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*A New wave in Education*

# EdCLAN

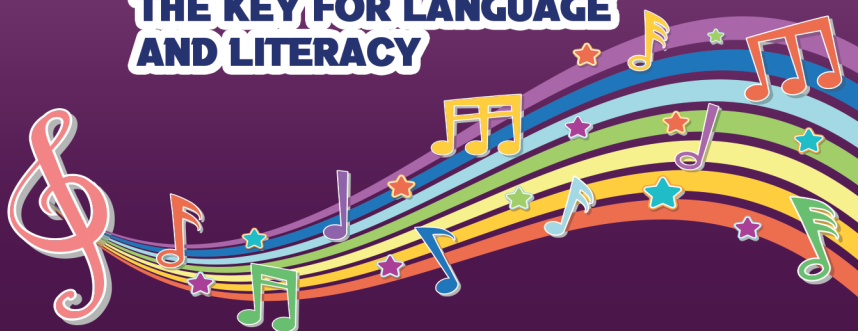
Empowering Educators and Families Globally

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**SELF-REGULATION:  
WHAT IS SELF-REGULATION  
AND WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?**

**MUSIC AND MOVEMENT:  
THE KEY FOR LANGUAGE  
AND LITERACY**



**The First Seven Years:  
A Foundation for Life**

*Rethinking Assessments in Early Years Education:  
Shifting from Traditional Metrics to Observational Learning*

**Roots and Wings:  
The Cultural Tapestry of  
Early Childhood**

**BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS:  
INTEGRATING PLAY-BASED  
LEARNING WITH FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS**

**Peaceful Humans  
Peace Pedagogy**





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



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





Dear Readers

**"When education meets purpose, and learning meets compassion, we don't just build students — we nurture peaceful, sustainable humans."**

— Dr. Vasavvi Acharjya

**Welcome to Volume 6, Issue 1 of the EdClan Journal!**

The first half of the year seems to have flown by in a heartbeat—and what an eventful six months it has been! ECDF has moved from milestone to milestone with purpose and passion.

One of the highlights was our meaningful partnership with EU Media for the **Education Excellence Conclave**, held on May 17th at the Taj, Guwahati. A gathering of thought leaders, the conclave reinforced our shared vision for excellence in education.

Another remarkable achievement was the **ECDF International Edu Tour, Conference & Awards 2025 – Bali 3.0**. This immersive journey proved to be a grand success. Among all the enriching experiences, the visit to the iconic 'Green School Bali' stood out profoundly. Witnessing how sustainability is seamlessly woven into the fabric of everyday learning there was both inspiring and validating. The school's approach beautifully resonated with my own philosophy of **Peaceful Humans, Peace Pedagogy**—and I was truly thrilled to witness such a living, breathing model of sustainable education in action.

This edition of **EdClan** brings together voices from across the globe. Early childhood education experts share their insights, practices, and reflections—making this a rich, thought-provoking read for educators, parents, and policy-makers alike.

As we step into the second half of the year, it promises to be just as dynamic—with a host of engaging events, both online and on ground. I look forward to the continued journey of growth, collaboration, and learning—together with you, our cherished readers.

With love and positivity,

**Dr. Vasavvi Acharjya**  
Founder & Director, ECDF

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# THE FIRST SEVEN YEARS

## A Foundation for Life



**Bushra Saleem** is a parent coach, internationally certified NLP practitioner, internationally certified trauma support specialist, and a certified mentor and speaker.

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As a certified parent coach and passionate advocate for mindful parenting, I have always believed that the early years of a child's life hold the key to shaping their future. Over the years, my work has been dedicated to empowering parents with the tools to nurture, connect, and build strong, emotionally intelligent relationships with their children. These formative years—especially the first seven—are a window of unparalleled opportunity for laying the foundation of a child's personality, behavior, and emotional well-being.

In this article, I will delve into why these early years matter so profoundly, what happens during this critical period, and how mindful parenting can shape a child's future for the better.

### Why the First Seven Years Are Critical?

Research in developmental psychology and neuroscience highlights that the early years of a child's life are marked by rapid brain development. By the age of seven, a child's brain reaches 90% of its adult size. During this period, the brain acts like a sponge, absorbing experiences, emotions, and interactions that become the building

blocks of their personality and behavior.

The foundation for many aspects of a person's character, such as empathy, self-regulation, problem-solving, and resilience, is laid during these formative years. Children's early relationships, particularly with their primary caregivers, play a pivotal role in shaping their sense of self-worth and their ability to trust others.

Dr. Maria Montessori famously stated, "The most important period of life is not the age of university studies, but the first one, the period from birth to the age of six, for that is the time when man's intelligence itself, his greatest implement, is being formed." This sentiment perfectly encapsulates the significance of these years.

### **Key Developments in the Early Years**

- **Emotional Regulation**

In the first seven years, children learn how to manage their emotions. How parents respond to tantrums, fears, and frustrations teaches children whether their feelings are valid and how to navigate emotional challenges.

Parents who respond with patience and empathy encourage emotional resilience. Conversely, dismissive or punitive reactions can create a sense of shame and inadequacy, which can manifest as insecurities or behavioral issues later in life.

- **Social Skills**

The home environment acts as a child's first classroom for social learning. From observing and interacting with their caregivers, children develop communication skills, learn to empathize, and understand social norms. These

early interactions set the tone for how they will form and maintain relationships throughout their lives.

- **Cognitive Development**

The early years are when children's curiosity is at its peak. Every experience, whether it's playing with toys, exploring nature, or engaging in conversations, stimulates cognitive development. Providing a nurturing and stimulating environment fosters creativity, problem-solving abilities, and a lifelong love of learning.

- **Identity Formation**

Children begin to form a sense of identity based on how they are treated by their caregivers. A child who feels loved, heard, and valued grows up with a strong sense of self-esteem. On the other hand, a child who feels ignored or criticized may internalize feelings of inadequacy.

### **The Role of Parenting in These Formative Years**

Mindful parenting plays an indispensable role in these critical years. Here are some actionable ways parents can nurture their child's development:

- **Be Emotionally Available**

Children need their caregivers to be present and attuned to their emotional needs. Listening to their concerns without judgment and validating their feelings helps them feel secure. When a child says, "I'm scared," responding with, "I understand; it's okay to feel scared," teaches them that their emotions are acceptable and manageable.

- **Set Boundaries with Love**

Boundaries are essential for healthy development, but they must be set with kindness



and consistency. For example, instead of saying, "Stop jumping on the couch!" try, "Couches are for sitting; let's find a safe place to jump." This approach maintains the boundary while respecting the child's need for movement and exploration.

- **Encourage Exploration and Play**

Play is the language of children. It's how they learn about the world, express their emotions, and develop critical thinking skills. Parents can encourage this by creating opportunities for unstructured play, providing age-appropriate toys, and joining their children in imaginative activities.

- **Model Positive Behavior**

Children learn more from what parents do than from what they say. Modeling kindness, patience, and self-regulation teaches children to embody these traits. If a parent apologizes after losing their temper, it teaches the child that making mistakes and taking responsibility are part of being human.

- **Foster a Growth Mindset**

Praising effort instead of results helps children develop a growth mindset. For example, saying, "You worked so hard on that drawing!" encourages perseverance, while "You're so talented!" may lead to fear of failure.

### **Case Study: A Child Transformed Through Mindful Parenting**

Let me share an example from my coaching experience. A mother approached me about her 5-year-old son, Ali, who was prone to frequent tantrums and had difficulty expressing his emotions. The mother admitted that she often felt overwhelmed and would respond to his outbursts with frustration.

Through our sessions, she learned to recognize the unmet emotional needs behind Ali's behavior. She started responding with empathy, saying things like, "It looks like you're upset. Can you show me what's



bothering you?” Instead of punishing him for tantrums, she guided him toward healthy ways of expressing his feelings, such as drawing or using words.

Within weeks, Ali’s behavior began to change. He became more communicative and less prone to outbursts. This transformation highlighted the profound impact that small changes in parenting can have during these formative years.

### **Common Parenting Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them**

- **Over-Scheduling**

In a bid to provide the best opportunities, many parents overschedule their children with structured activities. While activities are beneficial, children also need downtime for free play and rest.

- **Comparing with Others**

Every child develops at their own pace. Comparing your child to others can create undue pressure and affect their self-esteem. Focus on your child’s unique strengths and progress.

- **Ignoring Self-Care**

Parenting is demanding, and neglecting self-care can lead to burnout. Taking time for yourself isn’t selfish—it’s essential. A well-rested and emotionally balanced parent is better equipped to support their child.

