The background of the cover is a close-up photograph of two young girls. The girl on the left is slightly behind the one on the right, both smiling warmly at the camera. They are wearing colorful, patterned clothing. The overall tone is bright and positive.

Issue No. II November, 2005

Nurture

Pakistan's Pioneer Publication on Early Childhood Development

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and much more... Page 3**

**Find out how Television
Treats your Children... Page 15**

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PLUS Resources for Parents & Teachers

about

The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, is a diverse consortium of agencies, donors, NGOs and foundations that links with regional-based Early Childhood Care and Development networks comprising individuals and organizations involved in programming, research, policy-advocacy, monitoring and evaluation for young children (0-8) at risk in the Majority World. The term Majority World refers to those countries that are often referred to as South countries, developing or third world countries and serves to remind us that the majority of the world's children are at risk of delayed or debilitated development.

Please note that we are not a grant-making body and regret that we are unable to provide grants, scholarships, bursaries etc. to organizations.

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Early childhood

counts: *rights from the start*



The Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development

Major Activities

- Synthesize, critically review and then share - in different forms - the lessons, findings, and impact from practice and research across regions.
- Continue to strengthen regional networking, capacity-building, outreach and activities.
- Strengthen and/or establish more effective links with others working in health, social welfare, community development, adult literacy and basic education.

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Nurture Magazine

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Editorial

Parenting seems to be an increasingly challenging job in this changing world. We are raising a generation in an age where there is a variety of activities and distractions; and if they weren't enough there are other personal inhibitions that clash with robust growth and development. Child development itself is a rich term that has a number of facets and perspectives. I wouldn't say that parents are completely blind to these perspectives or ignorant of the 'outlooks' they should be conscious of to be a well-rounded parent. I am rather suggesting that they take a genuine interest in all the meaningful ways they can help their children to be well-rounded people.

The theme of this issue of Nurture tries its best to encapsulate what we feel are the most essential areas parents should be paying attention to. Healthy physical development, creative cognitive development and positive emotional development are essential responsibilities that we naturally and unconditionally owe to our children as their guardians and caregivers.

Most parents don't realize how they can contribute to their children's childhood. Their children are falling into subtly obsessive routines that rob them of the time and energy to pursue more meaningful activities. The more obvious ones are television watching, overeating, internet surfing and video games, but numerous other possibilities exist—gossiping, fantasizing, feeling sorry for oneself, shopping and so on. Although these are minor and softer forms of addiction most parents aren't alarmed by these behaviors, assuming that they are 'normal'.

Children require guidance, affection, the space and the environment to contemplate what's important in their lives and to master knowledge and skills that will allow them to achieve their goals. Soft addictions are enemies of reflection, exploration and skill development. Parents can have perspective and need to take responsibility for helping their children manage the years of their lives that can affect them the most. For instance, many parents need to do better than to come home from work and spend the majority of post-dinner hours slumped in front of the television, overeat or even work out compulsively.

Parents who feel they are guilty of letting their children 'just be' without providing any significant interest and help need to redirect their time and energy to more conscious, fulfilling endeavors. This doesn't mean they have to stick to their children nagging them every second of the day and follow them to school keeping a close eye on all that they do. Parents have to aid their children rediscover the fine art of conversation, bond with family, visit friends, go for walks in the woods, express their feelings to people they care about, read inspirational books, learn about the lives of inspirational people and so much more.

Mashhood Rizvi
Editor

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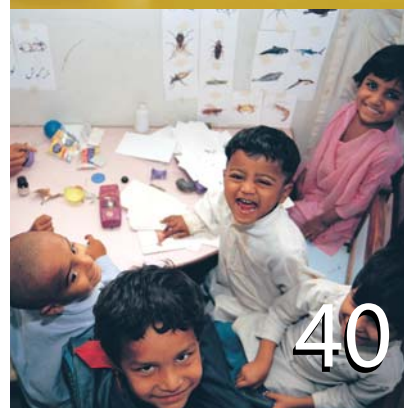
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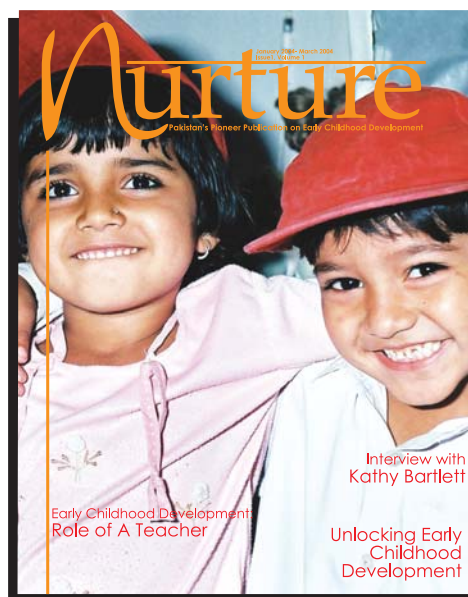
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Letters to the Editor



Nurture is Pakistan's pioneer magazine on Early Childhood Development. The magazine is published bi-annually and captures different themes on Early Childhood Development.

If you have a short message, critique, suggestions or any comments contact us directly by sending us an e-mail at: nurture@ecdpak.com



"I am very pleased to see a magazine that speaks so well on the concept of Early Childhood Development. There is a dire need to disseminate knowledge and information about children of this age group, not only in our school, but also in our homes where they are growing. I am confident that this magazine will serve the purpose of creating awareness via latest research findings and learning from each other's experiences."

*Rafiq Allana
Teacher / Parent Educator
Karachi*



"When I received the first issue of Nuture I was overwhelmed by its content. Nuture gave me the opportunity to learn so much about different Pakistani organizations working towards the better prospects of early childhood educational programs."

*Nageen Shoaib
Principal, South Indus Academy
Karachi*

"Nuture is an excellent magazine and an innovative step towards building a better society."

*Mr. & Mrs. Ahsan
Fountain Head Montessori School & Teacher Training Academy Karachi*

"I feel that this magazine has so much potential. I think it will be a useful tool for educators and parents in the future who care about the development of their children in the early years."

*Bina Shah
Writer
Karachi*

"We extremely appreciate this initiative of informing local communities about child development which covers areas such as health, education, care etc. Not only is Nuture a treasure chest of information it is also a very easy and interesting read simplifying the concept of Early Childhood Development for the readers."

*Wafa Brehmani
President, Tahreek KBT*





Perspectives on Parenting

BY YOUSHEY ZAKI UDDIN

Over the first 8 years of life children mature physically and emotionally, acquire complex cognitive abilities and demonstrate remarkable social skills. This is the time when young children experience rapid development. Any kind of negligence or ignorance on the part of parents and caregivers during these crucial years can severely hinder the child's development.

There are primarily three aspects to a child's development: **physical**, **cognitive** and **social**. Parents and caregivers have a critical role to play in order to ensure the healthy overall development of their child. Each aspect of development is equally important; one cannot afford to pay more attention to enhancing their child's mathematical skills for instance while ignoring the child's health and nutritional needs.

Parenthood is thus a very demanding responsibility. Parents have very specific roles to play in different circumstances. In a number of instances they may not fulfill these roles effectively; not out of negligence but out of inexperience or lack of proper knowledge.

The purpose of this article is to draw the attention of parents and caregivers towards the needs of young children and the responsibilities of the parents.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Throughout the early years, children's physical skills are developing at an astonishing rate. Children begin life with little control of movement and proceed to run, jump, write with a pencil and control their own small and large muscles with growing confidence. This is what is called physical development.



Although humans change physically throughout life, the changes which occur during the first few years are dramatic and eagerly awaited. From the time of a baby's birth, parents eagerly wait for the day when the child will start to roll over, crawl and then walk. Unlike speech and language development, these milestones are at first glance easily determined i.e. either a child walks or s/he doesn't. Within the field of physical development there are separate areas of development which are:

GROSS MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

This is the area of physical development that concerns the general ability of children to move around and use the various parts of their body. Activities like rolling over; crawling, walking, running and jumping are gross motor skills. These skills usually involve using the entire body or several parts of the body at one time.

FINE MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

This term refers to skills that require smaller movements and more intricate capabilities. Overall, when we say that children have appropriate fine motor skills, it means that they can use their hands appropriately for children of their age. Fine motor skills in children can be indicated by their adept usage of scissors, using other small tools such as screwdrivers and playing with play dough depending on the child's age and abilities.

There are a number of factors that affect the gross motor and fine motor development of any person. Some of them are:

Nutrition

All parents are aware that the first and foremost need is to provide adequate and healthful nutrition to children. Nutrition plays the most influential role in the physical and cognitive development of any human. For the parents of a young infant the nutritional needs are all the more necessary. After all, a child that eats well is more likely to see a healthier tomorrow.

Just as children need a variety of activities to develop different muscles and different emotional and communication skills, they also need a varied diet to satisfy bodily needs. Babies, being at the most sensitive point in their lives, need breast milk to fully develop. It is absolutely necessary that the dependence on cow's milk and other substitutes be minimal during the first one year. Soon the child can be fed soft food such as mashed fruits and vegetables. Stay alert for any allergies or reactions to certain foods especially if there is a family history of allergies. By the time the child is more than a year old, more solid foods can be introduced.

Although nutrition is a vast subject with endless information that is deemed highly important for any and every parent some essential hints include ensuring that your child drinks clean water frequently during the day keeping the intake of soft drinks at a minimum. Ensure there is regular intake of vegetables, fruits, meat, poultry, fish, beans, eggs and other nutritional foods that are easily available. Start encouraging your children early to eat a growing range of healthy foods and to drink adequate liquids, especially clean water.

Health & Hygiene

The health and physical well-being of your child is one of the most important concerns as a parent. Good hygiene is one of the most effective ways we can protect our children from a lot of illnesses. All babies and small children must follow a daily health and hygiene routine.



A hygienic life style includes bathing regularly and frequently washing your hands. Be sure to wash hands before and after preparing food or baby bottles, after handling diapers, using the bathroom, touching pets and sneezing or coughing.

Good health and hygiene practice also includes taking care when you are handling and storing food. Also remember to always wash fresh fruits and vegetables with cold water. Cook foods thoroughly at recommended temperatures and promptly store in refrigerator or freezer. Many infectious diseases can be prevented by taking care when handling food and regularly washing your hands, especially if someone in the family is unwell.

It is also important to protect against infections by fighting the germs that spread diseases. Germs - viruses, bacteria, parasites and fungi - are everywhere around the house. They are on your hands, in the air, in food and, especially, in bathrooms and kitchens. Keeping your child's surroundings clean will keep the entire family healthy. Frequently (and not over obsessively) clean and sanitize surfaces with a cleaning solutions (these are easily available in the market). Do make sure you store their bottles and packages at a place that is out of your children's reach.

Some helpful health-related tips:

- 1) Learn about your child's illnesses, especially chronic conditions like asthma etc.
- 2) Find a pediatrician or family physician you trust.
- 3) When your child's doctor writes a prescription, make sure you can read it.
- 4) Talk to your doctor about any and all side-effects the prescribed medicines may have on your child.
- 5) When you pick up your child's medicine from the pharmacy, confirm with your doctor if it's the correct medicine and dosage.
- 6) Ask to get information about your child's medicines which you can understand when the medicines are prescribed and when you get them.
- 7) Seek a second opinion on your child's diagnosis and treatment if you think your child isn't getting the right care.
- 8) If your child is having surgery, make sure you, the child's doctor and the surgeon agree on exactly what will be done.
- 9) Make sure all health professionals involved in your child's care have important information, such as whether the child has drug allergies or a chronic condition. Don't assume they know.

SOURCE: kidshealth.org, familydoctor.org

Play

The importance of play is something that has a significant role as far as a child's conduct is concerned. The old saying which goes 'all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy' definitely has some truth to it, because

play is not only an active pastime; it's also the greatest health promoter (although not all children become dull as a result of no play). Different children react differently and it is very possible that some children resort to misconduct due to lack of recreation and fun activities. This is especially true of children with no siblings. Parents should realize the importance of both outdoor and indoor play in the process of self-discovery and in building of a spiritual connection with nature.

Play is one of the most important ways children learn how to relate to other people. As they play, young children will find cooperation less frustrating and more satisfying than competition. Play enhances a sense of cooperation which is far more valuable traits than having a spirit of cut-throat competition. In addition, when children compete, only one person or team wins; everyone else loses.



It is important to remember not to pressure or demand children to excel at every physical task. The goal is to encourage youngsters to want to become more skilful. Don't worry if your toddler doesn't play with the toys you buy her/his like it is shown on the box or the way that your neighbor's child plays. All children have their own way of playing, exploring and learning.

Remember to provide toys for your children that encourage interaction. You and your toddler could entertain yourselves by having pretend conversations on toy telephones etc. At a later stage, you will find that dolls, stuffed toys, toy utensils, etc. also encourage role play in your toddler.

Safety

As parents and caregivers one of our main objectives is to provide children health and safety without being overprotective. It is especially during play that we have to keep a lookout for dangers at home and elsewhere. A good parent is observant of the environment the child spends time in, ensuring that there are no dangerous items the child is exposed to such as nails, glass or other sharp and harmful objects.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

When we talk about cognitive development we usually mean the ability to read, write and do math and other logical and scientific reasoning. It is a well accepted fact amongst researchers of, child development that a child's biological set up and environment shapes his or her brain. The biological set up (genes) plays the role of forming all the cells and brain regions while the environment (along with daily experiences) fine tunes and triggers the brain to learn and to adapt to different situations.

Environment & Experiences

At birth, the parts of the brain that handle thinking and emotional and social behavior are considerably underdeveloped. It is the outside world and environment with its plethora of experiences that shape these facilities of the brain. Everything that is sensed through sight, hearing, touch and smell develop the way people think, learn and behave.

Adults can help children develop thinking and reasoning skills by seeking answers to questions and problems together. Children become more creative as you encourage them to come up with their own ideas and solutions and then filter out the right answer. Explore the world with your children. They can be



taught to recognize shapes and colors when you are out on the road and similarly introduce them to numbers by counting out loud when you are shopping for groceries and then proceed to basic mathematical operations. One can enhance children's mathematical skills by introducing them to simple, enjoyable activities involving counting and sorting, simple measurements and calculations.

Nutrition

Many things can affect the growing brain. One of the most essential ones is nutrition. Children who are malnourished have more likeliness of undergoing inadequate brain growth, slower language and weaker memory. Research has reinforced the fact that breast-fed babies result in better learning advantages over babies fed formula milk and other substitutes to the mother's milk.

Some types of food that can enormously affect the adequate growth of your child's brain are: seafood (highly important for pregnant mothers), red meats, eggs, leafy vegetables, soybeans and walnuts. All of these have been found to greatly enhance improvement in learning, mental alertness and clarity of thinking. They are also known to elevate the child's mood, improve memory and learning.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The social development of children incorporates all elements that influence their everyday behavior and their interaction with others. Each and every aspect of a child's role as a social being is adapted from observing their parents, their immediate and extended family interactions and relationships.

Language & Communication Skills

As caregivers, we play an important role in helping children learn to communicate with others, and eventually, to read and write. Recent evidence indicates that the role of language is not solely to communicate one's wants and needs but in fact having a good command of language goes hand-in-hand with the ability to be creative and to imagine new ideas and concepts.

