

A Community-Based Approach to Improving Children’s Learning and Development Proposal to Asha for Education (2026–27)

I. Background and Rationale

Rural Tamil Nadu has made notable progress in expanding access to education over the past two decades. School enrolment has increased significantly, and aspirations for higher education have become widespread across communities. While this reflects important progress, it also highlights a critical gap: improved access has not consistently translated into improved learning outcomes or holistic child development.

Many children continue to progress through school without acquiring foundational skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. These gaps often remain unnoticed in early grades and widen over time, affecting confidence, participation, and long-term opportunities. In addition, a large number of children enter school without adequate readiness in language, cognition, and social behaviour. Developmental delays and learning challenges frequently go unidentified, placing children at a disadvantage from the outset.

A child’s development is influenced not only by schooling but also by the home and community environment. Parents shape routines, motivation, and emotional security, yet many lack guidance on supporting learning effectively. Community structures are present but are not always actively engaged in child development. As a result, children grow within a fragmented ecosystem where support systems are not aligned.

This project is built on the understanding that a child’s future rests on four interconnected pillars: parents, teachers, community, and society. When these pillars operate in isolation, children struggle—not due to lack of ability, but due to lack of alignment. This programme therefore shifts the focus to the community as the central platform, where alignment can be built in a practical and sustainable way.

II. Vision and Goal

2.1 Vision

To create a community-driven ecosystem where every child is supported through aligned efforts of families and local structures, enabling them to learn, develop, and thrive.

2.2 Goal

To improve school readiness, foundational learning, inclusion, confidence, and parental engagement among children aged 3–14 years through a community-based child development model.

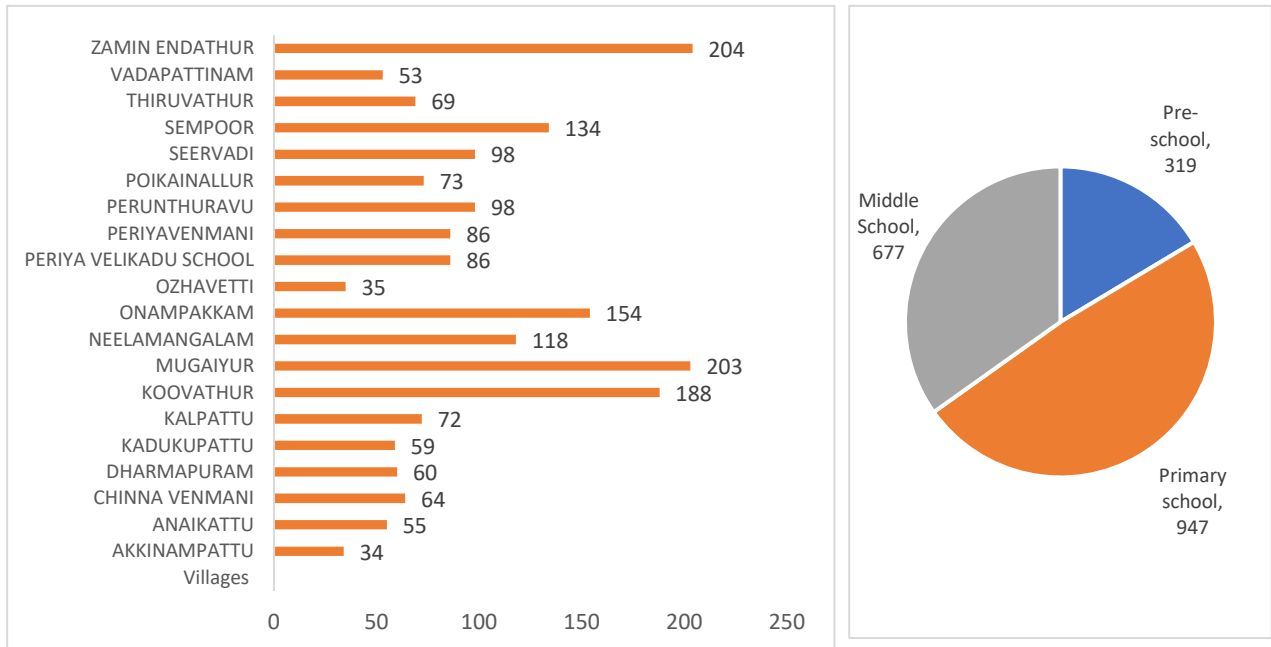
2.3 Objectives

- 1.To strengthen early childhood development and school readiness among children aged 3–5 years.
- 2.To improve foundational learning outcomes in Tamil, English, and Mathematics among children in Classes 1–8.
- 3.To promote inclusive child development by identifying and supporting children with developmental delays and learning difficulties.
- 4.To build an aligned support system by strengthening parental engagement and connecting families and communities to support children’s overall development.

