing. As adults, we know how this affects us, and it makes a difference to the children too.

But as adults, we deal with change and challenge differently. This is because we have a wealth of life experience that we can draw upon to shape how we respond when something happens. None of us have ever had to deal with a pandemic, so we are drawing on all sorts of strategies that have worked for us before, some successfully and some not so much. The youngest children don't have these reserves:

Settings may receive children who have experienced more disruption and discontinuity "than their professional caregivers have experienced in the course of their own lives"

(Brooker, 2008, page 3).

Dealing with change can be hard. The youngest children require us to be consistent in our approach in order to support them with our greater understanding. This sounds challenging, but actually we work with children through many types of transition, another word for change, on a daily basis. Dealing with a pandemic and what happens next is a greater challenge, but the strategies of helping the youngest children to cope with the change are the same.

We all go through two types of transition everyday-
-Horizontal transitions
-Vertical transitions

Horizontal transitions occur on a daily or regular basis and usually refer to a movement or a change in routine. Horizontal transitions describe activities such as children going from the classroom to the playground (a movement) or taking part in the annual sports day event (a change in routine).

In contrast, vertical transitions are much more significant and linked to specific events that do not happen on a regular basis. Starting school is described as a vertical transition and, interestingly, we often discuss children moving 'up' from nursery to primary school and moving 'up' from primary school to secondary school. The role of parents is particularly important in the vertical transitions children experience in moving 'up' from one school to another, but so is the role of teachers and teaching assistants (TAs).

(<https://www.open.edu/openlearncreate>)

What is happening now is a 'vertical transition'. The role of the adults is critical here.

The central tenet here must be 'respect'. And this must be shown to all involved. Whilst this is true at all times, in this pandemic world point of view can be challenging.

Children's feelings should also be respected. It is questionable whether adults should attempt to jolly children along when they are bereft at being left in the nursery, or when their friend will not play with them.

(Dowling 2007 p74)

The same will be true of parents who may feel uncomfortable using Nursery again, and team members who might not be at ease working again. Dealing with transition is about more than one person – but the child must always be at the centre. And becoming used to change is a challenge that

takes time. Transition is not a one off event, it's a process. Consistency of approach and time are the keys here. Our work as we return to normal must be viewed through these three lenses-

-How well have the children come to terms with their feelings on entering nursery? How do I know?

-How many routines and rules in the group are totally in the interests of the children's wellbeing? How many are for the convenience of the adults?

-An understanding that children develop in the context of relationships and the environment around them

I make no apology for giving the last word to Loris Malaguzzi from 1994

Posing Important Questions

When you begin working with children in the morning, you must, as adults, pose questions about the children, such as: "When are these children really going to begin socializing?" And at

the same time the children will pose questions to the adults: "When are the adults really going to begin socializing?" This is a dialogue that needs to be continual between the adults and the children. The adults ask questions from the world of adults to the children. The children will ask questions to the adults. The expectations that the children have of the adults and the adults have of the children are important. We must spend some time talking about these expectations.

(Your Image of the Child: Where Teaching Begins by Loris Malaguzzi. <https://www.reggioalliance.org/downloads/malaguzzi:ccie:1994.pdf>)

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The poster features a circular logo on the left with the text 'ECDF' and 'EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT FORUM' around two children. On the right is a stylized tree where the canopy is a globe and the trunk is an open book, with various characters and symbols on the leaves. The background is a gradient of blue, green, and yellow.

**Don't miss
this opportunity**

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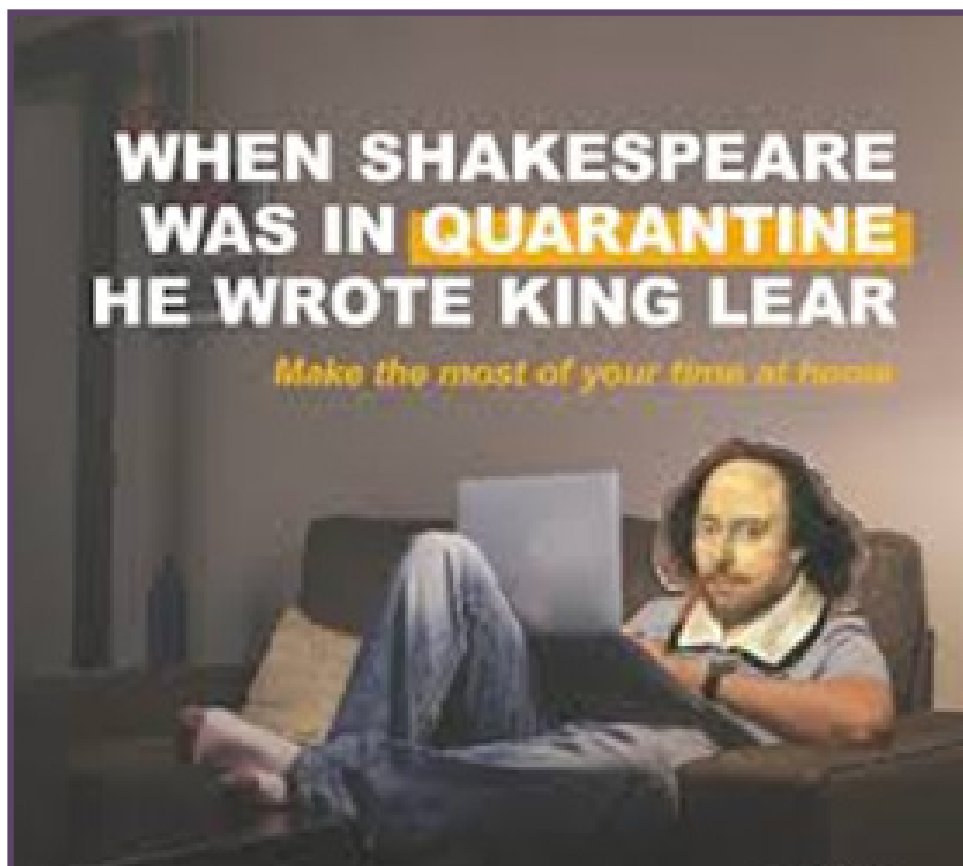
SIMRAN BALLANI

An Educationist, Strategist & Change Maker with 22 years of experience in US and India. Gold medallist in Early Childhood Education. Currently pursuing PG Diploma in Education Leadership. Training Specialist with NABET – Quality Council of India. Research Paper Publication – CCE Finland and World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology, UK. Invitee Speaker/Panellist with CCE Finland, BITS Pilani, IIT Mumbai & other ED Tech conferences. She has been awarded Best Chief Learning Officer for year 2017 and 2020. Innovation Research award recipient for year 2019. Zonal Head – Bangalore – South India – Early Child Development Forum (ECDF, NGO).

CORONA'S NEW NORMAL – STORY OF AN EDUCATION LEADER

This has been eventful year nonetheless for everyone, not to forget in life of an educator – it's almost a life changing experience! As a **School Leader**, I had the primary responsibility of ensuring the well-being of my team and find ways to ensure that little ones continued the learning while in-school learning is suspended. The COVID19 crisis presented us an opportunity to have school leaders realign their roles and support teachers to focus on doing what is best for their students.

Though the journey for me personally wasn't an easy one, I realised that I had to develop a strong response more urgently now than ever before to mitigate the disruption to my team,



the little ones and their parents were facing as they continue to be out of school. Additionally, there were dynamic policy changes rapidly in educating pre-schoolers online and I kept wondering how we could adapt and develop systems that can empower and support teachers alike to focus on learning success.

Now that a lot has been accomplished in the year almost gone by, we all still need to constantly revisit the remarkable journey we encountered and in turn make it a small success story in our personal diaries

Mid of March 2020 - I suddenly stepped into a life of denial from a perfect normal life – What is corona and why can't I travel and why will my workplace even close for few weeks? These were my top thoughts of denial to myself. The only solace was working in the background with new curriculum ideas for our school and prepares engaging and innovative content

As **April** approached, this denial rapidly turned into

a struggle. While I was with a loving family and my close circle of friends were just a call away, I started missing my travel, work and freedom. It was quite harrowing for a perky girl like me to witness a complete stop to everything normal and the beginning of a boxed-in life. Many a days, I hit rock bottom and for the first time in life did not know what to do with myself. However, it is well said that when we hit rock bottom the only way is up.

This was the point where I vowed to take one day at a time and looking/ dressing up the best

each minute. During this time I read this very nice quote and it became an inspiration of sorts. When Shakespeare was in quarantine, he wrote 'King Lear'. Make the most of your time. It was about time to start working on new goals in new so called normal.

-Developing an online learning delivery methodology with my team within the framework of prescribed government guidelines.

-Creating the basic coursework of 'ABC of Online Teaching for Facilitators' who were caught by surprise with this whole new mode of learning and delivering lessons to pre-schoolers.

-Personally, studying further had been a lazy goal for a quiet a long time which needed action. I added the same with learning of a new art project, expanding my work network to international arena and reading. It was time to see what could be accomplished amidst tsunamis of lockdowns and curfews.

Extreme circumstances call for extreme measures
and elimination of negative elements around me was mother of all goals. This also meant taming the inner demons of fear. Have I been able to accomplish all of it? Not yet, but I'm very proud of my progress so far and keeping with the promise of optimism renewal each day!

My positive manifestation turned out to be like Aladdin's magic lamp and here is what worked perfectly well:

- Our online sessions for preschoolers is going very well with parents cooperating and team motivation is at an all-time high. As a reputed school, we are doing quite well, given the circumstances.

- Being a part of international education forum was a dream and now I am an integral part of CCE Finland's team – honoured and humbled to work with reputed education experts each day.

- I have always wanted to study further, hence I enrolled in an education leadership post graduate program with the Asian College.

- My father had always wanted me to do something for the Government of India even if its pro-bono. I was selected to train 80 educators by NABET - Quality Council of India.