### **Conclusion**

The first seven years of life are a treasure chest of potential, brimming with opportunities to shape a



child’s personality, values, and emotional health. As parents, our role isn’t to be perfect but to be present, patient, and purposeful in our actions.

By focusing on connection over correction, setting loving boundaries, and fostering a nurturing environment, we can help our children develop into confident, compassionate, and resilient individuals.

Parenting is a journey filled with challenges, but it is also one of the most rewarding experiences. The seeds we plant during these early years will grow into the values and virtues our children carry into adulthood.

Let’s commit to making these first seven years count, because the foundation we lay today shapes the adults of tomorrow.



# SELF-REGULATION:

## What is Self-Regulation and why is it so important?

### SUE ASQUITH

Sue is an award winning freelance International Early Childhood Consultant and published author with a suite of early years training CPD courses suitable for nursery, kindergarten and pre-school practitioners, teachers and nannies. She has worked in affiliation with local authorities and children centres as well as on several Department for Education (DfE) funded projects in the UK. Sue delivers keynote speeches, seminars and workshops at conferences as well as CPD training for teachers and early years educators around the world. She has appeared on Early Years TV and was one of the judges for the UK Nursery World Awards in 2022, 2023 and 2024.



### What is self-regulation?

Self-regulation is complex, but to put it simply, I describe it as: the ability to understand and manage your own energy, emotions, behaviours, and attention in a socially acceptable way.

### Why is self-regulation important?

Self-regulation skills help to lay solid foundations to support children's emotional, social, and academic success. They can help us:

- to recognise and react to stressors,

identify the triggers, and find appropriate coping strategies.

- to adapt to change and control impulses, which in turn help us to interact appropriately with others.
- with executive function skills, which help us to focus, follow instructions, and complete tasks; these are critical life skills and aid future academic success, and help them to achieve their full potential.

Research also suggests that self-regulation skills are a predictor of short and long-term outcomes, such as with 'school readiness' skills, academic achievement throughout school, and adult educational attainment, which may lead to feelings of higher self-worth.

Self-regulation and executive function skills are closely linked, but when applied together, they can help children to gain greater control over their thoughts, actions, and emotional responses.

If we do not help children to build strong self-regulation, there may be an increase in emotional outbursts and social conflicts; children may struggle to focus, listen, and attend, which in turn may hinder their learning and development. It also hinders the learning environments throughout the early years and school life; if the teachers are always reacting to 'behaviours', they are unable to support children's learning and development, and teach.

If teachers and educators are not trained to understand self-regulation, they might take a behaviour management approach, reacting to children's behaviours. Understanding why a child might be displaying a certain behaviour helps us to be proactive, where necessary, we can make small adjustments to our routines and environments to help children remain regulated. We can help children understand their feelings and emotions, offering strategies to help them self-regulate. In turn, this empowers children to understand their feelings and apply coping strategies, creating emotionally and

physically safe environments, allowing them to participate in the learning opportunities on offer.

#### Links to the EYFS prime areas of learning

The statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) highlights three prime areas which are particularly important for learning and forming relationships. They build a foundation for children to thrive and provide the basis for learning in all areas.

- **Personal, social, and emotional development**

Babies are not born with the ability to self-regulate, but they are born with the ability to learn. Positive relationships play a crucial part in early childhood; babies and young children need the security of familiar adults to co-regulate when they are feeling dysregulated. Adults responding to a dysregulated baby or child in a timely, caring way and offering their support is called co-regulation. This might include providing comfort if they are lonely or fearful, changing a baby's nappy, feeding a hungry baby, offering a toddler a snack or a drink, etc. Through these caring relationships, babies and children learn that uncomfortable feelings do not last and that their bodies can return to a more comfortable state. Through co-regulation, children can learn the more advanced skills of self-regulation.

- **Communication and language**

Children need lots of age and stage-appropriate opportunities to learn about their emotions. It is important to acknowledge children's feelings to help

them to understand more about the sensations they are experiencing and then learn the words to identify and name their emotions. This helps them communicate their feelings more effectively and reduces frustrations and misunderstandings. It also helps children to express themselves without resorting to physical ways of expression or things escalating into an overwhelmed or meltdown.

Emotional literacy is the ability to deal with your own emotions and recognise their causes. Emotional vocabulary and emotional literacy help us to understand our triggers, express emotions effectively, and build empathy.

- **Physical development**

There is a long-established link between physical activity and better mental health. Exercise releases “feel-good” chemicals such as dopamine, oxytocin, serotonin, and endorphins. Exercise can also improve brain health and cognitive function, reduce anxiety, aid better sleep, and increase levels of self-esteem and social connection. ‘Children who are more physically active in the early years are better at regulating their emotions and achieve better in primary school’ (Ofsted, 2023).

Giving children opportunities to move, crawl, pull, push, climb, and carry things enhances body awareness. However, did you know that movement also provides them with proprioceptive input? Proprioceptive input to the muscles and joints can also have a calming and organising effect on the nervous system, which can help them to

calm down.

I also read an email from the OT Toolbox recently, which likened self-regulation skills to a gymnast. Gymnasts need:

- strong and stable core muscles to perform the movements and maintain positions
- self-control
- to have practised the individual skills and movements required to perform a routine
- to shut out distractions and noises from the audience to focus
- the executive function skills to remember and sequence the performance
- the emotional knowledge and resilience to bounce back if a manoeuvre did not quite work
- to maintain concentration, attention, and composure during their performance.

Although the above examples are gymnastics-specific, these are all essential life skills for us all to apply in daily life.

### **What can I do to help?**

The key person approach helps to establish consistent, positive relationships and opportunities for adults to help children co-regulate.

Help children build agency so that they can make choices and decisions, learn to problem solve, build self-belief, and develop a strong sense of identity.



Make time for child-initiated play where children can make choices and follow their own interests.

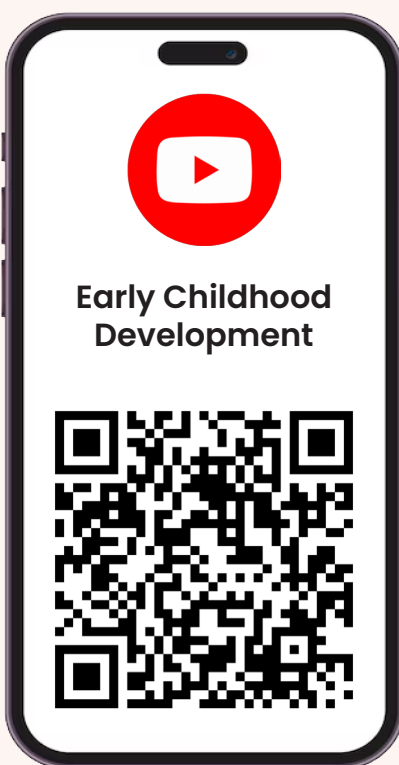
Early years settings can help children reduce their screen time, spending less time scrolling and more time for movement and time outside.

Time for rest as well as activity is important. Every child will have their own body rhythms in terms of food, drinks, and sleep. We need to encourage children to make healthy eating choices and to drink water to stay hydrated.

Time for music, movement, and age and stage-appropriate games can help foster self-regulation skills too.

When we think about self-regulation strategies, our thoughts sometimes automatically turn to calm down strategies such as Yoga, deep breathing, grounding exercises, mindfulness techniques, and soothing sensory input. However, sometimes people need extra movement and sensory input.

Sensory experiences can also help to build self-regulation skills and sensory organisation. For example, sensory bottles provide weight (proprioception), physical input as they shake the bottle, as well as visual input as they watch the contents float and move around. Multi-sensory input can be a useful strategy when a child (or adult) is dysregulated.



## MUSIC AND MOVEMENT

### The Key to Language and Literacy



**Sue Newman** BA(Hons) ACA  
Managing Director Boogie Mites UK Ltd and  
Community Projects CIC

After leaving a corporate career to look after my children, I have been able to follow my passion since setting up Boogie Mites as co-founder in 2007. *“Music has played a huge part in my life, and I am delighted to spend every day leading our passionate team of teachers at Boogie Mites as we share the joy and learning power of music every day. When I learnt about the neuroscience evidence indicating the power of the music activities to develop the whole child ready for learning at school, then observed this in action myself through my own children and teaching Boogie Mites music groups, I knew that we had to share the knowledge, confidence and resources to enable early years educators and parents to provide brain boosting, active, creative music making each and every day.”*

We have taken Boogie Mites from private classes for parents/carers and children in London, to offering online music programmes and teacher training packages across the UK and internationally. We have set up a Boogie

Mites Community Interest Company to deliver charity funded projects and to support business managers to run Boogie Mites in their area under licence, making our music programme available to all children including those in areas of deprivation.

