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Celebrating 10 Years

December 2023

Unraveling ADHD



Dr. Nandini Mundkur

MD. Developmental
Paediatrician

Celebrating The
School

'I Am Proud To Be
A Teacher' Contest
Results

How To Talk To
Children About
Conflict & War?

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Celebrating 10 Years

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Self-Reflection, Is It Worth The Effort?

■ RASHMI MARIAN FURTADO

Senior Editor, TeacherTribe.world



The arrival of December automatically brings with it the holiday spirit for many of us and I am no exception to that. But as we get closer to the last week of the year, the holiday spirit morphs into a reflective mind. **Harvard Business Review speaks of research that shows the habit of reflection can separate extraordinary professionals from mediocre ones.**

To gain the benefits of reflection to the fullest extent one must make it a habit.

Reflection for me is about learning and moving forward. While many may believe that mulling over the events of the day or year may not fetch us the fuel to move forward. When done objectively, it does provide us with valuable lessons that will help us tremendously. We can truly work on ourselves in a manner that will be beneficial for us in our professional and personal lives. Research suggests that unprejudiced and objective journaling can be an effective way of self-reflection.

1. **Maintaining a journal** about surprises, shocks, successes, failures, frustrations, delightful experiences, arguments, agreements, fruitful debates and so on, will help us understand the way we deal with the positive and negative outcomes and if something we said or did caused the outcome. Along with this, note the physical, emotional and mental changes that you experience. It could be a headache, a smile, butterflies in the stomach and anything else. Make a note of the reality but don't ponder over it as you write it.

2. Review the journal that you have maintained. The review may be a tough experience. We will need to be honest, pragmatic and non-emotional about the process and not allow ourselves to get carried away or hide behind excuses.

The sole intention is to reflect, learn, implement and move forward.

Growing as a professional and as an individual can be done quite easily if we are honest with ourselves and follow these steps.




3. Question yourself about your reaction or response. Don't just review and drop the issue at hand. Ask yourself how you would have handled the situation in a way that would make it a pleasant experience. Ask yourself what you did right, so you can repeat it. Ask yourself what you did wrong, so you can correct it in the future.

4. Note your lessons and implement them. Make a note of the lessons you learn and implement it. Growing as a professional and as an individual can be done quite easily if we are honest with ourselves and follow these steps.

Although, we must remember that all the above steps must be done periodically. It can be weekly, fortnightly or monthly, but it has to be a habit for us to learn and implement the lessons effectively. Honestly, self-reflection is not something that I have followed as a habit myself.

But it is something that I have decided to try. I am a firm believer of not dismissing anything without trying. It's time we all try this method and see if it's actually worth the effort. I invite all of you to join me and maintain a self-reflection journal for yourself, so all of us can be a better version of ourselves as a professional and an individual. ■



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 Rashmi Furtado

A natural writer, teacher and a passionate content creator, Rashmi has authored the Cu and Rio series and created the Keystones program on Values Education from Greycaps Knowledge Tribe. She is one of the founders of TeacherTribe.world. She is a sought after speaker at educational conferences, facilitator programs and for motivational talks to students at schools across India. She holds a Master's Degree from the prestigious NIT Suratkal where she also taught before joining Greycaps Knowledge Tribe. Rashmi is also a popular quiz host for schools, colleges and large corporate audiences. She has co-hosted the Tata Crucible quiz, Canara Bank National School Quiz, Travel Quest by Thomas Cook and QNOW it ALL? World Teachers Quiz.

Celebrating the School

■ G. BALASUBRAMANIAN

G. Balasubramanian is a doyen of school education in India. He has held several positions of leadership at CBSE, including Director Academics. He was the brain behind the introduction of several innovations at CBSE, which included frontline curriculum, communicative approach to language teaching, Information Technology, alternatives to homework, etc. He is also an author, poet and a sought-after speaker at educational conferences world over. This article has been taken from G. Balasubramanian's LinkedIn Page.



The K-12 system of education is currently under pressure from different directions. While at one end, the content, pedagogy, and assessment patterns seem to be transforming to new perspectives, the current narratives that describe lifestyles, the conflicts that arise through human thought dynamics, the impact of digital approaches to redefine relationship models appear to contextualise the needs and purposes of educational processes to new paradigms and patterns. The socio-cultural evolutions expect from educational systems learners who are more integrated, more competent, current, enterprising and productive. These requirements seem to demand a more broad-based approach to the way the schools shape and structure themselves for the future, brand and celebrate themselves.

The schools need to refocus on the way they organise and impact their learner's growth process. Some of the ways they should address the emerging needs could be:

1. Celebrating Ideas

The schools need to understand that repetitive content and their assessment through exercises that promise and promote rote learning would no more be appreciated in any learning environment. A potential learner is a treasure house of ideas. It is necessary to tap these ideas, nurture them, navigate them and celebrate them and the school communities need to make a conscious and positive commitment to this. Every learner comes with a fund of ideas both during the process of learning and as an outcome of learning. With the human brain processing the inputs of information both in a synergetic and synesthetic manner, the students may come with a galaxy of new ideas. Of course, some of them may be fanciful but even those are worth examining without rejection. The celebration of the ideas of the individual learners puts them more on a progressive pursuit of new knowledge oftentimes facilitating construction of new knowledge. Celebrating ideas of the learners would also help in meeting their existential identity needs and enhance comfort and confidence levels to a more adventurous journey in learning.

2. Celebrating Curiosity

Curiosity is the bedrock of the growth process of life systems. The search for knowledge and experiences starts right from the time of birth. Unfortunately, the curiosity of the individual is oftentimes silenced, overpowered with the existing dominant ideas thereby forcing them to accept what is already prevalent. Curiosity, sometimes, is considered as a threat to formal learning or as an interference to the normative learning procedures of classroom indulging and promoting mediocrity. There should be a process in place in schools to observe, understand, record, nurture and facilitate the domains of curiosity of the individual learner. This is a phased process, and the schools need to have a window where the learners could showcase their curiosity, even if it is to a limited extent. Celebrating the curiosity of the learner is a gateway to their future genius.