- A research paper publication by an international research house was another dream that turned into reality. It was good fortune that my paper got published by the World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology, UK.

- Public speaking has been a recent obsession of mine and suddenly even during Covid-19, I was speaking, moderating and conceptualising various national and international conferences.

Last, but not the least, this new normal has made me realise that it is high time I start giving back to society. I was looking for a foundation in doing some meaningful and innovative work - I'm now a member of ECDF (Early Childhood Development Forum). Our new initiative include planning upliftment projects for pre-schools in the southern part of India.

Though I ache going back to normal life, yet I cannot help but be immensely grateful for what is unfolding while I'm busy chasing my dreams and not giving up. My better half politely suggested not to keep talking about me in this article but I strongly feel the only way to inspire others is to be honest about our personal struggles, defeats, sadness and triumphs.

'Power of manifestation and positivity' is lot more important than we give the term credit for. It is actually as simple as manifesting and in turn the universe is conspiring to make it real for us. This has been also a great time to nurture key relationships and clearly knowing which doors to close and keep our focus on positive people in life.

A sunset chaser, in case you don't know, is one who spies a beautiful sunset-in-the-making and then needs one more vantage viewpoint to absorb its beauty yet again. Similarly, if you are having a tough day, or a tough week or even a tough 2020, you are not alone, keep going - it will get easier I promise. Try to find good things in every part of your day, smile at people or dial that bestie and have a heartfelt conversation. You'd be surprised at how good the small things make you feel. Overcome fear and the things that make you apprehensive or nervous. Leave the fear behind and go get what you want. May you keep manifesting and chasing your dreams.....!

INTERVIEW



Q & A with RAE PICA VIRGINIA, USA

• **TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF**

I have been an early childhood education consultant dedicated to the development and education of the whole child for 40 years! As someone who since fourth grade has known that she wanted to be a writer, I am thrilled to say that I have authored 21 books for early childhood professionals and for parents.

I am a former adjunct instructor for the University of New Hampshire and currently a blogger, online course creator, and keynote speaker. Among the organizations I have addressed are the National Association for the Education of Young Children, the Maryland Association for Elementary School Principals, Eric Jensen's Learning Brain Expo, and the National Family Child Care Association.

My presentations are currently being given virtually, but I'm really enjoying the experience.

Although born and raised in New England, I moved 10 years ago to Alexandria, Virginia, where I live with my cat, Mickey. I made the move to take advantage of the social and cultural opportunities possible in the Washington DC area. The pandemic has temporarily paused my ability to take advantage of them, but I am looking forward to the day I can once again enjoy all that the area has to offer.

- **WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT BOOKS YOU HAVE WRITTEN AND WHEN DID YOU START WRITING?**

Writing is in my blood! In fact, my great-uncle John Frasca was a Pulitzer-prize-winning journalist! I have written since fourth grade and still contend that the greatest gift I ever received was the typewriter another great-uncle gave me when I was in seventh grade.

Among the books I've written are a number of activity books promoting movement and active learning. They include *Toddlers Moving & Learning*, *Preschoolers & Kindergartners Moving & Learning*, *Early Elementary Children Moving & Learning*, and *Active Learning Across the Curriculum*. My three latest are *Acting Out! Avoid Behavior Challenges with Active Learning Games and Activities*, *What If Everybody Understood Child Development? Straight Talk About Bettering Education and Children's Lives*, and its follow-up, *What If We Taught the Way Children Learn? More Straight Talk About Bettering Education and Children's Lives*.

- **GIVE US AN INSIGHT INTO YOUR LATEST BOOK.**

What If We Taught the Way Children Learn and its predecessor are my two favorite books because they gave me the opportunity to speak out in defense of childhood, play-based education, and developmentally appropriate practice in ECE.

Some of the topics I covered in this latest book are using an understanding of child development to help with transitions, the hazards of screen use in the classroom, the link between movement and challenging behavior, and the problems inherent in teaching children to fear.

The short chapters almost all began as blog posts that resulted from stories I read or heard from teachers and parents unhappy with what's occurring in early childhood education.

- **TELL US ABOUT YOUR ACHIEVEMENTS AND RECOGNITIONS**

I've had the pleasure and the privilege to consult for such groups as the *Sesame Street* Research Department, the Head Start Bureau, Hasbro, the Canadian Broadcast Corporation, Centers for Disease Control, and state health departments, resource and referral agencies, and school districts throughout the U.S.

A few of my books, including *Acting Out*, *Jump into Literacy*, and *Great Games for Young Children* have received awards. And Ball State University in 2014 presented me with the McGovern Award, given to those who have made a contribution in the field of health.

But professionally speaking, I am most proud of using my writing and presentations to defend childhood.

- **A MESSAGE FROM YOU TO THE EY EDUCATORS**

I would like to thank EY educators for all that they do for young children! And if they are currently being required to teach in ways they know to be developmentally inappropriate, I would encourage them to fight back! For too long teachers have been told by people outside ECE what to do and how to do it, and for too long they have remained silent. I say it's time to speak up. I say it's time for a revolution in ECE!



EXPERTS SPEAK

MAGDALENA MATULEWICZ

**AND
WITOLD MATULEWICZ**

TECHNOLOGY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Magdalena Matulewicz and Witold Matulewicz, Founders of Natural Born Leaders, have been applying the Active Experiential Holistic Learning for over 20 years - both in early childhood and primary education. They have trained and inspected many nurseries and schools where dedicated teachers successfully use this approach on a daily basis. They both are UK-qualified Assessors in Early Childhood Education and School Playwork. In private life, they've been world-schooling their own children for over 14 years.

In view of the current global crisis in education and the widespread implementation of online learning, early childhood and primary educators are facing unprecedented challenges. As a result, most of them struggle to support children's holistic growth and their well-being - which are the most important pillars of Early Childhood Education.

IS TECHNOLOGY-BASED LEARNING A SUITABLE SOLUTION FOR THE EARLY YEARS SECTOR?

ECE and Early Primary teachers are aware that at this stage of education everything should be hands-on and based on children's direct interaction with the world - essentially this is how children learn best. Direct experience is also the only way children can develop their



gross motor and fine motor skills, their overall bodily coordination, their hand-eye coordination, their sense of safety, and their balance - and all these provide solid foundations for other skill sets to emerge. And this leaves many ECE teachers wondering how such education can be offered using technology, if at all.

One thing is certain - no amount of online learning or worksheets will ever be enough to satisfy children's natural curiosity to explore the world hands-on. The implementation of online learning is almost everywhere now, but unfortunately the way it's delivered is based on passive learning, extended screen time, and fails to support the fundamental developmental needs of early childhood and early primary children.

This, however, doesn't mean all is lost. Technology CAN be our ally to meet ECE goals - provided that educators learn how to use technology to offer education the way children naturally learn. In current times such skill set is needed more than ever before.

WHAT SHOULD BE THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN TODAY'S EDUCATION?

We can use technology to our advantage and as a powerful tool to supporting children's HOLISTIC LEARNING, but it should never be treated a stand-alone approach. In fact, the real power of technology for education is about teachers being able to maximise opportunities for hands-on experiential learning for their students, especially at ECE and primary levels. In this case it means that the less screen time students get, the better the teacher is utilising technology to EMPOWER their students.

Technology in education can help:

- inspire children to experiment and create in the REAL world
- raise their interest in certain topics or themes
- explore beyond tangible results
- provoke children to master certain skills
- foster their natural talents and gifts
- go beyond the things that can be seen and

touched, explore the unseen and untouchable, and bring children's dream creations to life.

If you use technology this way, you can be sure that your students will be inspired to explore the real world, and that their hands-on exploration will lead to further investigation, very often through the use of technology again.

HOW TO USE TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT EXPERIENTIAL HOLISTIC LEARNING?

Technology is so much more than Edtech - it's also microscopes, scooters, 3D pens and printers, drawing pads, etc. Whatever technology you use, think about how it can inspire your students to explore the REAL world - build, draw, create, read, dance, cook, use their whole body, design, rearrange, role play, do research.

Even a simple mobile app or a short video clip about construction play can inspire your children to build castles, bridges or houses in the real world - keeping them busy for hours and giving them Holistic Experiential Learning they really need in these times.

Children may want to build something that they've just seen on a screen, and test it in real life. Or they may wish to find out more information about a bug they've just spotted in a garden or a park. Lots of hands-on experiences, deducting, reasoning, child-led discovery, and taking ownership of their own learning. As a matter of fact, no worksheets and very little screen time is needed to achieve all this. Our role as Educators is to offer cues and guidance, assign exciting project work, raise interest by offering inspiring contexts and resources, ask children to do some research in the real world, and offer feedback once they share the results of their work with you.

This is how world's top educators use technology to their advantage. You can easily do this too, and incorporate technology into Active Experiential Holistic Learning on a daily basis. The first and the most important thing, however, is developing an understanding of what Experiential Holistic Learning is, and why it's the key approach for Future-Oriented Education.



EXPERTS SPEAK

AWARENESS, EMPATHY, CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

OF EARLY YEARS

PROFESSIONALS DURING

THE COVID 19 PANDEMIC

TRACY SHERIFF

Tracy is a passionate educator from Ontario, Canada who strongly believes in inclusive education for all. She considers herself a lifespan educator with strong roots in early childhood education. Since graduating as an early childhood educator in 1994, she has held a variety of positions in the early years sector, often with a focus on children with special needs and their families. She currently holds a leadership position at Community Living Hamilton. There she leads a team of resource consultants and inclusion facilitators who work directly with early learning professionals to support the inclusion of children with special needs in the classroom. Tracy most recently achieved her MA in Education. She is now focused on ensuring she contributes to creating quality educational experiences for those with an interest in becoming an early years professional.

Like never before, the COVID-19 pandemic has drawn attention to the essential role that early learning and care programs play as part of the public infrastructure. We have always known that dependable child care is a foundational element of healthy development for children, and by extension, their families for generations to come. The benefits of child care participation are proven to have positive, lifelong impacts. Today, the global pandemic has not only emphasized this, but has underscored the importance of child care to our global economic recovery.

