

Academy for Severe Handicaps and Autism (*ASHA*) Charitable Trust



ANNUAL REPORT
(Monthly April 2020- March 2021)

APRIL 2020

COVID 19 Update

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic, we stopped all activities and declared holidays for the children from 16th March as per the State Government directive to schools.

The following measures were taken to safeguard the health and safety of our children, families as well as teachers:

1. On the 20th March, a few office staff and program heads met to discuss the future plan of action and complete any pending reports and proposals.
2. Brochures were shared with all the parents on safety measures to be taken, activities to keep the children engaged and to remain calm during difficult times.
3. A Zoom conference call was conducted on the 26th March with the program heads to try and understand how to help parents manage their children in this difficult time. We needed to provide activities to avoid boredom and make sure they do not lose skills which has already been learnt.
4. On the 27th March, we sent out a notice to all the parents through WhatsApp that we can provide support and advice through Zoom conference call or through WhatsApp and phone calls.

Migrating to a new mode of Learning

In April 2020, with the lockdown, the teachers adapted to provide intervention through video calls mainly through Zoom and WhatsApp. This took a couple of weeks to get used to; first for the parents as they had never used the video calling option. Secondly, the children found it difficult to concentrate and follow directions through video. With time and persistence, the children were able to adapt to the online sessions with their teachers supported by the mothers.

Some families were not able to attend online classes due to lack of having a smartphone. We were able to provide new smartphones with the help of our donors.

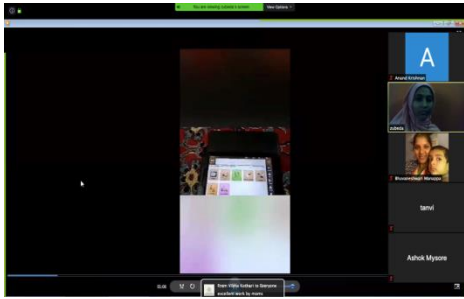
The online sessions were provided by the teachers, speech therapist, counsellor and physio therapist so that no child misses out on therapy.

From August, art based therapy, yoga and dance sessions were provided online.

ONLINE SESSION

Emerging from a Crisis – Autism: Opening up during a Lockdown 13, 15, 17 April

Academy for Severe Handicaps and Autism, along with a few professionals from St. John's Hospital CARE-ADD, Sunshine Autism and Spastics Society of Karnataka conducted a program to understand how parents are managing their children with autism during the lockdown.



To understand how parents are addressing the change in routine for their children, teaching, motivating and inspiring other parents and to help professionals understand how they can support families. The one hour sessions were moderated by Mrs. Jayashree Ramesh (Director, ASHA), Dr. Ashok (CARE-ADD), Dr. Vanitha Rao (Sunshine Autism) and

Mrs. Suchita Somashekariah, (Director, Shristi Special Academy). The sessions were attended by 70 parents on each day and was highly appreciated. There was a call for more such sessions and to create a parent support group.

MAY 2020

LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

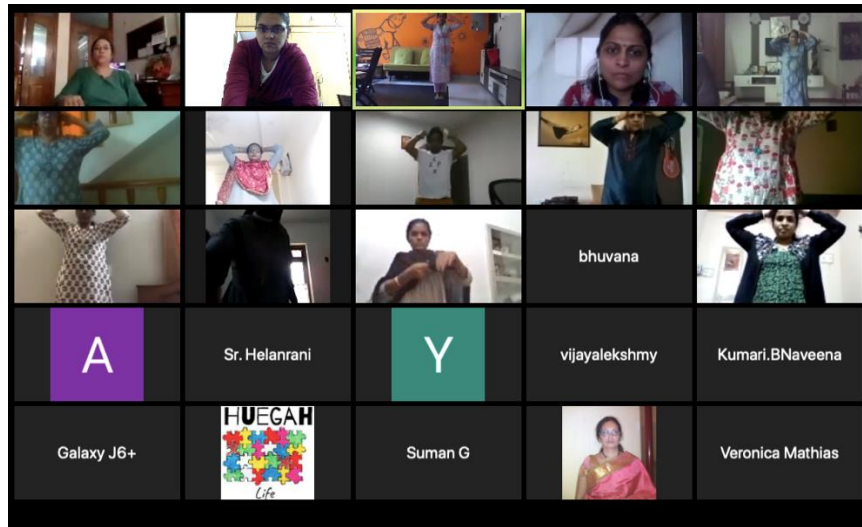
Autism Online

Autism Online was a 12 session online course conducted from 16th May to 21st June to enable parents and special educators to learn and work effectively with children with autism. Each session lasted for 2 hours and was conducted on Saturdays and Sundays over the online platform – Zoom.