3. Celebrating Enterprise

Several students in the formative process exhibit a sense of enterprise. They come with questions of ‘why not’ in preference to why. Nurturing the sense of enterprise gives enormous scope for finding their identity, their ability to develop problem solving and decision-making skills, their ability to analyse data and seek opportunities, their ability to take risks and manage them effectively, their aspiration to do a thing differently or creatively. The schools need to have a workstation for learning, planning, exhibiting and parading their sense of enterprise. This goes alongside idea creation and idea management. This not only enhances their self-confidence but provides an opportunity for a positive approach to life and understanding not only business but the dignity of labour.

4. Celebrating creativity

Not all ideas or entrepreneurial attitudes might be linked to or leading to creativity. Creativity is a much more broad-based process encompassing several domains of knowledge. This helps in capturing, nurturing, hypothesising, testing and piloting the ideas. The universe of creativity extends its horizon to several abstract areas of learning including fine arts and poetry. Schools need to have separate centres for creative engagement. Creative thinking and engagement need to be recognised and appreciated. Children with creative mindsets need to be developed as role models for others. It is important to ensure that there is no bias in respect of disciplines of learning. Bias should also not exist depending on the utilitarian value of the creative outcomes.

5. Celebrating Quality

The concept of quality is vital to any productive process, whether concrete or abstract. Unfortunately, several compromises are made both in defining quality or certifying quality either due to social compulsions or due to resource limitations. Pursuit of quality must be integral to any learning process so that it becomes a second habit.

Opportunities do exist in every pursuit of learning to position quality both in content and processes. This can be realised only if one has a right mindset to breathe quality in whatever they do. In an increasingly competitive and consumerist environment, the focus on quality will be significant in the future. It is important for schools to develop a generation of learners with the right mindset for the pursuit of quality.

6. Celebrating Values

Values form the core of any purposeful thinking and living. Understanding and pursuing values is the outcome of the wisdom of any evolved society. Understanding the role, implication and practice of values by any individual is critical to personal and social growth. Opportunities to engage with value propositions and practices in a school system is important for a healthy futuristic society. In a world haunted with competition where value as an instrument of righteousness is negated, it would be injurious to national and universal health. Plans and programs need to be put in place on a continuous basis to empower the learners with values. As such every discipline of learning holds values central to their heart.

7. Celebrating Heritage and Culture

Heritage is what a country passes on to its posterity as the treasure assimilated over the past. It introduces the learners to the struggles by which the past generations have unravelled the unknown vistas of knowledge. It puts the current generation on a more comfortable pedestal to travel towards the future. It helps to understand our relationship with the entire biosphere and the ecosystem. It helps to understand how acceptance and celebration of diversity facilitated to promote and pursue diverse perspectives and seek a common meaning to the diversity. Schools should open more avenues for celebration of heritage and culture so that the learners see the harmony as the undercurrent in diversity and conceive the 'one world' idea.

8. Celebrating the Planet

The proverbial statement, “In search of trees, the forest is lost” appears true in the field of education. The issues relating to global warming, depletion of the ecosystems, disturbance to the balance of nature, deforestation and resultant weather challenges seem to be creating problems to the very existence of the planet. No amount of education is sufficient to promote the urgency for saving the planet. In trying to focus on data and the irrelevant concepts which have no concurrent value, we seem to be handing over a half-dead curriculum to the learning community. The SDG 4 goals need to be realised without delay and hence the schools need to put in place appropriate plans for enriching this idea of ensuring a sustainable planet.

The vital issues enlisted above appear to be the most critical requisites for any futuristic educational process. With the new NEP in place, the time is ripe for envisioning the schools with a third eye. It is time for the schools to examine their processes rather than showcasing their examination results. ■

Unraveling ADHD

■ Dr.Nandini Mundkur

MD. Developmental Paediatrician

Dr. Nandini Mundkur is a developmental paediatrician based in Bangalore with specialisation in developmental disorder in young children, namely attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism, learning difficulty and behavioural problems. Dr. Mundkur has been in practice for over 3 decades and is considered the pioneer to develop this specialty for the Indian Academy of Paediatrics (IAP) and was the founder member of the childhood disability group of IAP.



She has developed an assessment kit for early diagnosis of developmental disabilities in children for paediatricians called the 'NM early intervention diagnostic profile', which is widely used in the practices by many.

Dr. Mundkur is the director of CCDD, which is a referral centre for developmental disorders. It has wide based referrals from south Asian regions like Maldives, Bangladesh, Nepal, Dubai and Sri Lanka, besides India. The centre has over 50 children in therapy and seen average of 400 new children per year. Dr. Munkur is also the director of International Children's Peace council which works on socio emotional learning in children.

What is ADHD?

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental condition that stands for 'Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder'. This is a medical disorder and has definite criteria for diagnosis. Doctors use the DSM-5 CRITERIA to diagnose it.

DSM-5 characterises ADHD by a persistent and pervasive pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interfere with functioning or development. 18 symptoms are noted in predominantly 2 symptom domains (inattention and hyperactivity/impulsivity), of which at least six symptoms in one domain are required for diagnosis.

Children with ADHD find it difficult to adjust how much they move and where they move, by themselves. They find it difficult to adjust how much attention they pay to what task and when. They also find it difficult to adjust what they need to do now based on what might happen later, because of their behaviour.

Self-regulation would be harder in places where routine and rules are less clear or are not followed consistently.

What is self-regulation?

Often the behaviour of children with ADHD may elicit comments like: 'lazy', 'no manners', 'takes advantage', 'naughty', 'attention is on TV', 'we constantly teach him to not do these things, yet he disobeys', 'he knows, he still does it'. When a child with ADHD appears lazy, naughty or disobedient, it is actually their difficulties in self-regulation that are showing up in different ways.

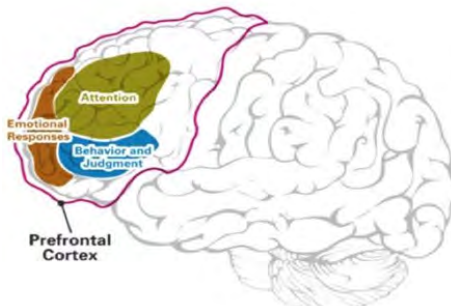
Sometimes, children who have experienced severe emotional difficulties may look like they have ADHD, but may not actually have it. Children with ADHD often feel motivated only when they are praised or given rewards immediately for doing something appropriate. They find it harder to motivate themselves with their thoughts.

