
Letters to the Editor

Parents Opinion on Pre-Primary Education

Pre-primary and primary education are fast advancing in India. Pediatricians, educationists, psychiatrists and child psychologists feel that the present system of Kindergarten (KG) education needs modification. This study was undertaken in 3 matriculation schools in Kumbakonam to evaluate the parents opinion in this context. A total of 281 parents of KG children were interviewed. Of these, 144 (51.2%) children were in Lower KG and 137 (48.8%) children were in Upper KG. One hundred and seventy one (60.9%) children were less than 4 years of age 164 (58.4%) were first born and 72 (25.6%) were second born. About 75% of parents were less than 35 years of age. With respect to educational qualifications of parents, 31 (11.1%) had technical qualification, 13 (4.0%) were teachers, 114 (40.6%) had college level education and 100 (35.6%) had completed school final education. Majority of parents (97.9%) felt that the present pattern of pre-school education is correct. 265 (94.3%) wanted home work, 272 (96.7%) wanted examination, 266 (94.6%) wanted marks and ranks, 177 (62.9%) wanted physical punishment and 235 (83.6%) wanted written punishments. 7.5% parents wanted private tuition for KG children, 12% want -

ed more home work, 3 (0.9%) parents wanted to reduce school bag burden and to avoid western uniforms. 3 (0.9%) parents wanted co-curricular activities and improvement of general knowledge and 7.5% parents felt that teacher should be very strict and children should have a fear about teachers.

Age, sex, birth order, class of the child, educational and socio-economic status of parents did not influence their views. Teacher mothers also insisted on home work, tests, ranking, marks, punishments and less play time. The results are depressing because they are not in accordance with the National Policy on Education, National Council of Educational Research and Training norms, Yashpaul and other Committees' suggestions on pre-schooling and primary education, and also the UN Convention of Rights of Children. The parents need to be educated about the potential harms of pre-primary education. The recommendations of the IAP Sub Committee on Pre-School Education(1) need to be propagated.

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