

childhood matters

— AIF's Digital Magazine —

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CHILDHOOD MATTERS

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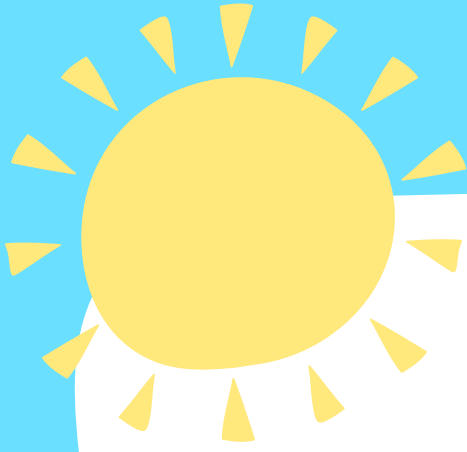
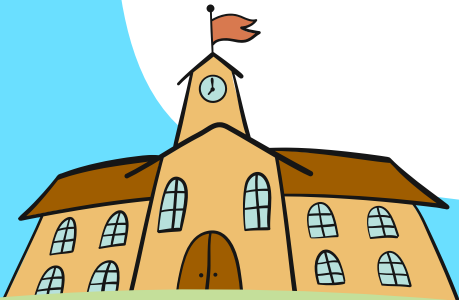


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About Us

Anthropos India Foundation (AIF) is a trust registered in Delhi since October 2011. Anthropology is one of the most vibrant and fascinating subjects. Anthropology deals with communities both big and small and people from all walks of life. It engages with people and communities for solving various social issues of communities by furthering understanding from an 'emic' perspective and respecting the local cultures and ecology. The philosophy, theories, concepts and methods of anthropology have made notable contributions in every field, be it law, human rights, public health, education and child rights. The aim of AIF is to promote the discipline of anthropology, its philosophy and methods. It also aims to conduct anthropological research; applied, visual and action research.

Childhood matters and the experiences of childhood play an important role in the making of an adult. The impact of childhood experiences will decide the personalities, attitudes, and actions of future adults. The current situation is grim because crimes against children are on the rise. Child rights are violated every second in this vast country. To have a safe, healthy and happy childhood

is every child's right. This digital magazine aims to promote creative articulation of children and with its humble efforts seeks to disseminate the knowledge and information related to child rights and protection. We are publishing the digital magazine "CHILDHOOD MATTERS" for the well-being of children to bring a positive impact on society. The methodology and approach of the digital magazine is participatory, where all the stakeholders will be involved: children, parents, teachers, child welfare activists, child protection professionals and all those who are concerned about children. Each one of us can contribute to this digital magazine, in the form of poems, stories, illustrations, paintings, podcasts, short films, images and many other forms of expression. We attempt to take into consideration the existence of multiple childhoods along with specific circumstances of children shaped by the intersection of caste, class, gender, ethnicity, religion and other specific context. We shall keep the diversity of children in mind and come up with meaningful, useful, and impactful content. This is a small effort to bring a small change by the AIF team to make childhood a better experience.

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Guest Editorial

Ms. Meenakshi Sahni,

Principal, Modern School, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi since 2011.

A Medley of Sorts

Evolution touches all facets of life as it has over the ages. The role of a Principal in a school consisting of children as young as 3 years old to adults touching the right side of 60 is commonplace. Several generations under one roof to be progressively led forward by a leader at the helm! Understandingly a typical day in my office as Principal feels like a jet flying at supersonic speed with 'pilot' ensuring safety of all passengers while keeping a steady keel and an unwavering eye into the farthest point on the horizon. There are moments, however, which necessitate touching down and navigating the runway to arrive at the 'destination'- a must if we are to remain grounded.

One such 'touch down' that led to a destination hither to uncharted is recorded thus. I was invited by a music teacher to listen to a young student rehearse a classical rendition on one such busy day. Mindful of complex equations, I entered the music room and sat down to enthuse the eager student with my 'important' presence. As the music wafted into my being, I found the mental haze lifting and a sense of appreciation drawing me. It was in the transporting moments that glided in the lesson that it is perception which determines our reactions and responses. While music can sometimes be jarring too but still called music, noise must enjoy the equanimity of being termed as music by people with a discerning ear. 'Noise' emerging from a class full of vivacious bundles of joy and energy, be it 3 or 18 or expressive or not so adult, can sound like music if listened to with empathy and wonderment.

Discerning music from noise, therefore, is both an art and a skill. It's vital if we wish to give it

our best as teachers in class or attending to other day to day requirements as exemplars of employees at our workplaces or even performing other worldly roles such as those of parents, siblings, friends and the likes. It's all in the mind. Listen. Not hear. Music or noise is a question for you to raise and answer. The melody you hear therefore shall determine the world you and others around you live in, especially our children.

It's their birth right to be bequeathed with a world that listens to the melody of their dreams, aspirations and tales of our failure too, sometimes. I arrived at one of my destinations that precious morning. Hope that this little experience of mine helps you find your touch down moment too!



Editorial**Dr. Sunita Reddy,***Chairperson, AIF, Associate Professor, JNU*

The world is diverse, unequal and hierarchical. Children too come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds with unequal resources and thus going through diverse experiences. One thing which is not under our control is our birth: where we are born, which home we are born into, born with a silver spoon or born in resource constraint and struggling families. The ecology- home, parents, siblings, neighborhood, community, nation, state, school, teachers, peer group all make a lifetime influence on the child, shaping the present and the future of the child.

The life experiences of children born and brought up in cities, towns and rural India are diverse. The issues, concerns and challenges are different and so are the opportunities. One of the articles shows the life of children from the tribal communities and their everyday activities. Despite resource crunch, the joy of living close to nature cannot be measured. To presume that they are in any way backward and unhappy shows our ethnocentric bias. With basic necessities fulfilled children can be happy souls. I had the pleasure of witnessing the happy children of Great Andamanese in 2005 when I was researching there. The whole debate on “development” therefore can be turned upside down with such an approach.

On the one hand we have millions of children who are deprived of food, adequate nutrition, grow up under-nutritioned or suffer from malnutrition while on the other the privileged children too are malnutritioned due to regular consumption of junk food. To direct our focus on this burning issue, a few articles on the importance of fitness, and the right kind of nutrition for children are included in the current issue of our digital magazine.

We are also bringing to you some interesting poems that sprouted from a child’s imagination, an article on digital technologies and another on the experience of motherhood and positive



parenting. AIF in this issue is delighted to introduce its readers to BUDS, an organization working for children BUDS and to share the poetry and messages written by children who are from BUDS centre of learning, in our magazine.

