

Every year in the month of June, children are renewing their enrollment at Madurai Seed education centers for the new academic year. We also welcome new admissions. We don't avoid any children. There are no discriminations. This year from June 2014, **221 children (128 male: 93 female)** have enrolled in education centers at Karumbalai.

There are two groups according to their age levels in the slow learners- development program; one is children aged from 5 to 9. (Class 1 to 4) and children aged 10 to 14 (class 5 to 9).

The school drop-out issue is occurring among the age group of 10 to 14.

All children are encouraged to complete a basic ability test during their admission, **For Tamil**, children are asked to read simple texts from their books, dictation of simple words (two letter, three letter, and four letter words) and sentences comprising three or four words.

Basing the test, Tamil classes are divided into two sessions. A Tamil class is for 60 minutes. For the first 30 minutes volunteer will help the school-Tamil lessons for all children. For the second half, children who lack basic skills like identification of letters, pronunciation, and writing sit close to the volunteer. They are being taught letters, reading, and writing simple words. This way every slow learner gets the attention of the volunteer. Once a week, volunteers are testing their reading and writing. Volunteers are maintaining these records. I am checking their classes, and test records. Volunteers meeting are conducted twice a month. At that time their daily work-done note is being checked. 5 volunteers are teaching Tamil.

Class	Children who can't read Tamil
V	9
VI	7
VII	11
VIII	6
IX	4

For English, Volunteers Viji and Muruges conducted an ability test for children from 5th std to 9th std. There are 88 children (50 boys and 38 girls). Based on the test, children are divided into three groups.

Lightening- 16 children (their reading is good)

Tornado- 17 children (difficulty in reading complex words, confidence is low)

Thunder- 55 children (difficulty in identification of letters, sounds, reading simple words)

This group system is followed **two days in a week** when Muruges and Viji are coming to teach at Seed. Muruges is taking classes on English grammar, book reading, and speaking skills for the Lightening and Tornado group. Two volunteers are supporting him.

Viji is taking care of the Tornado group where children need more support. These classes are focusing on basic language competencies like reading, identification alphabets and their sounds. She is step by step introducing the words in **Dolch Word List**. She also uses **ChipperSage- Flow of English** interactive software tool to teach letters and sounds. 4 volunteers are supporting Mrs. Viji.

During some days, Muruges and Viji are doing combined class to teach general topics like story reading with Tulika books, rhymes, etc. All children are provided with hand writing notes and they are practicing regularly.

Mrs. Viji is also teaching an hour for children from 1st std to 4th std (70 children). She teaches rhymes, sound practice with flow of English tool, and stories.

For other four days, volunteers are practicing the 30:30 minutes schedule. For the first 30 minutes they teach school- English and another 30 minutes they teach the slow learner children with the inputs got from Viji and Muruges. They are also checking the progress of children.

Maths classes: For children from 1st std to 4th std, there are no groups divided. Volunteers are concentrating more on addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division for all students. There are four volunteers.

9th std: slow learners and fast learners: one volunteer

8th std: slow learners and fast learners: one volunteer

There are no groups in these two classes. Volunteers help the slow learners within the class. They are given more importance. Peer learning is encouraged.

From 5th std to 7th std, they are divided into three groups.

A: Children who don't know addition, subtraction

B: Children who don't know multiplication, division

C: Other children from 5th std 7th std taught school Maths

There are three volunteers helping these 3 groups of children.

As soon as one learnt addition and subtraction, he/she will go to the "B" section. Children who learnt from "B" will go to "C".

All children are given importance and treated equal regardless of study-abilities during the skills & personality development activities, recreation activities, seminars, workshops, field trips, scholarships, club activities, children magazines, game events. We are conscious about all children are participating.

Extension Program:

New supplementary education program is initiated for children of Sevalayam Hostel from 6th std to 12th std. There are 136 boys all are studying in a nearby corporation school. Currently, 3 volunteers are teaching here. We are looking for another 3 volunteers to conduct this program effectively.

Children don't know to read Tamil : 47

Children don't know to read English: 78

Volunteer Ramki is helping 10th, 11th, and 12th std students in Maths. Volunteer Nagoor and Balamurugan are helping children in reading, and writing practices. They are teaching Tamil for 45 minutes and English for 45 minutes.

Recently, the children from 6th std to 9th std were divided into four groups. In each team students who can read should teach the others who can't to promote peer learning.

Volunteers were trained to make flash cards, charts, and steps in teaching Tamil. We have planned to conduct the evaluation in the end of November.

Long- term goals:

It is very hard to enter in schools to teach the slow learners. I have a vision to establish evening centers in 5 hostels (Govt/ Govt.Aided hostels) around Karumbalai. It needs effective planning. We should find adequate, skillful volunteers; design a curriculum, needs financial assistance to give honorarium to volunteers, funds for teaching resources, materials. If Asha-Boston is likely to support this idea, I can develop a model and send you a proposal.

Things are changing in the educational scenario here. But, the number of children with lack of reading and writing abilities are increasing. A recent statistics says, 60% of students find difficulties in reading both Tamil and English in govt/govt.aided schools in Tamil Nadu. The government is striving to make a difference. The uncommitted teachers, traditional teaching methods, narrow minded exam based teaching make the indifference in learning.

In my case, we can make children to learn the basic reading, writing skills for 50 to 100 children in two years.