Child care is more than a way to ensure equitable access for women to the workforce. As stated by Hope (2020), “The COVID-19 pandemic has meant that this sector has become the essential workforce behind the essential workforce.” With that comes a continued emphasis on the development and implementation of high-quality, inclusive child care. Early childhood educators from all parts of the world have been challenged to do the job they’ve always done, yet have had to pivot

at breaking speed to do it safely and in many ways differently. Things that were once considered best practices are no longer deemed safe. Early learning and care staff have been asked to reinvent their environments and how they interact with children, families, and each other. This has required them at times to forgo some deeply ingrained pedagogical principles in order to prioritize health and safety which hasn't always been easy.

The Centre for Disease Control (2020) identifies that the "Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) can affect young children, birth to 5 years, directly and indirectly. Beyond illness, the social, emotional and mental health of even the youngest child has been at risk". Early childhood educators, like many other workers deemed essential, have had to navigate the workplace in unprecedented times, while also navigating personal challenges. This has required early childhood educators to demonstrate levels of awareness, empathy, innovation, and creativity, over and above what was already considered best practice.

AWARENESS

1. Early childhood educators have had to stay abreast of ongoing changes to health and safety regulations to meet all public health recommendations.
2. Early childhood educators have had to consider various family situations and the impact a break in service may have had on children whose parents may be working remotely or isolated from family and friends.
3. Early childhood educators have had to become more aware of the possibility that children have experienced adverse childhood events as a result of Covid-19 and make decisions on how to support, and when necessary, seek help.
4. Early childhood educators have become increasingly aware that all children returning to child care may have an unprecedented adjustment period.
5. Early childhood educators have had to be vigilant in following health and safety guidelines recognizing that some children, families, and coworkers are at higher risk of medical complications

EMPATHY

1. Early childhood educators have had to reflect on

how to support others while recognizing that their lived experience during the pandemic may not be the lived experience of others.

2. Early childhood educators have had to calm and soothe parents' fears about having their children return to child care.
3. Early childhood educators have had to demonstrate empathy and compassion for coworkers who have been displaced as a result of the global crisis.
4. Early childhood educators have had to trust in their leaders like never before to lead them through this time of uncertainty.

INNOVATION

1. Early childhood educators have had to come up with ways to embed technology into their service delivery model, both during child care closure and reopening.
2. Early childhood educators have now learned to create engagement opportunities for children and families in virtual environments.
3. Early childhood educators have had to create arrival and departure protocols that support their connection with all families while maintaining health and safety protocols.
4. Early childhood educators have had to reconfigure staffing protocols to ensure they can maintain operation during a time of increased staff absences.

CREATIVITY

1. Early childhood educators have had to replace many toys and materials with those that can be regularly washed and sanitized, sometimes eliminating favourite activities and sensory materials.
2. Early childhood educators have had to use different materials in new ways to meet the same goals.
3. Early childhood educators have had to make decisions on how to incorporate music into their programs without singing or dancing unless socially distanced.
4. Early childhood educators have had to adjust regular daily routines to accommodate new health and safety guidelines while trying to increase engagement and belonging.
5. Early childhood educators have had to come up

with new ways to engage with families about their children's development

6. Early childhood educators have had to be creative about collaborating with community partners virtually to support the needs of all children

Throughout the 2020 COVID-19 Pandemic, early years professionals have been experiencing stress and anxiety, both on the job and off. Yet, they have risen to the occasion, succeeding at creating and maintaining high-quality environments during the most unprecedented times. The above lists are not exhaustive. There are many ways that early childhood professionals have adapted to their current circumstances alongside other professionals in the essential service sector demonstrating

awareness, empathy, innovation, and creativity. For that they should be acknowledged as they have in many ways demonstrated a level of resilience for children and families that has likely surpassed even their own expectations.

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INTERVIEW Q & A with SHIRIN KULKARNI

CCE FINLAND

Shirin is the Research Director and Co-founder of Council for Creative Education (CCE) Finland. She is an entrepreneur, researcher and teacher trainer par excellence and a fantastic writer in the field of creativity in education and educational psychology.

An expert in curriculum development and training, she has developed all the training modules at CCE from scratch and trained over 12,000 teachers on the whole. With her solid expertise in pedagogy and creative education, she has trained teachers and principals to develop their school learning environment using creative methods based on the Finnish education system, known to be the best in the world. This unique approach has been appreciated by educators worldwide and Shirin is currently one of the key researchers who has conducted a comparative study of the Indian education system with the Finnish education system.

Her total research experience in the field of psychology and education is contextually diverse

and spans over 18+ years. Till date she has authored numerous articles and book chapters published on creativity and education in various international newspapers, journals, eBooks and paper books.

As an international speaker and Trainer, Shirin has delivered talks on Creativity in education, Nurturing Creativity, Creativity as a life-skill, Comparative studies in Education systems, Teacher education, Indology (Indian studies-Panchatantra-Narrative learning approach), Vedic education systems(Ancient Indian Education) in countries like Finland, Denmark, U.S.A., U.K, Curacao. She is the winner of 'Golden Women's Award 2015' in the Science and Innovation category and also a recipient of University of Tampere Foundation's Research Grant.

• What are your thoughts as an Educator in the year that has gone by?

As an educator, I would like to think that last year was the best learning opportunity. It made me realize that things can change overnight. One needs to be always adaptable, flexible, open-minded, and

positive. Considering the field of education, we all saw the inequality of available digital resources across the globe. We also saw how some nations found a way to cope up with it. It was more adaptable by societies which were already quite well-organized and could handle the pandemic in a better way.

CCE responded very well to the CORONA pandemic. We shifted most of our events online overnight as we already had the necessary skills and background work. The most amazing events were our 3 online conferences, which received excellent responses from worldwide audiences. Total 45 countries were represented through these conferences. In addition to this, me and my team conducted a lot of free webinars on topics ranging from good screen time vs bad screen time, Engaging kids creatively at home, Adolescence and Learning ESL, Mental well-being of teachers.

• The greatest learning?

On the personal front, I learned that with the help of technology, the best education can be imparted in any part of the world or to anyone wanting to be educated. The distance, the time difference is no more a constraint.

• Future goals for new normal and beyond that?

Each sector worldwide, including education, has been devastated by the impacts of the CORONA pandemic. With this new normal in the post-COVID-19 era, there is a need to consider education in the light of emerging opportunities and

challenges. Thus, CCE Finland attempts to rethink education in the new normal post-COVID-19 era through the perspectives of Education and Equality. The implications of the continuing crisis to the four elements of education - goal, content, approach, and evaluation - are being rethought by CCE Finland's think team. Some emerging options that we have rolled out are SISU Online Global Preschool- 100% online solution where teachers are from different parts of the world - Truly international not just the name or tag line! Another important innovation by our ECE team is the SISU box, for which we received the accreditation from Design from Finland. SISU box brings all the necessary elements for early childhood education together with the training, teaching aids designed especially to impart 21st century skills and curriculum. SISU Schools & CCE's School development projects are in a major expansion mode across India, Taiwan and Egypt. Aside from the lens of providing creative education - CCE Finland has also developed various programs for Facilitators, Parents and Leadership.

• Any advice for budding educators?

a) Educators now need to encourage creative, active and practical learning. Making connections to real-world applications of the course material is more pertinent than ever.

b) Make space of more meaningful teacher - parent-student - interactions. Small things like learning basic etiquettes such as students' names and demonstrate that you care about their lives.

c) It's important for all educators to utilize interactive platforms. I see many teachers who struggle to balance the pedagogy of instruction with engagement.

d) Last but not the least - Facilitate discussions and collaboration and make time for socio-emotional learning.





THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAY IN CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT

10 SIMPLE AND EASY WAYS TO DEVELOP IT

SUE ATKINS

Sue Atkins is an internationally recognised Parenting Expert, Broadcaster, Speaker and Author of the Amazon best-selling books “Parenting Made Easy – How to Raise Happy Children” & “Raising Happy Children for Dummies” one in the famous black and yellow series as well as author of the highly acclaimed Parenting Made Easy CDs, Apps and resources.

She regularly appears on the award-winning flagship ITV show “This Morning,” Sky News, Good Morning Britain and does a monthly review of ‘The Papers’ on the Julia Hartley Brewer Morning Show on talk RADIO. She also appears on The Jeremy Vine Show on BBC Radio 2 and is the parenting expert for many BBC Radio Stations around the UK.

Sue was also a former Deputy Head and Class Teacher for over 25 years.

There is a great deal happening during playtime. Little ones are lifting, dropping, looking, pouring, bouncing, hiding, building, knocking down, discovering, exploring, and gaining dexterity and kinaesthetic experiences.

They are learning key scientific concepts, such as what sinks and floats; mathematical concepts, including how to balance blocks to build a tower; and literacy skills, such as trying out new vocabulary or storytelling skills as children “act out” different roles.

And when your toddler plays with you, they are also learning — that they are loved and important and that they are fun to be around.

These social - emotional skills give them the self-esteem and self-confidence they need to continue building loving and supportive relationships all their lives.

Play comes in all shapes and sizes. It is really easy to wake up and find your house resembles a toy shop full of toys!

It can be chaotic and over stimulating as there may be missing pieces, broken pieces, too many plastic toys as well as worn out toys and favourites.

It is not easy to keep your cool when they tell your child says 'I'm bored' and you see hundreds of toys and activities scattered all around your house that they can do but instead they are whining for something else or basically your attention.

Keeping your child playing well takes time and changes as they grow.

Each child in your family is different not just because of age or gender but because of temperament too. But I think establishing a "play habit" works well if everyone is on board with it and the play habits are discussed openly and planned and your children are clear about your expectations.

This isn't what most parents of toddlers do – so you are going to be one step ahead!

