

Auro Mira Vidya Mandir Golden group Report

April - September 2013

Helping the child as a guide, where am I? Have I made the change inside me that I aspire to see in my Child? What is the Education that I am able to provide? There are thousands of questions in my heart when I look into my child's eyes? Then comes a lightening image of the spark within me? Who is that? Is that a person? A Force? Strength? Or weakness? It is surely the strength, The Hope, The force hidden in a tiny seed. Facing difficulties and meetings with happiness, we grow together the teacher and the child.

The Mother is always guiding us in each step towards progressive future. At Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education in one of her classes she gave messages to the children, aged seven.

" My dear children, love work and you will be happy. Love to learn and you will progress. If one does not love work, one is always unhappy in life. In order to be truly happy in life, *one must love work.*"

The Mother

July 1961

To move ahead on the path of Integral Education we found this message very appropriate. The children of the Golden group are at a stage where they love to work and learn and in that lies their beauty, their motivation & their strength.

Group Reflection by the group diya



At present there are about eleven children in the Golden group. Three children Tanushree, Swati and Niraj are now eight years old and the rest are seven years old. All the children in the group are encouraged to work in harmony. The group is gradually developing a sense of togetherness.

They help each other and sharing comes more easily now. The entire group is displaying an energetic attitude in executing & completing their work. Each one of them enjoys drawing, craft work, painting, thread work, games and sports. The children are also developing a taste for learning different languages. Each child is given individual attention to enhance, develop and understand what their individual needs are. Decisions are always taken along with the children. The children have over a period of time, developed a better understanding of each other and are more settled. The children are also encouraged to think for themselves and decide what they want to learn. While we reflect and work on all the fivefold areas of education, there are some areas that need more attention than the rest, depending on the needs of the children.

Having been entrusted with the development of this group of children, we try and ensure an all round development – intellectual, spiritual as well as the physical.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Food

Most children from the Golden group have good food habits though there are exceptions like Neeraj, who often says, “**I do not want to have lunch, because I am not hungry.**” Jayu, Swati, Tanushri and Laxman were developing a habit of talking and sitting with food for a long time, both during lunch and dinner. After being constantly reminded about the significance & the value of eating food quietly, they are trying to change this habit.

*** Sleep**

Most often children sleep sharp at 8:30 p.m and wake up before 6:00 a.m. In summer, they wake up at 5:00 am. Laxman tends to get up later than most others. During the working hours, we maintain a specific time where all the children rest depending on their individual need.

Health and hygiene

During summers, children have a bath twice – once in the morning at 6:00 am and then in the afternoon at 4:00 pm. Normally in the afternoon, the children would bathe carelessly, using neither soap, nor a towel. In the morning, the group didi would help them with cleaning themselves and after that with maintaining their material. In the beginning, the children seemed a little reluctant to the idea of keeping themselves tidy but with gentle persuasion, they have adopted the habit of keeping themselves, their surroundings as well as their materials properly. Laxman and Rohit need to be reminded persistently. During the summers, some children like Laxman had heat boils because of eating too many mangoes. However, in the rainy season it is difficult for the children to dry their clothes or take a bath in the open. As a result of this persistent effort towards maintaining good health & hygiene, none of the children really needed any kind of medication.

*** Physical strength and balance.**

The children from the Golden group are physically strong. They have a regimen for exercising which they maintain regularly - four days in a week from 6:30 to 7:30 am. Kumari, Laxman and Tanushree learn Bharatnatyam, while the others exercise. In the afternoon, from 4:00 to 5:00 O'clock they go for sports and games in the playground. The children also cycle and play fun games as well as football and Dutch ball etc. During sunny days they go for long walks.



VITAL EDUCATION

*** Development and use of the sense organs.**

The children appreciate the beauty in their surroundings. They are able to discriminate what is beautiful and not so beautiful for them.

*** Character and its transformation.**



Development of the habit of Self observation...

Self observation was implemented in two ways for the group - individually and together. Each day the children were given a specific time in the morning and several as well as other time slots if necessary. Together, the children would put a flower pot, and sit around it in a circle. Through open discussions the children were encouraged to express their feelings and emotions, desires and sensations.

*On **Sri Aurobindo's** birthday, the children were helped to understand the writings of The Mother, 'An Ideal Child'. Through reflections they shared their experiences and by simply being together, created a bond within the group. Telling them stories of The Mother and Sri Aurobindo as well as stories from the childhood of Lord Rama was the most effective way to overcome negative emotions like fear. A few reflections as expressed by the children are given below...*



An Ideal child is good tempered...

"One day I was playing football with my friends, everyone said, 'This is not a goal.' But it was a goal. So calmly I said, 'This is a goal' I did not become angry."

An ideal child is truthful...

"One day I was playing in the home. My mother kept a money box there, by mistake it was broken down by me. My sister saw me so I told sister not to tell mother but she told. Mother called me and asked, I truthfully told that by mistake it fell down."

An Ideal child is patient...

"One day in the snacks time my brother called me to take the food in the middle. But I told My brother patiently, 'Breaking the line is not a good idea.'"

On the School's Birthday...

Why do you like school?

"I like school because didi and bhaiya love us."

Development of the habit of self discipline and a sense of responsibility...