Children with ADHD develop these skills slower than children similar to them in age and intelligence. They require skilled coaching by adults around them, to develop skills for self-regulation.

Why does my child have ADHD?

In children with ADHD, a part of the brain (frontal lobe) develops slower than in others of similar age and intelligence. This part is 'in charge' of concentration, waiting, stopping, planning, remembering, staying calm, etc. Because the 'in charge' is slower/weaker, there are difficulties in the functions regulated by this part of the brain.

If a parent has ADHD, there is a 50% chance that the child will have it. If a child's sibling has ADHD, there is a 30% chance that the child will have it. Whoever has it, it is because of the way their brain has developed.



Areas of the brain affected in ADHD

Examples of possible ADHD symptoms

1. Problems with Attention Regulation

- Not being able to pay attention for a period of time, especially while reading, doing paperwork or working on things that are repetitive and boring.
- Being easily distracted by sounds, sights and thoughts.
- Being unable to pay close attention to details, making careless mistakes.

- Hyper focusing and being unable to break focus and refocus attention, especially when involved in activities that are very interesting.
- Difficulty focusing and staying focused on the important thing rather than the interesting things. Forgetting to complete tasks even if they are common activities.
- Frequently losing necessary things.
- Poor listening skills.
- Tuning out while being spoken to.
- Difficulty staying focused while reading.
- Excessive daydreaming.

2. Problems with Hyperactivity

- Fidgeting, finger drumming, leg shaking, etc.
- A feeling of internal restlessness.
- A mind that races or switches focus frequently.
- Unable to relax.
- Talking too much or too fast.
- Craving excitement and seeking out high risk activities.
- Trying to do too many things at once.

3. Problems with Impulsivity

- Acting before pausing to think.
- Making impulsive decisions before thinking things through.
- Spending without first considering if it is wise to do so.
- Talking at the wrong time.
- Interrupting others.
- Speaking without thinking - blurting out things that are hurtful or rude.
- Becoming easily bored.
- Being reckless without considering consequences.
- Quick to react to emotions in unacceptable ways.

- Jumping from job to job and relationship to relationship without a plan.

4. Problems with Executive Functioning

- Difficulty doing the most important tasks first.
- Disorganisation - messy home, office desk and car.
- Procrastination - putting off doing difficult but necessary tasks.
- Trouble starting and finishing projects.
- Difficulty managing time - often running late and unable to complete work.
- Difficulty with planning.
- Unable to use past experiences and forward thinking when making decisions.
- Feelings of under achievement.
- Starting numerous projects but not completing them.
- Depending on others to organise and handle most of the household duties, especially paperwork.

5. Difficulty Regulating Emotions

- Reacting emotionally to a greater degree than others.
- Emotional outbursts.
- Impatience.
- Irritability.
- Difficulty staying motivated.
- Oversensitive to criticism.
- Becoming easily frustrated and unable to deal with frustration.
- Moods swings - excited and happy and then annoyed and down soon after.
- Angry outbursts.
- Anger can fade very quickly or continue longer than normal.

Often, children who are hyperactive, seem as if they are driven by a

motor. Children who are impulsive may appear to be impatient. They may appear to be careless or rude, answering before asked or have difficulty waiting for their turn.

There may be complaints that they interrupt without caring for the other person. Children who are being inattentive are seen to have difficulty starting new tasks, difficulty in continuing tasks once they start, and if they are distracted, they have difficulty coming back to it. They often appear not to be attentive to instructions given and appear forgetful, especially in repetitive and dull tasks. Children can also have difficulties in regulating their emotions and might get easily frustrated, get more emotional, and might find it difficult to calm themselves down.

One common observation in children with ADHD is their need for repeated reminders to complete even simple tasks. It is essential to recognise that this is not due to laziness, but rather a result of their impulsivity and susceptibility to distractions. Because of poor executive function, it is challenging for them to initiate tasks, follow through with plans or stay on track. This can lead to disorganised thoughts and behaviours, making it difficult for them to manage their time efficiently and plan their activities appropriately.

Emotional deregulation: Impulsivity, a core feature of ADHD, can also influence how emotions are expressed. Children with ADHD may blurt out their feelings without thinking, leading to impulsive reactions or inappropriate emotional expressions, which can affect their social interactions and relationships. Emotional deregulation can cause children with ADHD to have difficulty transitioning between different emotional states. There is increased emotional sensitivity to external stimuli, such as criticism, rejection or sensory overload. ■

...Part 2 in the January edition of the TeacherTribe.world e-magazine

My Struggle To Remember Names

■ **Prachi Lahiri,**
National Public School, HSR

As a middle and high school teacher, I teach seven sections a year on average. Each class has thirty students each. Therefore, in a year I teach 210 students. This is the arithmetic of only the scholastic classes that I go to. In addition, there are extra-curricular classes that I oversee like visual and performing arts, sustainability classes, etc. I really want to remember the names of each and every individual, but I cannot. I keep consoling myself that it is the large number of students that I handle every year that prevents me from remembering their names, but I know that it is not true. I forget the names of the children whom I have taught for more than two years in a row. I accuse myself of not paying enough attention to the children. However, I know that I genuinely make an effort to remember the children's names, but I still forget.

What could be the reason behind not remembering the names of the students that I teach year after year? Why do some names stick and others don't? A pattern emerges when I sit back and think about it. I realise that the children who talk and distract me in class are the children that I remember the most. I guess because they take a lot of my attention and disturb me that I must keep repeating their names. The second category is the children who are consistently involved in class discussion and participate in class activities. These children are willing to take up responsibilities and thus the teachers trust them to carry on a task diligently and in turn, grow dependent on them on a day-to-day basis and thus remember their names.

I wonder how the other children feel when I fail to remember their names! Do they get hurt? Do they care whether a teacher remembers

their names or not? Honestly, in my quiet time I do feel guilty for letting them down.

My struggle finds no solution, no matter how hard I try. If I remember the names of the children in one classroom setup, the next day the seating pattern changes. Or on Friday they come in a completely different school uniform, and they start looking different than usual. During dispersal time, they abandon their usual groups and hang out with their school bus friends and I get confused. There are multiple children with the same common names as Arnav, Atharva, Saanya, Mishika, etc. If that is not enough, there are rhyming and same sounding names in the same class, such as - Vihaan, Nivan, Vivaan, Vanya, Sanya, Sonya, etc. I feel I am fighting a losing battle.