I still do some teaching, I also manage business strategy planning, programme compilation, training provision, local authority contracts, team and customer relationships. We work with partners who support our work, including Neuromusical Researcher Dr Anita Collins. We collaborate with artists, including Michael Rosen and Rohini Vij.

We have a vision of making a real difference to early years education globally through the power of music, starting children on a lifelong love of music, language and literacy, with all the associated wellbeing and cognitive benefits, joy and comfort that music and literacy can bring.

**W**e all know that movement is important, but did you know that movement with music is an incredibly powerful combination for developing foundations for learning? A strong auditory-motor link in the brain is key for strong language and literacy skills.

### **The Neuroscience**

Music and movement activities every day in early years are the most fun and efficient way to build strong neural connectivity linking the auditory-motor system. Early neuroscience research (1990s) has shown that music is a whole-brain workout.

This finding led to further studies that compared the brain of musicians and non-musicians doing the same tasks to see if musician's brains worked differently, whether the study of music had changed their brain. They found that there was a difference and that the corpus callosum (bridge between the two hemispheres of the brain) was more highly developed in musician's brains.

Following decades of Brainvolts Auditory Laboratory research studies looking at the impact of our life in sound, on brain development, the evidence is clear:

*"The processing of sound drives many of the brain's core functions – how we think, feel, move, and combine our senses"*

And

*"Music is the jackpot. Music does an exceptionally good job at engaging our cognitive/motor/sensory/emotional networks, providing strong pathways for learning through sound."*

*"Music has a privileged portal to memory," Dr*

The effect of music is "like fireworks going off in the brain. No other activity has been seen to have such an effect on the whole brain. Music is a whole brain workout."  
- Dr Anita Collins

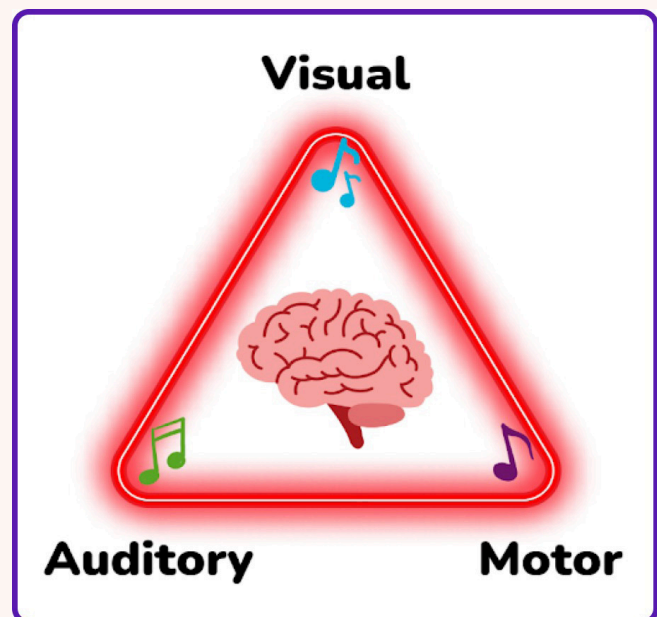


Nina Kraus, Brainvolts Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory publication: Of Sound Mind.

This 'privileged portal to memory' is key, when engaging in singing, melodic and rhythmic exercises, children are creating a memory bank of the sound patterns/ vocabulary and automated memory of the motor responses.

### **The Magic Triangle**

Studies with 3-4-year-olds tell us that a huge number of messages need to fire around the brain to make sense of



language. They use an overlapping circuit of neural pathways that are developed through regular music and movement activities, building strong connections between the 'magic triangle', the Auditory/Visual/Motor regions of the brain.

Body percussion music games develop auditory, visual and motor memory (sometimes referred to as muscle memory), we hear and feel the beat, see and hear the pattern of actions, with practice this becomes an auto response dance/pattern of actions as the sounds are heard and the actions seen, the motor response becomes automatic. Along with a rich and varied music provision, we are developing sound processing to recognise and react to a wide range of sound ingredients. We are developing the neural connectivity needed for language and learning to read.

## Rhythmic Awareness

Research indicates that the ability to coordinate and time our movements impacts children's ability to learn language, to read, and to write. Movement involves timing skills supported by the ability to keep the beat and rhythmic awareness, skills which are also found to be important in the processing of language sounds and learning to read.

The level of synchronisation that is needed between the auditory, visual, and motor cortices of the brain to make sense of the messages (language or music) is tied to the motor circuit, which is developed through keeping the beat and rhythmic awareness activities promoted through music practice.

## Rhythm Is an Integral Part of Both Music and Language

Research studies at the Brainvolts Project find biological evidence linking music, rhythmic abilities, and language skills, specifically linking the ability to keep a beat to the neural encoding of speech sounds.

Studies demonstrate that accurate beat-keeping involves synchronization between the parts of the brain responsible for hearing as well as movement.

*"Rhythm is an integral part of both music and language, and the rhythm of spoken language is a crucial cue to understanding. It may be that musical training—with its emphasis on rhythmic*







*skills—can exercise the auditory system, leading to less neural jitter and stronger sound-to-meaning associations that are so essential to learning to read.”* Dr Nina Kraus, Northwestern University, Illinois.

### **Can you Feel the Beat?**

In one study carried out by Brainvolts, found that synchronisers (children aged 3–4 who could keep a steady beat) were found to have more accurate brainstem processing of speech than non-synchronisers and to have higher pre-literacy skills (phonological processing, auditory short-term memory, and rapid naming) compared with non-synchronisers.

This finding indicates a fundamental impact on early years learning for pre-

literacy skills. We need daily music activities that include lots of beat-keeping and rhythmic movement exercises!

### **Try It Out**

The neural connectivity indicated by beat-keeping skills should not be the Neuroscience Music Researchers’ secret; everyone should know the power of music and movement in the early years. All educators and parents/carers in early years should have access to the training and resources that enable them to harness the power of daily music and movement activities for getting children ready for learning, language, and literacy at school. Try it out for yourselves and share with your community of educators and parents.





### Dr. Vasavvi Acharjya

is an early childhood educationist with over 24 years of experience. She is the Founder and Managing Director of **Inner I Foundation Pvt. Ltd.** and the **Tender Petals Preschool Chain**, as well as the Founder-Chairperson of the **Debendra Nath Acharya Foundation for Children and Women Welfare**. She also leads the **Early Childhood Development Forum (ECDF)**, a global initiative promoting early years development.

Dr. Vasavvi is the author of the parenting guide *First 5 Years ~ Demystifying the Crucial Period of Parenting*, also available in Assamese. She compiled and launched *Early Childhood Development – Universal Perspectives by Global Experts* in 2023. A TEDx speaker and former trainer at TISS Guwahati, she is a multi-awardee and a

frequent speaker at national and international platforms.

Dr. Vasavvi is a dedicated peace advocate and passionate proponent of a global culture of peace. In 2023, she introduced the *Peaceful Humans Peace Pedagogy*—a pioneering approach to peace education specifically designed for early childhood learners. This unique pedagogy has been successfully integrated into her chain of *Tender Petals* preschools, where it fosters emotional intelligence, empathy, and non-violent communication among young children. She has presented her work at both national and international platforms, receiving widespread recognition and acclaim. Today, she actively trains educators and schools across the country, helping them implement this transformative model and instill the values of peace from the earliest years of life.



# Peaceful Humans: Cultivating a Culture of Peace from Early Childhood

## What Is Peace?

Peace is more than just the absence of violence or conflict. It's a state of calm, balance, and emotional well-being. When the mind is at peace—free from fear, chaos, and anxiety—it becomes a fertile ground for positive thinking, wise decision-making, and creativity.

To truly understand peace, we must explore its roots. Peace stems from three interconnected sources:

- **Inner Peace** – Harmony within oneself.
- **Social Peace** – Harmony with others.
- **Peace with Nature** – Harmony with the environment.

## The Three Pillars of Peace

- ✓ **Inner Peace:** This is peace with oneself—accepting who we are, developing self-love, cultivating compassion, and fostering a positive self-image. It's the foundation of emotional and mental well-being.
- ✓ **Social Peace:** This refers to peaceful coexistence and cooperation with others. It involves conflict resolution, empathy, unity, friendship, and shared human values.
- ✓ **Peace with Nature:** Acknowledging our interdependence with the environment, and committing to actions that protect and sustain the natural world.

