

A New wave in Education

ECDFORUM

Empowering Educators, Nurturing Young Minds

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**The Importance
of Early Childhood
Music Specialty**

**Immersive Learning
Can Make
Students Dive
into Studies**

**Every Child
Can Learn**

**Let's
Play
Puppets**

**Minimum
Level of
Learning**





An Initiative of DN Acharya Foundation for Children and Women Welfare

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

VISION

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

MISSION

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

GOAL

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

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

MEMBERSHIP

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



Empowering Educators, Nurturing Young Minds

ED CLANNING



Dear Readers

We have stepped into another year 2023 and I wish all of you a very happy and prosperous new year.

The year 2022 has been an action-packed year with many events and conferences and training sessions that ECDF organized both virtually and offline. The Educators Summit held in Guwahati in association with downtown Charitable Trust in the Assam downtown University was a big success. Speakers and delegates participated from different parts of the country. This year ECDF collaborated with EDU MEDIA in their Mega Education Conferences in Delhi and Chandigarh as the NGO Partner. The panel sessions in these events were very insightful with a lot of takeaways. Besides these, there were webinars on pertinent topics, one-day online certificate courses for educators, story ka pitara sessions by renowned storytellers and so forth.

This year ECDF started its EDU TALK series where experts speak on various topics related to early childhood care and education and this series has been an instant hit with our online audience. The year ended with two Mega events one in Guwahati- ECDF WALK FOR GEN ALPHA ~the Alphathon which aimed to create awareness about the importance of ECCE and Child Rights in a society where prominent faces of the state joined as Goodwill Ambassadors and they showed their support to the cause. The other event was Story Ka Pitara, the Storytelling Festival, and Awards Season 2, held virtually in which storytellers and early childhood educators from all over India participated and narrated stories. The event started with a panel session with global experts in the field. The winners and participants were awarded trophies and certificates respectively.

I look forward to another year of good work from the forum. I take this opportunity to thank all the members of ECDF who have given us valuable time and suggestions, our audience, and well-wishers for their constant support and for having faith in the forum.

Wishing everyone a happy and blessed year ahead.

Dr. Vasavvi Acharjya

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(OCTOBER – DECEMBER)



EXPERTS SPEAK

BEVERLEY OMSKY

Beverley is both Author and Composer having a Bachelor of Music and a postgraduate in Education. (B.Mus(ed) H.D.E), and postgraduate certificates in Guided Imagery in Music (Mel) and Musical Play Therapy(N.Z). Beverley has created the Concept and Characters for the Series “Adventures at Humminghive”. It is available both in Print and eBook versions. The Musically-Interactive children’s audiobook, “Adventures at Humming-Here We Are” was published in 2020 and is the story and Musical version. The fun-filled story has been developed for children aged 2-6 years to follow the Adventures of the Community who live and thrive in Humminghive. Both the Adults and the Children have a “voice” that rejoices in peacefulness, courtesy and equality which brings tranquillity and harmony. Differences are resolved with confidence and high self-esteem is fostered between all those who live at 35 Floral Drive in Humminghive as one successful Society.



Beverley has over 30 years of experience as an Early Childhood Music Specialist, providing Services to Early Learning Centre Staff and Teachers. Her Musically Interactive Life skills Program has been created and developed for Kindergarten Children and this together with the Audiobook provides singing, musical role play, musical activities and storytelling focusing on turn taking, co-operation, mutual respect, social inclusion, social awareness and self-belief. The children are empowered with self-confidence and high self-esteem is fostered. Beverley has written music education curricula for kindergarten and primary school students. She has promoted, administered and directed Instrumental Music Programs at private schools and community centres and has established Music Departments and Resource Centres. Her private practice includes providing music education for special needs and gifted children and group classes for babies, toddlers, children and high school students. Beverley has presented numerous times, including for Family Life and The Association of Graduates in Early Childhood Studies.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD MUSIC SPECIALTY

Beverley has created the concept, and characters, written the story and composed the music and songs for the musically interactive children's audiobook "Adventures at Humminghive". This unique, ready-to-use downloadable resource provides a fun-filled, interactive musical story for educators, caregivers, and all staff in Early Childhood settings, parents and grandparents to use for young children. Principles and elements from Early Years Learning and Development and aspects of play based, musical play, guided imagery and guided listening are all incorporated.

The characters living in Humminghive model empathy, kindness, love, respect and social inclusion. The ethos is that of peace, harmony, equality, egalitarianism and a "voice" that rejoices in tranquility and harmony.

Mother Teena and Father Oliver Petunia together with their children Petal, Peter and adopted Hollyhocks portray family focused living. Freddy Frog, Ginger Cat, the ducks, caterpillars and snails join in providing modelling where differences, diversity and problem-solving is communicated through collaboration, negotiation and mutual respect. Each member of the society is supported in developing their own identity and the principles of positive engagement help to empower confident socially aware children. The butterflies and birds, the elders of the community, contribute by fostering attitudes of acceptance and self-respect while exhibiting flexible thinking and adaptability.

Music beneficially impacts health by reducing stress. The autonomic nervous system, the endocrine psychological, cognitive and

emotional processes are positively affected (Nyklicek, I. Khalfa, S. Burns J.L. Labbe E. Blood A.J. Zatorre R.S. Juslin P.N. Sloboda J.)

