

In concentration and silence we must gather strength for the right action.
-The Mother

Children are made to recollect these powerful words of Mother when they were asked to write a quote on the board. They got fully involved in collecting the message, writing it on the board, remembering and understanding its meaning.

These 13 kids of concentration group are cheerfully growing in a happy and healthy environment.

They are energetic, strong and assertive.

Sometimes they are very funny and share funny stories and jokes with the Diyas. They are in a phase to laugh and enjoy days with friends. Due to this sometimes they avoid learning new things.

As they are growing they want to make many more friends. Since they stay together in the hostel also, they imitate each other's actions and forget their responsibility at times. They look for company to do all activities.

Though we emphasise timeliness, at times they don't value time. Though they do understand the value of being disciplined still they are not able to apply it in their daily life.

Here are some extracts from their writings;

"I feel I am a disciplined child when I obey my Diyas, and when I concentrate in my work. A disciplined child never wastes time; he always comes to school on time and focuses on his work".



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They have reached an age, most of them don't bother when Diya's raise their voice. Some still do care. Each individual needs different response from the diya's to change his/her way.

So we Diya's have to be very conscious to deal with each individual. It has been observed that they have brought about some changes in their behavior. Now they are not very stubborn but they start ignoring when something goes against them.

They take time to accept new things. They are energetic but now they need to utilize their energy and time in a positive way.

Some months back we started a story telling session for the children where all children get a chance to tell a story in front of the whole school during assembly. Concentration group children were not keen on this activity. Very few children confidently told stories. Slowly they started participating in this activity and are now trying their best to speak confidently. Even now a few girls are stepping back for their story telling turns.



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The children of this group have improved their writing skills. Sometimes they struggle when they have to explain something.

All children are not so open to do science. Mostly the girls keep quiet in the science class. To understand the concepts they need to do a lot of objects, models, and experiments. Each child also needs personal attention.

Some of the children are independent but some need a lot of help and encouragement.

We are trying to build the habit of using maps, dictionary and encyclopedia. Now children are able to find their subject related books and refer encyclopedias. But they still need to be a good friend of the library. Mostly when they go to the library they like to see pictures. Once in a discussion they said "First we pick up a book and look at the pictures. If we like the pictures we start reading it". Some said "we try to draw the pictures and if we don't get a notebook or pencil we issue the book and pick up another book". And often they pick up books like Disney, Comics, Amar Chitra Katha and magazines.



PROJECTS

In the Earth topic we started the geography part with different landforms. First we took up Oceans. Children learnt "how do oceans form". Here, they took a lot of time to visualize and understand the formation of oceans. But some children were forgetting the sequence of this formation though they could understand the concept.

Mountains: We covered the concepts of all five types of mountains such as dome, fault-block, volcanic, plateau, and their formations. Formation of mountains were shown to them through models. As they understood how different mountains form, they started recognizing the hills/mountains near school.

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They went for a walk and made pictures of different mountains. Later some children presented their understanding also through models.

Deserts: We started the topic with a lot of questions children had. Questions like: what is a desert? How do deserts form? What is the climate of deserts? How many types of deserts are there? How do animals and plants survive there etc.

Children used different books to look for the answers, we shared our findings and learning's in the class. But they were stuck about formation of deserts.

So we introduced the globe (Equator, Tropics, Hemisphere, Climate Zone). After which we discussed different reasons for formation of deserts. We also did the water cycle through an experiment. Then the children wrote whatever they had learnt, experienced, experimented, shared, modeled in their own words. They also enacted taking roles of cloud, rain, dry air, mountains etc. Children had internalized some knowledge, they were participating well in the quiz about deserts.



INDIA: Under the project "India", we started with different continents of the world as the students could not rightly differentiate between continents, countries and states.

Activities included looking at the world map and maps of continents with each team listing out all the countries in a continent, finding capitals of different countries, spatially locating a country etc.

Next, we looked at India and its neighbours on the map with each child "performing" a different country to accurately convey the size and geographical location of that country. In pairs, the students were assigned to study various geographical features of India followed by a map exercise.

However, some gaps in their understanding were found. Children often confused continents with countries, countries with states and likewise. To address them, we started with a continent case study. The continent of Africa was introduced with couple of stories [Kalahari tribesmen] and discussion about major rivers [Nile], landforms [deserts, rainforest], animals [wild beast, elephants etc] trade, religion, monuments, clothing etc. Short film clips [Hitchcock's The man who knew too much] that aptly introduces Africa to a novice were shown in class.

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Shanoor didi was invited for a guest class to share her experience of living in Kenya. A simple map exercise followed with each child marking out the important physical and political feature on the map.