I am sure all of you will enjoy reading this edition and are eagerly looking forward to the coming issues.

Like many of us, I too wish to see the world transform into a better place for children. We seek your cooperation to make it a better, in any small or big way.

Greetings for New Year, 2023!

Love and Bestest wishes to all the children.

Dr. Sunita Reddy



Children's Corner

Me and My Imagination

By Niangthianhoih Guite,

10 Year Old, Springdales School , Dhaula Kuan, New Delhi

What a lovely day

What a lovely day
In the month of may
With children smiling
And birds chirping
Singing songs, all day long
What a lovely day
In the month of May

I am angry when I can't play
I am angry when I don't play
But I know that someday,
I'll grow up and be free to play,
When my emotions don't overtake,
And decisions on my own, I make!

The seasons

Summer is here
Summer is here
Lovely songs
That we sing and hear
Monsoon is here
Monsoon is here
Water here
Water there
After spring, winter is here!
Christmas lights everywhere
After that, New Year comes
Now the seasons start again.

My emotions

I am happy when I play games
I am happy when I win games
I am sad when I lose hope
I am sad when hope is lost



Fitness for Children

Ajay Gurung
(Fitness Coach)

I have been in the fitness field for almost 12 years. I have worked as a fitness trainer in many well known gyms (Talwalkar gym, Gold gym, Lifestyle gym etc) And along with that I also participated in some body-building competitions. Currently, I am freelancing in the fitness field.

Fitness : The state of being strong and healthy!

Fitness is an integral part of our lives. It is not a short term engagement or episode that occurs intermittently. Like we eat, sleep and manage our everyday tasks in a routine manner similarly we have to exercise in a regular manner. The day fitness becomes a part of your life like the other mentioned integral activities of our life from that day you will be able to understand the real meaning of fitness as fitness like life is not a destination, but a journey.

Physical fitness is a state of health and well-being. It is generally achieved through proper nutrition, regular exercise, sufficient rest along with a formal recovery plan and managing stress. All these things should be in equal proportion so that one can reap the optimal results. Therefore, *“Fitness is not a common thing, it’s a combination of everything”*.

In children and adolescents , physical activity improves by following the below mentioned steps:

1. Regular physical activity is one of the most important things one can do for one’s good health (mental & physical). Being physically active can help in managing weight, reducing the risk of disease, strengthening bones and muscles, and improving ability to perform everyday activities.
2. The most commonly experienced, science-backed benefits of physical activity on mental health are reduction in stress,



anxiety, depression, improved self-confidence and mood, better sleep quality, and better cognitive skills.

Consequences of not doing physical fitness:

Sedentary lifestyle or not getting enough physical activity has major implications on the health of children, including an increased risk of obesity. Obese children are more prone to developing high blood pressure, heart disease and type 2 diabetes. Research has also shown that this can impact children’s mental health and well-being, along with their academic performance.

Recommendations:

In the Physical Activity Guidelines for

Americans, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Trusted Source recommends children and adolescents aged 6 to 17, get at least one hour of moderate to high-intensity aerobic exercise every day. Strength-training activities that build muscle should also be part of a 60-minute exercise routine for at least three days of the week.

In 2012, a study was published in the *Journal of Sports Medicine and Physical Fitness*, in which researchers observed that if we compromise a child's physical activity and push them to study, the child may perform better for the time being academically but cannot sustain the output for a long-term.

One pertinent question I have been asked frequently by people of various age groups is: *"How fitness is different from being healthy?"*

My reply to the query always is, "The major difference in both the ideas is; first health comes into play and then comes fitness. Because the foundation of fitness is laid on good health and health is more internal than what reflects in an individual's blood reports. Organs function, deficiency in a body, illness or disease that troubles an individual, digestive issue etc all come under the ambit of health.

When we talk about fitness, components that are an integral part of it are: Endurance, Strength, Power, Balance, Speed, Coordination, Agility etc. If all these components are there in fitness and your body is not healthy from inside. Then there is a problem. That's why health comes first! To conclude with age old wisdom and a fact one should always remember is:

"Life doesn't give you what you want,

It gives you what you deserve !!"

So, folks stay healthy and stay fit.



Expert Column

Malnutrition In Children And Dietary Management

By: Dr R. Priyanka Musale

MD Homeopathy Consultant Dietician and Nutritionist Pune, Maharashtra

Rapid growth during infancy is followed by generally slow growth in children between the age group of 1-6 years. The child becomes more active and social as well as environmental influences have a great impact on the child's food behavior and eating patterns. The school age i.e., between 6-12 years is a latent period of growth and during this phase growth is slow and body changes occur gradually. **Life cannot be sustained without adequate NUTRITION** and nutritional requirement is same for boys and girls upto 9 years. In some parts of the world, malnutrition is a pressing issue. Because of famine that remains endemic in some parts of the world, WHO figures suggest that malnutrition contributes to 30,000 deaths every day in children under 5 years.

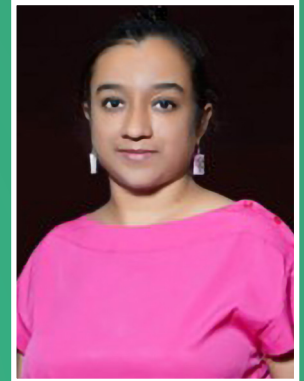
The prevalence of BMI < 18.5 kg upon M2 in adults remains as high as 20% and growth retardation due to malnutrition in children is as high as 50%. Childhood malnutrition is the underlying cause of mortality in 35% of all deaths of children under 5.

What is malnutrition?

Earlier the main cause of malnutrition among children, according to studies, was because of protein deficiency. However, subsequent systematic study of the habitual diet of these children indicated that the concentration of protein in their diet was adequate, but they were suffering from energy or food inadequacy since they were not eating enough of their habitual diet. Proteins form the main structural component of body cells and adequate intake is essential for health. Proteins are made of 20 different amino-acids, of which 9 are

essential and 11 are non-essential.

Malnutrition is the result of dietary protein deficiency. PEM is an important nutrition problem among preschool age children. Every living body needs vitality. It comes from ones food.



The people who have no/very weak immunity, what is it that they lack? They lack strength and power which comes from food. Foods provide heat for the body. There are serious deficiencies in the diet of the Indian people, particularly among the poor. Consequences of these dietary deficiencies are : multiple nutritional deficiencies in our country are predominant along with other parts of the world.

Malnutrition is global burden – more prevalent in developing countries, “often starts in the womb and ends in the tomb”. Protein energy malnutrition (PEM) affects every 4th child in the world.