Hans Jenny, in his book, Cymatics, describes how forms and shapes are created by the changing of pitch. If crystals can be altered according to music, imagine the effect on our children. Music affects the heartbeat, pulse rate and blood pressure. The heartbeat responds to musical variables like tempo and volume (Campbell, Don 2001). It speeds up or slows down to match the tempo. This principle of "entrainment", is used by Beverley in bringing the children (and adults) to a relaxed state. Music improves physiological and mental co-ordination, making it an extremely effective medium for development. (Sheppard, 2005). Sensory processing is the integration of sensory input as the vestibular system co-ordinates the movement of the body, affecting balance, visual spatial and auditory perception. (Kranowitz, 2006).

Beverley has balanced the music within "Adventures at Humminghive" with action songs (songs to move), quiet reflective mindful/ guided listening, dances, songs about numbers, colours and the unifying signature song which begins and concludes each episode. Guided listening is a very useful tool to provide a basic understanding of the difference between active "listening" as opposed to passive "hearing". In the Meditative segment, "Inspiration for Meditation" the children are encouraged to watch their favorite soft toy rise up and come down on their tummies while listening to the music. The educator can use a triangle or slide whistle to imitate bird sounds, which is the focus for the children to direct their listening.

The children can respond by using their hands to indicate a flying motion or their fingers to show the birds singing. Alternatively, coloured scarves can be used should they choose to fly or dance. This also provides an opportunity for the children to engage in a shared experience whilst choosing their own response. It is an expression of the ME and I -the individual within the US -the team (the children in the class). By the educator, teacher, parent or caregiver bringing this element into this segment, an opportunity is provided to introduce texture-the “thinness or thickness” of the sound as well as the introduction of timbre-“the tone colour” of that particular percussion instrument.

Beverley chose the inclusion of the mindful/guided listening segment being composed in the classical style. This is the result of very purposeful thinking and is in line with Quantum physicist Masaru Emoto who believed that every living thing pulsates with an energy field. Through experiments, he observed the positive and negative changes in the formation of crystals and found that pure mathematical structures were formed when crystals were exposed to classical music and the words, ‘love’ and ‘beauty’ were spoken.

Through singing the songs, the children use their voices which is a direct extension of themselves. Their own individuality is expressed, fostering the development of their social relationship within the group. The songs are “happy” and positive, providing excitement and a shared experience to cultivate self-confidence and esteem. Musical phrasing helps with the acquisition of language. Melodic patterns and inflection aid language development and comprehension. “Singing activates parallel brain circuits to those used for speech and the interpretation of speech”. (Sheppard, 2005).

The characters of “Adventures at Humminghive” communicate effectively by taking turns, being patient, sharing their thoughts, being tolerant, brainstorming possible solutions, co-operating, collaborating and compromising. Each member of the community is recognised for having an important role in their society.

Through discussion and role-play, the children are able to express themselves allowing them to be actively involved in the story, as active communicators.

The children are provided with chances to apply thinking and learning skills regarding problem-solving in a creative manner.

Throughout the interactions, moral reasoning, and a sense of justice and fairness are introduced.

The children assert and grow their knowledge in how they approach unfamiliar situations with developing confidence, open-mindedness and caring for others. They incorporate sensitivity and respect while considering the needs of others.

There is an understanding of the importance of personal and physical well-being for oneself and others.

The subliminal messages include the concept that the universal systems of the world are interconnected and interrelated. How the characters live affects all who live in Humminghive. This encompasses the waterways, the air, food sources, peacefulness, harmony and gratitude.

EXPERTS SPEAK

RAJNI JULKA

Dynamic Leader offering 18+ years of total experience with 15+ years of administrative and leadership experience as a Global Ed-Tech Strategy, Business Excellence for Project Planning, Course Development and Operations, Principal & HOD. Signature Strength is the unique blend of strong industry and academia experience with excellent strategic planning & execution, administration, institutional branding, stakeholder engagement, coaching, training and ed-tech industry expertise.

An Inspirational Speaker/Mentor who conducts an experiential and inspired workshop program bringing her educational & corporate experience with Students, Teachers, Principals, Corporate, Scholars, and Leaders to transform their passion, skills, life & bring the full human potential.

Her training/workshops deepen the Professional skills and Life-coping skills that aim for optimum individual performance through connecting with "Self".

Inspired 5000 Lives as a Life Coach and helped to re-design their thoughts, feelings, and work.



IMMERSIVE LEARNING CAN MAKE STUDENTS DIVE INTO STUDIES

Immersive Learning, as the name would suggest, allows learners to cross conceptual and theoretical boundaries with the help of tools including **game-based** and **simulation-based learning**. It is one of the most promising methods in the history of learning that immerses students or professionals in an interactive learning environment in order to teach them a particular **skill or technique**.

Immersive tools like **Virtual Reality, Augmented Reality and Mixed Reality**, allows students to experience abstract concept in three-dimensional space; find the meaning of words and links between concepts. It transforms passive learning into technology-assisted immersive learning that gives students an opportunity to explore and navigate their subjects and live inside them like never before.

