**Balavidyalaya –The School for Young Deaf Children and Institute for Teacher Training**

**Located in Adyar, Chennai**

Date of Visit: August 28-30, 2012

Address: 18, Ist Cross St. Shastri Nagar, Adyar
 Chennai 600 020,
 Tamilnadu, India.

Telephone: +91 44 24917199

Fax: +91 44 24982598

Email: hear@balavidyalayaschool.org

Website: [http://balavidyalayaschool.org/index.htm#](http://balavidyalayaschool.org/index.htm)

Wire Transfers are possible to Balavidyalaya.

***The Balavidyalaya Trust is allowed to receive donations from abroad by FCRA.***

The FCRA registration number is 075900615

The account details :

Account No 03290210000311 - UCO Bank Current Account. Shastri Nagar Branch.

**SCHOOL**

Honorary Director: **Mrs. Saraswathi Narayanaswamy**
Honorary Principal: **Mrs. Valli Annamallai**

Honorary Vice Principal: Dr. Meera Suresh

Headmistress: K. Meena

There are 150 hearing impaired children from ages 0-5 in the school and 22 trained teachers. There are 14 classrooms and 3 office assistants. The school admits Deaf and Hard of Hearing Infants and young children below two and a half years old. Teaching in the school is in either English or Tamil, depending on the parent’s decision.

The aim of the school is to train *very young* deaf children (when their ability to to grasp developmental skillsis at its peak) to acquire valuable language and speech skills so that they can then get integrated into mainstream education, so that the child has the same opportunities as a hearing child would in society. This quality sets this particular school apart from other hearing impaired schools all over India.

The duration of training at the school depends on the child’s hearing loss, intelligence and the ability of his or her parents, and usually ranges from 3 to 4 years 4-5 years.

School hours are from 9am – 3pm.

Balavidyalaya has a Diagnostic Centre which they use to diagnose the children and prescribe suitable hearing aids, and also to carry out periodic assessments to ensure the children get the maximum benefit from the hearing aids.

The school also has a train-the-trainer system. Due to Balavidyalaya’s unique curriculum (from its philosophy of training really young children to join the mainstream), they need to have their own teacher training system. . Teachers trained here are placed out into other schools all over Tamil Nadu and India.

 As a matter of policy the school charges absolutely NO FEES for the students. Balavidyalaya also has no religious affiliations.

Since the school is a non-profit and charges no fee for tuition towards trainees or the students, they are able to afford only a few staff members. Hearing aid testing equipment is in good order and there is enough space in the classrooms, however lack of the ability to retain teachers after training them proves to be a problem.

**MANAGEMENT**

The Balavidyalaya Trust, a registered non-profit making Charitable Trust, is in charge of the management of the school.

The school has the recognition of the Government of Tamilnadu and functions under the Directorate of Rehabilitation of the Disabled.

The school is under the Aegis of 'The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt. of India'.

Balavidyalaya The Institute for Teacher Training trains teachers in the Diploma in Teaching Young Hearing Impaired (DTYHI).

The Diploma is recognized by the Rehabilitation Council of India and the Government of Tamilnadu.

The school appeals to philanthropic in deed firms and individuals to help them by donating liberally, so that they can continue the noble cause of providing FREE services.

**CONCLUSION**

I was very impressed with the uniqueness of the school curriculum and the effectiveness of placing very young children with severe and profound hearing loss into the mainstream education system at an early age and train-the-trainee system.

Right now the school is not able to retain many teachers after giving them training because of the low salaries and other attractive opportunities for the teachers in Tamil Nadu after receiving the training. The staff in the school seems extremely dedicated to teaching the underprivileged young children of Balavidyalaya, however they can do a much more effective job if they had enough in-class supplies and retained trained teachers.