- ▶ Protein Energy Malnutrition Among Preschool (under 3 years)
- ▶ Vitamin A Deficiency In School Going Children(3-16years)
- ▶ Iron deficiency anemia in all groups especially pregnant woman
- ▶ Iodine Deficiency In Endemic Goiter
- ▶ B-Complex deficiency is common in Indians as the maximum Indian population is vegetarian.

3 Major Indicators of PEM:

Stunting (low height for weight),

Wasting (low weight for height),

Underweight (low weight for age)

Clinical Features of Severe Undernutrition:

1. Loss of weight
2. Thirst, weakness, feeling cold, craving for food
3. Lax, pale dry skin, hair thinning or loss
4. Cold and cyanosed extremities
5. Muscle wasting, loss of subcutaneous fat, oedema
6. Slow pulse, low BP, small heart, distended

abdomen with diarrhea

7. Diminished tendon jerks
8. Susceptibility to infections
9. Depression, introversion, aggression at food sight
10. Vitamin deficiencies especially thiamine, folate and Vit C.

A Brief Discussion on the Ideal Diet Plans for Children in the Age Groups: 3-6 years

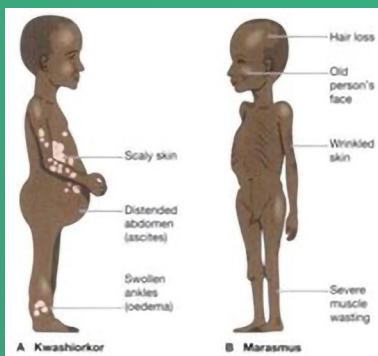
A DIET PLAN FOR AGE GROUP 3-6 YEARS

ENERGY REQUIREMENT 1600 KCAL/DAY

PROTEIN NEED 30 GM/DAY

(Note: These values are approximate and the nutritional requirements may vary from child to child)

MEAL	MENU	QUANTITY
BREAKFAST MID MORNING	MILK SHEERA CHIKKU, DRY FRUITS	1 CUP (150 ML) 1 CUP 1 SMALL
LUNCH	POTATO PARATHA RICE DAAL PALAK CUCUMBER SALAD CURD	1 MEDIUM 1 CUP ½ CUP ½ CUP 50 GM
MID AFTERNOON	MILKSHAKE	1 GLASS (200 ML)
DINNER	MIX VEGETABLE CHAPATI RICE GHEE DAAL CURD	1 CUP 2 MEDIUM 1 CUP 1 SPOON 1 CUP 50 GM
BEDTIME	MILK	1 CUP (150 ML)



Oral Health and Malnutrition among Children

By Dr. Shivani

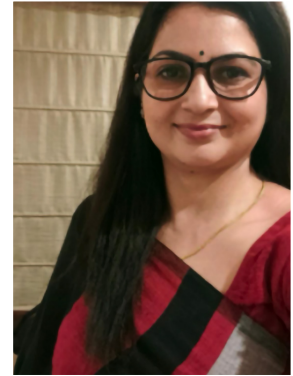
BDS, Oral and Dental Surgeon, Lucknow

Oral diseases are a major health concern in children. Specifically, dental caries is the most common chronic disease during childhood. Poor oral health leads to pain, lack of sleep and inability to chew. As a result, a child often misses school and other outdoor activities. Malnutrition has multiple effects on oral and dental tissues. Nearly one-third (31.4%) of Indian children between one to five years of age will be stunted by 2022, due to acute malnutrition (Global Nutrition Report 2021). Malnutrition and infection are closely linked as infection aggravates malnutrition and malnutrition abets infection. Malnourished children have higher prevalence of enamel hypoplasia (hypomineralized enamel) leading to early dental caries. Nutritional deficiencies also affect oral mucosa. The most commonly seen oral lesions among children are inflamed/fissured tongue (Iron and Vit. B2/B3 deficiency), mouth ulcers, cracked lips and inflammation in corners of the mouth (Vit. B1 & B12 deficiency), gum diseases/periodontitis (Vit. A, C and B6 deficiency). Calcium and Vit. D/K1 deficiency leads to poor jaw development and delayed eruption of teeth resulting in cosmetic disfigurement during adulthood. It not only affects phonetics and chewing but also leads to lowered self-esteem among children.

Tooth decay is an infectious transmissible disease. An infected or abscessed primary tooth can transfer the infection to the developing permanent tooth as well as other areas of the child's body and the brain. Low fat or lipid deficient diet is highly associated with pathologies of salivary glands. Foods retained on tooth surfaces increase acid production. Saliva prevents intra-oral reduction of pH (buffering) and also assists in removal of cariogenic bacteria from the oral cavity. Salivary hypofunction can also cause dry mouth, gingivitis, difficulty in swallowing, halitosis (bad breath), and difficulty in speech.

Healthy milk teeth are important for mastication so that essential nutrients are properly digested and absorbed by the gastro-intestinal tract. Thus, good oral health is directly linked to proper growth and development of children. Only nine percent of infants in India (6 to 24 months of age) received proper nutrition (Niti Ayog 2022). First tooth erupts between the ages of six to eight months. A 2016 Lancet study has shown that breastfeeding up to 12 months can ward off baby-bottle caries in a child. Adequate nutrition during pregnancy can prevent developmental anomalies in the infants' teeth. Parenting plays an important role in providing a balanced diet (unprocessed, less sugary, less sticky & less acidic) and promoting good oral hygiene among children. Night time brushing, dental flossing and tongue cleaning should be incorporated into a child's daily oral hygiene routine. Other factors contributing to good oral health among children are fluoride intake, use of dental sealants and frequent visits to the dentist. Apart from this, macro level factors such as lowered per capita availability of food, inequality, gender bias, wastage of food, and increased export of food grains has contributed to increased malnutrition among poor and marginalized population group.

In India, oral health needs a perception change and a comprehensive strategy to bring it to the forefront of other health issues. Programmatic interventions should be strengthened in four key areas of women's and child health - supplementary food, awareness about health and nutrition, regular health check-ups, and child-specific services. Delivery of oral health services must be shifted



from a dentist-centered system towards a community-centered system so that primary causes of poor oral health among children can be recognised in a timely manner. Rather than focusing on disease management, a

prevention-oriented primary care model of oral health must be considered to achieve good overall health and well-being of our children.