Instead of encouraging you to buy more things I want you to look at what you can do with what we already have in your homes and extending and expanding play with that.

Developing good play habits and keeping it simple.

It is all about long term gain with a little bit of effort up front first and developing play habits that will pay off in the long term with a little input from the beginning.

My kids loved simple, basic toys and used to play happily for ages with saucepans, wooden spoons and the colander!

And I am a great believer in using simple toys from things you can re-use – like toilet roll cardboard, cereal boxes, and the wonderfully colourful sweet wrappers from something like "Quality Street." These can all be used in collages and paintings and are so simple to organise if you just have a way to

systematically store them in a cupboard.

Just get creative and find your own ways to make toys and activities and be led by what your child likes to do as your child plays from many sources.

As a former Reception Class teacher of 4- 5-year olds I discovered that children need a lot of access to the basics. Their whole learning foundation depends upon it. So set this up now as your toddler is so receptive to learning and foster a love of play and encourage their natural curiosity to learn in different ways.

This will have a wonderful influence on the way they handle the multi-media cyber world of play too – which can close older children down, isolate them and teach them to be passive as they sit for hours on their tablet.

Your child will be different as they will know how to occupy themselves and use their own resources to entertain themselves – and while we all embrace change and the Internet – it's ALL about balance . So, start now to teach your children how to use their imagination and give them a wonderful creative gift for life.

Remember less is more for your toddler.

Most children are not short of toys!

There's noise, colour, different textures and over stimulation and overload everywhere.

So have a plan with your toddler's toys and play experiences and build in variety and simple choices from the beginning.

- I used to box up and rotate the kid's toys to keep them fresh, new and exciting and I remember them playing for hours at their Grandparents house with an old train station toy that was their Dad's when he was a boy. That was a magic moment actually seeing them playing so happily with their Dad's old toys

- Another tip is to only have out a few toys at a time.

Having too many toys or access to too many things

just encourages flitting from one thing to another without developing your child's concentration and tenacity – skills they will need to develop at school to help them learn to read and write.

Reduce the number of toys and activities you put out for them and give them a chance to work on ideas and discover what pulling this lever actually does!

- Allow your child to experiment with their toys by getting familiar with them and they will come back and try new things and accept that they may play with some toys in their own unique way

REMEMBER that over stimulation encourages button pushing and not exploratory play.

And encourage your toddler to play independently. And don't be afraid to reject toys that you don't like or find fun or useful for learning. Trust your own intuition and be guided by what feels right for you and be guided what feels right for your child. Send those toys you don't like off to the Charity shop for somebody else to play with.

Provide a rich environment of toys

Children play with anything so try not to limit their play to only the bought toys.

Grab a pen and paper and maybe a cup of coffee and get in amongst your toddler's toys and evaluate the type of toys you have.

- What is my child learning from playing with this?
- What experiences will my toddler have touching this?
- What part of my child's imagination is this toy stimulating?
- How is this toy improving their dexterity?
- Have they got too many toys all at one time- what can I do to create interest, variety but also concentration and tenacity?
- Is there a wide variety of different types of toys?
- Are they a bit gender specific and predictable?
- What's the message I'm giving my toddler about

playing with this toy?

- Have they grown out of this toy?
- Is it too old for them at the moment?
- What do I want my child to learn from playing with this toy?

Homemade things to play with.

There are many things you can make that children learn from and enjoy and often the value of these types of toys is widely undervalued and overlooked. Don't fall into the trap mistakenly believing that the more you spend the better it is for your child.

Playdough and plastic scissors, mini rolling pins and biscuit cutters- all from your kitchen are great toys so just get creative about what you offer your toddler to play with.

Go outside.

Go outside to play with gardening tools to plant, manipulate and dig with, play with different sized balls for dexterity to help with throwing and just go for a good old fashioned walk.

One of my books for toddlers is called 'Are we there yet? The magic of looking under stones and finding fairies' and was based on walking down the road with my son Will when he was 3 years old as we chatted about the things we saw and as we looked under stones and talked about fairies. It inspired me to write a book about giving toddlers self-esteem, discipline, fairness, boundaries and love. The book is all about enjoying the magic of childhood and creating the memories of an adult.

Be present

For me the time of my children's toddlers' years was magical and full of memories that I treasure.

Whatever their age, moments of time when you give them your complete attention is what they crave and need more than anything.

We live in a very busy, hectic world full of fast

moving, instant gratification but toddlers aren't like that and I don't want you to miss out on this special time with your children.

They really do grow up very quickly – even if you are exhausted at the moment with tantrums or tiredness – keep the bigger picture in your mind and it will help you to relax and enjoy the moment.

You are building memories – one memory at a time so make them positive.

You don't want your child to look back on their growing up years feeling rushed, hurried and stressed, do you?

Attention spans

Children have very varied attention spans.

Start where your child is at and spend time with them watching their play, interacting and joining in, and sitting on the side-lines sometimes too.

Encouraging and praising them easily.

Children love to please you; feel you notice them and love to spend time with you and you will be building their self-esteem and self-confidence really easily just by doing this.

When your child comes tugging at you to play just stop and play for a few minutes. It will show your toddler that you respect them, love them are interested in them and keen to engage and play with them.

Children won't remember what you said but they will remember how you made them feel.

Just develop this habit and if you are busy also explain that, but make a special time and note, to STOP what you are doing and give your toddler your undivided attention. As they will learn to trust what you say and that you always keep your word, and will be less demanding as they know you WILL come and play with them for a certain time each day.

Get into a routine and a habit which makes it much easier for you to remember to play with your toddler. I found adding a routine to our play times really helped. I found after I had fed my daughter, when she was just a baby, my son and I could play together and it was our “special time” as the baby went to sleep.

Then I did the same for my daughter as she grew up when my son was watching his “Postman Pat” video we would have our “special time” together. They both had their special “play time” with my whole attention.

I found this nipped in the bud any sibling rivalry early on and is one thing I teach parents about on my workshops and in my Banishing the Bickering audio MP3.

But don't let guilt and worrying stop the fun you both can have together. Some days will be better than others. There will be high times of laughter and low days of tears.

Play at their level. Sit on the floor and push cars around, if this is what they want and try not to be too controlling or always educational. Just join in, have fun and relax

It's about them not you!!

Adding value and learning to their play.

When I cook spaghetti bolognaise, I cook it the same way.

I get out the fresh spaghetti, chop the tomatoes, onions, oregano and garlic, bring the spaghetti to the boil add a pinch of salt. I throw a strand on the wall to see if it's cooked and sticks and drain the water, then put it all together in a large serving dish for the family to help themselves.

I've got into a rut!

Babies and toddlers get stuck in a spaghetti bolognaise rut too!

As they can so easily stay with the familiar and safe

and enjoying the toys they usually play with in the same way.

They need help to try out the Gordon Ramsay way of cooking it or the Jamie Oliver!!

Just think about gentle and simple ways you can add a bit of variety and take your child out of their comfort zones when they play.

Create different play situations

Toddlers are easily bored if they have only one way to play with most of their toys.

So look for open ended toys that encourage free expression and creative play and will encourage your toddler to be curious and will make them use their own imagination to think of the next best thing to do with the toy.

Introduce books as early as you can with your baby or toddler – point to the pictures, point left to right under the words so they begin to learn the way to read across the page, talk about the characters and ask your toddler open ended questions about what they see or hear. As this all develops their reading readiness and love of books ready for school later on.

Encourage your little one to join a Toddler Class
There are so many wonderful local classes in your area to learn to play and socialise easily and naturally in a fun environment so ask other parents or look in parent groups.

Take your child on visits to museums, farms or nature trails and talk with them about what they see, what they hear and how they feel or notice!

I believe the Internet, technology and TV all provide rich sources of great information if you use them sparingly when your toddler is young. Don't use them as a babysitter or as an excuse for you to plonk them down for hours in front of the box while you phone your friends or do the ironing!

Keep it all age appropriate, challenging and fun.

A useful website for this is Common Sense Media where editors have made it easy with their handpicked list of the best kids' websites and online games for children chosen for their overall quality and age appropriateness.

Fun and free, these are destinations that you can approve of for your toddler

It's a big world on the web, and these lists help you keep your children safe.

So go to the Common Sense Media Website to explore.

One of the many great tips I picked up along the way is the "I'm Bored" Jar. It takes a little time, but it is totally worth it.

You write down all the games and activities your toddler loves to do and then cut up the list (which you can continually just keep adding to) and pop them into a "I'm bored jar" to pick out on those days and moments when they say the dreaded words "I'm bored"

Being Bored

But this actually leads me into another passion of mine allowing your kids to be bored sometimes!! We are so used to things being faster, quicker and more and more exciting that we may have lost the ability to allow our children to be bored sometimes. Boredom is a part of life and you are teaching your toddler how to handle this very important part of life by learning to entertain themselves sometimes. There are a great many books, web sites, and training courses today more or less dedicated to the idea that being bored is a major sin, and that the only cure is to find ways to be busy and productive every waking moment.

People who follow this idea are constantly on-the-go and often really stressed because any feelings of boredom get quickly smothered with yet more activity....

Yet boredom is, in reality, crucial to any ability to be truly productive, relaxed and positive as well as being far more effective and happy.

So just pause for a moment and ponder if you're flat-out busy and engaged all the time, as you are unconsciously passing this on to your toddler?

And ask yourself is that something you are happy to pass on?

There's an interesting article to read on how boredom can be good for you and your toddler and to read it click on => Boredom can be good for you

Encouraging friends over to play.

Whatever the age of your child having friends over to play will change and really enhance the way they interact and play with others. It will develop your toddler's social skills, their sociability, and overcome any possible shyness. It will also help your toddler with the ability to share toys and make compromises naturally with you around to guide them.

New people bring new ways and new experiences of ways to play.

It's all about collaborative play not competitive play. Dressing up, sharing jigsaws, sharing Lego and sharing ideas.