The fundamental approach parents ought to have during conversations with their children is to listen with sincere interest, to respond in a way that will enhance and continue conversation, and to allow the child time to formulate their ideas and answers. Waiting for replies is one of the most important things we can do to encourage language growth. Slow down and take the time to listen to what children have to say. Encourage conversation between children by urging them to ask questions of each other and engaging in interesting conversations among themselves. Parents that talk more to their children boost their vocabulary comprehensively. The habit to regularly read to your child also helps expand the child's vocabulary.

Character Development

It is more often than less the principle of practicing what you preach that brings about strong morals and values in children, especially for those in their early years. Every time you are unconditionally generous towards someone in need of help; every time you go out of your way and sacrifice for a charitable cause and every time you show tolerance, concern and sincerity in the way you communicate with other people you are not only providing a role model for your children to view but also making a deep impression on their own way of dealing with the world around them.

For the development of moral principles of the child, parents must organize their own priorities as role models. Placing more value on selfish material benefit than on ensuring equality and fairness creates a Darwinian sentiment in children that makes them a competitive and self-centered survivor with no concern for those around them. Similarly defining behavior that is cooperative and rises above any needy obligation with material wellbeing has equally strong effects on the child's outlook on life.

The family, being one of the pillars of any social structure, plays a seminal role in strengthening the child's social skills. In joint family systems, where parents and their children's families often live under a single roof, the definition and responsibilities of a parent or a caregiver are extended to grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, and even friends and neighbors. The joint family system is one which is strongly embedded in our culture and our way of living. It minimizes the inclination to be selfish and think of oneself as a 'individual' in the social web of life. It is one that is underpinned on cooperation, sharing, tolerance, compromises and mutual understanding of the people you spend your life with. The very bases of this system instill in the child the same sentiments of keeping high the responsibility he has to have towards the people around him.

Positive Disciplining

Parents have a very tricky role to play when it comes to disciplining their children. To boost their children's confidence parents must allow them to take a few decisions on their own and simultaneously they must also be taught to confront the consequences of those decisions.

A child can get discouraged very easily. It is important that caregivers create a positive environment where the 'don't & do's' for children are minimized. Young children like to experiment with everything, thus parents should create a safe environment where the child is free to experiment.

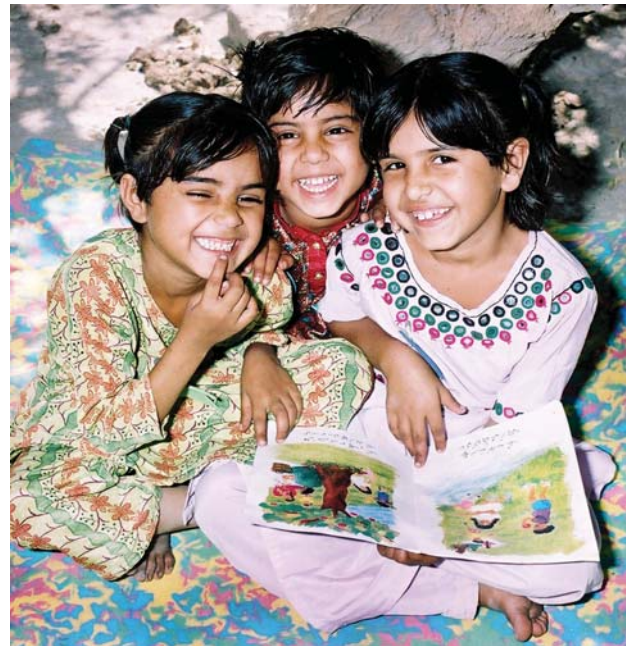
Providing children with a variety of interesting activities will keep them happily occupied and out of trouble, thus minimizing the needs for disciplinary action.

Relationships

Parents and caregivers influence their young child's growth and development much more than may seem apparent. To realize children's true potential in the various aspects that forms them, it is an absolute obligation that parents provide nurturing and dependable relationships based on security, pleasant interaction, encouragement and affection. Not only do these relationships imbue in children the confidence and the ability to manage stress, insecurities and fear but also inspires social skills, emotional growth and emotional regulation.

Like adults, children need to be held, cuddled and encouraged to express their affection for others. Maintaining physical closeness is important, as children feel a particular connection with their parents through physical touch.

Your attitude toward emotions, especially negative ones like sadness or anger, can shape how your kids learn to handle their own feelings. We all have different approaches to emotional experiences, but some are more helpful in nurturing emotional development than others. It always helps to stay informed of your child's emotional needs, and how to deal with them.



For many parents childcare has to be balanced between a lot of other activities and commitments. There is no doubt that for all children the first few years are vitally important to form a basis for good education, good health, emotional strength, morality, self discipline and social integration. There is also no doubt that all parents hold their children dearest amongst all relationships. But it doesn't hurt to be reminded that parents have to prioritize and make an extra effort to be tolerant, sincerely affectionate and genuinely concerned in the way they bring up their children.

Types of Parenting

Psychologist John Gottman has identified some parenting styles in his research on families and the emotional climate of the home. While we all react differently at different times, you might see yourself more in one style than another.

The Dismissing Parent

Parenting styles are deeply influenced by the attitudes parents have about their own emotions. Emotion-dismissing parents often view their own emotions as voluntary, as something they choose to feel. These parents then view their child's emotions in the same light. When a child experiences a negative emotion, the solution seems simple: the child should simply decide to have a more positive emotion. In addition, emotion-dismissing adults tend to think of negative emotions as toxic, as if these feelings should be avoided. If a child experiences a negative emotion, they will do anything to move the child out of the negative emotional state, including distraction, tickling, eating, and so on.

Such parents are not insensitive to their children's emotions. They see them happening and want to be helpful and protective, but they are not sure what to do. Because they are uncomfortable with their own emotions, they remain uncomfortable with their child's feelings. For them, dismissing the emotion, minimizing it by saying "it's not that bad" or distracting the child with something new, may seem like the best option. The efforts of dismissing the child's emotional experiences may also result in dismissing the child. In addition, since children often model adult behavior and attitudes if the adult regards emotions as something to be moved out of the way, the child will likely follow suit.

The Disapproving Parent

Children have powerful emotional lives from a very early age and emotions are not simply a mode of thinking that can be switched on or off at will. This is because brains are 'wired' to experience emotions. Some of our emotional thinking even goes on unconsciously, influencing how we feel about people or leading us to make certain choices. All parents and caregivers have different attitudes about their emotions - especially their negative emotions like anger, fear, sadness, disgust, or contempt. Some adults may believe that expressing emotions is a sign of weakness or reveal bad character and are unproductive. These attitudes about emotions in general will influence how they treat their child's emotions. Disapproving parents tend to disregard or suppress their own emotions, and because of this they treat their children's feelings negatively.

The Permissive Parent

Those parents who have a carefree and an 'anything goes' attitude about emotion accept emotions as natural and normal. Rather than ignoring their child's feelings, or dismissing them, these parents view emotions as a normal part of life. They see emotion as a process that needs to run its natural course without much outside interference. These parents value being involved in their children's lives. They accept, love, and respect their children, and they encourage and honor their children's emotional expressions. They know children flourish in an atmosphere of unconditional love. But they also fear that setting limits on a child's behavior might send the wrong message. However this style falls short of nurturing healthy emotional development because sometimes letting things run their course does not always produce the best results. Research suggests it's not enough to accept and value your child's emotions. In addition to being allowed to freely experience their emotions, children need to be encouraged to understand them as well. And this is precisely where this parenting style falls short. Children tend to lack the ability to calm down when they're angry, sad, or upset and find it more difficult to concentrate or learn new skills, social and educational.



TIP:

Emotions - including negative emotions - are healthy and natural, not problems to be fixed or avoided. As an adult the parenting style that best nurtures a child's emotional development, begins with one word...empathy, i.e. understanding your child's emotions. Help your child label her/his feelings, both negative and positive, and solve problems and guide the child and set limits on behavior.

Accepting, valuing, sharing and exploring emotions is not always easy. It is not automatic, like breathing or growing fingernails. We're not necessarily born with the ability to do it. Instead, it might require effort and practice—but like any new skill, it can be learned.

Here are some steps to better deal with your child's emotions:

- 1) Recognize emotional times as opportunities for intimacy and guiding.
- 2) Listen caringly and validate your child's feelings.
- 3) Avoid excessive criticism, humiliating comments, or mocking your child.
- 4) Set limits while helping children 'problem-solve' what's bothering them.
- 5) Empower your child by giving choices and respecting her/his wishes.
- 6) Point out your child's small successes to boost her/his confidence.
- 7) Be aware of your child's needs, both physical and emotional.

Always remember to provide ample opportunities for your child to develop various skills and talents. By doing this you not only recognize the child as a competent person but also as somebody who knows how to achieve what s/he desires and yearns for. It also helps to remember that children need a sense of belonging to feel safe and secure. As parents one of the best gifts we can give to our children is the emotional and inner strength which are needed to cope with different situations of life.

SOURCE: Gottman, John "Four Basic Parenting Styles." 2005. <www.talaris.org> (14 September, 2005)





Emotional Growth in Children

BY NAVEED BUSHRA OSMAN

Infants cannot say how they feel; one can only imply a baby's emotions from his or her reactions and expressions. A new set of emotions and tendencies mark each new stage in a child's physical growth. Parents often complain, for instance, that as children grow, they become 'more difficult'. At 6 weeks, there is an increase in the level of crying, at 9 months children start to cling and moan. At 18 months, they start to throw tantrums and at 6 years, they bicker with their siblings all of which shows how emotions and their expressions evolve.

There are no simple formulae to ensure that you get parenting 'right', but it can help parents to know the main emotional milestones and issues of concern during their child's early years.

This article attempts to highlight some of the basic periods of emotional growth that a child goes through in the first few years, and also addresses some core issues that parents face with their children due to these changes. These are the changes you can expect to see in your children as they progress.

CHILD'S AGE	EMOTIONAL EVOLUTION
0 to 9 Months	It is right from the start that babies begin to eagerly explore the world around them. They spend a lot of time getting to know their own bodies, for e.g. they observe their own hands and also suck their own fingers. Children also enjoy being cuddled and form a strong emotional attachment with their mothers. All of this indicates strong emotional development right from the start.
9 to 18 Months	The child has formed a central emotional attachment to the caregivers and is dependent on them. The curiosity and urge to explore increases immensely during this age and the children try to figure out what they can do by themselves. Parents can help their children a great deal in this stage by anticipating their needs, such as the need for more attention, more activities, more room to explore etc.
18 Months to 2 Years	Children begin to develop a high sense of self-importance, and want to make their own choices and challenge the caregiver's wishes. Children usually have to be taught the concept of sharing as they are emotionally not ready to share at this stage. The best way to introduce the idea of sharing is that it carries a great moral value (something they may not be able to readily comprehend but still have to be made aware of). It is also at this point in time that children begin to imitate their adults, so it is best to practice the behavior that you want your child to display.
2 to 3 Years	Children during this stage begin to enjoy being with people and play simple pretend games with other children and themselves. They use language to express wishes and feelings, and show the beginning of a sense of humor. They explore everything, show a stronger sense of self and expand their range of self-help skills. They also begin self-evaluation and develop notions of themselves as good, bad, attractive, etc. and show awareness of their own feelings and those of others, and talk about feelings.
3 to 5 Years	The child is now more aware of how s/he should act around other children. However preschoolers are very self-centered. To themselves, the world revolves only around them, even though they are starting to talk and see the outside world through their friends and playmates. Children at this age also start to have very active imaginations, which lead to new fears such as fear of the dark or closed spaces etc. It's best for parents to talk about these fears and accompany their children whenever required rather than scold them for having such insecurities. Children begin to understand how emotions work. They know that facial expressions 'match' certain emotions, and that their emotions can be used to manipulate others. This understanding of their own feelings and the experience of other people's emotions and actions gives children the capacity to feel social emotions such as guilt, concern, responsibility, jealousy, hostility, in addition to feeling miserable, resentful and horrified.
5 to 7 Years	At this age, children are more aware of themselves as individuals. They show fair understanding of moral reasoning (exploring ideas about fairness and good or bad behavior). They can also empathize with others' feelings. Children usually begin to attend school during these years which is why it is important that parents realize there may be some separation anxiety and some nervousness in joining a totally new environment with strangers. Parents, realizing this, should look for ways to comfort the child when s/he is at home and make an effort to stay involved in all school work and activities. This is one of the best times that parents can begin to read to their children and assist them in understanding the value of morals, compassion and being helpful.

The following are some of the emotional upheavals that all toddlers face, and which all parents must be equipped to handle:

TANTRUMS

Tantrums almost always occur when your child is with you or another major caregiver, rarely when you are not there. A way to seek more attention, tantrums mostly occur at home, usually when you are trying to do something from which your child is excluded. Children also have them when they are ill, tired or frustrated. Tantrums have definite phases. Before the crying or screaming starts, children seem to be 'spoiling for a fight' and are easily frustrated. Once the tantrum is under way, the early part is invariably intense. Your child will shout, scream and kick. This phase may be followed, particularly in the case of older children, by a quieter phase when s/he is sad or sobbing. All tantrums are, nevertheless, about relationships; love, attachment, security, and anger.

There are no easy ways to deal with your child's tantrums, but it's been found that hugging, cuddling or distracting your child with a new game or activity can help to curb a tantrum's duration. Once the tantrum is underway, it can also be curbed by walking out of the room and leaving him/her to it. Tantrums do not occur in a vacuum, they occur within a relationship. So if you are not there to witness it, your child will stop. Also, talking to her/him about the cause of the tantrum seems to reduce their frequency, especially in older children. Giving in to the child's wishes or hitting him/her are the least efficient of all these measures and should be avoided since they increase the frequency and duration of tantrums.

COMPETITIVENESS AND PRAISE

As babies become toddlers and preschoolers, they become more and more cooperative and helpful. This is partly because they copy you and others who are helpful towards them, and also because they enjoy being helpful. Problems arise because our society values competition, so children are praised for winning. By the time they are in junior school, competitiveness has taken over some of children's natural helpful tendencies. Seven year-olds are less cooperative than they were before they started school and find it quite hard to work together. This competition can lead to fights and emotional upsets.

To tone down the competition and reduce the frequency of fights, parents should encourage cooperation by setting an example. Children will only learn to be cooperative if they see their parents cooperate and work together. Parents hence need to create a 'WE' environment, and encourage the child to help them and each other not as a favor but as a matter of course.

BICKERING AND EMOTIONAL UPSETS

Children, especially siblings, quarrel because they know each other so well. Children who have lived all their lives with another knows exactly how to get you on their side in any argument, and how to put their siblings in a bad light. To handle bickering, encourage children to talk and listen by showing them how to express anger to each other. More importantly, try to avoid labeling your child as the aggressor.

SIBLING RIVALRY

A child's jealousy of a new baby is inevitable. To deal with it, do not dismiss negative feelings about a sibling. Let the child know that you love her/him differently from the baby. Find times to put your child first. Listen to your elder children when they talk to you. Even when physically dealing with the baby, do not shut your elder children out. If you say 'just a minute', make sure that you do come back to her/him after the minute is over.

Aggression arises from frustration and jealousy, so find ways for your children to vent their feelings. Do not tell your child how nice it will be once the baby is big enough to play with her/him; young children cannot think that far ahead into the future.

MAKING FRIENDS

From babyhood, children have distinct kinds of behavior towards parents and other children. By your child's third year, you are there to talk to and provide security that the child's peers are her/his partners. Opportunities for playing with other children are important for social development. These days, most preschool children only make friends if you make the opportunities for them to do so. While other children practice their social skills, your child will lag behind if you do not make an effort now, and you may hamper her/his ability to settle into school quickly.

