

Text

The Crucial Early Childhood Years

EDUCARE

Jacqui Robinson



The Crucial Early Childhood Years

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Table Of Contents

About The Author	iv
Dedication	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
Book Review	viii
Introduction	x
Preface	xii
Chapter One	
Reasons Why The Early Years Are Crucial	1
Chapter Two	
The Exceptional Effects Of The Environment On The Young Child	4
Chapter Three	
A Brief Explanation On How Each Developmental Domain Develops	10
Chapter Four	
Be Aware Of The Value Learning Involved In Play	15
Chapter Five	
The True Meaning Of Education	18
Chapter Six	
Pointers	20
Chapter Seven	
Questions And Answers	23
Chapter Eight	
Story Telling	25
Chapter Nine	
A Method To Ensure The Character Of The Young Child Will Develop With Human Values	29
Conclusion	41
References	42

About The Author

Jacqui Robinson



Graduate Diploma Early Childhood Education Western Australia.

Graduate Diploma Applied Linguistics, Northern Territory, Australia.

Diploma of Education in Human Values, Institute of Sathya Sai Education (Thailand).

The author is a retired qualified Early Childhood teacher with extensive experience teaching children in pre-schools and early primary grades including teaching English as a second language in remote Aboriginal Community Schools. Her special interest in value education led her to do a five-month diploma course in Education in Human Values at the Institute of Sathya Sai Education (Thailand) where she found that the knowledge and experience gained from this course was a valuable asset to her teaching.

After implementing the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values method into her teaching programmes, she observed a gradual difference in the children's attitude. They were becoming more thoughtful in their behaviour to one another, and after hearing a story containing human values, they would ask and answer questions that demonstrated their

understanding of the moral principles contained in the story. The positive results from the implementation of this programme made the author realize that effective value education was what had been missing from educational curriculums and this was what was needed in the future planning of education for children in homes and schools.

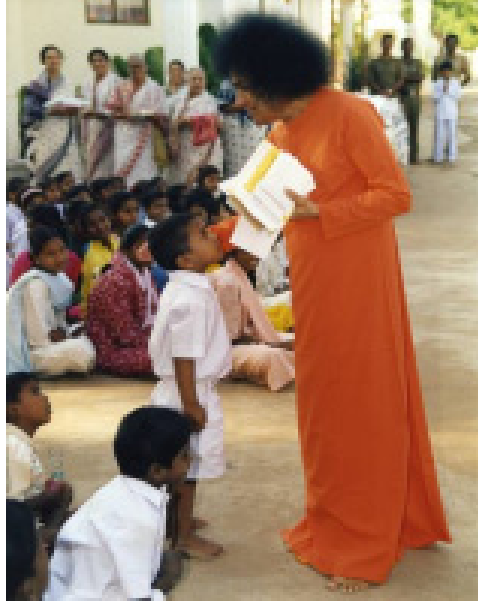
It was during her retirement that Jacqui decided to write her first book 'A Manual for Integrating Human Values into Children's Education *For homes and schools*' (Available at SSSST-Publications Division enquiry@sssbpt.org). The book contains the theory of the Sathya Sai Education in human values and how it can be implemented in homes and schools.

In this, her second book the focus is on the importance of parents being aware of the effect of the rapid growth has on children which ceases after the child reaches the age of seven or eight years. The rapid growth rate is instrumental in the child absorbing three times the amount of information than it will during its later years when the child reaches seven or eight years.

Included is more on the developmental growth rate and suggestions for implementing ideas and methods that will utilize the developmental effects taking place during these early years.

This information will help parents to raise their children to develop with optimum results in all growth areas and with a character exhibiting human values.





Dedication

Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Sri Sathya Sai Baba (1926 -2011) is an internationally known Indian God-man, spiritual teacher, educator, founder, and chancellor of the Sathya Sai University in India and founder of a number of primary and secondary colleges around the world. He is the creator of the 'Education in Human Values and Educare' method and philosophy.

Parents

To all parents and those who have the responsibility for the developmental care and welfare of children.



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ANN MORAN, Primary school teacher at St Brigids School in Ireland, *for kindly giving permission to include her school as an example of a Human Values School.*

ROD MOSS
Technical Advisor

Dr. ROSEMARY MARRON PhD
Book Review



Book Review:
“The Crucial Early Childhood Years”,
by Jacqui Robinson (2019)

Robinson is concerned with the development of human values in the crucial early years of childhood, and suggests that ‘*values education*’ is the missing link in childhood curriculum.

This author claims that learning through play includes the learning of human values. It is accepted internationally that the first five years are critical years in child development, and therefore, modelling human values so that the child may know and imbibe such values are central to well-being, including the development of feelings of self-worth, self-esteem, and happiness.

This author suggests that a values education approach contributes to, 1) the development of character that lives through human valuing; 2) the enrichment of identity and 3) the enactment of prosocial behaviours. A philosophical and practical approach is presented whilst considering the absorbent mind of the child, the effect of the environment(s), and in particular parents/carers/educators as role models.

The methodology is based on a pedagogical practice of drawing out the inherent values in the child through story-

telling, group singing, group activities, silent sitting, and quotations. A loving supportive environment is identified as the key ingredient in which to explore the human values: truth, love, peace, righteous conduct, and non-violence. A brief description of developmental growth in the cognitive, social, emotional, and physical domains is offered.

This book represents a gift to the children of the world, and to parents, family, carers, and educators to commence the development of human values expressions.

Dr. ROSEMARY MARRON, PhD.

4th June 2019.