Limiting TV and technology.

Once the TV is on it can be very hard to turn it off.

We all enjoy chilling out in front of the box sometimes, but small children can't regulate themselves and need you to set firm, fair and consistent boundaries for them until they are old enough to self-regulate themselves much later on.

So one simple way to do this is to have a couple of

simple rules that you and your toddler and family all understand and let your toddler know clearly what happens if they break these rules.

Then everyone knows where they are and that creates less friction, arguments and tantrums.

TV makes toddlers very passive.

Get grounded, confident and clear about what is and what isn't acceptable to you and stick to that!

Brothers and sisters

Older siblings who just want to help often "take over" and knock down carefully and lovingly built castles or scribble on masterpieces.

Take the time and energy to teach your older child about respecting their younger toddlers' creations and drawings and toys.

Quiet time

When I was a class teacher we used to have "Quiet Time" each day at a certain time to give the children a bit of "Me Time"

It's worth remembering that every child needs quiet moments to themselves to relax, ponder, chill out and have a bit of quiet me time.

It recharges their batteries, allows children to pause, reflect and make sense of their day and to enjoy just "being."

Also quiet time gives everyone a break from each other – being at home all day can drive you all a bit stir crazy – no matter how old you are !

It's ALL about BALANCE!

The importance of make believe.

Why is play essential for child-development?

Regular play not only shapes, happy children, but also builds essential "real-world" skills such as

cooperation, social coping skills, negotiation skills as well as critical thinking skills.

But how exactly does building a castle out of bed sheets instead of watching TV build and develop those skills?

Well, make-believe requires your toddler to be proactive and to use their creative imagination and not just be passive, reactive and a bystander in the playing process.

Pretending is in danger of running out of steam if you as a parent don't encourage it in your toddler. Times have changed from 50 years ago due to four factors.

- The first is stranger danger. These days, kids are inside more and it's not just because they are less active. Nowadays, many parents fear the unknown "danger" outside their homes.
- The second barrier is the availability of technology and games. Walk into any toy shop and you will be surrounded by toys that talk and dance on their own. It's like the toy is having all the fun, but it's not giving your toddler the chance to be creative.
- A good toy is 90% child and 10% toy
- Additionally, today's society emphasises structure. Parents today are told to keep kids busy

rather than allowing them free time to play. Did you know that the UN's Convention on the Rights of the Child lists play as a guaranteed right, next to access to nutritious food and clean drinking water?

- Also, creative play's biggest obstacle is commercialisation.

Media and marketing messages from toy manufacturers convince you and your children that they need toys in order to play and be creative.

According to research the average child spends 40 hours a week engaged in electronic media after school. That equates to more than five hours a day of non-creative play!

So as parent, what can you do to convert some of these lost hours into make-believe minutes?

Grab a piece of paper and get jotting down some ideas

(Perhaps you could give your toddler tools to create with, rather than toys to play with.)

Set yourself some play goals for your kids and help them develop this very important skill.

It is through exploring their creativity as children that people like Steven Spielberg, Beethoven, Einstein or Leonardo Da Vinci were allowed to shine.



EXPERTS SPEAK



AYESHA KHAWAR BUTT

Ayesha Khawar, MBPSs, RBT, is a trainee clinical psychologist with certification in behavior therapy from BACB, USA. Her professional experience includes teaching, and counseling in KSA, at ABC Learning and Diagnostic Centre and Barrington's Behavioural Health. She has received rigorous training in behavior therapy from New England Children's Centre (NECC), UAE. Besides that, she has expertise in Acceptance and Commitment (ACT) therapy and has presented her research studies at the prestigious Association for Psychological Science (APS) Annual Convention'19, and so on. Currently, she is working on building collaborations and creating mental health awareness across the globe.

PANDEMIC AND FAMILIES WITH AUTISM:

A BEHAVIORISTS' VIEW

While I stroll down my Facebook, I came across a post that read "The amount of anxiety we are feeling during this time is just a fraction of what people with Autism feel every day. Your routine is changed up, you are experiencing denied access to many things (preferred items and necessities), reduced, or heightened sensory stimulation which dysregulates you, and you want out of this situation. The functions of behaviour cause you to act out in ways you can barely control. How do you feel? Have you had a meltdown yet? Not that easy to keep it together when you do not know what to expect now, is it?" -Harper Martel.

Keeping this in my mind, I thought that it would be vital to share my two cents on how to educate children with Autism about the pandemic (which is happening!) amidst global uncertainty. Before that, you need to know what Behaviourism is. Behaviourism is the experimental analysis of behaviour (EAB), derived especially from the teachings of B.F. Skinner, that has two main goals: 1) Individualised treatment for each child 2) Focus on teaching socially significant behaviour to the child. So, behaviourism is an empirically based therapy that provides treatment protocol for children with Autism especially.

As we all know that children with Autism, require certainty in their environment (DSM-5), there is a possibility that global uncertainty can lead to behavioral meltdowns. So, it is essential to create a conducive environment that promotes the growth of the child as behaviorism works on single units, followed by behavioral chains that soon turn into routines.

Moving on to the topic, first, let us have a look at the requisites that are required to curb the pandemic with the behavioural cusp (def: A behaviour that has sudden and dramatic consequences

that extend well beyond the particular change itself because it exposes the person to new environments(Cooper, Heron, Heward, 2013))-

- 1- increase request/mand (deMAND)for necessities
- 2- increase in hand washing
- 3- decrease in touching the face (DRP, DRL)

Note: We need to make these actions the “new normal” as the Canadian PM Justin Trudeau stated.

The first two are based on skill acquisition, whereas the last one is on behavior reduction.

Firstly, we will be focusing on skill acquisition and then on maintenance of the skills by constant revision and repetition.

It is essential to bear in mind that skill for the child is taught through the process of task analysis (chaining) which breaks down behavioral chains into simple units contingent upon the reinforcement (*def:*When a response is followed immediately by the presentation of a stimulus and, as a result, similar responses occur more frequently in the future (Cooper,Heron, Heward, 2013)). Reinforcers (*def:*a stimulus such as a reward or the removal, that increases the probability of a desired response(Merriam-Webster, n.d.))are needed to be identified especially the primary ones which includes food, that would help bring the children in the same field of thought since they are not interested in that happening in front of them.

Apart from this, children can be taught about the pandemic by reading them visual social stories, a concept introduced by Carol Grey in 1990, that would enable them to comprehend the new normal. Social stories are “short descriptions of a particular situation, event or activity, which include specific information about what to expect in that situation

and why” (McGuinness, 2020). So, one of my favorite picks would be

“What is the Coronavirus?” – A Social Story™ from The Autism Educator, Amanda McGuinness as it eloquently explains what COVID-19 is to children with ASD.

In a nutshell, skill Acquisition and Behavior Reduction go hand in hand: An increase in one lead to a decrease in another.

References

Cooper, J. O., Heron, T. E., &Heward, W. L. (2013). *Applied Behavior Analysis* (3rd ed.). retrieved from https://wps.prenhall.com/chet_cooper_appliedbeh_2/

Merriam-Webster. (n.d.). Reinforcer. In Meriam-Webster.com dictionary. <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/reinforcer>

The advertisement for Tenderpetals features a young girl in a pink dress holding a bouquet of flowers. The text 'Be an EDUPRENEUR ! Open Your Own PRESCHOOL' is prominently displayed. Below this, it says 'PARTNER WITH A PRESCHOOL BRAND THAT CARES'. The Tenderpetals logo is in the top left corner. At the bottom, there are social media links for www.tenderpetals.com and www.facebook.com/innerifoundation, along with logos for Forbes MARQUEE and India Leadership Awards.



— EXPERTS SPEAK —

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND CARE IN THE POST COVID TIMES

PREETI PASRICHA

Preeti is the Asst. Academic Coordinator of C.P.Goenka International School, Mumbai and Founder of Svadhyaya an N.G.O. She is highly skilled and overtly student-focused educational leader possessing a strong commitment to the development of students, staff and providing a stimulating, safe and motivating learning environment. Dynamic visionary leader and solid team player with a proven track record in collaborating with the school community, increasing student academics, and maintaining excellence in education. Trustworthy, professional with superior communication skills to develop strong and lasting relationships with all members of the school community. She is the CEO and Founder At EYES (Enlighten Yourself at Every Session)

Mitigating the negative impact of COVID-19 on young children will require strategic, deliberate collaboration among various stakeholder groups (e.g., government, civil society, and private sector) and sectors (e.g., health, environment, and economy) to jointly achieve a policy outcome. 'Early childhood development has always been an unseen area in our pre-COVID societies and the pandemic has shown how assailable young children are'. Early childhood development should no longer be considered only a mere educational issue and should not be confined of the discussions and strategy for economic convalescence.

To provide safe school environments following a pandemic, policymakers should:

- i. Yoke school-based hygiene promotion with the distribution of waterless hand sanitizer and/or soap.
- ii. Consider school-based screening for fever and cough, which may reduce risk and improve confidence, but which does not by itself offer a reliable and proven solution.

iii. Train and support teachers and other school staff to offer school-based psychosocial support to returning students.

Psychosocial and emotional support is often needed in schools following crises.

A fleeting and systematic review of the impact of social isolation suggests that children are likely to experience high rates of depression and anxiety during social isolation and for several years after it ends.

To recover learning loss following a pandemic, policymakers should:

- Engage students in accelerated learning interventions to reverse crisis-related learning loss and strengthen future learning trends.
- Engage teachers in training and coaching so

health, learning, emotions and behaviour.

Look out for these signs of stress and anxiety to determine if a child needs extra support from you: Sadness , Worry , Anger , Agitation, Fatigue, Confusion etc.

Lack of interest in twiddling with other children or completing their homework

Not sleeping or eating well

Loss of interest in their hobbies or friends

Before children return, remind them it is normal to feel overwhelmed every now and then. Encourage them to speak about how they're feeling and allow them to know school teachers and staffs are always there to concentrate.



they can help students catch up, and ensure that school environments are safe and protected.