The objective of this training program was to enable parents and professionals to learn about autism, learning characteristics, language and communication, behaviour management and teaching approaches. To enable parents to work with their child with autism effectively and to further the learning of special educators and teachers working in the field of autism.

The Autism Online program had a total of 28 participants comprising 11 parents and 17 professionals. The Autism Online team consisted of 5 resource persons with extensive experience in teaching as well as working with individuals with autism.

The virtual valedictory ceremony on the 27th June was attended by Mr. V.S. Basavaraju, Karnataka State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Mr. Dipesh Sutaria, Founder – Enable India and Dr. Nalini Menon, Principal, Rainbow Center for Autism. The ceremony saw a brief report on Autism Online, an address by Mr. Dipesh, certificate distribution and speech by Mr. V.S. Basavaraju and words of encouragement by Dr. Menon. The participants shared their experiences and so did the resource persons.



JUNE 2020

With the gradual lifting of COVID 19 restrictions, our organization opened for teachers only.

Early Intervention

By June, the lockdown was eased and mothers from the early intervention program were asked to come to the centre to seek guidance and collect toys and learning materials for their child to learn with.

All safety protocols were followed. The centre was sanitised completely. Each parent was assigned a particular time and asked to wear a mask, sanitise their hands and maintain social distancing. The furniture was sanitised after each parent left.

WORKSHOP

Mr. MahendraPyati, Trustee, Nav Prabhuthi Trust conducted a session on “Need and importance of photo documentation” for the teachers on 3rd June.

PARENTS MEET

Parent meeting was conducted on 5th June and discussed about the plan for the next 3 months at the school premises.



Online Sessions on Adolescence, Hygiene and Sexuality

Dr. Gifty Joel is a specialist in human development and sexual health in individuals with autism. She is a consultant with ASHA and has conducted many sessions on hygiene and sexual health in individuals with autism.

Individuals with autism as with mainstream children need to be educated on puberty, sex, maintaining personal hygiene and managing menstruation. There is also a need to inform parents on their growing children's sexual health, managing menstruation as well as to identify and protect the child from sexual abuse and harm.

In the month of June 2020, Dr. Gifty conducted a series of online consultations with parents to understand their concerns and suggested measures and ways to help the child and the family. There were 6 topics discussed, namely:

1. Characteristics of autism and how it affects development during puberty and adolescence.
2. Hygiene before and after puberty. Helping the child be independent and self reliant.
3. Sexual development and changes in the body and behaviour during puberty and adolescence.
4. Training the child in appropriate social behaviours and safe sexual behaviours.
5. Teaching the child about privacy and giving the child privacy.
6. Looking for signs of sexual abuse and protecting the child by teaching essential safety skills.

JULY 2020

Online Academic Sessions

Online academic sessions continued for all the students of ASHA. Sessions were conducted over WhatsApp video. All skills were worked upon such as academics, cognition, motor skills, speech and language.

The parents were also asked to work with their child at home and send the homework including questions and doubts over WhatsApp and email.



Online Sessions on Adolescence, Hygiene and Sexuality

Dr. Gifty Joel is a specialist in human development and sexual health in individuals with autism. She is a consultant with ASHA and has conducted many sessions on hygiene and sexual health in individuals with autism.

In the month of July, Dr. Gifty addressed the concerns of 10 families of individuals with autism.

The common topics discussed during these sessions were:

1. Puberty and its management
2. Behaviour management during puberty
3. Importance of hygiene
4. Privacy
5. Training the child in appropriate social behaviours.

AUGUST 2020

Online Academic Sessions

The intervention sessions continued with teachers coming to the school to take sessions and some teachers worked from home in view of the pandemic.

The parents constantly give feedback about the sessions and the teachers are adapting their teaching approach accordingly.

The students are showing good interest and following the sessions for an hour along with the parent.

Samagra – Complementary Approaches to Autism (15th August to 18th October 2020)

Samagra is a 20 session program to explore the complementary approaches to autism which are important as no single approach to autism works with all individuals. The program is being conducted by Information and Resource Centre for parents and professionals. As part of professional development, 4 teachers/parents from ASHA Charitable Trust attended this online workshop.

The program seeks to educate and bring awareness on complementary approaches to autism specifically for parents and professionals.

The Samagra program has 2 hour sessions each on music therapy, art therapy, play therapy, drama, sensory integration therapy and many more. All the sessions are facilitated by experts with many years of experience.

