

# NEWSLETTER

Parenthood is sneaky. You think you're just raising a child, teaching this little person how to live and be in this lovely, chaotic world, but in truth, you're learning and growing right alongside him. If your heart remains open and your mind aware, you'll find that parenthood is the ultimate journey of self-discovery and that through raising this precious being who has been entrusted to your care, you rise to your own fullest potential.

**Rebecca Eanes**

**Positive Parenting: An Essential Guide**

## Parents' Perspective on Learning Differences



## Actor Khushbu on Parenting a Child Who Learns Differently



Venue:  
Madras Dyslexia Association  
12/6, Lynwood lane, Mahalingapuram,  
Chennai 17

Timings: 9:30 a.m to 5:30 p.m  
Date : 11th and 12th Feb  
Email Id: mda.conferences@gmail.com

Open to corpus donors of Rs 8000 and above  
Early bird discount of Rs 500 available  
for the first ten donors

Workshop on

**Crispiani Method & Dyslexia  
Cognitive Motor Training to improve  
Academic Performance  
(Theory & Practical)**



## Dyslexia makes me who I am...



**Harsh Melvani**  
*Interior Designer*



**Neha**  
*Jewellery Designer*

## Parenting – The Art with a Scientific Base

Of all the skills, we learn in a lifetime, parenting is perhaps the most challenging, enjoyable and bewildering experience, with the ability to have extremely long-lasting effects. Most of us stumble into our roles as parents with no particular expertise or knowledge – just an unconscious awareness of what our own parents did. For those who would like to analyse the subject – is it Art? Science? Actually, equal parts of both. With no guaranteed formula for success!

Add to this the variable of a child with special needs, and the equation calls for even more skill – positivity, patience and unconditional support become the key words. Parents who shared their experiences had all these in abundance. And their children flourished.

For all special parents, there will be periods when the child's future seems uncertain. But taking one day at a time and setting achievable short-term goals paves a path to creating a healthy atmosphere in which the child grows to their full potential and recognizes their strengths instead of focusing on the things they cannot do.

This issue is dedicated to all those amazing parents and children who said: "Of course, I can!"

The Editors

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### My Son Veeru



*Pinky Murugappan*

When our child was in Grade Two, at Abacus School, his teachers observed that he had a learning difference. While he was winning laurels in drama and public speaking, he was finding academics a challenge, particularly quantitative subjects. Also, his handwriting though neat was a trifle illegible.

It was never our intention to conceal the issue our child was facing from our family. It just so happened that the family did not probe. Hence we addressed the concern within our child's core care group, ie the child, the school, MDA and us parents.

As a mother, at first, I was devastated as any parent would be. I turned to spirituality to garner strength. I soon gathered myself to help my child as per the school's counselling and expert advice. On the suggestion of the school, we kept him back in Grade Three. That was a sensitive circumstance

for us to handle as our child, like nearly all children of his age could not at first accept that while he was retained, his peers would move on. Since he was an understanding child, we talked him through the tough decision. It helped that few of his other classmates too were kept back owing to similar issues. At first, the school recommended that we take help from a psychologist. He engaged our child in a play way method to overcome his difficulty. At home, I would play the board games he prescribed with our child as a reinforcement. Later, fortunately, Abacus brought in MDA to conduct special sessions in school. Once a week, our child would stay back in school for these additional classes. I must really thank Shobha and Shubha of MDA for helping us through this very crucial phase in our child's life. All our efforts were well rewarded when Veeru did very well in his 12th grade board exams.



## Dyslexic Doctor

*Dr B Vijayalakshmi*  
MD Dermatology

We were a happy family of three, my husband, my 5-year-old daughter and I. My husband is an ENT surgeon and I am a Dermatologist and my daughter was in second grade. Since I had just finished my post-graduation I was eager to set up my own practice. All these years I was busy studying and could not pay enough attention to my daughter's education. Now that I was comparatively free I noticed some difficulty in making her learn. As days went by I began to notice more problems. Her writing was slow and she could not spell few words. She could not sit in one place for more than few minutes. She became addicted to television. She would refuse to go to school and would not eat her lunch. I found it extremely difficult to teach her and make her study. Study time became a nightmare for both of us.

It was through a friend that I came to know about Madras Dyslexia Association. I took my daughter for assessment with much resistance from my parents. She was diagnosed with having Dyslexia and Attention Deficit Disorder. In a way I was relieved to know why she had problems in learning and, I was also shocked to know why it was my child who would have such a problem. It was a difficult time for us to come to terms with it. Finally we accepted the problem and took help from MDA.