Immersive learning encourages inquiry where students learn by doing, grab the method of solving problems and obtain knowledge. It also helps in motivating the introverted and inculcates distracted-free learning within the classroom. Additionally, it changes the conventional method of teaching into a virtual classroom that fosters self-learning ability

machine learning or artificial learning to provide qualitative and quantitative feedback and score once the student experiences the course.

- **Cost-effective method**

Technology has to be affordable in order to make it reach out to the masses. There is need to build a cost effective and easy-to-use tool that is conducive to learning. One cannot expect students to have a heavy VR carry bag on their shoulders to school. Further, there is a need to build an active program with the institutions and provide active support and maintenance.

- **Promotes Personalized Learning**

Traditional teaching methods hardly provide personalized learning to students, unless there's a dedicated teacher for each learner. On the other hand, immersive learning lets every student learn at his/her own pace. With simulations, learners can perform various experiments without stepping out of the classroom. The whole experience is so gripping and enticing that students are motivated to learn and grow.

- **Better Memory Retention**

It has been proven that one learns better by doing. The concept of immersive learning is so formulated that learners have to immerse themselves in the process thoroughly. Students attain a deeper understanding of concepts, whether it is interactive videos, simulations, or virtual 3D models. This is not possible with other methods of teaching, not with the traditional ones, at least. When learners are engrossed in learning, they understand the toughest of topics without any ado.

- **Break the Tethers of Space and Time**

When used the right way, technology is a blessing! With immersive learning, students can break the tethers of space and time and learn about historical events and various locations around the world. Virtual field trips have been gaining popularity among modern learners as they allow them to travel any place across the globe. Teachers can also organize sessions that will enable learners to go back to ancient times to understand various historical topics in detail.

- **A Great Way to Educate Specially-Abled Students**

Physically-challenged students cannot take part in various activities. With the power of technologies such as virtual reality, these students can be a part of various field trips and adventure sports. They might not be able to do the same on their own, but with immersive technology, they can. Virtual reality has also proved to be effective in educating students with **autism and speech defects**.

Immersive learning is a need for modern learners. Traditional teaching methods are not sufficient to fulfill the requirements of the students in the current era. Blame it on the distractions, or the impact of digital stimulation, immersive learning is crucial to cater to their needs. Hence, schools and educational institutes should find out ways to incorporate immersive learning in the classroom for better learning outcomes.

Awareness of VR based learning

More importantly, awareness about VR-based learning in schools is as crucial as building content and technology for it. Infact, it becomes a bigger challenge as there is a misconception among educators that immersive tools will



disrupt the learning that has been going on for years.

However, that isn't the case, as **teachers** will always be the face of the institutions and curriculum. Additionally, there is a need to assert on the **values and the potential** of immersive learning in transforming the educational system for the betterment of the learners by piloting the project within the institutions at the initial stages, only then the attraction for deploying such technologies on top of the existing teaching methods.

In order to make immersive learning a practical reality, **the combination of content, technology, and awareness** about it within society is crucial. Moreover, school authorities, educators, researchers and parents have to come together to witness the power of such great tools in harnessing students' minds and making them better learners.



EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT FORUM

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EXPERTS SPEAK

LEENA NARESH RAJANI

Leena Naresh Rajani, is an MA . B. ED by qualification and has an experience of 18years in Pre- Primary sector. Presently she is the state Coordinator for MH in Narayana Educational Organisations.



MINIMUM LEVEL OF LEARNING

“My elder one could walk at the age of 12 months but my younger son is unable to walk till now, he is 15 months. What should I do?”, A worried mother asked.

“My son is 2 years old, he cannot even speak a sentence clearly, he is unable to say a few words”, Another worried mother questioned.

Series of concerns in the eyes of a mother of a new born for his/her development according to the standards laid by society. A child learns to walk at the age of 12 months, and another child at the age of 18 months. A child's parents play a major role in the first two years of their life. They aid in discovering their 'sense of self' which in turn helps children to differentiate between themselves and others. But while nothing can beat the love and attention given to a child by his or her mother, research has shown that early childhood education

programs not only encourage a passion for learning but also instill good habits that last a lifetime.

In order to provide a child with an environment that is supportive, as well as nurturing, it is very important that we understand how crucial these early years are and how we as parents and educators can contribute to making it intellectually stimulating. The power of early years education is immense with a plethora of benefits such as better social skills, increased confidence levels, greater coordination, creativity and increased confidence levels.

Not many people are aware of the importance of early education in a child's life. In fact, research has proven that by the time a child reaches the age of 3, 85% of the brain's capacity is already developed. As parents and educators, investing in the education and learning of a child from birth till the age of 6 would probably be the best decision you will ever make. Not only your child would thank you for it, but as a parent, you will also be able to witness your little one turn into an

emotionally strong and well-balanced individual with a constant thirst for knowledge.

In a fast-paced world like ours, where technology and modes of learning are changing incessantly, it is important for us to understand if there is a right way for parenting in the digital age. It is the early year's education of a child that determines the path that he/she takes as he/she grows. Don't you think then, that we should make a difference at that point in time?

However, in the middle of all this struggle to make a child become independent and kick start their learning, what is equally important for us is to also understand that at the end of the day, learning also needs to be about doing enjoyable stuff that they like to do, while at the same time spending time with them! It is not only about making them learn new things every single day but also about making the entire experience exciting. Something that they will look forward to!