1. Music Therapy: The first session conducted on 15th August was on music therapy titled 'Resonate through Music' conducted by Dr. Geetha Bhat, Founder of Hamsakutira Foundation. Our special educator, Ms. Sowmya BV attended the session. Dr. Geetha explained how music stimulate the neurons and increase language and development as well as cognition.

2. Art based Therapy: The second session on 16th August was on art based therapy conducted by Ms. Sumathi Ramjee, a practitioner with many years of experience. The facilitator started off by engaging the participants in a singing and movement activity and moved on to explain how engaging the child in a fun activity can encourage learning and improve attention.

The participants enjoyed the session and was a great learning experience.

3. Neurocognitive Theories: The third session, 'Unravel other Minds' was conducted on 22nd August to explain theories of understanding the brain of an individual with

autism. It explored the 3 theories of a) Central coherence b) Theory of mind c) executive functioning. The session was conducted by Ms. Renuka Jiothiswaroopan, special educator and course coordinator at Information and Resource Centre, Bangalore. The session helped the participants figure the strengths individuals with autism and how to harness it to build skills.

4. Yoga: On the 23rd August, Ms. Sumasree, a registered yoga practitioner, spoke and demonstrated the benefits of yoga for individuals with autism. She began with the science of the human body, the sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system, controlling our body movement and breathing. She demonstrated some yoga asanas which can be performed with individuals with autism and stressed on the importance of keeping the sessions interesting and fun by singing and progressing slowly from simple to complex asanas.



Autism Online Kannada (17th August to 5th October 2020)

Autism Online Kannada is one of the very few autism specific training programs for parents and teachers to be conducted online exclusively in Kannada. To reach out to more people, ASHA Charitable Trust partnered with Rotary Bangalore West, Inner Wheel Club of Bangalore West, Disability NGOs Alliance, NavPrabhuthi Trust and Information and Resource Centre.

Autism Online Kannada aims to train parents and professionals to work effectively with individuals with autism.

Autism Online Kannada is a 20 session program conducted every Monday, Wednesday and Friday for 1 hour per session. The program is being coordinated by Ms. Vani Nagaraj, Director – Aarohan Center for Special Education along with a resource team of doctors and professionals from various institutions. The topics being addressed can be vastly categorized as a) Diagnosis and Medical Intervention b) Skills, Training and Teaching methods c) Understanding Behaviour and its Management d) Home Management e) Government Laws and Schemes.



Autism Online Kannada has 110 participants of which 37 are parents and teachers from ASHA.

1. The first session was conducted on 19th August by Ms. Sujata Sathyamadhava, special educator from ASHA. She spoke on autism and its characteristics. The session delved into what autism is, its features and how intervention can help build skills.
2. On August 24th, Dr. Venkat Lakshmi, lecturer from Smt. VHD College of Home Science conducted a session on Human Development highlighting the stages of development in human beings.
3. On August 26th, Dr. Ashok Mysore, psychiatrist from St. John's Hospital spoke on the Medical management of Autism. He explained the positives and negatives, do's and don't's of medication and when medication is prescribed.
4. On August 28th, Dr. Nalini Menon, Principal of Rainbow Center for Autism, SSK, conducted a session on how autism differs from other disabilities. This session was important to understand how autism presents itself and the features of autism that are sometimes confused with other conditions.
5. On August 31st, Dr. Indumathi Rao, Director, CBR Network conducted a session on recent development in public policies in disabilities. She explained the current laws and policies and its effect on the disability sector, particularly with relation to autism.

Online Sessions on Adolescence, Hygiene and Sexuality

Dr. Gifty Joel is a specialist in human development and sexual health in individuals with autism. She is a consultant with ASHA and has conducted many sessions on hygiene and sexual health in individuals with autism.

In the month of August, Dr. Gifty addressed the concerns of 10 families of individuals with autism.

Some of the topics discussed were:

1. For girls, the importance of teaching personal safety was discussed with regard to touch i.e. Safe and unsafe touches. Using the 'swim suit rule' and 'safety circle' charts were recommended to the parents. Certain anxiety issues concerning using the toilet were addressed and appropriate suggestions were given to parents.
2. For some teenage students, the need to promote independence was discussed in self care activities and the need for privacy. Further, parents were encouraged to expose their children to a wide range of social situations in order to teach appropriate social behaviours as they reported certain awkward/inappropriate behaviours seen in their children. The importance of fathers' involvement in training their sons at this stage in their life and guiding them through adolescence was discussed.