The much-needed help is elusive because, while rummaging through Google, the methods suggested are not practical on a regular basis, especially while running from one class to the other. So many other things take priority, that unwillingly I push the job of memorising names to a later day. Unwittingly, the chores that have measurables for my performance like preparing lesson plans and question papers, finishing the portion on time, etc. take precedence. The bonding with children and investment of time for building emotional connection takes a back seat.

I am sure that I am not alone in this struggle to remember the names of the students and there are many teachers who can associate with me. I just wish that we teachers had more time to spend with the students, that we were not packed with things to do, where we could bond with each other and spend more quality time with each other. I wish I could make all the students realise that they are all important and they are all precious. ■

How To Talk To Children About Conflict & War?

■ **Ishita Verma | Team QEDRAK**

Educator

With 30 years of experience in the corporate sector and school education, Ishita is a sociology graduate, PGDCA and a gold medallist in Educational Management. Her true passion lies in being with children, animals and nature. She excelled at designing and implementing innovative and sustainability-driven curriculum for the students of the schools she headed and helped set up. Ishita has conducted several in-service training sessions for teachers and parents; sessions for the Gyan Sarovar Sahodaya Schools (Gujarat); as well as webinars, chapter reviews and chapter frameworks for Collins India.



Quintessential Educational Resources And Knowledgeware or QEDRAK is an Educational Solutions provider catering to the pressing emergent challenges faced by all stakeholders of the school education arena – Students, Parents, Teachers and School institutions. These form the 4 pillars of the company: QED-WIZ for kids, QED-SYNC for Teachers, QED-TIPS for Parents & QED-HUB for school institutions, providing exact need-specific solutions.

One of the most important roles that a teacher and a parent plays in the lives of children under their care, is to keep them safe and secure, especially in times of turmoil. When rage, conflict and war make the headlines, children see disturbing images on television, on the internet, at times on their digital phones as well. They may also hear things from friends, playmates, as well as other children and adults (worsened, like Chinese whisper, with each oral transfer), about what is happening in

society, their city, their country and in the world, including frightening possibilities about what could happen to them! Lately, viral forwards on social media of horrific videos on local riots, accidents, heinous murders caught live on video, war crimes and atrocities against women and animals, have created feelings of fear, stress, sadness, anxiety and even anger among children, across all age-groups.

Talking with kids about violence and world conflict can be hard, but it is important. The way real life unfolds is often not outside the Lakshman Rekha of the cocoon of bliss we have chosen to create for our children. We would be making a gross mistake if we were to believe that by not talking about it, our kids will be 'ok'. We would be making a bigger mistake to assume that conflict and war would never touch our lives so why talk about it! This is very similar to the taboo we see around, of (in general), families hesitating or absolutely avoiding openly discussing the nuances of physical expressions of affection or abuse. We must understand that knowledge is power, even in such cases. Well-informed means being well-guarded and being safe.

How much should one share and clarify?

Children grow and develop differently, including in their emotional and mental abilities to process images and information. Currently, across many homes, it is normal for parents to spend time watching the news and feeling emotions of worry, sadness and anger in times of war and conflict. While children have a right to know what's going on in the world, adults should use wisdom in how much detail to share. It's best to be honest and explain things based on the kids' age and maturity. Use age-appropriate words, watch their reactions and be sensitive to their worries.

- **Early grade school:** Keep things short and simple, like, "People are fighting and some are getting hurt." Things like visual displays may help them understand. For example, if they ask where it's

happening, you can show them on a map. End the talk by reminding them that the adults in their lives keep them safe.

- **Older kids:** You can give extra information but avoid graphic details. Children this age may ask more questions, and it's OK to answer them briefly. You don't need to tell them more than they ask. Sometimes kids may want to read an article with you, but make sure it's right for their age.
- **Teens:** Teens will likely know more about what's happening and may have strong feelings. Encourage them to share by asking, "What do you think about what's going on?" Let them lead the conversation. Then try to answer any questions they have. If you don't know how to respond to something, explain that the issues are complex.

What about access to news and social media?

Cocooning them completely really doesn't work, since the access to information these days is so varied and so quick. There may be a lot of scary stories and videos online when conflict happens. If kids are on social media, more of these are likely to show up in their feed.

What you could do for a start is that, for younger kids, you can block certain apps and websites; and for the older ones, talk about it with them and try these tips:

- **Defining limits.** You can talk about how tempting it can be to go online. But, explain that some photos and videos may be very upsetting, even for adults. So, tell your kids that you don't want them to have around-the-clock access – you would need to work out mutually agreed upon ground rules on what apps they can use and limiting time on social media. By installing an app to monitor screen time, you can keep check on what and how much of screen time your child is being exposed to.

- **Sharing with caring.** New age kids freely post things online, but some posts could be hurtful to others and even dangerous. Talk to your kids that videos, images and websites can cause strong reactions in people who are affected in conflict and war situations. Create a family/school culture of NOT forwarding or sharing anything related to violence (no matter how dramatic or exciting it may seem). If they want to post or repost something about a conflict that's not related to violence, they should seek your guidance and approval first.
- **Monitor & be available because you care, not control.** Remind your kids that you're there to support and protect them. If they see something upsetting, you want to hear about it and make sure they're OK. When you notice them watching something, ask if they'd like to chat about it with you. If kids want to stay informed, encourage them to follow accounts that you know provide accurate information. Also, as conflicts arise and news stories gain attention, be sure to check in regularly to see how children feel about the escalated/continuing war and conflict. Do they have more questions? Are they interested in getting your perspective? Do they want to clarify something they heard or saw?

Be alert about your child – whether s/he seems worried or anxious about what's happening, be especially aware of any changes in how they behave or feel, such as stomach aches, headaches, nightmares, sleepwalking, bed-wetting or difficulty
- **Pathways for good information.** To give kids a break from situations of news and views about conflict and war, bookmark some sites where they can find good news that's right for their age – like GK trivia, or new technology in cars/bikes/rockets, or what's trending in music and fashion!

What else can one do?