Introduction

It must be agreed that despite the best efforts of the UN and the governments of the world, humankind today faces the greatest crisis in all of human history. Violence, corruption, abuse of the worst kinds, drugs money-power, genocide, pollution, and hatred ravage the world and what is worse, we seem to have no solution in sight.

**'EDUCARE' (for parents and teachers) by
Dr Hiramalini Seshadri
Dr. Seshadri Harihar
Page, 89**

Although the professional teacher has a responsibility for being a role model and guiding the children in human values, the parents are the first educators.

'Home is the first and most important school of character. It is there that every human being receives his best moral training or his worst; for it is there that he imbibes those principles of conduct, which endure through manhood, and cease only with life.

**Samuel Smiles
Sanathana Sarathi November 2017 pages 54 and 55**

A culture generally follows the belief and attitude of what is thought to be the norm at that particular time. If the norm of the culture gradually changes and deviates from the morality code it once held, then the whole of the society, which is a part of that culture, will follow suit.

Unfortunately, large parts of the world's cultures are now suffering the effects of increasing criminal and lawless behaviour. One of the main reasons for the increase is the lack of many children developing without guidance and education in human values.

Major religions promote the basic teachings of the values of 'Love' 'Truth' 'Peace' 'Right Conduct' and 'Non-Violence,' these values are intrinsic in all humans, but need to be brought out to the surface

The Sathya Sai Education in Human Values method and philosophy has the advantage of bringing out the same morality and ethics as a religion and is therefore suitable for both religious and non-religious parents who want to guide their children's character to show signs of developing with human values. This method is having worldwide success in homes and schools throughout the world.





Preface

The information contained in this book is vital for parents and carers of young children up to the age of seven or eight years. They will get to understand why these early years are vital as they are soaking up environmental influences at three times the rate than they will during the years that follow. If this information is absorbed and put it into practice, the children in their care will develop with human values as an integral part of their character. Included is a description and sample of how to employ the Sathya Sai Education in Human Values method. This method has proved to be successful in helping children in many homes and schools around the world to develop a character exhibiting human values.

In addition, the parent will find information on the different aspects of the child's developmental processes, which will provide an invaluable asset to their understanding of not only how their child develops but also what they can do to ensure the child receives the utmost love and care especially during its most vulnerable years.





Chapter One

Reasons Why The Early Years Are Crucial

During the first five years of life, your child's brain develops more and faster than at any other time in his life. Your child's early experiences – his relationships and the things he sees, hears, touches, smells and tastes – stimulate his brain, creating millions of connections.

The first five years create a foundation for the child to accomplish key developmental advances in mind and body. From the first day of life to the first day in kindergarten, a child grows at a phenomenal pace that is unequalled at any other time of life. It is during these years that the brain undergoes its most dramatic growth. Language blossoms, basic motor abilities advance, thinking starts to become more complex. Children develop 85% of their core brain structure by the time they are five years old.

Child development: the first five years | Raising Children Network
<http://raisingchildren.net.au/>

Author's note: Education theorists vary in what they state as being the crucial early childhood years, some state birth to five years; others state birth to age six, or seven years and some to eight years). However, they all do agree that the

early childhood years are crucial with regard to the child's development.

'A person's 'life script' is written by the seventh year of their life, depending on what he sees, hears, / experiences. Therefore, parents have to be very careful in their behaviour in the presence of their children and to what children are exposed to for example, TV shows. Childhood is like a mirror, which reflects in later life, images first presented to it'.

Samuel Smiles

Sanathana Sarathi November 2017. P.54

The reason why this knowledge is especially important is that the growth rate of the child from birth up until approximately its seventh or eighth year happens at a phenomenally fast rate, unequalled at any other time in life.

The consequence of this dramatic growth rate is that the brain becomes sponge like; absorbing all influences, knowledge and experiences at three times the rate in comparison with the absorption rate after the rapid growth subsides.

It is therefore, of great importance that these experiences that are influencing the child's development be of a positive nature. That parents, educators and carers (from now on will be referred to as parents) need to be aware of this knowledge in order to be the best possible role model and guide to the children in their care. To provide experiences that help them to grow with knowing and imbibing the values that are important to its wellbeing, this will enable them to choose the right action when circumstances occur that will require them to make the right decision.



‘Maria Montessori the Italian physician was a pioneer of theories in early childhood education, which are still implemented in schools all over the globe. Montessori observed that the young child’s mind is like a sponge and wrote her theories in a book called ‘The Absorbent Mind’. In her book, she describes how the young child’s mind is like a sponge and absorbs all information from the environment without discrimination.

The terminology created by Montessori provides an explanation that makes it easy for trainee early childhood teachers and parents to understand just how crucial it is for the young absorbent mind to develop in an environment that is conducive for ensuring the most beneficial atmosphere for the child’s positive growth.

*Maria Montessori, ‘The Absorbent Mind’ (1949)
(From an online review of Montessori’s book,
‘The Absorbent Mind’)*

Note; (Dr Maria Montessori’s view on children and their absorbent minds was a landmark departure from the educational model at the time. Her book ‘The Absorbent Mind’ helped start a revolution in education. Since this book first appeared, there have been both cognitive and neurological studies that have confirmed what Maria Montessori knew decades ago)





Chapter Two

The Exceptional Effects Of The Environment On The Young Child

The things it sees are not just remembered; they form part of his soul. Your child will now build on this core foundation for the rest of its life.

Maria Montessori. (The absorbent Mind 1949)

If parents make use of the advantage of the 'sponge affect' during these early years it will help their child reach its full potential in all areas including character.

Being aware of the effects of the environment is an important way in which you the parent will be giving your child the best advantage of developing with human values as part of its character.

By looking at the effects of the environment on the young child, the parent gains the advantage of being aware of the positive and negative effects and in a position to guide the child from experiencing the negative ones.