SEPTEMBER 2020

Online sessions on Adolescence, Hygiene and Sexuality

Dr. Gifty Joel is a specialist in human development and sexual health in individuals with autism. She is a consultant with ASHA and has in depth knowledge in counselling and sexual health in individuals with special needs.

Dr. Gifty conducted sessions for 10 parents in September.

1. A couple of mothers expressed their desire to know more about autism and wished to learn techniques and strategies to deal with their children. Various learning opportunities that would suit them including enrolling in courses, reading books that will help them and interacting with other parents/teachers who are willing to share their knowledge and experience were discussed.

2. For some girls, Dr.Gifty discussed the importance of teaching personal safety with regard to touch i.e. Safe and unsafe touches. Using the 'swim suit rule' and 'safety circle' charts were recommended to the parents. They were asked to teach the girls to differentiate between friends and strangers, between genders, etc. Parents were told about using teaching aids such as dolls, picture charts and family photo albums to reach out to their children.

3. For some boys, parents expressed the need for help with regard to teaching them independence in self care activities. We discussed training plans and were able to put together schedules to help them follow the same at home. Parents were taught simple task analysis to help understand their child's abilities /inabilities better. As this will enable them to teach and guide them more effectively.

Autism Online Kannada (17th August to 5th October 2020)

Autism Online Kannada aims to train parents and professionals to work effectively with individuals with autism.

Autism Online Kannada is a 20 session program conducted every Monday, Wednesday and Friday for 1 hour per session.

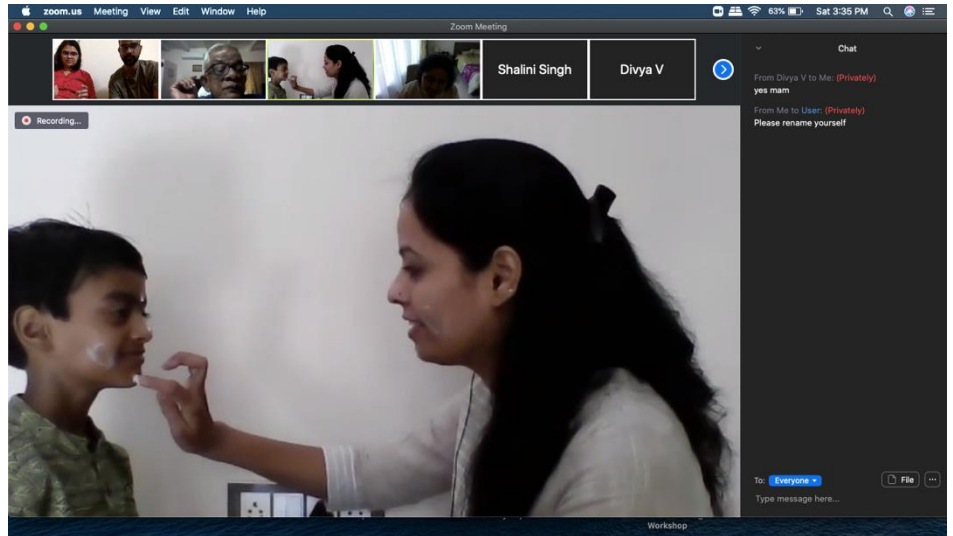
1. On September 2nd, Ms. Sowmya Kuduvali, Co-Founder – Hope – The early intervention centre spoke on early intervention. Early and intense intervention works best in any individuals with autism.
2. On September 4th, Ms. SuchitaSomashekariah, Founder – Shristi Special Academy spoke on how to plan for the future of individuals with autism. Ms. Suchita spoke on the importance of early intervention and identification of the child's strengths which can be made productive later in life.