Every child is different and learns at his or her own pace. So don't push too hard. Encourage children to explore. Read to them. Talk to them in a language they can relate to. Make them understand the true joy of giving. Answer their innumerable 'Whys' even

when all you want to do at the end of a long tiring day is to crawl into bed. And above all, always bind them with lots of love and laughter so as to make emotionally strong individuals.

Early Childhood Education or ECE, as it is commonly known, is a stream of education that relates to the formal and informal teaching of children from birth up to the age of eight. This particular field of study originated in European countries and has since gained a lot of popularity. It has now become a norm in most developed and developing countries.

As rightly explained in the National Education Policy, the ability to read and write, and perform basic operations with numbers, is a necessary foundation and an indispensable prerequisite for all future schooling and lifelong learning.

The Foundational Stage will consist of five years of flexible, multilevel, play/activity-based learning and the curriculum and pedagogy of ECCE. The Preparatory Stage will comprise three years of education building on the play, discovery, and activity-based pedagogical and curricular style of the Foundational Stage, and will also begin to incorporate

some light text books as well as aspects of more formal but interactive classroom learning, in order to lay a solid groundwork across subjects, including reading, writing, speaking, physical education, art, languages, science, and mathematics. The Middle Stage will comprise three years of education, building on the pedagogical and curricular style of the Preparatory Stage, but with the introduction of subject teachers for learning and discussion of the more abstract concepts in each subject that students will be ready for at this stage across the sciences, mathematics, arts, social sciences, and humanities. Experiential learning within each subject, and explorations of relations among different subjects, will be encouraged and emphasized despite the introduction of more specialized subjects and subject teachers. The Secondary Stage will comprise of four years of multidisciplinary study, building on the subject-oriented pedagogical and curricular style of the Middle Stage, but with greater depth, greater critical thinking, greater attention to life aspirations, and greater flexibility, and student choice of subjects.



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FEATURE ARTICLE

ALPHATHON- WALK FOR GEN ALPHA

This year has been quite wonderful for the team of ECDF as the forum has been able to conduct many fruitful online and offline programs for early childhood educators and little learners.

With an aim to create awareness about the various aspects of Early Childhood Years and Child Rights, ECDF organized a walkathon that goes by the name “Alphathon-Walk for Gen Alpha” on 27th November 2022 (Sunday) at LDBC Park, Mother Teresa Road, Guwahati. The walk was open for all age groups, ranging from small children to elderly people. The event was graced by the presence of many prominent faces in various disciplines who were invited as Goodwill Ambassadors and Ambassadors of Charity. Some of the prominent faces were Udayan Duarah, an eminent Actor, Anshuman Bora, Senior Advocate at Guwahati High Court, Tina Atifa Masood, Writer and Poet, Sukalpa Das and Franco Parakka, fitness experts, Nellie Ahmed, Founder and Managing Trustee of Maria’s Public School and Maria Montessori House of Children, Guwahati, RJ Mandy of Radio GupShup a local radio station and others. The Ambassadors spoke about the dedicated work for children empowerment that ECDF has been doing relentlessly all these years. Tina Atifa Masood specially thanked Dr. Acharjya for being able to bring positive change in the life of children by empowering all those who touch the lives of children. Another Guest Dr. Soumen Bharatiya also acknowledged the efforts of ECDF to reach out to children from the marginalized sections of

society. Franco Parakka spoke about the role of nutrition in the early childhood years and Sukalpa Das elaborated on the importance of physical exercise and an active lifestyle right from the start.

Before flagging off the walk, Dr. Vasavvi Acharjya, Founder and Chairperson of ECDF, spoke about the importance of early childhood years and the importance of creating awareness about child rights. She also said that how the entire community or society plays an important role in the holistic development of the child.



The walk was followed by the release of the translated edition of Dr. Vasavvi Acharjya’s book “The first 5 Years” which is now available in Assamese too. The book was released by Nellie Ahmed, Founder Trustee of Maria’s Public School, in the presence of Ms. Mahashweta Acharya, (Retd. HOD Assamese Dept. Handique Girls’ College), the translator Ms. Farnaz Syeda Hanum accompanied by Mr. Debajit Bora (President of Debendra Nath

Acharya Foundation for Children and Women Welfare). Ms. Nellie Ahmed spoke a few words on how the book is going to help young parents to nurture their children in the early years and how those little footprints are going to change the world if we can raise them in a proper way.



The total distance covered in the walk was 3kms, and the forum gave away trophies to the winners in different categories which included trophies for highest participation along with trophies for the first, second and third to complete the walk. There was a huge turnout on a Sunday morning which implied that people are gradually getting more and more sensitized and aware of the importance of early childhood care and education and child rights.



Surprisingly all three winners of the Alphathon were students, who are our real heroes and future of the nation. The trophies for the highest

participation were won by SNYP and the parents, staff, and children of Tender Petals.



The event was wonderfully covered by the local media channels ~ DY 365, News Focus, News Live and North East Live.



ecd_forum

EXPERTS SPEAK



KIRAN TEVTIYA

Child Behavioural Psychologist, Parenting Counsellor and Founder of 18petals.com

18petals is about child behaviour, psychology and parenting, working with children from “Toddlers to Teens”. We specialise in the age-appropriate development of children in areas like social, emotional, intra-personal, interpersonal, conflict management, addictions, fears, anxieties, aggression, oppositional, attention/focus, and parent-child connection. Through in-person and online consulting, we support families with child-based and family-based interventions as per their needs.

