

V-Excel Educational Trust, Chennai
Progress Report 2005-06

Special Education for mentally and developmentally challenged children

There have been a number of developments at V-Excel Educational Trust in the review period 2005-2006. While concerted efforts put in many areas has shown results, accolades received from outside have made us proud.

With widening reach and enhanced quality of service offering, our resource needs have gone up significantly, especially in terms of manpower and space. The immediate significant impact of this is seen on our salary expenses and crunch in terms of classrooms for children. We have normalized salaries of our teachers, hired new ones, conducted a number of in-service training programs, compensated our volunteers for conveyance and their other out of pocket spends, and called in expert guest faculty for our Teacher training programs. We have also been forced to invest in construction upstairs on a rental place. But given that we have another four years lease on this premises, we have taken that tough decision and gone ahead.

Many activities and events have taken place in the past few months. A few key ones are presented below.

Awareness Generation –

A Certificate course on "Creation of Awareness about Special Education among the Youth of Today" was conducted for students of M.G.R. Janaki College of Arts and Science in Chennai.

The Sociology department of M.O.P Vaishnav College for Women and V-Excel launched a Dyslexia Awareness Campaign. This involved a talk show on SS Music (TV) and our experienced faculty addressing teachers at various schools. The drive spanned over a week and concluded with "A Walk for Dyslexia" on the Marina Beach.

For exhibiting the talents of our children, an Ability Feat was held in December. The diverse explorations had been in the context of 'Colours of Nature', 'Colours of Seasons', 'Colours in Celebration', 'Colours in Movement' and 'Rainbow Dance'. The Rainbow dance stood out in its near perfection.



It was indeed a feather in our cap when the Chief Guest Mr. Shanmugasundaram, (Jt. Director, Office of the State Commissioner for the Disabled) stated, "I have the authority to rate schools, as I've been inspecting these special schools for certification, and I can assure you that V-Excel is one of the best, and works not like a 3 year-old but a 3-decade old organisation!."

Training & Development -

The team at our Remedial Center got together in the continuing workshop series on 'Strategies to work with Children with Autism'. The focus was on sharing techniques that worked and reasoning for those which did not. Many in-service training programs were held for teachers on various specialization areas directly related to enhancing effectiveness with special children – on autism, creativity, building effectual working, planning goals etc. A unique hands-on, highly intensive workshop and assessment of Learning Disabilities was done at Madurai, where four schools belonging to the TVS Group were serviced. 31 children were assessed, tailor-made prescriptions were given to the teachers and meeting with parents was held. The enormous success of this workshop has been a source of inspiration to take on more tasks of this type, in the future.

New Ventures -

The Montessori Therapy that started only this year is meeting with good response from the children, specifically the ones with Autism. Remedial team started a group class room model at our Mandaveli Center. The objective is to enable a smooth transition to school environment and to provide a social setting in which the children can realize their potential. Lots of Greetings, as we welcomed a new class, new teachers, and 4 new students added to special school in November in the afternoon shift. A web portal with a [directory of services and service providers for disabilities](#) was launched across the country on December 2, the eve of World Disability Day. It is a joint venture of Satyam Foundation and V-Excel Educational Trust and includes information on special education, rehabilitation, counseling, alternate therapies, product aids, medical and paramedical services. Over 200 entries have been registered in the directory that covers Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Andaman and Nicobar. We are very grateful to Reliance Infocomm for permitting the children of KLC and BLA to learn basic computer skills at their Reliance Web World. In collaboration with ITC Ltd., we are involved in a school upgradation program in rural Coimbatore. Amenities at primary schools will be boosted by providing desks & benches, drinking water, toilets, educational material etc.

Events -

Distinct Honor for our Teachers: This Teacher's Day our special educators - Gita Bhalla, Geeta Gopalakrishnan, Neela Chandramouli and G. Babu Rao were felicitated by the Global Tamil/Telugu People Foundation. Each received a cash prize and a citation for their achievement in this truly challenging and innovative career and making a real difference in the life of special children. Convocation ceremony was held for the fourth batch of Academy for Teacher Excellence and eleven teachers were conferred the well-earned diplomas in Special Education. The present batch of 24 students actively participated in successfully organizing the event. Meetings organized for parents of the special children of our school included a talk by an eminent Neurologist from the city Dr. G. Kumaresan. He addressed the parents on various issues relating to the neurological basis of disabilities. The other one include 'Sibling Perspective' where siblings of special children s

On the 'Open Day', parents of children from each class of Special School came, observed and participated in the child's school program for one day. They also spent time discussing the progress of their child and went through all the worksheets and class work done during this term.

The children went on an educational tour to visit the Birla Planetarium. Teacher trainees from Academy for Teacher Excellence volunteered to escort the children and ensured an exciting learning experience for the children.

Some Success Stories -

The month of October turned out to be highly prolific for a few children

- o Pon Harish, a child whose world whirled around his dear teacher Jayanthi Srinivasan, all of a sudden seems to have extended his social skills. He is able to attend the music sessions with some comfort, although his eyes do keep searching.....
- o Abhishek, belonging to Transition II group was finding it difficult to connect the sound of the bell and the act of the kids running out of the classroom. Now his teachers have discovered that he comprehends this particular situation beautifully when a flash card depicts this issue, when his turn comes.
- o Another child, Nitesh, who could never sit put in a place even for a few minutes during the last three years, has suddenly amazed his teachers with his increased sitting tolerance. During his Montessori time, he works with the static Decimal system, by arranging number symbols from 1 to 9000 in groups of 10.

Seven children from our Learning Disabilities school have enrolled for the National Open Schooling Exam and preparation schedule is rigorously followed. Kalyan Nagar Ladies Association organized drawing and recitation competitions for the children on 14th November to celebrate Children's Day. We are proud that many of our children showed their mettle and won prizes.

We believe that each of our children has the potential to lead an effective and meaningful life and work towards making it happen. We are happy to report that five of the youngsters in the age group 3 to 5 years acquired the skills mandatory to be in a kindergarten and have been mainstreamed to join the regular school. We continue to handhold them with their transition difficulties.