My daughter was assigned a special educator and given occupational therapy. Her academics began to improve slowly and steadily. Learning session became less tiresome. Her social skills improved drastically. She began to have more friends and seemed to enjoy school. Her marks in school began to improve. After primary education she was advised to change board from CBSE to State Board. She was extremely reluctant to change and wanted to continue in CBSE. We forcefully changed her board. In her new board she found second language (Tamil) challenging. Her remedial sessions continued. It took some time for her to adjust to her new environment. Gradually she began to accept the change. Her remedial classes became shorter and less frequent. Finally in 7th grade her special educator stopped her classes and set her out to learn on her own.

I used to teach her every day. She continued to have problems with maths and Tamil. We continued to

struggle and somehow cleared 10th board with 80% marks. In 11th standard she was advised to take French and quit Maths. She was extremely reluctant to do so. Finally we won and promised to get her into medical profession if she agreed to go by our choice. She settled for Physics, Chemistry and Biology. She was able to read Biology on her own but required tuition for other subjects. Somehow she got through 12th board with 74% marks. Now the problem began as National Entrance Examination Test became mandatory for medical profession.

This test is based on CBSE syllabus and we had forcefully taken her away from that board. This was a point of disharmony in our relationship. Life became hell for me. She used to accuse me daily of spoiling her career. She was not able to clear NEET in the 1st attempt for mere want of 2 marks. She became depressed all of a sudden. She would stay all day long in a dark room. Her only company was her mobile. It was then, my friend, who also happens to be a mother of Dyslexic child came to our help. She would counsel my daughter at length regarding her future career. My daughter was firm in her decision to do medicine. So we decided to give it another try. I put her in a private coaching class. We got an appointment from a Psychiatrist to treat her depression. She was put on antidepressants and concentration improving drugs. All along my friend would motivate her in spite of having to deal with her own Dyslexic child. She also gave me courage to face all difficulties arising out of my daughter's decision to choose medicine. She would always encourage my daughter to follow her heart. At last my daughter cleared NEET with a decent score of 208 in her second attempt and she got admission in a private medical college.

Our journey does not stop here. Our struggle continues. Adult dyslexia also needs to be managed. They also need help, but they become mature enough to handle their own problems. They develop coping strategies and know their strengths and weakness. We as parents should be more encouraging and have confidence in our children. We should have a strong network and support system to derive strength among ourselves.

# Parenting is not a Practice. It's a Daily Learning Experience



*Deepa Venkat*

And I am still learning! When I look back on how we have come so far with my children, I remember only one phrase which had a deep impact on me – “The best way to make children good is to make them Happy”.

This single phrase changed my entire perception towards bringing up my children especially my elder one, Vishnu who has grown up to be a very sensible, truthful, hard-working and a happy person. Now, as he enters adulthood with confidence and happiness I am grateful to all teachers in Ananya and Bala Vidya Mandir who laid the path of confidence for him.

The foremost quality of parenting is to accept your child the way he or she is and work towards enabling them to overcome their fears/difficulties with better understanding, without imposing peer pressure, or comparing them with others, including their own siblings, and keep feeling sorry.

I know it's not easy but nothing is impossible. It reminds me of the early days when I had to explain so much to some of my family members on how my child is different. We as parents had to prepare ourselves just to stand by him 'come what may' and assist him in overcoming his difficulties as he advanced in age. Days and nights were spent on coming up with ways and methods to make him overcome in his own way albeit at a slower pace. Indeed, we could achieve what we as a family aimed for.

In this process, I can say with pride that my daughter Sushma who is 3 years younger to my son played a key support role in dealing with the situation. She had her own style of doing things and we made sure that she too understood that her brother is unique with many positives. To her, he was a hardworker and a

good hearted person. Except for normal sibling fights, both my children never fought for attention because of the background set by us as parents and thus gave them equal attention/affection. The best mantra which worked out was letting him do what he likes and enjoys doing with little explanation. We helped in setting easy goals and gradually moved to bigger ones and fulfilling all the promises given to him, big or small.

We let him do things in which he is good at, more than lamenting upon things which he had trouble with, right from academics to doing work at home and letting him pursue different sports activities where he was the winner many a times.

Letting him go through the NIOS stream based on the advice from his teachers at Ananya was one of the best decisions. He scored well with good grades in his 10th and 12th which would not have been possible if he had appeared through the mainstream schooling. We discussed everything openly which gave him clarity and made him understand how every step he was taking would benefit him in the longer term.

Now in his third year of under graduation in Mass Communication, I remember how I would scribe for him when he was in smaller classes. I also remember how his teacher or another student would scribe for him in the higher classes. Today, with confidence, he has written undergraduate exams all by himself without scribes and has scored very good marks.

He has set a target to achieve an aggregate score of 85% in his graduation. He practices public speaking without any inhibitions and says with sparkle in his eyes that he wants to start his own enterprise to prove his ability rather than join our family business. This attitude has brought joy to our family.

Vishnu is 21 now with sixteen years of hard work, discipline, punctuality, and respect for elders and concern for the needy has because of one simple reason - being parented to let him be happy. Coupled with this, let us as parents "hear" the things our children will not or cannot say, and be generous in giving compliments. Create an environment to enable them hear the nice things we say about them. It gives a boost to their confidence level which in turn leads to success.