IS IT BECOMING TOUGHER TO TOILET-TRAIN A TODDLER IN TODAY’S TIME?

Before we get to the topic of “How to toilet train”, we need to understand - Why do we need to toilet train a child? Isn’t it a natural physiological process for any living being to expel undigested portions of food?

For this, it is important to understand how a child develops cognitively as they grow right through their early years. Observational and experiential learning presented in a repeated manner is the most prominent way that the child understands the world around them.

Have you seen a two-year-old holding the mobile exactly how an adult does, with a lost look in their eyes, mimicking small talk therein (hmm, ok, yes, no....!).

Or a three-year-old who starts speaking in English though being raised in a vernacular environment, just because the child watched many series on youtube.

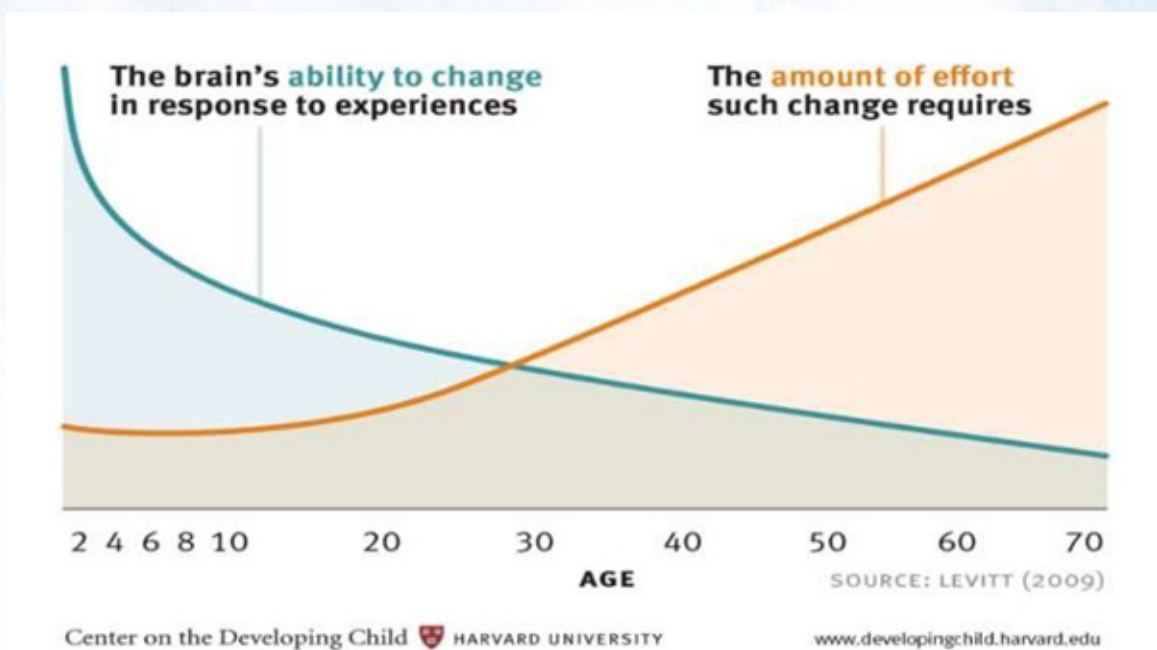
And nobody taught them. They learn just because they see their world functioning in a certain way and wish to blend into the same. Having said that, the world has changed since the time the grandparents of today’s children grew up. Attending nature’s call wasn’t such a secret business. During early childhood, the child would often be at home most of the time being overseen by an adult, especially during early childhood. For an infant, just when the adult sensed that the child is about to have a bowel movement, the adult would lift the child out of the bed and hold the child a little away and let the child take the leak. Even if the adult is delayed, the child experiences the discomfort of staying in a soiled place and starts howling. The child’s motivation to

stay dry drives the child to push themselves out of the area causing discomfort to a drier place. These experiences form a seed for the child to stay tuned to the inner and sensory signals of their body. Each day the child would see others take their water cans and walk to the fields. It becomes aspirational and soon the child would start accompanying them as well of their own volition or being guided by an adult. A child would squat down mimicking others, keep looking down under for magic to happen, and observe various shapes being formed, sometimes see a swallowed marble or undigested peas pop out! Naturally, the child just embraces ways of conduct within society.

Let's see how it works in today's world. We are more mobile in today's world and we have fewer adults to take turns taking care of the child. So the pressure on the primary caregiver is high to attend to the child apart from indulging in self-care and other chores. As a practical option, a child as young as a few weeks old is draped in a diaper and the child stays for hours at end attending to various calls of nature unmindful of any discomfort. Only when the heaviness of the diaper reaches a certain threshold or the physical discomfort of a poop, does the child start whimpering or howling for attention? We make the whole process of attending to nature's call a discomfort-free or fuss-free event for the child and the adult. And suddenly when the child turns two or three years old, we realize that the child doesn't want to use the toilet and insists on wearing a diaper to poop or sometimes even pee.