3. On September 7th, Ms. Shubhra Shanker Vinay, Consultant Speech Therapist, ASHA conducted a session on speech and language. She delved into how speech develops, how to encourage speech in children with autism.
4. On September 9th, Ms. Anupama from ASHA conducted a session on behavior management. She explained the common behaviors in children with autism, its possible causes, its function and its remediation.
5. On September 11th, Ms. Vani Nagaraj, Founder, Aarohan conducted a session on perception. Some individuals with autism have perception difficulties and most are highly visual. Ms. Vani showed how these strengths can be harnessed to develop skills. Many examples and worksheets were shared which made the session interesting.
6. On September 14th, Ms. Vani Nagaraj, Founder, Aarohan conducted a session on pre academics. Pre-academics is the foundation for all future learning and therefore its importance cannot be undermined. Ms. Vani shared many tips to build pre-academic skills in children and gave numerous examples.
7. On September 16th, Ms. Kavitha and Ms. Banu, special educators from ASHA conducted a session on self care and activities of daily living skills. These skills are often neglected but is highly important for independent living. The resource persons shared many videos to explain how these skills can be taught.
8. On September 18th, Ms. Anitha, special educator from ASHA conducted a session on motor coordination and play.
9. On September 21st, Ms. Hema Nataraj, Director of Nithya Saadhana – a vocational training institute conducted a session on building vocational skills. Ms. Hema gave many real life examples of how vocational skills can be taught and can also generate income for individuals with autism.
10. On September 23rd, Ms. Sowmya, special educator from ASHA conducted a session on building social skills. One of the primary deficits in children with autism, Ms. Sowmya detailed how to teach social skills with plenty of video examples.
11. On September 25th, Ms. Sujatha, special educator from ASHA conducted a session on basics of teaching strategies.
12. On September 28th, Ms. Vani Nagaraj and Ms. Vinaya Kini – Director of Amulya Vocational Centre conducted sessions on effective parenting skills and shared their experiences as parents. This session was particularly useful to the participants as they got to hear from the parents who have done a commendable job in bringing up an individual with autism.
13. On September 30th, Mr. V.S. Basavaraju, Karnataka State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities conducted a session on Rights of Persons with Disability Act 2016 and Initiatives in Karnataka.



Samagra is a 20 session program to explore the complementary approaches to autism which are important as no single approach to autism works with all individuals. The program is being conducted by Information and Resource Centre for parents and professionals. As part of professional development, 4 teachers/parents from ASHA Charitable Trust attended this online workshop.

1. Drama and Autism – 5th September – The session was conducted by Mr. Parasuram Ramamoorthy, Founder of Velvi a theatre initiative for individuals with autism. The session highlighted the benefits of theatre in improving eye contact, emotion identification and imitation.



2. Supporting the Sexual Health of Individuals with Autism – 6th September – The session was conducted by Dr. Gifty Joel, a specialist in sexual health and hygiene.

3. Whole body learning – 12-13th September – The session was conducted by Mrs. Jinisha Chedda and Kejal Bakshi, Founders of JinShiksha from Mumbai. The session focused on the importance of whole body learning.

4. Jumpstart Communication with PECS – 19th – 20th September – The session was conducted by Ms. Akila Vaidyanathan, Founder of Amaze Charitable Trust. The session helped parents and teachers understand the usage of picture communication.



5. Functional Skills of Perception – 26th September – The session was conducted by Ms. Renuka Jiothiswaroopan, course coordinator at Information and Resource Centre. The session helped participants to apply activities to improve perception in children with autism.

6. Independence through Occupational Therapy – 27th September – The session was conducted by Mr. Surinder Pal Singh, an occupational therapist. He examined how

occupational therapy can help improve other skills in autism such as writing and learning.

Teachers Day Celebration

On 5th September, Teachers Day was celebrated virtually through Zoom. A Musical event was conducted by volunteers from TCS.

The students, their siblings and volunteers entertained teachers with songs and fun activities.

Mrs. Jayashree Ramesh extended her heartfelt thanks to all children, families and volunteers on behalf of staff and thanked all the teachers for their diligence, sincerity, effort and hard work.

VOLUNTEERING

Deloitte Virtual Volunteering program

On 19th September, volunteers from Deloitte conducted a session with art and craft, origami and music and dance. Students from ASHA sang and danced along with the volunteers.



Deloitte Virtual Volunteering program

On 26th September, volunteers from Deloitte conducted a session with art and craft, music and dance with students of ASHA below the age of 6 years.



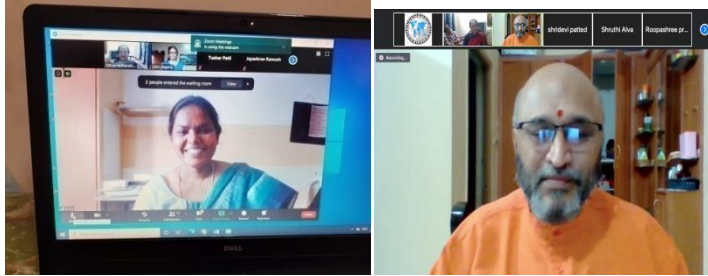
OCTOBER 2020

Autism Online Kannada (17th August to 5th October 2020)

Autism Online Kannada aims to train parents and professionals to work effectively with individuals with autism.

Autism Online Kannada is a 20 session program conducted every Monday, Wednesday and Friday for 1 hour per session.