Building a culture of peace means nurturing all three dimensions—from within the self, in

our communities, and with nature.

## Peace Education in the 21st Century

In today's increasingly interconnected world, peace must become a deliberate choice. The seeds of this choice need to be sown early. Children's formative years—when their brains are most adaptable—are critical for instilling the values, behaviors, and skills necessary to build a peaceful society.

## Early Childhood Peace Education

Mahatma Gandhi said, *"If we are to reach real peace in this world, we shall have to begin with the children."*

During early childhood, children form their core habits, social skills, and emotional understanding. Their brains are rapidly developing, making this the ideal time to nurture the building blocks of peace.

As Stacy M. Alfonso notes in *Peace Education in Early Childhood Education*, children begin to use language for emotional expression, practice conflict resolution, and build relationships. These are all early steps in becoming peace-makers and peacekeepers.

Key social-emotional skills like self-regulation, empathy, collaboration, and critical thinking—essential for peacebuilding—are all formed in these early years.

## Creating a Peaceful Environment in Early Childhood Settings

### Classroom Atmosphere

A peaceful classroom doesn't happen by

chance—it's cultivated intentionally. Key principles include:

- Respect
- Truthfulness
- Cooperation
- Dignity
- Equality
- Liberty
- Justice
- Safety
- Freedom of expression

### Peace Corner

A dedicated space can help children manage their emotions and find a sense of calm. A “peace corner” may include:

- Soft cushions and low seating
- Toys and books promoting peaceful behavior
- Natural items like pebbles, leaves, and shells
- A peace table for expressing emotions



through art

- Soft toys and “worry dolls” for comfort

These elements provide children a safe space to reflect and express themselves.

### Classroom Design

- **Color Scheme:** Use soothing colors to promote calm and avoid dark tones that may feel chaotic.
- **Furniture:** Use low, child-friendly furniture with rounded edges. Ensure space is available for both floor and table activities, as well as designated areas for rest.

### Library

Set up a small book rack with colorful, picture-rich books focused on:

- Positive self-image
- Ethics and kindness
- Love for nature and animals
- Emotional literacy and personal awareness

### The Role of Educators in Fostering Peace

Educators are central to building a peaceful classroom culture. They must:

- Model peaceful behavior
- Use inclusive, bias-free language
- Create a “peace zone” classroom
- Foster connection and empathy
- Practice self-care to prevent burnout

Mindfulness practices like slow breathing, eating, and observing nature can be introduced as simple, daily rituals. These encourage children to live in the moment and manage emotions effectively.

Facilitators can also:

- Teach children to name and understand their feelings



- Reinforce empathy, gratitude, and compassion
- Use discussions and role-play to build emotional intelligence

### Outdoor Peaceful Learning Environments



A peaceful culture extends beyond classroom walls.

### Nature-Based Learning

- Maintain green spaces with trees, flowers, and vegetables
- Encourage children to care for their

own plants

- Include pet animals to teach responsibility and compassion
- Use recycled materials to make bird feeders, planters, and eco-friendly items

### Outdoor Play

Playgrounds can teach vital social skills—turn-taking, empathy, conflict resolution, and emotional regulation—through natural interaction.

### Final Thoughts

Embedding peace education in early childhood isn't optional—it's essential. If we want a future led by compassionate, responsible, and peaceful individuals, we must start early.

As Dr. Maria Montessori wisely said:

*"Establishing enduring peace is the work of education; all politics can do is keep us out of war."*

Let us sow the seeds of peace today, so tomorrow's world may blossom in harmony.



## EXPERTS SPEAK

### **Archana Madhusudan: A Trailblazer in Education and Soft Skills Training**

With over two decades of enriching experience in the education sector, I have dedicated my career to empowering individuals and transforming learning environments. My journey has been a dynamic blend of roles—academic leader, corporate trainer, and mentor—allowing me to make a meaningful impact in diverse settings.

As a senior academician at Next Education for over six years, I have had the privilege of training over 2,000 teachers, conducting principal workshops, and leading parent orientation programs. My mission has always been to create impactful learning experiences that drive growth and excellence.

As a certified practitioner in Emotional Intelligence and neuroscience-based learning, I craft transformative soft skills programs that enable individuals to communicate effectively, lead with confidence, and build meaningful relationships. My expertise extends to corporate training, where I specialize in voice modulation, accent refinement, and interpersonal communication.



In the realm of competitive English exams like IELTS, TOEFL, GRE, SAT, and OET, I serve as a master trainer, blending my linguistic skills with neuroscience principles to ensure learners achieve exceptional outcomes. I am also a certified POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment) and POCSO (Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses) practitioner, underscoring my commitment to creating safe and respectful environments.

Throughout my career, I have embraced roles such as lecturer, Head of Department, and curriculum designer across reputed institutions. Beyond my professional contributions, I am a sought-after speaker at national and international forums, where I share insights on education, soft skills, and leadership.



# The Digital Dilemma: Finding the Balance Between Technology and Traditional Learning in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in India

It's a dilemma we all face: *How much screen time is too much screen time for toddlers?* In India, we've seen it—children barely old enough to tie their shoes mastering the art of swiping through cartoons. And while we can't help but be impressed by their tablet skills, it also raises a big question: *Is all that screen time helping them learn, or is it turning them into tiny tech overlords with no time for real-life play?*

Let's dive into the digital dilemma of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in India, where technology and traditional learning need to coexist, but sometimes feel like competing superheroes. Can we use tech to enhance learning without replacing the joys of hands-on experiences? Spoiler alert: Yes, but with a little balance.

## The Benefits of Technology in Early Childhood Education (Yes, There Are Benefits!)

First things first, let's be clear: technology isn't the villain here—it's all about how we use it.

- **Boosting Literacy and Numeracy Skills (Without the Tears)**

Imagine your child learning the alphabet not from a dull flashcard, but through a *fun* animated app where "A" is an animated apple that sings. Apps like *Khan Academy Kids* or *Bachpan Ki Dunia* make learning interactive and enjoyable, transforming abstract concepts into games that kids love.



Suddenly, learning feels less like a chore and more like an adventure, without the chocolate bribery. Win-win!

- **Personalized Learning—Because Every Child is a Superhero in Their Own Right**

Kids learn at different paces—some whiz through their lessons, others take their time. The beauty of technology is that it adapts to each child's needs. Apps like *BYJU's* or *Toppr* provide personalized lessons, adjusting the difficulty based on the child's progress. No more bribing them with snacks just to finish a worksheet; the tablet's got their back.

- **Bridging Accessibility Gaps (Because Everyone Deserves a Shot)**

In India, where access to quality education can depend on where you live, technology is a game-changer. A child in a rural area now has access to the same educational resources as a child in a metro city. Apps and digital platforms cater to multiple

languages, ensuring that language isn't a barrier to learning. Assistive tech helps children with special needs, providing tools like text-to-speech to aid their learning journey. Equality achieved—at least on the digital front!

- **Building Global Connections (Without Leaving Your Living Room)**

Remember school field trips? Now imagine taking one to the African savanna or the Great Wall of China, without leaving your home. Virtual field trips, through apps like *Google Expeditions*, give kids the chance to experience new places and cultures, all while sitting in their living rooms. It's like a mini-vacation for their brains.

### **The Risks of Too Much Screen Time (Uh-oh, Here Comes the Plot Twist)**

But let's not get too carried away. Too much screen time can lead to some problems. And believe me, you don't want to be that parent who has to negotiate with a toddler who thinks their tablet is a personal assistant.

- **Social Skills—Or Lack Thereof**

Your child may know how to operate a tablet, but can they share their toys or wait their turn in a group game? Technology is great for individual learning, but it can hinder social development. Kids need face-to-face interactions for developing empathy, teamwork, and communication. So, while your child's tech skills might rival a Silicon Valley engineer's, you might find them struggling to negotiate sharing a snack with their sibling.

- **The Attention Span of a Goldfish**

Let's face it, screen time often teaches instant gratification. Kids are trained to expect quick results, just like how you scroll through



Instagram in 10 seconds. While that's fine for adults, toddlers need longer periods of uninterrupted focus for meaningful learning. If they can't sit still through a picture book, it might be time to reconsider how much time they're spending on fast-paced apps.