In the Golden group, most of the children are responsible when they are given any responsibility like arranging corners, cleaning, working independently, cleaning the hostel toilet, making chapattis for the school etc. However, a few of them still need to be motivated.

This is the song which the children learnt to help each other and bring about self-discipline.

Song.....

1. *It is early in the morning,*
2. *Samay huaa ab,*
3. *Sooraj ki aati hain saari kaliyan.*



Mental education

Development of the mental faculties

We spend a lot of time with the children during this session working on their concentration, observation, fantasy, imagination, thinking, memory and expression.

To develop these faculties, three different topics were taken in the group.

The topics are... **Jungle, Time and Insects.**

These topics were taken after observing each child's need and interest. The first topic was 'jungle'. The children visited a jungle close to the school. Known as the Kashoo forest, this forest is full of cashews during the month of June. The children felt very happy being in the jungle and were very happy being on the top of the hill that had the jungle spread over it since they could see the school from there. Through this topic the children were encouraged to develop their expression which they did by creating a song about the Cashew forest. The children made drawings as well.

The children had interesting observations and answers to some questions:

- *What is the similarity between us and the trees?*

The tree has fruits, we do not.

- *When someone throws a stone at us, we feel like crying and the tree too feels like crying.*

‘Time’ was the second topic. Day and night, morning, afternoon and evening were discussed with the children.

Children’s expression...

“When the lights are on, I know that this is night. When the Jhilmili comes I know that this is night. The hen tells us to wake up when it is morning.

Also when I saw the light coming from the window, I got to know that this is morning and that the sun has come.”



A lot of observational activities were done as they observed their own shadows and things around. Children also observed the movement of the sun. With practical experience the children understood the concept of shadows. Observation of the sun dial was an effective activity where the children showed curiosity. They also observed the sand clock and the water clock. After this the simple clock was introduced to them. Through stories, the concept of a clock was initiated and then lots of stories were narrated to them.

The group created a new song on the change from day to night and then from night to day. This was both sung as well as read...

It is early in the morning

You can see the sun’s first rays

You must rise and all get ready

You must start out on our way...

I am small but even I am useful for

I help you to work on time....



Insects...

Through this topic the children were helped to develop mental curiosity and thinking power. Grasshopper, ant and spiders are some of the insects that the children found around themselves. This is what they observed ...

"One day I was playing football and a grasshopper jumped on my head, I tried to catch the grasshopper, but I could not.

One day Vikanti didi told me to collect flowers. In the garden I saw the grasshopper. Instead of collecting flowers I ran to catch the grasshopper.

Rohit and me saw a red colored grasshopper, to make him fly we threw a stone on it, but we should not do this."

During the celebrations for the birthday of the school the children were asked one question....

For the coming year what is your wish for the school, what would create more interest in you to learn and becoming happier?

"If in our school there would be birds and animals we would become friends with them. If in our school there would have been a sweets shop. There would be more fun if we could eat sweets every day. If there would be cows in our school we would feel happier."



Language development...

English...

During this term, the children worked hard and worked further on improving their ability to express themselves, both orally as well as in writing.

The children also did two plays, the first one being about their experiences of the ideal child. The second one was on the antics of little Krishna and was performed on **Janmashtami**.



Hindi...

Reading

Many children in the Golden group love books and are eager to read. These children have good observational skills and a sharp memory and they can read long stories with difficult words. The others are also encouraged to read and they are also putting in some effort to read, they can now read small words with ease. Rohit, Niraj and Laxman are able to concentrate when they are given

individual attention. They can also read simple sentences. The group also puts in an effort to create their own books to read. They take interest in reading their own creations. They made books to read on topics like time and insects.

Psychic Development..

"The more one develops the psychic, the more is it possible for the grace to act."

- **Sri Aurobindo**

In the morning, when all children sit in a circle around The Mother's photograph with a bunch of flowers, everyone is receptive. The children feel more connected to themselves and in those moments, sometimes the children help the *didi* and sometimes it is the *didi* helping the children to know the deepest truth of their being.

Through different topics they are asked to reflect on questions like...

Who is your inner friend?

"The Light. When I do wrong works it tells me... do good works. The light helps us what to do when didi asks us."

When do you feel happy?

"When I go to pluck mangoes. Few mangoes fall on my head then I laugh loudly and I feel happy, and when I am having fun with didi."

When do you feel sad?

"When someone is drown in the river."

"When Papa scolds me."

What is the peaceful moment of today?

"Yesterday when I went up on the roof of the new building I felt happy."

"When I was reading in the library I felt happy."

"When I play football I feel happy."

"Today I am feeling happy because I cleaned the group."

"When I fell down I feel sad."

"When I make chapatti's then I feel happy."

Children's expression after the group worked on an exercise on concentration, using the diya as a source of light

"When I was looking at the light, I was not able to focus my attention & it was going here and there. I was trying to see the diya (light) with closed eyes but I could not. So I opened my eyes, and saw the diya (light)."

to develop the psychic, the Soul, perfect calm and harmony is needed from the facilitator. We have faith that the children from the Golden group will surely grow in divine nature and help the creation to become even more beautiful.

We pray to the Mother that every child from the Golden group grows in divine consciousness.

The Golden group diyas