Experts View

Tribal Education: What We Think - What They Need

Prof. S. Bhagwan Roy

Founder Chairman, Indian Institute of Bio- Social Research and Development (IBRAD)

Early childhood is the most significant milestone of mental and emotional growth of children. What children see, listen to, feel and experience shapes their future. Tribal children are brought up in the forest villages in the background of tribal rituals, ceremonies, and various activities of communities around them. But those of us who are brought up in an urban educated world have a perception, meaning and purpose of education and grooming. The process of education as a system varies from culture to culture and context (time and space). The government with good intention establishes schools and appoints teachers for teaching the tribal children. But the tribal children have their own cultural mindset, traditions and aspirations to meet their immediate need for livelihoods in their own natural environment. The children of the particular vulnerable tribal group (PVTGs) are deprived of many goods and services, which has resulted in their economic losses, pre-agricultural level of technology, and declining population with a low level of literacy in comparison to others. Their literacy level is far from reasonable than the non-tribal.

The tribal children wake up with cock's crow and join their parents in forests or farms or tending the livestock. The children pluck leaves, collect the non-timber forest products and help their families as well as communities in many activities for subsistence. Neither parents nor children consider school-going as a dignified act in their society. The tribal

children in the school do not feel comfortable with the non-tribals. Rather, the children enjoy working with their parents.

It requires competent educators who can help tribal children of different cultural backgrounds, languages, beliefs. Shaping their naturally acquired art of expressions, engaging with their aspirations and working with traditions in order to fulfill their requirements of subsistence is important. The teaching methods, curriculum and timings have to suit the crop calendars and seasonal variations of the tribal ecosystem and traditional practices of livelihoods.



Parent's Perspective

Becoming Mother: A Joyful Journey

By: Karina Jasuja

Homemaker, Full-Time Mother of two

They say every woman is born twice. Once when she comes out of her mother's womb and again when a new life comes out of her's. Obviously none of us really know what it must have been like to take birth but I'm sure every mother has a clear picture of what it felt like to be assigned with responsibility for a new living creature.

Somehow I was never hit by 'Postpartum', maybe because it was after two failed pregnancies that I actually got to hold Aryan, my elder one in my arms. Yes, I had two miscarriages and sadly each time my fetus couldn't survive for more than two months and ten days. We all were overwhelmed at the first sight of our first child. I still can't forget the priceless expression of my husband holding our child in his arms, his eyes wet with tears of joy, surprise and gratitude, all emotions mixed, confused as to what to actually feel.

From never ending domestic chores, hormonal imbalances, sleepless nights, health issues to anxiety attacks. I had it all. My journey was no different from any other mother of a 6 - 8-month-old infant. It felt as if I was always racing against time. Trying to manage everything all at once. But I think that one thing that came across as the most complicated task is trying to figure out why your baby is crying. I'm sure every parent would agree to this. Each time I was waiting for my infant my stress knew no boundaries: my blood pressure rose and so did my voice. And more so if tears didn't come rolling down those little eyes out of hunger. The tranquility of the house after all is directly proportional to the well-being of the new member.

I sometimes wish they had Youtube and other such entertaining apps back in those



times. Where the kids get to learn through visuals and sounds keeping them involved and occupied. I realize the convenience of feeding a toddler when he/she is busy watching his/her favorite cartoon, poem or song. For me it was no less than running a marathon, trying to feed every morsel in Aryan's mouth whilst he would be on a tour of our home which comprised of 6 rooms, 2 living rooms, a huge garden and a backyard. Thanks to this drill I could shed those 18 kilos that I had gained during pregnancy, in spite of my C-section.

Amidst the joy of raising my little one who was by now 19 months old, came a shock. I call it a shock because then an unplanned pregnancy came like a blow. It was unplanned because not only did we not want a second child so soon, but also because I wasn't physically or biologically fit for this. Owing to my miscarriages which I had mentioned earlier it was mandatory for me to deal with my inefficiency to carry. According to my doctor, the deficiency of Zinc and Folic Acid is

a hinderance to the development and growth of the fetus leading to abortion. So I was advised to plan a kid only after undergoing a treatment for three months which included supplements like Folet and Zincovit. And since I had no plan for another child so soon, I didn't prepare myself medically.

I still remember rushing to my Gynac early in the morning with the pregnancy test tool that indicated a positive result. We went to the extent of suggesting a termination of pregnancy because none of us wanted to feel dis-heartened and miserable again in case the fetus is unable to make it to upto the entire term of 9 months. But our doctor, my angel in disguise, with a sweet smile that she never forgets to adorn in her calm and assertive voice said, "let's take a chance". That's it. All my doubts, insecurities, confusion, worries and anxiety vanished into thin air with this one simple but much needed advice. Yes, we took that chance and named the baby Arav after birth.

Arav means peace but for a hyperactive child this name was a complete antonym. And so, whenever anyone asked us as to why we name him that we would suggest that we knew he would need peace and hence the name.

By now I had two boys with an age gap of only 2 years and 5 months. The first one was well behaved, cooperative and mature for his age so I thought that if I can manage to raise one child so well I might as well raise two. But Nah! Arav was the exact opposite of his older sibling. He was a diametrically opposite; a cute little monster. He was so mischievous that I had to put Aryan to a play school at the age of merely two and half years. Everyday was a new challenge with Arav. As far as the other family members are concerned everyone was already preoccupied with Aryan growing up, which was very fulfilling for them. I am happy to say that everyone in the family had spent so much of love and affection on the elder one that my younger one had only mumma and papa for him. But that didn't make him any less special. I made it a point that he gets more attention from us.

I am lucky to have kids with such an amazing bond since they first laid eyes on each other.

Literally, I mean a boy who's just 2 and a half never objected or complained of having to share his mother's love, care and affection with his younger brother. In fact he always looked for ways to help me out with Arav. I think this is what makes him a super brother. And so, as a teenager too his younger sibling is all hearts for him. I pray their bond remains the same all life long. I say this because while Aryan is sweet, tactful, mature, well-spoken, obedient, understanding and adaptable, he fails to be determined and decisive. And Arav on the other hand is very motivated, quick learner, focused, responsible, witty and hardworking, he's immature and non-cooperative .

I tell them that they are like pieces of a puzzle, completely incomplete without each other and will make sense only if they are together. Therefore, this is the reason why I feel they can work wonders together.

A lot goes into how you want your kids to feel about each other. It's important to create a good rapport with your children and it's equally important to monitor the kind of relationship they have with each other. We all know what impact childhood experiences have on our minds. So it's very essential that our kids share a good, strong and positive vibe with each other. I don't remember gifting any of them on their birthdays without doing something similar or good enough for the other. We make it a point that no matter who's birthday it is we give presents to both. We never shop for just one, we buy stuff for the two of them together. We as parents leave no room for any kind of jealousy or negativity.