A child doesn't understand why she/he can't continue being in something as comfortable as a diaper and what is all this fuss about sitting in a pot alone. Is it just because she/he is an older child and the adults around me are becoming uncomfortable now?

Another tricky thing is that the brain's ability to change in response to experiences goes drastically down as the child ages, especially taking a sudden dip post the first two years of age. Thereby the time and effort taken to toilet "train" a child would be much longer (refer to



graph here).

So much so that for a child between 4 to 6 years it can take a few months or even a year to patiently guide the child to start using the pots. It becomes a family's preoccupation to check on the child's pee and poop routines. The more the pressure from the adults the more the child holds on which puts pressure on the muscles inside and affects the sensory signals that the child gets. And a bigger challenge is, the longer the child holds on to the poop, the drier it gets and the more painful the process becomes. It becomes a solo journey of fear, pain, guilt and shame for the child.

On top of that we have lots of euphemisms for poop and pee -say chi-chi, wee-wee, doo-doo, poo-poo, number two - attaching a big sense of shame around the acts. The disgust towards bowel movements during early childhood is an acquired emotion. As a parent our facial expression changes when during an outing, the child would suddenly come up and say - I want to poop. This further makes the child go into a shell and the child ends up feeling highly guilty and wanting to hide the soiled clothes or shying away to share with an adult post a leak.

A few guidelines can help your child's journey to pot stay stress free:

- Make it a natural process. Starting as early as the crawling of the child begins. Let it be a routine to take to the toilet after meals, when the child wakes up or before the bed time. Take them to the toilet for 2 to 3 minutes depending on the child's comfort level, and have some special tune or song for this alone.
- Except when you are travelling or maybe at night time (if you are getting overwhelmed with frequent night time awakenings and don't have enough help around), let the child be in thin bloomers and feel how it feels when the pee or poop trickles out and calls out for you for help. Our brain wants to avoid negative experiences. Let the

experience of discomfort itself guide the child instead of adding rejection from the parent. Stay calm during accidents and soiling. Look for ways to make it easy for you to clean.

- Be a model for the child, feel free to use the pot when the child is around, say taking a bath in a tub or brushing teeth, saying - My time to pee now. If you are uncomfortable with the opposite gender, let the parent of the same gender be the model for the child.

- First two to three years are critical for the child to build self-motivation through their own experiences of the world around them. Using diapers for a long period during these years is going to take the child away from the signals of their body. It builds an alternative habit within the child that becomes tougher to break in later years.

- Each time the child used the pot, be extra loving through smiles, hugs, sooth talks, and looking lovingly at the child - Wow your gut is fresh now. We have more space for yummy food now...And in case of an accident, keep a smile as well, truly believe that if the child is not overwhelmed with the emotional load of an adult's reaction, the child has the tools within to help him/herself. Positive reinforcement works better than negative reactions like chiding the child or being stern. The reward is in trying alone and not doing per se.

Let the process stay what it should be; An aspirational process for a child to attend to their physiological needs and signals. As the child grows, it becomes a self-acquired habit similar to how the child learns to turn, sit, walk, speak or eat. And the word "train" gets flushed out of "The Toilet Time"!

SANGYA OJHA

EXPERTS SPEAK



Sangya Ojha is a puppeteer and co-founder of The Puppetarians, a unique Puppet Performance Initiative based in Mumbai. Sangya also puppeteers popular puppet characters like Elmo & Aanchoo for Sesame Street India (also known as Galli Galli Sim Sim, on Indian Television) since 2006. Sangya has been playing puppets for over 16 years also performing in famous TV shows like Dance India Dance & Kaun Banega Crorepati. She

also does live puppet plays, puppetry workshops for kids, teachers and parents; creates online educational and entertaining content with puppets, and trains puppeteers worldwide. Sangya has received Jagran new Media's Awareness Warrior's Award and the prestigious mBillionth Award for her Puppet Video Series 'Tara hai Taiyar' that she created under The Puppetarians with UNICEF, U.P. Over the years Sangya has collaborated with the biggest names in entertainment, education and corporate sector to spread the art of Puppetry among young and grown-ups. Sangya believes that Puppets are for all ages and their impact could be life-changing.

LET'S PLAY PUPPETS

Puppets and Puppetry have existed for thousands of years, coming to life through the hands of puppeteers, telling stories, singing, dancing, starting a dialogue, educating, entertaining and celebrating life. Puppets create a willing illusion that occurs because both the puppeteer and the viewer believe in it being alive, even though they know otherwise. It's one of the reasons why puppets tug at our heartstrings, no matter our age. And for children, they are even more magical.

A few years back, after one of our puppet plays, a child came backstage and hugged the 'shy' puppet character 'Chaman' for a long. Then he told him softly that he was so happy to meet another shy person just like him. This is the kind of impact puppets have, they create a bond with the audience, reflect the viewer's persona and open a safe space for discussion. That is why this art should not be limited to theatres or television but should be a part of every classroom and every household with children.