- Engage parents by capitalizing on their current involvement in remote learning, to improve future outcomes.

The corona virus outbreak has caused major disruptions to existence — and youngsters are feeling these changes deeply. As the child returns to school, there should be watch on their physical

Institute/ School should explain that the virus has nothing to do with what someone sounds like, where they are from or what language they speak. Remind children that everybody deserves to be safe in school. Bullying is often wrong and that we should each do our part to spread kindness and support one another. If they are called names or bullied in class, they must tell a trusted adult.

There have also been concerns that bullying may increase when children return to high school, because of a number of the misinformation around COVID-19.

The Education

ECDF PROJECT

- NABA UDAY, SISHU SIKSHA VIKASH ABHIYAN

FEATURE

Early childhood education is the most powerful catalyst for social transformation which has a very special appeal of its own.

ECDF (Early Child Development Forum, founded in 2019) is an initiative of the DN Acharya Foundation for Children and Women Welfare, a non-profit making organization working relentlessly to bring about a positive change in the lives of children and women, since the year 2014. ECDF is striving towards excellence in Early Childhood Care and Education and is working for the enlistment of the economically underprivileged children from the rural and backward areas. The ongoing endeavour is to work for the holistic development of children in their early years and to bring about a change in the quality of care, development and learning in early childhood education.

Keeping this goal in mind – ECDF initiated its PILOT project 'NABA UDAY', SISHU SIKSHA VIKASH ABHIYAN – to Spread the Light of Knowledge, on the occasion of Children's Day at Sonapur. This event was held on 12th November

2020. Here are some highlights:

Venue: Nazirakhat LP School, Nazirakhat, LomatiGaon, Assam

Number of Children: 55

Age Group: 3 to 12 years

Material Distributed: Books, Notebooks, Stationary items and other study related material

Objective: To motivate these little ones to study and do well academically

Additions: Teaching apparatus and library books for the children were handed over to the school principal. (Thanks to the support partners Hello Kids and Maria's House of Children)

The Founder Chairperson of DNA FOUNDATION for Children & Women Welfare and ECDF, Dr. Vasavvi Acharjya, was present along with Debajit Bora, Secretary, the Head Master of the school and village Headman, besides teachers and parents of the children. The program started with a meeting, which was followed by distribution of kits to the children.

www.dnafoundation.org

www.ecdforum.org

ECDF
EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT FORUM

NABA UDAY
(নব উদয়)

SISHU SIKSHA VIKASH ABHIYAN
(শিশু শিক্ষা বিকাশ অভিযান)

A PROJECT to Spread the Light of Knowledge

Early Child Development Forum an Initiative of

DN ACHARYA FOUNDATION
FOR CHILDREN AND WOMEN WELFARE

Venue : Nazirakhat L.P.School, Sonapur, Assam. Date :12th November, 2020

Support Partners

ecdf_forum ecdforum ecdforum.org ecdinfo2019@gmail.com

Dr. Vasavvi Acharjya spoke about the importance of Early Childhood Education and how impactful it is for children to get the right kind of guidance and facilitation in these early years, in order to attain success in later life. She also spoke about the role of parents in shaping the life of a child and the importance of teacher training, in order to deal adequately and teach children in their early years. The program was concluded with light snacks and refreshments for all.



TEACHING AND LEARNING IN THE 21ST CENTURY

REQUIRE TEACHERS TO LEARN, UNLEARN AND RELEARN



Teaching and learning in the 21st Century require teachers to learn, unlearn and relearn. It is needed to create a learner centric curriculum which can above and beyond compartmentalized and confined learning boundaries. First, all the stakeholders should understand the importance of concept driven lifelong learning. Secondly, there must be a greater emphasis on developing transferable understanding and skills developments. Learners should have opportunities to develop their enduring understanding through real life experience, collaborative learning and knowing their strengths and weaknesses through ongoing self-reflections and teacher's feedback and feedforward.

It is needed to create a learner centric curriculum which can above and beyond compartmentalized and confined learning boundaries. A learner centric environment helps learners to become agentic as they develop the ability to make choices and decisions about their learning, they voice their opinion about their learning process and progress and they take ownership of their learning by becoming more self-reliant and self-regulating.

There must be a greater emphasis on developing transferable understanding and skills developments. Learning facts by mugging them up through rote learning will lead the learner nowhere as they deprive from 21st century skills which basically deals with communication, collaboration, creativity and critical thinking. Developing an enduring

understanding of concepts will help the learners to apply their understanding in real life and will make the learning more relevant, meaningful and purposeful.

Learners should have opportunities to develop their enduring understanding through real life experience, collaborative learning and knowing their strengths and weaknesses through ongoing self-reflections and teacher's feedback and feedforward. Learners through reflection can gather a deeper understanding by becoming more mindful and self-aware. Peer feedback and assessments helps the learners to view assessments and feedback as a learning tool not the end of learning.

The 21st classrooms and teachers can only survive and thrive using reimagined pedagogical approaches like learner centric learning, more focus on concept driven and relevant learning opportunities which focus on transferable knowledge and involving learners as co- constructor of their learning who can identify the purposes, relevance and applicability of their learning and knowledge. Teachers should relearn the new pedagogies, unlearn their role as a sole distributor of knowledge and must learn that they are facilitators of learning who help the young mind to become active agents of their learning.

Asnaha Farheen,

Abdul Kadir Molla International School,
Bangladesh.



LEARNING OUTSIDE SCHOOL

EDUCATORS SPEAK

Not all learning takes place in the classroom – in fact, most of your child’s learning is going to happen outside of school.

“Learning outside the classroom activities are often authentic, hands-on, interactive and build on classroom learning.”

The purpose of school is to prepare students for life beyond school. Today’s society has a higher demand for self-awareness and more specialised skills. One of the easiest ways to help advance students is by incorporating learning experiences outside the classroom. Taking classroom learning outside can help enrich a student’s educational experience by showing them real-life applications of theories that they are learning at school.

Learning outside the classroom experiences differ from those that arise through conventional teaching methods as students may be encouraged to engage a broader range of soft skills such as teamwork, leadership and compromise in their learning environment.

Conventional teaching focuses on repetition and memorisation to educate students and is beneficial for sharing new knowledge and teaching students who learn best by listening. However, conventional

teaching doesn’t encourage students to develop critical thinking, problem-solving and decision-making skills, which learning outside the classroom can. Not only can learning outside the classroom lead to a deeper understanding of challenging concepts, but it can also provide a context for learning in many areas.

A parent or a homeschooled child has more options. Physical outside play can help a child learn about the world around them, but it also can help students optimize both their mental and physical health. Kids are permitted to move around, interact with their surroundings, and get more oxygen into their body. When oxygen reaches the brain, it opens it up and makes it more receptive for learning. Sunshine is a natural mood enhancer. Engaging in new opportunities make kids happier. All in all, the outdoor experience provides the perfect setting for the excitement of learning.

Take your child away from the traditional educational environment and move them out into the real world. Not only will they learn more and more easily, you will discover that they actually enjoy it!

Students who experience learning outside the classroom benefit from increased self-esteem and

become more engaged in their education. Evidence suggests learning outside the classroom can help raise achievement, improve classroom behaviour and improve the engagement of students, including those who are hard to engage in the classroom environment.

1. MAKE LEARNING MORE ENGAGING

It can be difficult to keep kids on task in the classroom. Especially as the school year draws to an end and the weather is nice outside and all they want to do is run around like mad things. Why not take learning outside and let them do just that? Take maths outside and have children estimate then time how long it would take to run, hop and skip across a field. They can discuss it outdoors and graph it back in the classroom.

2. MAKE LEARNING RELEVANT

By taking learning beyond the classroom you'll find dozens of opportunities to make learning concepts, real and relevant by putting them into a more realistic context. Many concepts which seem too difficult to get a grasp of in the classroom are a lot easier to understand in the big wide world when they're set in context, and when the children are more engaged and motivated to understand and learn.

3. NURTURE CREATIVITY AND IMAGINATION

Taking kids beyond the classroom is like unclipping their wings. Suddenly their minds are free to explore and you can often end up with some very creative results no matter what subject you're teaching them. For example, instead of learning about castles in the classroom are you able to take your children to a real castle ruins and have them act in role? You'll be amazed at how their imaginations run wild – but make sure you know your stuff as they'll have no end of questions to ask you to help fuel their role play.

4. DEVELOP LEARNING THROUGH PLAY AND EXPERIMENTATION

We all know that children learn more when they're happy and engaged. It's amazing just how much they can learn through playing. You can bet that the kids who did the role play in the castle will remember heaps about what life was like for their characters. Experimenting is also a fantastic way to learn – very young children learn a huge amount about volume and textures by simple things like sand and water play, whilst older children will enjoy becoming nature detectives and learning about minibeasts and their habitats.

5. IMPROVE ATTENDANCE

If you're able to build outside play – and visits, into your curriculum and engage and motivate your pupils to learn, you'll inevitably find that they're more motivated to turn up to school.

6. REDUCE BEHAVIOUR PROBLEMS

Whilst learning beyond the classroom certainly means implementing a whole new set of behaviour management processes, on the whole it can often mean a general improvement in behaviour – yet another consequence of children being happy, engaged and motivated. There are not many children who are likely to act up if the consequence is that the whole class has to go back to learning maths inside.

7. DEVELOP INTEREST IN THE ENVIRONMENT AND WIDER SURROUNDINGS

Learning outside can give you a great opportunity to teach your pupils about the environment and about your local area. This is an important part of developing them as responsible citizens that can be difficult to convey in the classroom.

8. EXPOSE CHILDREN TO NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Learning outside the classroom doesn't just have to mean wandering around the school grounds, though this is a great place to start. There is no end of places you can take the pupils that they might not get

access to otherwise. Museums, galleries, zoos and farms can be of great interest or somewhere where they can find out how things are made and maybe even have a go themselves can provide learning experiences that won't be forgotten fast.

