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# A NEW WAVE IN EDUCATION

The background of the entire slide is a light blue-grey color with a pattern of faint, overlapping white silhouettes of people in various poses, suggesting a crowd or a community. The text is prominently displayed in the upper half of the slide.

# EdCLAN

A NEW WAVE IN EDUCATION

# Empowering Educators, Nurturing Young Minds

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# The New Learning ECOSYSTEM





## **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](mailto:ecdinfo2019@gmail.com) or visit [www.ecdforum.org](http://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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## ED CLANNING



Dear Readers

We are thrilled to publish the 1st issue of the 2nd Volume of ED Clan, the ECDF quarterly education journal. It is indeed a pleasure to reach out to early years educators from every nook and corner of the world and build up a fraternity of informed and aware educators.

We all know that in a span of a few months there has been a paradigm shift in the Learning System and, therefore, we educators equipped and upscaled ourselves to meet the new needs. This issue of EDClan is about the New Learning EcoSystem, the need of the hour. We have to keep adapting to the changes and as educators and parents try to give the best to the children in their early years.

This issue of ED Clan also features the ECDF events and the ECDF Earth Literacy Awards 2021 that were held in the last quarter. I hope this will be an insightful read for all of you.

Signing off

Dr. Vasavvi Acharjya

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**The World of Toys**

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## EXPERTS SPEAK



Caroline Essame is founder and CEO of the social enterprise, CreateCATT and the pioneer of Developmental Play. A British arts and occupational therapist, with a Master's in play based education she has over 35 years' experience in education, welfare and health settings in England, India, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore. An associate lecturer for Singapore University of Social Sciences, an award winning adult educator at the Social Service Institute and a CPD provider at the National University of Singapore she trains ECD teachers and clinicians as well as running a small private practice for children who learn differently. She has worked with the LEGO Foundation on how play develops skills for the 21st Century and is an international speaker and thought leader.

**CAROLINE**  
**ESSAME**

# DEVELOPMENTAL PLAY MODEL AS A HOLISTIC APPROACH FOR POST-COVID TIMES

Two years ago, the World Economic Forum stated that *"We must equip our children with the tools to address and embrace the new realities of tomorrow. To do this, we must allow them to develop through play. Fewer play moments mean fewer opportunities to develop the skills children need to thrive in the dynamic, challenging economies of tomorrow"*. Little did anyone imagine that the 'new realities of tomorrow' would look like this! The need for play has been intensified by these difficult times and we need to support children through play more than ever.

The Developmental Play model centres on how children grow through different stages of play. It grew out of work in rural India with differently abled children where there was need to bring together best clinical and educational practices to support child development in a way that could be replicated by all adult stakeholders quickly and easily.

Play can support the ECD sector post-Covid. It is the language of children and it has 100 ways of being, according to Loris Malaguzzi, the founder



of the Reggio Emilia approach. It is what makes children happy and builds their brains and bodies. This story shows how.

### **Lin Lin and Lockdown**

*Lin Lin is a four-year-old girl on lockdown. She doesn't really know why, but she and her family have had to stay at home for weeks now. She hears her parents talking about illness and talking a lot about grandma and grandpa. Daddy shouts more and Mummy sometimes cries, and they always seem worried. Something bad is out there. Maybe it's a bad monster trying to get them – Lin Lin isn't sure. She doesn't really understand what germs are. She's never seen one.*

*So, Lin Lin is confused, the world has become a scarier place than usual, smaller, confined and uncertain. She likes being home with Mummy and Daddy more as she gets lots of their attention, but fundamentally she doesn't feel safe. She has no friends to play with and she cannot run outside and play in the playground. Her days have taken on a new form in their small city flat – less social, less physical, and strangely unsettling.*

*Food becomes central. Sometimes she likes to play with it and make a mess which irritates Mummy. Occasionally she has online lessons with her classmates, but she quickly loses interest if they're not interactive. Talking heads on screen are not very engaging, and she would prefer a video game with music and clear visuals that she can control.*

*Her sanctuary is her bedroom, her dolls house and her teddies. She constantly rearranges her toys, ordering and sequencing them and rescuing her teddies from disasters. She builds dens of pillows and her duvet which she and her teddies hide in, and sometimes she has tantrums when her mother tries to clear them up before she has finished.*

*Her mother worries that Lin Lin is anxious and tries to reassure her that COVID does not really make children ill, but Lin Lin knows it scares her*

*parents so it must be something to worry about. She uses play not just to express her anxiety but also to process it and make sense of the world around her. Playing with her food makes her feel free. Lining up her teddies give her a sense of control. Reorganising her dolls house helps her feel she can influence something. And building safe spaces helps her build resilience. Lin Lin uses play to make sense of her world in the language that works for her.*

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In the past year, many children have spent too much time indoors, too much time on screens and often too little time at school or with peers learning the crucial social and emotional skills that form the basis of happy learning and development as well as core subjects that schooling offers. We are facing a generation of young children with anxiety, social disconnection from isolation and wearing masks, as well as short falls in formal learning. Children have been sitting inside more than ever; and some have been abused or witnessed abuse, family breakdown and approaching poverty. They have picked up from their parents' fears that the world is not safe and cannot be controlled. The opportunities for learning and wellbeing we had previously taken for granted have been profoundly changed. We now need to fill in the gaps in learning to help children rebuild their bodies, minds and souls – and play is a great tool to enable this.

One priority in the early childhood sector is to rebuild relationships, support physical, social and emotional development, and to build resilience, flexibility and a sense of an inner locus of control so that children have the skills to recover from Covid and embrace opportunities for learning and development.

The model of Developmental Play gives a simple framework to introduce play for children and is based on the Developmental Play Pyramid where

each stage builds on the solid foundations of the one before. It emerged from wide-ranging professional experience in physiology, psychology, education, neuro-science, therapy, and arts and creativity. It builds on proven strategies for children's cognitive, physical, social and emotional development.



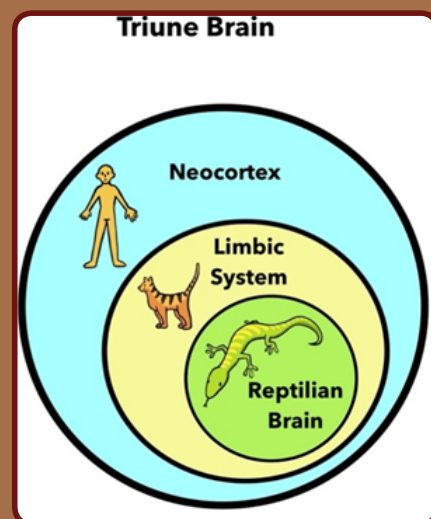
The Pyramid has four stages – Level One is the foundation stage and focusing on sensory body play which is all about learning about the world through our senses and through embodying experiences. Children who have sat too long during Covid need to move - in all domains – and feel their bodies in space, this is crucial for later writing, concentration, conceptual thinking-without strong internal body schemas children will not develop and learn as well. We also need to support relationships, ensure they have strong attachments and feel safe in the world and this is where attachment safety play comes in. It is amazing how a teacher who sees you for who you are and believes in you can make all the difference and keep you going when your home situation is unspeakable.

Once children have a good foundation in level one they will be more able and open to explore, create and move. They engage in exploration and they develop confidence and a sense of enquiry which is level two and this in turn will lead them to beginning to make meaning and to organise, sequence and have more control, cognitively and emotionally which is level three. These three levels are pre-verbal and happen through objects

and embodied play and the more opportunities children have to practice these the stronger their learning capabilities will be. From a neurological point of view you are hard wiring the triune brain - from more primitive reptilian responses of anxiety, fear, survival, to the higher cortex – where higher thought, learning and language takes place. Play builds the limbic system (the mammalian brain) and strengthens the brain's capabilities.

When there has been endemic anxiety to the extent we have seen it in the past year play is children's language for navigating their way out of the crisis and we must harness it for them in the best way we can. The Developmental Play approach helps us build

relationships, healthy bodies and healthy minds to embrace our new realities and find the way out of Covid.



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**RISA BETH  
COHEN**

Risa Beth Cohen, MEd, is the Creative Director of Sing into Reading, where you can teach your child to read with music and love. Risa offers classes for children, as well as training for teachers and librarians. Risa is an entrepreneur, a singer/songwriter, a storyteller, and a writer, but she identifies most strongly as a teacher. She has been teaching children since 1994. Since then, Risa has taught babies, toddlers, preschoolers, elementary students, middle school students, college students, teachers training in graduate school, educators and librarians. She received her B.F.A. in acting from Tisch School of the Arts at New York University, and her MEd in Early Childhood/ Elementary Education from Bank Street College. She studied at The Reading and Writing Project (TRWP) at Teachers College, Columbia University, where she served on a number of leadership groups. As a classroom teacher, teaching a K-1 loop in New York City, her class was a lab site for Writing Workshop. Risa served West Side Montessori in Toledo, OH as the Music/Literacy Co-Curricular for ten years.

# TEACHING LITERACY THROUGH MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

Music and movement are powerful teaching tools and effective class management tools. Music begs the listener to pay attention. The cadence invites the audience to find rhythms and play with language. Moving the body ignites the brain. Music prepares children to be strong and confident readers. Under each of the headings below, I offer ways to teach literacy skills through music and movement.

## ***SINGING TO TEACH PHONOLOGICAL AND PHONEMIC AWARENESS***

Phonemic awareness is the awareness of and the ability to isolate and change the sounds of language (phonemes). This includes identifying and making rhymes, breaking words into syllables, and alliteration. What better way to teach rhyme than with rhyming songs? I introduce rhymes with fun rhyming songs

(i.e.: “Jack and Jill,” “Baa, Baa, Black Sheep”, Raffi’s “Down by the Bay,” Laurie Berkner’s “Victor Vito,” “Little Johnny Brown,” and “Hush Little Baby.”) Since the most meaningful word to a child is their name, I like to rhyme students’ names with Raffi’s “Willoughby, Wallaby Woo” or “The Name Game,” by Shirley Ellis. I invite each child to stand or dance when they hear the sound that rhymes with their name to incorporate movement as well. Students stand up gleefully when they recognize a sound that rhymes with their precious name.

To teach alliteration, I sing an alliterative song. “My Bonnie” is a favorite with kindergartners. Every time we say the sound /B/, we move: if we are standing, we sit; if we are sitting, we stand. Singing “Bring back, bring back, bring back my Bonnie,” invites quick movement and peals of laughter. The movement gets the lessons into their bodies, and the music anchors it into their memories.

### SHARED READING WITH SONGS

Shared Reading involves reading a big book or a text written in large print on chart paper to be read in front of a group. In Shared Reading, a teacher can model the techniques, skills, and thinking processes of careful readers. For example, just as a child in your lap can watch you point under each word as you read it, a group of children can watch the teacher point under each word with a finger or a pointer while reading. Shared Reading is most effective as a repeated activity. The first time a text is introduced, the children listen and observe. On subsequent readings, as students gain familiarity with the text, they read along, either in choral reading or an interactive call-and-response format. Through Shared Reading, children learn valuable reading skills like tracking print, one-to-one correspondence, phonics, word study, vocabulary, left-to-right directionality, and letter and word recognition.

Use a song children are familiar with to encourage participation. Since music helps memory, children will soon memorize the song and join in reading the text. Many call-and-response chants and songs

(like “One Potato, Two Potato”) lend themselves to an interactive reading, breaking the lines up in two parts, like dialogue. While students may be reading or reciting from memory at first, by watching the teacher point under each word as they read the familiar words in the song, Shared Reading helps students develop letter/sound correspondence and learn to read more fluently.

