

## Balavidyalaya Site Visit 2023

Date: March 17, 2023 at 10:00pm - 11:00pm CT

Site Location: Balavidyalaya School for Young Deaf Children and Institute for Teacher Training, Shastri Nagar, Chennai

Site Visitors -

Asha for Education: Advait Deepak, Anitha Thyagrajan

Balavidyalaya: Dr. Meera

\*This site visit was a virtual site visit held through zoom\*

### Background:

Balavidyalaya is a school located in Shastri Nagar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu. It provides training for young deaf children and some older children. They attempt to break the barriers that deaf children could have in society through multiple years of training/teaching. After recovering from the recent pandemic, Balavidyalaya seeks to continue developing these children.

### Site Visit Details:

Balavidyalaya offers an Early Intervention program where there are 1-4 students per class. The program helps the toddlers understand comprehension, and the preschool stage focuses on teaching them words, sentences, and numbers. The school has created its own books to teach students, and students are assessed every month to monitor their progress.

The students at Balavidyalaya seemed to be enjoying themselves and were responding adequately to the teachers by engaging in conversations and listening to directions.

The teachers had them do multiple tasks and say multiple things that would help them understand the concepts better. They were learning to count numbers from 1-10 and were taught to be familiar with household items and common animals. The students at Balavidyalaya are taught hand-eye coordination and motor skills as a basis so that they can expand on other skills such as being able to identify colors, shapes, numbers, and place rings on poles. During the visit, an older child in the Balavidyalaya schooling system read out a few sentences as a lesson, and the teacher engaged with him by asking him questions on the lesson to further improve his understanding. Each classroom had a shelf of toys and equipment that the teachers used, which were age and level appropriate. The school uses assessment cards to monitor the progress of the students. If a child is on track, they move to the next level, while the other children stay in their level until they are ready to move on.

Parent communication is key as both the child, teacher, and parent need to work together to create a successful environment. There is a parent library that they can take home, which is meant to help the parents and children. The staff of Balavidyalaya are also there to support the parents through their situation. Amongst this, teacher training takes place in the school and is a one-year course. The school has facilities that allow them to detect infections, and they also have equipment such as an audiometer that allows them to diagnose the level of hearing loss, which allows them to get adequate hearing aids. The children are tested once a year to make sure the hearing loss has not become worse. Because of Covid, it is up to the parents whether or not they want to buy hearing aids or other implants because they are still very expensive.

Conclusion:

Balavidyalaya provided insight into the quality of education provided by the school for deaf children. The students seemed to be enjoying themselves and were learning effectively. The school's use of age and level-appropriate equipment and their own books to teach the students was impressive. Balavidyalaya's dedication to supporting the parents through their situation is also noteworthy. Based on our assessment of the health of the school, we feel comfortable to go forward with the funding for the 2023-2024 year.