Besides I think for any relation to work well, equality is a necessary factor. This is why I never taught Arav, the smallest one to address Aryan as 'Bhaiya'. I want them to treat each other as equals. I am so glad that they are more of friends than brothers. Whenever there is a disagreement in the family it is always them versus 'me' or them versus 'us'.

Raising Children: The Positive Parenting

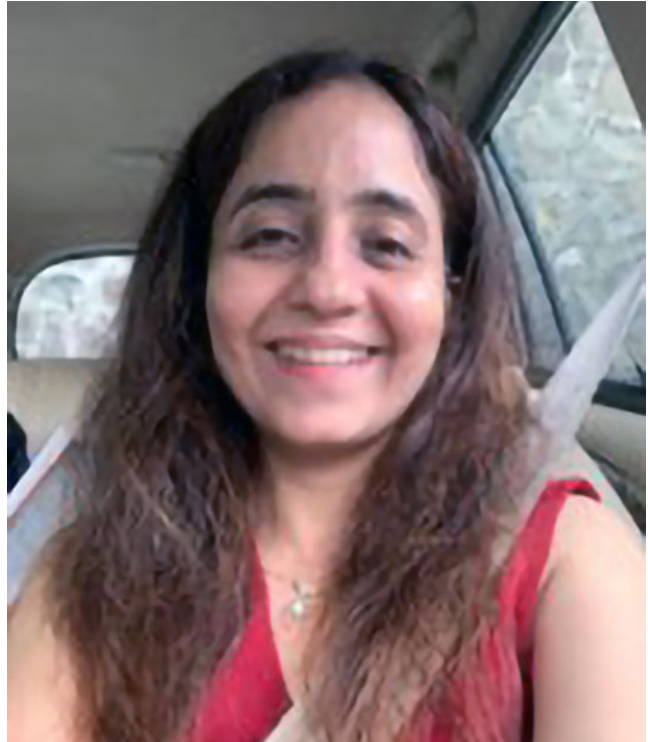
Girija Chhabriya

Dentist by profession, mother of one.

Handling children is a very challenging task, wonderful is the power of motherhood, that overwhelms the heart with emotions. Love is the first step to successful parenting; however, the path is thorny and full of pits & ditches and is difficult to traverse, it can only be delt with utter patience.

Over the years, I have come to rely on some of my rules and principles

- While maintaining a friendly relation with the child it is also necessary to be strict with the child.
- Parents should take a leading part in the management of a child's well being emotionally, physically, mentally etc.
- Children going through negative emotions need support from their parents, try to understand, validate their feelings, emotions by asking questions, do not judge the emotions or make the child judge his good or bad emotions.
- Relationships are always about give and take. Invest your time with your children. Training your children to express themselves will help them to develop confidence.
- Until the age of 5, children tend to engrave everything that happens in the house so it is important to have the right atmosphere in the house. If a child gets hyperactive frequently, you need to remain calm.
- As the child grows, it is important to make him or her understand responsibility.
- During the teenage years, due to hormonal changes, behavioural changes are natural, this is the tender age where children should be closely observed. parents should be well versed about their whereabouts, their company and so on.



- Never handover cash to children, always provide them with the facility of online modes of payments so the parents are aware of their children spending money.
- Passwords should be connected to a child's phone so as to have the record of their social media activities to have the knowledge of their online friends.
- Be bold to check your child's phone regularly
- Invest quality time with your child
- Do not say yes to everything that the child demands right from early childhood do not trust your child completely
- Encourage them to spend their free time learning musical instruments, reading singing ideas instead of using social media
- Encourage them to do breathing exercises to keep their minds calm.

Digital Technologies: Boon and Bane

Dr Shobha Vijender

A well-known professional social worker who has worked in various positions of responsibility in the field of child welfare. She is dedicated to the task of ensuring safety and wellbeing of children and continues to raise her voice for the same.

Globalization is taking over the world. We have access to anything and everything with a good digital device and internet. Adults have more access to world news, interesting content, and social media while children have more games to play and more funny videos to watch. It's easier for everyone to connect with their loved ones. From children to adults to the older generation, everyone is using the technology available in their hands according to their interests. However, this can easily turn into addiction.

In this age of digitization and the internet, the growing use of devices can easily turn into addiction and may go unnoticed for children. When a device is taken away from them, they might feel anxious or throw a violent fit, akin to withdrawal symptoms one may experience. Tiny tots are naïve and do not know that technology could be largely damaging for them. Adults may get confused, but they might not be able to recognize the downside of technology as it is a topic less explored. They are voiceless in a democracy as they have no voting right. Less and less children are seen out in parks and gardens as they prefer watching videos on social networking websites. They are missing out on the joy and adventure which childhood brings.

Now, the time has arrived when Indians must speak out to save millions of children from the war of digital encroachment which they are facing unknowingly. The last 10 years have been nothing less than disastrous for the development of Indian children whose parents are themselves misinformed about the digital revolution. These machines and devices which should ideally be making lives easier are now subtly controlling our lives. In every household including the families of humble backgrounds, children are eating food only with mobile phones in their hands, watching one video



after the other. Some of that content is not even meant to be consumed by children.

In the name of cartoons Tik Toks, Instagram reels, YouTube shorts etc. – which children always prefer to watch – have abusive language, scary depictions, abnormal food habits, obnoxious scenes, and deteriorating content. In some of videos, materials of all kinds, even food items, are shown to be crushed by pointed heels of the sandals or shoes of the adults.

Developed nations who have recognized this trend are spending a huge amount of their allocated budget on holistic education of children. They are ensuring that children are not exposed to visuals of this kind and are terminating the use of content showing uncultured scenes and uncouth language.