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## Accept your Child

*Venkatesh*

This article is a small message to all parents to accept your child first irrespective of his/her shortcomings. This is a first-hand experience of our child who had difficulty in coping with his academics and the school had very little time or inclination to encourage him. Result, he became an introvert and refused to mix with other children at school. Being a reputed school, branding a child as dumb and poor in studies was all they could offer us. Countless 'call parents' with hundreds of signatures assuring our child will improve in coming term was all the world could offer us. No smile on our child's face nor was it distinctly with us.

We never gave up and always believed the world was not such a bad place. Of course, we were ignorant about learning difficulties and special schools that could solve our problem. Constant encouragement and not giving him harsh punishment from our side always made him feel that his parents are with him.

We did have our share of miseries during open day and during social gatherings. Parents would discuss how 98% was a low mark. **Nothing bothered us.**

**Parents, please follow these small tips ;**

1. Never punish/scold the child if he is not performing in studies. Get to his/her problem.
2. Don't compare even with his/her siblings.
3. Don't pass on your dream to your child.
4. Your child expects encouragement from you and teachers.
5. Your child can always get into main stream at some point of time. Be patient.
6. Seek help of special school/educators.

We are today proud parents with our child who not only finished his engineering but went on to do his MBA from a reputed university. As we said earlier, **ACCEPT YOUR CHILD**. After all, who else will.

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## Devanshi's Parenting

*Parul Shingala*

Devanshi was born with a right foot talipes which was rectified with a surgery when she was 4 months old. She was unable to crawl and her walking was also delayed over a year and a half because of the heavy plasters and calipers put on her legs. This restricted her exploring capacity and mobility.

Her entry in school (Pre - KG) showed signs of her staying reclusive from the rest of the children. No interactions in word or action. Stepping into the main school program i.e. LKG she was pronounced a slow learner because of her incapacity to read from the board. Numbers danced before her eyes mocking at her inefficiency to handle them in the routine way.

She was our first born and we as parents did not see this as a problem in itself. We thought her teachers were over ambitious and expecting too much from a toddler. As she continued further into the 2nd and 3rd class, teachers started calling us practically every day to complain about her non-performance at school. She started going into a shell - evading homework - resulting in tantrums. We were unaware of Dyslexia, and hence I was harsh with her many a times.

Family elders insisted I seek help of some professional to know if she was struggling with some psychological issues. So I contacted MDA on the suggestion of Ms Indumati Ramesh. The Clinical psychologist told us that Devanshi was Dyslexic and needed remedial help to handle her academics.

She was also prescribed Occupational Therapy to work on her fine-motor coordination skills. This was the time we realized she had problems with tying shoe laces, identifying right and left shoes, buttoning her shirts, copying and writing from a board. While reading, of course, lines were missed as though they never existed on the page in front of her. Her fingers struggled to come together to grip a pen to write a few words which were hardly legible. All this was a nightmare for her as well as her parents. Due to this stress, she developed skin rashes which worsened to wounds that were bleeding and painful.

Having accepted that Devanshi was a special child who needed special upbringing, we became more caring and more sensitive to her needs. Helping her with academics at home with the skills taught at Ananya, we encouraged her to enjoy her studies. Children around us were performing well in every aspect and here we were so uncertain about our child's future.

Entering MDA for remedial help, it was felt that she needed full-time remedial help. Hence, she was pulled

out of main stream school and sent to Ananya which had just started in 2004.

To check on her gait, posture and working skills we put her into dancing, tailoring, yoga, acupuncture, Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy sessions. Escorting her to all these classes, her interaction increased with us parents and we are now best of friends.

Now the big decision had to be taken. We were warned to be cautious not to put her in an ocean to swim (college) as she learnt to swim in a shallow pool (remedial school). We were advised to enrol her into some short course with limited number of students per class. But she was adamant to go to college.

Ethiraj college with the awareness of Dyslexia quickly gave her admission for B.A course in Travel and Tourism Management.

She is now a Post Graduate in Travel and Tourism Management. Her journey of learning from sounds to letters to words and sentences progressed gradually making her capable of presenting an entire project on Rajasthan as her topic. Transformation from disliking reading to being motivated to gather information and notes from the text books in the libraries itself shows a remarkable grooming of her by Ananya teachers. She had successfully learnt the art of comprehending the contents of her study material.

From a child who spoke nothing she has blossomed in to a young lady, strong and confident. Devanshi is 25 now and has grown to be a strong independent and fearless young lady.

Seeing the world through the eyes of the differently abled child made us realize that God has gifted us a Child with a Beautiful mind. I would also like to make a special mention about my son who has been a great support to her in every way - love, care, motivation and help given during her projects in college.

