**Report for ASHA – September 2010**

**Positive changes in children:**

Tangible change has been observed amongst the children in this year, after components of curative education have been added to our curriculum. Not only has it has made the whole environment more positive, healthy and proactive, but specific improvements are seen in many areas that are generally of concern in case of children with developmental challenges.

**General appearance and bearing:** Almost all of the children improved their posture, in carrying themselves better, walking straighter and thus looked more purposeful and connected. More and more children look focused and respond with a look or smile and are losing that far away, lost look so characteristic of autism.

**Coordination and motor movement:** Another area where in we find children, walking better, climbing, running, hopping better with the inclusion of  many traditional games in the curriculum like hop scotch, seven tiles etc. Motor movement in the arms, hands and fingers has improved. Pre-writing skills are being learnt easily now.

**Speech:** Non-verbal children have begun to make sounds, children who were speaking have increased their sentence length and complexity, children with irrelevant speech have begun to speak more meaningfully and clarity of speech is also seen in some children.

**Imitation skills:** One of the ways children learn from 0-7 years is imitation. However, this one skill has been an autistic child’s foe as these children do not usually imitate. Because of large classes, more group work rather than individual work, and free play we find children now imitating what they have seen at home or at school, thus helping their expressive skills.

**Reduction in hyperactivity and increase in sitting tolerance:** Children are now able to have an attention span of over 30 minutes for attending to a story, narration, music concert without getting agitated and restless. Credit goes to curriculum design - having a circle time, a strict and predictable schedule during school hours, and learning to wait for turns and the design of the diet. Also, wet-on-wet painting has helped the children become calmer.

**Writing skills:** Form drawing, a method of teaching children the art of writing, spacing, formation of alphabets, sizing etc. has been useful in getting the reluctant writer to hold a pencil and do some meaningful formations. Although quantification is difficult, all classes and all children have moved up in their pre-writing skills.

**Relating to the environment and communication skills:** In a survey done at the closing of last term from the parents the maximum number of parents reported that there was a distinct change in the children’s engagement to their environment and in their ability to communicate not just their wants and needs but ideas too. Hence they felt that the children were easier to handle in social situations too.