

EDITORIAL

Child Friendly Schools

The National Curriculum Framework-2005 revolves around child centredness – child centred curriculum, child centred teaching learning, child-friendly assessment and school environment. The key recommendation of NCF-2005 is to make the curriculum flexible, so that teachers can adapt curriculum to the child's context, and needs. Curriculum should provide space for children's experiences and voices. Children's curiosity should be addressed giving them opportunities to question, explore and discover. Children from all sections of the society should be able to relate to the curriculum. A child centred curriculum provides children opportunities to construct their own ideas and knowledge; to discuss and negotiate their knowledge with peers and teachers, and also to validate their knowledge.

To translate this vision of NCF-2005 in to practice, teachers need to create a child centred classroom, where each child is actively engaged in learning. The challenging task for teachers is to design a variety of learning experiences and situations to meet the needs of diverse learners. A flexible curriculum requires teachers to discuss knowledge and ideas that are relevant for children even though these are not part of textbooks. For example, if children want to know and understand about Malaria and Dengue in the rainy season of July-August, then the teacher must discuss these in class, even if these are not a part of the textbook. Children should be able to relate school knowledge to their everyday life experiences. Let children bring knowledge that they have constructed outside (home and neighbourhood) to school and negotiate this knowledge with teachers and peers.

Child centred pedagogy requires child centred, learning oriented assessment procedures. Assessment facilitates and guides learning when it is integrated part of teaching learning process. For assessing the 'holistic' development of children, assessment needs to be comprehensive. Continuous comprehensive assessment is child friendly as it does not cause stress and anxiety. Teachers can develop learning portfolios for assessment, which can be discussed with child and parents.

For making school environment child friendly, teachers need to understand the causes of stress and anxiety. Child friendly environment is free from trauma, fear and anxiety. Child friendly school provides facilities for sports, arts, and

crafts. Library is essential for each school. Child friendly school is inclusive in nature, where children from all sections of the society – rich and poor, first generation school goers and differently abled study together. Necessary facilities and equipments need to be provided for differently abled children. Safe drinking water, healthy mid-day meal and separate toilet for boys and girls need to be provided for all children.

Let us make our schools child-friendly where each child feels safe, secure and loved, and develops at his/her own pace.

Academic Editor