Parents, Teachers, Carers, Friends Of Both Family And Of The Child.

"The cultivation of Love is the greatest need today"

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba



The period of infancy and toddlerhood are very vital periods. Medical science is replete with studies that show that children deprived of maternal and family love during this period can

develop problems ranging from psychiatric disorders, cardiovascular problems to malignancies in later life. Bhagawan Baba reiterates time and again how very important it is for the mother to be with the child during this vital period. He does not subscribe to the idea that spending some 'quality time' with the child is enough at this stage. According to him, the more quantity of time spent by the mother with the child the better, and excellent quality has to be brought into this time as well'.

'EDUCARE' (for parents and teachers)

By Dr Hiramalini Seshadri and

Dr. Seshadri Harihar. P.39

Parents, teachers, carers and friends of the family and friends of the child will have an effect on the child's attitude and behaviour, especially in this period of rapid growth. The language of the adult is one that a child will easily pick up. Even though you think they are not listening be careful of what you say around them, they may not say anything about what they have heard because they accept all that you do and say as normal. The same applies to family members and friends.

As the children become older, they will have adopted any negative or positive language and behaviour as their own.

Friends Of The Child

The behaviour of some of your child's friends may not be appropriate for your child who is going to absorb and copy. The child will think that this behaviour is acceptable unless the parent intervenes. If this situation arises, the child may be upset if it thinks the friend is being criticised, in which case the parent may carefully explain why the friend's behaviour was inappropriate. It may be possible for them to discuss together how they could treat this situation in a sensitive and positive way.

Hero Worship

Children often look up to and even emulate well-known popular celebrities of sport, screen and any other medium that involves the child's interest. It is important that the chosen character is worthy of your child's adoration. Help or encourage the child to choose programmes showing themes and characters that exhibit good values. Good role models will inspire them towards developing a character that displays human values.

Equipment

Toys, books, phones, tablets, games television, games etc: Parents, ask yourselves what are the subtle messages that the children are receiving and absorbing? Are they on their phones or other equipment too long? If so, is this causing them physical harm? Are the games or other items they are absorbing an aggressive kind? On the other hand, are they, preferably absorbing material that gives them positive

messages? If the young child is continuously influenced by good values, it will have a higher probability of developing a healthy mind and body and become a virtuous human being.

For Parents To Be Aware

Mother is the first teacher of the child. At this age, children knowingly or unknowingly acquire behaviour characteristics of their parents. Thus, it is very essential that mothers be prepared to play their role. They must maintain a balance between 'Love and Law' in dealing with their children. In modern time, unfortunately, this is generally not the case.

*Education in Human Values
A Course book for the Training of Master Trainers
(Sri Sathya Sai International Centre for Human Values)
p.200*

Parents need to be the good role models they can possibly be. It is not a case of 'do as I say and not as I do'. When children are at this very young age they will perceive their parents just the way they are, they will not have the experience or language to be able to discriminate between good or bad attitudes and behaviour. It will be just a matter of fact that they will absorb and emulate their parent's behaviour. Sometimes it can be in a very subtle way as shown in the story below, told by Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The point of the story is that although subtle influences are generally not thought to be important, they can in fact have a catastrophic affect. Parents, therefore, need to remember to be honest in all that they say and do. This will give the child the best chance of the child maturing into being an honest, moral and therefore a happy adult.

The Story Of The Child Thief

A mother carried her son on her shoulder when she went to the market. A woman with a basket of fruits passed by her; the child lifted a banana from that basket and started eating it. The mother noticed it, and when she was told that he had cleverly lifted it from the basket of a passing fruit seller, she complimented the son on his smartness. This made the child indulge in petty thieving and picking pockets, as it grew into a boy, and later into an adult, he began housebreaking and become a member of an armed gang of robbers. Once during a robbery, he committed even murder, and when he was caught and jailed, he expressed a wish to see his mother before being hanged. The wailing, weeping desperate mother was brought before him. She was sobbing at her son's fate. The son asked her to come closer to him; the son said, "She deserves the punishment; for, it was she who brought me to this doom. Had she reprimanded me when I stole a banana, when I was a child of two years, instead of complimenting me, I would not have fallen into this evil way?"

*Sathya Sai discourses printed in
'SATHYA SAI ON PARENTING'
By the Institute of Sathya Sai Education (Thailand)*

An Example Of A Subtle Negative Message Received By A Young Child As Witnessed By The Author

I was sitting in a bus shelter waiting for a bus, a grandmother, mother and children came into the shelter to wait for the bus, which was not due for another twenty minutes. One of the children a girl aged about eight told her mother and

grandmother she often didn't pay on the bus that took them to and from school. grandmother told her it was wrong. 'Why?' the girl asked, 'the other children do it.' Gandmother told her she didn't have to do the same as other children.

The mother said nothing, grandmother had told the child it was wrong but did not explain to the girl why it was wrong.

This is a typical example of what would be the case of many children who need to be guided by instruction from parent and school.

In this particular situation, it is possible the child will grow to adulthood accepting that this sort of getting away with not paying for something that should be paid for is acceptable as long as you aren't caught. Teaching children human values from an early age will remain in the child's subconscious and guide them into performing right action for the rest of their lives.

"Honesty is the first chapter in the book of wisdom"





Chapter Three

A Brief Explanation On How Each Developmental Domain Develops

(Developmental growth in the areas of cognitive, socio/emotional and physical)

The following explanation of the four domains (areas of growth) will help parents to know the correct expectations of children's capabilities at the stage of growth reached.

