

NEWSLETTER

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Child-to-Child Approach for Getting Ready for Schooling

An innovation to preschool education in Sri Lanka



The Child-to-Child (CtC) model is grounded in the principle of peer learning—children learning from and with each other. This is an innovation focuses on interactive early learning to make preschool children Getting Ready for Schooling (GRS). GRS is based on the child to child concept of older children (Young Facilitators-YF) being supported to younger children (Young Learners-YL). In the Sri Lankan context, a group of Grade Six students from formal schools facilitate and support 325 preschool children in 10 preschools through activities adapted from the preschool curriculum. This initiative actively involves three primary stakeholder groups: parents, teachers, and the older children (young facilitators YFs).



Positive Reception

According to the baseline data, it was revealed that the participating preschool teachers had an extremely positive perception of the benefits of the Child-to-Child (CtC) approach. All of them recognized it as a valuable method for keeping children motivated and actively engaged, offering multiple benefits for preschool education.

Parents of the young learners also anticipated rapid development through this type of collaborative learning and also, they appreciated for bringing back of traditional practice of younger children are supported by the older children in the family

Furthermore, analysis of data collected from the young facilitators indicated their readiness and strong motivation to participate in this new experience, which they were eager to engage in the implementation.



Implementation Steps

The following are the steps followed in the implementation of the child to child programme implementation.

- Discussions with stakeholders held and necessary approval granted.
- Resource team identified including representatives from the faculty of education university of Colombo, Ministry of Education, Provincial Department of Education, Western Province, National Institute of Education, National Education Commission and the Ministry of women and child affairs
- curriculum alignment and adaptation of resource material- National level curriculum experts and academics worked together to study the CtC material and introduced them to the 10 preschool teachers to make them familiar in few workshops.
- Baseline survey conducted to study the level of competency of group of children in the same preschools and the attitude and awareness of parents of those schools. Also, the knowledge on CtC of preschool teachers of the 10 preschools selected for the research pretested through a baseline questionnaire.
- management procedures concluded orientation for the formal school principals and teachers on selection of young facilitators, training of young facilitators, feedback from the preschool teachers, feedback from the research team, parents observations and comments, teachers of young facilitators comments, parents of young facilitators comments, challenges, how did the challenges addressed, regular monitoring through visits and physical and remote meetings, feedback sharing online, qualitative analysis of parents perception on child to child approach
- weekly monitoring conducted through visits by the resource team and followed up with feedback comments provided. Participating teachers organized weekly online meetings to review lessons conducted in the previous week and regarding preparations for the coming week. Day to day achievements and challenges were discussed through WhatsApp messages and other communication methods.



Participating Preschools

List of preschools included in the project

- Sadhana Preschool - Minuwangoda
- Kids R kids Preschool - Kotte
- Shiny Kids Preschool- Bandaragama
- Holy Kids Preschool - Bopitiya
- Mahabodhi Preschool - Maradana
- N.M.C. preschool – Bolawalana, Negombo
- Div. Secretariat preschool -Mahara, Kelaniya
- Asha Preschool- Pitipana, Homagama
- Al Hikma preschool - Welipenna
- Apple Tree preschool- Puwakpitiya, Avissawella

Name of the Pre School	Number of YL Participating	Name of the Formal School	Number of YF Participating
Kids R Kids preschool	43	Ananda Shastralaya, Sri Jayawardenepura Kotte	11
Divisional Secreteriate Early Childhood Development Centre	16	Kadawatha Presidents' College	4
Al Hikma Pre School	11	Matugama St. Mary's M.V.	3
Apple Tree Pre School	12	Tamil Maha Vidyalaya,Puwakpitiya	3
Holy Kids Pre school	31	Pamunugama M.V Bopitiya	7
Shiny Kids Pre School	43	Ramukkana Vidyaloka K.V.	10
Sadhana Pre School	44	Sri Ghanawasa Maha Vidyalaya	11
N.M.C. Pre School	21	NG/Bolawalana Nimala Mariya Maha Vidyalaya	5
Asha International Pre School & Day Care Center	57	Pitipana Maha Vidyalaya, Pitipana	16
Mahabodhi Shokanji Kindergarten	53	Ananda Balika Vidyalaya, Colombo10	12
Total	331	Total	72



Early Achievements

More than fifty percent of the sessions have been conducted so far by all 10 preschools and there are significant achievements that have been observed. These can be called as successes and generally it has depended on the corporation of both the preschool teachers and the principals of the formal school and the grade 6 teachers. Through fun and interactive learning activities YL develops early learning skills and socio emotional competencies. They seem to be comfortably associating the older sibling. Preschool teachers have mentioned that preschool children are not shy and backward in engaging with older children and it will lead to establish readiness to schooling.

Through fun, interactive, and play-based learning activities, the Young Learners (YLS) have been able to strengthen their early learning skills while also developing vital socio-emotional competencies. They are seen confidently engaging with their older peers, building bonds that make the transition to formal schooling smoother. Preschool teachers noted with pride that their children no longer hesitate or shy away from interacting with older students—an encouraging sign of readiness for the next stage of learning.

At the same time, the Young Facilitators (YFs) themselves have shown tangible growth. They are gaining confidence, self-esteem, and leadership qualities. Importantly, they demonstrate inclusivity by ensuring that no child is left behind, often using creative methods to gently draw quieter children into group activities. Schools have recognized these leadership abilities, increasingly entrusting YFs with responsibilities as mobilizers and role models. Encouraged by these experiences, many YFs are now motivated to study harder, and some even aspire to become teachers in the future.

The *Child-to-Child—Getting Ready for Schooling (CtC–GRS)* approach has already proven itself to be a scalable innovation. Evidence from all ten preschools shows that it effectively enhances the competencies of both YLS and YFs. The teaching materials have been carefully tested, adapted, and adopted, while ten preschool teachers have been trained to the level where they can serve as valuable resource persons for expansion. With the upcoming final evaluation, it is expected that strong recommendations will emerge for embedding this model more widely—perhaps even at the policy level.

SIPCA

Scaling Impact of a Play-Based
Child-to-Child Approach to
Make Pre-School to Primary School
Transition Fun and Inclusive

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