THE INCLUSION PROJECT AT VIDYA SAGAR AND CHILDREN WITH ASD

SHIRIN MAMMEN
DIPTI BHATIA
USHA RAMAKRISHNAN

& TEAM
VIDYA SAGAR CHENNAI

THE INCLUSION PROJECT ,ASD & VIDYA SAGAR

Partnership with 35 private schools and 10 colleges in Chennai in any given year

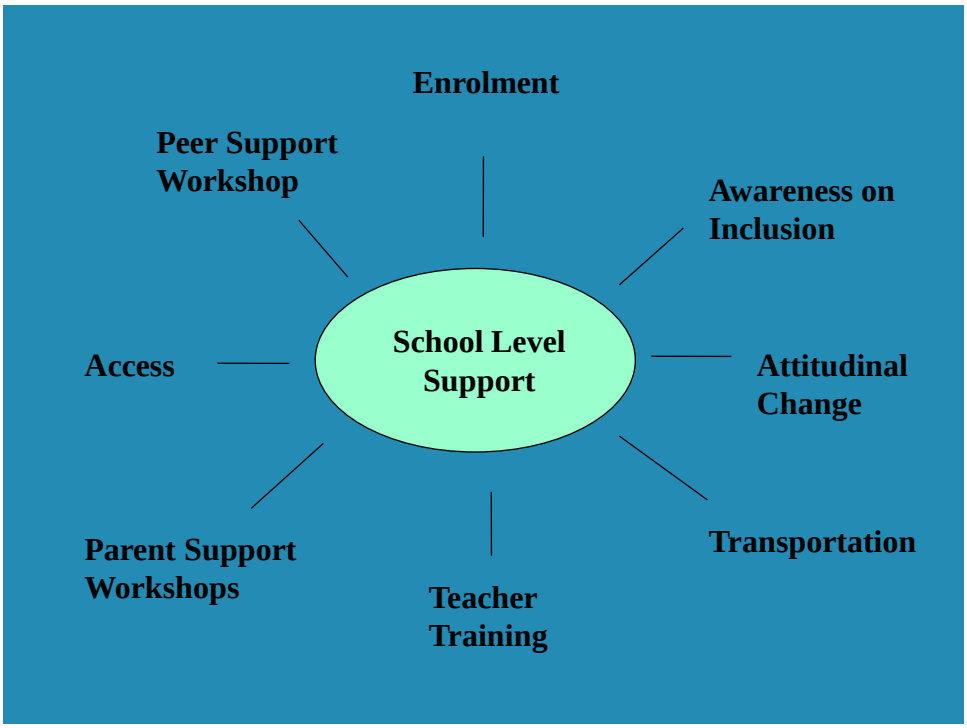
- 15 children with autism have been included in various mainstream schools and colleges in and around Chennai. In various stages of follow up by the inclusion Department.
- Implementing Sarva Siksha Abhayan in 6/10 zones in Chennai (2001-12).Intervention given to children from mainstream schools in SSA
- Involved in training program for mainstream school teachers
- CBR team works with rural partners in districts in Tamil Nadu and other States

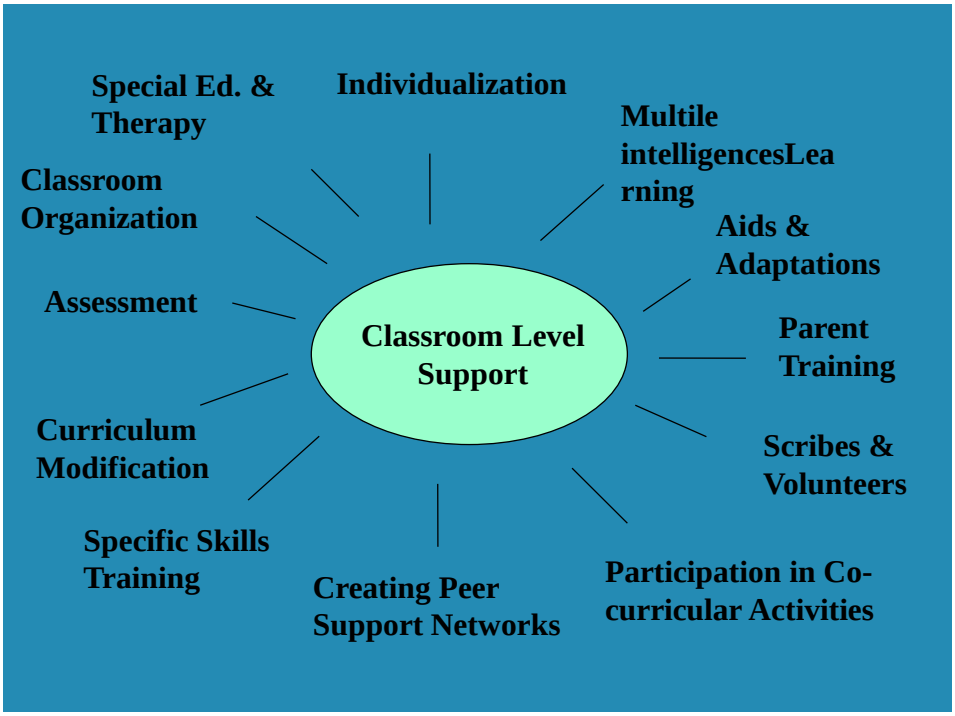
Inclusion implies meaningful participation of children/person with ASD in various activities of school/college life such as class work, co-curricular activities, library, sports, excursions, lab work, club activities etc. To make this possible Vidya Sagar works on inclusion with a multi pronged strategy