### ZIPPER SONGS

“Zipper songs,” (or “fill-in-the-blank-songs”) consist of a repeated verse in which one word or phrase changes. I ask the students to fill in those blanks and “zip” their ideas right into the songs. For example, “Old McDonald” is a zipper song because I can ask children, “What animal should we sing about?” and “What sound does it make?” Since the ideas for the songs come from the kids, zipper songs give children a sense of ownership which piques their interest and engagement.

When I use a zipper song as a shared reading piece, this presents an opportunity for modeled writing, interactive writing, or independent writing. For example, one of my favorite zipper songs is by Ella Jenkins, “Play Your Instruments and Make a Pretty Sound.” I write the song on large print on chart paper, with blanks, “Play your \_\_\_\_\_ and make a pretty sound.” Then, I laminate the page, or cover the area to be written on with wide clear packing tape so that I can fill in the blank with dry erase marker, erase it, and write something else. Depending on the age of the students, this might be an opportunity for modeled writing or interactive writing. For older students, I print the song on copy paper, and they can fill in the blanks independently. Then students illustrate the song as a comprehension exercise. Since zipper songs are such useful tools for teaching literacy, many of the songs I write are zipper songs.

### MOVEMENT

Movement involves both fine and gross motor skills. Therefore, it is directly related to writing. Train the hand to hold a pencil with finger



plays. Provide plenty of opportunities for large movement, crossing the midline, to help the left and right hemispheres of the brain communicate. Even skipping enhances reading readiness, so providing opportunities to move in this rhythmic step-hop pattern helps a child's brain prepare for reading!

## ***A STRONG LITERACY CURRICULUM INCLUDES MUSIC AND MOVEMENT***

There are many components of effective literacy instruction. I have studied a number of literacy programs. At Bank Street College, where I received my MEd in Early Childhood/Elementary Education, I learned a whole language approach. This approach emphasizes play, a print-rich environment, daily read alouds, and serving “the whole child.” While teaching a K-1 loop at Hamilton Heights Academy at P.S. 28 in New York City, I studied at The Reading and Writing Project (TRWP) at Teachers College, Columbia University, where I learned Balanced Literacy. I served on leadership groups, and my classroom

served as a labsite for Writing Workshop. As the Music/Literacy Co-Curricular at West Side Montessori in Toledo, OH, I learned Reading Recovery and Orton-Gillingham. The phonics component and explicit teaching I learned from Reading Recovery, and the Orton-Gillingham approach supplemented the Balanced Literacy curriculum I learned at TRWP. Thanks to my background in performing, I injected music and movement into my literacy curriculum, which deepened the learning for my students.

Reading Recovery, the Orton-Gillingham approach, and Balanced Literacy are effective programs, and they complement each other well. It is important to recognize that, while reading to your child every day and creating a literacy-rich environment may teach some children to read, most children need more support. Effective literacy instruction includes phonological and phonemic awareness, phonics, word study, modeled writing, handwriting, interactive writing, independent writing, shared reading, guided reading, and independent reading. Music and Movement will enhance any literacy program.



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## EXPERTS SPEAK



**SMRITI  
AGARWAL**

Smriti Agarwal is a passionate early childhood educator since the year 1995 and has been associated with best schools in India in a leadership role. Writing is a love for her which won her an award from Scholastic India for writing on 'The School of my Dreams'. Ms Smriti has contributed numerous articles for educational magazines, stories for anthologies and value adding content for early childhood education. As an active leader, parenting mentor, teacher's mentor, speaker and panellist, she believes in knowledge sharing, collaborating, innovating and reinventing the best practices in the ECCE world with fellow educators. Having won many awards as an educator, she believes that acknowledging one's contribution and hard work humbles and motivates one to keep working passionately towards the betterment of the world we are in. Recently ECDF honoured her with the 'Pinnacle Award' in the category 'Innovations in Early Learning and Child Development'. Ms Smriti Agarwal headed Podar Jumbo Kids Powai, Mumbai for five years and currently is leading the content team at Vibgyor Kids school since last year. As an avid reader and eager learner, she believes that 'Education never ends' and her motto is 'One who dares to teach must never cease to learn'.

# THE NEW LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

The most important component of a learning ecosystem for early childhood is the immediate environment. Different environments which effect development and learning of children are physical, social and temporal environments. The known ecosystem which all early childhood educators and parents understood until now, has changed drastically as the world faced the pandemic.

The unprecedented time for the world going through the Covid 19 pandemic has taken away

the nurturing and stimulating environment from the children globally. Outdoor play, exploring elements of nature was not possible and likewise the necessary stimulating physical and social environments of an early childhood centre was also deprived from the young learners. Closing of schools has a catastrophic impact on children and society at large.

As the saying goes 'Change is the only Constant'. Learning environments and the entire ecosystem has undergone a paradigm shift. The

new ecosystem will now have the blended and integrated approach of teaching and learning.

The AI and AR has shrunk the world and made it into an interconnected community of people. One positive and progressive effect of the pandemic was that remote learning on virtual platforms enabled schools to reach hundreds of children. The platform had a wider reach across all boundaries. The teacher teaching in one school, in a particular class was not limited to only her/his students but had an access to teach all children of that particular age group, wherever she/he was. Numerous online programmes by the government, public and private organisations and institutes made sure that learning goes on uninterrupted.

With the new found confidence on an otherwise lesser travelled and explored territory of technology by teachers and educators, it became an integral part of life and education in every sphere. The new eco system will depend largely on technology in terms of technical gadgets and services. The present generation is tech savvy from birth. The brains are wired and the neurons form synapses much faster to comprehend the working of gadgets as compared to the earlier generations. The blended learning approach was being practiced in a miniscule way for secondary school education, is now becoming a necessity for all levels, including early childhood. The pedagogy is changing on a multi fold level. Next step will be to go from blended to hybrid learning. Hybrid learning means synchronous lessons taught simultaneously in physical and remote environment, that is face to face and online at the same time. It will be the new norm in education as even when schools reopen and we have early childhood centres opening, we will not be able to safely accommodate the strength we used to in a single classroom. India is an over populated country with over 16 crore children in the age bracket of 0-6 years according to census India website. Each school has hundreds of children attending school on a daily basis to get educated, which will not be a possibility keeping safety in

mind now. Hence, it will be a roster attendance with half children studying via screen, sitting at home, attending the same class as the other half physically present in the class room. Adapting and evolving are inevitable now. The 'Hybrid Learning Model' provides flexibility, safety, personalisation and adaptive learning tools for remote as well as face to face learning and teaching. For effective hybrid learning eco system, making face to face learning and online learning a cohesive experience, we need to capitalise on the strength and effective features of each to be blended and tapped upon with diligence.

Another big change for the new learning ecosystem will be flipped classrooms and home schooling. The focus has to be on developing an environment with parents as the main resource people for the children's education. The division between the role of a parent and the role of a teacher in a child's life has merged and interchanged in a big way. Home is the first school and parents are the first teachers of a child in the true sense, but now this responsibility has added colours of being a facilitator along with being a nurturer.

Parents and families will need to make an effort on training themselves on age and developmentally appropriate practices to provide maximum stimulation, a nurturing environment and appropriate resources to optimise learning and progress of their children being at home. Parents as support teachers will have to collaborate with schools and teachers for their children's education. Education is no longer only the school's domain and responsibility, but a shared responsibility for both parents and schools. Schools can provide the expertise as mentors, in terms of curriculum, learning material online platform, and digital aids, but implementation and quality time will have to be provided by the parents.

Observations and assessments are another major area where parents are playing a major role in the new learning ecosystem. With the formative and summative assessment methodology of schools not being apt for the present scenario, prime caretakers have to take measures to adapt to



observation as a tool for marking the progress of the children.

NEP (New Education Policy) 2020 has laid a paramount importance to digitalisation of education for all levels, including early childhood education, with the aim of greater reach and more children availing the benefit of quality education. Today, even baalwadis and annganwadis are being supported by local and state government and various NGOs to slowly move toward digitalisation of content and methods of implementing the curriculum. The world is accepting the importance of community, families and schools coming together to provide for children's welfare, education, safety and overall development.

We educators look forward to the new learning ecosystem and brace ourselves for the change required. Teacher training and upgradation will be the focal point as, outdated, age old traditional methodology needs to be replaced with new pedagogy with redefined role of a teacher. 78 % of aided and government aided schools are now spurred up to take the challenge heads on. The 4 C's of competencies will be in the foreground as communication, collaboration, critical thinking and creativity will take the driver's seat to lead the new learning ecosystem to its destination. Information, Media and Technological literacies are new foundation literacies and the learning ecosystem with appropriate digitalisation will support these for life readiness in children.



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### SMRUTI SWETA SAMANTRAY

Smruti Sweta Samantray, National Coordinator, Media and Communication – The Climate Reality India, Marcom Specialist and Career Counsellor wears multiple hats. She is a Climate Leader, Writer, Feature Editor, Freelance Brand Consultant, Counsellor & Music composer.

Smruti has been working in the genre of Corporate Communication for >12 years now (specialization: Green PR). She hails with an interesting mix of backgrounds of English Literature-Mass Communication, MBA and PR, and she has been imparting training sessions to the college students (including engineering, management/ IIM students) on various related topics. She has had an opportunity to work on some stories with an array of international and national media. Having the knack of branding, marketing communication strategies, in her DNA, she assists NGOs and startups as Communication & Brand Consultant.

Her knack of creativity is evident in her culinary skills too. She enjoys cooking and blending it with literature. She has written 3500+ feature stories, reviewed 40+ books and counselled approx. 3000 students and 1500 parents. Her script and dialogues for a movie, “The Torn Wish,” along with the lyrics of three songs has been her debut strike in the film industry. Currently, she is working on independent research projects on education and environment, and incorporating sustainability in pre-school education is in the primary radar of her research. She loves connecting with people and having constructive feedback. What keeps her going? Food and positive thoughts!

## NATURE AS AN ELEMENT FOR LEARNING, CONNECTING & RESILIENCE: EFSIS IMPERATIVE

**I**t is never late to learn, but it is good to start early. By writing such an oxymoron-ic statement, I am trying to stir the need to segregate the realization and methodologies of execution for better approach towards an effective start. Many people who already are parents and those expecting to-become parents soon, must acknowledge the significance of nature and environment in the art of parenting. Everything that we consume or use, be it vegetables, fruits, water, air and other resources, are all from nature. Nothing more we can do towards nature than cultivating the art of gratefulness towards it by being sensible and sustainable. To make this

simple process more efficient, we need to start early. Right from their birth, children should be inculcated with the attitude of realizing the values of gifts nature bestows upon us. What could be the best way of thanking than integrating the same in the system of education?

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD), a program by United Nations, underlines the system of education that encourages sustainable and just society for all, through knowledge, skills, attitude and values. If developed and implemented properly, ESD can become a powerful tool against climate crisis and its impacts. ESD aims at a balanced future. Its objective is to equip the present and future generations to meet their needs using a balanced and integrated approach towards economic, social and environmental aspects of the sustainable development. As a component of measurement, ESD is an indicator for SDG 12 (Sustainable Development Goals) that stands for “responsible consumption and production.” Of 11, 8th target of SDG 12 aims at making people aware towards sustainable development ad lifestyles, with relevant information and harmony with nature. This goes without saying that all of this wouldn't be possible without a strategic scheme of education. As Fredrich Froebel has emphasized that educational environment plays an important role in the development of a child's mind and body, then why not start this process of strategic learning from their pre-school days?