How well your children weather each transition depends partly on their underlying temperament and partly on the relationship with their main caregivers. An easy child may sail through despite indifferent caring, while a difficult, temperamental child needs sensitive parenting to see her/him through. The significance of emotional development is seen in every area of a child's life. Children will have a strong foundation for later development if they can manage personal feelings, understand others' feelings and needs, and interact positively with others. For this reason, one of the greatest gifts you can give your children is an understanding and appreciation of their strengths and needs all of which will form a strong sense of identity and self-awareness leading to inner strength and confidence.

Effects of Television on Children

BY BINA SHAH



on

Imagine a guest who is a regular visitor to your household. This guest comes to your house all the time, and your children spend an average of three hours daily with it. But instead of telling your children about the real world, this guest introduces your child to a world of fantasy and illusion, where violence always wins and problems are always solved by super heroes.

In this world, smoking cigarettes is something 'fun' to do, something 'cool', and never harms anyone who indulges in it. Similarly, junk food is promoted to be healthy. This guest tells your children that it is funny to be rude to adults and parents, and that life is only enjoyed by those who are wealthy, or who drive fabulous cars.

This guest is **TELEVISION.**

It is amazing how parents are willing to abandon their children to the television for hours at a time each day. This is a tempting prospect; children sit mesmerized in front of it, watching anything and everything that it has to offer. If you've ever watched children while they're watching television, they seem almost hypnotized by the programs they're watching, and they'll watch almost anything with more or less the same eagerness and interest. But there are quite a few pitfalls to entrusting your children to the "electronic babysitter" that can have

Once Your Children are Hooked to Television, What are some of the Things that Might be Happening to Them?

You might notice that your child races in from school each day, barely has the time to say "hello" to you, and rushes right to the television set to watch a favorite

Besides selling products and engaging children's attention television promotes a passive attitude in children, encourages a lack of creativity and a short attention span.



a serious effect on your child's physical and mental health. In fact, you as a parent are being extremely irresponsible if you aren't taking the time to examine exactly what your children are watching and exactly what it might be doing to their bodies and minds.

Television, according to the experts, is probably the most pervasive media influence on children today. As mentioned before, studies have shown that children watch television for an average of about three hours a day, although there are many children who watch much more than that. Entirely a third of all children under four and 52% of children under the age of sixteen have a television in their bedroom in the United States, and numbers are similar for much of the developed world.

What exactly is the Point of Television?

You might think that it is meant to sell you products, because of the constant advertising that you are bombarded with. However, this equation is all backwards. The television executives are actually selling something, but it's not the products that are advertised. They are selling your attention to the advertisers. The more of your attention they have, the more money they earn from advertisers who pay them to place advertisements on television. The key is that they must hold your attention for as long as possible, so they create the most sensationalistic programs possible in order to do that. You may be able to control how much attention you are giving to the television, but are you aware of how much attention your children are giving to it?

cartoon show. Your child may want to watch television through dinner instead of having a mealtime conversation with family members. You may notice your child starting to adopt some of the attitudes, habits, and mannerisms that a popular television character exhibits, and not all of these are terribly polite!

On a deeper level, television may be contributing a great deal towards your child's ill health. Obesity in children has been proven to be directly caused by watching too much television. Instead of going out and exercising, children are sitting in front of the television, barely burning enough calories to maintain sound health. They are also constantly watching advertisements for sugary drinks, junk food, and candy, and their eating habits are influenced by these ads to the point that your child will not only gain weight but also have to pay many visits to the dentist for cavities.

In addition, television deprives many children of their proper sleep. Children will watch television late into the night if you'll let them, and this contributes a great deal towards children and teenagers being unable to wake up in the morning for school. Not only this, but consider the type of television shows that are on air late at night – horror movies, violent shows, shows displaying vulgar content – these are programs that can cause sleeplessness, insomnia, and even nightmares and other sleep disturbances in your child.

So now you have a child who's in poor shape and tired and fatigued for most of the day. What else is television doing to them? Besides selling products and engaging children's attention television promotes a passive attitude

in children, encourages a lack of creativity and a short attention span. Your children have no need to exercise their brains, be actively engaged in play or exercise, or even do any independent thinking of their own when they are sitting in front of a television being fed image after image of silliness, chaos, or destruction as is depicted in most television programs, even those made especially for children. In a worst-case scenario, television even promotes aggressive behavior in children.

Is this Really What You Want for Your Children?

Of course, this is somewhat of a negative view of television, but it is what can happen to your child when there is no thought given to what kind of influence television will have over your lives. There is no doubt that there are quite a few excellent television programs being made for children today, which educate children in a fun and helpful way, teach proper values to your children, and help them to cultivate their higher interests and instincts rather than their lower ones. Look for shows that have a gentle pace and tone, which includes content that will help your child's development; physically, socially, cognitively and emotionally, shows with positive content, and cultural diversity.

More than just finding quality programming for your children, you also need to think long and hard about the presence of television in your home. You need to make a conscious choice about which mode of viewing best



There are more or less seven different ways in which people interact with television.

Different Ways Of Interacting With TV:

- 1 No television at all – television totally banned in the household
- 2 Restricted hours, restricted shows & channels
- 3 Unrestricted hours, restricted shows & channels
- 4 Restricted hours, unrestricted shows & channels
- 5 Children watch television with parental guidance (advice about what to watch)
- 6 Children watch television with parents present
- 7 Unlimited, unrestricted viewing

Television is not merely an electronic babysitter; it is a powerful tool that actually programs your children into certain modes of behavior, thought, and emotion.

suits your family. You may decide to not have a television set at all in your house. Or, you may choose to limit how many hours a day your child can watch, but not what s/he watches; the opposite is limiting what your child watches but not how long s/he watches. Experts agree that the best option out of all these seven, however, is number 6, where parents watch television with their children, explaining what's being shown, and asking questions and making comments about the content and presentation of the show that help your child to make the distinction between fantasy and reality. "Wow, he got hit on the nose, but he's not hurt. That wouldn't happen in real life, would it? Because when you hit someone, it really hurts them" is an example of this kind of explanation.

You may or may not decide to ban television altogether from your household, and this is probably an impractical thing to do in today's world, but experts also agree that it is best to remove a television from your child's bedroom, and also set specific hours for TV viewing. One to two hours of television a day is certainly adequate and don't listen to your child's requests that "other children watch as much as they like". Simply explain that the values portrayed on that particular show are not values that you wish to follow in your family, and that is the end of it.

Where possible or available, you can use parental blockers that are available on the market or even ask your cable company or satellite dish provider to block out channels or shows that you don't want your child to see. Remember that violent and scary television actually frightens young children (and even adolescents) so they may silently appreciate the limits that you set for them, despite their loud protests that you are depriving them of a fantastic experience.

In the end, remember that television is not merely an electronic babysitter; it is a powerful tool that actually programs your children into certain modes of behavior, thought, and emotion. Never underestimate the effect that television can have on your children, and the fact that certain programs can actually be stressful for your children to watch and absorb. It is up to you to control how much television and what kind of television is watched in your household, and although your children may protest for imposing limits on it, they will certainly thank you later.

The TRUTH About Television



Research Findings on the Effects of Television Viewing

Numerous scientific studies have assessed the effects of TV on children, evaluating the question from many points of view. Following is a brief review of various research findings:

Effects on Sensory Development

Children who are actively playing will have more opportunities to develop their senses than children passively viewing TV. By its very nature, TV is an impoverished sensory environment. In a recent study comparing TV viewing with laboratory simulated sensory deprivation, researchers found that 96 hours of laboratory induced sensory deprivation produced the same effects on the person as only a few minutes of TV viewing. Normal sensory experience is vital to maintaining a balanced state of mind and body.

Sight

While viewing, the eyes are practically motionless and 'defocused' in order to take in the whole screen. Constant movement is required for healthy eye development. Visual exploration is a prerequisite of seeing and necessary for developing a sense of depth and perspective. The two-dimensional screen does not

facilitate such development. The sense of sight is maturing through age 12. Excessive TV viewing, one of the most passive visual activities, can seriously impair a child's observational skills. Viewing affects not only eye mechanics, but also the ability to focus and pay attention.

Hearing

Since TV is more visual than auditory, children's sense of hearing is not being fully exercised. Active listening is a skill that needs to be developed. Children need practice in processing auditory stimulation, making their own mental pictures in response to what they hear. Also, when TV is constantly on, the sense of hearing may be dulled by the persistent background noise.

Sense of Wonder

The subtle rhythms and patterns of life's wonders which can only be appreciated through patient observation and experience will hold little interest for a child given a steady diet of TV. The fast paced, action-packed, high drama which is programmed to keep viewers tuned in does not accurately represent the natural world, yet it is what children come to expect. Real experiences, therefore, can't compete with TV and the child's sense of wonder is dulled.

Effects on Health

TV viewing visibly impacts motor co-ordination, balance, and general level of fitness because of the activities it displaces. There are also other, perhaps less obvious, effects.

Obesity

TV viewing has been found to be associated with prevalent nutritional diseases such as elevated cholesterol and obesity. Likewise, viewing correlates significantly with between-meal snacking, consumption of advertised foods, and attempts to influence mothers' food purchases.

Sleep Deprivation

Many studies indicate that children are staying up late to watch TV. One study reported that children as young as eight were still watching TV at 11:30pm on school nights. Sleep is a physical necessity, required to build up the growing organism. It is also a psychological necessity, the prerequisite for dreaming. Yet dreams after TV viewing may be disturbed, with vivid TV images resurfacing and causing nightmares.

Effects on Cognitive and Intellectual Development

Numerous child development and educational experts express great concern with television's numbing effect on children's brains. Many reports suggest that our children's minds are not developing the way they should, and this is attributed in large measure to excessive TV viewing.

Language Acquisition

In the early years, when the brain is so impressionable and sensitive, TV viewing prolongs the dominance of right brain functions which induce a trance-like state. When viewed for more than 20 hours per week, TV can seriously inhibit the development of verbal-logical, left brain functions. The patterning that the brain needs for language development is hindered by viewing during this language sensitive period of infancy, and it may be more difficult to acquire speech later on. Studies document that general word knowledge and vocabulary are not affected either positively or negatively by TV, but it has been found that creative verbal fluency is lower for children who watch TV more because it does not offer time for interactive play and conversation.

Reading Skills

A great many studies have documented declining literacy rates over the last thirty years. TV viewing is an easier and preferred activity compared to the challenge of book reading, especially for children who have not yet developed fluent reading skills. TV requires little concentration, de-focuses the mind, offers electronically produced images, and encourages passivity, while reading

necessitates concentration, thought, focusing, and the ability to visualize. Television trains short attention spans, while reading trains long attention spans. Studies suggest that light viewers learn to read more easily than heavy viewers.

Effects on Creativity and Imagination

'Boredom' is the empty space necessary for creativity. With TV filling a child's leisure moments, the necessary void is never experienced. Additionally, the child's play is often restricted to forms prescribed by adult programmers whose primary objective is to sell toys. With predetermined themes and ready-made playthings, little is left to the imagination. Furthermore, when children are bombarded with TV images, their own ability to form imaginative pictures becomes severely impaired. This process of generating internal pictures is critical to the development of dendrites and neural connectors which lay the foundation for intelligence and creativity. Studies which have investigated how TV viewing affects performance in creative problem solving suggest that excessive viewing may lead to decreased attention, persistence, and tolerance. The displacement of problem solving opportunities also results in a more limited repertoire of creative solutions.

Effects on Social Development

Television is not a substitute for meeting and interacting with real people in real situations. A child cannot develop a sense of self in the absence of contact with others. While viewing TV, a child is not gaining practice in relating to others and in constructive interpersonal problem solving.

Over thirty years, findings have consistently demonstrated that violence on TV correlates with subsequent aggressive behavior. Recent evidence from an extensive longitudinal study carried out in four different countries suggests there is a sensitive period that begins before age eight when children are especially susceptible to the effects of violence shown on TV.

The idea is to realize that TV does have its plus points along with carrying a lot of adverse effects. For most of us ardent followers of daily news, serials, movies and other channels it is hard to imagine a life without spending a portion of the day in front of the TV which is why it is always the best option to take it slow. Start watching the programs you find hardest to quit and you will realize how much time you have for the things you planned but never really got around doing. Gradually you will also realize that a life without cable is indeed possible and fulfilling at the same time both for yourself and your children.



Language & Literacy Development

BY CAROLINE ARNOLD

What Early Childhood Development and Education Programs are all about?

Whether we are thinking about families raising children or Early Childhood Centers and schools educating them the responsibility that is one of the most important responsibilities we have as human beings: to support children's overall development and equip them with the knowledge, skills, values and sense of self-worth to help them interact effectively with the world and be contributing members of society.

Language Development and a Love of Learning

One of the most critical parts of language development is supporting children's language development and enthusiasm for learning. Many parents, and especially parents from disadvantaged groups, underestimate the significance of their role in supporting children's language,

learning and sense of themselves. Their focus, very understandably, is often on keeping children fed, to carry out their social responsibility and ensure the physical development of their children rather than develop their children's understanding of the world and supporting their confidence and communication skills. Surprisingly, most parents can hardly wait for their baby to say its first word, but believe that 'language development' implies that the child's acquisition of language is an automatic process. This, however, is not the case. There is nothing that any human being knows or can do that s/he has not learned. This is especially true of language acquisition, which is extremely critical in enabling children to get the most in life and become productive citizens in a rapidly changing world.

The child begins to learn language from the day s/he is born. From the very first moment it is the parents' responsibility to lay a proper foundation that will enable the child to acquire adequate language skills. Just like parents must ensure that a child follows a healthy and balanced diet for optimal physical development, they must take steps to ensure optimal language development.

Parents should start talking to their little baby from the



Suggestions for Your Reading Sessions

- ✱ Read aloud to your children: books, newspaper and magazine articles, labels on boxes, cans - anything with appropriate printed material on it.
- ✱ Read poems and sing songs aloud together to learn about rhythm and repeated sounds in language.
- ✱ Point to the words on the page when you read.
- ✱ Listen to your children about what they did during the day.
- ✱ Go to a bookstore together and check out books.
- ✱ Encourage your older children to read to the younger ones.
- ✱ Develop a quality night time ritual of reading a few books with your children.

SOURCE: www.buzzle.com

day s/he is born. Some mothers are by nature quiet and reserved. Others have the unfortunate idea that it is foolish to talk to their babies, knowing that they do not understand. The mother, who does not speak to her child while feeding, bathing and dressing her baby, is laying the foundation for a late talker.

How Children Learn Language

The baby learns language in one way only, and that is by hearing language as the parents or other people around them talk. The more a parent can talk to a child, often repeating the same words, the same phrases, the same structures over and over, the sooner the child will learn language.

An important thing to note here is that by the time a baby is about nine months old s/he should be able to understand simple words and commands. S/he may perhaps also be able to say a few simple words already. Invariably, however, one finds that the baby understands much more than s/he is able to say. In fact, this remains so of almost every person throughout his life. One is always able to understand more of any language, even one's mother tongue, than one is able to use in active speech. This is even more so of any second or third languages that a person is able to speak.

This shows that we have two, more or less separate, masses of language knowledge: our passive knowledge (also called receptive language), and our active on the other. When we listen or read, we make use of our passive vocabulary, and when we speak or write, we use our active vocabulary.