- **Goodbye Physical Play**

Remember when kids used to run around outside? No? Well, neither do we, since digital distractions often keep them indoors. But physical play is essential for developing motor skills and coordination. Too much screen time means less time for the kind of play that helps kids develop the muscles and skills they'll need to navigate the world (and to outrun their sibling when fighting for the last cookie).

- **Disrupted Sleep Patterns (No, Your Kid Won't Sleep Through the Night)**

You've tried it all—*no more screen time before bed!* But that 10-minute episode turns into an hour-long saga, and now your child is wide awake, ready to discuss *Peppa Pig* until sunrise. The blue light from screens messes

with melatonin production, meaning your child might have trouble falling asleep. And let's face it, if they don't sleep, neither do you.

### **Striking the Right Balance (Without Losing Your Mind)**

So, how do we make sure we're not turning our kids into digital zombies? It's all about balance, my friend.

- ✓ **Use Technology as a Supplement, Not a Replacement:** Think of tech as the sidekick, not the hero. Encourage interactive apps, but follow them up with real-world activities like building a fort or drawing a picture. It's like giving your child a superhero team—tech + hands-on play = education!
- ✓ **Set Screen Time Limits:** The *American Academy of Pediatrics* recommends no more than one hour of screen time a day for kids under five. Set a timer, stick to the rules, and remember: the less time they spend on screens, the more time you'll have to enjoy your adult-level screen time.
- ✓ **Encourage Active Engagement:** No passive viewing! Choose apps that encourage thinking, problem-solving, or creativity—think educational games, drawing apps, or digital storytelling. You know, the ones that don't make your child think they can "learn" just by watching.
- ✓ **Mix It Up with Hands-On Learning:** While tech can be awesome, it's no substitute for physical play. After an interactive app session, have

your child do something tactile, like drawing a picture of the animal they just learned about or building a paper tower. Trust me, you'll thank yourself later.

### **Conclusion**

In the end, technology isn't the villain—it's all about how we use it. When used in moderation, it can enhance early childhood education in India, making learning more engaging and accessible. But, just like you wouldn't feed your child chocolate for breakfast (well, maybe just once in a while), you shouldn't give them unlimited screen time. A balance of tech, traditional play, and face-to-face interaction will give your child the best shot at becoming both a *tech genius* and a social butterfly. And hey, if you need a break, just remember—there's always the *digital babysitter* to help out... for a limited time, of course!







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# Where Futures Blooms: The Tender Petals Approach to Early Learning

In the heart of Northeast India, a quiet revolution in early childhood education has been taking root and flourishing. *Tender Petals*, a premier preschool brand headquartered in Guwahati, Assam, stands as a beacon of transformative education, dedicated to nurturing the foundational years of young learners with compassion, innovation, and purpose. An initiative of *Inner I Foundation Pvt. Ltd.*, Tender Petals was founded in 2013 by renowned educationist and visionary leader, **Dr. Vasavvi Acharjya**, with a mission to redefine how we approach early learning in India.

At its core, Tender Petals was conceived not merely as a preschool but as a dynamic learning ecosystem designed to empower children to become joyful, confident, and curious individuals. Guided by a deeply rooted philosophy of holistic education, the brand integrates multidisciplinary learning, creative exploration, and emotional nurturing to ensure each child is recognized, respected, and encouraged to blossom in their unique way.

Over the past decade, Tender Petals has expanded from a single vision to a growing movement, steadily establishing its presence across Northeast India and North India. With every new centre, it brings its signature pedagogy and values to

communities across the region—and is now on an exciting journey of national expansion, bringing its transformative educational practices to children across India.

## The Heart of the Vision: Peace Pedagogy

At the soul of Tender Petals lies its most distinctive feature—**Peace Pedagogy**, a unique educational framework conceptualized and developed by Dr. Vasavvi Acharjya. This groundbreaking approach reimagines the learning environment as a sanctuary of calm, compassion, and mutual respect. Through Peace Pedagogy, children are not just taught curriculum—they are guided to become emotionally intelligent, socially responsible, and internally resilient human beings.

Peace Pedagogy emphasizes:

- **Empathy over authority**
- **Mindfulness over haste**
- **Dialogue over discipline**

Each classroom at Tender Petals is a carefully curated space where children are encouraged to express themselves freely, collaborate with peers, and engage with the world around them in meaningful ways. This environment fosters not only academic readiness but also emotional well-being and ethical awareness.



## Tender Petals Centres Director and Principals received the Rabindra Nath Tagore National Award 2025 on 17<sup>th</sup> May

Venue : Vivanta, Guwahati, Assam



Dr. Vasavvi Acharjya  
Director, Tender Petals



Kasturi Mahanta  
Tender Petals, Down Town



Ansuman Das on behalf of Namita Das,  
Tender Petals Jatia.



Sandeeptha Purkayastha  
Tender Petals Barsapara.



## Core Focus Areas

At Tender Petals, the educational journey revolves around three foundational pillars:

- **Holistic Development:** The curriculum integrates emotional, social, cognitive, and physical development to foster well-rounded growth.
- **Peaceful Learning Environments:** Classrooms are designed to be safe, inclusive, and emotionally nurturing spaces where children feel seen, heard, and valued.
- **Child Empowerment:** The learning process cultivates independence, curiosity, and inner confidence, preparing children for a lifetime of meaningful learning.

## Key Benefits

Tender Petals' innovative approach yields tangible benefits for children, families, and educators alike:

- **Empowered Learners:** Children develop critical life skills such as compassion, resilience, and self-confidence.
- **Strong Relationships:** The school fosters meaningful partnerships between parents, teachers, and children, ensuring a united support system that nurtures each child's growth.
- **Values-Based Learning:** The Peace Pedagogy model embeds important values such as kindness, respect, and inclusivity into the daily learning experience.

## A Decade of Transformation and Trust

In 2023, Tender Petals proudly celebrated its **10th anniversary**, marking a decade of meaningful impact, unwavering commitment, and countless inspiring stories. To commemorate this milestone, a special souvenir publication was launched, showcasing touching testimonials from alumni, parents, educators, and mentors. These heartfelt narratives reflect the profound influence Tender Petals has had on its community—stories of children gaining confidence, families feeling supported, and educators finding purpose and fulfillment in shaping young minds.

## National Recognition and Milestones

Tender Petals' commitment to excellence has not gone unnoticed. In 2018, it was proudly recognized as one of **India's Top 10 Preschools** by *Forbes India*, a prestigious accolade that validated its quality-driven, child-centric model and innovative practices. This honour marked a significant moment in the brand's journey, placing it among the pioneers and thought leaders in India's early childhood education landscape.

Further cementing its leadership, Tender Petals recently achieved a new milestone at the **Education Excellence Conclave 2025**, organized by EU Media and held at Hotel Vivanta, Guwahati. At this esteemed event, the heads of all Guwahati-based Tender Petals centres were awarded the **Rabindranath Tagore National Award 2025**, recognizing their dedication, leadership, and passion for early childhood education. In a crowning moment, **Dr. Vasavvi Acharjya** herself was honoured



with the **Rabindranath Tagore National Directors Award 2025**, underscoring her pivotal role as a changemaker and torchbearer for progressive education in India.

### A Legacy in the Making

More than a school, Tender Petals is a vibrant community where young minds are shaped, nurtured, and empowered for the future. Its commitment goes beyond academics—aiming instead to sow the seeds of lifelong learning, empathy, and integrity. Every child at Tender Petals is not just a student; they are a unique story of potential, waiting to unfold.

As the brand continues its journey across India, it remains steadfast in its mission: to create spaces where futures bloom naturally and beautifully—one tender petal at a time.

At Tender Petals, **education is a celebration of life**—a process of growing, exploring, connecting, and becoming. It is here that the foundations of a peaceful, purposeful future are laid with love, vision, and a deep respect for the limitless possibilities within every child.



Soma Dey Das  
Tender Petals Beltola.



Tender Petals Fraternity





Mridusmita Deka  
Tender Petals Outal.



Mriganka Gogoi  
Tender Petals Panjabari.



Riina Dey  
Tender Petals Rehabari.



Shanti Mahesh  
Tender Petals, VIP Road.



## BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS:

### Integrating Play-Based Learning with Foundational Skills

**Shilpi Agrawal** is an enthusiastic educator, curriculum designer, and published author with over two decades of experience in educational publishing, content development, assessments, and teacher training. With a strong foundation in both pedagogy and subject expertise, she brings a unique blend of academic rigour and creative instructional design to her work.