The relation between nature and humans renders two-way impacts. Our actions, and nature's resources. Nature, through its abundance and love, provides ample opportunities to the children to connect with them and themselves. Not rote memorization, but through unstructured free-play with nature and its systems,

children improve their thought process, creativity, comprehension and sensibilities towards sustainable living. Let the child decide which path to walk inside the biodiversity parks, of course you follow and guide them. At least, with this freedom of choosing, they would know what they feel there and are curious about. Another activity in the nature trails could be letting them analyse the variety of flowers, leaves, trees, birds, etc. they witness during their trails. By asking them to maintain a scrapbook of the same (maybe a sample leaf, stem, or anything else), you teach the attitude of valuing nature. This lets them connect. I would like to cite an example here. Four-year old Annie spent with her weekends with her parents on a seashore. There, she drank tender coconut water as her father mentioned that coconut trees are abundantly found in such regions. She saw fishermen catching varieties of fish. She also created a sand castle but mashing, cupping, mixing and moulding wet and dry sand. She loved the texture. She also collected conches from the seashore and made a neckpiece out of some of them. Se used the remaining shells in decorating her pen stand. Right from getting the essence of natural beauty, here, Annie learned several other things, including sustainable crafts, flora and fauna, and others. Just one visit of free-play (topped with guidance) increased her knowledge-bank.

As a perfect catalyst of STEM education, nature contributes to social, emotional, intellectual and physical development of children. It boosts critical thinking, problem-solving attitude, creativity, enthusiasm, and relationship skills among others. Fresh air, sunlight, oxygen and greenery can push children to get into physical activities with their friends or groups. They may run and play; climb



trees or hug them; dip feet in water; splash water from the spring collected in their cupped palms; or simply lay down and gaze at the clouds to create their own imaginary world. Any child or any person, who has spent a substantial amount of time in nature or natural patches, knows the real meaning of connection, freedom, happiness and serenity. Ambitious SDGs have a universal agenda to transform the world for better, and the challenge it has issued is to provide all the children with quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education by 2030. Nature-based education offers a platform that blends quality with learning.

Tapping the emotional wellness, nature helps in reducing anger, anxiety, impulsive nature, stress, disorderly behaviour and negative thinking. Nature does plentiful health benefits, including healthy heart and mind. It is the best pillow, mattress or quilt to improve your coping skills and resilience. A simple barefoot walk on green grass can stimulate reflexology further reducing pain and inflammation. Likewise, basking under the sun, improves the level of Vitamin D, which further helps in balancing mood, motivation, strengths, and positivity. Walking, jogging, exercising or sprinting in a lush green park or biodiversity park alleviates oxygen levels stimulating brainpower and working as stress buster. A picnic spot in the lap of nature is incomparable! Outdoor is magical and so is indoors.

The entry of pandemic COVID has put a thick cloak of suspicion on outdoor activities. The limitations or restrictions of staying indoors have affected the overall development of the children. However, the good news is that one can still stay connected to nature and be sustainable even while indoors. Indoor air-purifying

plants can help children breathe better quality of oxygen. Children can still be taught to be responsible towards nature by participating in upcycling and waste management activities that take place at home. Simply by knowing when to turn off the lights and water taps, you make them responsible towards nature. Make a few bottle planters with them and make them part of your daily gardening activities, especially for vegetables and fruits. This will help them understand how food grows and gets into their plates. Acknowledging natural elements like birch, sand, leaves, rocks, pebbles, etc. is another way. Listen to the natural sounds from internet if you can't take them outside. It calms the mind and senses. How does a cuckoo or a cow sound? How does a flowing river sound? Let them hear and register in their memory of formative years. You can also give them near-to-reality experiences through 3D or Augmented Reality systems (especially, books), as these will help them observe and learn better.

The idea is to stay connected with nature by incorporating EfS approach (Education for Sustainability) that brings together students, schools and communities with the values and motivation to step up for sustainability-related actions starting with their personal lives and scaling it up to community and worldwide, starting now. It is never late for the parents to begin teaching their children keeping an angle of sustainability in mind – if parents have missed the formative years, then they can start EfS anyway at any growing age of a child. The best way to do it would be the collaboration of schools and parents for this mission. The more you are connected with nature (for learning and/or resilience), better your life becomes.

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# Q & A with Dr. CHARLENE WRIGHTON, USA

## INTERVIEW

### TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF

**M**y name is Charlene Wrighton and I have a master's degree and a doctorate in Curriculum and Instruction. I have many credentials in both regular and special education. I taught special education students for twenty-one years. I was a mentor teacher and voted "Teach of the Year" during my tenure in special education. During the last six years of this twenty-one years, my sister and I began to develop our Zoo-phonics Mnemonic and Multisensory Language Arts Program. Zoo-phonics is thirty-six years old and is used in thousands of schools, private and public (toddlers through first grade), in the United States. 40,000 children learn English through Zoo-phonics daily. Japan has twenty Zoo-phonics academies. Singapore has twenty-one Zoo-phonics academies. They have

also established schools in other countries. The Dominican Republic has two preschools that use the Zoo-phonics curriculum. Our partner in Spain is just starting. Our alphabet has been translated into Spanish, Arabic and Danish. The Zoo-phonics Mnemonic and Multisensory Language Arts Program won two awards from Learning Magazine (peer reviewed) for its preschool and kindergarten curriculum.

Fourteen years ago, we opened Safari Learning Academy. It is a large learning center where Zoo-phonics is at the heart of our curriculum. The Safari Learning Academy has won "Preschool of the Year" in Tuolumne County, CA, USA.

I have a wonderful husband of 52 years, three adult children and nine grandchildren. I am 73 years old



and still run and write for Zoo-phonics, creating new educational products each year. I also handle our international partners (stated above). I work part-time at our Safari Learning Academy as the Executive Director.

***AS THE CEO AT ZOO-PHONICS MNEMONIC AND MULTISENSORY ARTS PROGRAM, ENLIGHTEN US ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF ZOO-PHONICS IN ECCE.***

Children need to learn through concrete (not abstract) concepts. Zoo-phonics is concrete, playful, and physical. We use Animal Letters in the shape of lower case letters and make mastery of the shapes and sounds of the letters so needed as a foundation for reading, spelling, and writing.

As children progress, we use those same cute Animal Letters and Body Gestures (Signals) to teach CVC words, the schwa sound, blends, digraphs, long vowels, diphthongs, silent letters and soft sounds. We teach reading fluency, comprehension and all aspects of language arts.

Children need to move as they learn. When children move, the brain secretes a chemical protein called “brain derived neuro-tropic factor” (BDNF) that not only strengthen new neuronal connections (memory) but also grow new neurons. Children learn through their bodies. We use visual (Animal Letters), auditory (Alliterative Animal Names), and kinesthetic (Body Gestures called Signals) mnemonics. (There are many studies on BDNF, movement and memory).

Zoo-phonics integrates language arts into all academic subjects: math, art, music, literature, technology, social studies, self-help skills, cooking and nutrition, socialization, thus: S.T.R.E.A.M.S. Children need to learn through play. They need to be engaged and excited about the learning and they need to feel confident and proud of their accomplishments. This education is the foundation for learning that will last a lifetime. We reach the whole child.

***YOU HAD PARTNERED WITH AN ORGANIZATION IN THE US AND HELPED MANY COUNTRIES IN AFRICA. COULD YOU PLEASE TELL ABOUT IT?***

A principal of a Christian school in the U.S. brought Zoo-phonics to his school. He saw its success and decided he wanted to take Zoo-phonics to Africa, where he made yearly trips to bring water purifiers and educators to various countries. He and his teachers came to California to train with me. I donated a lot of Zoo-phonics materials and he took them to nine countries in Africa and trained their teachers. In 2020, my husband and I made a trip to Kenya where teachers and ministers from six countries joined me for a three-day training in Zoo-phonics. It was a glorious three days. The other days were spent in the classrooms full of children who had been learning to read, spell and write through Zoo-phonics for the last several years. It lifted my heart. I cannot wait to go back.

We have donated materials to two church schools in India and many other schools in the U.S. and in other parts of the world. Children are our highest priority. Knowing that education, primarily reading, lifts children out of poverty, keeps me motivated to keep sharing our Zoo-phonics with the world.

***WHAT IS YOUR MESSAGE TO THE EARLY YEARS EDUCATORS OUT THERE?***

Children need to learn lower case letters and letter sounds before learning capital letters and letter names. They need to play and move their bodies (it solidifies memory) while they learn in order to keep their wiggly bodies and active minds engaged. If they are having fun, they attend. Learning should be joyous. Zoo-phonics accomplishes this, regardless of age (infants and toddlers expand their vocabulary), preschoolers, kindergarten and first grade learn all language arts skills. Zoo-phonics quickly help children with special educational needs as well as those learning English as their second language.

# ECDF–THE SPHERE OF INFLUENCE 2021 (SOI)

A Global Confluence of Educators and Stakeholders

Theme: Exploring The Various Aspects of ECCE

ECDF conducted a day long summit on 12th February, 2021 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (IST), an online event which went live on the Facebook page of the forum. It was a first of its kind event in the field of Early Childhood Care & Education. The main objective of this event was to bring together Early Years Leaders from all over the globe on one platform where they would share their knowledge, expertise, ideas and bring about a revolution in ECCE. There were speakers from US, UK, Australia, Sweden, Canada, Nigeria, Pakistan, Dubai, UAE, Malaysia, Indonesia and India who joined that day. The specialty of this event was there were 11 young speakers in the category of Young Voices, from India, Indonesia, Canada, UK and US, besides the 90+ speakers from the domain of ECCE.

There were varied topics on which the eminent speakers shared their knowledge, some of which were Child Rights and Protection, Content Creation for Children in Early Years, Stem Education in Pre-K, Wonder filled Early Childhood Environments to name a few. Since it was a day long summit of 8 hours, there were 4 conveners who moderated the session for every two hours.

The first 2 hours session was moderated by Ms. SimranBallani from Bengaluru, India, the Zonal Head of ECDF South Chapter. The Young voices in this session were Henry Fu from Ottawa, Canada and Aryamann Sharma from Mumbai, India who spoke on “Use of Technology for the Betterment of Education Delivery”, Anweshan Garg and Iffat Ikram from Guwahati, India, spoke about “Learning Experiences in Pandemic Times” and “Child Rights and Protection” respectively. The confluence was then carried on for the next two hours by the next convener Ms. Shareen Ratnani from Indonesia who is an Early Childhood Specialist. The young voice during this session was Christian Rebolledo from Nevada, USA who spoke about the “Importance of Resilience and Coping Skills”.

The next two sessions were moderated by Dr. Kathryn Murray from Australia and Dr. Sue Allingham from UK respectively. The young voices in Dr. Kathryn’s session were Aiushmaan Sameer Gogoi from Guwahati, India, Yash Raj Krishnan from UK, and both of them spoke about “Use of Technology for Betterment of Education Delivery” and Ananya Khaund from Guwahati, India who spoke on “Learning Experiences in Pandemic Times” respectively. The young voices in

Dr. Sue's session were Kian Suresh from Bengaluru, India and Simran Mahtani from Indonesia, both of them spoke about their Learning Experiences in Pandemic Times and Agnivh Prakash Bora from Guwahati, India, spoke on the Importance of Resilience and Coping Skills.