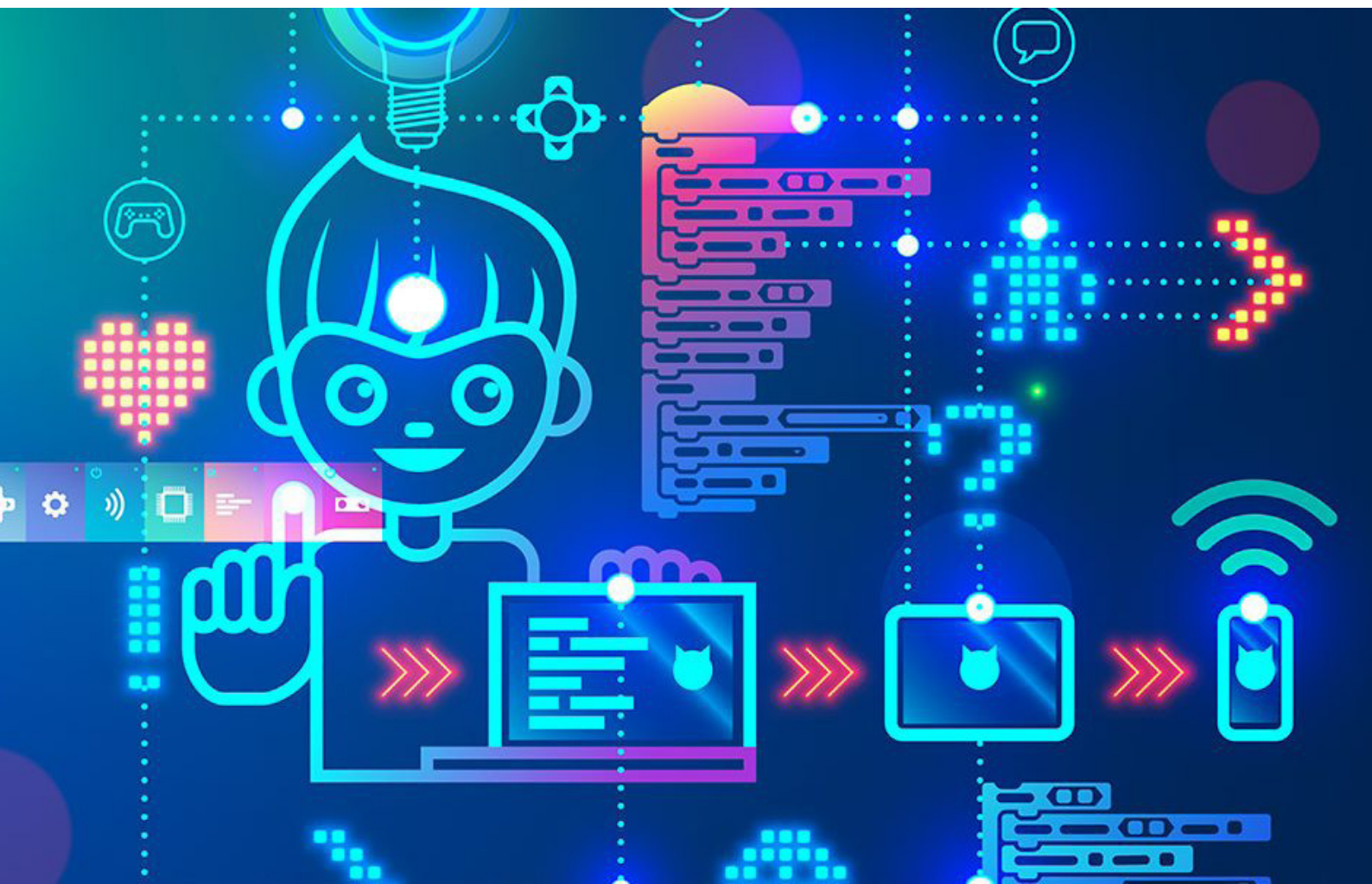
In the Indian situation, from shanty huts of urban slums to big houses, children are exposed indiscriminately to degrading culture along with their parents through unregulated use of social media and technology. Besides

media, the screen time in itself is also a point of concern for the health of children.

Parents can help regulate the usage of devices and limit the exposure of their children to potentially harmful settings both digitally and physically. However, there are people belonging to unprivileged sections of the society who are unable to do so for their children. There is an urgent need to give a healthy childhood to the children of millions of domestic workers, daily wage earners, factory workers and those mothers who are compelled not to spend time with their children when they come back from school. They leave them out in public parks or alone at home without supervision. When they are out, they can fall prey to predators like pedophiles, child traffickers, kidnappers, and in some cases can also get exposed to violence, abusive language and even pornography. They are exposed to such harmful incidents due to the lack of a caregiver. Even the toddlers and preschoolers can also get exposed due to lack of awareness among the adults about the detrimental effects on the mental wellbeing of the tiny tots.

We can suggest the Government of India as well as the State Government to really think of creches for women workers in their workplace or nearby. In that way, children can still be under the protective gaze of their parents and live in a safe and caring environment. Parents, especially mothers, will be able to breathe a sigh of relief knowing that her child is safe and she can easily reach him or her if she wants. We must be vigilant and practice caution with technology as well. Managing screen time and regulating content viewed by children should be prioritized. Adults can set a healthy example to the young ones by practicing it first.

A child should be seen as an asset to the country, a human who needs care and protection to flourish and thus should not be exposed to materials unsuitable for his/her age. Of course, that is nothing less than utopia. But now is the time when community togetherness and sympathy for the well-being of little ones should be encouraged.



NGOs Working With Children

Bal Umang Drishya Sanstha (BUDS)

Bal Umang Drishya Sanstha (BUDS) is an organization, run by pediatricians and medical doctors, and works for the children and young women from the marginalized communities in the urban slums of Delhi. Currently it is working in three districts (South Delhi, North Delhi, and North-east Delhi) of the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCT of Delhi), as well as in 34 villages in the aspirational district Nuh (earlier known as Mewat), Haryana.



Fig. Children at Buds Centre

BUDS Envisions a society where all children and young women are provided every right regardless of their socio-economic standing. The mission is to Prevent disease, Promote access to healthcare and Prompt treatment (3Ps) for the marginalized, Promote Right to Education for children and young women in low resource setting, Prevent violence against young women and children, Develop partnership with Government, allied NGOs, media agencies and civil society to sensitize and bring about behavior and attitudinal changes to realize the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC); ensure India achieves the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030

BUDS conducted medical examinations, prevention and response activities, and

education and training of frontline workers, allied professionals, and community influencers in three districts of NCT-Delhi and the aspirational district Nuh in Haryana. More than 1,32,170 children and community members from marginalized communities received primary health care through the BUDS health van. They cook meals for 346 children and youth every day. They also provide educational support to 271 marginalized children and counsel 47,056 women and girls to prevent violence in the urban slums of the NCT of Delhi and Nuh.