1. On October 2nd, Ms. Jayashree Ramesh, Director, ASHA conducted a session on choosing appropriate educational services. The session was helpful to parents understand what services will work best for their child.
2. On October 5th, Mr. Jitender Joshi, Director and Corporate Trainer, Prasanna Wellness Academy conducted a session to motivate parents and stressed on positivity to bring out the best in themselves and their children.



October 5th marked the valedictory ceremony of Autism Online Kannada. The ceremony was attended by Chief Guest – Mr. Jitender Joshi, Director and Corporate Trainer, Prasanna Wellness Academy and the Guest of Honour was Mr. Fazal Mahmood, Governor elect, Rotary District 3190. The session started off with a brief report on Autism Online Kannada by Ms. Sujata Sathyamadhava from ASHA and she shared the number of participants, sessions overview, resource persons and the team behind Autism Online Kannada. Ms. Jayashree Ramesh, Mr. Gurunagesh from Rotary District Literacy Committee and other dignitaries from Rotary spoke about the sessions, its larger implications and plans for the future sessions. The participants shared their experiences as well. Each participant will receive a physical certificate which will be sent via post.

Feedback:

The sessions were well received by the participants and the response was overwhelming. There is a demand for a second edition of Autism Online Kannada. The participants found the sessions easy to understand as it was in Kannada and are eagerly waiting for the future sessions. The wealth of knowledge delivered in a succinct, simple manner was appreciated by the participants. The resource persons too provided feedback that the whole program was well managed by the team and the execution was flawless.

Samagra – Complementary Approaches to Autism (15th August to 18th October 2020)

Samagra is a 20 session program to explore the complementary approaches to autism which are important as no single approach to autism works with all individuals. The program is being conducted by Information and Resource Centre for parents and

professionals. As part of professional development, 4 teachers/parents from ASHA Charitable Trust attended this online workshop.

1. Making Sense of Senses – Sensory Integration – 3rd October – Ms. Revathi Narayanan conducted this session to explain how sensory integration is important for individuals with autism. Sensory difficulties are common in individuals with autism and by remedying them, their behavior problems and learning can improve.

2. Insight into a parent’s journey – 4th October – Ms. Vani Nagaraj, parent and founder of Aarohan spoke on her experiences in bringing up her son, Rohan a young man with autism.

Ms. Vinaya Kini, founder of Amulya Vocational Centre and parent of Niveditha spoke on her experiences with her daughter. Both sessions were highly appreciated by the participants because it was packed with practical information and how to overcome challenges. Also, it motivated us to be positive and appreciate small successes.

3. Connect through art in motion – Dance – 10th October – Ms. Minal Shah, a Bharatnatyam dancer spoke on how dance can help with body awareness, movement as a mode of learning and how music and dance helps individuals with special needs and autism.

4. Montessori Education for life – 11th October – Ms. Nirmla Jain, a Montessorian and founder of Pebbles Montessori spoke about the Montessori method of teaching. She gave numerous examples and tips on how Montessori can be used with any child and attain good results.



5. Play Therapy – 17th October – Mr. Reddy Venkatesh, Founder of Huegah Life is a play practitioner and he delved



into how play by harnessing the innate need for humans to seek happiness can encourage learning. Play has many benefits including health, creativity and learning.

6. Sports beyond disability – 18th October – Mr. Aaron Richard, National Director – INAS SIVUS India spoke on how sports can bring out hidden talents in individuals with autism. Sports has multiple benefits such as improving self worth, confidence and motivation.

Feedback:

4 parents and special educators and from ASHA, Ms. Anupama, Ms. Bhuvana, Ms. Kavitha Manjunath, Ms. Rashmi found the sessions to be highly engaging. The hands on approach and demonstration was extremely useful in learning how to apply these complementary approaches to individuals with autism. Sessions on sports, dance and Montessori were highly useful.

NOVEMBER 2020

Academic Intervention

The communication therapy sessions are being conducted by Mrs. Shubhra Shanker Vinay and Mrs. Vibha Kothari over WhatsApp Video and Zoom. The sessions are conducted individually and run for an hour. The therapists also advice the parents on exercises to be done with the child to improve language and communication.

The intervention sessions are being conducted over WhatsApp Web. The teachers are sending worksheets via email to the parents to work with their child. These worksheets are used to develop math's, language, comprehension and reading skills.

Behaviour Management Sessions

Ms. Anupama, consultant behavior therapist at ASHA is conducting sessions at ASHA for parents. The sessions are to address any behavior management problems that the parents are facing at home. Some of the common problems faced by parents are:

- Attention seeking behaviours
- Behaviours during an activity – escaping from a task.
- Difficulty in transitioning from one activity to another.