Something that's always fascinated me is the connection between playing and puppetry. The verb associated with puppetry is 'playing' - we 'play' puppets. It might be because puppets look like dolls - but are endowed with the capability of coming alive at any moment. Or because puppet performances evolve through exploration much like playing. Whatever the reason, we can't deny the strong connection between puppetry and playing. And we also know how important playing is for children and for early childhood development. Famous child psychologist Jean Piaget has said, "Play is the work of children." And I believe puppets are one of the most effective tools in this 'work'.

When we see a child with puppets what seems on the surface is just 'play' but underneath it a lot of work is going on. Puppets help in children's overall growth. Studies show that puppets can help children's cognitive, affective, psychomotor, and personality development. Puppets by their very nature meet the playful instincts of children, helping them generate creative ideas and stimulating the young mind's imagination with their colours, shapes, sounds, and movements.

Puppet art and craft activities give children the opportunity to be creative and imaginative, by pouring their ideas out and creating fantastical characters through their puppets. While making choices for their puppet's shape, colours, materials etc. children learn decision-making while improving their fine motor skills. Puppetry activities also train children to work with other children through discussion and understanding others through give and take, thus, aiding in their social-emotional development as they make puppets in groups, engage with known or unknown friends in pretend play, create stories together, and perform with their puppets in unison.

As puppets facilitate pretend play, they help

children become anything they want - their favourite animals, aliens, or any creature in existence or in imagination. This is how puppets also help children experience the feelings of other characters (stimulating empathy). As children act out stories and scenes with their puppet characters, they explore ways to cope with uncomfortable feelings and difficult situations.

Puppet play helps children manage their emotions better, improving their physical and mental health. Children also learn about daily living skills which are embedded in the puppetry activities.

The 'talking-mouth' puppets (like sock puppets and other puppets with mouths that can open and close) can help children with phonics, syllables, words and sentences in the language. They help enhance children's communication skills by employing storytelling and interactions. They help improve children's vocabulary and fluency too.

When children perform stories with their puppets, doing the movements, music, dance and drama, not only do their language skills and artistic knowledge increase but they also learn multi-tasking and problem-solving in their daily lives. As they make simple puppets and bring them to life through a story or a song, their creativity and memory get a big boost, and it motivates them to learn and do more. Puppets can even encourage shy children to engage and talk with focus.

In the hand of teachers and parents puppets impact children in many different ways.

There's no doubt that puppets are great pedagogical tools, they invariably bring colour, joy, and life to the teaching-learning atmosphere. While watching their teachers or parents play with puppets children feel that

they are at the same level as the grown-ups, all engaged in the same pursuit of 'play' and then it becomes easier for them to connect to and learn from the adults with a puppet in their hands. Children love to imitate the puppet movement and behaviour shown by the teacher. Watching puppets stimulates their brain cells and tugs at their imagination. That is why as soon a teacher whips up a puppet in the classroom children's attention is immediately drawn to it. This is an extremely powerful moment where the child is fully engaged and ready to imbibe what the teacher has to say through this creature in her hands.

And I'd like to stress that Puppets don't have to be expensive to be fun and help children learn. Teachers can either use the puppets available in school or make their own simple puppets with things they can find easily around them - like papers, spoons, boxes and socks. What they say through them and how they work the puppet is what actually does the magic. Even the puppets with no features on them work wonders if played nicely as puppetry works through the suspension of disbelief. The children imagine the puppets' expressions using their inner picturing abilities and it makes them own the puppet play even more.

Teachers must involve different kinds of puppets in storytelling, sensory activities, routine and transition, art and craft, language and communication, social and emotional, physical and health, and cognitive and behavioural activities. They can also use puppets effectively in teaching art, science, and other subjects.

Puppets are also great to help children learn new skills and concepts. Children often enjoy learning about the right behaviour from a quirky puppet. While teaching at home, a puppet can be the voice used to correct table manners or other social skills. This way the puppet becomes the instructor. It is not mummy's or papa's voice setting the rules again, but a funny puppet character instead that the child will love listening to, interacting with and imitating.

Let us motivate children, increase their involvement, change their attitudes and build good habits in this fun way with puppets. And through this magical art form we grown-ups, parents and teachers will also find a creative let-out for our ideas and a way to laugh and express ourselves too, because puppets and puppetry are for all ages, especially for the young at heart.



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EVENTS (October to December)

ECDF EDU TALKS (A 30 MINUTES LIVE SESSION BY EXPERTS ON SOME VERY PERTINENT TOPICS)

ECDF EDU TALKS
Topic: **WHY SHOULD STORY TIME BE A PART OF PRESCHOOL?**

VANYA PANDYA
* An EY Educator for the last 17 years.
* ECCEd Coordinator with RBK Global School.

Date: 1st October (Saturday)
Time: 11am -11:30 am (IST)

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www.ecdforum.org

ECDF EDU TALKS 1.1
TOPIC: Professionalism in Early Childhood Education.

DR. MAYURI DUTT
* Founder headmistress & Ex-Rector / Manager of Barasat Indira Gandhi Memorial High School.
* Presently mentoring ICCE/ECSE schools.
* 33 years of experience in academics & administration.

28th Oct 2022 (Friday)
4:30 pm - to 5:00 pm (IST)

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ECDF EDU TALKS 1.2
TOPIC: Harmonising the brain, the environment and digital technologies in early childhood learning spaces.

