

## Snap shots - 1998 - 99

The batch of August 1998- 3 year old , provided some terrific results: We began with a very intensive general knowledge program comprising of about 60 animals, 40 birds, fish, flowers, people and their work, India political, major landforms and oceans and their locations, other than the all time favourites Early World of learning. They have been shown a lot of CDs, videos to cover the topics done so that the comprehension is as thorough as possible. They have finished three primer books in Tamil and in English - a reading vocabulary of about 100 words in each language.

Four 5 year olds joined us last August. They are more serious. We did the same work with them for GK but with greater speed and they are already into reading and math programs. They have done about 10 books in Tamil and three in English.

The cream of the school - our 6 year olds who joined us in 97 August, have overcome their environment, their personal limitations. One is Karthik - put aside as a retarded. He came to us when he was 4, with the growth - physical and mental - of a 2 year old. Today he plays like any 7 year old; difficult to spot as a 'different' child in a group !

Then we have two of them - working at their level - first standard - with almost no help in reading in Tamil. Their English will catch up. And two who read almost anything in Tamil - newspapers, magazines, books at 5th grade level or more. In English, they can read all the Poldy books of their own, and special reading programs created by the Central Institute for English and other Foreign Languages. Their math level is at par with any Mumbai board child. The two are being taught to play chess.

Our three eleven year olds - including Nirupama - are ready to take the eighth exams although they don't 'qualify by age' for another two years.

This year is going to be crucial for 5 of our young adults. They shall be taking the 8th board exam in December. It is crucial for the girls, to get a gift from the govt. on marriage if they complete their 8th.

Teaching materials for each of the group of children have been created. The teachers spent a fortnight addressing each group's strength and weakness whilst creating the worksheets. This we expect should ensure that all our children are compulsive readers!

Field trip this year was 4 days and 3 nights at Kodai Kanal. Sounds like another tourist brochure?. As they began the climb from the plains there were cries of "Look, there's a mountain", before it dawned that they were on the mountain themselves. The kids had a great time - climbing,

trekking, boating and of course eating parathas and biryanies. They were each given small diaries to maintain. Every evening, from 2000 to 2130 there was a lot of noise as the seniors helped the juniors fill up, helped with the spelling.

We inaugurated the library / cum AV room in June 98. The kitchen is also ready for use and has been inaugurated on Ganesh Chaturti. We have also completed the construction of a store-room (about 200 sq. ft.) above the kitchen and can now safely store our harvest and bulk provisions purchases. Staff strength is now on to 5 other than us, keeping the ratio to 7 children to a teacher.

**Special event :** We are helping start a new school in Pondicherry under the aegis of Mother's Service Society - Primrose School. For the inauguration ceremony we had taken 10 of our wonders and had a demonstration of our techniques. We had a 40 -50 books including the World Book Encyclopedia which the guests were asked to pick and have them read. They came out with flying colours. Some were yet suspicious: may be the children could have learned it all "by heart". So they gave the children some reading material they had brought with them. Our children read that too!

In April, we did a very intensive training for all our teachers Shikshayatan and Primrose. - 10 days in-house almost 14 hours a day. A whole lot of teaching materials were made for the nursery and lower KG levels and it was a very creative time. We don't remember the last time we enjoyed ourselves so much in adult company!