During this day long confluence, speakers from different part of India and the world chose to speak on some very pertinent topics. Some of the speakers were Sonia Kullar from Bengaluru, Amrit Nagpal from Mumbai, Asnaha Farheen from Bangladesh, Shantha Sampath from U.K., Rita Das from Haryana, Dr. Sabina Keshwani from Delhi, Swapna Mitra from Mumbai, Nellie Ahmed from Assam spoke about "Enquiry Based Learning Environment", Dr. Prgya Upadhyay from Uttarakhand, Tulika Samal from Odisha, Preeti Pasricha from Mumbai, Dr. Shauli Mukherjee from West Bengal, Sue Asquith from U.K., Swarleen Kaur from Uttarakhand, Harsha Girish Ramaiya from Gujarat spoke about "Conscious and Effective Parenting".

Speakers Priya Roy from Trivandrum, Brooke Gomes from USA, Kareena Bhambhani from Mumbai, Laura Perfetti from U.K., Moushumi Sinha from U.P. spoke about "Multicultural Education Beyond Classroom", Kari Sutton from Australia, Somapika Sarkar from Maharashtra, Shirin Kulkarni from Finland, Tanvi Auradkar from Pune, Sukaina Hussain from Pakistan, Greshma Momaya from Bengaluru, Archana Madhusudhan from Hyderabad chose to speak on "Socio-Emotional Wellbeing of Children". Himangi Arora from Delhi, Karthik Naidu from Bengaluru spoke about "Future Proofing Your Child", Azura Abrasid from Malaysia, Dr. Nidhi Khurana from Delhi, Pratima Srivastava from Bengaluru spoke about "Stem Education in Pre-K", Neha Seth from Delhi, Sanjeev Kapoor from Delhi, Laurina Bergqvist from Sweden, Smriti Agarwal from Mumbai, Archana Gaba from Punjab, Purnima Prabhakar from Bengaluru, Jagruti Patel from USA, Sapna Pothula from Bengaluru chose the topic "Content Creation for Children in Early Years".

Simran Ballani and Khyati Singh from Bengaluru, Shanoli Ray from Kolkata, Himani Gour from U.P., Sana Fatima Larik from UAE, Archana Jain from Mumbai spoke about "Parents as Collaborators", Abigail Carr from Hong Kong, Paras Mahendru from Gujarat, Sadia Nazli from Pakistan, Kiran Khetwani from Mumbai, Kusum Kanwar from Mumbai, Ritika Grover from Delhi, Dr. Haleema Sadia from Delhi, Johnson Dolapo from Nigeria spoke about "Wonder filled Early Childhood Environment". Tyrone Jones from the US, Reshma Shah from Guwahati, India, Brian Coulter from Dubai, UAE chose to speak on another interesting topic and that being "Training and Hiring Qualified Educators". Ashika Shetty, Dr. Geeta Shukla, Khushboo Yadav from India and Bharati Patel from U.K., spoke on Child Rights and Protection. Some of the International speakers who managed to join the confluence in spite of the huge difference in the time zones, were Stephany Pascoal from Canada, Priscilla Kandel from California, USA, who spoke on "Parents as Collaborators" and "Content Creation for Children in Early Years" respectively and Dr. Charlene Wrighton who spoke on "Stem Education in Pre-K".

There was extensive sharing of ideas and knowledge as all the EY Leaders, Educators and Educationists deliberated on the various aspects of ECCE and shared their valuable bite sized inputs that were extremely enriching from the attendees from all over the globe. Special mention should be made of the young voices who at such young age were extremely aware and knowledgeable and shared their views on the varied topics they chose to speak on.

There was a huge response from all quarters and the feedback of the confluence was extremely positive both from speakers and attendees. Attendee Usha Prasad wrote on Facebook "Commendable job by the ECDF team to put up such a huge global platform to highlight various issues faced in different domains of child development. However diverse we all maybe yet we all have one common thought, a common goal, that is Early Childhood Development. Thanks so much for such a huge



and mammoth confluence on our windows....(pun intended). Kudos to ECDF.”

Attendee Asna Khan wrote, “A big shout out to Dr Vasavvi Acharjya and team ECDF. Much appreciation to all the wonderful Eduheroes. It was great to hear such bite size but powerful thoughts from all the eminent Eduheroes. More power to you all!”

Our esteemed speakers wrote wonderful testimonials that motivated team ECDF. Speaker Sanjeev Kapoor, Delhi, India wrote, “The event is wonderfully organised and very well conducted. The in depth knowledge of speakers to sum up their thoughts in 3 minutes needs an applaud. An entire globe comes under one umbrella to share thoughts shows the great leadership of Dr. Vasavvi Acharjya. Love to be a part of many more of such events in times to come.”

“I want to thank ECDF for this opportunity and congratulate everyone who has had the chance to share their perspectives. Truly wonderful and

knowledgeable professionals! This has been a wonderful experience and an introduction to professional and international speaking about such important topics. I hope to interact and share a stage with you all again in the future. Have a wonderful day. Thank you,” wrote Stephany Pascol, speaker from Canada.

Young voice Aryamann Sharma, from Mumbai, India wrote, “It was such a privilege and an honour to be a speaker at the Sphere of Influence. I would like to express my utmost gratitude to Dr. Vasavvi Acharjya for giving me the opportunity to be a part of this event. To be in the company of speakers with such powerful insights was indeed an eye opening experience for me. My wishes to the ECDF team and I am looking forward to participating in more of such events in the future.”

The Sphere of Influence is a first of its kind confluence in the history of Early Childhood Care and Education and has been a step forward in the ECCE revolution happening all over the world.





THE SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

*A Global Confluence...*  
**EXPLORING VARIOUS ASPECTS OF ECCE**  
An Online Event



**Dr. Vasavvi Acharjya**  
Founder Chairperson ECDF & DNAF  
M.D. Tender Petals Preschool Chain & IIFPL

**12<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2021**  
**10 a.m - 6 p.m**

**CONVENERS of SOI**



Dr. Sue Allingham  
United Kingdom



Dr. Kathryn Murray  
Australia



Simran Ballani  
India



Shareen Ratnani  
Indonesia

**THE ROSTER OF YOUNG VOICES**



**Aryamann Sharma**  
Project Support Specialist,  
Greson Leherman Group,  
India



**Simran Mahtani**  
Founder, Karma Kambhatla,  
Indonesia



**Yash Raj Krishnan**  
Student at Queen Elizabeth's  
School, London, Rep. Barret  
Youth Board, U.K



**Agnivh Prakash Bora**  
Student at STG Sanskrit The  
Gurukul, Guwahati, Columnist Ed  
Cian, an Education Journal, India



**Kian Suresh**  
Student at The International  
School Bangalore, School  
Relation Prefect, India



**Iffat Ikram**  
Student at Marj P.O.H. Chien, Doha, Founder  
Fameer, India  
Student at The International School Bangalore,  
School Relation Prefect, India



**Ananya Khaund**  
Student of Royal Global School,  
Dowahati, a budding writer, India



**Aishman Sameer Gogoi**  
Student of Royal Global School,  
Dowahati



**Anweshan Garg**  
Student of Maria's Public School,  
Dowahati



**Henry Fu**  
student with multiple interests, Canada



**Christian Rebolledo**  
Student, Hyde Park Middle School,  
Nevada USA

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Dr. Charles Wigham  
Executive Director, The Sphere of Influence, New York

Laurina Berginot  
Executive Director, The Sphere of Influence, Australia

Archana Gaba  
Founder, The Sphere of Influence, India

Tymone Jones II  
Executive Director, The Sphere of Influence, USA

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# EXPERTS SPEAK

## RELATIONSHIPS: THE FOUNDATION OF A LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

“You can’t solve a systemic issue just with a new system.”

Listening to Jay Shetty’s podcast, this quote makes me think of early education as a whole. We are seeing many needed changes being discussed and brought to light through our current experiences with Covid.

What we don’t want to see happen is the decision of simply implementing a new system, a new way to check boxes - calling this the solution.

What we need is an ecosystem of educated,



involved, compassionate people prepared to implement research-based practices and adjust to the learners as needed.

This is a seemingly impossible undertaking. Where do we even start to create this type of dynamic community? Once we create it, how do we maintain it? The answer is simple and terribly challenging at the same time; positive relationships are always the foundation of change.

Here is the complicating part - the specifics of this look different for every nation, every culture, every school, and every student. Creating a new learning system that focuses on the learner starts with taking the time to build positive relationships with them.

### **Building Relationship - Two Pieces to Success**

The best learning relationships have two vital pieces. First, the type of environment they are built in and second, the ‘product’ of the relationship. We know that just because a relationship is built does not mean that it was grown in a safe environment or that it is healthy.

The biggest focus for using relationships as a foundation for change is being intentional with how they are built, the space they are being built in, and what relational success looks like. Without being intentional about this, the practice is wasted.

### **Building the Environment - Trauma Informed**

The type of environment we want to set is a trauma informed, or psychologically safe, space. In the most basic sense of this concept, this type of space allows for an understanding that each member of the community comes with their own experiences and traumas and deserves to be treated in a manner that allows them to feel safe, to feel a sense of belonging, and to feel validated.

In the classroom setting this looks like having discipline methods that have the flexibility to be adjusted for each child. In a trauma informed space, no matter the form of correction, there is space created for the learner to share how they are feeling, how actions are impacting them, and suggestions

for change. This type of interaction, not just in ‘negative’ instances, builds positive relationships.

### **Building Resilience - The ‘Product’**

It has been shown that the greatest indicator of resilience in a child is the strength of the positive relationships they have in their life.

In an article I wrote in September 2020 called Excessive Resilience, I share a more in-depth view of what resilience is and why it is important;

“The concept of resilience is a broad topic made up of limitless factors of influence. It can be generally painted as the capacity to adapt to threatening challenges. Rosabeth Moss Kanter wrote in the New York Times describing what the resilience mindset looks like, “resilience is the ability to recover from fumbles and outright mistakes and bounce back”. Bouncing back requires the mindset that it is possible and probable.

There is an important difference to be noted between healthy resilience and unhealthy coping. Resilience is adapting to overcome, while coping is silencing to make it through.” We always want to create a space where learners are adapting to overcome and never have to become silent just to make it through their learning day.

What we want to see ‘produced’ from positive relationships with learners (and the entire learning community) is this mindset of being able to try new things and bounce back from the ones that don’t work out the way we planned - never losing their feeling of safety and belonging.

### **Not Another New System**

We know we can’t solve a systemic issue with a new system.

Let’s instead turn to relationships built in safe spaces. We want an intentional focus on giving learners a resilient mindset and a strong sense of resilience in this learning ecosystem with relationship as the foundation. When we start here, the rest of the ecosystem building becomes much easier.



# EXPERTS S P E A K

## ABIGAIL CARR

Abigail Carr (M.Ed.), is an Early Education Consultant for parents, teachers and schools. She is also a part-time instructor at Hong Kong Baptist University and Yew Chung College of Early Childhood Education, in Hong Kong. She has been dedicated to teaching and leading in Early Childhood Education for more than 22 years. Abigail has led the opening of a number of early years settings in Hong Kong, as well as developed their staff teams and curriculums. Wiser World, Early Education Consultancy is Abigail's provision for support to parents and educators in their own context for enhancing early learning, and instilling a love of the natural world and sustainability in children.

## EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE IN POST COVID TIMES

Early last year, SARS-CoV-2, AKA COVID-19, rudely awakened the whole world to the very real fragility of life as we once knew it. Almost overnight, the world united in looking back over their shoulders somewhat fondly at December 2019, when we could never have imagined what was ahead of us. Without a doubt the pandemic has been dangerous, damaging and downright horrifying, but as with all difficult things, there are things to be learned and there are ways of moving forward. We simply have to. With the vaccine being rolled out worldwide, there is hope for some normalcy to arrive in our lives again, though 'going back' to how we once did things seems way off in the future, if at all.

With the global acknowledgement, somewhat indirectly in many

cases, that educators can and should be regarded as important essential workers, and that they are flexible and absolutely vital for keeping the economic world in motion, discussions have been cultivated and debates have been sparked surrounding the non-negotiables in early childhood care and education (“ECCE”) in particular. This has brought people together through worldwide conferences, open forums and a shared interest in how and what to prioritise during this period and into the future.

Before directing our thoughts to the immediate future of ECCE, it is enormously important to recognise that dedicated practitioners globally have found ways to continue to provide in-house services safely to families that have needed it. And many have added strings to their bow with unforeseen distance learning provision too. With these in our consideration, UNESCO has highlighted the importance of continued support to the ECCE sector, not only financially, since many ECCE providers across the world are privately funded, but also in terms of pre- and in-service training on adapting to new technologies, social and emotional development, and crisis management. It is this hindsight that propels us forward to consider how we can adapt ourselves, our knowledge and skills, as well as our settings and communications with stakeholders that will take us into what some are calling ‘Post COVID times’.

In fact, it is very likely that COVID-19 is here to stay for the long term and our focus should now be on living with it, adjusting to it and utilising what we have learnt through the trials and tribulations it took to get to where we are now, for sustainable, suitable and valuable ECCE. This must start, as should everything relating to the human condition, with a deep focus on the personal, social and emotional (“PSE”) competencies of all stakeholders. We are talking; resilience, adaptability, coping mechanisms, connections with others and the new-found ways in which we can and should do that safely and healthily. In many ways the ECCE sector is well-versed in putting this first, PSE is what underpins the very essence of early education and care after all. We need to channel that into all we do for the children and families, and for ourselves

as educators, as we move forward. It most certainly starts with self-care and reflection on how we fill our own cups before wading in to support others and build on our ECCE provision for a changed future. One of the ways in which settings have provided a safer environment for young children to attend in person throughout the pandemic, has been to get outside and utilise the resources that nature so kindly offers us in abundance. Nature-based play activates all the senses, provides space for safer social interactions and fosters children’s eco-self, that is, the understanding that they are a part of nature and not removed from it. Innovative, flexible practice using outdoor play in nature as a basis for ECCE provision, can not only provide a healthier and safer environment for playful learning, but can build on the skills, knowledge and attitudes we need to see in the next generation for taking care of our world, and being the change agents needed for sustainability. Not all settings have easy access to outdoor spaces, and of course there are a number of perceivable barriers to this for some providers. Though, embedding the principle itself in the culture of a school community can be a very good start.

Bearing in mind that, over the past year, there has been a focus on the family as educators of their children, and immediate caregivers have been given the chance to assume their powerful status as role-models to their young children in their homes. It seems like this is a trick that we should not miss. With our knowledge and expertise, ECCE professionals now have the power to transform the links and partnerships they have built with families, by providing solid parent support networks that may include but can go much, much further than, the online learning that has been hastily developed over recent months. We have the opportunity to make a shift in our focus towards supporting families and preparing them even more fully to readily take on the early education of their own young children, effectively and appropriately. It is here that we may see those perceived barriers to nature-based learning broken down, and the potential to find ways to cultivate it across children’s lives, not only in our own settings.

Let us support families to fully understand child

development and early learning, prioritise nature-based play, and give them the tools and guidance they need to cater for their child's learning during a pandemic, school closures and lockdowns, or not. Our partnership with parents during this time of change and reflection is an opportunity for the ECCE community to embrace and prioritise parent (or other caregivers') education surrounding developmentally appropriate early years learning. How to build connections with their child that utilise children's rapidly-growing and fast-learning brains to support the foundations for their future success, as well as for the future of a world whose needs are ever-changing.

ECCE practitioners and their settings, alongside parents, play a huge role in laying the foundations for how the adults of the future fair personally during difficult times, as well as how they contribute to wider society in the form of citizenship and expertise. Harnessing the innate care for the natural world that children have, as well as nurturing personal, social and emotional health must be our main focus as we navigate the next few years in a 'Post-COVID' world. This is unlikely to be the last time humanity goes through such upheaval. We can celebrate and embrace the unique standing our sector has in the chain of events that lead to the effective survival of the human race on this planet.



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**LINDA  
ROSE**

Linda Rose is the Chairwoman of SUNFO Global Federation – International Children’s Wing, based in Sri Lanka. With 30 years’ experience, 15 years internationally in many countries as a Youth and Community Worker, with particular focus in Sri Lanka, Linda developed her “Love and Laughter” creative healing workshops for traumatised communities, and in 2017 was the recipient of the Award of Excellence from the World Peace and Diplomacy Organisation, for “Excellence in the Field of Social Work and Youth Development”.

(She has a Master’s degree in Community Education, and 30 years’ experience as a youth and community worker and creative healing practitioner for statutory and third sector services in many countries; the UK, Soviet Poland, USA, India, and Palestine but mainly focussing on Sri Lanka over the past 15 years, where she has worked extensively in areas of great trauma – initial the tsunami recovery areas and then the war and post war regions. Linda has worked with children in every setting from schools, refugee camps, prison, remand homes, orphanages to street work.)

# TRAUMA- BASED CREATIVE PLAY

The Covid-19 Pandemic has in some senses been a great leveller across the world. All nations have faced the same dilemmas and choices; but in reality, these have also shown the varying values and inequalities across all of our society. And in the digital age, in the UK almost 10% of children do not have access to the internet or smart phones/tablets and are falling way behind educationally and developmentally. The early years’ settings that kept open have become sterile environments, devoid of many of the activities which provide fun and comfort for this age group.

Two years in adult life are very few, but in children’s lives this pandemic will have a massive impact. This will be extremely difficult trying to bring children’s academic

level up to their age-related norm; but if the social and emotional aspects of this young generation are not healed quickly, then they may become a truly lost generation as they grow with an unstable foundation of unhealed trauma and poor social skills.

So, crucially, how can we combat this trauma? How to thaw the soul, frozen in time, safely heal, and move forward into holistic well-being? We need a trauma-based response, but which is the most effective for early childhood trauma?

Traditional counselling is still one of the most common responses to trauma, and yet time and again the talking therapies are seen to be ineffective at times of trauma. Counselling is so often problem focussed, and can compound the trauma rather than diffuse its power.

I always teach that a child is like a flower bud; and a traumatised child like a bud with a worm, deep inside, nibbling it away. If we forcibly open the bud in order to remove the worm, we actually damage the bud irreversibly in many cases; we have to give the flower the right environment of love, acceptance and safety, and then the bud will open by itself and we can pick out the worm.

I stand by this after seeing the damage done by some of the poorly administered, however well-meaning conventional counselling methods that were used in London by supposedly sophisticated high level mental health professionals. The “do no harm” adage needs to be taken seriously for mental health as well as physical health and I do not believe conventional methods of psychotherapy actually follow this basic tenet. Many people with mental health issues have been harmed by the very procedures aimed at helping, what I call stone age psychiatry – blundering around trying to undergo brain surgery with stone age implements.

The critical issue of creative interventions is that they can do no harm. Within a framework of general creative guidance the child will naturally draw what is on their mind. Some of the children

in my post war workshops chose to draw dramatic pictures of their parents being blown up. This happened on many occasions; while others chose to draw sunsets and avoid painful memories. Both are equally healing. By going around the circle looking at all the drawings and offering, but not pressuring, each child to say something about what they have drawn – this gives them a chance to elaborate, or not. They hold the power and control; but many choose to share their stories having had the foundation of a safe and accepting place from the initial stages of the workshop.

Over time, running sometimes 6 – 7 workshops per week, every week for months, I recognised what I had always believed inwardly, that the two most healing elements were Love and Laughter. Love - being the total, non-judgmental acceptance of the whole child, right where they were: their feelings, experiences, fears, past and future; the validation of their past trauma and hurts, their current worries and stresses alongside the belief that each person was good, that inside they hold real potential no matter what had gone before, and that in this space, everyone understood and accepted the same about each other. And Laughter – only possible by being relaxed, the freeing of the spirit, unadulterated joy, which physically opens up the chest, chemically releases endorphins, and emotionally brings release, healing and relaxation. To recreate these powerful experiences within one group workshop was what I developed over the years, through games, art, social activities, puppets, role play, mini-talks and lots of face-to-face interaction with the children. In each workshop there are one or two children who write that ‘this is the first time in my life I have been happy’ and that ‘this day will change my life.’ Long term evaluations show that this has often been the case, that the impression and lessons learnt in this workshop have endured for many years in the children’s memories. Some of the success is enabling stressed children to relax together. The understanding that peers have been through the same painful experiences is very valuable and unifying; and giving opportunities to draw whatever they want allows children to bring out the inner recesses of their minds, or avoid this

if they are not ready.

Some teachers and leaders of early childhood settings feel insecure about whether they can offer enough for their traumatised children and, when they cannot afford to buy in play therapist, feel that all is lost.

However, unstructured play and responding positively to the issues that children raise comes naturally to nurturing staff; and it does not need a degree in play therapy to make a massive difference to the children's emotional healing and optimism and resilience for the future. Providing a safe and loving atmosphere of acceptance; with creative play opportunities and lots of fun activities fostering laughter rather than strict regimes; this can be immensely healing to young children, no matter what the trauma. Where home life is dreadful, children find a safe refuge at school, and giving positive messages of hope and strength can give the child the tools they need to cope with the difficult times at home. There is a place for exploration of the trauma and deeper counselling with experienced professionals, but this is not the norm.

For many children and adults, trauma sets back our development to a time before the trauma. We can see the bedwetting of a child who had learnt toileting; but we can't always see inner regression, so we often have to assume it and respond accordingly. No matter what our age is, we need to reconnect with our bodies and almost begin our developmental stages again from scratch. Tactile play with elements such as clay, paint, sand and water are so crucial for any post traumatic play. This begins to reconnect the body and mind in a safe and sensory way. We need to rediscover our senses – making and breaking, touching and creating, smelling and tasting, to free our spirits and let us feel love and laughter again.

Partner and circle games reignite the faith in one another, needing each other for balance or to catch us when we fall, and we rediscover our own importance in the world equally along with others.

Creative play and role play can be critical in practicing frightening situations in a fun and relaxed way, which can create resilience and problem-solving skills. For example, playing at crossing the road with some children pretending to be the cars, teaches us to think sensibly and practice in an emotionally and physically safe place. Using blue fabric to recreate water can be a useful water safety exercise, hiding shells and pretty stones and pretend fish under the fabric. Indeed, I have led session with very young children on tsunami awareness with many meters of blue material which teaches them to run away when a tsunami drags the water away from the land first (the critical mistake that leads to mass loss of life in tsunamis).

We can play at hospitals, and recreate a situation where they felt scared to give them more control, or practice having pretend injections to prepare them. Play makes it fun – it does not take away from the learning, rather the relaxed state of mind actually allows more learning to take place than formal settings where the child's brain can freeze with nerves.