In addition to the above, one can be caring, supportive adults and offer a positive flavour to life. You may like to refer to these tips:

- **Spread care and compassion, not stigma.** News stories and images from war and conflict can stir up strong feelings, which can create prejudice and discrimination against a people or a country. When speaking with or around children, avoid labels and name calling, such as ‘bad people’ or ‘evil’ and instead use it as an opportunity to encourage compassion, such as for the families who have lost members or those forced to flee their homes.
- **Highlight the heroes and angels.** To offer hope, remind your children that many people are working hard around the world to stop the conflict/war and find peaceful resolutions. It’s important for children to know that there is good in the majority of people and that people are doing good for those who suffer from war and conflict. Find and share stories of helpers and heroes who serve and sacrifice for the benefit of those who are affected by war. Talk with children about ways they can help – like making cards/writing letters and posting them on social media. The sense of doing something, no matter how small, can often bring great comfort.
- Exemplify your clarification **with nature’s recovery after a natural calamity.** Children will be able to see that the order of the world does not support stress, conflict, disaster for long – there is hope in recovery and getting back to a better world, even if not the same. The indomitable spirit in man to improve and inherently seek balance, is also present in the earth, flora and fauna.

As you traverse this journey of talking to kids about conflict & war, bear in mind that children have different reactions to stressful events and some signs of distress might not be so obvious. Younger children may

become clingier than usual, while teens might show intense grief or anger.

Many of these reactions only last for a short time and are normal reactions to stressful events. If any condition prolongs, it is advisable to seek professional help to help the child come through without emotional scars.

Let your children know that you're always open to talking more. Just being present is a huge part of supporting kids during times of conflict & war. Being consistent and caring helps them feel protected. ■

Top 4 Must-Have Gadgets If You Are Serious About Exercise

■ **Dr. Vivek Baliga**
Cardiologist and Consultant Physician

Dr. Vivek Baliga B. is a consultant physician and cardiologist, and director of Baliga Diagnostics in Bengaluru. He is a keen advocate of patient education and loves to blog about all things health-related. Learn more about him at drvivekbaliga.com.



Technology has advanced a great deal in the recent years. Smart phones have changed the way we communicate, and have also become an integral part of our health.

With hundreds, if not thousands of different gadgets out there, we thought we would look for best top 5 in each category. We looked at factors such as user convenience, reviews on popular sites and affordability as we understand that complicated gadgets can sometimes get on your nerves!

Of course, we have listed a few for the tech savvy folk as well. Below are some cool gadgets that we think are the ‘bees knees’ when it comes to monitoring your health.

1. **Fitbit Charge HR Heart Rate and Activity WristBan**

This cool cat is currently ranked the best seller in Electronics and Gadgets on Amazon, and there is a reason for it.

This high performance wrist band has an automatic continuous heart

rate monitor that keeps an eye on how fast your ticker is ticking. In addition to this, it has an activity tracker that monitors your daily calorie burn.

For those who are serious about their exercise, this device can help maximise your training time too.



Some of the other features that the Fitbit Charge sports includes -

- PurePulse heart rate
- Auto sleep and silent alarm
- Caller ID
- OLED display
- Seamless linking with computer or phone app wirelessly

What's good about it?

Firstly, it is sleek. It is available in 2 colours that suit your taste. It is available in small and large sizes. The large fits a wrist of between 7" to 11".

Users have found the Fitbit Charge heart rate monitor to be quite accurate. The caller ID feature is quite handy, especially if you are a busy individual who finds little time to exercise and is interrupted when you get a phone call during your exercise routine (takes away the need for you to take out your phone from your pocket and swipe to cancel/answer).

The battery life is decent, and a full charge can last up to 3 to 4 days. Recharging is simple. The app integrates well with the product, and the analytics are decent.

The not so good part

Users have constantly complained about the poor accuracy of the step tracker. Since the Fitbit Charge is worn on the wrist, it often calculated movements of the hand as steps! For example, if you ride a motorcycle, then the movement from hitting a few bumps can be counted as steps. It does not measure blood pressure. A handful of people have noticed a skin rash after wearing it.

While it is resistant to your sweat, it is not waterproof, so don't use it in the shower or when you swim.

2. GOQii Life 6 Month Plan

This unisex tracker is yet another best seller that is described by company as the 'complete ecosystem to live a healthier and fitter lifestyle'. Armed with precision motor sensors and algorithms, the GOQii can keep tabs on your daily steps, active time, distance covered, calories burned and even 'karma points'!

The software works on all platforms – Android 4.3 and above, Windows Mobile 8.1 and above and IOS 7 and above. The app links to your personal habits as well, and assigns you a personal coach who will inspire the user to work at their exercise harder. These coaches are real life certified professionals who provide tips and guidance on health and wellness on a regular basis. We think that this is quite a unique feature that can be a boon to some.

The 'karma points' refer to the steps walked daily. As Mahatma Gandhiji walked 390 km for the Dandi march, the GOQii records 390 steps as 1 karma point. If you accumulate more points, that will convert to money that can be donated to a charitable cause! Quite something, isn't it?

What we love about it

The sleek design and the combination of black and red is a classic.

The coach service is unique and can be very handy if you need motivation to get off the couch. The karma points rock!

The not so good part

The tracker is basically a subscription service. If you stop your subscription, you are left with just a band around your wrist without the coach and the app. Some users have stated it does not integrate with older models of the iPhone.

3. Polar Activity Tracker

This cool custom fit bracelet can track your activity 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. It provides motivation feedback after each workout and tracks your total steps, calories burned and whether or not you have reached your daily goal.



A rather unique feature is that this tracker can detect 5 different levels of activity, and is able to differentiate between whether you do a simple, light walk versus whether you do a run. The app links seamlessly with the device and is available on the iPad, Android devices and most other devices commonly used these days. However, it cannot work with the iPhone 4. The data from each activity is downloaded to the app, but requires the owner to enter their weight manually every day along with a few bits and pieces of their personal information such as age, sex and height.

What users say

The LED array of the Polar Loop Activity tracker is visible even in bright sunlight. General reviews about the look of the product are positive. The battery life is good (around 7 hours) and is reasonably priced.