1Enabling systems in schools/college,

Inventory of schools and colleges, with details about location, transportation, number of students in a class, medium of instruction, facilities available, which can be matched to the needs of the child and the family.

2Working with regular schools/colleges at two levels ……..


Enrolment
Peer Support Workshop
Awareness on Inclusion
School Level Support
Access
Attitudinal Change
Parent Support Workshops
Teacher Training
Transportation


Special Ed. & Therapy
Individualization
Multile intelligencesLea rning
Classroom Organization
Aids & Adaptations
Assessment
Classroom Level Support
Parent Training
Curriculum Modification
Scribes & Volunteers
Specific Skills Training
Creating Peer Support Networks
Participation in Co-curricular Activities

4) Working with the educational authorities and government for concessions, educational and evaluation modifications.

These have been worked out depending on the needs of each child with autism who is included in the mainstream. These concessions however will benefit the disability sector as a whole.

Some of the provisions that we have worked out that could be beneficial for the sector

1. Using a walkman while writing the exams to reduce sensory issues (VIIIth standard)
2. The mother/aunt/caregiver being next to the child (VIIIth & XIIth)(to reduce anxiety levels)
3. Allowing breaks (required for sensory needs)
4. Using a communication chart for giving exams
5. Using a scribe who could understand his communication mode
6. Using a computer (XIIth Standard)
7. Time extension
8. Language exemption

Our aim

: School/college gives unconditional admission

*** Schools/colleges take ownership of all the needs of the student**

CASE STUDY

Krithika Venkataraman

Krithika Venkataraman joined Vidya Sagar in 2004. Diagnosed as having Autism, she was pronounced as having severe problems with socialization and being non verbal she was considered to be withdrawn and lacking totally in communication. In her childhood everyone knew her as a child who ran here and there and did not want to listen to anything that anyone wanted to say.

However when she joined Vidya Sagar, we could notice another side to her personality-her abilities, rather than her disability, which was until then only the focus of all her intensive therapies. Tall, stately and well built; she loved to dress up in the latest of designer clothes, the colours and style

which she would herself choose. She loved to be alongside her peers and we often found her paying attention to what her friends were communicating. These were signs of a strong inter personal intelligence!

Her academic inputs began after a long assessment of her skills. Her sensory issues were coming in the way of her learning and she found it difficult to sit in the class. Sudden Ear piercing high pitched screams were her way of communicating sensory overload .Unable to stand the heat, she would rush here and there in desperation, often removing or lifting her clothes in the process. Sensory integration therapy sessions were given, (which helped her a great deal); but it was her friends who helped her settle down in class and follow social rules.

Being of high interpersonal intelligence she had the urge to socialize, but being autistic she did not know how go about it. Again with the help of her friends-their admonishing, explanations and urgings, she slowly learnt to use the communication chart. It is this mode that she used to complete her XIIth through National Institute of Open School (NIOS).

Once, her sensory issues were tackled and she was ready to learn, she displayed a good amount of logical mathematical intelligence. She took a liking to subjects like Mathematics, Sociology, Economics-Economics and statistics being her all time favourites. Group studies, large group discussions caught her interest and she passed with flying colours.

Needless to say, she wanted to do her Graduation in business economics. She decided to go to a regular mainstream college. The inclusion department conducted orientation sessions for the administration and teachers, familiarizing them on Autism as a condition, the needs of Krithika, and the accommodations that could be put in place. Above all a Workshop was conducted for the peers. The teachers got enough information about her intelligence profile, the way she learns, her friends and her needs.