These are not just for young children. Many adults have hidden trauma, deep inside which can cripple them from living a full and happy life. I have lost count of the number of adult workers on my courses who have told me how healing the play was for them personally. This is part of the ongoing cycle of learning and personal development for all. What works for children works for us all; just we don't often have or prioritise those opportunities to play and draw, dance, write poems, imagine and create stories. We all need these outlets for love and laughter; not just early learning settings. This is the learning ecosystem we all need; lifelong lessons of resilience, freedom of spirit, hope for the future, trust in other people, and strength within ourselves.

Love and laughter, imagination, sensory play and creating must be top of our list to help heal our hurting and frightened communities.



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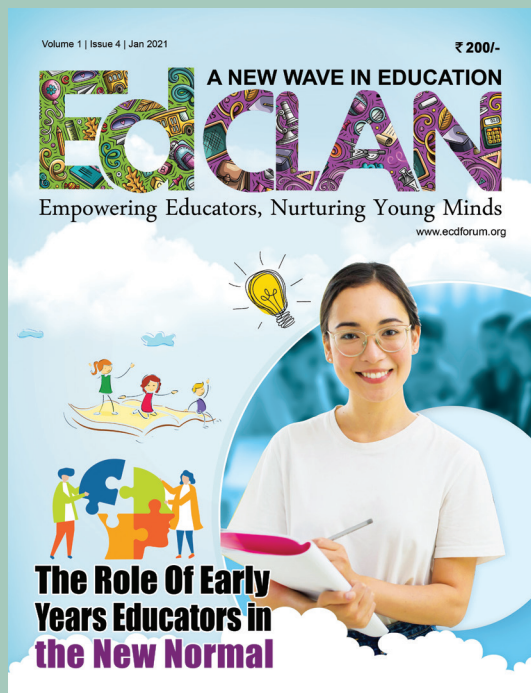
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# EDUCATORS SPEAK



## SANJHEE GIANCHANDANI

Sanjhee Gianchandani has a Masters' degree in English from Lady Shri Ram College for Women and a CELTA from the University of Cambridge. She worked as an English language assessment specialist. Her love for publishing brought her to her current job as an ELT editor in the K-8 space. Her articles have been widely published in the educational space in magazines such as The Progressive Teacher, Digital Learning Magazine, and Teacher Plus Magazine. She is based out of New Delhi, India.

## CREATING A POST- PANDEMIC LEARNING ECOSYSTEM

The impacts of the pandemic have been felt differently among different population groups. Among these, one group is facing additional challenges to understand, absorb, and deal with the changes that the pandemic has brought about in its wake: the children. A report prepared by UNICEF has revealed that COVID-19 pandemic in India and lockdown has impacted 247 million children enrolled in elementary and secondary education, besides 28 million children who were undergoing pre-school education in Anganwadi centres.

School closures are preventing children from access to learning and limiting their interactions with peers. Almost abruptly, children have been uprooted from their safe and secure school environment and their comfortable, traditional chalk and board system of teaching-learning and planted incongruously

in front of screens to battle with attentiveness, connectivity issues, excessive screen time, and online learning with a huge amount of work left to be done themselves.

Children may feel confused and at loss with the current situation leading to frustration, disquietude and anxiety, which will only increase with the overexposure to mass and social media, especially among adolescents. Some parents and teachers are also struggling to find ways to explain and communicate with children about the current situation in a way that is understandable by this age group. On the other hand, children being keen observers of the environment around them, are reflecting and reacting to the stress experienced by their parents and caregivers which is unavoidably affecting their wellbeing.

Overtly this is visible in complaints such as stomach aches, headaches, frequent nightmares, problems in sleeping, crying for no apparent reason, demonstrating clingy behaviour, decreased levels of interest in playing, and difficulties in eating. Parents might start noticing behavioural changes in their children such as excessive arguments, refusals, opposition, defiance, or withdrawal, and it is not unusual for some kids to fall further behind in their studies.

‘Anxiety travels faster than a virus. I get four to six calls a week from parents whose children are showing behavioural changes during lockdown,’ said Harish Shetty, social psychiatrist for LH Hiranandani hospital, Mumbai. Children as young as three are experiencing COVID related stress and wondering if they have been put to some sort of punishment. Schools and the homes have changed roles. The online teaching model has to be embedded with an emotional compass more than anything else as mental health issues have already peaked, and the domino effect is going to be felt across time. Instead of identifying the learning gaps in this transition, parents must help their children cope with anxiety, uncertainty and change. Social-emotional learning will help children to cope and prevent arousal symptoms and strong negative emotions. Capsules of meditation, yoga, motivational conversations will

help to deconstruct the conflict that children are facing. Identifying their areas of stress, detachment and confusion should become an integral part of the teaching-learning experience. Because the end-goal of all learning is to help children find their ‘selves’ and connect knowledge to their happiness, opines Ameeta Mulla Wattal, Principal Springdales School, Pusa Road, New Delhi.

In this new normal, as the modes of teaching and learning have changed, parents can follow the following steps to support their children as their tiny minds struggle to fathom what is happening around them.

First, it is super essential to be an empathetic listener. Keep communication channels open and let them know that it’s okay to feel however they feel – whether that’s scared, worried, angry, sad, or something else. Try to answer your child’s questions and reassure them in an age appropriate manner. Storytelling is an exceptionally powerful medium of learning as children relate better to stories and feel a sense of comfort in them. Some Indian storytelling platforms which parents and teachers can explore are Katha India, Story Truck, and Pratilipi which house many stories in different languages.

The second step is not to create watertight schedules. Being on the screen all time can be stressful for young kids. Don’t try to recreate school with six to seven hours of curricular content. Instead, focus on shorter, higher-quality engagement focussing more on bite-sized learning. At the same time, do not over-indulge your kids and maintain as many regular routines going as possible to help your child feel safe and secure. This can include things like having regular times for going to bed, waking up, eating meals, and making time for hobbies.

The third step is to help children create space for fun-time in their routines. Parents must remember to use this as an opportunity to bond with their kids and include fun activities in their kids’ schedules as they have a positive washback effect on learning and also help calm the worries of the children. These activities can also help them channelize their

pent-up energies in a positive manner. ‘Students are missing out on the crucial balance between studies and play. The emotional effects of being physically distant from their friends, combined with the impact of losing out on playtime could potentially induce stress in students,’ says Pravin Prakash, Chief People’s Officer, BYJU’S.

And finally, parents ought to find ways for their children to interact with their peers. Children are used to a lot of social contact at school, so they will definitely feel the effects of being distanced from them even after a few days. While it might not be safe for your kids to see their friends in person, you should allow them to interact with them online, beyond social media or text messaging. Arushi Sharma, a mother of a 5-year-old states that, ‘Initially she did not understand why some were playing in the gardens but not her. But now, via video calls with cousins from across the globe, she has realised she is not the only one stuck at home.’ The pandemic has certainly ushered in a “new” normal, in which digitization will enforce ways of working and learning. According to P.T.M Marope, ‘This calls for higher flexibility in curriculum development, and for the need to leave space for curricula interpretation, contextualization,

and creativity at the micro level of teachers and classrooms.’ Thus parents, children, and teachers need to precipitate the change in a participative, dynamic, inclusive, and transformative way.

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# EDUCATORS SPEAK



**AMRIT  
NAGPAL**

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## CREATING HYBRID LEARNING SPACES – A CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF LEARNING!

In a fast paced and ever changing landscape with respect to learning and development institutions need to create a learning ecosystem that engages learners with opportunities for continuous growth and allow the learners to immerse themselves in multiple outlets for educational engagements.

Teaching from home is the new normal and the future of education. Whether through remote teaching flipped classrooms or blended learning is an integral part of the evolving landscape of education. Hybrid learning is rapidly becoming a significant teaching method to make use of during this period of uncertainty. It provides the necessary safety restrictions for students as well as staff and gives some sense of normalcy.

It is a way of integrating conventional classrooms experiences, experiential learning goals and digital content delivery that highlights on seeking equilibrium between face to face and online learning. Hybrid classrooms vary broadly according to the subject matter taught and the needs of particular groups of learners. Students are given options to volunteer in attending in person or attend a distance learning session and participate via video call, it's thus a desirable and flexible approach.

Hybrid learning is becoming a favourable style among educators, parents and students. Since it is related with technology it could be scary to adapt especially if one is already struggling with other problems in the classroom. With appropriate tools and resources one can plan lessons, deliver and connect with students online. With readily and freely available portal services and institutional learning managements systems there are contemporary solutions to new problems.

There are a number of benefits to hybrid learning, firstly its highly flexible, it caters to different learning styles, reduces the problems of student absenteeism, engages students in student collaboration and active learning so much more!

## **HOW TO SET UP HYBRID LEARNING SPACES?**

Hybrid learning sounds wonderful on paper, but there are some challenges that one needs to consider when adapting a hybrid strategy. The biggest factor with respect to learning spaces is that it needs to be used productively. Learning spaces for hybrid learning should not only consider physical spaces but also how they interact with one another.

### **HYBRID LEARNING SPACE AT HOME**

The most important aspect for home hybrid learning space is the spot the student chooses. Whether it is a peaceful corner or near a noisy window, the student knows where they feel productive and comfortable. Ensure the learning space is well lit either by natural light or lights from the lamps. Ensure the student has a decent device and good internet connection. Encourage students to keep the space highly organised with all the required supplies. The learning space should be used for attending classes, doing homework and assignments. Encourage the students to decorate the corner with artwork and personalise it to keep the student motivated and inspired. Once the learning space is established it is time to set goals and create daily and weekly learning schedules.

### **HYBRID LEARNING SPACE FOR THE CLASSROOM**

Hybrid learning in classrooms means deciding the technology to use, some lessons can be taught in person while the others can be adapted and modified as per hybrid learning environments. There are three main technologies you might want to consider for successful hybrid learning.

**Interactive White Board:** Interactive white board is a common term used for any touch display that is used for interaction. Unlike the traditional white board the interactive whiteboard transforms into the digital world. All you need is a high quality whiteboard with the right software. This

enables you to share the content, promote student collaborations, use remote teaching strategies and so much more on a single device.

**Video Hardware and Software:** Most of the students will be present on video so it is important that everyone hears one another, cancel noise around and good connectivity. For this it is crucial to have a good video recording and live streaming hardware. While choosing the correct hardware you may want to consider built in as well as external microphones. Also a device with high resolution, good colour technology, high durability, retractable screens and ceiling mounted projectors can keep the device out of the student's reach and devices with less eye strain should be well calculated.

**Assistive Technology:** Assistive technology is the laptops, video equipment or other technologies with functions such as recording, live-closed captions, screen sharing and many more functions to modify your lesson plans and make it accessible to distant students. It can also be used in inclusive classrooms.

### **HYBRID LEARNING SPACE FOR STUDENT COLLABORATION**

You should consider the students' hardware and software when designing lessons that call for collaborations between the students. Think-pair – share is a common collaboration strategy. It requires a few minutes of individual thinking, pairing up students and then sharing their ideas. This works well in distant students as well as in class students too. In another setting few students are in class and others join in through a video call. Synchronous education taught in-person and online simultaneously. So it can be a good option for the pandemic times where full class strength can be achieved with social distancing ...

Hybrid learning spaces are perfect for many scenarios, if you feel your arrangement is not working, try another one! Hybrid learning allows teachers to have liberty with abundant opportunities to experiment, be creative, learn and grow to enhance the teaching and learning experience and for the betterment of students and options in their learning and teaching experiences.