However, it only works with certain android devices, so make sure you have the right one before you dish out on this kit. The battery life appears to be lesser than other competitors and it does not have a heart rate monitor built in

4. TomTom Runner Cardio GPS Sports Watch

This is the bad boy amongst all the watches, and probably one of the more majestic, yet suave looking. It is best suited for those who are really serious about their running/exercise routine. With a strap that is available in different colors, the TomTom Runner Cardio GPS sports watch can record your heart rate in real time, which is a great tool if you wish to train in a particular heart rate zone. The large display shows time exercises, distance covered, heart rate and calories burned.

What users say

Despite the cost, users feel it is a must buy for those who are looking to make some serious upgrades to their exercise routine. The GPS feature is quite something. When compared to the Garmin, the watch is able to pick up the GPS signal a little quicker.

However, some people have found the back light a little dull. Occasional spikes in the heart rate may be seen even if the heart rate remains normal, albeit by a few beats. ■

'I AM PROUD TO BE A TEACHER'

Top 5 Winning Entries

■ Annie

Sunbeam School, Lahartara

Annie is a teacher at Sunbeam School, Lahartara. Her interests are listening to music and travelling. She has seven years of experience in teaching.



Being a primary teacher is an emotional journey that touches my heart in profound ways. It's about the tears of joy when a struggling student finally conquers a challenging concept. It's about the laughter that fills the classroom, the giggles over a funny story and the joy of watching kids be kids. It's about the countless moments of connection when a child looks up at you with wide eyes, full of trust, and believes that you hold the key to knowledge and understanding.

But, it is also about the tears that fall in private, the ones shed when a student faces difficulties outside the classroom, and you wish you could do more. It's about the heartache of witnessing the struggles of children who are dealing with problems that are far beyond their years. It's the lump in your throat when you see a child's eyes filled with fear, sadness, or frustration, and you wish you could take it all away.

Being a primary teacher is about the warmth of a child's hug, a thank you note with colorful drawings, or a simple "I love you, teacher" that fills your heart with an indescribable tenderness. It's about the knowledge that you have the privilege of being a steady presence in a child's life, a beacon of hope and support.

It's about the fulfillment of seeing your students grow, not just

academically, but as individuals. You witness the moments when they discover their own strengths, when they learn to persevere through challenges, and when they realise the beauty of being unique. Those moments fill your heart with pride, knowing you played a part in their personal growth.

The emotional aspect of being a primary teacher also involves dealing with your own vulnerability. There are days when you question if you've done enough, when you wonder if you could have made a difference in a child's life, or if you could have been more patient, more understanding. These moments of self-doubt and reflection are a testament to the deep emotional investment that teachers make in their students.

Being a primary teacher means forming bonds that often last a lifetime. It's about receiving invitations to high school graduations, weddings and hearing about the successes of former students in their adult lives. These moments are a testament to the emotional connection that forms between teachers and their pupils. It's also about the bittersweet feeling of saying goodbye at the end of each school year. You've watched these children grow, and as they move on to the next grade, there's a mixture of pride and sadness. You're proud of their progress, but you'll miss their bright faces and the special moments you shared.

The emotional aspect of being a primary teacher is deeply intertwined with the role's intrinsic rewards and challenges. The elation of seeing a student succeed, the compassion you extend when they stumble, the understanding you offer when they face difficulties, and the joy you find in their laughter - all of these emotions create a unique and powerful connection between a teacher and their students.

In the end, the emotional journey of being a primary teacher is a tapestry woven with countless threads of love, care and dedication. It's a journey that evokes tears of both happiness and empathy, laughter

and quiet reflection. It's a journey that touches the very essence of what it means to be human, to nurture, to guide and to inspire the future generation. It's a journey that fills the heart with an overwhelming mix of emotions, making it a privilege and a profound honor to be a primary teacher.

■ Kavitha Subramani

Vidyaniketan Early Years, Bengaluru

Kavitha Subramani is a kindergarten teacher at Vidyaniketan Early Years, Bengaluru. She has five years of experience teaching the little ones. She holds a bachelor's degree in commerce along with Nursery Teachers Training. Kavitha is a Level 1 certified Kuchipudi dancer. She is an active, creative, artistic and a multilingual teacher, who loves reading books, narrating stories and pencil sketching.



I am a teacher,
I play, I laugh, I dance.

I am a teacher,
I teach, I learn, I sing.

I am a teacher,
I touch their life, they touch mine.

I am a teacher,
I believe them, they believe me.

I am a teacher.
I inspire them, they inspire me.

CONTEST RESULTS

I am a teacher,
I narrate stories to them
They tell me their own stories.

I am a teacher,
I miss them, I am missed by them.

I am a teacher,
I long for them, they long for me.

It's the end of the year.
I start to yearn...

With heavy heart and tears in my eyes,
I bid goodbye to my sweetie pies.
I wish them to sore high.

We get separated...
We are scattered...

Its time again,
To roll my sleeves up and smile again
I stand tall with my head high.

Yes! I am a teacher...
A proud teacher!

■ Dr. Madhavi Mangat

Cygnus World School, Vadodara

Dr. Madhavi Dhanak Mangat is a medical professional by academics, an educator by choice and practice, and a writer by passion. Her diverse

pursuits in academics and professional life range from clinical medicine, marketing, CSR, writing, teaching and school administration in India and China. It has helped her gather experiences and stories to share. She hopes to share these and her knowledge with her students through her interactions with them. Apart from being an English Language Educator, Dr. Madhavi also trains students in public speaking, life skills, dramatics and writing. She presently works in the position of Secondary School Coordinator with Cygnus World School, Vadodara, Gujarat.



I am proud to be a teacher because I find my joy, purpose, fulfilment and salvation in being one. I can touch lives and make a difference in a way I never expected was possible. Let me begin with the joy of learning that I create and nurture in my classroom as an English language teacher. The way the faces of my students light up when they understand a concept or idea or lesson that I shared with them, gives me a different kind of high. When they participate in class discussions and not sit quietly till they get the concept completely, it is a small victory for them and me. And I look forward to it every single day!

I am glad that for those assigned minutes, that classroom becomes their space and mine- a place where we can jump from one concept to another. From a simple lesson in literature, we are able to create a whole new world together. We enjoy the class whether it is taken in the classroom or in their favourite outdoor space in our school campus; they love the discoveries waiting for us every minute. Not only that, they relish the freedom and space that my classes are able to give them.