An important thing to note here is that the child's passive vocabulary comes into being through constant and continual repetition of words, phrases or structures. Once a word, phrase or structure has been repeated often enough, it also becomes part of the baby's active vocabulary. This shows that the active vocabulary can

only be improved via the passive. Research has shown that a child who is just beginning to talk must hear a word about 500 times before it will become part of his active vocabulary. Long before that it will already form part of his passive vocabulary. This means that parents should create as many opportunities as possible in which their baby can hear them talk.

Plessis, Susan du, "Talk Your Child Clever." Audiblox Online Magazine (2005)

Reading for Children Program

Reading to children is one way in which language development can be facilitated. Integrating a 'Reading for Children' component in parenting programs can enable parents/siblings to borrow simple, illustrated story books to read to young children. This provides important benefits to young children and also links ECD and literacy/post-literacy and school support programs.

Reading for Children Programs' Achievements

Parents' reading to their children is a predictor of school success and access to enjoyable printed materials is highly significant for children from disadvantaged communities. Reviews have found that both parents and primary school teachers across Asia emphasize how 'ready' for school children with ECD experience are.

Outcomes for Older Children

Where Reading for Children programs operate a more surprising finding has been the equal enthusiasm of the older children. They are often seen not only reading to their younger siblings but also taking the books off to a quiet place to read them on their own.

Outcomes for Parents

For parents who have limited literacy, reading to their own children is an enjoyable way to make sure that they

maintain their skills. The children make sure they practice ('Read it again mother') and the materials are naturally at a suitable level (in terms of vocabulary etc) for new readers.

However, one of the most striking findings has been the way Reading for Children programs have transformed parents relationships with their children. Parents who previously had felt they could do nothing to really support their children's overall development because of their own lack of education suddenly had very concrete evidence of what they could do. Parents report that they now talk more with their children, listen to them and take more interest in what they are doing.

Implementation Strategies

One of the strengths of Reading for Children Program is its flexibility. A few examples of the programs it can be integrated with are:

- 1) ECD centers (library from which parents can borrow books)
- 2) Parenting programs
- 3) Children's organizations e.g. children's clubs, youth groups
- 4) Primary schools
- 5) Community reading centers
- 6) Women's groups
- 7) Health centers

Key Issues for Implementation

- 1) High illiteracy rates
- 2) Lack of suitable, attractive and affordable books for young children – no books at all in many houses.
- 3) The risk of some parents trying to make the child read and the experience ending up as a negative one.

It is important to emphasize that the purpose is simply that children have the chance to look at books together with a caregiver. The idea is that the caregiver reads to the child and that they look at the pictures together, talk about the story etc. Research has shown that children who are read to as young children learn to read more easily when they enter school.

- 4) Over-worked parents have limited time
- 5) Parents underestimate their importance in supporting children's development – and especially language and cognitive development.

Parents should not be made to feel bad if they have little time to read to or tell stories to their children. It is important for all parents to feel that they can play an important role in supporting their children's development through talking with and listening to their children and using everyday activities as opportunities for conversation and support for their children's development.

"Reading for Children" is in essence a very simple idea – but often it is the simplest ideas that bring the greatest benefits for children.



Benefits of Reading To Your Children

If you are a parent who admits that you don't read to your children enough, or if you feel that you are just too busy for this activity, there are several reasons for which you should read to your little ones:

- 1) **Learning to read.** If you need just one reason, this should be it! All parents want their children to learn to read and by reading to them you are giving them an early start.
- 2) **Learning new words and language skills.** Think for a second -- if you are reading a book about cats and the word "feline" is in the text, chances are that your child will begin to know that "feline" is another word for "cat" -- even without you specifically saying this.
- 3) **Developing their imagination.** Young children will listen to the words that you read and they will imagine them in their minds. Later, they might think back to the story and imagine even greater tales involving the characters, places, and feelings you read about.
- 4) **Learning about the world around them.** Books can expose us to locations and situations that we may never experience ourselves first hand.
- 5) **Learning about moral concepts.** Many stories teach about honesty, service, kindness and choosing right from wrong. Enjoying a good book together can end up teaching your child these valuable concepts.
- 6) **Feeling close to each other.** Since reading is a calm and soothing activity, it gives parents something to engage in with their children without spending a lot of money or even a lot of energy.

SOURCE: www.babyuniversity.com

Activities to Encourage Language Development



Share an Experience

When parents talk about an incident and discuss anecdotes about themselves or their children it ensures good communication, understanding and interaction between parents and children.

The way conversations take place has a huge influence on the richness of language development. The tone parents use and the body language that accompanies it, develop the ability of how they manage and express the children's feelings.

For solid communication to develop parents and other adults have to send messages of "you matter" and "what you say is interesting and important". Children also need to be with and communicate with children older and younger than them.

Talk about Photographs

Look at photograph albums. The best ones are the oldest ones. Talk about what kind of clothes people wore then, what they did together and how you spent your childhood.

To cultivate interesting conversations with children parents have to learn how to ask appropriate and sincere questions. When talking about incidents and experiences help children by asking 'what's happening', 'what next', 'what if' etc and be open to their ideas and decisions.

We learn to talk most effectively when we are not put under pressure to perform. We need to be with people who are tolerant and welcoming in our efforts to put ideas, thoughts, feelings and relationships into words and signs. It is the same with children as is with adults.



Children can only learn to increase their vocabulary if they are with people who offer them new words during the conversation. Help your children enrich their understanding of new words by:

- 1) Naming. That's a ball.
- 2) Explaining. Balls can be thrown and played with.
- 3) Talking about feelings. You like playing with the ball, don't you?
- 4) Describing. The ball is yellow and round. It bounces as well.
- 5) Talking about what you just did. You threw the ball in the air and I caught it.
- 6) Talking about the future. I will roll the ball towards you and you try and catch it.

SOURCE: Bruce, Tina, Developing Learning in Early Childhood, London: Paul Chapman Publishing, 1988.

INVOLVING PARENTS

BY AGA KHAN EDUCATION SERVICES, PAKISTAN

It is important to realize that learning does not end at school and that knowledge imparted at home is the foundation of a child's learning environment. Exploring how parents can contribute to a child's learning process and understanding the importance of involving parents in the child's school is important for a child's development.



Research has shown that students benefit from parental participation in many ways such as better behavior and concentration during the early years, possibly leading to higher grades, better attendance and continuation of education at the advanced level. Looking closely at the research, there are strong indications that the most effective forms of parental involvement are those which engage parents in working directly with their children on learning activities at home. Furthermore, parents can support their young children by having a regular daily routine thereby providing them discipline, which would ideally include involving the children in household chores and responsibilities, getting into bed on time and helping the children get ready in the morning. Showing children that a parent values learning, self-discipline and hard work is important. Guiding television viewing, reading aloud, taking trips together, having books around the house and doing creative activities will stimulate the child's mind.

Parents must realize that school is not a ready-made package in their children's lives and that value-centered learning is an important ingredient provided at home. Similarly schools should value the importance of parental involvement and devise strategies to make the learning environment more wholesome. Furthermore, parents should show curiosity in what the child does at school. Parent's enthusiasm and interest in meeting with the child's teacher makes the child realize, the value or importance of school.

Nurturing the Child's Learning Needs

The curiosity of a child is central to the learning process and it needs to be nurtured. The role of parents is very important in this regard and parents should try to enhance their children's curiosity. For example when animals are discussed in the school, parents can take their children to the zoo to actually connect real life experiences with what the children have learned at school. Even pointing out animals seen everyday such as stray cats and dogs connects knowledge with reality. Alternatively field trips can be organized by the school and parents can be asked

to accompany the students and staff as facilitators. Moreover, when talking about fruit, children can be taken to a fruit shop by the parent, and when fruits such as oranges are being eaten, the parent can practically demonstrate how to peel the fruit, showing the children the seeds and unique texture. Parents can also be called in to school and asked to take part in making fruit salads, cutting vegetables and preparing sandwiches. The fascination of a child needs to be incorporated into learning and translating education into knowledge, hence integrating learning and tangible experiences.

Reviewing the Child's Performance at School

Parents can be made aware of the child's work on a regular basis and this can be ensured by adopting various practices at the school. Sending work home with the child on a weekly basis is effective as it keeps the parents informed about the work being done in school, along with the child's progress. Furthermore, a cordial environment should be created at school, whereby parents feel comfortable with the teacher and are at ease when enquiring about their child's progress. The process works both ways and the school and parents need to give time and importance to the child's learning.

Developing the Child's Language Skills

In terms of language articulation and development, parents should make it a point to regularly read to their children. If parents are unable to engage their children with story telling then they can be invited to be a part of story time at the school to learn how to keep the child interested and involved in the story. Parents should also be encouraged to talk to their children, hence developing their confidence in using language and helping them to express themselves, while also building rapport and social skills. Singing different poems and local songs with your child is fun and very interactive as well.

Introducing Learning at Home

Parent assistance with homework should also be considered, an important mode of engagement. It is important for parents to guide their children, while also motivating them to study. Planning the day together and working out a schedule are ways to discipline your child, and whilst engaging the child willingly rather than creating a climate of oppression or coercion. The school can develop parent involvement programs that include conducting learning activities with children at home. Project based learning is an interactive and fun approach to learning especially when the child and parents are working together. Assignments which require students to incorporate and represent knowledge imparted from their parents are also good ways of engagement.

Creating Strong Linkages with Communities

Schools that succeed in engaging families should further focus on building collaborative relationships between teachers, families and other community members. Some successful examples are visible in the schools of the Releasing Confidence and Creativity (RCC) programme where efforts have been made to engage families in student learning. Community members were actively involved in a theatre training event organized. The message sent across by the theatre performance was well received in many cases and helped to facilitate change, especially with regards to female literacy. This helps in embracing a philosophy of a learning partnership making sure that the parents, school staff and community members understand that the responsibility for children's education is a collaborative and cooperative process.

Participation in School Events

Attendance at school functions and events is also one of the ways of ensuring parental participation. However, parents can also be involved at the classroom level by sharing their skills and knowledge with the children. In Releasing Confidence and Creativity (RCC) programme parents are invited into the schools where handicrafts such as making clay toys and stitching *ralli** have been taught to the students, thereby utilizing the role of parents as a valuable resource, and connecting the school with the natural environment of the child by valuing local culture, traditions and knowledge. Parents have also been involved in story telling, especially folk stories,

once again indicating respect and value for the knowledge of a parent and the larger community. The sharing of stories when successfully applied influences the development of moral and ethical values thereby building character in a child. Hence mothers are called in to conduct and facilitate fun filled activities. Alternatively parents can take on the role of facilitators and observers, giving valuable feedback to teachers and helping students with classroom activities.

In many cases for effective implementation of any initiative parents would need to be involved in training. However, this should be carried out while keeping in mind feasibility and necessity. In the RCC programme an Adult Literacy Program has been initiated which involves teaching mothers basic numeric and literacy skills. The program has been successful in motivating the parents to educate their children and enabling mothers to assist children in their work. It is anticipated that fathers will also be involved in the program at the next stage. Parents have also been called in as substitute teachers when required, thus connecting them further as learning partners.

The lack of planning and mutual understanding between teachers and parents is a possible barrier to effective parental involvement. As part of the planning process, teachers and school administrators need to assess their own readiness for involving parents and determining how they wish to engage them. When involving parents as learning partners, schools need to have adequate information about the skills and specialization of specific parents, in order to identify probable learning partners. However, parents should be able to choose and be comfortable with the activities, and the school should accommodate different schedules, preferences and capabilities. School staff should communicate to parents that their involvement and support makes a great deal of difference in their children's school performance, and that they need not be highly educated or have lots of free time for their involvement to be beneficial. However, it should be taken into consideration that parental participation should not impede the general functioning of the school, such as administrative, practical and academic aspects of school life. The school will also at times need to fulfill the role of a mediator in negotiating and reaching a consensus between the goals of the school and parents. There may be various difficulties in engaging parents. School staff wishing to carry out effective activities that involve parents will need to be flexible, friendly and well-organized in their approach in engaging parent participation.

* *Ralli* is a traditional cloth made by patchwork.

Multiple Intelligences

A Quick Overview

BY DUAA KHALID

Multiple Intelligence theory states that there are at least seven different ways of learning anything, and therefore there are "eight intelligences": bodily kinesthetic, interpersonal, intra-personal, logical, musical, linguistic, spatial and naturalistic. This concept was introduced in 1983, by Dr. Howard Gardner in 'Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences'. Intelligence, according to Gardner refers to "the human ability to solve problems or to make something that is valued in one or more cultures." For many generations, before this newfound theory came into being, people chose to believe that intelligence was something every human was born with. The amount varied on sheer luck and one could do nothing to support it further or eradicate it all together. Intelligence, then and even now, was defined in schools by assessing skill and expertise in either the languages, the sciences or mathematics, basically exposing the children to only two types of intelligences: linguistic and logical.

In Gardner's book, he takes into regard the several evolutionary patterns that exist in nature and states that there are more than the two intelligences (logical and linguistic) that one considers important. Up to date he has come up

with eight of them i.e. bodily kinesthetic, interpersonal, intra-personal, logical, musical, linguistic, spatial and naturalistic but debates are open for the addition of a few more. Furthermore, he goes on to state that because of the various different cultures that are present around us and the difference in the brain structure, not every human being is gifted the same way in each of the categories. Some have more of one of the intelligences while others are more intelligent in terms of another field.

This theory also provides an answer to the ever puzzling questions related to children, who though outwardly bright and smart, do not do well in school exams and tests. Before the formation of this theory, many children with gifts in other unknown areas were labeled with different types of disorders. The theory of multiple intelligences proposes a major alteration in the way schools are run. It advocates that teachers be trained to present lessons in a variety of ways using music, art activities, role play, multimedia, field trips, inner reflection, and much more. Gardner's theory has led to the assistance of teachers, parents and schools to make a more conducive learning environment for the children.

Resources:

- The Intelligences, in Howard Gardner's Words: A Quick Overview of the Idea of Multiple Intelligences. <http://www.fctel.uncc.edu/pedagogy/resources/MultipleIntelligences.html>
- Guignon, Annie. Multiple Intelligences: A Theory for Everyone. http://www.education-world.com/a_curr/curr054.shtml
- Armstrong, Dr. Thomas. Multiple Intelligences. http://www.thomasarmstrong.com/multiple_intelligences.html

PLEASE REVIEW ENCLOSED HANDOUT (provided with this issue)

CHILD SAFETY

BY DR. BEHROZE HASHIM



How many children are taken to an emergency/casualty room daily because of an avoidable accident? The answer is thousands. Children are extremely accident prone because they are very active, very energetic and very vulnerable to all the traps that we have in our urban environment. How many doors do you have in your house that are liable to slam shut with the wind and injure a hand or a finger or two? How many children have you seen running down the stairs that are likely to have an unfortunate injury with the slightest of slips? How many times have we witnessed on the road, families of 4 or 5 mounted precariously on a motorcycle? How many times have we seen our young toddlers reach out for detergents and other kitchen chemicals that we absentmindedly store in cabinets that are easily accessible?

Here are some useful tips that we ought to keep in mind to prevent common accidents involving children:

FALLS

Babies and infants are sometimes left unattended for a short while, and they suddenly fall off the bed, the chair or even the table. To avoid mishaps of these sort:

1. Keep the stairways clean.
2. Make sure that there are no loose rugs to trip over.
3. Remove all the toys after the child is done playing with them so that children don't trip on them.
4. To avoid slipping, make sure that the bathroom floors and bath tubs have a non-skid surface.
5. Either avoid buying furniture with sharp edges or cover them with soft pads as children are susceptible to cut themselves when they trip or fall.
6. When children spill water, food and other liquids, wipe them dry so that they can refrain from slipping and falling.