Next, the children were asked to read short stories from around the world and write a brief report about the country's origin and its people. The final project is for each child to work on a continent and list a series of facts and figures about it. So what started as an India project has now morphed into Our World Project.



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English Language - The children of this group are split according to their English capabilities. Some are good with spellings and grammar, others are better at reading and still others are proactive when it comes to writing stories.

By and large, the group has made progress in the different facets of the language. They are now more confident with their speaking and have come out of their stubborn silence and resistance to speaking in English. Except one or two, most of them are still quite shy when it comes to performing drama though many of them are more vocal in class, expressing thoughts and raising doubts. Spellings are better and grammar comprehension has improved, though some are still bridging the gap of its practical application. In terms of writing they are made to come up with creative writing pieces of different themes and translate texts from Hindi To English.



Math – Some of the children of this group are doing mathematics from Book-IV and some have started doing Book-V. The children have developed their understanding. Confidence level in doing operations has increased. Most of the children are learning slowly.

The group worked on the topic - market place. Each child of concentration group set up a shop and children from other groups came as buyers.

Before setting the shop the children collected different articles and marked their selling price. By doing selling and buying they practiced how money transaction are done along with operations on money.

Though all the children have done basic operations on natural numbers some children need help in division of bigger numbers.

Calculating money according to the weight of different measure of items was difficult for them. Lots of practice was done in class room after shopping.

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Very few have understood the fractional numbers and others still need help in manipulation. Word problems are a challenging area for them. They need constant help in understanding the language to transfer it into a mathematical calculation. Children need more clarity in understanding and practice on topics of measurement, time and money.

The children in the group played different kinds of math games. The instructors also helped them to play games based on practical applications in order to increase their speed and accuracy in math. A Diwali Mela was done, where in fun, math, magic games were conducted by the New Creation children. Successful children were given paper money as prize so they could buy some edibles from the Faith Group children who had set up shops.

Most of children lack confidence in measuring the weights, time and other units. We did some exercises to improve their understanding. Games related to calculation of money, mass and weights etc. were done.

Children regularly play math games and do puzzles in the math lab, they also play monopoly and other games. They are learning to solve the magic triangles, magic squares, and enjoy chess and other board games of brain exercise

Gradually they are improving in confidence. But some of them - Padma, Sushila, Damru, Bhuvan and Kamal Lochan are still not clear about units of monetary, time and weight measurement.

Children were also being given some written as well as oral tests for evaluating their progress.

Mansi is the first child to complete level V book, now she will be doing Class VI book. Mahadev is going to complete the Book V. Basanti and Mohan are also doing well. Damru and Yamuna are trying hard. Vivek is also hardworking.



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Hindi Language - For the purpose of learning Hindi and Sanskrit the Concentration Group has been divided into 2 sub groups of 6/7 children.

For a group of six children - Mansi, Mohan, Basanti, Bhuvan, Padma, and Sushil we adopted the Class 5, Text Book- Rim Jhim for studying Hindi. In these 6 months we have completed the entire text book with its exercises. All stories were done. After reading and completing the activities, children also created their own stories and poems. We also read poetry using other books. Children enjoy reading and writing poetry. The group is writing poems to compile a poetry book of their group which will be kept in the library for other children.

Grammar book - Shiksharthi Bal Hindi Vyakaran Book has also been done. We have covered Language & Grammar, Phonology, Noun, Gender, Number, Case, Pronoun, Adjective, Verb, Tense, Adverb, Preposition, Conjunction, Interjection, Incorrect-Correct, Synonyms, Words with various meanings and Unseen passage. All the concepts are clear to them. Children are doing this book/level related exercises very well. Children have been given to do grammar puzzles for Noun, Pronoun, Adjective and Conjunction.

The children want to read by themselves. They enjoy reading Amar Chitra Katha, Ramayan, Panchatra, Akbar Birbal etc. They take Hindi books from the library to read independently. Children have improved their vocabulary through regular reading practice. They are even better than the New Creation Group.

Children are given to write essays of up to 300 words. They are given different topics to write on, but also exposed to different forms of writing (prose, poetry), made to associate writing with their activities and being introduced to rhyming words etc.

Most children's spoken Hindi is good. They speak full structured sentences and with clear pronunciation. Most children have developed a nice and clear hand writing.



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For the other a group of six children - Nilambar, Damru, Yamuna, Vivek, Kamalochan and Mahadev we have focussed on

- Hindi reading
- Spellings (Dictation)
- Thinking and writing - prose and poetry
- Grammar

All the children in this group are reading properly. They also have good spellings. They like taking dictation. They are able to construct structured sentences. Some children make mistakes, for them we are giving more practice in listening and writing correctly. They are also writing poetry.