Attention seeking behaviours happen when the child wants attention from the caregiver but is expressed through behaviours as they have difficulty expressing through words or accepted gestures/actions.

Task avoidance behaviours also occur when the child does not want to do a particular activity.

Behaviours during transition occur when the child is not prepared for what activity comes next.

Ms. Anupama addressed these behaviour problems by suggesting:

- Use of visual cards/materials to prepare for the transition to a new task.
- Use of reinforcement to do an activity.
- To follow the ABC method – to document what happened before the behaviour – the nature of the behaviour and what happens after the behaviour.

Feedback

The sessions have helped the families understand their child's needs better as behaviour is a form of communication used by many children without autism too. The families are less stressed, they can use reinforcers effectively to complete tasks as well as reduce unwanted/harmful behaviours. The child is happier as they are understood and their needs are met.

Early Intervention Program Fathers' Interactive Session

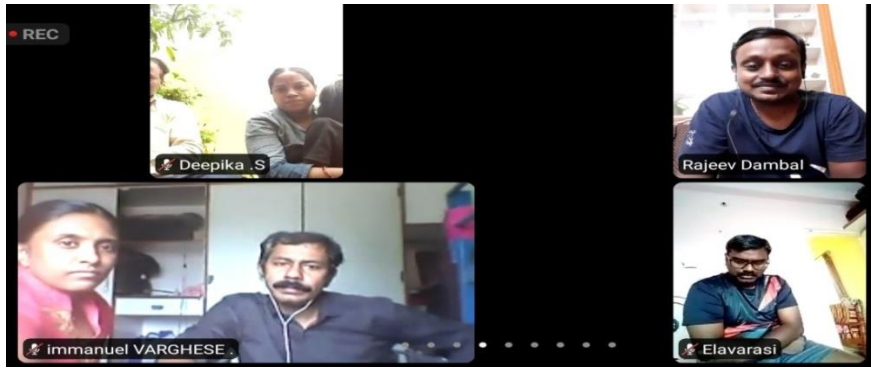
The early intervention program is a mother-child intervention for children with disabilities up to the age of 6 years with a specific program and therapies including speech, physio, art, dance, yoga and counselling. The program empowers mothers to work with their child.

On the 29th November, Sunday Ms. Jayashree Ramesh, Director, ASHA and the early intervention program staff conducted an interactive online session for fathers of the children.

The purpose of the program was to gain an understanding of

- How the fathers have come to terms with the child's disability.
- How the program has helped the child.
- What areas of deficit they feel intervention is needed.
- What changes they have observed in the child with the program.
- How they provide support to the child and the mother.
- Their thoughts and feedback

The online session helped the fathers express themselves and also helped us to think about modifying our program to better cater to the family's needs as a whole.



Feedback:

The fathers expressed happiness and satisfaction with the early intervention program. They have noticed a lot of positive changes in their children after starting the program. The mothers are also less stressed and happier as they can understand the child better and work on improving their functioning.

DECEMBER 2020

Academics and Therapies

The intervention sessions are running successfully over WhatsApp video. The other therapies too such as dance and yoga are being conducted by the therapists over Zoom.



Yoga Sessions for Parents

Ms. Sumasree conducted 6 yoga sessions for 19 parents of our students with autism in December.

Yoga is an excellent practice for the parents. Yoga can help in the following ways:

1. Help parents manage the physical body - building strength, stamina, flexibility etc.
2. Help them release physical tension/ aches and pains
3. Improving physiological functioning
4. Helps them manage their stress levels
5. Helps them be aware of their emotions and helps regulate
6. Overall, it would help them be more present for their children and for themselves

Most of them feel a lightness in the body and experience calmness in the mind after each session. They felt lesser stress and improved ability to cope with day to day chores.



Newspaper Recycling Workshop

Our teachers attended a unique newspaper recycling workshop conducted by The Information and Resource Centre, Bangalore on the 23rd and 24th December. The session was conducted by Ms. Chitra Nandan. The workshop was deeply nested in the idea of recycling and reducing waste instead of buying items from a shop.

Ms. Chitra taught the participants to make beautiful items by just folding newspapers and made things like bags, a phone holder and dust bins.



Carer's Worldwide – Life Stories and Impact

On 27th December, Mr. Natesh from Carer's Worldwide, an UK based non profit organization working to understand and improve the lives of carers all over the world.

The objective of the session was to inform the parents on the –

- Importance of a support group
- Process of setting up a support group
- Action that can be taken from the group

The session was highly informative and set the foundation for creating a support group of parents of individuals with disabilities. The parents face many issues over a lifespan when caring for their child with a disability that includes financial, emotional, loneliness and many more. A support group can address many of these issues effectively.