9. KEEP HEALTHY

Even if you're just going to work a few feet from the confines of your classroom, well directed outdoor learning opportunities can offer a great opportunity for fresh air and exercise. Even pupils who aren't much interested in PE can usually be tempted by a fun learning game without the pressure of needing to 'win'.

Regardless of the individual's past experiences, educational beliefs, or successes with in-class

techniques, all recognize that learning outside the classroom has major benefits.

Traditionally speaking, the classroom is the academic setting. Bulletin boards, posters, letters, words, and numbers outline the walls that surround the desks. The place where most children spend 4 to 6 hours each day... sitting, listening, watching.

Is this an engaging environment? It can be, but for the highest level of effective learning, no. The teacher leads the sessions. The students are onlookers. There isn't an overabundance of engagement in a school setting.

Divya R. Unni,

Principal, Xpertz Kids Preschool, Gujarat.



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REDEFINING THE ROLE OF AN EDUCATOR IN THE NEW NORMAL KEEPING THE DOORS OF LEARNING OPEN

The pandemic has significantly transformed the education system and has brought a fundamental paradigm shift in teaching and learning strategies encouraging educational institutions to redefine the classroom learning across the globe and make a swift transition to an online mode. Providing continuous access to learning and education, defying the myths surrounding the feasibility and effectiveness of online learning has been addressed. The increasing demand for online platforms is a proof of this. With no doubt, education has been the ray of sunshine in this pandemic.

We must understand that the learning environment is not just confined to the classroom, but extends to

the home and community too. School are not just bricks and walls, but institutes of lifelong learning. Teaching is recognised as one of the most respectful and challenging career as it is important to the social economically and cultural growth of a nation.

In the midst of the pandemic the seeds of transformation in the education sector are being planted. Encouraging schools globally to slowly restructure themselves, leading millions of educators to rethink the tools and methodologies they employ, streamline the content of the curriculum, renew the standard of assessment, broaden their horizon of continuous professional development and much more.



Here are the top 5 roles of the educators in the new normal

1. Adopting new learning environment: One of the needed impetus is to adopt digitalization and think beyond books and classroom teaching. Reaching out to children from Tier 2 and Tier 3 regions, with increasing technology feasibility and credibility of online learning shall transform radically in the next few years. Making the

curriculum focus on being more practical and skill oriented.

2. Educators engage as a team player: With the support of other stakeholders, created self – learning modules, online tasks as well as offline tasks in order to build up an exciting learning process for the children.

3. Adapting to new practices: Many educators are encouraged to adopt new practices such as up skilling themselves to learn new technology, adjust to new modes of online teaching, ensuring learning is accessible to everyone in the current scenario.

4. Educators endorse student motivation: Since everyone is skeptical about this new normal,

especially students may feel bored so educators need to step up and motivate students to organize things and make the necessary changes. Educators need to find time and connect with children virtually keep their socio – emotional learning high.

5. Educators as innovator of change:

Educators need to reinvent inside and outside of the virtual classroom as there is a need of continuous nurturing to grow, guide children as they mature, helping them to integrate personal , social , emotional and intellectual abilities.

We may think that educators are simply masters of classroom rules, but the role of the educators in the core of this pandemic is highly significant. We must appreciate what it means to be an educator in the advent of this pandemic, as in spite of encountering several crises, being confronted with stress, coupled with troubles with less technology access and slow connectivity, educators - continue to remain unsung heroes in the midst of the pandemic. They have been supportive, responded in delivering high quality standard and nurturing India's tomorrow!

Amrit Nagpal

Head – Preschool and ECCED
Birla Open Minds



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ECDF EVENTS

November & December 2020

an initiative of

**DN ACHARYA FOUNDATION FOR CHILDREN
AND WOMEN WELFARE (DNAF)**



DN ACHARYA FOUNDATION
FOR CHILDREN AND WOMEN WELFARE

EVENTS

WICCI
INDIA BANGLADESH BUSINESS COUNCIL

EXCLUSIVE WEBINAR ON ZOOM

HOSTED BY -
ALAKANANDA DAS
PRESIDENT,
INDIA BANGLADESH BUSINESS COUNCIL, WICCI

Raising Resilient Children
SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING IN EARLY YEARS

SPEAKER PANEL:

NELLI AHMED
An Education Policy and Founder Managing Partner of Nelli's Policy Future Institute
Member of the Open Policy State Accountability Committee, UK and India Inc.

JASMIN KUMAR
An award winning Entrepreneur & Author of International Bestseller 'Jai Shree Krishna' Founder of Jai Shree Krishna Foundation and Jai Shree Krishna Centre
National President of 'Therapeutic Education at WICCI'

ZAREEN MAIBUD HOSEN
Founder & CEO of 'Nurtury' Foundation
Founding partner of 'Nurtury' Foundation & Co. Founder of 'Nurtury' Foundation

MALEYA HOSSAIN
Founding member of WICCI group of companies
Co-founder and executive director of 'Nurtury' Foundation

DR. VASAVYI ACHARJYA
Executive Chairperson of 'Nurtury' Foundation
Executive Director of 'Nurtury' Foundation

ECDF

10TH NOVEMBER, 2020 (TUESDAY)
5:30 P.M. - 6:30 P.M. IST | 6 P.M. - 7 P.M. BST
MEETING ID: 821 1732 2834 | PASSCODE: IND0BANGLA

CO-CHAIRD BY - DR. RUMANA DOWLA
VICE PRESIDENT, BANGLADESH - INDIA
BUSINESS COUNCIL OF WICCI.

**WICCI WEBINAR IN ASSOCIATION WITH ECDF,
ON THE TOPIC 'RAISING RESILIENT CHILDREN'
WAS ORGANIZED ON 10TH NOVEMBER 2020.**

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DATE
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TIME: 4 P.M. - 4:30 P.M. IST

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zoom
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ECDF TALK SHOW – 'A WALK THROUGH THE YEAR 2020' WAS HELD ON 16TH DECEMBER, 2020 ON ZOOM & FB LIVE

ECDF TALK SHOW
A WALK THROUGH THE YEAR 2020
Join us as we explore the world of educators in the year gone by!

CHAIRMAN: DR. VASAVI ACHARJYA
Founder Chairperson ECDF & Chair, MD Tender Petals

MODERATOR: SIMRAN BALLANI
Talent Next ECDF, Founder

Panelists: PRIYA ROY, RESHMA SHAH, ASHOO KALRA, AMRIT NAGPAL, RIMJHEM GARG

DATE: 16TH DECEMBER (WED) 2020
TIME: 4:30 P.M. - 5:30 P.M IST

SUPPORT PARTNERS: tender petals, EN KIDZ, BOOKBELL



ECDF 1 DAY CERTIFICATE COURSES

ECDF 1 Day CERTIFICATE COURSE #14

For early childhood educators, edupreneurs, daycare owners, aspirant edupreneurs, daycare counsellors and interested parents.

TOPIC: Day Care (Crèche) Administration and Covid Protocols

DR. VASAVI ACHARJYA
Founder Chairperson ECDF & DNAP, MD Tender Petals
Chair of Preschools and Tender Daycares

Date: 27th November, 2020 (Friday)
Time: 4:00 - 5:30 PM (IST)
Registration Fee: Rs. 499/-

COURSE HIGHLIGHTS:

1. Setting up a day care.
2. Toys, Equipment and Other Materials.
3. Daily Activity Routine.
4. Meals and Right Diet.
5. Training the Staff.
6. Safety Standards & Covid Protocol.

SUPPORT PARTNERS: tender petals, BOOKBELL, EN KIDZ, THE ACHARJA FOUNDATION

Phone no: 78968 87051

Follow us @: ecdf_forum, ecdf_forum, ecdf_forum

ECDF COURSE

Thank you for the Fabulous and Fun intensive training. The slide presentation was all very helpful. It was fantastic and worth the wait 🙌. Thank you very much.

Imsunungla Jamir
The Maple tree School
Nagaland, India

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

ECDF
18 Day
CERTIFICATE
COURSE #15

For early childhood educators, edupreneurs, aspirant edupreneurs.

TOPIC:
Guiding Young Children to Arithmetic Operations

REGISTRATION FEES: RS. 499/-

COURSE HIGHLIGHTS:

- Can young children really do addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division?
- What are the early stages of Arithmetic Operations?
- How can teachers support young children's construction of foundational Arithmetic Operations concepts?
- What types of curriculum materials support Arithmetic Operations?
- How to use play to support children's construction of Arithmetic Operations?

AZURA ABRASID
(Malaysia)
Head of Early Childhood Programme,
Veritas University College,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Date: 11th December, 2020 (Friday)
Time: 4:00 - 5:30pm (IST)

ECDF
18 Day
CERTIFICATE
COURSE #15

For early childhood educators, edupreneurs, aspirant edupreneurs.

TOPIC:
Guiding Young Children to Arithmetic Operations

REGISTRATION FEES: RS. 499/-

COURSE HIGHLIGHTS:

- Can young children really do addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division?
- What are the early stages of Arithmetic Operations?
- How can teachers support young children's construction of foundational Arithmetic Operations concepts?
- What types of curriculum materials support Arithmetic Operations?
- How to use play to support children's construction of Arithmetic Operations?

AZURA ABRASID
(Malaysia)
Head of Early Childhood Programme,
Veritas University College,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Date: 11th December, 2020 (Friday)
Time: 4:00 - 5:30pm (IST)

THANK YOU

The online certification course for Guiding Young Children to Arithmetic operations was very informative, it will help me in taking classes more effectively. Having said that the session could have been more elaborate, it was little short in order to learn and know everything. I feel the presenter covered almost all topics and answered my questions according to my expectations.

Thank you. Looking forward to more such courses in order to enhance my skills.

Sheikh Md Ashraf Islam
Currently pursuing Diploma in Elementary Education in Normal School Bongaigaon.