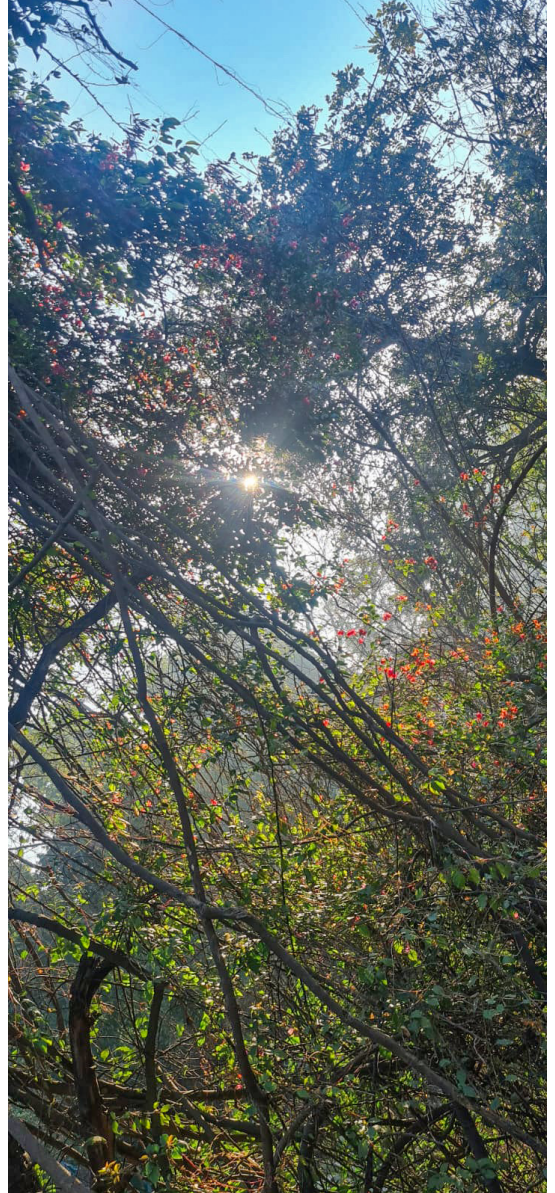
The core areas of social change are child health and nutrition, Education and vocational training, prevention of violence against women and girls and community based research. For more details about the organization one can see their website- <https://budsnngo.org>



बोलता बचपन (Hindi Section)

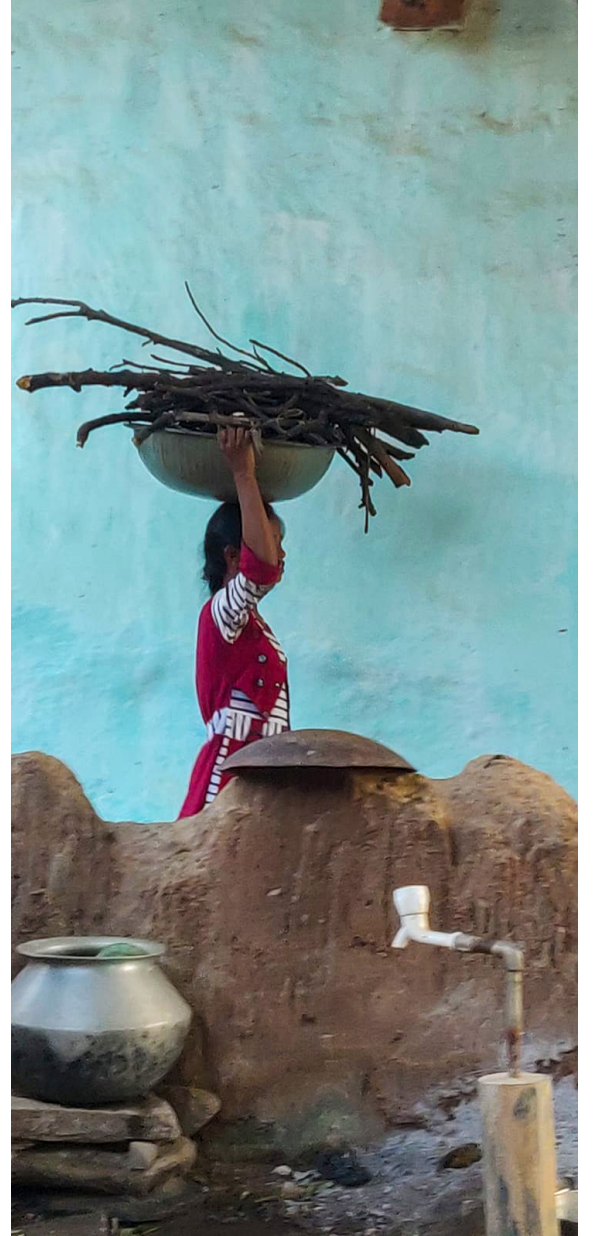
कविता - पेड़ों का महत्व (निदा अंसारी)

धरती की यही पुकार
पेड़ लगाओ बारम्बार
आओ मिलकर कसम खाए
अपनी धरती हरित बनाए
धरती पर हरियाली हो
जीवन में खुशहाली हो
पेड़ धरती की शान
जीवन की मुस्कान
पेड़ पौधों को पानी दे
जीवन की यही निशानी दे
आओ पेड़ लगाए हम
पेड़ लगाकर जग महाका कर
जीवन सुखी बनाए हम
आओ पेड़ लगाए हम



शिक्षा पर कविता (तब्बसुम)

बहुत जरूरी होती शिक्षा
सारे अवगुण धोती शिक्षा
चाहे जितना पढ़ ले हम
कभी न पूरी होती शिक्षा
शिक्षा पाकर की बनते है
नेता अफसर शिक्षक वैज्ञानिक
मंत्री व्यापारी या साधारण रक्षक
कर्तव्यों का बोध कराती शिक्षा
अधिकारों का ज्ञान दिलाती शिक्षा
शिक्षा से ही मिल सकता है सर्वोपरि सम्मान
बुद्धिहीन को बुद्धि देती अज्ञानी को ज्ञान
शिक्षा से ही बन सकता है
भारत देश महान



Courtesy: Mini

कविता- मत बांटों इंसान को (शाहबाज़ खान)