Shilpi is the author of two comprehensive mathematics series: *ICSE Mathematics for Primary Classes (Grades 1–5)* and *My Mathematics for Primary Classes (Grades 1–5)*, aligned with the CBSE syllabus. These series are designed to foster conceptual clarity, problem-solving skills, and mathematical thinking in young learners.

In her professional journey, Shilpi has worked with several renowned publishers and ed-tech organisations in capacities such as Content Head, Managing Editor, Subject Matter Expert, Reviewer, and Teacher Trainer. She is currently associated with Kips Learning Pvt Ltd as **Managing Editor – Mathematics**, where she leads the development of engaging, skill-based, and NEP-aligned educational content.

In addition to her work in publishing, she has taught mathematics to IIT-JEE aspirants at prestigious coaching institutes like FIITJEE. Shilpi remains deeply invested in improving *Early Childhood and Primary Education*, continuously exploring new methods and tools to make learning accessible, inclusive, and joyful.



“It is a happy talent to know how to play.”

— **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

In the early years of childhood, curiosity blossoms naturally. This is the time when the building blocks of language, thinking, and early maths skills begin to form. While teaching foundational literacy and numeracy is essential, the way we introduce these skills can deeply influence how children absorb and apply them. One of the most effective approaches that aligns beautifully with the developmental needs of young learners is play-based learning. When play is thoughtfully planned and supported, it can seamlessly connect a child's innate sense of wonder with the development of essential academic abilities.

### **Unlocking Learning Through the Power of Play Way Method**

Play is far more than a fun pastime—it's a child's way of exploring the world. Research and real-life experience both show that

play supports brain development, boosts problem-solving abilities, builds social awareness, and helps children manage emotions. When children play, they think, create, communicate, and explore their surroundings with confidence.

Play gives each child the space to learn in a way that suits their pace and interests. It takes away pressure and brings in joy, helping children build skills in a relaxed and meaningful way.

Not long ago, I led a workshop for a group of teachers where I introduced simple but engaging games like **Mathematics Bingo** and some **Left Brain–Right Brain activities**. What amazed me was how much the teachers enjoyed playing—there was laughter, excitement, and lively discussion. It was a powerful reminder: **if adults can feel energised and inspired through play, imagine the level of motivation and joy children can experience when they learn through playful methods**. That day, I saw

how play connects us all, regardless of age, with the love of learning.

### **Connecting Play to Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Skills**

Children develop early literacy and numeracy not just through formal lessons, but through everyday play experiences that feel natural and engaging. Here are some playful ways to support both skill areas:

- **Block Play and Building:** When children stack, sort, or compare blocks, they're exploring measurement, patterns, balance, and spatial thinking. They also begin counting, estimating, and discussing shapes.



- **Board Games and Dice Fun:** Games that involve moving pieces, rolling dice, or counting spaces help children understand numbers, take turns, and follow rules.
- **Sand and Water Activities:** Measuring cups, pouring jars, and water wheels introduce concepts like volume, comparison, and basic problem-solving.
- **Pretend Shops and Kitchens:** Running a pretend store or cooking imaginary meals helps children practise counting, sorting, using money, and applying real-life language.
- **Nature-Based Play:** Collecting leaves or pebbles, sorting them by size or colour, and creating patterns enhances early maths and classification skills.

- **Storytelling and Puppet Shows:** When children create or retell stories using puppets or props, they strengthen vocabulary, sequencing, and comprehension.
- **Songs, Rhymes, and Movement:** Action songs and rhymes improve phonemic awareness, rhythm, and memory—all of which support early reading.
- **Writing Through Play:** Providing materials like cards, notebooks, or chalkboards encourages children to write for a purpose—making signs, lists, or drawing what they see.

### Creating Play-Friendly Spaces That Promote Learning

A thoughtfully designed classroom or learning space can encourage exploration and spark curiosity. Some key elements to include:

- **Learning Areas:** Dedicated spots for reading, building, role play, or art invite children to choose what they want to explore.
- **Open-Ended Materials:** Items like buttons, sticks, shells, cloth, and blocks allow endless creative possibilities.
- **Theme Corners or Projects:** Letting children explore interests like animals, transport, or gardens can naturally include counting, measuring, writing, and storytelling.
- **Visuals and Labels:** Picture charts, signs, and number lines help children connect language and numeracy to real-world objects.
- **Observation by Educators:** Teachers





can watch how children play, note their progress, and plan gentle ways to extend their learning.

### **The Teacher's Role in Learning Through Play**

In a play-based classroom, the teacher is fully involved, not standing apart. Instead, they guide learning by setting up inviting environments, introducing thoughtful questions, and encouraging deeper thinking.

Let's say children are building a bridge using blocks. The teacher might ask, "What will make your bridge stronger?" or "Can you count how many blocks you have used on each side?" These simple prompts help children apply logic and maths without making it feel like a formal lesson.

Reflection is also key. A teacher might revisit a child's work through photos or drawings and ask, "What were you building?" or "What did you find tricky?" This builds awareness and pride in learning.

### **Aligning Play with Curriculum Goals**

Play-based learning doesn't mean stepping away from curriculum—it means approaching it in a child-friendly way. In fact, frameworks like the **National Curriculum Framework for the Foundational Stage (NCF-FS)** under the **NEP 2020** promote integrated, play-based approaches that support literacy and numeracy development.

For example, if children are playing 'grocery store', they might be learning about counting, currency, weight, spelling food names, and even environmental awareness—without ever opening a textbook.

### **Addressing Myths and Misunderstandings**

One common misunderstanding is that

play lacks academic depth. In reality, when guided by purpose and reflection, play is full of learning. The challenge for educators is to observe and support learning without interrupting the child's flow.

Assessment, too, looks different in a play-based setting. Instead of tests, educators gather information through observation, discussion, photos, and the children's creations. These authentic records offer a fuller picture of a child's development.



### **Wrapping Up: The Joy of Learning Through Play**

Play is a natural way for children to understand their world. It builds joy, curiosity, confidence, and connection—all while supporting early literacy and maths. When we blend play with purposeful learning, we open up endless opportunities for discovery. Let's embrace this approach not just for our students, but for the future of learning itself.

"Play gives children a chance to practice what they are learning." — **Fred Rogers**

## RETHINKING ASSESSMENTS IN EARLY YEARS EDUCATION: SHIFTING FROM TRADITIONAL METRICS TO OBSERVATIONAL LEARNING



The field of education is constantly evolving and early years are the cornerstones of child development. During these formative years, the child grows at a tremendous pace cognitively, emotionally, and socially, and hence it is crucial that educators evaluate and support young learners effectively. But traditional methods of assessment centered on standardized tests and strict benchmarks, usually fail to grasp the real value of a child's capabilities and potential.

**Ms. Amrit Nagpal** is a leading expert in early childhood education with over 18 years of experience. Known for her innovative methods and strong leadership, she has trained over 1,500 educators and played a key role in advancing holistic child development.

Holding a Master's in Education from James Cook University, Singapore, Ms. Nagpal has served as a Teacher Trainer, Curriculum Designer, Storyteller, and Consultant. As Head of Preschools & ECCed. at Birla Open Minds, Mumbai, she helped establish 120+ preschools and K-12 institutions across India and developed a Diploma in Early Childhood Education for Vedanta Foundation in Rajasthan.

She has spoken at major education conferences globally, influencing policy and practice in early learning. A renowned storyteller, she has performed at Kala Ghoda, Pune Lit Fest, and is a resource person for the National Book Trust.

Ms. Nagpal is also a published author, with works including *"Early Childhood Development – Universal Perspectives by Global Experts"* and *"Paws, Whiskers, Feathers, and Wonders"*, an activity-based storybook. Her contributions to journals like *Ed Clan* further reflect her thought leadership.

Her impactful work continues to shape the future of education for children and educators alike.

This has triggered a significant shift in the education community, a move towards observational learning and innovative ways of tracking progress in young children. Understanding children in their natural environments provides educators with richer, more authentic insights into their developmental journey.

### **The Limitations of Traditional Assessments**

The old methods of evaluation are based on the measurable outcomes such as how well a child can recite the alphabet, recognize shapes, or complete a worksheet. Such approaches do provide some quantifiable data but these methods are rarely in sync with the way children learn and develop. Dr. Carla Rinaldi, renowned for her expertise in early childhood education elaborates: *“Traditional assessments often look at what children can do in the moment, not on the processes that have led up to learning. Young children’s learning is fluid, contextual, and deeply embedded in their experiences.”*

More evidence from the Early Childhood Research Quarterly shows that

standardized tests cause undue stress to children and limit the opportunities for creativity, curiosity and exploration. When results are the only goal, the discovery process, which is arguably the most valuable part of learning, may be neglected.