7. If you have a staircase guard fence, keep it closed as little children can easily venture down the stairs unattended.
8. Tree climbing and bicycle riding must be done under adult supervision.
9. Unsafe swings, trampolines and other playground equipment must be checked for safety before children can use them.
10. Never leave the child unattended in a high chair; they can easily tip it over.
11. Make sure the child is kept away from prickly plants in the gardens as falling into them can be immensely painful.
12. Besides falling, children can also easily make things fall on themselves. Make sure that the iron and other wired appliances are put away from the reach of the children. If not, they can easily pull the wire and burn or bruise themselves.

BURNS AND FIRES

Children are more prone to burns than adults, because their skin is much more sensitive. In addition, children have not learned the dangers of heat.

1. Don't drink or carry hot beverages like tea, coffee or soup while holding a baby.
2. Don't use a table cloth that hangs from the edge of the table, children can pull the table cloth and injure themselves with hot food and fluids.
3. Your hot water heater temperature setting should not be over 35 degrees, as children may easily burn themselves playing with hot water.
4. To keep children safe from fires and level degree burns keep matches, lighters, candles and incense sticks away from them.
5. Kitchen is a restricted area for children for it houses

appliances which are not child friendly. Holding children while cooking is even more dangerous as it puts the mother at risk of burning herself.

6. When cooking on stoves, do not use pots and pans with handles, as children can effortlessly pull the handle, drenching themselves in burning liquid or food. If you have to, make sure the handle is towards the inner side of the stove.
7. Make sure there are smoke detectors and fire extinguishers in the house.
8. To make sure that your child does not get sun burnt put ample amount of sunscreen over him/her. Children are easily susceptible to such burns even if the sun does not appear to be so scorching.

s/he is eating solid food.

4. Make sure the baby is not talking, laughing or running around with food in her/his mouth. A toffee or chewing gum is extremely dangerous. Similarly raw apples, pears and carrots can get stuck in a baby's throat.
5. Safety pins, jewelry, buttons, marbles, beads etc. all can potentially choke a child. Keep them away.
6. Ropes, strings, shoe laces, loose wires and cords all are potential sources for strangulation.
7. Plastic bags on the head of a child can be fatal as the child's air supply can easily be blocked.

POISONING

Poisoning is a common cause of accidents around the house. It is usually between the ages of 2 and 6 years that we see most cases of poisoning. Tips to prevent poisoning:

1. All pesticides and chemicals should be kept locked and out of reach of children. Locked, not merely with a latch as that can easily be opened but with a proper key that must also be kept in a secure place.
2. All medication should be kept tightly shut in child resistant bottles with secure caps.
3. Reference to medicine as sweet should be discouraged as it makes the substance seem more child friendly than it really is.
4. Find out about the toxic plants in your area. Poisonous plants and flowers should be kept away from children.
5. Never change the bottles of detergents and cleaning solutions by putting the remnants in milk, juice or cola bottles. Children can possibly drink it.
6. Kerosene, diesel, varnish, paint and other such substances should be kept safely in a shed or store room, locked. The key too, should be securely placed.
7. Keep mosquito repellent mats away from the reach of children. Infants tend to chew them.
8. Keep the telephone number of your poison control center handy next to your telephone.

CHOKING

Children discover the world by putting everything in their mouth. Since they have small airways, and their cough reflexes are not developed, children can choke easily. To avoid such accidents, some tips are given below:

1. Coins, food and certain toys with removable parts contain material that can choke should be kept away from children. Make sure you read the age label that accompanies the toys before giving it to your child.
2. To further avoid a hazard, children under the age of 4 years, should not be given nuts or seeds of fruits and flowers, like those of sunflowers, watermelons, grapes or even peas. Hard caramel candy should also be avoided.
3. Make sure the baby is in a sitting position whenever

Other Common Hazards For Children

Knives

Scissors

Forks

Glass

Sharp Edges of Furniture

Wet Floors

Windows with no Bars

Electric Sockets

Plugs and Wires

Scattered Toys

Unstable Chairs and Tables

High Heel Shoes

Staircases

Toilets

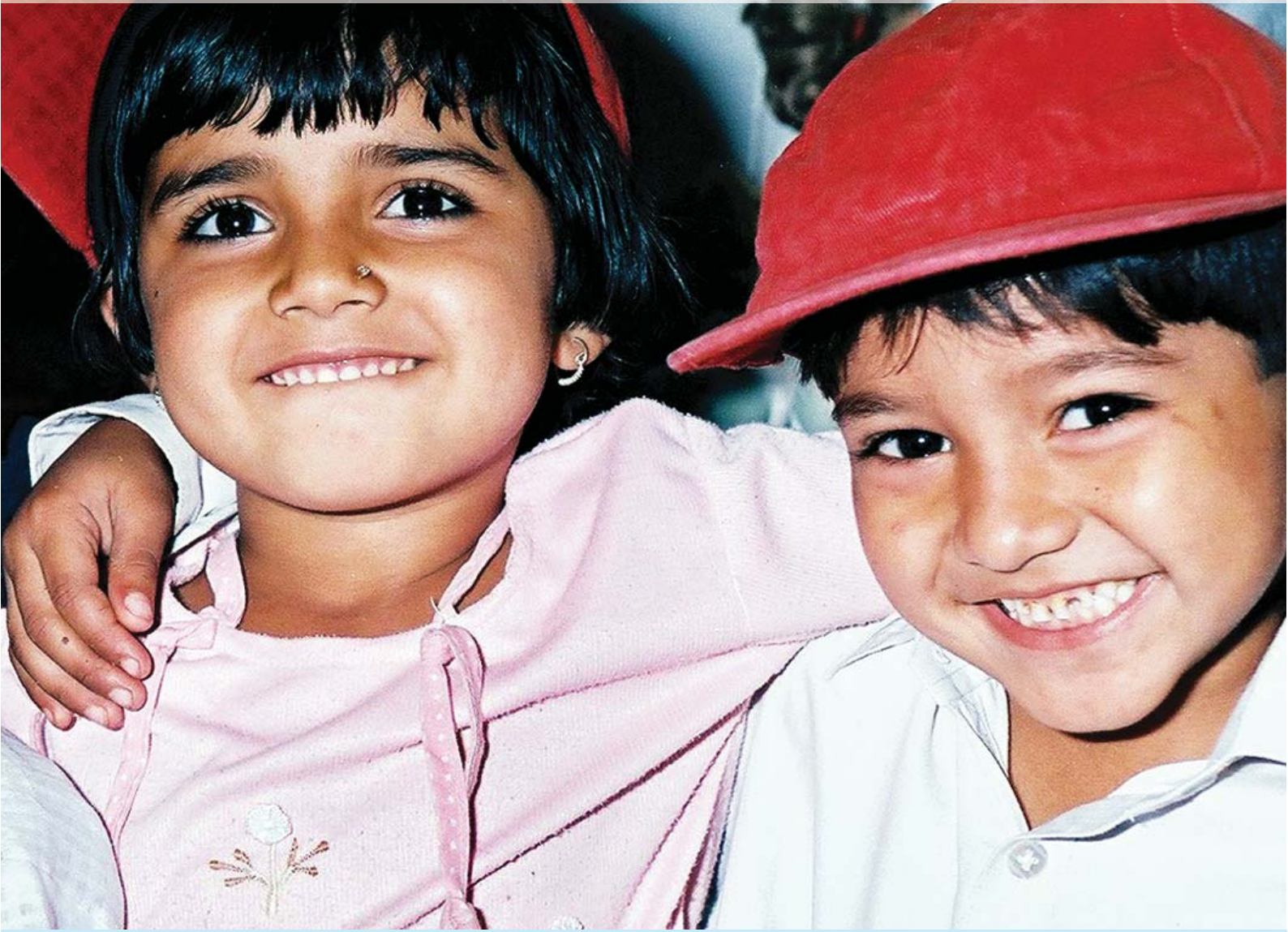
Stationery

Doors, Drawers and Cupboards

Parwarish

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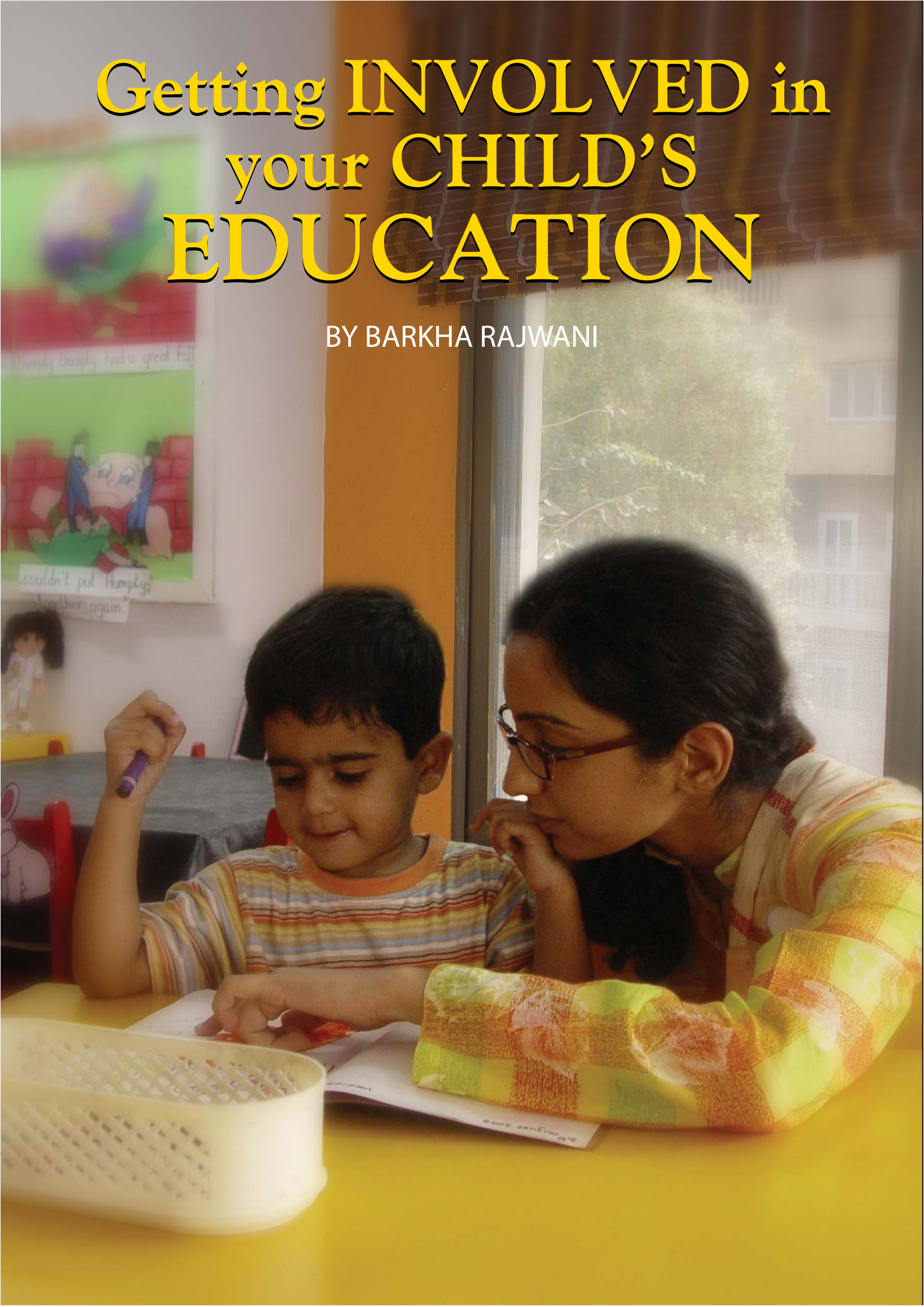
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Getting INVOLVED in your CHILD'S EDUCATION

BY BARKHA RAJWANI



Why Should I Get Involved In My Child's Education?

No matter what class your child is in, there are many good reasons and opportunities for you to volunteer at school. This will not only show your child that you take an interest in her/his education, but will also display that you consider school to be a worthwhile cause.

Parent volunteers can be a source of support for the school community. Moreover, by offering some of your time to the school, and by interacting with teachers, administrators, and other parents on a regular basis, you can gain a first-hand understanding of your child's daily activities and some insight into the trends of school life that will help you communicate with your child as s/he grows and changes (all without intruding in your child's privacy or personal space).

What Can I Do to Help My Child Do Really Well in School?

Other than just being familiar with the trends at school, parents can get involved in their children's schooling by participating in activities such as arranging *melas* at school, attending story telling sessions, going with children to the field trips, etc. This not only encourages parental participation, but also gives children a sense of importance and comfort with regards to their schooling. The best time to start active participation is from parent-

teacher meetings that schools schedule from time to time. If you have something to offer, or if you just want to help out in whatever way you can, discuss the possibilities with your child's teacher. It is also a good idea to join or start a parent-teacher association or parents' advisory council if there exists any at your child's school.

While trying to get involved through one or many of the suggested ways, always remember that not everyone is suited to a fixed formula of parental involvement. Get involved in activities that suit and interest you most. You can also ask for assistance from the school or your child's teachers if you cannot understand how to build up your participation in your child's school.

When you begin participating in a particular way, ask how much time or finances this participation will entail. Also, find out if there are any school regulations that you need to comply with. You should also be sure to always start small in the beginning. Don't take on too much responsibility all at once. Find out if you can get partners to help you out. Be sure not to give your child extra special treatment while you are volunteering at her/his school, and get frequent feedback from teachers and students you are working with. Finally, don't underestimate the students - you may feel that what you have to offer might not interest them or might be above their heads, but you'll probably be pleasantly surprised. You'll be helping to build skills, confidence and self-esteem that will last beyond their school days.

SOME WAYS TO HELP

The following are just some of the ways in which you can help:

- 1) Act as a classroom helper.
- 2) Mentor or tutor students.
- 3) Help organize or work at various activities such as fun fairs, sports day, school concerts, and other such activities
- 4) Organize a specific club or interest group (if you are interested in an activity that isn't currently available to students, offer to help get a group started for example, an art club or a drama club).
- 5) Assist sports teachers with sports and fitness programs or provide support at sporting events.

- 6) Help the school administrators by providing administrative assistance for e.g. work as a library assistant (if there is a library available at school).
- 7) Offer to help with story time or reading assistance in the school.
- 8) Attend school board meetings.
- 9) Volunteer to speak in the classroom if you have a field of expertise that you'd like to share.
- 10) Supervise or judge experiments at a science fair.

These are some helpful tips, all of which might not be applicable in the school where your child goes to but can help you in generating creative ideas to get involved in your child's school.

Who Needs to be Controlled First; Parents or Children?

BY AFSHEEN ALI



Being a parent is a joy, but it is also a tough job. Along with the pleasures of seeing your child's first step, listening to her/his first words and being thrilled at her/his growing recognition of parents and family, comes the painstaking procedures of diapering, feeding and dealing with dreadful temper tantrums.

No parent is flawless. Even loving parents sometimes do things that are unlikely of nurturing parenting, like unnecessarily shouting at their children or needlessly

slapping them. These actions are usually a result of frustrations that the parents face at work or home. It may also be the result of a lack of the parent's own relaxation and breathing space. It is usually suppressed anguish that often transforms itself into a subconsciously motivated controlling behavior on part of most parents. The child, who apparently is the weakest, becomes the victim of this suppressed anguish and eventually an external outlet for parents' inner aggravations.