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IV. Programme Design and Coverage

The programme will be implemented across 20 village communities, covering children aged 3–14 years and their families. Total estimated number of children to be covered is 1943. The figures below provide the village and age wise break up:



4.1 Community-Based Implementation Model

- All programme activities will be conducted within the community using locally available spaces such as community halls, ward member homes, libraries, counselling centres, or other shared premises. These spaces will be provided free of cost, ensuring accessibility and sustainability.
- Each location will function as a Village Learning Centre, serving as a safe and accessible space for children’s learning, development, and community engagement.
- Community Education Facilitators (para-teachers) will operate from these centres and act as the primary link between children, families, and the programme.

4.2 Daily Functioning of Village Learning Centres

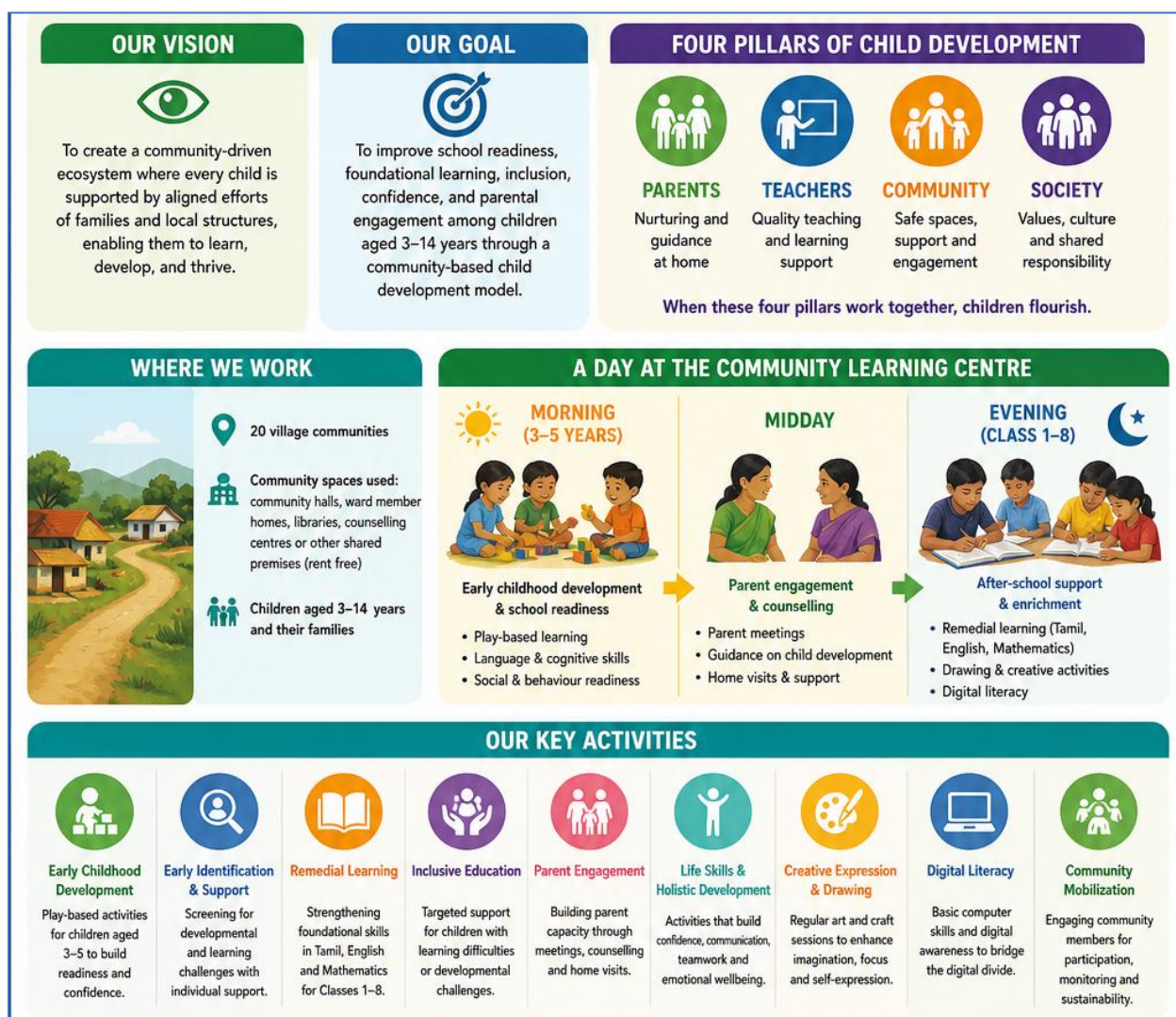
- Each centre will function as a multi-purpose learning and development space throughout the day.
- In the mornings, facilitators will conduct early childhood sessions for children aged three to five years, focusing on school readiness and developmental stimulation.
- During midday hours, facilitators will engage with parents through counselling sessions, home visits, and group meetings to strengthen caregiving practices and learning support at home.
- In the evenings, the centres will serve as after-school learning spaces where children from Classes 1 to 8 will receive remedial education, along with opportunities for creative expression and digital learning.
- This structure ensures that children and families are supported continuously within the same community space.