We continue encouraging her to perform better and never fail to appreciate the smallest of her achievements. We as parents are proud of Devanshi's achievements and fortunate to have been associated with MDA in these many years.

# Parents Are Brain Sculptors



**Kesang Menezes**  
Certified Parent Educator

*This was the opening statement of a talk that I attended by a renowned parent educator from Los Angeles, "Parents are Brain Sculptors". She went on to describe how science has now discovered that the interaction of a child with his or her caregivers shapes the architecture of the child's brain.*

Oh my gosh! Can this really be true I wondered. I always believed that it's largely a child's genes or nature which determines how they turn out. I knew that environment plays a role but how much? The speaker said that according to the Centre for Developing Child, Harvard, "Genes form the basic blueprint, but experiences shape the process that determines whether a child's brain will have a strong or weak foundation for all future learning, behaviour and health."

That is a scary thought and a huge responsibility! To know that the experiences I give my children determine how pathways form in their brain? I have children who are four and six years old. I give so much attention to their food, their schooling, their extra classes but I have not given so much thought to my 'interactions' with them. Is that more important? I do what many parents do — scold, threaten or bribe to get them to behave. And of course, I lose it and yell at them sometimes. Even give them one whack if needed. Isn't that what a parent is supposed to do?

Apparently not! Harvard says that for strong brain architecture a child needs warm, caring interactions with caregivers. John Medina, Developmental Molecular Biologist and author of 'Brain Rules' tells us that the primary function of the brain is not learning. It is survival and safety. I struggled to understand what this information meant for me as a parent?

What do I need to do differently? Like every parent I try to give my children the best possible experiences. I read them stories. I have bought educational toys. I take them to the park to play. I even put them in an Abacus Math class. The talk made me aware that I was a 'doing' parent. Doing so much for my children. But what they need the most is a 'being' parent. A parent with whom they feel deeply bonded and secure. Sure, we all love our kids but in getting things done on a day-to-day basis that love may not get communicated. And then sometimes we feel helpless and resort to harsh measures to discipline them as we are conditioned to believe that is what is needed. With this information I felt the need to rethink my role if I really wanted my children to grow to their full potential as calm, happy, healthy and confident individuals.

## To Summarise What I Learnt:

- Building a deep bond or attachment with our child is our most important task as a parent.
- Children need warm, caring and consistent responses from their caregivers.
- Our anger, threats or physical punishment can deeply affect a child's sense of safety.
- We need to find ways to guide and discipline our children with love and empathy.
- It is essential that young children's feelings get the same level of attention as their thinking

Kesang Menezes is a certified parent educator with Parenting Matters, an organisation to empower parents to build deeper connection in families. Visit [parentingmatters.in](http://parentingmatters.in) for more information. (First Published in DT Next on October 12, 2016)

# The Invaluable Benefits of ‘Messy Play’



**Swetha Krishna**  
Special Educator  
Coordinator, Early Interventions, MDA

Growing up in Chennai in the 80's my childhood largely consisted of spending my time jumping into muddy puddles, building sand mountains at the beach, digging the garden looking for worms and scraping my knees while climbing trees. In fact, if you reflect on your own childhood, sticky fingers, wet feet or a messy veranda is probably one of your favourite memories. Yet, very often as parents, the first thing we shy away from is letting our kids get messy. However, messy play is not just a lot of fun, but an essential part of childrens' early childhood development.

## What really is messy play?

From playing with water in the bath to creating something with chapati dough, experimenting with paint and just about any unstructured play can be called messy play. It provides young children an opportunity to use their imagination and get messy with different materials and be exposed to many textures. In essence, messy play provides a child with multi-sensory experiences - experiences that help make sense of the world around.

There is no right or wrong in messy play. There is no need for end product in messy play. The focus is more on the process rather than the product.

## So what really happens during messy play?

Messy play has a positive impact on several areas of early child development. Here are just a few reasons why it is very important to embrace messy play in all our homes.

**Messy play aids physical development:** while engaging in messy play, children develop their hand-eye coordination, build fine motor skills and improve body control, body awareness, poise, balance and personal space.

**Messy play aids creativity:** messy play allows children to be children. When messy play is truly unstructured, children explore many options of expressing themselves, try new things and experiment with colours, shapes, material and

textures. They learn to think out of the box and express themselves without fear.

**Messy play impacts language and communication:** the informal setting of messy play helps children communicate with confidence, listen patiently and learn to follow instructions. Their vocabulary increases and they learn to express themselves effectively.

**Messy play aids social, emotional and personal growth:** messy play fosters the natural curiosity in children, helps the child build confidence and independence. It also encourages a positive attitude about new experiences and enables their risk taking ability and shed inhibitions. Children also develop their social skills by learning to share, engage with other children and learn to take turns. By involving children in the process of cleaning up, they also learn responsibility and accountability.