# EDUCATORS SPEAK



**REENA ELIN**  
THOMAS

## KEEPING EMOTIONAL CONNECTION ALIVE IN THIS WIRED WORLD OF TEACHING

We are seeing a paradigm shift in the education system for a better tomorrow making us capable of handling worse situations. Global strategic-integrated collaborative planning, expensive good quality educational resources, excellent IT tools and technologies will definitely elevate the new learning ecosystem, but we must not forget the basics of educational elements, the essence of the education system 'our teachers', without whom we cannot execute the plan. I would rather focus on the overall holistic development of a teacher, who can create a quality blended learning environment for children of all age groups.

Yes, there is no substitute to classroom teaching. It is also true that challenge serves beautifully to introduce you to our best and most brilliant self. Teachers have the responsibility to respond gracefully under pressure, when life sends one of its inevitable curves.

“Happy Teachers, Happy Students” Period. But How?

Model the behaviour you wish to see (Educators---->Teachers----->Students)

### 1. SHOW LOVE AND RESPECT

Today, as an educator, I take a moment and think about teachers in my life who need to be cherished, appreciated and told that their support has been

helpful. This in turn will help them look at their students differently.

## 2. ESTABLISH EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

Human beings move when their emotions are moved. In so many ways, adults are nothing more than children in grown-up bodies and people go where they are made to feel cared for, special and good.

## 3. LISTEN INTENTLY

Listening shows respect. It is the best way to honour that person and forge a deep connection. By listening, we fold their world onto our own, further helping us to discover new teaching methodologies.

## 4. MAKE THEM AWARE AND PREPARE FOR A TRANSPARENT RELATIONSHIP

Teaching is about loving your students and giving them more value than they have any right to expect. Building trust and making them understand the policies in a collective effort towards one vision.

## 5. BE RELAXED AND HAVE FUN

When you get back to doing those things that lifted your spirit and sent you soaring, you reconnect with that state of happiness that you may have lost by playing games, implementing hobbies, creative sessions and rekindling the most cherished

moments.

## 6. TRAINING (SOFT SKILLS/TEACHING SKILLS/IT SKILLS)

Developing patience and will power should be an integral part of the skill development process through yoga, meditation and various activities based brainstorming sessions online or offline.

## 7. UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN TO USE THE RIGHT TEACHING METHODS

Children bond well with teachers they like. They follow their instructions, imitate and engage in roleplay. They are spontaneous observers of nature and have an anxious concern for living beings and the satisfaction of this instinct fills them with delight. Simple and real ideas or tools are what they relate to moving from known to unknown. The power of simplicity in everything is the key to world class teaching in early childhood education.

Educators and teachers can spread happiness around, making children happy and loyal to us. We are now part of their community and they will take good care of us should times get tough. Once emotional connection is established, we can understand and empathize with children better. Good quality teaching blended with online materials and offline traditional elements will take the new learning ecosystem to the next level, thereby creating a new wave in the education system.





# EDUCATORS SPEAK



## VERONICA MORALES

Co-founder of Raising Children you like, Veronica Morales Frieling's passion for working with kids started in 2009 when she produced a documentary about an after school program that was invented by kids in San Francisco, California.

Now they are helping hundreds of families around the world to understand how to see their children's behavior as communication, learn how to identify and calm their own triggers, heal past hurts and cultivate a new relationship with their families and ultimately become Emotion Coaches for their children to teach them emotional intelligence.

The work is nuanced. The work is healing. And the work is transformative. Their motto is, "join for the hacks, stay for the healing."

## IDENTIFYING THE ROOT OF TANTRUMS AND HOW TO CALM THEM

If you've ever experienced a toddler's tantrum you know how hard it can be to recover from them. Both physically and emotionally.

But the truth is tantrums are inevitable. It's part of a healthy human development.

Since birth, crying has been the primary way children communicate so it's no surprise that toddlers, while still learning how to speak, will also cry and act out to show they need something.

As children get older and explore other ways of using their body to communicate, they'll express their unmet needs through throwing themselves on the floor, kicking, biting, screaming, spitting, etc., which can be very triggering for a caregiver who struggles to identify these behaviors as communication signals.

And living through a pandemic hasn't made it any easier. The unpredictability of a child's schedule can be very dysregulating and can create the perfect recipe for tantrums.

So how can early childhood educators identify the underlying needs of children to minimize the intensity of tantrums?

## 2 SETS OF NEEDS

Tantrums occur because there is an underlying need that needs to be met for a child.

Needs are Normal, they're Emotional, they are to be Expected, they are demanding and they require us to Stop and respond.

Children have two sets of needs: Basic and Higher.

Basic Needs are an integral part of a child's well-being. These needs are making sure they got enough sleep, they have eaten enough, they've had some time to connect with you, and that they feel safe in their environment.

Higher Needs are more nuanced. Have they been in an environment that has been too loud for too long and they need some quiet time? Have they have been practicing putting on their own shoes and really don't want your help because they want to keep practicing that skill? Does their body really feel like jumping but it's raining outside so they want to jump on the table instead?

## IDENTIFY AND MEETING THE NEED

Simple ways to identify the needs of children is by scanning their behavior through The Ladder of Needs:

- ▶ Safety
- ▶ Sleep
- ▶ Hunger
- ▶ Connection
- ▶ Sensory
- ▶ Emotional
- ▶ Independence

One thing to remember is that safety is always first. Always make sure children are and feel safe.

Then scan through the Basic Needs. Did they eat enough breakfast, do they seem tired and require a lower energy activity? Does it seem like they need some more private time before joining the group activity?

Meet those needs first.

If they seem tired and there is a higher energy activity scheduled, create a low energy activity for them to do instead.

If they seem hungry, offer them a snack. If snacks are not available, remind them of when snack and lunch times are and the importance of eating during those scheduled times. Offer them water, as well as that curbs appetite.

If it seems like they're having a hard time transitioning back into the classroom, schedule some one-on-one or small group time to connect with the children who seem like they need an extra ounce of connection before joining the rest of the class in the scheduled activity.

Meeting the basic needs will often times manage and minimize the tantrums.

If not, move on to identifying and meeting the Higher Needs.

If the classroom has been loud for quite some time and you see that the children's energy is matching the chaos in the room, switch rooms or take them outside for a change of pace.

If two children have a squabble and they get their feelings hurt, narrate to them what occurred to help them make sense of the situation. It can sound a little something like this, "it looks like you really wanted to play with that toy but your friend was playing with it first. It looks like she doesn't want to share the toy and you are frustrated because you want to play with it now, too. I wonder what toy you can play with in the meantime, while your friend finishes playing with that toy?"

If children seem squirmy and really want to wiggle around during storytime, it might mean their bodies really need to move instead of sitting. Consider adding an activity to meet their needs. Put on a song and dance for a couple of rounds and then go back

to the reading circle.

If children have been practicing a certain skill like putting something away, washing their hands, or putting on a piece of clothing and they flip their lid when you try to intervene, it may mean they need some space to do it themselves. Give them that space and then praise them for a job well done.

## THE NEW LEARNING ECO-SYSTEM

The more we practice identifying the needs of each child the easier it will be to meet their needs. When parents and educators become aware that misbehavior is just a way our child is communicating that they need our attention, the sooner the tantrums will calm at home and in the classroom.

Now more than ever, the term "it takes a village" applies to how we care for children.

Because the pandemic made schedules so unpredictable for everyone, it's important to communicate with parents to understand if the Basic Needs have been met prior to entering the classroom.

The same applies for when the child goes home. It's important for early childhood educators to let parents know about the dysregulating times the child experienced throughout the day and how those needs were met.

When we have a clear picture and a full understanding of how a child is expressing their unmet needs, how the adults practiced identifying what those needs are, and how we are able to meet them, the more predictable our children's behavior will be at home and in the classroom.



# ECDF EVENTS

January to March 2021

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



**DN ACHARYA FOUNDATION**  
FOR CHILDREN AND WOMEN WELFARE



## ECDF 1 DAY CERTIFICATE COURSES



### 10 Day CERTIFICATE COURSE #17

**TOPIC:**  
**FOSTERING WRITING  
SKILLS IN EARLY YEARS**

**PREETI PASRICHA**

Academic Coordinator, C.P. Goenka  
International School, Maharashtra.

- Awarded Best Teacher by Drishti Academy 2012-13
- Awarded Best Coordinator, IIFPL Global Hallmark Education Awards 2020

**COURSE HIGHLIGHTS**

Let's explore more about why writing is essential in early years and how to make writing fun and interesting

- Writing readiness
- Multisensory Teaching Strategies
- Cross-Curricular Connections
- Unique Letter Order and Style
- Child Friendly, Simple Language
- How to foster writing successfully
- Lefty-friendly ways
- Line Success
- Assessments and Tailored Instructional Plans



*Register Today*

**COURSE FEE : RS. 399/-**

**DATE: 22<sup>nd</sup> JANUARY, 2021**  
**TIME: 4 - 5:30 PM (IST)**

SUPPORT PARTNERS







### 1 Day Online CERTIFICATE COURSE #18

**Shobha Mathur**

- Curriculum Writer/ Designer
- Teacher Trainer

**TOPIC : Phonics for Beginners**

**Course Highlights:**

- What is Phonics?
- The 4 language skills we should follow
- Importance of Phonics and is this method new to us in India?
- The Phonic song
- As teachers, what should we do?
- Ideas to reinforce Phonics in children
- Using Blending and Segmenting techniques effectively



**Date: 19th March, 2021**  
**Time: 4:00-5:30 PM (IST)**

**Course Fee: Rs 399/- only**  
**Register Today !!**

SUPPORT PARTNERS:






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# ECD F WEBINARS

**Webinar on**  
**Importance & Benefits of**  
**Early Childhood Care & Education :**

**Date: 26th Feb (Friday) 2021 | Time: 4:30-5:30 p.m.**

Join us @ **LIVE** **ecdforum**

**Dr. Vasavi Achariya**  
Early Childhood Educationist/Edupreneur / Founder Chairperson ECDF / MD Tender Petals Preschool Chain/ Child Rights Activist/ Multi Awardee/Ex TISS Trainer/

**SUPPORT PARTNERS:**  
D.N. ACHARYA FOUNDATION, tenderpetals, INNER, BOOKBELL

**INTERNATIONAL Women's Day Special Webinar**

"With a cradle in one hand & a pen in the other, a woman is an enormous potential"  
- Dr. Vasavi

**Dr. Vasavi Achariya**  
Chairperson ECDF & DNAF and M.D. Tender Petals Preschools

**JOIN US IN THIS POWER PACKED JOURNEY ON 8TH MARCH 2021 (MONDAY) | 4:30 P.M. - 5:30 P.M. IST**

**Simran Ballani** (Moderator) Education Leader, Change maker, Zonal Head ECDF South Zone

**Abigail Carr** Speaker  
Specialized in teaching young children, teaching early years teachers, and managing various settings for children aged 6 years and under.

**Swarleen Kaur** Speaker  
A South Australian Development Coach and all children who have worked with her have thrived.

**Clare Stead** Speaker  
Creator and Founder of the award winning Child app, all app for parents with children from conception to 5 years. From birth, first baby, a strong brain and reach their full potential and build their parents confidence one play activity at a time.

**Rita Das** Speaker  
Project Manager at The Learning Solutions Pvt. Ltd., Chennai, formerly known as Discovery Kids Pvt. Ltd.

**Jennifer Smit** Speaker  
Founder of Breakthrough and Creator of Euphoria, an interactive parenting tool, and the author of 'The 100 Essential Library Skills'.