### **The Case for Observational Learning**

Observational learning presents an alternative that is closer to how children grow naturally. In observing children in play, group activities and daily routines, educators can meaningfully find out about their skills, interests and areas needing support.

Most-cited in the context is the Reggio Emilia approach. The latter pedagogy focuses on an educator as a researcher who would observe children performing, record children’s development processes and apply learning

Experiences appropriately to children’s needs. One of the well-known phrases, said by Reggio Emilia founder Loris Malaguzzi, states it best *“The wider the range of possibilities we offer children, the*





*more intense will be their motivations and the richer their experiences."*

### Key Benefits of Observational Learning

**1. Holistic Understanding:** Observational assessments provide educators with an opportunity to tap into various facets of a child's development including cognitive, emotional, social and physical. Instead of just knowing what a child is aware of, educators can now see how he or she is approaching challenges, interacting with others and creating something.

**2. Child-Centric Learning:** Observation methods respect the uniqueness of every child. Educators are not expected to turn all children into the same cut; instead, they can observe different talents and learning styles.

**3. Encouraging Natural Behaviours:** Children perform better when they are comfortable and engaged in activities they enjoy. Observation in a natural setting provides a more authentic picture of their abilities than test-based scenarios.




**4. Building Relationships:** Observation fosters deeper connections between educators and students. As teachers closely watch and document children's progress, they build a stronger understanding of each child's unique journey.

### Innovative Ways of Tracking Progress

Observation is a strong tool, but it does require systematic methods to ensure that it is conducted accurately and consistently. Some novel methods which educators have started adopting to track progress follow:

**1. Learning Portfolios:** Portfolios make excellent records showing how a child has progressed along the way. This may incorporate samples of drawings, photographs, anecdotal comments, and sometimes videos of all those key times. Portfolios provide an apparent record for a teacher but serve to allow parent eyes to share in their children's journeying.

**2. Digital Tools and Apps:** Technology is changing the way teachers record and evaluate learning. Apps such as Seesaw and Learning Genie enable teachers to record real-time observations, track developmental

ART WORK SAMPLE					
NAME OF CHILD:	Matilda Burns	NAME OF ART EXPERIENCE:	Thin Brush Painting	DATE:	Jul 12, 2013
					
Briefly Describe The Art Experience: For this experience, Matilda chose to paint with the thin paintbrushes. "I am going to paint a princess" she said. She selected the paints she was going to use and sat at the table. She placed a thin paintbrush in each of the colours and then began to paint. "My princess has rosy cheeks and long hair like me" Matilda commented. When Matilda finished painting her princess, she continued painting a rocket and a beach.					
Linking To the Early Years Learning Framework: I/O 1: Children have a strong sense of identity. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I/O 2: Children contribute & are connected to their world. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> I/O 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing. <input type="checkbox"/> I/O 4: Children are confident and involved learners. <input type="checkbox"/> I/O 5: Children are effective communicators. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>					
Parent Comments: Matilda loves to paint and draw. On the weekend she sets up her little paint station on the table at home and spends some time painting or drawing. We have bought a variety of items to enable Matilda to paint with and she really enjoys it! We have a little artist on our hands!					



milestones and share updates with parents in real time.

**3. Anecdotal Records:** Anecdotal records are a means of recording anecdotal notes. Educators can write short narratives describing specific moments of learning. These records help track patterns in behaviour, problem-solving abilities, and social interactions.

**4. Checklists and Rating Scales:** For example, structured observation tools, including checklists, focus the teacher's attention to particular skills or behaviours. These could include observing the frequency at which a child engages in a group activity or the effectiveness at which a child uses fine motor skills.

**5. Peer and Self-Assessment:** Encouraging children to reflect on their own work, or observe peers in a positive and structured way, fosters metacognitive skills. For example, a teacher might ask, "What do you think you did well in building this tower? What would you do differently next time?"

### **Research Supporting Observational Methods**

Several studies highlight the effectiveness of observational assessments in early education. In a study that appeared in the *Journal of Early Childhood Education* in 2021, it was found that through observational learning, children not only improve their academic outcomes but also their emotional and social development. The study concluded that children who were assessed using observational methods were more engaged and showed greater confidence in their abilities than those who

were subjected to standardized testing.

A report from the National Association for the Education of Young Children also suggests that assessments in early childhood should be through observation, play-based evaluation and collaboration with parents to have a holistic view of the child.

### **Overcoming the Challenges**

This change is promising, but is not without its challenges. Observations are bound to take time and there is of course, the risk of subjective bias. In this regard, professional development for educators becomes crucial. Training in observational techniques, using digital tools and collaborative assessment practices might help avoid inconsistencies and ensure reliability.

Assessment rethought in early years education does not mean change in tools alone, but perspectives too. In switching from metric assessment to an observation-based system, the child is put first in an all-inclusive way as the center for the educators, with all that this would celebrate the individuality of every child's growth. According to John Dewey, *"Give the children something to do, not something to learn; and the doing is of such a nature as to demand thinking."* The future of early years education is in understanding and embracing the complexity of children's development. It is through observational learning that educators can nurture not just knowledge but curiosity, creativity and confidence in every young learner.

# ROOTS AND WINGS

## The Cultural Tapestry of Early Childhood

### Surbhi Monga

is the Headmistress of  
Salwan Public School,  
Trans Delhi Signature City



***There are only two lasting bequests we can hope to give our children. One of these is roots; the other, wings."***

**– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**

### Abstract

*In the dynamic phase of early childhood, character, empathy, and foundational values are established, deeply influenced by the cultural and emotional environment. Our approach, grounded in the Panchkoshas—a holistic view of human development encompassing*

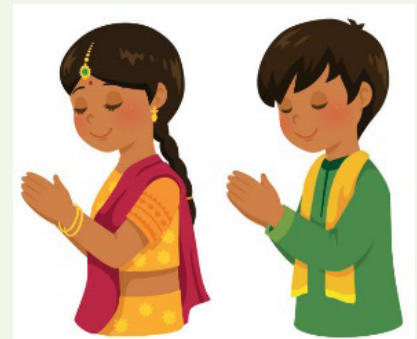
*physical, mental, and spiritual layers—aims to nurture both roots and wings in children. Through practices like pranam to foster humility, mythological storytelling for moral grounding, and grandparent interactions for bridging generational wisdom, a rich cultural tapestry can be created. Empathy development,*



*shloka recitation, and Bhagavad Gita teachings enhance emotional intelligence and spiritual growth. Innovative methods like student podcasts and quality time activities strengthen familial bonds. Morning routines and value-based education further anchor children, preparing them to navigate the world with confidence and compassion. This integrated approach ensures that while our children remain grounded in their heritage, they are also empowered to soar into their future.*

### **Pranam Culture in School**

Introducing children to the concept of pranam—an act of bowing that signifies humility and gratitude—is integral in fostering respect. Incorporating these practices daily makes children conscious of respecting their elders and peers. Modeling pranam during assemblies, using visual cues and stories to explain its significance, encourages children to share how it makes them feel.



### **Morning Routine**



A structured morning routine sets a positive tone for the day. Encouraging habits like gratitude exercises, light physical activity, or sharing a healthy breakfast help children start their day positively. Techniques include using visual schedules for consistency, introducing “morning mantras” for positivity, and engaging activities like nature walks, simple yoga stretches, and brain gym.

### **Mythological Connections**

Mythological stories are rich in lessons and moral values. Engaging narrations help children develop a sense of belonging to their cultural heritage. Methods include dramatic narrations with puppets and props, encouraging children to illustrate scenes, and reflective questions that help them apply the stories’ morals to their lives.

### **Shloka Recitation**

The rhythmic recitation of shlokas introduces children to the beauty of ancient texts. This practice enhances concentration, memory, and speech, fostering a sense of peace and discipline. Techniques include audio guides for





proper pronunciation, visual imagery to aid retention, and integration of shlokas into daily mindfulness routines.

### **Gita Learning for Students**



The Bhagavad Gita offers timeless wisdom and life lessons. Simple methods can introduce these lessons to children. Techniques include storytelling with easy-to-understand narratives, visual aids like colourful illustrations and charts, role-playing to depict lessons on teamwork and determination, daily affirmations with meaningful verses, and interactive discussions for children to express and apply their learnings.