Having learned that this early childhood period is critical with regard to the shaping of children's future character, it will be of benefit to the parent if they understand how the areas of growth develop. It will prevent parents from making comparisons between children or being concerned that their own child has not reached a certain level that they may have thought to be 'normal'. This in turn will help parents to be less anxious about the progress of their child and will help them to understand that each of the developmental areas is equally important.

The growth rate within these areas will differ within one child and between children. For example a child might be

forward intellectually but still developing at the emotional level. Parents need not be concerned; the domains (growth areas) will even out as the child develops.

An explanation of each growth area:-

The Cognitive Domain

Cognitive development focuses on a child's development in terms of information processing, conceptual resources, perceptual skill, language learning which is reliant on knowledge and understanding gained through cognitive development and other aspects of brain functioning. The child may not be so quick to understand what you are communicating, if this is the case show patience. When telling a story etc, ensure that the child has understood its meaning; this may be achieved by asking questions that are relevant to the story. To avoid the child becoming frustrated make sure all tasks that are given are suitable for the child's level. If the child finds the task too difficult, the feeling of failure or frustration will be absorbed and may adversely affect future attempts at that particular task or ones similar.

Many parents believe that the cognitive area to be the most important and are thrilled if their child is quick at learning cognitively, i.e. language, reading etc, but the child may need help with the other developing areas which may be overlooked. On the other hand a parent may worry that compared to some other children the child seems to be slower developing cognitively. Parents need not be concerned, as all the areas of growth will even out eventually.

The Emotional Domain

The social and emotional areas of growth are closely related; how a child behaves socially will affect the child's well-being. This area is generally referred to as the socio/emotional area. As Montessori pointed out this is a very sensitive time, as they are beginning to recognise their feelings and learning how to manage them. Emotions are feelings, as in love hate, fear and grief, to name a few. The child is learning how to interact with other children. Parents can help the child to manage its feelings by listening and understanding and help with the emotional problems the child may have. This help and understanding will also be of assistance for the building of the child's self-esteem. Children's responses to the different feelings they experience every day at a young age will have a major impact on their behaviour in later years

The Social Domain

Social behaviours are closely identified with emotions, values, and temperament. This is the time when attachment formation becomes critical. Attachment theory suggests that individual differences in later life functioning, and personality are shaped by a child's early experiences with their caregivers. The quality of emotional attachment, or lack of attachment, formed early in life may serve as a model for later relationships including peer relationships.

Attendance at a kindergarten or an early childhood centre is a beneficial way for children to learn social skills. They are supervised by qualified educators who will provide the right learning environment and encouragement for the children to have the experience of mixing socially with other children.

The Physical Domain

The physical domain is the growth of gross and fine motor skills. Gross motor skills coordinate the large muscle groups that control larger movements like balancing, running, etc. Fine motor skills involve the coordination of small muscle movements like grasping, manipulating, holding etc, usually involves the hands working in coordination with the eyes.

The above explanation of the domains is to give the reader a very brief understanding of the importance of knowing that the development growth areas do not reach their potential until the child reaches the age of seven or eight. It is, therefore important that when activities are being planned, to make sure they match the stage of growth the child has reached. For example, children's building bricks and other manipulative toys need to be large enough for the child to handle comfortably. If the child cannot manage the equipment provided, it may feel frustrated or inadequate; this could damage its self-esteem.

Bearing in mind how the rapid growth rate creates the sponge like effect and how the areas of growth are developing at different rates compared to other children and within themselves. (Remember, various educators give approximate time only and parents should not depend on a fixed timetable with regard to the developmental stage of the child.) Eyesight, hearing, all physical skills, cognitive, emotional and social skills are still developing and the child cannot be expected to perform at levels other than the ones that have been reached.

At the practical level, the parent will need to know and remember that the child may not be hearing or seeing at what you may think to be normal, or maybe not able to reach a high note when singing, or judge distance for safely crossing the road. The same applies to the cognitive and socio/emotional levels.

Having understood the implications of the more positive aspects that may help the child develop at an optimum level in all growth areas, the parent will feel motivated to put into action a method that will bring value education to the surface and incorporate into the character of the child.

The method I recommend is the 'Sathya Sai Education in Human Values'. Please see full information and example of this method in Chapter Nine.





Chapter Four

Be Aware Of How Play Can Include Learning Human Values

Learning through play stimulates the growth areas of language, socio/emotional, physical and intellectual areas of the developing young child. As technology has now become a large part of 'play' there is a need for parents to ensure there is a balance between the two.

Whether your child is attending an early childhood centre or not, it is a good place to go to observe just how play is structured so it will meet the needs of the children. The information and knowledge learned would be of great benefit towards providing parents with optimal guidance on how to raise their children to develop with morals.

Centres of Early childhood Education are often thought of as places where children are left to be looked after while parents are working and that their play is something that is organised to keep children safe and happily occupied. The truth is that while children are playing games, doing puzzles, drawing and painting and all other activities they are developing pre reading skills, pre maths skills, social skills, physical and learning skills to name a few skills only out of



all the learning and developing that is taking place during 'play'

The teachers and helpers are trained and qualified to hold a position in this important role of being their first educators, outside of the home. All the indoor / outdoor play areas and activities are structured to encourage the natural growth of the child, and are planned in order of difficulty or to meet the needs of the child at their stage of development.

Encouraging the natural creativity of the child is also catered, for example, art activities are provided to inspire children to be creative. (Too much colouring in is not recommended as this is not conducive for stimulating the natural creativity of the child.) Another example of a creative art activity:- children are given an easy to handle glue pot and brush, card, and bits of material and small items that can be glued on to the card; this stimulates the child's creativity, which will be clearly visible on the finished product.