The need to control the child is driven and justified by a simple phrase, parents often say to themselves and their children such as "I know what is best for my child". Without doubt, there is no better person to cater to child's needs than a loving and caring parent, but in problematic situations where parents are confronted with day to day unending frustrations of life, is it fair to equate their own 'necessitation to control' (which is either a characteristic of their own personality or a means of venting their frustrations) with their child's needs?

Parents may show the following signs where they vent off on their children. Also some possible ways are stated as to how a parent be best able to resolve the situation with a tad more patience and forethought:

Shouting

A consistently loud parent may produce an even louder child. Parents who shout and scream habitually to get their children's compliance may get away with it but that would only be obedience out of fear of parents and not out of respect. Children gradually get conditioned to that tone of voice and will exhibit similar or worse tones in their language as they grow up. In an extremely violent environment at home they might even show signs of negative behavior, speech impairment or may become suppressed and insecure individuals altogether.

SOLUTION: Use a soft and polite tone with your children. Exercise use of magic words "Please, Thank you, Excuse me, May I etc" in your daily language. Take control of your tone, instead of your child. It is a life long test of patience and will but all is worth it to produce a soft spoken child! (Use a firmer tone at times of setting limits.)

Spanking

Parents usually resort to spanking with the idea that physical coercion is usually the most effective way to instill discipline. The goal of discipline is to teach children self-control. If we think a little clearer we spank children usually because we lose our own control. It then becomes hard to assert that we expect our kids to maintain their self-control and never throw fits and tantrums knowing that we ourselves are guilty of the same.

SOLUTION: Parents who spank their children consistently need to condition themselves not to raise their hands on their child even if s/he has done something disastrous. If the situation prevails and you see yourself losing control,

take a break. Isolate yourself from the situation. Go for a walk. Breathe easily and relax. Give yourself time to think, analyze the situation and take control of your anger but do not hit your child. Remember spanking makes a child stop doing something temporarily, instilling fear rather than discipline. Fear is not only a negative personality trait but also causes great amount of stress and anxiety. This anxiety may subsequently set off aggressiveness and stubbornness in a child.

Emotional Blackmailing

This is the most deceitful of strategies used by parents. Usually after parents have exhausted their more forceful practices of shouting, yelling and spanking they resort to emotional blackmailing to control their children. As is the case with children, any agreement out of fear or emotional cornering can leave indelible scars on a person's personality and cause extreme strain. In some cases it has also been observed that the child may even turn rebellious, disrespectful and outright aggressive towards the parents.

SOLUTION: Children in their early years should be trusted and conditioned to make their own choices in life and learn from their mistakes. Start with simple decisions that do not carry expensive consequences. Give your opinion. Tell them what's right and wrong but do not impose. Do not say words which would leave them no choice but to comply with your decisions out of love or worse, out of fear. As long as the results do not bear danger allow the child to live and learn from life. Emotionally imposing your decisions on the child may not give her/him the satisfaction and self esteem that s/he needs to have to live with her/his head up.

It is important to realize the value of self-reflection and analysis. We owe it to our children to give us an opportunity to reflect to control ourselves first. Our children can definitely be molded into positive individuals but instead of struggling to make them one, if we invest in ourselves time, effort and knowledge, with endurance, to become positive role models, the frustrations will automatically take a back seat and will not interfere with the way children ought to be brought up, i.e. with love, attention and care rather than threats and emotional blackmail.





Resources for Parents & Caregivers

Raising a Confident Child

10 Signs of a Great
Early Childhood Classroom

9 Steps to More Effective Parenting



Raising a Confident Child

For most parents an inferred yearning is to have a child that is not only physically and mentally strong but also emotionally stable and secure about him/herself. Parents can do a lot to help their child in avoiding feelings that may evoke insecurities. Peer input and approval by a child's friends and school mates is necessary but it is just a part of the equation. How a child is treated at home by parents and other caregivers; how parents communicate with the child, how they react to a child's evolving personality and behavior and a lot of other input by parents is what defines a child's self-confidence. It is the job of the parents to strike a balance where they allow children their own privacy but at the same time be there for them to make them feel good when they are feeling low and gloomy.

All of this needs to be done because having a low self-esteem can make life much more difficult for any person. Without the confidence people rarely realize their potential in life. They may be great public speakers inside but they may never have the security within to boldly stand up and express themselves in public. Strong self-esteem can greatly help a child to be successful at school. Helping your child build inner strength to cope with the turns in life is the best gift you can give as a parent.

Show love - tell your children, as often as possible, that you love them.

Chat & listen - talking together gives the message that you enjoy your child's company and find her/him interesting.

Play - join in your toddler's games or if you have household chores to do, ask her/him to help. Including your children shows you enjoy spending time with them.

Praise - even if your child doesn't manage to do exactly what s/he set out to do, saying things such as "That was a really great try" will encourage her/him to have another go.

Provide choices - help your toddler feel s/he can exert some control over the world. You might ask your child to choose her/his own clothes or offer a choice of shoes, etc.

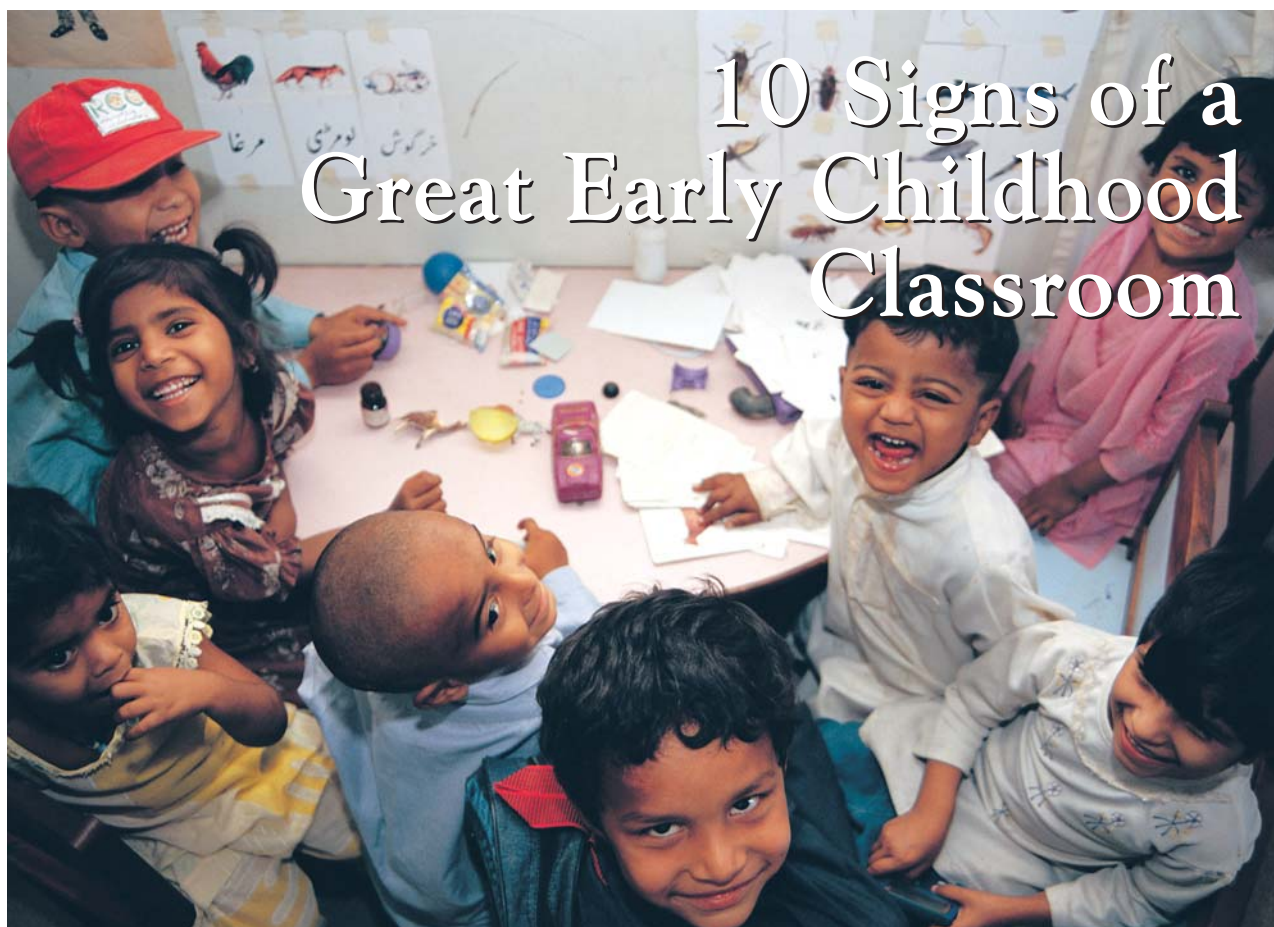
Provide plenty of activities - trying out lots of things makes it more likely you'll find something your child is good at; even if there are lots of other things s/he can't manage so well yet.

Encourage friendships - being able to make friends and get on with others plays a big role in building self-esteem. Take an interest and, if possible, invite your child's friends at home to play.

Celebrate family life - talking with your children during meal times not only celebrates family life, but also helps your child understand that s/he has a special place within it.

SOURCE: www.bbc.co.uk/parenting/your_kids/toddlers_confidence.shtml

www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/sci_tech/features/health/sexualhealth/parents/commun1.shtml



If your child attends a child care center, preschool, or kindergarten, please look for these 10 signs to make sure your child is in a good learning environment.

- 1) The children spend most of their time playing and working with materials or other children. They do not wander aimlessly, and they are not expected to sit quietly for long periods of time.
- 2) The children have access to various activities throughout the day. Look for assorted building blocks and other construction materials, handmade puppets for pretend play, picture books, paints and other art materials, and table toys such as matching games, puzzles and other locally developed material. The children should not all be doing the same thing at the same time.
- 3) The teachers work with individual children, small groups, and the whole group at different times during the day.
- 4) The classroom is decorated with children's original artwork, their own writing with invented spelling, and stories dictated by children to teachers.
- 5) The children learn numbers and the alphabet in the context of their everyday experiences. The natural world of plants and animals and meaningful activities like cooking etc provide the basis for these learning activities.
- 6) The children work on projects and have long periods of time (at least one hour) to play and explore. Worksheets are used little if at all.
- 7) The children have an opportunity to play outside every day. Outdoor play is never sacrificed for more instructional time.
- 8) The teachers read books to children individually or in small groups throughout the day, not just at group story time.
- 9) The curriculum is adapted for those who are ahead as well as those who need additional help. Teachers recognize that every child's different background and experiences mean that they do not learn the same things at the same time in the same way.
- 10) The children look forward to school and are happy to attend it they do not cry regularly or complain of feeling sick. The parents feel secure about sending their child to the program.

SOURCE: 10 Signs of a Great Preschool. (1996). Early Years Are Learning Years. National Association for the Education of Young Children.

9 Steps to More EFFECTIVE PARENTING



1) Nurture your child's self-esteem

Your words and actions have the profoundest effect on your child's developing self-image. Thus, praising your child for her/his accomplishments, however small, will make her/him feel proud, and letting your child do things for herself/himself will make her/him feel capable and independent. Avoid using harsh statements such as "What a stupid thing to do!" and also avoid belittling the child by comparing him/her to another child. Let your child know that everyone makes mistakes and that you still love him/her, even when you don't love her/his behavior.

2) Catch your child being good

Statements appreciating good conduct of your child are a very effective way to encourage good behavior. Make a point of finding something to praise every day. Be generous with rewards - your love, hugs, and compliments can work wonders and are often reward enough.

3) Set limits and be consistent with your discipline

The main aim of discipline is to help children choose acceptable behaviors and learn self-control. Children need limits

to grow into responsible adults, and they may test these limits at times. House rules will help children understand your expectations and develop self-control. Consistency is the most essential factor when it comes to disciplining your children. Stay consistent with your rules and s/he will have a better understanding of how to behave.

4) Take out time for your children

It is often very difficult for parents and children to get time together as a family or spend quality time together. But there is nothing a child would like more than the attention of her/his caregivers. Children who are not getting the attention they want usually go out of the way and misbehave as they believe that negative attention is better than no attention at all. You could perhaps set a prescheduled time and let your child know about it. For instance, tell your child that Tuesday is his special evening with Mother, and let her/him help decide how you will spend your time together. Look for other ways to connect with your child - put a note or something special in her/his lunchbox or school bag.

5) Be a good role model

Model the traits you want to cultivate in your children; respect, friendliness, honesty, kindness and tolerance. Do things for people without expecting a reward. Express thanks and offer compliments, and most of all, treat your children the way you expect other people to treat you. Remember, children learn by watching you, and the younger they are, the more cues they take from you.

6) Make communication a priority

Children expect and deserve more explanations than adults do. Parents who reason with their children allow them to understand and learn in a non-judgmental way. Lay out your expectations on the table, clearly express your feelings about them, and invite your child to work out solutions to their problems. Include consequences and be open to your child's suggestions, as children who participate in the decision making process are motivated to carry those decisions out.

7) Be flexible and willing to adjust your parenting style

You will have to change your parenting style as your child grows. If you frequently feel "let down" by your child's behavior, it may be because you have unrealistic expectations for her/him. Teenagers, for example, tend to look less to their parents and more to their peers for role models. Just continue to provide guidance, encouragement, and appropriate discipline while allowing your child to explore and earn more independence.

8) Show that your love is unconditional

When you have to confront your child, do not criticize, blame or find faults. These can lead to undermining self-esteem and resentment. Make sure the child knows that although you want and expect him to do better next time, you love her/him no matter what.

