

CODE OF CONDUCT

Aachaar Sanhita For the parents and teachers of Balmandir

Gijubhai Badheka

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Preface

A Teacher's Duty

A teacher's work is like flowing water. Until the question remains of the education of humans it is not possible to answer without understanding human nature, inclination (*vrutti*) and strengths and traits. If we do not understand those who have to study/be educated; do not think about what they like and what they do not, then our work and theirs will go in vain. The success/fulfilment of the work of education is not in teaching one or two subjects nor preparing for a certain class, or passing matric or BA. Real education lies in making humans conscious/aware about their own unending strengths. It is to reveal the secret of how to animate these and how to use them. To do this requires that the strengths are respected. Their individual development needs to be given first place. Rather than being taught, they need to be guided onto the path of self-knowledge. This is the work of education today.

For a moment, leave your political fraud
and play with your children
For a moment, leave your legal intrigues
and play with your children.
For a moment, leave your commercial dealings
and play with your children
For a moment, leave your poetry and music
and play with your children.
For a moment, leave your devotionals to the lord
and play with your children
For a moment forget about the entire world
and play with your children
For a moment, become a child yourself
and play with your children.

Before Children come to Balmandir: Suggestions for Parents

Since the field of child development has accepted that children have their independent personality, there has been a big change in the attitude and approach towards them. Children

are not all cut from the same mould. They can each develop their own personality. While we adults and children are in the same environment yet there is a huge difference in the way we see the world and live in it.

The child is in a continual process of development. But the pace of development differs depending on each one's strengths and weaknesses. Our important task is to remove the obstacles that may impede the pace of development and create an enabling environment in which they can develop independently.

Thus any child development or education curriculum needs to be flexible and open to change rather than fixed in a rigid mould.

It is important that the efforts for child development undertaken at home and in the Balmandir follow the same thinking. It is also important that this should be presented in terms of the age of the child and stage of development. But it would be wrong to assume that every child would be at the same stage at a certain age. These suggestions are meant to provide some general guidelines for all.

For parents the primary interest is that their child should quickly learn the alphabet and to count from 1-100. But we feel that what is important is the longer goal is that the child gains the ability to find its place in the world. The activities in the Balmandir are such that children learn to understand the difference between good and bad. They learn values like responsibility without being told. Children themselves accomplish all-round development. Their self-confidence grows.

When a child enters the Balmandir or school for the first time, its heart and head are full of confusions. At such a time it is important to help the child by trying to understand its many needs.

When the child comes home ask about the day. What did you do? What was the *nasta*? What is your teacher's name? Did you make friends? What did you play? Did you swing in the playground? Talk with the child. This will help in building vocabulary and understanding as well how to conduct themselves with others. *Vartanook* (conduct, behaviour, character)

Psychologists have proved that the only way that children learn is by watching the behaviour /conduct of parents. It is important to always remember that to quarrel in the presence of children, to sulk, to tell on others, to find fault in every task, all these behaviours leave a deep impact on the child. Children should be made aware that their parents respect and care for each other, listen to each other's suggestions, listen to their children, and answer questions with patience (*maahitgaar*-well informed).

Children learn good habits-discipline-values not through preaching but by creating a warm, comfortable stable environment of concord. It is from seeing this that the child learns best. If one story could be told every day, the child feels that it has got so much. It too will learn how to be articulate and voice control.

Two-and-a half to three years: This is the age when children start going to Balmandir. Here are some suggestions on how parents can prepare.

Pre-Preparation: When the child is ready to start school, parents talk to the child as much as possible about where it will be going and what it will be like.

Even adults find it difficult to adjust to a new place. For children of this age it is more difficult to adjust to a new place, new people, and new environment. So parents must prepare the child for this experience with sensitivity and care. If possible take the child to the place. If you are walking there, match your pace with that of the child and talk about what you see on the way.

Then, if the child is to go to Balmandir, it should be encouraged in all ways, by discussing what it will find there such as toys, playground, garden flowers etc. It should be explained that there will be adults there like mummy-pappa who will talk, play, tell stories. That the child has to say bye-bye to its parents and go alone to the Balmandir. (Do not rush the child to go and stay alone. Give it time).

When the children come to the balmandir the teachers should welcome them with a smile, pleasant voice, affection and warmth.

If the child does not immediately follow instructions then neither teachers nor parents need to get bothered. Children will slowly adjust to the environment and start doing as required.

The child should know its name, parents' names and names of brothers and sisters before it starts going to Balmandir. It should also know where it lives; if not the complete address, at least the name of the area or street/society. Once it has started Balmandir, it should know which tukdi (group) it is in and the name of the teacher. If it comes by a vehicle it should know the name of the driver..

When the child first comes, the teacher should familiarise it with the basic geography of the Balmandir—such as the entrance gate and doors, its room, the toilet, the playground, the drinking water place, and also how to open and close the tap.

Never be in a hurry that children should learn the alphabet, numbers or songs by heart. The child will learn all this at an appropriate time. It is not to be taught but be allowed to learn. But learning to be in a group, learning to use the muscles of the arms and legs, these are to be focussed on. Some important habits can be cultivated only at this age. One of our objectives in putting children in the Balmandir is to cultivate good habits.

These are some of the activities in the Balmandir that support the development of these habits.