मंदिर-मस्जिद-गिरिजाघर ने

बांट लिया इंसान को

धरती बांटी, सागर बांटा

मत बांटों इंसान को।

अभी राह तो शुरू हुई है

मंजिल बैठी दूर है

उजियाला महलों में बंदी

हर दीपक मजबूर है।

मिला न सूरज का संदेशा

हर घाटी मैदान को।

धरती बांटी, सागर बांटा

मत बांटों इंसान को।

अब भी हरी भरी धरती है

ऊपर नील वितान है

पर न प्यार हो तो जग सूना

जलता रेगिस्तान है।

अभी प्यार का जल देना है

हर प्यासी चट्टान को

धरती बांटी, सागर बांटा

मत बांटों इंसान को।

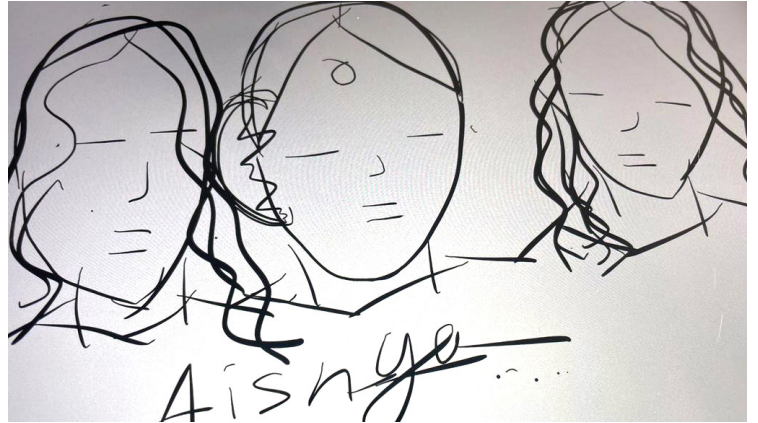
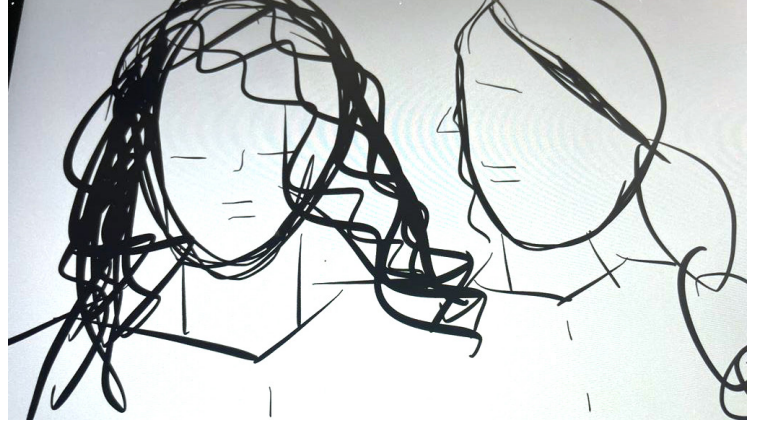
साथ उठें सब तो पहरा हों

सूरज का हर द्वार पर

हर उदास आंगन का हक हो

खिलती हुई बहार पर।

रौंद न पाएगा फिर कोई



Courtesy: Ashwarya

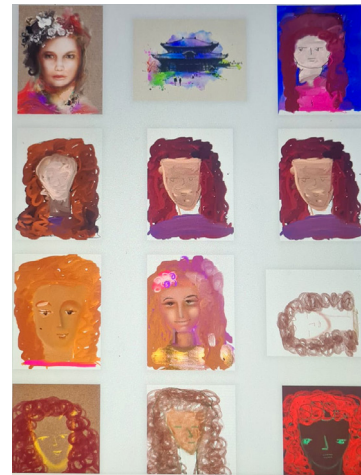
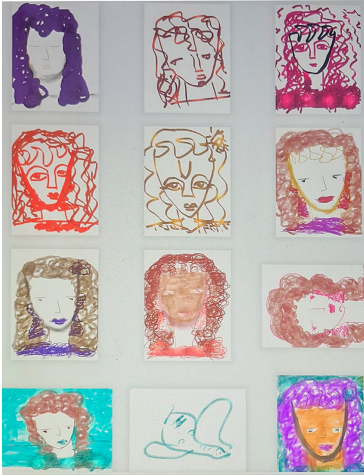
मौसम की मुस्कान को।
धरती बांटी, सागर बांटा
मत बांटों इंसान को।

मेरा सपना (नाजनी)

मेरा नाम नाजनी है। मैं सराय काले खान में रहती हूँ। मैं आपको अपने सपने के बारे में बताना चाहती हूँ।

मेरी उम्र 16 साल की है और मैं कभी स्कूल नहीं गई। मैं घर में ही पीस बनाने का काम करती हूँ और घरों में काम करने भी जाती हूँ। मुझे लगा मेरा जीवन ऐसे ही बीत जाएगा लेकिन जब से मेने BUDS सेंटर में आना शुरू किया है तब से मेरा जीवन और मेरी सोच बिलकुल बदल गई है। क्योंकि मुझे यह नहीं पता था की मैं बिना स्कूल गए भी पढ़ सकती हूँ।

बचपन से मेरा यह सपना था की मैं पुलिस बनूँ। लेकिन मैं यह उम्मीद छोड़ चुकी थी। लेकिन जब से पेस सेंटर से जुड़ी हूँ तब से मुझे यह यकीन हो गया है की मैं जल्द ही अपना सपना पूरा करूँगी। क्योंकि मेरे माता पिता ने भी मुझे यंहा इसीलिए भेजा है कि मैं अपना अधूरा सपना पूरा कर सकती हूँ।



Courtesy: Ashwarya



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Feedback Page

Childhood matters is a beautiful magazine with important learnings and experiences from different people in our society. It's a magazine that covers an array of topics about a child and things that are important for their overall development. It's helpful in sensitizing our society while providing the knowledge also. What I like most about the magazine is that it allows all of us (kids, parents, educators, professionals) to learn, participate and contribute equally, which makes this magazine even more interesting and unique.

It was great experience for me to write for the past issue in the magazine. I would love to contribute and write in future also ma'am. Please keep me in your thoughts for the future issue. Thankyou ma'am

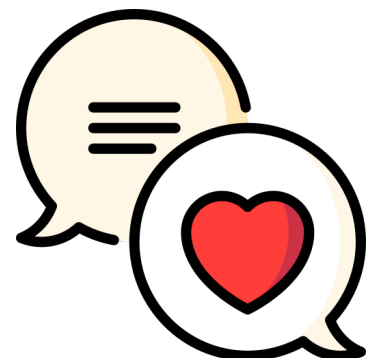
- Sangeeta Sahni

Childhood Matters is a complete read because it includes the perception and views of a plethora of contributors especially the kids.

- Aditi

The digital magazine 'Childhood Matters' has a lot to offer to the discipline and, more importantly, to the children themselves, because it allows them to express themselves, share their thoughts, and creativity, as well as learn from the perspectives of teachers and experts of various fields.

- Habiba Haroon





WRITE TO US

If you have any suggestions, comments, ideas, please write to us:

aif.digitalmagazine@gmail.com

Anthropos India Foundation is a trust, since 2011 doing action and applied research. It is a foundation, which works for the social cause based on ethnographic research, skills and capacity building, advocacy, policy and social interventions. The purpose of the foundation is to bring positive change, especially in the lives of women and children. You can visit and to engage meaningfully, become member and access our e-resources and get notification of our programs, workshops, lectures series and research projects.

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childhood matters

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