9) Be aware of your own needs and limitations as a parent

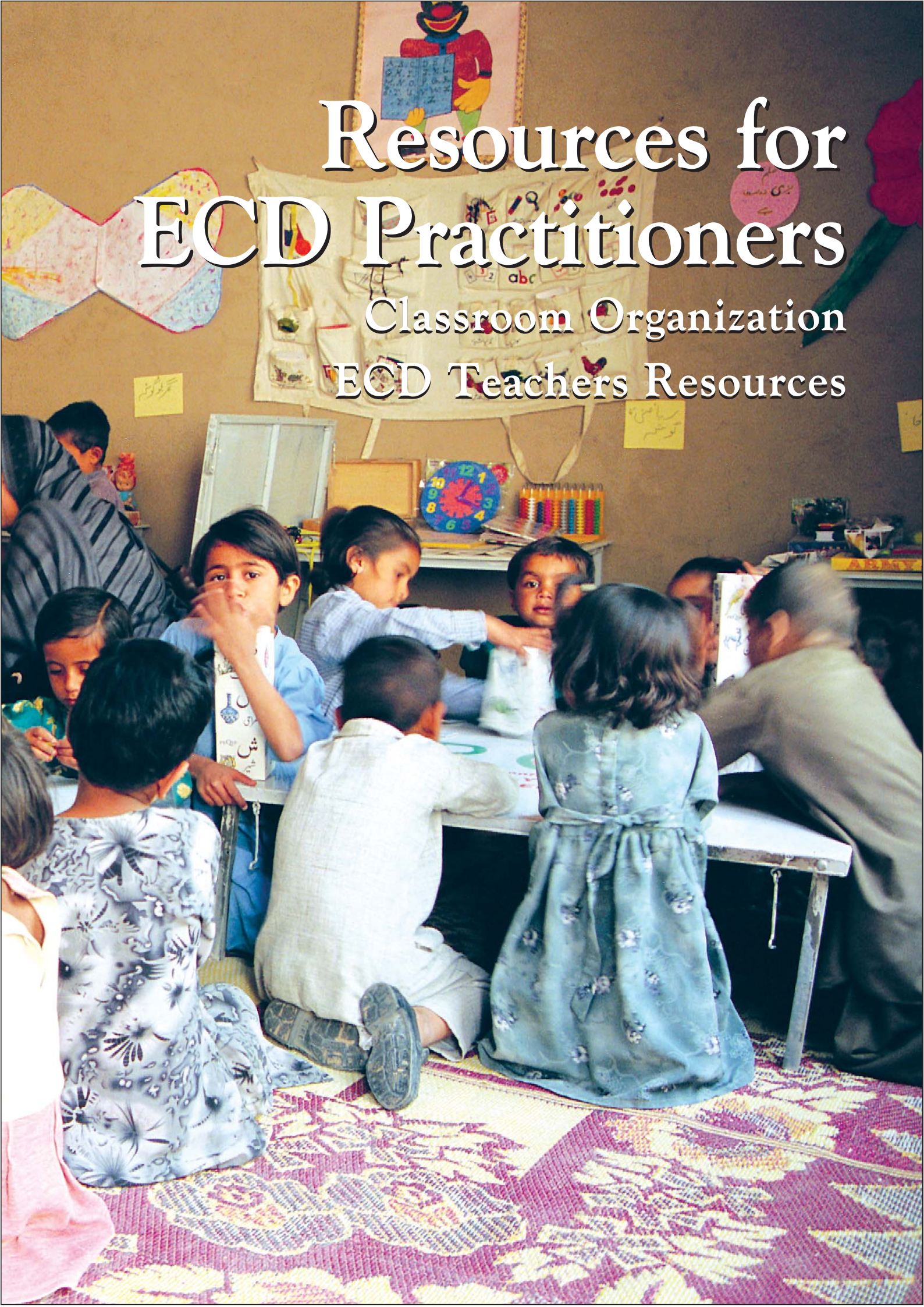
Everyone has strengths and weaknesses, and you, as a parent, are no exception. Try developing realistic expectations for yourself, your spouse and your children. Be forgiving of yourself, and try to make parenting a manageable job. Divert your attention towards areas that need the most attention rather than trying to do everything at once. Take time out from parenting to do things that make you happy, as that does not make you selfish; it only enables you to become a better parent at the end of the day.

SOURCE: Wayne Ho, MD, "Nine Steps to More Effective Parenting", August 2004.
http://kidshealth.org/parent/positive/family/nine_steps.html (26 August, 2005)



Resources for ECD Practitioners

Classroom Organization
ECD Teachers Resources



Classroom Organization



A classroom is an important part of a child's learning environment. It is therefore, crucial for the pre-primary teacher to provide a stimulating, pleasant, learning environment for the children. Learning corners are ideal work spaces for children where they can learn in simulated real life situations. Having designated areas or learning corners for specific activities and storage of classroom equipment is an efficient and effective way of organizing, and optimizing children's learning experiences. Learning corners encourage children to learn in ways that are natural to them; they allow children to work independently, in small groups or one-on-one with the teacher. Learning corners provide for a wide range of abilities and interests where children can progress at their own rate and repeat an activity for pleasure or reinforcement. Learning corners encourage children to be independent, make decisions and solve problems and also foster experimentation, curiosity and creativity.

CREATING LEARNING CORNERS (GOSHAS)

Working in different learning corners helps develop children's ability to:

- 1) Take initiative and make decisions about what they are going to do (plan) and how they are going to do it
- 2) Complete self-chosen tasks and review their plans
- 3) Question, experiment, discover and make sense of the world around them
- 4) Work, share and co-operate with other children
- 5) Work independently, towards mastery of different skills
- 6) Conform and adhere to classroom rules
- 7) Reason and express themselves in a wide range of naturally occurring situations, thereby building their self confidence

Depending on the size of the classroom and the space and resources available, you can set up three or more learning corners at a time and then change them, some on a weekly or monthly basis. Learning corners should be clearly separated by space in your classroom. Clear boundaries should exist between one learning corner and the other. A few of the learning corners that can be created are as follows:

Language Corner: This corner should be equipped with material related to increasing vocabulary and



learning reading skills.

Library Corner: This corner should be set up to promote the reading habit and to learn how to care for and value books.

Art Corner: This corner should provide children with opportunities for creative expression.

Math Corner: Appropriate material for the math corner includes objects that will help children grasp basic math concepts of size, shape, width, classification and number, by direct experimentation.

Science Corner: This corner should provide children with opportunities for observation and experimentation in order to understand the world around them.



Home Corner: The home corner should reflect the cultural background of the children where various kitchen utensils, clothes, small furniture and dolls can be provided. From a kitchen it can be later transformed into a shop, office or a doctor's clinic.

Even though the learning corners are separate, it is important to remember that the development and learning that takes place cannot really be separated, and that learning takes place simultaneously in different learning corners and areas of development.

SOURCE: Strong Foundations, A Guide for ECE Teachers
Developed by the Teachers' Resource Centre

ECD Teachers Resources

Pehla Taleemi Basta (First Educational Bag)



AN EDUCATIONAL KIT IN URDU, FOR PRE-PRIMARY TEACHERS

DESCRIPTION: The *Pehla Taleemi Basta* is an educational kit for young children and their teachers. This folding cloth bag contains ready to use learning material and teaching aids, including pictures, basic scientific equipment, beads and threading cards. The kit comes with a teacher's guide, which provides suggestions on using the material for initial literacy, numeracy and science activities. The *Pehla Taleemi Basta*, which has been designed after considerable research and usability testing, enables the pre-primary teacher with little or no training to instantly create an active learning environment in the classroom.

PARTICULARS:

Weight: 5 k.g.

Size: 130 x 77.5 cm (when opened up)

Price: Pak. Rs. 2,500

AVAILABILITY: The *Pehla Taleemi Basta* can be purchased from the Teachers' Resource Centre.

Language & Literacy

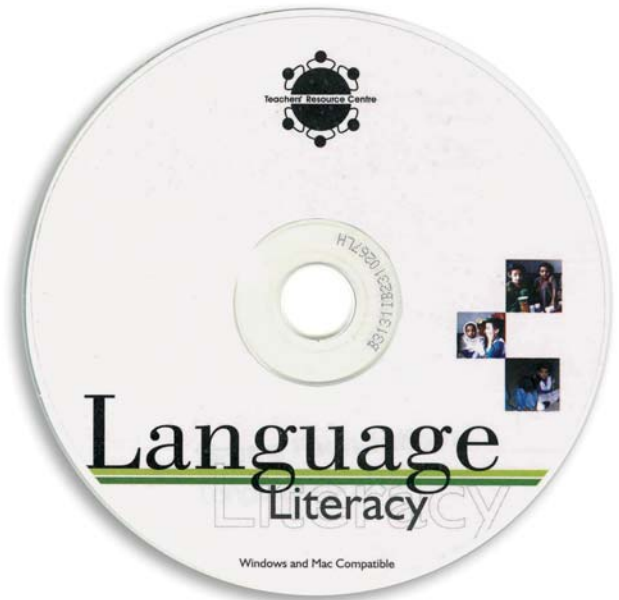
Training CD in English and Urdu
(Also available in video form at the same price*)

DESCRIPTION: This educational resource is a useful tool for early childhood educators and trainers. It focuses on the four major areas of language development: listening, speaking, reading and writing. This resource CD provides unique insights and examples for enhancing the classroom environment to facilitate young learners.

PARTICULARS:
Running Time: 25 minutes

*Price: Pak. Rs. 280

AVAILABILITY: Both English and Urdu versions of this CD can be purchased from the Teachers' Resource Centre. One week's notice is required for the video version.



The Learning Environment

Training CD in English and Urdu
(Also available in a video version at the same price*)

DESCRIPTION: The physical setting of learning space contributes dramatically to the interactions and experiences that occur in an early childhood classroom. Early childhood educators will benefit greatly from this breakthrough video, which highlights the importance of providing children with opportunities to manage their activities and time within a conducive and culturally relevant learning environment.

PARTICULARS:
Running Time: 25 minutes

*Price: Pak. Rs. 280

AVAILABILITY: Both English and Urdu versions of this CD can be purchased from the Teachers' Resource Centre. One week's notice is required for the video version.



67-B, Garden Road, Karachi - 74400 Pakistan
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URL: <http://www.trconline.org>, E-Mail: info@trconline.org

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



Releasing Confidence & Creativity Programme

BUILDING SOUND FOUNDATIONS FOR EARLY LEARNING IN PAKISTAN

The Aga Khan Foundation in collaboration with the Government of Balochistan and Sindh and the support from USAID started an Early Childhood Development (ECD) Programme in the year 2002 in the provinces of Balochistan and Sindh. The programme entitled 'Releasing Confidence & Creativity (RCC): Building Sound Foundations for Early Learning in Pakistan', has been implemented in 155 government schools in Balochistan and Sindh.

The programme aspires to benefit all children going to these schools especially those enrolled in *katchi* classes. Other important beneficiaries of this program include teachers, head teachers, parents, community members, Department of Education and even members of the local government. The RCC programme strives to work with target communities and parents in order to involve them in the early learning of their children. The RCC programme provides parents and School Management Committees (SMCs) tools and knowledge that encourage them to be active in their children's education, in order to increase

awareness about the importance of ECD. 155 SMCs/PTSMCs will be strengthened during the course of the program period. The RCC programme also encourages community empowerment by devolving funds to make necessary improvements to school learning environments that are prioritized by communities.

Teachers and school officials are perhaps the most visible engine for transformation of a school. The RCC programme has conducted trainings and follow-up workshops for government school teachers, community ECE teachers, ECD professionals and managers and community workers. New techniques will eventually allow the school children to explore their self-confidence and creativity in a safe environment, instigating a positive change in classroom environments and in student achievements and enrolments.

A notable accomplishment of the RCC programme has been with regard to its efforts to facilitate a community of learning around early childhood development. This



has been created through a regularly updated mapping exercise of ECD activities in Pakistan, two leading ECD magazines - *Nurture* and *Parwarish*, a pioneering ECD website - www.ecdpak.com, roundtable discussions, a networking forum for organizations working on ECD issues, and a growing network of informal connections that are sharing lessons and helping to inform policymakers about realities on the ground.

The RCC programme also focuses on creating a model that can be adapted and replicated to improve ECD initiatives all over Pakistan, hence, research is being undertaken to inform decision-makers of important issues related to early learning.

By far, one of the most visible changes the RCC programme has brought to the classrooms is the vibrant energy and color. Classrooms have been revamped in such a way that they have become more energetic, creative and conducive to learning. In addition, the RCC programme through its support in developing schooling capacities in teachers, seeks to make great use of the

creativity that can be employed while schooling children in their early years. This creativity has resulted in classrooms that are beautiful and welcoming to the child. Children are no longer forced to operate on strict schedules. With learning corners (*goshas*) in every classroom they choose their own activity. Such activities are also indicative of the transformations the program has brought to early learning. Children are found wholeheartedly singing in groups, using seeds and fruits to learn numbers, listening to stories narrated by their teachers, writing and drawing, threading beads and playing with other material. The RCC programme has demonstrated that it is possible to create nurturing and stimulating learning environment in a cost effective manner.

This activity based learning and child centered approach can be considered RCC's greatest achievement because children thrive in an environment that is nurturing, intellectually stimulating, enjoyable and interesting. Not only does this make learning much faster and more fun but it also supports the child in her/his emotional and cognitive development.



Interview with

Dr. Randy Hatfield

Program Manager, Education, Aga Khan Foundation, Pakistan

BY YOUSHEY ZAKI UDDIN

“At the community level, parents have expressed that they see a marked change and difference in their children.”

Q According to you, what have been the biggest achievements, especially in terms of parental involvement, that the RCC programme has accomplished so far?

A When we see parents moving their children from private schools back to government schools where RCC ECD intervention has occurred we know that parents are making independent choices about their child's education and this evidence should not be taken lightly. Most parents are "switched on" in terms of the future of their children. They are ready to meet, fund, and support any initiative that can add value to their children's future. In one year alone, over U.S. \$20,000 was donated by communities mostly parents who were committed to an approach that they see significantly changing their child positively. These funds went towards construction of classrooms for the *katchi* class.

Q How different is the second phase from the first? Are you intervening in different areas now?

A In Phase II, RCC is concerned with deepening the understanding of ECE concepts, improving the quality of delivery and assisting with the transition of our focus children from *katchi* class to the next levels.

The second phase of the program is focused on deepening school and community understanding of early childhood development not just the "entry to school" bit, but also the programs downward extension. For example, one of our technical partners AKU-HDP is concerned with child growth monitoring at the community level as an aid to "readiness for schooling". Providing advice and referral services to parents for health issues is a positive way to nurture a child to ensure that s/he is healthy once s/he reaches the doorstep of the school.

Quality delivery of classroom teaching is also a major focus of the second phase. The reality of schooling in rural areas in Pakistan is that children of all ages are sitting in the same classroom. This phenomenon is usually called multi-grade but we would suggest the name "multi-age". Providing teachers with skills and materials for dealing with this situation is critical. Aga Khan Education Services, Pakistan (AKES, P), Health and Nutrition Development Society (HANDS) and Teachers' Resource Centre (TRC) are working together on materials and methods that address the multi-age setup.

Also, the transitions from home to school and from *katchi* class to class one and two are valued as areas that need immense attention and support.

Phase II is concerned with taking the model of RCC instruction that was used in Phase I to higher levels of primary education. While we have not moved into any new districts, we are now delivering the programme to boys' schools in some of the same districts.

Q What are some of your key learnings and observations in the RCC programme at the community and policy levels respectively?

A At the community level, parents have expressed that they see a marked change and difference in their children. I had the opportunity to meet with both a mothers and a fathers group in interior Sindh who shared anecdotes of how their children had become more confident and creative. The fathers were telling me that their children were teaching them simple tips on hygiene like washing their hands before eating. Also fathers were being admonished by their children to be polite and say greetings when coming and going from the house. The children were teaching their parents the alphabets and songs which they had learned at school. The mothers independently validated the fathers' observations and were so excited that they could not resist sharing their own stories.

On a personal basis, when I walk into the RCC supported classrooms I see children singing, learning through play, exploring with activities at the *gosha* (corner) stations, talking to each other. All of this is because the teacher is allowing children to explore their own ideas. The spark in the children's eye is indeed the best indicator of success. I have been observing classrooms in rural Pakistan for over ten years and I see a real difference in children who have benefited from the RCC initiative.

At the policy level, I think the key learning is that advocacy is a full time job. It isn't enough to think that we (private sector) can work in an isolated project mode and then expect ECE teachers to be regularized, the age of entry



to school to be sorted out, or similar programs on a national level be developed. We always need to share the learning at the community level with the government, who are the national policy makers, to try to influence broader planning and interventions for ECE. The evidence on the ground is the substance that continually needs to be fed to policymakers and this is our most challenging responsibility.

Q RCC schools provide a welcoming and a child-friendly environment. With all these facilities, can the RCC programme be seen as a cost effective model?