Pre schools also cater for the child's natural creative development by providing play equipment that could be any number of things. Instead of equipment being specific items, like an old boat, or car, the equipment is just wooden seats with maybe a steering wheel, it can then be anything the child imagines it to be, this type of equipment is usually safer also, (no rusty edges or nails to cut or scratch the child.) (Please note also that early childhood centres do not allow toys that are the weapon type, e.g. toy guns, bow and arrows and other aggressive type toys)

Parents could learn valuable information from an early childhood centre and could ask the teacher for information

about their child or the programme in general. Teachers are always happy to talk to parents and answer any questions they may have. This is an important part of their job; however, it is advisable to make an appointment first. The information gained could help the parent to understand how natural play can benefit the child in a positive way and help with the choices the parent has to make with regard to organising the child's free 'play' time.

Is your child getting enough outside play?





Chapter Five

The True Meaning Of Education

“The cultivation of Love is the greatest need today. The end of education is character; education is for life and not just for a living.”

*Sri Sathya Sai Baba in ‘EDUCARE’
(for parents and teachers) by
Dr Hiramalini Seshadri and Dr. Seshadri Harihar. P.111*

The main aim of this chapter is to help parents to think about what their expectations of the formal education their child will be receiving.

As parents, in what way do you think formal education will benefit your child?

What do you understand to be the meaning of education?

Do you think cognitive learning is the most important aspect of education? Alternatively, do you think it is important that moral character is also an important aspect of what your child is learning?

“Literary education is of no value if it is not able to build up a sound character”

- Sri Sathya Sai Baba

Sri Sathya Sai Baba explains: - "The meaning of 'Education' is commonly associated with acquiring skills that will lead to highly paid employment. The original word 'education' has its roots in the Latin word 'educere' meaning 'lead out'. The verb form is educare, which is related to 'educere' which means to bring about or develop (something latent or potential) leading to the process that gives expression to the human values of Truth, Love, Righteous Conduct Non-violence and Peace.

"Education has two aspects: the first is related to external and worldly education, which is nothing but acquiring bookish knowledge. In the modern world, we find many well versed and highly qualified in this aspect.

The second aspect known as Educare is related to human values. The word Educare means to bring out that which is within. Human values namely, Sathya, Dharma, Shanti, Prema, and Ahimsa (Truth, righteousness, Peace, Love and Non-violence) are hidden in every human being; one cannot acquire them from outside; they have to be elicited from within. Educare means to bring out human values. 'To bring out means to translate them into action'"

**Sathya Sai Baba Discourse
'Educare in Human Values'
Prashanti Nilayam, September 26th, 2000**

The aim of educare, therefore, is to enable every child to develop equally in the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual domain and give them the opportunity to grow into physically, mentally, and spiritually healthy adults. This should be an important part of a child's education from home and from educators.



Chapter Six

Pointers

* ACTIVITIES

Ensure the child can easily manipulate the activities provided, for example blocks, pencils, paint and glue brushes, leggo pieces etc, ensuring that they are large enough for the child to experience success with the outcome rather than the frustration of trying, but not able to handle smaller objects successfully. If children are given tasks that are too hard for their growth level, then they will think of themselves as having failed and will experience a lowering of their self-esteem. Colouring in is not encouraging children to think creatively and should be given only in moderation or when the outcome is to see if the child has developed the skill for colouring within the lines of an outline.

Make sure all activities are enjoyable.

The developing self-esteem is a critical issue in the early childhood period. Carl Rogers the well-known psychologist (1951) wrote that he believed feelings of self-worth developed in early childhood and were formed from the interaction of the child with the mother and

father. As a child grows older, interactions with significant others will affect feelings of self-worth.

* **SINGING**

When teaching songs to children, make sure they do not contain notes that are too high for the child to reach, as their voice range is still developing and may not have developed fully.

* **HEARING**

Make sure the child can hear you. Hearing is not fully developed and the child may not hear you giving instructions, for example, he may be reading a book. You may mistakenly think the child is not paying attention, when in fact the child is not hearing what you are saying.

* **EYESIGHT**

Eyesight is still developing so make sure children can see the objects or pictures in a book you may be showing him. Be aware the child may not yet be able to estimate distances correctly when crossing a road for example, an oncoming vehicle may look further away than it actually is. However capable the child may be it is not advisable for it to go alone when a road has to be crossed.

* **LANGUAGE**

Use simple words when speaking to a young child. Look at their face to make sure they understand. After reading a story, ask questions that will help indicate if the child has understood the question.

Children learn to name things in simple language. For example if your child is interested in learning about butterflies. The word 'changes' is the simple word for explaining how the caterpillar changes into a pupa and then a butterfly. The words 'transformation' and 'metamorphosis' can be used interchangeably or the child may be just informed of the alternative names. This way it is not frustrated by not being able to understand the more difficult words, but at the same time, can be learning them for use in the future.

* **DISCIPLINE**

Children need discipline. If it is done with love, it is teaching your child which behaviours are acceptable and which are not. It should never be done by shouting at the child or administering physical punishment, this has the tendency to make the child become aggressive. If parents are having difficulties, controlling or disciplining their child, they should seek help, it is available, you can find it on line, at child help clinics etc.

* **CONCENTRATION SPAN**

The child's concentration span will extend naturally as long as the teacher is aware that it is still developing and gives activities that match the level of growth at that time.



Chapter Seven

Questions And Answers

(Readers can attempt to answer the questions before reading the answers that are given)

- Q. Why is it important to understand and act upon the information available on the growth rate of the child up to eight years of age?
- A. The rapid growth of the child during its first seven years is absorbing information at three times the rate than it will for the rest of its life.
- Q. Why are the surroundings of the developing young child so important?
- A. The things that it sees, hears and feels are remembered for the rest of its life.
- Q. What will the young child do with the effect the environment has had on its early years?
- A. Your child will now build on this core foundation for the rest of its life.
- Q. What is it that makes parents the most important educators of their children?