**Messy play helps children understand the world around them:** the most important thing children learn through messy play is cause and effect. It also expands their understanding of day to day life, and encourages representational play through role playing.

**Messy play aids in the development of numeracy skills:** through messy play, children learn to measure, develop a concept of size and shape. Children also learn to count, sort, sequence and recognise patterns.

Messy play doesn't require complicated toys or expensive material. A child doesn't need to be taught messy play, it is a natural extension of their being. For a young child there isn't any difference between playing and learning, there is not division between what he or she does for fun and something that is educational. So it's time to let them scribble, scrape their knees, dirty their clothes, dig up worms and just watch the world go by. As Albert Einstein said - 'Play is the highest form of research'.





# The Art Of Parenting

**Dr. Shanthi Nambi**

Senior consultant psychiatrist, Chennai  
Professor, Department of Psychiatry  
Saveetha Medical College and Hospital

## Types of parenting styles and Outcomes

Most parents can be classified into three main types by the style in which they guide their children. As we discuss each, think about where your own parents fit most appropriately. Do both your parents use the same style? Do you fit the outcome?

### Authoritarian: Limits without Freedom

Parents' word is law, parents have absolute control. Misconduct is punished. Affection and praise are rarely given and parents try to control children's behaviour and attitudes they value with unquestioned obedience. Children are told what to do, how to do it, and where to do it, when to do it.

Children from authoritarian homes are so strictly controlled either by punishment or guilt, that they are often prevented from making a conscious choice about particular behaviour because they are overly concerned about what their parents will do.

### Permissive Freedom without limits

Parents allow their children to do their own thing. With little respect for order and routine. Parents make few demands on children. Impatience is hidden. Discipline is lax, parents are resources rather than standard makers, rarely punish, non-controlling, non-demanding, usually warm. Children walk all over the parents.

Children from permissive homes receive so little guidance that they often become uncertain and anxious about whether they are doing the right thing.

### Democratic: Freedom within Limits

Middle ground between the two above, stress freedom along with rights of others and responsibilities of all, parents set limits and enforce rules, willing to listen receptively to child's requests and questions. Both loves and limits. Children contribute to discussion of issues and make some of their own decisions, exert firm control when necessary, but explain reasoning behind it. They respect children's interest, opinions, unique personalities. Loving, consistent, demanding, combine

control with encouragement.

Children whose parents expect them to perform well, to fulfil commitments, and to participate actively in family duties, as well as family fun, learn how to formulate goals. They also experience the satisfaction that comes from meeting responsibilities and achieving success.

One of the most important things to remember as a parent is to be yourself. You can use those methods with which you can feel comfortable. A child can spot a fake a mile away. Children know if you mean what you say or if it is just another threat. Select the methods that you believe in, that you feel comfortable with and then be consistent.

### Positive Parenting Tips for Toddlers

Set up a special time to read books with toddler. Encourage your child to take part in pretend play. Play parade or follow the leader with your toddler. Help your child to explore things around her by taking her on a walk or wagon ride. Encourage your child to tell you their name and age. Teach your child simple songs like Itsy Bitsy Spider, or other cultural childhood rhymes. Give your child attention and praise when she follows instruction and shows positive behaviour and limit attention for defiant behaviour like tantrums. Teach your child acceptable ways to show that she's upset.

Because your child is moving around more, they will come across more dangers as well. Dangerous situations can happen quickly, so keep a close eye on your child. Here are few tips to help keep your growing toddler safe:

Do not leave your toddler near or around water (For example, bathtubs, whirlpools, or the ocean) without someone watching her. Fence off backyard pools. Drowning is the leading cause of injury and death among this age group. Encourage your toddler to sit when eating and to chew his food thoroughly to prevent choking. Check toys often for loose or broken parts. Encourage your toddler not to put pencils or

crayons in her mouth when colouring or drawing. Do not hold drinks while your child is sitting on your lap. Sudden movements can cause a spill and might result in your child being burned. Make sure that your child sits in the back seat and is buckled up properly in a car seat with a harness.

Talk with staff at your child care provider to see if they serve healthier foods and drinks, and if they limit television and other screen time.

### Positive parenting strategies across childhood:

Do you struggle at times to create a balance between your career, managing your household, community and social responsibilities, and raising your children? It is a difficult balance for many working parents and is a common source of stress for both mum, dad, and of course the children!

A few strategies to achieve a healthy family balance include:

- Create effective family rules
- Demonstrate effective co-parenting
- Encourage communication
- Be an “active” parent
- Plan for major events together
- As parents and partners, support each other
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### Strategies if you are not managing

Don't be afraid to ask for help—seek assistance from family, neighbours or friends. Talk with other parents about how they are managing, consider all the support mechanisms available. Remember parents are not perfect.

### Top tips for parents

Coping under pressure

Coping with your child's misbehaviour can be stressful. Sometimes it can seem like you're about to reach boiling point.