In the first month, a special educator worked with her in the college continuously. The scribe who could understand her mode of communication was provided in the beginning. By and by the intense support was slowly weaned of, when it became obvious that her peers were taking to her and her teachers fully understood her condition and were accommodating to her needs.

She loves to attend college and be in the company of her friends. As it is her favorite subject, she maintains her focus in class, and is doing well academically. She moves out once in a way and screams (especially when she cannot handle the pain during her menstruation period) but her friends and lecturers know her challenges.

She can use the computer and is trying to use this for academics... College authority especially the head of the dept have been very supportive. The college themselves have now identified a scribe for Krithika who would work with her henceforth. Krithika is now in the final year. It is Krithika vision that she will be able to soon communicate all that she knows to the rest of the world. She would like to continue her higher studies and become either a statistician or a researcher.

RESOURCE MATERIAL (handed over to schools and colleges)

I

Persons with autism look like others of their age. They are good looking graceful people and many exude a gentle calmness about them. However when you interact with them a difference shows up as they do not talk or interact with people and things like others of their age.

Some pointers

*When you approach them to talk they may appear to wait for you to reach them, only to walk past you as though you weren't there, or yet again, walk right up to you only to look through you and walk past you as though you weren't there.

*They typically appear absorbed in their own thoughts, consistently inattentive and unresponsive to people and things around them.

*They may smile- but not at you, with a faraway look in the eyes.

*They may show odd behaviors in public like playing with their own shadow/ jumping up and down / giggling inappropriately/ shutting their eyes and ears/ throwing tantrums for no apparent reason. / grabbing at things that belong to others (strangers included) without asking for permission to do so.

*They may talk in a monotonous voice, without checking to see if you are listening or attending to them .Others may drag your hand to reach out to what they want without talking.

II RESOURCE MATERIAL (handed over to schools and colleges)

Three steps for interacting effectively and empathetically with a person with autism

1 stay calm through the process

2 calm the person

3 give clear directions

When approaching a person with autism stay calm even if person is showing what appears to be odd behavior=

This could be because the person herself is agitated and does not know how to communicate this

Our own agitation can make people with autism more agitated

If the person is agitated, important to calm him/her first

<u>Sign s of agitation</u>

Rocking back and forth repeatedly

Flapping hands continuously

Talking monotonously to no one in particular

Shutting ears or eyes

Screaming

Jumping up and down \

Pushing away anyone trying to talk to them

<u>Tips To calm them down</u>

Hum a quiet repetitive tune standing near them, till agitation reduces

If person allows it, approach the person while humming and tap person on the upper arm while humming, if person recoils –Stop!

They will typically calm down

Preferable that there aren't *crowds around them and noise, smells and other sensations are reduced, If in such a environment move them to a quieter place

*As these can overpower and agitate the person with autism

Tips while interacting with person

Do not force eye contact on person

*They often listen better when not forced to look at a person while listening to them

Use step by step and sequential instructions of what is expected from person

Written instructions with illustrations to give instructions are advisable*.

(much like the safety instructions card in the seat pocket on a flight)

See that written instructions are clear rather than ambiguous

E.g. “Sit on the chair ” is clear

“Sit properly” is ambiguous

See that illustrations are specific and clear

*Some people with autism may understand illustrated and written information better than spoken language

When giving instruction use a clear matter of fact tone.

Don’t insist on making eye contact.

Don’t not make too many facial expressions

***this confuses the person**

Use step by step instructions

Model action required from person

Talk clearly and briefly with simple language

III RESOURCE MATERIAL (handed over to schools and colleges)

Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) experience stress, anxiety and frustration in educational environments due to:

a) Language comprehension difficulties

b) Expressive language difficulties

c) Sensory processing difficulties

d) Social relations difficulties

e) Resistance to change

f) Preference for familiar routines and consistency

g) Organizational difficulties

h) Difficulty attending to relevant stimuli

I) distractibility

To reduce this, and to help children with ASD focus on relevant information and filter it out from irrelevant information, it is extremely important to have well-sequenced, structured teaching, which uses visual cues and appropriate evaluation methods, based on the child's unique profile of intelligence.. Additionally this method will increase the child's independent functioning (without adult prompting and cueing), which will assist him throughout his life.