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V. Strategic Rationale for Community-Based Model

While schools remain central to formal education, they cannot address all barriers affecting child development. Many challenges begin before school entry and continue beyond school hours. Children who lack readiness or foundational skills often struggle despite regular school attendance.

Community-based learning centres provide an effective solution by bringing support closer to children's everyday environments. They enable early intervention, continuous learning support, and stronger engagement with parents. By shifting key interventions into the community, the programme complements formal schooling without adding to the burden on teachers.



VI. Project Activities

6.1 Early Childhood Development and School Readiness (3–5 Years)

The project will establish structured early childhood sessions within village learning spaces to prepare children for formal schooling. These sessions will focus on developing language, cognition, social interaction, and behaviour through play-based and activity-oriented learning. Children will be engaged in storytelling, rhymes, vocabulary building, pre-literacy exposure, number readiness, and

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games that strengthen memory, attention, and problem-solving. Activities will also support fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and early classroom habits such as sitting in groups, following instructions, and interacting with peers. Alongside child-focused sessions, parents will be guided on responsive caregiving, home-based stimulation, nutrition, and preparing children emotionally and socially for school entry.

6.2 Early Identification and Individualized Support

The project will implement a systematic process for identifying children who may have developmental delays, learning difficulties, or behavioural challenges. Screening will be conducted across age groups to detect concerns related to speech, cognition, attention, motor development, and learning readiness. Once identified, children will receive individualized support plans tailored to their needs. Special educators will provide targeted sessions using structured and multisensory approaches, while parents will receive counselling on how to support their children at home. Where necessary, referrals will be made to appropriate services, ensuring that children receive timely and continuous support.

6.3 Community-Based Remedial Learning (Classes 1–8)

For school-going children, the project will conduct regular after-school learning sessions within the community. These sessions will focus on strengthening foundational skills in Tamil, English, and Mathematics. Children will be grouped based on their competency levels rather than grade, allowing for more effective and personalized learning. The sessions will include reading practice, comprehension, writing exercises, vocabulary development, and spoken language exposure, along with strengthening number concepts, arithmetic operations, and problem-solving skills. Facilitators will also provide homework support, revision sessions, and additional assistance to children who require extra attention.

A dedicated component of the project will focus on supporting children with diverse learning and developmental needs. This includes children who are slow learners, those with reading difficulties, speech delays, mild developmental challenges, or behavioural concerns. The programme will use flexible teaching methods, repetition-based learning, and individualized attention to support these children. Special educators will work closely with facilitators and families to design appropriate learning strategies, monitor progress, and build the child's confidence. This ensures that children who might otherwise fall behind are actively included and supported in their learning journey.

6.5 Parent Engagement and Capacity Building

Parents will be actively engaged as partners in their children's development. The project will organize regular parent meetings, counselling sessions, and home visits to build awareness and skills related to child development and education. Parents will receive guidance on supporting learning at home, establishing routines, improving nutrition, encouraging positive behaviour, and maintaining communication with schools. Special focus will be given to supporting parents of young children and those with special needs. Through continuous engagement, the project aims to strengthen the home environment as a key space for learning and emotional support.