Parents need to find ways to reduce the pressure in the home and can do a lot to help their child's behaviour through positive parenting.

### Talk and Listen

As we know, all children are unique. Getting to know your own child, and knowing what makes them angry or agitated can help you prevent angry or upsetting situations before they happen. Talking and listening

to your child helps them to understand what's going on.

### Play

If children are playing, they are less likely to be posting the control in the bin or wrestling with a brother or sister! If you've got a lot to do in a short space of time, set up an activity that will give you that all important extra half an hour. Play is important and enjoyable, and children can learn a lot from it.

### Understand changes as they grow

Children's needs and understanding change as they grow, and what might be expected of a four-year-old can't be expected of a two-year-old. Parents need to understand the changes.

### Boundaries

Children need clear rules, boundaries and routine. Be consistent. Try one routine at one time and get it working before moving to the next. Reward and notice good behaviour. Real praise and encouragement is the best reward as it can boost a child and build self-esteem.

### Look after yourself

If you make sure you get a break to relax, this may help you cope better.

### When things getting difficult

Stay calm. If it is impossible, leave the child in a safe place and leave the room for a few minutes. This will give you breathing time to think.

Have realistic expectations and allow consequences. And finally parents must learn to deal with melt down movements positively.

A small note to parenting educators:

Other parenting principles may also be constructed from research and evidence. They are requested to improvise themselves from the Principles of Parenting Derived from Parental Acceptance-Rejection Theory (PART Theory)

“ To be in your children's memories tomorrow, you have to be in their lives today. ”

# Some Thoughts On “Parenting The Adolescent”



**Usha Ramakrishnan**

*Consultant, Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Wellness  
(For Parenting, Teaching, Leadership and Management)*

As teens transit between childhood and adulthood, enabling them to find their own identities, spread their wings and get ready to fly can be an exciting challenge for parents - when parents are equipped!

And so a start with a note to Parents!

Parents you deserve appreciation for the good things you do.

Take care of yourself, eat right, sleep well, exercise, interact with people who have a positive outlook and care about you, make time for your own talents. The wellbeing and harmony of your body mind and spirit is important. Be kind and compassionate to yourself first! You will need them all as you parent your teen.

A tired, stressed, cheerless parent can spread negative energies.

## Understanding your teen...few unique features

- There is new development occurring in the teen brain. Amongst other features, new connections between the area that governs emotions and the prefrontal area that is the seat of higher order thinking are forming. Planning, prioritising, conceptualising, problem solving at abstract levels, emotional self-regulation, are part of this development. They continue to develop into the early twenties.
- That's why sometimes your teen talks/behaves like an adult and sometimes reacts like a child. How you respond in turn (childishly or maturely) makes a valuable difference.

- With the onset of puberty, there will be a natural curiosity about the opposite sex, own body and sexuality. Guide them to right information and healthy attitudes. Keep communication open! Keep them safe from abuse.
- They typically become further conscious of differences between them and others. This can cause much stress if they don't understand their condition or have low self-esteem, or do not have parental support. Parental attitudes to their teens will definitely affect teens' attitude about themselves.

Your teen needs to understand their condition holistically, know their strengths along with their difficulties. They may require remedial education/ occupational/ sensory integration therapy / assistive technologies to tide over the difficulties. An informed parent can make a vital difference.

## “Times they are a-changing!”

Your teen is growing up in a very different time and environment than you did a generation ago. Parenting ways need to change too. Access to social media, changes in social/cultural practices, greater material comforts impact the environment your teen is growing up in and the way he thinks.

Combining the “spirit” of the best of our parenting traditions and values rather than mere rigid practices, with understanding of recent scientific findings regarding adolescence and your teens own world, could make for great parenting attitudes and styles!

For otherwise the generation gap is bound to occur.  
Or parents will hold their teen back...alas!

### Teens need

- Parents to believe in them, respect and trust them just as parents want from their teens.
- Values to anchor their lives. "Values are caught not taught." What values is your teen catching? Is there a conflict between what is said and what is practised? Parents need to introspect, and change where required.
- To be listened to and their opinion and perspective respected.
- Clear reasonable limits regarding their choices and permissions and, guided to make wise choices.
- To be guided and enabled to regulate emotions (parents remaining calm and composed at difficult situations is great learning for teens).
- Opportunities to discover what they find interesting and are good at. Parent actively supporting the interests and abilities greatly enhances self-esteem.
- Privacy. Don't feel upset when they want to be by themselves at times.
- Descriptive praise and rewards rather than punishment and, understanding love.

### Enable them. In these years there is much teens will be able to do, given opportunities

to explore and identify their unique profile of intelligences. This will further their self-esteem of feeling loved and capable.

(Could be mechanics, sport, drama, art, dance, different kinds of music, horticulture, cooking, photography, radio jockeying and, so much more. Teens with Dyslexia are intelligent and creative differently.