**SUPPORT PARTNERS:**  
tenderpetals, BOOKBELL, INNER, VASU

Visit: [www.ecdforum.org](http://www.ecdforum.org)

**WEBINAR 2021 #1**

**TOPIC: New Year New Goals**

**DATE : 19th January, 2021(Tue)**  
**TIME : 5:30 p.m. - 6:30 p.m.(IST)**

Meeting ID 857 2606 0198  
Security Passcode 015553

**Dr. Vasavi Achariya** CHAIRPERSON  
Founder Chairperson ECDF & DNAF, MD IFF, Early Childhood Educationist

**Simran Ballani** MODERATOR  
Education Leader, "ECDF Zonal Head, South Zone"

**Dr. Diana Morelli** (Italy) Speaker  
Diana has worked as teacher, administrator, coach and consultant in both public education, non-profit organizations and private education.

**Azra Akmal** (Malaysia) Speaker  
Head of Early Childhood Programme, Nanyang University College, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

**Ayasha Khawar Butt** (Lahore) Speaker  
Trained clinical psychologist with certification in behavior therapy from BACB, USA

**Sana Fatima Lari** (UAE) Speaker  
Marketing Director, "Trainer in Physical and Mental Development of Child"

**Brian Coulter** (Dubai) Speaker  
Teacher Trainer at Pedagogical Transformations, Dubai

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**In Conversation**

**DR. VASAVI ACHARIYA**  
Founding Chairperson ECDF & DNAF, Early Childhood Educationist, Edupreneur

**SIMRAN BALLANI**  
Education Leader, Zonal Head ECDF

**WHAT, WHY & WHO? THE SPHERE OF INFLUENCE**

**JOIN US**  
**Date - 8th Feb (Mon) 2021 | Time - 4:30 p.m. IST**

**LIVE** **ecdforum**

Know more about SOI, the 1st of its kind event in the domain of ECCE.



# ECDF SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

A GLOBAL  
CONFLUENCE  
OF EDUCATORS  
AND  
STAKEHOLDERS



A Milestone Event: First of its kind in the domain of ECCE, the event has benefited thousands of educators, parents and stakeholders from all over the globe. Experts around the world and young voices came together and shared their experience and expertise about the various Aspects of Early Childhood Care and Education and beyond. This Summit endeavoured to bring together the fraternity of Educators and Stakeholders from all over the globe in one platform, to bring about innovation and change, to build a better future for Gen Alpha. The Sphere of Influence was a highly successful event.



# ECDF EARTH LITERACY

2021

# AWARDS

## **AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN SPECIAL NEEDS EDUCATION**



**Anshika Kashyap**  
Starkey Labs India  
Pvt.Ltd. New Delhi



**Nichole Tucker**  
Special Education  
Consultant US



**Tasnim Hasan  
Bhimani** Bliss Edify  
International School  
Maharashtra



# AWARD FOR INNOVATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING



**Ankit Gupta**

Happy  
Faces  
Good Luck  
Publisher  
U.P



**Fatima  
Kazim  
Hussain**

Oxford  
Grammar  
School  
Hyderabad



**Ms. Meenakshi  
Singh**

Delhi  
Public School  
Haryana



**Nagarjun  
Karnatakam**

Director of  
The Cosmic  
Foundation  
Andhra Pradesh



**Soma Dey Das**  
Guwahati  
Assam

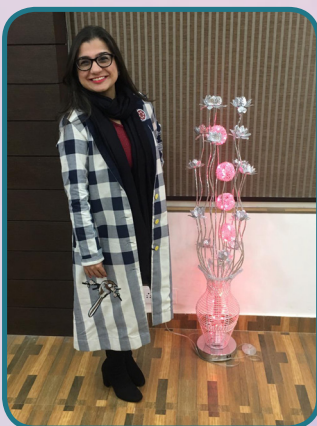


**The  
Crayons  
School**  
Noida U.P

# TEARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION CONSULTANT



**Linda Rose**  
Sunfo Global  
Federation



**Ritika Grover**  
Freelancer  
New Delhi



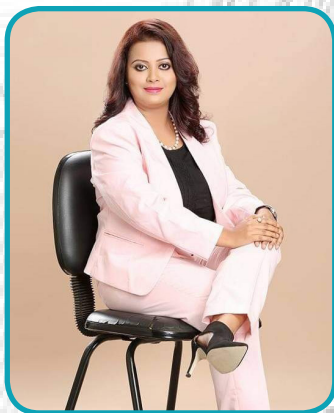
**Naomi Nakita**  
**Madre de**  
**Deus** Step up  
kids Stockholm  
Sweden





**AMRIT NAGPAL**  
BIRLA OPEN MINDS  
MAHARASHTRA

# **BEST** *EARLY* **CHILDHOOD** **MENTOR** **(INDIA)**



**DARSHANA  
BARUAH THOMAS**  
LITTLE EINSTEINS  
PRESCHOOL  
GUWAHATI



**NEHA SETH**  
NEHA SETH  
ACADEMY DELHI

## **Best** Faculty **preschool** **(India)**



**SUBHRA MISHRA**  
DISCIPLINED  
DISCIPLES  
INTERNATIONAL  
SCHOOL PUNJAB

# Best franchised preschool of the year



**HELLO KIDS PRESCHOOL,  
TAMILNADU.**



**An IIM Alumni venture  
Multiple Intelligence Preschool**

**LITTLE EINSTEIN  
(GUWAHATI, ASSAM)**



**MAPLE BEAR CANADIAN  
PRESCHOOL, GUWAHATI,  
ASSAM.**



**SANFORT PLAY SCHOOL,  
DULIAJAN, ASSAM**



# **BEST** INFRASTRUCTURE IN EARLY **EDUCATION** **INDIA**



Imagination Encircles the World

**KIDOFLY  
HYDERABAD  
TELENGANA**

# **BEST PRESCHOOL CHAIN OF THE YEAR**

**TENDER PETALS  
PRESCHOOL**



# TOP PRESCHOOL PRINCIPAL



**AASHNA ADITYA  
SHAH**  
JUNIOR SCHOOL  
AHMEDABAD  
GUJARAT



**GRESHMA  
MOMAYA**  
TOTS- TRIO  
WORLD SCHOOL  
BENGALURU  
KARNATAKA



**SUNITA RAMESH  
SADHWANI**  
SHINING STAR  
NURSERY &  
PLAY SCHOOL  
AHMEDABAD  
GUJARAT



**JAYESHTA  
DEDHIA**  
TWEETIES  
INSTITUTE OF  
EDUCATION  
MAHARASHTRA



**LYNSEY LOGAN,**  
BRITISH  
VIETNAMESE  
INTERNATIONAL  
SCHOOL  
HANOI, VIETNAM



**MAHIM HAMID  
MUJAWAR**  
NOAH'S ARK  
PRESCHOOL  
MAHARASHTRA



**HIRAK SARKAR**  
GREENCORE  
MONTESSORI  
PRESCHOOL  
WEST BENGAL



# **BEST STANDALONE PRESCHOOL** of the year (India)



**BRIGHT BEGINNINGS INTERNATIONAL  
PRESCHOOL MAHARASHTRA**



**PINE HALL SCHOOL U.P**



*Setting the stage for success*

**GIGGLEZZ PRESCHOOL BENGALURU  
KARNATAKA**



**SHINING STAR PRE SCHOOL  
AHMEDABAD GUJARAT**

# EMERGING PRESCHOOL FRANCHISOR OF THE YEAR

Early Ventions  
Preschool & Daycare  
Bengaluru Karnataka



## EXCEPTIONAL MENTAL HEALTH EXPERT FOR CHILDREN



**KARI SUTTON,**  
BUILDING RESILIENT  
KIDS, BRISBANE,  
AUSTRALIA



**SRADHANJALI  
DASGUPTA**  
RAMAKRISHNAN  
MISSION SEVA  
PRATISTHAN WEST  
BENGAL



# INNOVATIVE CURRICULUM

Developer  
(India)



**ABHISHEK GOEL**  
SAAR EDUCATION  
PVT.LTD  
MAHARASHTRA



**ANOOJA BASHIR**  
OUREA COCHIN  
KERALA



**DIVYA R UNNI**  
XPERTZ KIDS  
GUJARAT

## OUTSTANDING EDUCATIONIST INDIA / INTERNATIONAL



**DR.CHARLENE  
WRIGHTON, CEO**  
AT ZOO-PHONIC,  
MULTISENSORY  
LANGUAGE ART  
PROGRAM, U.S.A.



**KRUTI SANGHVI  
MEHTA**  
GARODIA  
EDUCATION  
TRAINING KRUTI  
MAHARASHTRA



**MOHAMMAD  
ARIF ABDUL  
RAHIM SHAIKH**  
HMW ENGLISH  
HIGH SCHOOL  
MAHARASHTRA



**SHIRIN KULKARNI**  
Co-Founder CEC,  
FINLAND



**AGNIVH PRAKASH BORA,**  
GR. VII, SANSKRITI THE  
GURUKUL

# The World Of Toys

## • The importance of toys in early years.

Toys are some things that almost all of us grow up with. Toys, play a very important part in a child's life. Most of the toys that we play with or should play with in the early years are educational toys that teach us Language skills, Cognitive skills, Fine Motor skills, Gross Motor Skills and help us showcase our creativity. These skills later help us to master the core skills. The development of these skills in a child in the early years is very important because as we grow older it becomes harder to learn the skills.

## • What effect toys have on children.

As I already said toys, play a very important part in a child's life. As children, we enjoy playing with toys, it gives us joy and happiness. And keeping a child happy during the early years, has a massive impact on a child's mental health. To have a positive mindset helps us stay positive to change, it helps us not panic in difficult and on the edge situations, it helps us look at things in a better perspective. Staying joyful in the early years give us a positive mindset helping us in the long run.

## • The fun part of growing up.

Almost all grow up playing with toys, as we grow up

we start to lose interest in those toys. It is not that as we grow older we stop playing with toys, it is just that our preferences change. I don't play with the things I used to play with, but that doesn't mean I stopped playing. If we look closely, we see that we never stop playing. It might be that we don't do it very often, but at the end up the day we always play, because it gives us joy. Joy is a part of growing up, and we never stop growing up.

## • A few useful toys, to develop prominent and important skills.

- 1) Magnetic Wooden Board- it helps the child with cognitive skills, and keeps the child's mind creative, and open to ideas.
- 2) Cargo Truck- It helps with addition, subtraction, learning colours, fine motor skills and gross motor skills.
- 3) Grizzley Geometry Shape Sorter Blocks- is a great way to teach shapes, size and colour. It gives them a better idea of visual identification, organisation, classification and cognitive skills.





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FOR CHILDREN AND WOMEN WELFARE



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[ecdinfo2019@gmail.com](mailto:ecdinfo2019@gmail.com)





# ECDF MEMBERSHIP INVITATION

If you are an Early Childhood Educator or a stakeholder who works for children in their early years and if you are passionate about what you do and possess the drive to contribute your best for Children; ECDF is the platform for you.

Your warm presence matters for the small children and their development under united contribution. ECDF is looking for such dedicated people who live for a purpose! For many years this trust has been working successfully, so we look forward to having more amazing people for some brilliant work towards children's education and development. We invite you to join us and make it more special.

To know more feel free to call

Head Office: 9864233332

You can also go through our website [www.ecdforum.org](http://www.ecdforum.org)



EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT FORUM



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Mentioned below are our Zonal Mentors to connect and know about ECDF and Membership formalities !!!

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**ECDF**

**EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT FORUM**

Study







## **EARLY CHILD DEVELOPMENT FORUM (ECDF)**

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Zoo Tiniali, Guwahati - 781021, Assam