In my class, I am able to create a place where we are allowed to make mistakes, where we need not know everything, where we can laugh

together, learn together and most importantly, grow together. It is a place where we can be ourselves with our set of imperfections and flaws. It is a place where we encourage each other and can take certain liberties with each other because we feel like a single unit together.

I think I am allowed some pride on behalf of this unit; I'm sure my students would agree! I love that I can be their go-to person through my sessions on Life Skills and through the role of the Middle school Coordinator. Yes, it is indeed a huge responsibility to be their confidante, their friend, philosopher and guide. But at the same time, it is also a relief that at least I can be there for them in whatever way possible.

One often laughs about the way one's office door and space does not physically suffice for one's students of grade 6 to 8 and some of the seniors who still come back to just hang out or talk... It is a heartwarming feeling to be that person that they can trust, to be that person who can make them feel like they matter and be that person who will not judge them. It is fulfilling that I was able to create that kind of rapport with them, develop that bond and earn their trust and faith. It does make me feel quite rich and blessed to be able to win their confidence and in some small way and help them out when they needed it. Many students have their own way of greeting me and connecting with me- through a smile, a blink, a gesture, a secret glance or simply a nod. Every bit of this makes me happy and proud. It gives me a sense of achievement and joy!

When I began my career with clinical medicine, I enjoyed interacting with patients in the clinics and wards and loved being able to add smiles to their faces. I'm glad that eventually, I switched to the field of education which was my destiny and my true calling. Here, I do not have to wait for anyone to fall sick or be dis-eased to be able to help them! I can catch every one of those precious smiles every day! Through the school, interactions with my team members and the parents help me to connect to a wider community. I am able to help them understand some

of the problems with a different perspective, or at times, realise that there is no problem at all! That feeling of having been able to help someone and indirectly having helped my students because of that transaction of positivity and good vibes, I feel happy.

It is a complete wholesome experience in itself; pride happens to be just one of the feelings in this package!

■ **Shazman Shariff**
NVPS, Bengaluru

Shazma teaches English and Mass Media Studies to high school students at NHVPS, RR Nagar. She is passionate about writing poems and articles, and often contribute blogs based on her teaching experience.



I am proud to be a teacher because I carry the trust of my students in shape of their problems, of their troubles and of their fears which they share with me, with a firm assurance that their secrets would be safe with me. A small clash with a friend, a perturbing misunderstanding with parents, an amorous entanglement...their minds carry the weight of a billion disturbing thoughts, which the adults may flippantly brush aside as balderdash; but for them these are serious concerns that would steal their concentration in the class, snatch their focus and leave them with a mind muddled and restless.

Apart from the academic transaction that happens in the class, the usual humdrum that revolves around writing lesson plans, planning activities, setting up questions papers, doing correction...for me, the realness of the profession lies in the communication that takes place between me and my students. If I take away the friendly conversations and the open discussions, then I am left with moments of dreary

teacher talk and usual blackboard work presented to a bored audience waiting for the show to get over.

The appealing makeover teaching has received at the hands of educationalist, now makes it a profession that proudly flaunts the attributes of a counsellor, a guide and most importantly, a friend. With such an enticing job profile that demands so much from me, wouldn't that be my sheer incompetence if I restrict myself to the textbook lesson with no care to go beyond and unleash the thousand thoughts and ideas that unfurl in the minds of my students? I deal with individuals who are discovering, aligning and shaping their perspective towards the world and people. They, with their newly acquired multiple curiosities - a gift of adolescence- are trying to find their niche in this world which offers tantalizing distractions. Aren't they like wide-eyed children in a candy store, trying to mask the utter bafflement with a pseudo confident smile that people like us can easily detect with our experienced eyes. Their innocence makes them vulnerable and they at times end up making wrong decisions- it could be trusting someone too much, giving priority to things that can be pushed at the bottom of to-do list, nurturing obsessions entailing considerably harmful results...the spectrum of bad decisions is stretched out wide.

I must realise their decisions making skills are under construction that would go on for some more years, and at the same time their stress and emotion management skills can be summed up as work in progress; in this precarious situation, all I can offer is a patient hearing, bereft of judgement and make them feel lighter till they burden themselves again. Their mistakes, mood swings appear unforgivable sins but if you just tear yourself away from the doctrine of morality that adults embrace after their fair share of misdoings, and step into the shoes of these young adults, then you will know the true meaning of empathy. The faith they repose in you is your prized possession earned with unfractured, unfragmented and undivided trust that forms the very foundation of the student-teacher relationship.

■ Smita Singh

St. Kabir Indian International School, Vadodara

Smita is a teacher with a rich, 12-year tenure as a Social Science teacher at St. Kabir Indian International School, Vadodara, Gujarat. Her noteworthy achievements include serving as the Coordinator for the British Council International Dimensions, earning an award in 2021-2022, and holding the position of Head of the Social Science Department for the past 8 years. She has excelled in monitoring, leading, training and managing teachers while spearheading the department's research, planning and goal setting. She is passionate about innovative and creative teaching methods and focuses on fostering an engaging learning environment.



The Joy of Being A Holistic, Child-Centric Educator

Hi! My name is Smita Singh and I teach in St. Kabir Indian International School, Chapadh, Vadodara, Gujarat. For over a decade, I have embarked on a transformative journey—a journey that transcends the boundaries of time and place. This journey has been my life's calling, my passion and my ultimate source of pride. I am not just a teacher, I am a holistic, child-centric educator, a guardian of dreams, and a shaper of futures. Today, I invite you into my world, a world of innovation, creativity and the celebration of the child at the heart of it all. I am proud to be a teacher because...

Unleashing Curiosity

In my classroom, curiosity is not just encouraged; it's celebrated. We embark on such activities where students don the hats of explorers, scientists and investigators. They question, they experiment and they immerse themselves in the mysteries of knowledge. It's a place where

answers are less important than the journey of discovery.

Empowering Through Choice and Personalisation

The best holistic, child-centric education recognises the uniqueness of every child. I empower students to choose their learning journeys based on their passions and interests. Whether it's diving deep into the world of art, delving into the sciences or unravelling the mysteries of history, students take ownership of their learning.