Get to know the theory of Multiple Intelligences. It will provide you with great answers.

At this very important stage equip yourself first. Understand, nurture and guide your teen deftly, caringly, as you would a very dear friend.

Let love, laughter, open communication and accepting of differences rule with safety, security and trust. Seek first to understand. Love your teen unconditionally. Enjoy these magical years of parenting. Watch your teen spread wings and get ready to soar!

## செய்திச்சிதறல்கள்

மெட்ராஸ் டிஸ்லெக்ஸியா அஸோஸியேஷன் அவர்களது CSR பயிற்சிகளின் ஒரு பாகமாக ஏழு நாட்கள் பயிற்சி வகுப்புகளை TNPL களூரில் அவர்களது ஆசிரியர்களுக்கும் மற்றும் அரசாங்கப்பள்ளி ஆசிரியர்களுக்கும் நடத்தியது. மொத்தமாக 37 ஆசிரியர்கள் பங்கு பெற்றனர்

சென்னை கிழக்கு ரோட்டரி சங்கம்(BETI) என்னும் செயல் முறை திட்டத்திற்கு முதன்மையான ஆதரவாளர்கள். இதன் துவக்க விழா 19.0.2018 அன்று சென்னை தீநகரில் உள்ள சாரதா வித்யாலையா பள்ளிக்கூடத்தில் பாதுகாப்பு அமைச்சர் மதிப்புக்குரிய திருமதி நிர்மலா சீதாராமன் அவர்களால் ஆரம்பித்து வைக்கப்பட்டது. MDA நிர்வகம், கற்றலில் குறைபாடுள்ள குழந்தைகளைச் சரி செய்வதற்கு வகுப்பறையில் ஆசிரியர்கள் செய்ய வேண்டியன பற்றி பயிற்சி வகுப்புகள் கொடுப்பதில் பங்குதாரர்கள். இந்தப் பயிற்சியானது பள்ளிகளின் ஆரம்ப நிலை ஆசிரியர்களுக்கு அளிக்கப்படும்.

அக்டோபர் 2ம் தேதி முதல் 7ம் தேதி வரை மெட்ராஸ் டிஸ்லெக்ஸியா அஸோஸியேஷன் “உலகநாடுகள் டிஸ்லெக்ஸியா வாரத்தை” தரமணியினுள்ள ரைட்டர்ஸ் கபேயில் நடத்தியது. இது சென்ற ஏப்ரல் மாதத்தில் நடைபெற்ற டிஸ்லெக்ஸியா கபேயைப் போன்றதேயாகும். கற்றலில் குறைபாடுள்ளவர்களைக் கண்டறிந்து உதவிகள் செய்யவும் எடுத்துறைக்கப்பட்டது .

### சேவை மேளா

மூன்றாவது முறையாக வருடாந்திர “Battle of Bouffet” நிகழ்ச்சியில் பங்கு பெற்றது. 2018 ஜூன் மாதம் தொடங்கப்பட்ட இந்த நிகழ்வில் சேவை மனப்பாண்மையில் நடத்தப்படும் இசை நிகழ்ச்சிகளில் பங்கு பெற்றது. இந்த மேளாவில் 100க்கும். என்ஜிஓக்கள் பங்கு பெற்றன. ஜூன் மாதம் முதல் செப்டம்பர் மாதம் வரை இந்த அமைப்பினர் நன்கொடைகள் மூலமாக நிதிதிரட்டியுள்ளனர். இதை தவிர வலைதளம் மூலமாக மொத்தமாக நன்கொடைகள் ஏற்பதற்கு தனியாக தளம் அமைக்கப்பட்டது. இந்த வருடம் பாடகர் சீனிவாசன் மற்றும் பாடகர் சங்கர் மகாதேவனின் இசை நிகழ்ச்சி நடத்தப்பட்டது.

### பயிற்சி வகுப்புகள்

எண்ணற்ற பயிற்சி வகுப்புகள் தொடர்சியாக நடை பெற்று வருகின்றன  
1.டி.ஏ.வி.- டி.ஏ.வியில் குருசிக்ஷானம் அகாடமி குழுவிற்கு பயிற்சி வகுப்புகள் நவம்பர் 12ம் தேதி முதல் 17ம் தேதி வரை நடைபெற்று முடிந்தது

2. ITTC - புதியதாக ITTC பயிற்சிகள் MDA நிருவனத்தால் 29ம் நாள் துவக்கப்பட்டது. இதற்கு ரமணவித்யாலயாவின் முதல்வர் திருமதி. லலிதா சந்திரசேகர் அவர்கள் சிறப்பு விருந்தினராகக் கலந்து கொண்டார்

3. VES - ரோட்டரி சங்கத்தின் செயல்முறை திட்டத்தின் ஒரு பகுதியாக VES பள்ளிகளில் பயிற்சி வகுப்புகள் நடைபெறுகின்றன. கடந்த 24 நவம்பர் 2018 சனிக்கிழமையுடன் 13க்கும் மேற்பட்ட பயிற்சி வகுப்புகள் MDA நிருவனத்தின் பயிற்சி யாளர்களால் நடத்தப்பட்டது.