In Grammar we have done Noun, Gender, Pronoun, Adjective and Verb. All the children have understood these concepts well.

Sanskrit Language

Like Hindi, the children are studying Sanskrit also in the same groups. For Group 1 i.e. Mansi, Mohan, Basanti, Bhuvan, Padma, and Sushil following topics covered

- Gender- Definition of Masculine, Feminine, and Neutral gender,
- Number - Singular, Dual, Plural and
- Person - Third, Second, First person,
- Declensions for present and future tense
- Case - nominative, objective, instrumental
- Conjugation

Children are now capable of understanding unseen passages, doing translation to Hindi.

For a group of six children - Nilambar, Damru, Yamuna, Vivek, Kamalochan and Mahadev we have focussed on

- Sanskrit reading
- Translation
- Making sentences in present tense with one verb "path"

All children are reading properly. Most of them are making sentences also. Some of them are trying to do. We are focusing on making proper, structured grammatically correct sentences.

Odia Language - The students of this group are divided into two groups for the Odia class. Each group studies Odia twice a week. Most of the time children are distracted and want to play with pebbles and other objects.

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So we are unable to cover as much as planned. During the last six months we have done the following

- a. Songs - ka, kha, ga, gha - ajanka manun aaeena mamun - aame sabu tiki tike kalika
- b. Stories - animal and moral based stories
- c. Reading - padhiba - 'a' kana to 'o' kana has been done. Still children are encouraged to read books of their choice.
- d. Writing - following activities are being done to improve the children's writing skills
 - dictation of words - writing simple sentences
 - copy writing - attempting question answers / exercises from class 1 book

It is observed that the students of concentration are not keen on singing. Some students are irregular to the class.

In the last six months, there were two major events that they participated in. One was a Drama and the other was singing Carols during Christmas.

Drama (Mother's Birthday) – All the children participated in the play, though some had to be cajoled into playing a more active role. They were involved in creating the many sub-stories that made up the play. Some had problems remembering the lines, but on the day of performance they all pulled it off with ease. During the play, many of the kids were comfortable in their roles and costumes and delivered their dialogues with ease, like they were the character themselves.

Carol singing (X'mas 2014) – The kids sang 'We three kings' and 'Feliz Navidad' and they did it well. The boys sang with a punch with bass voices and the girls provided a sweet melody. From the time they started practice, to the day they actually performed, all of them got over their initial shyness. They did not struggle too much with the pronunciation of the words. They were taught how to sing alternately (harmonise) and how to complement each other in different lines and stanzas and they pulled it off very well for their first attempt at this style of singing in a group.



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The children of this group are active and enthusiastic in their games. They play Football, Basketball, Volleyball and a range of Minor games. They also go running and practice dance. They have learnt a lot over the last six months and have now begun to see the value of passing and playing a team game. Most of them have increased their stamina and game speed and each child is exploring his strong point and also discovering other interest in games that they used to avoid before. Some of them have the tendency to not play but they can always be brought back when the teacher gets them in the spirit. Though they are still slightly small in size, they never fail to surprise with their speed, agility and diligence.

For sports day, they participated in various demonstrations. They are the following: **Rim Jhim - Lazium Dance** – This included all the senior girls, who did a form of graceful dance along with an accompanying instrument that was made of small metal discs, with which they made beautiful sounds that complimented their movements. All the girls from this group had participated.

Aero Wonders - Acrobatics – In this, all the senior kids participated in doing dare devil stunts that drew admiration and applause for all the viewers. As mentioned before, their small size saw Damru and Basanti being thrown across as sturdy hands caught them mid air. Two kids, Kamallochan and Mahadev showcased very good hand stands. The other kids were all active and agile in their participation.



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Happy Feet - Football – Here the kids showcased various Football drills that included passing, shooting, heading etc. Kamallochan is good in Football and he faced no problem in learning the ropes as he shot the goals to perfection. Yamuna gave the most convincing headers and had good ball control. Nilamber, for his initial struggle, came out a much more confident Footballer. Mohan was his usual confident self with the ball.

Joyful Jesters - Circus – This included all the funny and tough skills that one sees in a daily circus. The kids learnt stilt walking, juggling, skipping etc. Vivek learnt to walk the stilt well, as he went up and down a ramp. Bhuvan was dressed to kill and that along with his set of skills, was a delight to watch. Basanti was good at skipping, easily jumping over the fast ropes. Padma walked the stilt and Mansi was good at skipping. Damru found it easy to walk on the stilt.

Skills on Wheels - Skating – With the name 'Skills on wheels' the kids truly lived up to the name as they whizzed all over the court, sometimes on two and sometimes on one leg. Mahadev was good, skimming the surface on his skates. Sushila learnt the skates and balanced herself well on the skates.



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