- A. Parents are the first educators and role models and therefore have the most impact on how the child develops.
- Q. What things can the parent do to help the young child have the best experiences that will enable the child to develop with a good character?
- A. The parent must be a good role model and ensure that the environment that the child is absorbing like a sponge is suitable for it to develop with a good character.
- A. An environment that is radiating positive values conducive for the child to develop to its optimum finest growth level in all areas
- Q. What is it that is most important for the parent to give to the child?
- A. The answer is LOVE.





Chapter Eight

Story Telling

This is a powerful way for children to imbibe Human values. *Since the dawn of creation, nothing has been more effective than stories to drive a message home to an audience. A story generates interest, captures the attention, and leaves a beautiful moral to think and act upon. ... Stories can have a direct impact on the conduct of children and thus are extremely useful for cultivating the value of righteous conduct...*

Education in Human Values
(A Course book for Training of Master Trainers)
(2008-153)

Choosing A Suitable Story

Reading or telling a story to a child or children at bedtime or anytime has been a popular event for many years and the practice has not been wholly lost in this technical age.

A parent telling a story to a child has the most powerful affect, promoting a loving, relationship between parent and child, and if told at bedtime it lends itself to the child having loving thoughts as it slips into sleep.

Telling a story by memory would enable the parent to transfer looks of love coming from the heart of the parent to

the eyes and heart of the child. If reading a book the parent may pause between the pages and send loving looks to the child.

When selecting a book choose one that has a loving and positive message that is suitable for you to be able to discuss with your child when the story is finished.

a) Choose a story that you know will appeal to the child's interest and emotions, they need to be at the cognitive and vocabulary level that the child can understand and be relevant to the child's experiences. Stories with abstract ideas for example, need to be limited until after the age of eight. An excerpt from Sathya Sai Baba's recommendation - *'tell children short stories which can be remembered easily. The incidents and the moral they illustrate have to be imprinted on the heart. It is not learning by heart but learning through the heart. Select stories, which have some reference to the background of the children's home life.*

Suitable stories for parents to read and bring out the innate values in their children are available in each country, culture and religion. It is up to the parent to scour bookshops or look on line and discover stories that your children can identify with. Be sure to read them first to make sure the content does not contain aggressive or unsuitable words or meanings, have your questions thought out, and ready to ask the child.

Be aware of the length of the concentration span of the child, (this also relates to other activities.) Stories that are too long or are not of interest to the child will cause

it to become bored, if this happens, it will not absorb the story and miss the focus value. The result of boredom could also prevent the child from enjoying and learning from story sessions.

b) Tell the stories in a variety of ways, for example, the use of puppets. Create your own stories. Inspire children to create their own stories, either individually or as a group. Create stories with the help of children's ideas.

c) Find stories in public and school libraries, second hand shops, markets and on the internet.

d) A story from one's own country or cultures would add relevance and interest to the child.

e) When at an appropriate level, a child with the help of an adult may be able to create a story of his or her own.



In addition to asking questions that will indicate their level of listening, concentration and understanding, ask questions that will indicate how they felt about relevant parts of the story. It is important to get the children's reactions with regard to their feelings, for they are the key that will enable you to assess the level they have reached in their understanding of the value you are targeting.

You can vary your questions by placing one of the following words at the beginning of some of your questions. Who, What, When, Where, Why or How.

If you are reading to more than one child, make sure you do not keep choosing the same confident child or children

to answer questions. The less confident children need the time and the encouragement of the parent; this can be done by asking simple questions you know that the child will be able to answer and giving them time to think and to raise their hand. This way they will become more confident and have the courage to answer the more difficult questions later.





Chapter Nine

A Method To Ensure The Character Of The Young Child Will Develop With Human Values

A method that I recommend is 'The Sathya sai Education in Human Values method that can be used every day or once a week or as the parent chooses or has time for.

By using a method that will bring out the innate values, they will become a part of the child's character for the rest of its life. Below is a sample of how this method can be implemented.

This method has been used worldwide and shown positive results.

It is suitable for all religions and non-religions alike as it is not related to a religion or a cult, but is based on the core values that are found in all religions i.e. Love, Peace, Truth, Right-Conduct and Non-Violence.

I have had the experience of knowing the success of this method myself when I had incorporated it into my early childhood teaching and was amazed how quickly the children became enthusiastic in demonstrating that they had understood and imbibed the basic human values (proving

that the values are innate and just need to be brought to the surface)

Each main value has related values attached to it (for example - honesty, integrity, trust and justice are related to Truth). An important principle is that these values are inherent in every child, and the purpose of values education is simply to draw them out (educare).

Implementing a human values method while the child is developing in these early years is to take advantage of the 'sponge affect', that is, while it has more potency and opportunity to be effective.

Below is an example of one of the many schools around the world incorporating value education.



ST BRIGIDS CATHOLIC SCHOOL IN IRELAND

It began with a teacher who incorporated a method of Education in Human Values into her curriculum. Her pupils' confidence and self-esteem grew noticeably and positive changes could be seen in their behaviour. Other teachers noticed this and when they discovered that the change in the children was due to the method this teacher was using, they adopted it into their own teaching. A new principal also saw the benefits of the values education and decided to hold monthly values assemblies. Values education was then incorporated into every classroom in the school and it became the first Values School in Ireland and was featured on Ireland's national television.