### ராப்ஸொடி மேற்கோள் சான்று

பள்ளிகளில் இசையை ஊக்குவிப்பதற்காக,ராப்ஸொடி நிருவனத்தினரால் நடத்தப்படும் இசை பயிற்சிகளை அனன்யா பள்ளி ஏற்றுக்கொண்டு வெற்றிகரமாக நடத்திவருவதற்காக மேற்கோள் சான் நிதழ் வழங்கப்பட்டது.

அமைச்சர் மாண்பிகு பாண்டியராசன் அவர்களும் அவரது துணைவியாரும் தலைமை விருந்தினராகக் கலந்து கொண்டார்கள். பல பள்ளிகளிலிருந்தும் முதல்வர்கள் வருகைப்புரிந்தனர். அமைச்சர் தனது உரையில் விளையாட்டு மற்றும் இசைக்குக் கொடுக்கப்பட வேண்டிய முக்கியத்துவம் பற்றி எடுத்துரைத்தார்.

## Happenings at MDA



MDA conducted a 7-day training session at TNPL Karur, as part of their CSR activities for the teachers of their schools and few government teachers. In all 34 teachers participated in the session.



Rotary club of Madras East District 3232 is the prime initiator of a programme called BETI (Better Education and Training Initiative) which was inaugurated at Saradha Vidyalaya, T. Nagar, Chennai by Honourable Defence Minister, Nirmala Seetharaman. MDA is the partner for providing remedial training on classroom remediation for children with Dyslexia. This training will be given to primary teachers in 40 schools.

### Dyslexia Café

MDA celebrated the International Dyslexia Week with a Dyslexia café from 2-7 Oct 2018 at Writer's Café, Taramani. This was a replica of the Dyslexia Cafe held this year in April. Visitors were made aware about Dyslexia and how to identify and reach out for help.

### Seva Mela

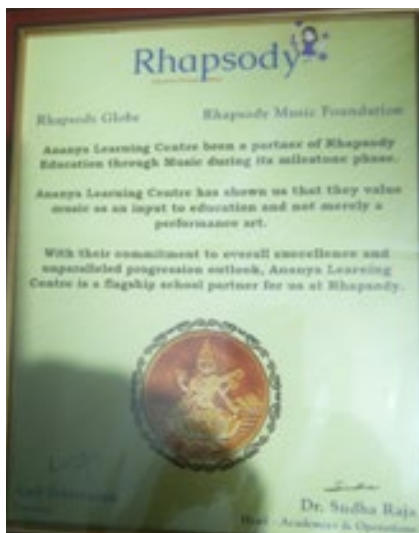
MDA participated in the Annual Battle of Buffet event for the third time. This event which culminates in charity concerts on the last two days, started in June 2018. The Seva Mela is an exhibition of NGOs when on the last two days concerts are held. More than 100 NGOs participated this year. Since June 2018 the NGOs collected funds as donations until Sept 30. There was also an online crowd funding platform customized for Battle of the Buffet for collecting donations. This year concerts were conducted by singer Srinivas and musician Shankar Mahadevan.

Besides collecting donations, NGOs are also encouraged to make Project Proposals upto the amount of 10 lakhs. Selected projects are funded by the organizers. MDA too has made a proposal. We are awaiting the results.

## Training

MDA is conducting several training programmes on a continuous basis.

1. DAV- A training programme at Guru Sikshanam. B. Ed Academy of the DAV group was completed from 12 to 17 November.
2. ITTC- The latest MDA Intensive Teacher Training Course started on October 29. Lalitha Chandrashekhar, Principal, Ramana Vidyalaya was the Chief Guest.
3. TNPL - Training for teachers of schools supported by TNPL at Karur started on 2 November.
4. SCERT – As part of the Rotary Project, training of Government school teachers through SCERT continues. So far 4 training programmes have been completed.
5. VES - As part of the Rotary Project, training at the VES group of schools continues.
6. A feather in our cap was placed when on Saturday 24 November 2018, as many as 13 training modules were conducted by MDA trainers in various venues.



## Rhapsody Citation

Ananya Learning Centre, MDA, was given a citation by Rhapsody Music Foundation, recognising our effort to encourage music in school. Minister Pandiarajan and his wife were the chief guests. It was also attended by principals of various schools like Vidya Mandir, P.S High School, Sankara Adayar, AMM, Omega International to name a few. Minister Pandiarajan gave an advocative speech on the importance of music and sports in schools. He urged schools to focus more on these areas. He congratulated MDA for doing great service in the field of children with special needs. Anil Srinivasan also acknowledged MDAs support of Rhapsody.

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