

BENGALURU

Readying for school the activity-based way

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All-new govt. pre-primary schools to introduce 'corners' that will encourage children to explore concepts



For the first time, 276 government schools will have pre-primary classes from June this year. The Department of Primary and Secondary Education has decided to introduce activity spaces or 'corners' dedicated to science, reading, construction, and creative activities that will encourage children to explore concepts with the help of teaching aids.

The 'science corner' in the classroom, for instance, will have objects such as weighing machines, magnets, and microscopes. The 'construction corner' will be filled with building blocks and the 'reading corner' will be stocked with mainly pictorial books.

Lata Menon, who was the Technical Lead for curriculum development and training, said the methodology has been devised to include both structured as well as unstructured components. She said the curriculum had been developed on the basis of the NCERT curriculum. "The purpose of the pre-primary education programme is to make children socio-emotionally ready for school," she said.

M.T. Reju, Commissioner for Public Instruction, said that the NCERT curriculum was customised for Karnataka. “The focus on pre-primary classes will be to encourage activity-based, joyful child-centric pedagogy,” he said.

The department also plans to introduce oral language skills as well as develop environmental awareness among students. “We want to develop a concept called emergent literacy where we introduce students to reading and writing without actually getting them to read and write. We want them to develop audio and visual discrimination where they learn and familiarise with the sounds of the language and shapes of the script,” Ms. Menon added.

Students will also get to experience a lot of free play where they can play on their own, pretend play, and involve themselves in creative activities. There will be themes every month such as ‘my neighbourhood’, ‘animals and birds’, ‘fruits and vegetables’, and ‘festivals’.

The curriculum also borrows from Chili Pili, a resource material developed for children in anganwadis in 2000 as well as from other NGOs working at the field level in Karnataka.

Various organisations, including Akshara Foundation, Azim Premji University, and Promise Foundation, among others, worked on developing the curriculum. Schoolteachers who teach Nali Kali as well as anganwadi workers who use Chili Pili were also consulted. At the end of pre-primary class and at the beginning of the primary school, there will be a recap of lessons to help those who missed classes to understand concepts.

The department officials also pointed out that the curriculum will work well for students as they would go to government schools where Nali Kali, which relies heavily on activity-based learning, will be taught from classes one to three.

In mother tongue

From the next academic year, the pre-primary curriculum will also be adapted for students whose mother tongue or script is Urdu, Lambani, and Dharwad Kannada, among others. This is being done so that students can learn in a language familiar to them. The curriculum will also be adapted for children with special needs.

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