Here is the link to the television presentation. The link leads also to the email address and video clips of sessions held on each of the five values

<https://twitter.com/news2dayRTE/status/930112528482418688>

If homes and schools employed this method, children would grow automatically knowing right from wrong. With human values embedded in their conscience, the world would become a better place because all the chaotic things that are happening in the world are mostly due to children not receiving moral guidance in homes and educational institutions.

Having read so far, you the parent will have become aware of why the first seven to eight years of a child's life is crucial and why there is not only a need for value education but also how much more powerful it will be if started from the earliest age.

The method has proved to be successful in accomplishing its objective even when used as little as once a week.

How To Apply The Method

Five Techniques:

Five techniques are recommended by Sri Sathya Sai Baba for their ability to help children to understand and retain the value. Any more than five is not recommended as it would make the session too long especially for classrooms and educational institutions that have so little time to spare within their curriculum. Another reason for not extending the number of techniques is so that the session does not become boring or tiring.

The five Teaching Techniques are a Prayer or a Quotation, Story Telling, Group Singing or Group Activities, Silent Sitting, Closure. Designed by Sathya Sai Baba to facilitate the method to perfection

Sanathana Sarathi: November 2017. P.43

1. Select a main value and one related to it from the lists below. Make sure each main and related value is covered over a period. Tick each value as it is completed. At times, it may be more relevant to focus on one that is needed to address a behaviour problem or an incident that is happening at the time, for example, a child has been unkind to another child in which case you will select the appropriate value and its related value.

LOVE

Appreciation
Caring
Compassion
Fairness
Generosity
Helpfulness
Kindness
Loyalty
Patience
Selflessness
Thoughtfulness

TRUTH

Curiosity/ Enquiry
Dependability
Equality
Honesty
Integrity
Equality
Sincerity

PEACE

Acceptance
Concentration
Confidence
Co-operation
Contentment

**NON-
VIOLENCE**

Obedience
Perseverance
Appreciation
Calm
Humility
Optimism
Respect
Understanding

**RIGHT
CONDUCT**

Courage
Determination
Discipline
Discrimination
Economical
Endurance
Independence
Initiative
Manners (Cultural)
Obedience
Perseverance

2. A Prayer Or A Quotation

(Choose one that represents the value)

Find a quote that represents the value you are promoting, for example “Never tell a lie” when promoting the value of being honest. Make sure the children understand the meaning. Write it on a board or on a piece of paper and pin it up where the child or children will see it perhaps for the next few days. Then get the children to read it and chant it for a few times.

3. Meditation Or Silent Sitting

Guiding young children in a meditation, at this younger age it is usually called ‘Silent Sitting’. It needs to be given personally and not by a voice on a CD, the reason being that the teacher will need to note the concentration span of the child and lengthen it gradually as appropriate. Also important in a spiritual type lesson and lessons with a focus on human values is for the teacher to be loving at all times, this is known as ‘Teaching from the Heart’ or ‘Heart to Heart Teaching’.

Make sure that the session is not too long causing the child to become bored and lose interest; this could result in the children not wanting to attend future sessions.

4. Group Singing

Choose an appropriate song about the value if possible. If this is not possible then choose a song that the children like, as long as the words in the song are positive. Singing will bring joy to the session. (All lyrics need to be positive and express the joy that is present in life.)

5. Story Telling

Choose a story, preferably one that contains the chosen value.

Questions

Ask questions about the story. This helps the parent to know if the children have listened and understood the story.

6. Group Activity

For example -

A game, a painting, a cut and paste, miming the story, or anything the parent chooses that will help reinforce the value. If an activity with a value cannot be found, one can be chosen that the children will enjoy. This will help to keep the children happy and joyful.

Closure

For closing the session, the parent may ask the children if they enjoyed the activities, and end with repeating the quotation.

A Sample Of A Written Plan

Value: Truth

Sub Value: Honesty

Prayer Or Quotation: "I will always tell the truth."

(Parent may explain to the child why it will be happier if it tells the truth.)

In order to help reinforce the quotation, the children may chant the quotation, or say it three times to the person next to them, or write it down three times. (The parents may like to use their own creative ideas.)

Quiet Time Or Guided Meditation

(Will help the child to feel calm and will enhance listening skills)

(The parent can guide the quiet time as in the following example, alternatively listening to peaceful music.)

A Sample Of A Guided Meditation:

Slowly close your eyes.

Imagine a light in front of you.

Feel the light filling your body

Your body is full of light

You are feeling very peaceful and content.

Now bring yourself back and slowly open your eyes ready for listening to the story.

Story:**Tammy Learns The Value Of Telling
The Truth**

Tammy's grandmother bought her some new rubber boots. Tammy had grown, and her old ones did not fit her anymore.

From the age of six, Tammy's parents were no longer able to take care of her and so her grandmother who had loved and adored her since her birth was happy to take her to live with her and take over her upbringing.

Tammy loved her grandmother and was able to adjust easily to her new lifestyle. On her way to school, Tammy liked to

wade in the stream that passed under the road where she used to walk on her way to school. She liked to feel the water swirling around her boots and watch the bits of dried grass and other things that went floating passed her and under the road . Grandmother had told Tammy that she was not to do this because she knew it could become quite deep and dangerous when there was heavy rain.

Tammy disobeyed her grandmother, she couldn't see anything wrong with wading in the water, it wasn't very deep. So as usual, she had a paddle in the stream on her way to school and on her way back again. During the day, it had rained quite heavily and the stream had become deeper. Tammy stepped into the water, which now reached almost to the top of her boots. As the water splashed its way past her, it wet the inside of her boots.