17:51 ✓

ECDF 4cs of online learning

File Edit View Insert Format Slide Arrange Tools Add-ons Help Last edit was 15 minutes ago

Background Layout Theme Transition

VIRTUAL CLASSES

Presented by
Shareen Ratnani
December 22nd, 2020

Click to add speaker notes

Ratnani's screen

ECDF
18 Day
CERTIFICATE
COURSE #16

For early childhood educators, edupreneurs, aspirant edupreneurs.

TOPIC:
4Cs of Virtual learning : Rethinking teaching online

REGISTRATION FEES: RS. 499/-

COURSE HIGHLIGHTS:

- The 4 Cs that make online classes engaging, fun and meaningful
- Changing your classroom management to Connection Management
- Communicating with Parents as Educators
- Rethinking your curriculum and ways of delivering it
- Creativity in your teacher toolbox : brain breaks, mindfulness, attention grabbers, novelty and other teaching strategies that engage your little ones

SHAREEN RATNANI
(INDONESIA)
An experienced child content practitioner and leader with expertise in pre-school growth and development

Date: 22nd December, 2020 (Tuesday)
Time: 4:00 - 5:30pm (IST)

ECDF
EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT FORUM

Himangshu Sharma

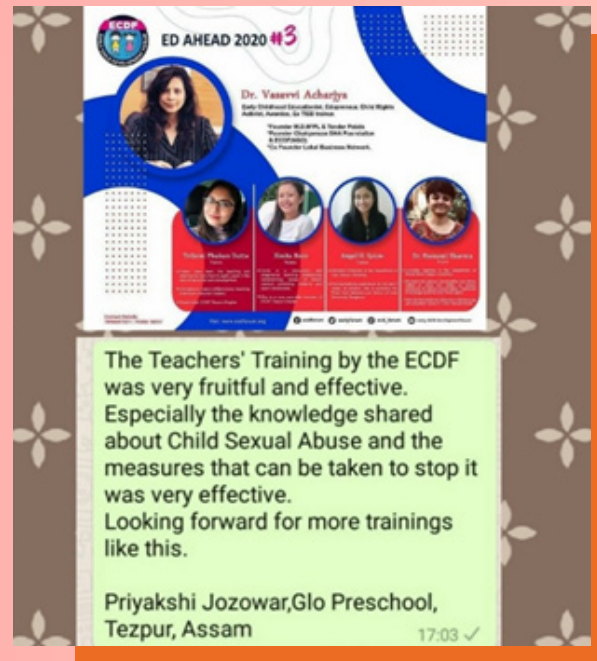
Shareen Ratnani

Shubha Goswami

Ed Ahead 2020 #3

ECDF conducted the Ed Ahead Educators Training Program at Assam Rifles High School, Lokra, Balipara, Tezpur on 13th December 2020. There were back to back sessions by the resource persons throughout the day. Only selected candidates

participated due to covid protocols. The feedback was remarkable and we thank the ECDF Tezpur Zonal Team for taking the initiative. ECDF Chairperson Dr. Vasavvi Acharjya was present and enriched the participants with her sessions.



DAINIK PURBODOY, A REGIONAL DAILY OF REPUTE : ED AHEAD 2020 #3 COVERAGE

असम रायफल्स का 'प्रारंभिक बचपन शिक्षकों का प्रशिक्षण'

तेजपुर, 16 दिसंबर (वि.सं.)। 'बचपन विकास मंच' ईसीडीएफ के सहयोग से आईजीएआर (ई) के तत्वावधान में 17 असम रायफल्स ने नायडू हॉल में 'इफेक्टिव टीचिंग एंड लर्निंग इन न्यू नॉर्मल' थीम पर शुरूआती बचपन के शिक्षकों के लिए एक दिवसीय प्रशिक्षण-सह-कार्यशाला का आयोजन किया। आकांक्षा दुबे, यूनित एआरडब्ल्यूडब्ल्यू- समन्वयक उद्यान समारोह के मुख्य अतिथि थे। एक दिवसीय प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रम 5 सत्रों में आयोजित किए गए और इनमें असम रायफल्स हाई स्कूल, लोकरा के 20 से अधिक शिक्षक-शिक्षिकाएं शामिल हुए थे। प्रथम सत्र में 'बाल यौन शोषण : मूल तत्व और चिंताएं', द्वितीय सत्र में 'मिश्रित शिक्षा : प्रारंभिक वर्षों में



मिश्रित मोड निर्देशों का लाभ' तृतीय सत्र में 'स्कूल की तत्परता पर वापस : बच्चे को नए सामान्य के लिए तैयार करना', चतुर्थ सत्र में 'कक्षा से परे सीखना' और पंचम सत्र में 'क्रिएटिव आर्ट्स-प्रिस्कूल के लिए एक अभिव्यक्ति' का आयोजन किया गया। प्रशिक्षण कार्यक्रम

मुख्य रूप से प्रारंभिक बचपन के शिक्षकों के लिए था, ताकि उन्हें प्रारंभिक बचपन की शिक्षा में नवीनतम और सर्वोत्तम प्रथाओं के बारे में जानकारी दी जा सके और उन्हें बुद्धिशीलता और बेहतर समाधान के साथ बाहर आने में सक्षम बनाया जा सके।

ECDF UPCOMING EVENTS:

Jan-Mar 2021

TRAINING COURSES

WEBINARS

SUMMIT (The Sphere of Influence)

ECDF EARTH LITERACY AWARDS 2021 (NOMINATIONS OPEN)

To know more, visit & like the ecdf fb page / ecdforum and other social media handles

DELHI MAY SCRAP NURSERY ADMISSIONS FOR 2021-22, SCHOOLS UNLIKELY TO OPEN BEFORE JULY

NEWS SOURCE INDIAN EXPRESS

THE DELHI government is considering scrapping nursery admissions for the 2021-22 academic session. Sources said senior government officials have discussed the option, which will now be proposed to private schools. According to the proposal, schools will admit two batches in 2022-23 instead – one in nursery, and the other in kindergarten.

Meanwhile, Delhi Education Minister Manish Sisodia told The Indian Express that there was very little possibility of schools reopening before July. “Even if we start vaccinating people by February, we will be able to vaccinate a sizeable chunk only by July. There is no possibility of reopening schools before that. We also have to look at how examinations will be conducted without putting teachers and students at risk,” he said.

Explaining the proposal to scrap nursery admissions for the upcoming session, a senior official said: “Schools can admit students in both nursery and kindergarten for the 2022-23 academic session, as

there will be vacancies in both grades. Considering the unpredictable nature of the Covid virus, the youngest children will be the last to go to school in any case. In such a situation, to have another set of young children whose entire academic year will be online is a little unfair to them as well as to their parents.”

School in Delhi have been shut since March. “There is a whole batch of students who started nursery in April this year, but everything was online. They have not interacted with their teachers or classmates, and have only seen them on the screen. In formative classes such as nursery and kindergarten, children learn to interact with each other and the world so that they are prepared for what lies ahead. They have not got this opportunity, despite starting school,” said the official.

Nursery admissions in Delhi are a highly regulated process, with the Delhi government deciding the admission schedule and criteria. The guidelines are usually released by November. This year, however, schools said there has been no discussion on the process so far.

“The government has not discussed any guidelines with us so far. Everything is very uncertain and parents are also wary, keeping in mind the pandemic,” said Jyoti Arora, principal, Mount Abu School, and member of the CBSE governing body.



MUST HAVE TOYS

Agnivh Prakash Bora

Student STG, (VI)

agnivhprakash.bora@sanskritthegurukul.in



Hello Readers,

In this issue of Ed Clan I am going to be telling you about another educational toy and its benefits. The name is Magnetic Wooden Board Game, for children aged 2 to 4.

Before we get to know the pros of this toy, let's first understand what it is all about. A magnetic board, bordered with wood. This board is used to draw and fix items on, the toy has a store area for items that you can fix on the board, and using creativity you can discover new pictures, shapes and structures, and by drawing additional pictures the thing can be further perfected.

To know that it is actually worth a buy, we have to

look at its utility and educative values.

Analysing it, I have discovered that this is a kind of play item which requires a child to use her/his creativity, as it is totally up to the child, what they want to create. While using one's creativity to make something, it would also involve other skills like cognitive and a final blueprint in mind as regards the outcome.

A magnet in something that can be quite interesting and intriguing to young children, and using so many magnets to play with is in itself quite interesting. When we play with something, we also discover new ways to play with it, that also keeps the mind open to new ideas.

Thank you for reading, I hope you liked it. Have a wonderful year ahead.



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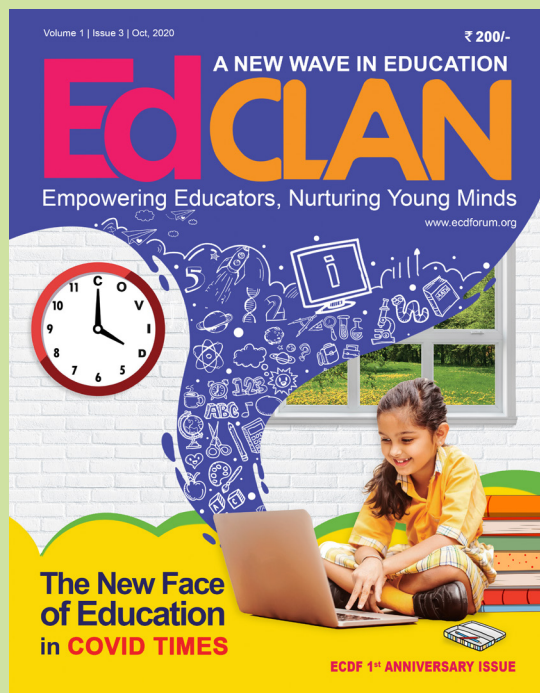
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You can also go through our website www.ecdforum.org



EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT FORUM



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