A The schools that I have visited in both Sindh and Balochistan are indeed child-friendly but have been made so with low-cost, indigenous materials. In several schools where HANDS has been working, parents/communities volunteered to paint alphabets, verses, poems, pictures on the walls and these were government school buildings. In Balochistan, parents brought things such as apples from nearby orchards to energize the children. Again in Balochistan, a school teacher in Ziarat illustrated child-friendly environment in a “dust bowl” school yard by asking the girls to gather in a circle and draw geometrical shapes in the dust...praising them as they completed their drawings. I indicated to the visiting government official that this is what we mean when we say “low cost”!

If we factor in ‘in-kind’ and cash support provided by parents that we have witnessed in this program, we see that the RCC model could be cost effective especially if the government’s recurrent budget covers the teachers’ salaries, training and a minimal amount for materials. But cost effectiveness should also be viewed in light of benefit to cost analysis in the long run. Evidence from other majority countries tells us that if we invest at an early enough stage of a child’s life the returns against even one dollar are multifold through savings due to controlled dropouts, lower health costs and lower social safety net expenditures on individuals when they reach adulthood. We hope to focus more on this cost effectiveness issue for Pakistan by the end of the RCC programme to inform the Ministry of Education.

Q How has the RCC programme been instrumental in involving the parents in their children’s school?

A As mentioned above, RCC programming has successfully encouraged parents to contribute in kind and cash towards facilities for the *katchi* class. Other avenues of inclusion have been through literacy programs that bring mothers of pre-school children together, also street theatre to share ECD concepts with communities where RCC schools are situated and so on. So you see, those of us who are planning are also called to be creative in developing ways that engage parents but do not burden them with added responsibilities that the school should be handling.



Q Who are the main stakeholders pivotal to the sustainability of schools that are child centered and revolve around basic concepts of Early Childhood Development?

A I think the answer here, really, is parents and caregivers. I think parents who are in a position to choose educational options for their children are certainly key stakeholders. The problem with a sustainable school model is the lack of knowledge of just how important an intervention at this level is and perhaps how to go about advocating this at the school level. Historically, pre-school in Pakistan has not been viewed as important therefore some parents may be indifferent to such programming without knowledge of the benefits that might occur from our interventions. If knowledge is there, then the demand of communities for this support to pre-school could ensure that district officials are kept accountable. This does not abdicate government and school officials of their responsibilities for providing quality services at this level. But the pressure needs to genuinely come from parents/communities on an ongoing basis.

Q How can the RCC model be scaled-up?

A The RCC programme has taught us that two major ingredients are important for working at the pre-school level in government schools: proper space and trained teachers. So our program has set about to develop some low-cost models to ensure that these two aspects are corrected. I don’t think the government could ever assume total technical responsibility for improving service delivery which is why a public/private partnership (PPP) is important with regard to particularly teacher training

and also for community mobilization. Some of our technical partners like Teachers Resource Centre in Karachi could support and strengthen government institutions like PITEs, GCETs and or provincial curriculum bureaus for specialized training in ECE teaching concepts and skills. TRC was responsible for working with the Federal MOE to develop the National *katchi* Curriculum. This is a fine example of a PPP. Scaling up the RCC model to a national level program would require that provincial governments allocate start up funds for *katchi* classes in their annual development plans and this could be done in a phased approach. Recurrent resources would also need to be allocated for early childhood and could be leveraged by agencies that are monitoring Pakistan's commitment to achieve the EFA covenants and goals. The choice to put resources toward ECE will be a hard one for the government as there are approximately 165,000 primary schools in Pakistan.

Q How does the RCC programme complement the Government of Pakistan's agenda on education?

A Chapter 5 of the National Plan of Action (2001-2015) for EFA lays out Pakistan's plan for early childhood programming for this decade. RCC complements this

plan by utilizing the national *katchi* curriculum, regular collection of statistical data from program schools, providing physical infrastructure support to participating schools, advocacy at the policy level through working groups and other fora, and simply providing direct resources to 155 government schools in Balochistan and Sindh. Our program is very much about public service delivery. Our private sector partners are working with district government officials to ensure close collaboration.

Constant communication, reflection and advocacy work will have to occur through all of our collective meetings, activities and gatherings. Not long ago I had the opportunity of engaging socially with the Federal Minister for Privatization. Not having too much else to discuss with him, I began to talk about social development in rural areas and the need for supporting early childhood initiatives. Who knows, perhaps even early childhood classes could be privatized or partially subsidized through the private sector. Just a thought!



Reflections from the Field



The Releasing Confidence and Creativity (RCC) programme, with its experience at the grassroots level, realizes the importance of involving the community and parents in running Early Childhood Development (ECD) schools successfully. To increase parental participation, parents are being encouraged more and more to contribute towards better and more effective functioning of the schools. Here are a few examples of the parental involvement efforts that have been generated in RCC schools.

Parental involvement in schools

Since most of any child's early years are really spent at home, it would be an honest assumption to add that parents are definitely the greatest source of knowledge. In the RCC programme to fully incorporate the parents interests in their child's learning, parents have been encouraged by the teachers to be frequently involved in the classrooms. This has benefited the children's learning environment as the RCC schools have been actively engaging parents as learning partners. There are various examples of parental involvement in Sahib Khan Mirani and Mir Mohalla, two places in Hyderabad taluka where mothers are usually invited into the classroom to teach students how to make clay toys to diversify children's learning experiences. Similarly in Jaiando Halepoto, parental involvement is such that a student's grandmother comes in to teach the practice of reciting the Holy Quran.

In Yaar Mohammad Kandra, story-telling at schools has become a major accomplishment of the fathers. Aqeel Baba, an elderly of the village, comes to the school regularly to tell stories to the children for their entertainment and their moral well being. Thus, Aqeel Baba is the epitome that presents the effective involvement of the elderly community members and their valuable indigenous knowledge. This participation is not merely restricted to the men of the family. While the government teachers involved in the RCC programme are engaged in training, many mothers and sisters are fully involved as teacher substitutes on a voluntary basis, showing their keen interest in their children's education.

Food for thought...

Khan Bibi is an active member of the school committee of Killi Ulais Khan Mengal Government Girls School. Though she belongs to a humble economic background her son and her four daughters all regularly attend school. One of her daughters was initially not interested in the ECD class and used to throw tantrums when asked to attend school. The same daughter now happily studies in the school. She takes part in different class activities and thoroughly enjoys using the material available in the classroom such as colorful toys, pictures, storybooks and charts. Khan Bibi has seen a lot of improvement in her daughter's behavior since she began attending school. She realizes that the RCC school is providing a strong basis in building the capacity and confidence of children, hence making them ready for school.

Besides her motherly duties Khan Bibi is also working as a cook at the local primary school, which is also implementing the Tawana Pakistan Program, serving nutritious food to all students including those in the ECD classroom. Owing to her job, she has observed the benefits the RCC initiative has had on all the children. She has noticed that children who go through the ECD classroom structure are more confident with their skills and they show more enthusiasm and curiosity towards exploration and learning. Her faith in the programme has led her to suggest that the ECD classroom should be present in every school of the country. She regularly attends all school and community meetings and is keenly interested in educating her community's children. She also motivates others families to enroll their children in the ECD classes.

SUBMITTED BY

AGA Khan Education Services, Pakistan
(AKES, P) &

The Society for Community Support to
Primary Education in Balochistan (SCSPEB)

Early Childhood Development Counts

Early childhood is defined as the period between the ages of conception to age eight. This is a very crucial time as far as the development of a child is concerned. Early Childhood Development, or ECD, encompasses the essential support and nurturing a child needs to thrive during the early years of a child. Also included is the support of the family and the community which is needed to promote the healthy development of the child. The child, during this time, should be provided with opportunities for exploration, play and active learning.

ECD offers an integrated approach, as it includes health, nutrition and intellectual stimulation. What needs to be noted here is that this multi-faceted approach towards the development of children does not pertain only to children, but also to mothers and other caregivers, family members, community members, teachers and healthcare providers. It is obvious that ECD benefits more than just children; adults, communities, and the entire society in general can feel the positive impact of ECD programs.



Children

Improved health due to increased chances of survival and reduced morbidity benefit children directly. ECD programs work to help improve the children's nutrition, their hygiene, and even their overall physical development. These programs also help improve not only the children's ability to think and reason, but also their relationships with others, their self-image and sense of security and their language and communication skills.

Adults

Adults experience an enhancement in their general knowledge about not only their children's health, nutrition and hygiene, but also their own. They will also find an improvement in their attitudes and practices towards health and hygiene, preventative medical practices, nutrition and diet. Moreover, their relationship with their children, their spouses and their peers will improve as a result of participating in ECD programs.

As a result of such an all-embracing approach that ECD adopts, programs in ECD create an environment in which protection and support for the issues of children's health, nutrition, psycho-social and cognitive development are given their due attention. ECD programs are child-friendly, family-focused, and community-based, which implies that they consequently strengthen ongoing social service programs and improve the physical and mental capacity of the community's children.

Communities

Communities can benefit in terms of an improved physical environment as a result of improved sanitation, creation of new spaces for play, and involving new, multi-purpose facilities for children to spend time in.

Increased social participation and improved solidarity of the community are also direct benefits to the community. Women's participation in community activities also increases. Furthermore, institutions within a community practicing ECD will be more efficient, more attentive to health, and will experience reduced repetition and drop out rate in schools. Organizations will become more effective and teaching and learning methods will be impacted positively.

Society

ECD results in a healthier population, which in turn is more productive. Reduced number of days lost to sickness, a more literate, educated population, greater social participation, an improved labor force and finally reduced social inequalities all result in a better and a more efficient society.

Even though there are a number of challenges that we face as far as investment in ECD is concerned, and there will always be something more immediate, there will never be anything more important than to convince society that the well-being of people, starting with the youngest of them all, is a central concern for the government and civil society. Rights, education, peace, social infrastructure and wise governance of nations all rest on the foundation of the youngest human beings, who will need to achieve their full positive human potential if a world fit for children (and adults) is to be achieved.

SOURCE: Early Childhood Counts



REVIEWS

BOOK REVIEW

BY BARKHA RAJWANI

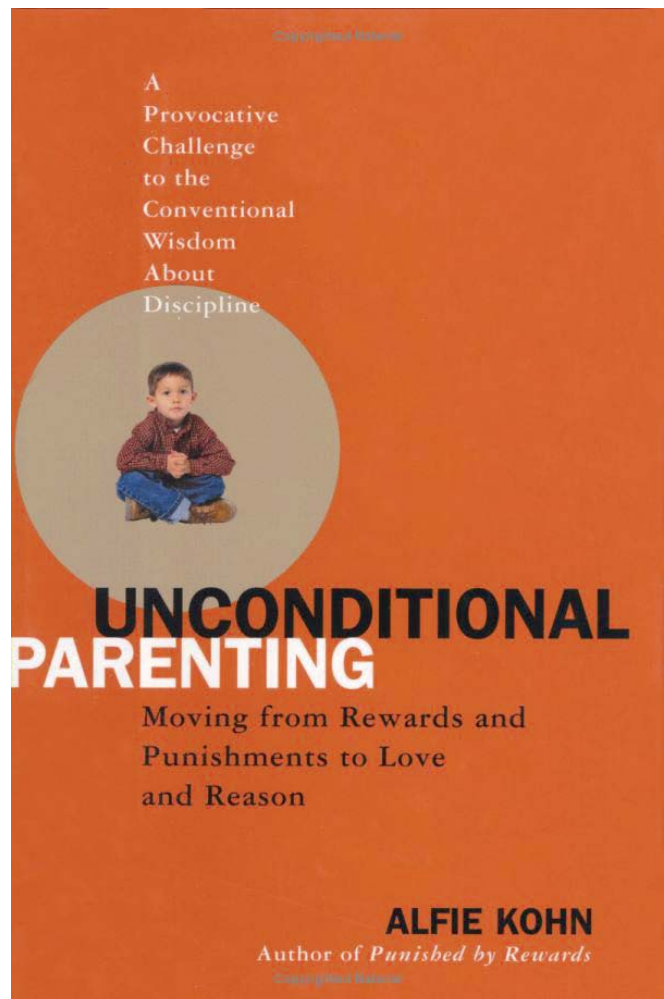
Unconditional Parenting

By Alfie Kohn

Most parenting guides begin with the question "How can we get kids to do what they're told?" From there, they move on to offer various techniques for controlling them. In this truly groundbreaking book 'Unconditional Parenting', respected educator Alfie Kohn begins instead by asking "What do kids need - and how can we meet those needs?" What follows from that question are ideas for working with children rather than doing things to them.

One basic need that all children have, Kohn argues, is to be loved unconditionally, to know that they will be accepted even if they go wrong somewhere or fall short of their expectations. Yet conventional approaches to parenting such as punishments (including "time-outs"), rewards (including positive reinforcement), and other forms of control teach children that they are loved only when they please us or impress us. Kohn cites a body of powerful, and largely unknown, research detailing the damage caused by leading children to believe they must earn our approval. That's precisely the message children derive from common discipline techniques, even though it's not the message most parents intend to send.

More than just another book about discipline, Unconditional Parenting addresses the ways parents think about, feel about, and act with their children. It invites them to question their most basic assumptions about raising kids while offering a wealth of practical strategies for shifting from 'doing to' to 'working with' parenting - including how to replace praise with the unconditional support that children need to grow into healthy, caring, responsible people. This is an eye-opening, paradigm-shattering book that will reconnect readers to their own best instincts and inspire them to become better parents.



WEBSITE REVIEW

BY YOUSHEY ZAKI UDDIN

ECDPAK Website

For parenthood the all-essential issue still remains that parents are still not sure what stage in the development of their child is most important and influential in building their child's physical, emotional and intellectual sides.

With respect to a person's most influential years most doctors and researchers claim that it is the first few years as a child that are most important in developing the physical, emotional and intellectual capacities.

What is passionately emphasized by the advocates of Early Childhood Development (ECD) is that a good start lays the foundation of a good life, and rightly so.

Every parent realizes that a child who is given ample affection, appreciation, attention, opportunities to communicate, play and learn, good food and healthcare is more likely to grow into a person with sound health, stable emotions and strong intellect.

It is exactly on these lines that ECDPAK.com - a website developed by Sindh Education Foundation under the Releasing Confidence & Creativity (RCC) programme - seeks to inform its users about the essence of ECD and related programs that aim to ensure that parents and teachers are aware of all needs of children that improve their learning skills, health status and emotional behavior.

With substantial sections for parents and teachers, the website is an amazing source of information pertaining to what parents need to know and include in their parenting styles and what teachers need to practice in the classroom. The website, Pakistan's first website on ECD, keeps full account of the fact that parenting is a practice that embeds in itself elements of culture, religion, the environment and domestic norms of society.



The website also extends detailed information on ECD initiatives taken by the government, various donors and other organizations.

A premier feature of the website is a section that invites readers to post queries related to child development. These questions will then be answered by leading ECD experts in Pakistan and their responses will be posted online. Other engaging sections include online versions of Pakistan's pioneering publications on ECD – *Nurture* and *Parwarish*.

ECDPAK also provides a more entertaining side to its educational content. It provides for its users quality photographs and downloadable wallpapers of children which study in ECD classrooms.

So don't forget to log on to www.ecdpak.com for more educational and interesting information on how children grow, learn and develop during the early years.



www.ecdpak.com

[Pakistan's Pioneer Website on Early Childhood Development]

The ECDPAK website creates awareness regarding the concept and benefits of Early Childhood Development (ECD). It features informative sections for Parents, Caregivers and ECD Practitioners. The website hosts an extensive ECD Resources section, Ask an ECD Expert section and much more...

Log on to
www.ecdpak.com
and discover the world of early childhood development