When Tammy reached home her grandmother was amazed to find Tammy's new boots wet on the inside. She asked Tammy how did this happen? Tammy didn't admit the truth because she was afraid of getting into trouble; she said she didn't know. Grandmother then thought that the boots had leaked and took Tammy and the boots back to the shop so she could exchange them.

The shopkeeper suggested that maybe Tammy had been wading in some water with them and it had gone over the top and made the boots wet inside. "Oh no" Grandmother replied, "Tammy would have told me she never tells lies, so I know that they definitely did leak".

The shopkeeper was doubtful as to whether Tammy had told the truth, but exchanged the boots anyway.

Tammy felt bad, she felt so bad she thought she would never be able to tell her grandmother the truth for she had believed in her and thought that she would never lie. It all felt so dreadful, Tammy went to bed that night feeling very miserable and decided she must do something to make her feel happy and good about herself again.

The next day Tammy plucked up courage and told her grandmother the truth. Grandmother asked her why she did not tell her the truth in the first place. Tammy explained that she was afraid of getting into trouble. "Well I am disappointed," grandmother said, "but I know how bad you must have felt and I hope you have learned that telling lies can make you feel miserable and unhappy with yourself. Telling the truth may have got you into a little trouble but not as much trouble as you have now. The first thing we must do is to take the boots back to the shop and you can tell the shopkeeper the truth. That will be very difficult for you to do, but it will help you to remember the trouble you get into because of telling a lie and remember" she added, "You will always feel better if you tell the truth"

Tammy did remember, she did always tell the truth and grandmother and her friends knew they could always trust her.

Questions:

1. How did you feel when Tammy told a lie to her Granny?
2. Have you ever told a lie? How did it feel?
3. Why was Tammy afraid to tell the truth?

4. How do you think Granny felt when Tammy admitted she had lied to her,
5. What made Tammy feel miserable?
6. When did Tammy feel better about herself?
7. Has anything like this happened to you or someone you know?

The Reason For Asking Questions After The Story?

Asking the right question helps the child:-

- a. To remember the story and absorb the embedded value:
- b. Will provide evidence to the teacher whether the story has been suitable for the child's attention span, understanding, and memory level: For example, ask yourself whether the story was too long, too complicated, or lacking interest.
- c. The question asking how the child felt after the story enables the teacher to gauge whether the child related to the value in the story.
- d. A guideline for the formation of asking a variety of suitable questions is to ask ones beginning with 'why, what, when and how:

The Activity

The activity can be a simple song, game, a miming of the story. If more time is available, an art activity can be included. If possible, relate the activity to the value theme.

The two main aims for the activity are-

1. Reinforcement of the focus value:
2. For the children to enjoy:

Closure:

The class to say the quotation altogether and maybe repeat a few times. Discuss the meaning of the word.

Alternatively, just finish with a game or a song.

Teacher Strategies:

Make sure the children can see the book if you are holding up pictures. If the child cannot see, it will lose interest. Tell a story without a book if possible so that the children can see the love shining in your eyes for them.

When asking the children questions, if you have more than one child in your group, remember some children are shy especially when they are new to this method. You can encourage the shy child by choosing it to answer a simple question or one that you know the child be able to answer. A caring teacher can gradually build up the child's confidence.



Conclusion

It is the parent's responsibility as their child's first teacher to provide an environment that is conducive to the child developing to its highest potential.

If the parents have read and imbibed the contents of this book, they will have become aware that the first eight years of the child are crucial with regard to how the child will develop in all areas of growth including its character.

If the child has been nurtured from an early age and parents have done their best with regard to putting their knowledge, love and care into practice, the child will benefit by developing with a strong character exhibiting human values.

The child who has internalised and put into practise human values will not be the only one to benefit, but the home, the nation and ultimately the whole world will benefit.

*"If there is righteousness in the heart
There will be beauty in the character.
If there is beauty in the character
There will be harmony in the home.
When there is harmony in the home
There will be order in the nation.
When there is order in the nation
There will be peace in the world"*

[APJ Abdul Kalam - Where there is righteousness in the... - BrainyQuote](#)

Child development: the first five years | Raising Children Network

For parents wishing to extend their knowledge of children's early developmental processes, the above link is one of many that can be found on the internet that will prove to be extremely helpful and informative.

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RECOMMENDED READING:

A MANUAL FOR INTEGRATING HUMAN VALUES INTO CHILDREN'S EDUCATION. (For Homes and Schools). By Jacqui Robinson. 2013

EDUCATION IN HUMAN VALUES (A Coursebook for the Training of Master Trainers) 2008 Sri Sathya Sai International Centre for Human Values, New Delhi.

THE JOYFUL CHILD' Printed in 1996 in USA by Peggy Jenkins, PhD

A sourcebook of activities and ideas for releasing children' natural joy.

Exceptionally beneficial for parents looking for meaningful activities. It also includes a section on page 14 that recommends and explains Sai Baba's method of Education in Human Values.

Dr MARIA MONTESSORI
Physician

Maria Tecla Artemisia Montessori was an Italian physician and educator best known for the philosophy of education that bears her name and her writing on scientific pedagogy.

CARL ROGERS

Carl Rogers is an influential American psychologist in the area of education. His theories would be helpful for the teacher/parent or those interested in early childhood learning. He leaned towards the humanistic side of viewing the child. His views are an important part of integral education. Rogers believed that the feelings of self-worth and positive regard for others were important and feelings of self worth were formed in early childhood.

RUDOLF STEINER
An Austrian Philosopher

Believed early childhood years (0-7) are characterised by children actively learning through imitation and their own creative experience. The child's imagination and sense of wonder is fostered, through stories, songs, creative play, interaction with nature and involvement in everyday human activity.