Workshop – Vocational Rehabilitation – Concept and Execution

Teachers from ASHA attended a State level CRE Programme on Vocational Rehabilitation – Concept and Execution conducted by Information and Resource Centre and National Institute for the Empowerment of Persons with Multiple Disabilities on the 28th and 29th December.

The speakers for the programme were Ms. Suchita Somashekariah, Managing Director, Shristi Special Academy, Ms. Jayashree Ramesh, Director, ASHA, Ms. Hema Natraj, Managing Trustee, Nithya Saadhana, Ms. Beena Krishnamurthy, Co-founder, Nithya Saadhana, Ms. Lekha J., Programme Manager, APD, Mr. Basavaraja N. Samshi, Senior Programme Manager, APD, Ms. Renuka Jithiswaroopan, Special Educator and Dr. S. Murali Krishnan, Occupational Therapist.



The program explored the concept of vocational rehabilitation, its scope, importance and how to implement it. With the wide range of experts from different organizations, the view on vocational rehabilitation was different and refreshing. It displayed many types of vocational activities, settings and environments and the possibilities are seemingly endless.

Workshop on ESI and PF

On 21st December, MrBasavaraju, a finance consultant, conducted a session for teachers on ESI and Provident Fund and briefed about the process of how these systems work.



JANUARY 2021

ACADEMICS

The academic and intervention sessions are going on well. The teachers are working systematically and with many teaching aids.



Other programs

Saraswathi pooja



Teaching Aid

ABT



Music

Christmas



Dance



AWARD

Education world India school Rankings 2020-21 has given us the first place among the special education school in Karnataka and Bangalore.

Virtual Kalaangana 2021

Inter school talent festival Virtual kalangana 2020-21 conducted by Information and Resource Center Bangalore. The event was held from 19th Jan to 22nd January 2021.

FEBRUARY 2021

Online sessions – Teachers Presentations - 4thFeb to 30th March

From 4th February to 31st March, 45 special educators, assistant teachers and therapists presented on various topics to their colleagues. These sessions were for 2 hours and conducted over Zoom.

The topics that have been covered were related to academics and special education such as cognition, maths, language, reading and writing.

The teachers also covered other skill areas such as play skills, motor skills, activities of daily living art and more.

There were also sessions on positive thinking, soft skills, stress management and meditation to manage stress and for a healthier living.

Sessions on child rights, human resources, work etiquette, computer skills and technology and being professional helped teachers get a view to the background of the organization, laws and legislations and how to be organized at the workplace.

The objective of this training was to share knowledge among each other and learn new skills related to teaching and special education.



Feedback:

The teacher training sessions have been a revelation. The teachers have taken a lot of effort in researching the topic, finding appropriate videos which supported learning. All the sessions have been recorded and will be used for future teacher training programs.

VOLUNTEERING

Ashotsava

On 3rd February, volunteers from TCS conducted the Ashotsava awareness program on Zoom. Parents and teachers shared their experience of the difficulties, the challenges faced and how they are overcoming them during the pandemic.

Kitchen Inauguration

On 19th February, our kitchen was renovated with new cupboards and shelves, new water filter and a raised counter top. This was possible with the support of United Way, Bengaluru as our implementing partner.

The kitchen was inaugurated with virtual presence from the donors.



Workshop on family well being and yoga

A workshop on family wellbeing and yoga was conducted on 26th February by Mr. Phaneendra. The workshop helped parents maintain positivity during the pandemic.

MARCH 2021

ACADEMICS

The online sessions for students are running successfully. The students have picked up many skills despite being at home. The evaluations are being conducted in March and April where the academic performance of each student will be assessed and an annual report will be given to the parents



VOLUNTEERING

Online Cultural Event - Online

On 1st March, one of our donors, L&W, conducted an online cultural event where our 12 students from ASHA participated in dance, music, and an art competition. The students also won prizes.

Cultural Evening

On 6th March, volunteers from TCS conducted a cultural evening for students and parents with dance, music, art competitions and fancy dress.

Distribution of Toys and Learning Materials

On 10th March, a team from UST, one of our donors, visited our organization to distribute toys and Learning Materials for all the students of ASHA.

Music and Autism

On 20th March, volunteers from TCS conducted a music therapy and autism online session for TCS employees and ASHA parents and students. Dr Meenakshi, a music therapist conducted a short 15 minute session on benefits of music therapy. The session also included a performance by Aditya Venkatesh, a musician and individual with autism.