IV

<u>Teaching students with ASD & other children through multiple intelligences:</u> multiple ways to Approach Curriculum-

Viewing the potential of a child with ASD through the lens of multiple intelligences enables us to understand how the child processes information and enable hidden potential of the child. As Intelligences are assessed on the job –The teacher should be able to find out the intelligence of the student in the way he does his activities at school.This is equally applicable to all children!

Those activites that comes easily,which he does well and enjoys doing are good indicators (refer table below***):

Byidentifying the student's profile of intelligences and teaching him through those intelligences, the teacher will find that:

I) Learning will occur naturally. Thereafter, the child with ASD will learn in the way he learns best

ii) Individual teaching interactions are typically very brief and distributed or spaced over a period of hours or days.

iii) Instructional interactions are typically child initiated. You will be able to link classes to the student's particular interests. You will also be able to redirect and broaden the student's fixations into meaningful activities.

iv) Instruction uses natural consequences (i.e., objects and events are highly salient and desired by the child)

Hence, When Planning a Lesson ALWAYS keep in mind how it can be taught through the intelligence of the child with ASD,- For this: Ask the Right Questions!

Linguistic: How can I use the spoken or written word?

Logical-Mathematical: How can I bring in numbers, calculations, logic, classifications, or critical thinking?

Spatial: How can I use visual aids, visualization, color, art, metaphor, or visual organizers?

Musical: How can I bring in music or environmental sounds, or set key points in a rhythm or melody?

Bodily-Kinesthetic: How can I involve the whole body, or hands-on experiences?

Interpersonal: How can I engage students in peer or cross-age sharing, cooperative learning or large-group simulation?

Intrapersonal: How can I evoke personal feelings or memories, or give students choices?

V

MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES: STRATEGIES IN THE CLASSROOM

The following list provides a survey of the techniques and materials that can be employed in teaching through the multiple intelligences.(useful for ALL children)

Linguistic Intelligence

- lectures, debates
- large- and small-group discussions
- books, worksheets, manuals
- brainstorming
- writing activities
- word games
- sharing time
- storytelling, speeches, reading to class
- talking books and cassettes
- extemporaneous speaking
- journal keeping
- choral reading
- individualized reading
- memorizing linguistic facts
- tape recording one's words
- using word processors
- publishing (e.g., creating class newspapers)

Logical-Mathematical Intelligence

- mathematical problems on the board
- Socratic questioning
- scientific demonstrations
- logical problem-solving exercises
- creating codes
- logic puzzles and games
- classifications and categorizations
- quantifications and calculations
- computer programming languages
- science thinking
- logical-sequential presentation of subject matter
- Piagetian cognitive stretching exercises
- Heuristic

Spatial Intelligence

- charts, graphs, diagrams, and maps
- visualization
- photography

- videos, slides, and movies
- visual puzzles and mazes
- 3-D construction kits
- art appreciation
- imaginative storytelling
- picture metaphors
- creative daydreaming
- painting, collage, visual arts
- idea sketching
- visual thinking exercises
- graphic symbols
- using mind-maps and other visual organizers
- computer graphics software
- visual awareness activities
- optical illusions
- color cues
- telescopes, microscopes, and binoculars
- visual awareness activities
- draw-and-paint/computer- assisted-design software
- picture literacy experiences

Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence

- creative movement, mime
- hands-on thinking
- field trips
- the classroom teacher
- competitive and cooperative games
- physical awareness and relaxation exercises
- all hands-on activities
- crafts
- body maps
- use of kinesthetic imagery
- cooking, gardening, and other "messy" activities
- manipulatives
- virtual reality software
- kinesthetic concepts
- physical education activities
- communicating with body language/ hand signals
- tactile materials and experiences
- body answers

Musical Intelligence

- musical concepts
- singing, humming, whistling
- playing recorded music
- playing live music on piano, guitar, or other instruments
- group singing

- mood music
- music appreciation
- playing percussion instruments
- rhythms, songs, raps, chants
- using background music
- linking old tunes with concepts
- discographies
- creating new melodies for concepts
- listening to inner musical imagery
- music software
- supermemory music

Interpersonal Intelligence

- cooperative groups
- interpersonal interaction
- conflict mediation
- peer teaching
- board games
- cross-age tutoring
- group brainstorming sessions
- peer sharing
- community involvement
- apprenticeships
- simulations
- academic clubs
- interactive software
- parties / social gatherings as context for learning
- people sculpting

Intrapersonal Intelligence

- independent study
- feeling-toned moments
- self-paced instruction
- individualized projects and games
- private spaces for study
- one-minute reflection periods
- interest centers
- personal connections
- options for homework
- choice time
- self-teaching programmed instruction
- exposure to inspirational/ motivational curricula
- self-esteem activities
- journal keeping
- goal setting sessions