DR. KATHRYN MURRAY
Founder and CEO Future Strong Education, Australia

8th Nov 2022 (Tuesday)
4:30 pm - to 5:00 pm (IST)

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ECDF EDU TALKS 1.3
TOPIC: Understand Parenting Style to Understand Children's Personality.

SMRITI AGARWAL
* Passionate and award-winning Early Childhood Educator, Content Designer, Parenting Mentor.
* Pre-Primary content lead Amperand Group.
* ECDF Zonal Head (West).

12th Nov 2022 (Saturday)
4:30 pm - to 5:00 pm (IST)

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ECDF EDU TALKS 1.4
TOPIC: Why a prepared environment is essential to the growth of the child and how the sensitive periods unfold within it.

DARCEL WASHBOUR
* A British Government for 8 years and a teacher of TEFL and Montessori.

17th Nov 2022 (Thursday)
5:00 pm - to 5:30 pm (IST)

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ECDF EDU TALKS 1.5
TOPIC: Cognitive Development through Play Based Learning

AMRIT NAGPAL
Head of Preschool and ECCEd at Birla Open Minds & ECDF Zonal Head (West)

10th Dec, 2022 (Saturday)
4:30 pm - to 5:00 pm (IST)

Join us **LIVE** [ecdforum](https://www.ecdforum.org)

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TALK SHOW
TOPIC: "Recognising Challenging Behaviour in Young Children: Could it be ADHD?"

Speakers

DR. VASAVI ACHARIYA
Chairperson - ECDF (NMSF) CEDRC & M.D. IPPL / Tender Petals Preschools

KIRAN TEVTIYA
* Child Behavioral Psychologist
* Parenting Counselor
* Founder of Ispat.

ASHWINI GODSE
* Founder - The Learning Planet
* Early Childhood Development Specialist
* Developing solutions for early learning, counseling, and redesigning educational approaches.

22nd OCTOBER, 2022 (SAT)
1:30 pm - 2:30 pm (IST)

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WEBINARS

WEBINAR
TECHNOLOGY FOR NEP 2020 COMPLIANCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

25th November, 2022 (Friday)
4:30 pm - 5:30 pm IST

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Moderator: **SURESH MINATRE**
* First Vice President - Tata Consultancy Services Ltd.
* Areas of expertise are in: Analytics, System design, and Project Management.
* Served as a Principal Executive at TCS, Mumbai.

Panellists:

DR. VASAVI ACHARIYA
* M.D. IPPL / Tender Petals Preschools.
* Chairperson - ECDF/NMSF / CEDRC.

VIPUL JOSHI
* Founder & CEO - Roadmap2Pill, Ltd.
* Will be bringing professional with experience in Software Product Development & Artificial Intelligence. Worked with Top Multinational Software Firms like Oracle and Microsoft Services in the United States.

AMRIT NAGPAL
* Head of Preschools and ECCEd at Birla Open Minds, Mumbai.

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Head of Preschools and ECDF at Bala Open Minds, Mumbai and ECDF Zonal Head (West)

DEBRA WELER
An internationally performing professional storyteller and educator. She has animated folk and fairy tales accompanied by the guitar. She served as president of the California Kindergarten Association for ten years.

NICOLETTE NORDIN HEAVY
Professional storyteller lighting up young children with interactive programs. Founder & Storyteller Founder & Storyteller - Stories At Play

VANITA CHAUDHARY SHAH
She is a storyteller, poet, and education professional with extensive experience working in the education and learning space for over 20 years. She has worked with learners of varied abilities (specific learning needs - gifted), diverse socio-economic backgrounds, and early to elementary years.

MEENU SVARAMAKRISHNAN
A Professional Storyteller, Author, voice-over artist, Carnatic Singer, Theatre Enthusiast and Educator. She has her own Story Podcast called KathaPur - Oral Upon A Story. She is a member of the Federation of Asian Storytellers (FASST), Indian Storytelling Network (ISN) and Bangalore Storytelling Society (BSS).

For more Details 9864233332/ 7896887051 | ecdfinfo2019@gmail.com

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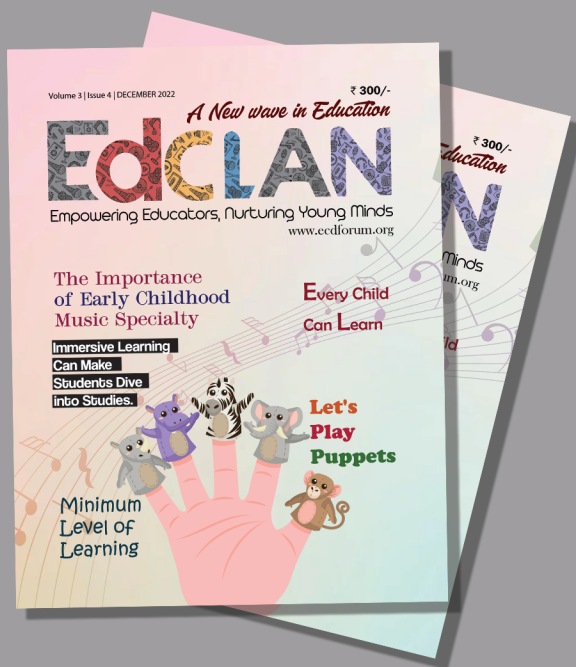
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