1. Parts of the body. Asking “what is this?” to identify and name hands, legs, head, knee, thigh, heel, palm, fingers etc. Do not expect children to know everything quickly. Children have fun learning this, especially when it is done with action and imitation.
2. Following instructions. Giving simple instructions like stand up, sit down, clap, close your eyes, put your hands up and down, come into the room, go to the playground. Children love to follow these especially in a group. This also gets them into the habit of following instructions.
3. Looking at books. Children like books with colourful pictures of animals, birds, flowers, fruits etc. Encourage children to ask to find out how to open the book; how to

turn the pages, how to keep the book, by answering patiently and showing them how. Sometimes you can ask questions. In case children do not give the correct answer, do not get irritated but tell and show them the correct way.

4. In the room. First tell them to put their shoes/slippers in a straight line in the designated place. They should place their mats in the squares; carefully take the toys out and place these back in their place after use. They should talk softly without screaming or shouting. Teachers as well as children must get in the habit of talking softly. Teachers should demonstrate how specific equipment is to be used.
5. Music Time: There could be specific signs to indicate time to go for music such as the sound of the tambourine or cymbals that children should recognise. Start with simple rhymes. *Rajabhaiya rajabhaiya soota chho? Suraj dada aave chhe. Ding, ding, ding. Haathibhai to jaada. Machhli jalki raani hai. Laambo laambo magar.* Children love to repeat these every day, and can remember them by heart, even little children.
6. Balgeet: Children's songs: These should be short with vocabulary that children can understand. *Naacho Maara Morlaa, Chakiben chakiben, Dhingli Maari Bolti Nathi* are some examples that have characters that children are familiar with. Telling the children a little about the song before starting engaged them from the beginning.
7. Abhinay: Play acting: Asking children to imitating sounds of animals and birds that they are familiar with. Then sing songs about these accompanied by actions. The teacher can begin and children can follow. Later children can be called on stage to independently perform.
8. Acting out stories: Tell children short stories with expression and action. This sparks their imagination. Some examples *Ek Hato Chako, Popat Bhookhyo Nathi, Bavajini Madhima.* These can be performed like small skits.
9. Games: These are very good for fun and to encourage a sense of community. Some examples: *Chaki Chokha Khande Chhe, Nadi Kinare Tametu, Ghee Khaau Gol Khaau, Aa Gai Koni?, Dhamal Dhoko.*
10. Free Activity: provide opportunities for unguided creative activities. A sand pit can provide many activities—filling containers with sand, making shapes with wet sand, picking shells from the sand. Also different sized pieces of wood, empty matchboxes can be used to create different structures and puzzles.
11. Cleanliness: Every child should develop the habit of keeping and using a handkerchief especially to wipe the nose. Child should know to look in the mirror and see if hair is combed. Learn to wash hands and face and keep its surroundings clean. To put sweet and biscuit wrappers in the proper place. To pick up any snacks that have spilt at the end. To fold and put the mats.
12. Life skills: To separate seeds, string beads, make pairs of objects, pour into a bottle, fold hanky, arrange shells etc on simple shapes. Playing together in the doll's house etc.

The *nasta* (snack) time in the Balmandir is a good time to teach basic habits. For example washing hands before eating, sitting in a line, getting up to collect the *nasta* only when hand is put on the child's head, hands in lap during prayer. Staring to eat

only after prayer *saathe ramiye saathe jamiya* (let us play together, eat together). Chewing the food properly. After eating to put back the bowl in its place without making noise. There can also be a discussion about the taste of that day's snack; teaches children to appreciate different tastes and flavours. Children also learn patience during the snack period and process.

Developing the senses: Through a variety of games. For example bring a flower and smell it, closing eyes, closing ears, also experience taste and touch different things, hot and cold. Rhymes can help. E.g. *Naani maari ankh te joti kank kank. E to kevi majani vaat chhe*. Use the basic *dattapeti* to help develop fingers to grasp and hold. Arrange the pink tower. Put the round, square and triangle shapes in the moulds. Arrange by size from biggest to smallest, thickest to thinnest, tall and short etc.

Colours: Introduce the three primary colours—red, yellow and blue and play games to identify these on paper, on clothes and toys. Prepare paints and let children use them to paint. Do not worry if the hands are stained. Ask what colour each child likes. This can also be done at home.

Language: Teach pronunciation starting by asking the child to say its name clearly. Children should repeat what the teacher says with clear enunciation. Parents should also be attentive to the child's pronunciation.

Vocabulary: Every activity in the Balmandir helps to build vocabulary. In addition, songs, stories, drama, outings, conversation, puppets and skits which are age-appropriate also enrich vocabulary.

Numbers: Even very small children have a sense of numbers. They can tell when the *nasta* or other things are less or more in quantity. Simple games like raise one hand/finger/clap once –increasing numbers up to five—introduce the concept of numbers. After opening all five fingers closing them in a fist can help communicate the concept of zero.

Drawing on the blackboard or showing through books can also familiarise with numbers. Children can counting out loud with teacher.

The parts of the body can be used to show number 1 and 2. One head, one nose, one chin, etc; Two legs, hands, ears, eyes etc.

Some rhymes can be used for learning numbers. For example one sparrow came to eat grains...up to five. Subtraction can be taught—one sparrow flies away—how many left—up to zero.

Most of these activities can be done at home in the first two years. Each child will learn according to its own ability and pace. It is important that we be patient.

It is not necessary that all the suggestions given should be followed to a T. Every individual can proceed with these to suit his/her own understanding, ability and

convenience, and even modify these as per need. The teacher should certainly think and plan what and how to do every day. Children can be taken on outings and introduced to new places and new things. Parents should also be invited to visit gardens and introduced to aspects of trees, birds flowers etc., to create awareness and appreciation of nature.

Celebration of festivals and important days should be discussed and also events held two-three times a year with the involvement of parents.

Parents should read these guideline from time to time and also discuss with the children.