VI

- ***The table below summarizes the strengths, learning preferences, and needs that correspond to the intelligences.***

Intelligence Area	Strengths	Preferences	Learns best through	Needs
Linguistic	Writing, reading, memorizing dates, thinking in words, telling stories	Write, read, tell stories, talk, memorize, work at solving puzzles	Hearing and seeing words, speaking, reading, writing, discussing and debating	Books, tapes, paper diaries, writing tools, dialogue, discussion, debated, stories, etc.
Mathematical/ Logical	Math, logic, problem-solving, reasoning, patterns	Question, work with numbers, experiment, solve problems	Working with relationships and patterns, classifying, categorizing, working with the abstract	Things to think about and explore, science materials, manipulative, trips to the planetarium and science museum, etc.
Spatial	Maps, reading charts, drawing, mazes, puzzles, imagining things, visualization	Draw, build, design, create, daydream, look at pictures	Working with pictures and colors, visualizing, using the mind's eye, drawing	LEGOs, video, movies, slides, art, imagination games, mazes, puzzles, illustrated book, trips to art museums, etc.
Bodily / Kinesthetic	Athletics, dancing, crafts, using tools, acting	Move around, touch and talk, body language	Touching, moving, knowledge through bodily sensations, processing	Role-play, drama, things to build, movement, sports and physical games, tactile experiences, hands-on learning, etc.
Musical	Picking up sounds, remembering melodies, rhythms, singing	Sing, play an instrument, listen to music, hum	Rhythm, singing, melody, listening to music and melodies	Sing-along time, trips to concerts, music playing at home and school, musical

				instruments, etc.
Interpersonal	Leading, organizing, understanding people, communicating, resolving conflicts, selling	Talk to people, have friends, join groups	Comparing, relating, sharing, interviewing, cooperating	Friends, group games, social gatherings, community events, clubs, mentors/ apprenticeships, etc.
Intrapersonal	Recognizing strengths and weaknesses, setting goals, understanding self	Work alone, reflect pursue interests	Working alone, having space, reflecting, doing self-paced projects	Secret places, time alone, self-paced projects, choices, etc.
Naturalistic	Understanding nature, making distinctions, identifying flora and fauna	Be involved with nature, make distinctions	Working in nature, exploring living things, learning about plants and natural events	Order, same/different, connections to real life and science issues, patterns

- Students with Intrapersonal Intelligence, learn best through research, reflection, or individual projects.
- Students with Interpersonal Intelligence learn best through cooperative learning. As they solve problems, answer questions, create learning games, brainstorm ideas and discuss that day's topic collaboratively.
- Students with Musical Intelligence learn best through musical compositions and by singing songs about the subject matter, make their own instruments, and learn in rhythmical ways.
- Students with Spatial Intelligence, learn best by exploring a subject area using diverse art media, manipulatives, puzzles, charts, and pictures.
- Students with Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence learns as they build models, dramatize events, and dance, all in ways that relate to the content of that day's subject matter.
- Students with Linguistic Intelligence can read, write, and learn in many traditional modes. They analyze and organize information in written form.
- Students with Logical/ Mathematical Intelligence learn best as they work with math games, manipulatives, mathematical concepts, science experiments, deductive reasoning, and problem solving.
- Students with Naturalistic Intelligence, learn best through observations of nature and natural phenomena.

RESOURCE MATERIAL (handed over to schools and colleges)

VII

(For classmates and peers-younger group)

Three things to do to be a good buddy:

1. Stay with your buddy.

This means that you and your buddy will play in the same area.
Sometimes you and your buddy may not want to play with the same thing. In order to be a good buddy, you will both have to take turns playing with what the other wants to play with. This means that you and your buddy play for a little while with what you want to play with and then you and your buddy play for a little while with what he wants to play with. But no matter what, you stay together.

2 Play with your buddy.

Not only do you and your buddy stay in the same area but you also
share the same type of toys and games. You play with one another. To play with your buddy means to join in an activity that your buddy is playing, to bring a toy to your buddy, or to ask your buddy if he would like to participate in an activity.

3 Talk to your buddy.

While you and your buddy are staying together and playing together, you should talk to each other. You will probably want to talk about what you are playing with or you may want to play pretend-type games and talk to each other while playing pretend. Even if your buddy does not always talk back to you, try to talk to them. They may just be a bit more shy and quiet and you may be able to help them talk more.