6.6 Life Skills and Holistic Development

The project will incorporate structured activities that focus on building essential life skills among children. These sessions will address communication, confidence, teamwork, leadership, problem-solving, and emotional wellbeing. Children will be encouraged to express themselves, participate in group activities, and develop a sense of responsibility and discipline. These efforts aim to ensure

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that children not only improve academically but also develop the skills needed to navigate everyday challenges and future opportunities.

6.7 Other Enrichment Activities

In addition to above interventions, the project will provide selected enrichment activities, including basic computer education, where children will be introduced to digital skills such as typing and using simple applications. Creative activities such as drawing, colouring, and craft will be conducted to nurture imagination and concentration.

1. Computer Education: Selected sessions within schools will introduce children to basic computer operations, typing skills, digital awareness, and introductory learning in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint.

2. Drawing and Creativity: Drawing, colouring, poster-making, craft, and creative expression sessions will nurture imagination, concentration, and confidence.

3. Student Engagement Activities: Periodic activities such as reading events, quizzes, public speaking, cultural programmes, and competitions will help build confidence and participation.

6.8 Community Mobilization and Continuous Engagement

The project will maintain continuous engagement with the community to build ownership and sustainability. Local stakeholders, including parents, youth volunteers, and community leaders, will be involved in supporting programme activities. Regular interaction with families and community groups will ensure consistent participation, improved attendance, and a supportive environment for children. Over time, this engagement will help embed child development as a shared responsibility within the community.

VIII. Monitoring and Evaluation Framework

The programme will implement a robust monitoring system combining early childhood development indicators, academic progress measurement, attendance tracking, behavioural indicators, and family engagement monitoring.

What will be monitored?	How it will be tracked	How often
School readiness of 3–5 year children	Observation checklists and simple milestone tracking	Monthly
Learning levels (Tamil, English, Math)	Basic assessments (baseline and follow-up tests)	Quarterly
Progress of children needing extra support	Individual child records and review notes	Monthly
Attendance of children	Attendance registers at learning centres	Daily / Monthly summary
Parent participation	Meeting records and home visit reports	Monthly
Child confidence and participation	Facilitator observations during sessions	Monthly
School engagement and retention	School records and follow-up with families	Quarterly
Overall programme progress	Review meetings and field reports	Monthly / Quarterly

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VII. Expected Outcomes

Area	Expected Outcome	Indicator (Simple Measure)
Early Childhood Development (3–5 years)	Children demonstrate improved school readiness and developmental skills	Increased ability in language, social interaction, and basic learning behaviours
Foundational Learning (Classes 1–8)	Children improve in reading, writing, and mathematics	Improvement in basic literacy and numeracy assessments
Inclusive Education	Children with developmental delays and learning difficulties receive timely support	Number of children identified and showing progress in learning and participation
Parental Engagement	Parents actively support children's education and development	Increased participation in meetings and improved home learning practices
Child Confidence and Life Skills	Children show improved confidence, communication, and participation	Increased classroom participation and engagement in activities
School Readiness to Performance Link	Better transition from preschool to primary education	Reduced learning gaps in early grades
Community Involvement	Communities take active responsibility for child development	Increased participation of community members in programme activities

EXPECTED OUTCOMES	MONITORING & EVALUATION			OUR IMPACT
 Children are school-ready and demonstrate improved development.	What We Monitor	How	Frequency	 Stronger children who learn and thrive  Empowered parents who guide with confidence  Active communities that support every child  A connected ecosystem for a brighter future
 Better foundational skills in reading, writing and mathematics.	 School readiness	Observation tools	Monthly	
 Children with learning or developmental challenges receive timely support.	 Learning levels	Assessments	Quarterly	
 Parents are more engaged and confident in supporting their children.	 Child progress	Individual records	Monthly	
 Children show improved confidence, participation and life skills.	 Attendance	Registers	Daily / Monthly	
 Children gain exposure in creativity and basic digital skills.	 Parent engagement	Meeting records	Monthly	
 Communities take active ownership of child development.	 Participation & confidence	Facilitator observations	Monthly	
	 Programme progress	Review meetings	Monthly / Quarterly	

VIII. Sustainability and Community Ownership

The programme is designed to build long-term village ownership by actively involving parents, youth volunteers, women's groups, teachers, community leaders, Anganwadi workers, and older students as peer mentors. Over time, communities can increasingly sustain child development support systems, learning centres, and parental engagement platforms with reduced external dependence.