### **Quality Time with Kids**

Amid the chaos of urban life, time spent with children is priceless. Whether sharing a common hobby, cooking together, or simply listening to each other, these moments strengthen parent-child bonds. Techniques include daily device-free time slots, co-creative activities like painting or gardening, and reflective journaling to note and contemplate shared experiences.



### **Grandparents Connect**



Grandparents are a bridge to the past, bringing traditions, stories, and unwavering love. Frequent interactions between children and grandparents, either in person or virtually, provide valuable learning experiences. Conducting “story-sharing sessions” where grandparents share their wisdom contributes uniquely to the children’s growth.

### **Integrating Modern Technology**

The modern world can be embraced with modern technology like Alexa, which can play a supportive role as a developing agent. Smart assistants can essentially be utilized to help



children with something such as interactive learning, or reminding them of routine tasks, and more. Techniques include educational quizzes set by Alexa, reminders for day-to-day activities like reading time or exercise time, and interactive storytelling sessions, making it engaging and fun to learn.

### Student Podcasts on Mythological Stories



Encouraging students to develop podcasts on mythological stories brings these tales to life in a modern, interactive format. Stories from the Ramayana, Panchatantra, Bhagavad Gita, Tenali Ramanand, Akbar, and Birbal can be narrated by students in their own voices. Workshops on storytelling and voice modulation, using simple recording tools, and guiding students in researching and scripting their narratives can enhance this experience.

### Exploring Nature and the World Beyond

Outdoor activities and field trips give children a hands-on experience that brings curiosity and a sense of adventure. Taking children on nature walks, to museums, and participating in community projects broadens their horizons and creates a love for learning. Techniques include planning regular excursions, encouraging children to maintain nature journals, and organizing group activities that connect them with the natural world and their communities.

### Developing Empathy

Empathy is a cornerstone of emotional intelligence. Activities that encourage children to understand and share others' feelings—through role-playing, cooperative games, or simple acts of kindness—lay the foundation for them to grow into compassionate individuals. Techniques include empathy exercises like “walk in their shoes,” creating kindness charts to celebrate

acts of empathy, and group discussions about feelings using story characters as examples.

### Values for Early Childhood

Teaching values such as honesty, responsibility, and kindness during early childhood shapes a child's moral compass. Through stories, discussions, and daily examples, these values can be instilled, guiding children through life's challenges.

### Conclusion

***By nurturing the roots of cultural heritage and instilling core values, children are empowered with the confidence and compassion to explore their world. Embracing traditions, leveraging technology wisely, and dedicating quality time create a vibrant cultural tapestry that enriches early childhood, laying the groundwork for a fulfilling life ahead.***



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# EVENTS - January to June 2025

**ECDF New Year Special**

## WEBINAR

**9th JAN 2025**  
Thursday  
5:00 - 6:00 PM (IST)

### New Year New GOALS SEASON 5

Join us **Facebook LIVE** ECDF Global Voices

**Moderator**  
Dr. Vasavi Acharya  
Chairperson-ECDF IDAFI CEDRC & M.D. UPK, Tender Petals Preschools, Guwahati

**Moderator**  
Simran Ballani  
Chief Operating Officer, CCE Finland  
Doctoral Student at European International University - Paris (Official)

**SPEAKERS**

- Clare Stead, UK**  
Co-ordinator and Founder of the OLE app in an e-learning specialist. Education researcher and primary teacher who has worked on three continents.
- Helen Battelley, UK**  
Internationally respected Early Years Physical Development consultant, trainer, author and design energy and a motivational approach to raising the profile of PE in the early years.
- Gina Bale, UK**  
Creator and Owner "Littermagician" She has spent the last 27 years teaching movement and dance in mainstream, early years and SEND settings as well as dance schools.
- Sukaina Hussain Ebrahim, Pakistan**  
Educational Consultant & Director Programs at Learning Lab and Consultant at IRIS Skill Development Program.
- Archana Madhusudhan, India**  
Language Skills Specialist an educator in the industry for more than 2 decades. Neuroscience practitioner POSH PCCSO certified practitioner.

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## WEBINAR

Presents

### "Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Early Childhood Education: Integrating SDGs into Early Childhood Education"

**24 MAY 2025** (Saturday) 5 - 6 pm (IST)

Join us **Facebook LIVE** ECDF Global Voices

**Moderator**  
Dr. Vasavi Acharya  
Chairperson of ECDF, Director of Tender Petals Preschools, TEDS Speaker, Pedagogue & Author

**Panelists**

- Smriti Agarwal**  
Education Pedagogy Expert, ECDF West Zone head, Teacher trainer & Academic mentor. Published Author, Children's Storybooks.
- Amrit Nagpal**  
Education Consultant and Storyteller, ECDF Zone Head.
- Ashoo Kaira**  
Academic consultant & teacher facilitator Member ECDF Brand ambassador India, SEEED Asia, Japan.
- Archana Madhusudhan**  
Academic Director of SJS, Bangalore.
- Gagandeep Kaur**  
Vice Principal (Senior School) at Lotus Valley International School, Noida Extension.

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## WEBINAR

### Creating a Culture of Collaboration : Strategies for Educational Teams

**19th April 2025**  
5-6 pm IST

Join us **Facebook LIVE** ECDF Global Voices

**Founder-Chair**  
Dr. Vasavi Acharya

**Moderator**  
Smriti Agarwal

**Panelist**  
Shareen Ratnani

**Panelist**  
Jayeshta Dedhia

**Panelist**  
Umita Melwani

**Panelist**  
Archana Madhusudhan

**Panelist**  
Shilpi Agrawal

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## Dynamic Webinar

### THE BOARD EXAM STRAIN: Parents, Pressure, and Students' Mental Health

Join us **Facebook LIVE** ECDF Global Voices

**Moderator & Speaker**  
Dr. Vasavi Acharya  
Chairperson of ECDF, Director of Tender Petals Preschools, TEDS Speaker, Pedagogue & Author

**Speaker**  
Dr. Mayuri Dutt  
Director - Dori School, Noida, West Bengal

**Speaker**  
Seema Goswami  
Respected Career Counsellor & Educator with Extensive Experience in Teaching Students.

**Speaker**  
Jahnabi Sharma  
Coaching psychologist and a Psycholinguist, TEDS Consultant, Art Therapist, Trauma Informed Consultant based in Guwahati, Assam.

**Speaker**  
Shubham Bhakat  
Experienced Subject Professor, Education Leader.

**Save The Date**  
**17 MARCH 2025** (MONDAY) 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm (IST)

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# EVENTS - January to June 2025



**FREE MASTERCLASS !!!**  
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PRESENTS

Bulletin Board Magic:  
Crafting Creativity and  
Communication Board It Right!

*Jayeshtha Dedhia*

Passionate educator with 22+ years of experience and the founder of Tweeties Institute of Education, a leading teacher training center in Mumbai. She has trained over 5,000 teachers worldwide, impacting many students.

 **8th FEB, 2025 (SAT)**  **5:00 - 6:00 PM (IST)**

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**STORY KA PITARA**  
(A unique live storytelling session for educators, parents and children)

*Story Time*




**12th MAY 2025 (Monday)**  
**5:30 - 6:00 PM (IST)**

Resource Person  
**Priyanka Chatterjee (Golpodidi)**

Priyanka Chatterjee a.k.a. 'Golpodidi' (Story Lady in Bengali) is an Rex KarmaveerChakra Awardee Storyteller, Factor/Daily Fellow, Design Thinker, Applied Theatre Faculty, and Cultural ambassador.

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PRESENTS

*Jayeshtha Dedhia*

Passionate educator with 22+ years of experience and the founder of Tweeties Institute of Education, a leading teacher training center in Mumbai. She has trained over 5,000 teachers worldwide, impacting many students.

**1 Hour MASTERCLASS!!**  
TOPIC: UNRAVELLING THE CHALLENGES OF SPELLING FOR CHILDREN

DATE: **22nd Feb 2025 (SAT)** | TIME: **5:00 pm- 6:00 pm** | DURATION: **60 min**

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**ECDF EARTH LITERACY AWARDS**  
5th Edition

**17th June 2025**  
**BALI, INDONESIA**





# ECDF International Edu Tour 3.0- Bali, Indonesia



## Highlights

Curated by Dr. Vasavvi Acharjya, Chairperson of ECDF the tour featured:

- School visits: Montessori School, Green School, and Kipina Kids Bali
- Mini-conference at Kipina Kids, Bali
- Awards Ceremony: ECDF Earth Literacy Awards 2025 honoring dedicated educators and principals

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