Holistic Development As The True Measure Of Success

Academic achievement is just one facet of success in child-centric education. 'Balanced Growth' is the essence of my classroom. It's not just about learning; it's about nurturing emotional intelligence, creativity, problem-solving and social skills. We practice mindfulness, collaborate on real-world projects and graduate as well-rounded individuals. Diversity is a treasure and child-centric education celebrates it. I enable the students to explore various cultures, traditions and perspectives. Through this, they learn not only to appreciate differences but to celebrate them. The classroom becomes a place where every background is valued.

Leveraging Technology For Enhanced Learning

In the digital age, technology is more than just a tool; it's a gateway to boundless knowledge. I let the students to a world of virtual exploration. They engage with interactive simulations, collaborate with peers and access a wealth of information, making learning interactive and dynamic.

The community becomes an extension of the classroom in child-centric education. I involve my students and parents in collaborative projects. This initiative nurtures a sense of civic responsibility and strengthens the

bond between the school, the home and the community.

Stewardship Of The Environment

The environment is not just our classroom; it's our responsibility. I enhance students into guardians of the planet. They don't just learn about environmental issues; they actively engage in projects to address them. Tree planting and sustainability education make them advocates for a greener future.

Learning Beyond Classroom Boundaries

The world is our classroom and every experience is a lesson. I encourage my students to step out of their comfort zones and explore the world. From museum visits to outdoor adventures, students learn not only about the world but also about themselves.

The True Essence Of Being A Teacher

My pride as a teacher is not in the knowledge I impart, but in the transformation I witness. It's in the sparkle of curiosity, the blossoming of creativity and the deepening of empathy I see in my students. I am not just a teacher; I am a guide, a mentor and a cheerleader in the incredible journey of self-discovery.

In conclusion, my pride as a teacher is rooted in the commitment to the principles of the best holistic, child-centric education. I am not just a teacher, I am an advocate for innovation, a believer in creativity and a custodian of dreams. I am dedicated to lighting the path for the stars of the future. As the torchbearer of this philosophy, I am committed to nurturing the potential within each child, recognising the unique constellation of talents and dreams within them. It's the child at the heart of it all that makes every moment, every challenge and every triumph as a teacher profoundly rewarding and truly special. ■

We Recommend App - Calm

Calm is a mindfulness app that offers a range of activities to help users relax after a strenuous day. The app includes meditation practices and calming sounds to de-stress the user.



Features:

- The app features calming exercises such as breathing techniques and meditation techniques.
- It also offers music, soundscapes and stories to help listeners fall asleep and 'calm' the mind.
- It is easily accessible through mobile devices.
- The app features a large content library listeners can choose from.
- One can avail its features with many time-friendly options, ranging from 90 seconds to 30 minutes.
- The content library includes categories such as guided meditations, sleep stories, wisdom stories, music, soundscapes such as ambient noises, breathing exercises, short moving meditations and yogic stretches.
- The app also features a section called the 'Daily Calm' that provides a 10-minute dose of meditation each day.
- It also features a 'check-in' section wherein users are provided with journal prompts.
- Calm is a 'freemium' app that is the app provides free as well as paid premium content.

How does it help teachers?

- Calm can help teachers decompress and relax after a long day.
- It can help manage levels of stress and rejuvenate oneself. ■

Financial Literacy For Our Children

■ VARSHA PRASAD

Editor, TeacherTribe.world



I recently saw a few kids of ages 5 and 6 visiting bank on a field trip from their playschool. It was a very cute sight to watch all of them interacting with the bank employees, exploring the vaults (lockers), touching and feeling different notes and coins, and understanding different denominations. I was pleased with the playschool's initiative to take these young learners to a bank to expose them to basic things in the world of finance.

On the other hand, a few months ago, I saw an elderly lady in the bank who was visiting the bank for the first time. She wanted to take out money from her late husband's account and did not know what to do or whom to contact for help. She was walking around the bank with a passbook, clueless on the next step.

I pondered how important financial literacy is, for people of all age groups. A few decades ago, money management was necessary once a person started earning. Pocket money or handling money was restricted to people of the higher age group. But today, in this fast-paced world, learning about money and money management has become crucial. Today, people of all age groups, including children in primary school, deal with and handle money. This said, many adults, even today, are poorly informed about investments, saving money and financial management, making education in this field very important.

Why is it important?

Financial Literacy does not only mean investing money somewhere, saving it for future use, taking loans, etc. It is also about learning how money works in society, understanding basic terms and jargon, information on financial concepts, and being aware of what is the right thing to do. Teaching this from an early age helps children understand the importance of money and gives them a chance to start saving from an early age.

What is the role of schools?

Schools, apart from parents at home, need to take up the responsibility of enabling children to adapt and deal effectively with the challenges and demands of life. Thus, teaching life skills at a school-level becomes important. Finance education becomes a part of this overall umbrella.

Schools can -

1. Have dedicated sessions or classes on basic finance management.
2. Organise field trips to banks and financial institutions.
3. Have workshops and seminars on the topic.
4. Let students of higher classes learn budgeting and handle finances for their events and fests.

At home, parents can involve children in day to day activities like shopping, allotting money for expenses, saving money earned by children, etc.

What can teachers & parents do?

Teachers and parents can become students' first example.

1. Teachers can involve students in planning and managing finances of events and programs in class and school.

2. Both parents and teachers can talk to children about the importance of knowing about money, and expose them to finance jargon.
3. Make learning about finances fun, by making it activity-based.
4. At home, parents can involve children in day to day activities like shopping, allotting money for expenses, saving money earned by children, etc.
5. Opening a bank account using the money saved.

At the end of the day, children need to know, starting early, that money is one of the most important things in life. Knowing how to handle and save money, make smart decisions and act responsibly with money, is the key.

Do you wish to share your experience with financial literacy in school? Write to me at varsha@greycaps.com. ■



Varsha Prasad

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Varsha Prasad is leading TeacherTribe.world initiative from Greycaps Knowledge Tribe, exclusively for teachers, as its Editor. She is also the Editor of TeacherTribe.world magazine. It is created by Greycaps Knowledge Tribe to celebrate the contributions of our teachers. She has played a vital role in creating many products, which ignite the curiosity of children, including the Global Awareness Program, also known as GAP in schools.