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IX. Conclusion

Many children need more than classroom teaching to succeed, and support must begin before school entry. Developmental delays, weak readiness, learning gaps, family constraints, low confidence, and special needs often remain outside the reach of routine schooling. This proposal addresses those realities through a practical and scalable model that places communities at the centre of child development and educational progress. By combining preschool early intervention, village-based remedial learning, parent empowerment, inclusive child support, and enrichment, the programme seeks not only to improve academic outcomes, but to create a stronger foundation where every child is supported to learn, grow, and thrive.

Staffing Structure (20 Villages)				
Sl. No.	Position	No. Staff	Coverage / Deployment	Key Responsibilities
1	Community Education Facilitators / Para-Teachers 77%	20	One per village learning centre	Conduct after-school remedial education, preschool readiness sessions, homework support, child progress tracking, attendance follow-up, parent meetings, home visits, and referrals for children needing additional support.
2	Special Educators / Child Development Facilitators 100%	2	One for every 10 villages	Screen children for developmental delays and learning difficulties, prepare individualised support plans, conduct one-to-one and group sessions, guide parents, mentor facilitators, and coordinate referrals.
3	Counsellor 100%	2	One for every 10 villages	Provide counselling for children with behavioural, emotional, motivational, attendance, family, or adjustment challenges. Conduct parent counselling, adolescent guidance sessions, psychosocial support, crisis response, and referral linkage where needed.
4	Computer / Digital Skills Trainers 100%	2	One for every 10 villages	Conduct computer education sessions, teach basic digital skills, support Word, Excel, and PowerPoint learning, maintain digital learning schedules,
5	Drawing Master cum Extra-Curricular Facilitators 100%	1	Shared across schools and clusters	Conduct drawing, colouring, craft, handwriting improvement, creative expression, talent development, competitions, cultural activities, reading clubs, public speaking events, and other engagement programmes.
6	Supervisor 50%	1	Overall programme	Lead implementation, planning, staff management, donor reporting, government liaison, partnerships, budgeting oversight, and programme quality.
7	Project Assistant 100%	1	Overall programme	Manage assessments, child progress databases, dashboards, attendance systems, reporting, documentation, and outcome measurement. Handle finance records, vouchers, payroll support

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Project Budget : Community-Based Approach to Improving Children's Learning and Development									
Sl. No.	Position	Total Project Budget				Support requested from Asha			Coverage / Deployment
		Unit cost	No. Staff	Months	Total INR	INR	%	USD	
1	Community Education Facilitators / Para-Teachers	6500	20	12	1,560,000	1,201,200	77%	13,057	One per village learning centre
2	Special Educators / Child Development Facilitators	12000	2	12	288,000	288,000	100%	3,130	One for every 10 villages
3	Counsellor	10000	2	12	240,000	240,000	100%	2,609	One for every 10 villages
4	Computer / digital skills trainers	10000	2	12	240,000	240,000	100%	2,609	One for every 10 villages
5	Drawing Master cum extra-curricular facilitators	12000	1	12	144,000	144,000	100%	1,565	Common for all schools
6	Supervisor	8000	1	12	96,000	48,000	50%	522	Overall programme
7	Project Assistant	6000	1	12	72,000	72,000	100%	783	Overall programme
8	Educational aides, notebooks, colour pencils, storybooks, flash cards, dictionaries, and prizes	10000.00	20	1	200,000	200,000	100%	2,174	
9	Staff training	10000.00	1	4	40,000	30,000	75%	326	
10	Events and meetings	1250.00	20	10	250,000	200,000	80%	2,174	
11	Communication and travel	800	20	11	176,000	176,000	100%	1,913	
	Project Activity total				3,306,000	2,839,200	86%	30,861	
	Admin				132,240	99,180	75%	1,078	
	Total				3,438,240	2,938,380	85%	31,939	
Other sources of Funding: Kalanjiyam will mobilize funds through various individual donors and funding from our general donations will be used towards the 15% of the budget.									

