

Freedom is not about doing whatever you want, whenever you want. A child has to understand this as much as an adult. Children are not born with a sense or understanding of social ownership. They assume whatever they like or want, is for them to have. If they don't like something, away it goes! As a child grows s/he learns the norms of society, some of them – the hard way!

As parents and teachers we want our children to be 'happy', to be 'free', to not to be 'burdened' or 'tensed'. We also want them to be safe, healthy, wealthy, bonded well with friends and family. In the midst of all that we want for our children, the question of 'freedom' comes up again and again – to allow or not to allow, to forbid or not to forbid, to help or not to help...?

Freedom needs to be deeply understood if it is to be lived. If we are to come anywhere near true and lasting happiness then we have to free ourselves from the traps of the mind. We also have to try to make our children aware of these traps. A tall, tall, tall order!

If we ask our children to step back often and think of the consequences or how others may be affected by our actions it may help us and them. Avoid preaching, encourage introspection. Like the other day...

I was walking around the central lawn, when a little girl (about four years old) bending over something her friend was holding. Quickly two other children got curious and started peering over.

'What is it?'



'I don't know.'

By this time I too was curious and wanted to see, just then one of them asked,

'Didi, what is this?'

(Our children seem to think that adults are omniscient!). I get close and see a dry leaf some insect on it, I remove

my specs and realize...

'It's a caterpillar!' (Phew! I knew this one!)

'What's a caterpillar?'

'A baby butterfly... It will build a cocoon, a kind of house around itself, grow beautiful wings and fly away!'

'I'm going to take it home in the bus with me!' the little girl announces.

'No you can't, I found it first!' the boy holding the leaf asserts.

'I saw it first and told you, so it's mine! I'm going to take it home with me!' a final verdict is delivered!

PAUSE...

What would you do as an adult? Would you let them fight it out and sort it out themselves (leaving the caterpillar to its fate?). Play Solomon and pronounce judgement? Give it to the little girl? The boy? Neither? Tell them to take turns to keep it? Tell them to put it on a bush and go home even if they sulk and long?

PAUSE AND REFLECT...

This is what happened with us. I asked the little girl who was still adamant...

'Where did you find the caterpillar?'

'Near the Champa tree!'

'Why do you want to take it home?'

'Because I like it and I'll take care of it and watch it grow wings.'

(I take a deep breath here.)

'You know I really like you. I think you are lovely. So I will take you to my house and take care of you too... Umm... how do you think your mummy will feel?'

There was a decided pause. I looked at her beautiful and pensive face as she reflected.

'She will feel sad... I will put the caterpillar back on the Champa tree.'

And she did!

Freedom comes from understanding, compassion and awareness of oneself and the other. It is neither selfish nor unselfish, it is a state of deep awareness. It frees one's mind through a resolution and not through force or mechanical conditioning. In a sense, freedom is a journey and a destination... it's always worth it!



Display Day

A visit to AMIS on 6th February and you would have guessed that there was a big event coming up the next day. The entire AMIS family was seen planning and preparing for the much awaited **Display Day** (7th February).

Kindergarteners are often considered playful and carefree. But within them lies a gush of creativity and this was well tapped by the diyas. The children's painting and tracing abilities amazed the viewers - every class room was beautifully decorated with their handiwork.

The aroma of sandwiches took the guest, not to the cafeteria, but to the Math exhibition, where children applied the subject in day-to-day activities like billing and consolidating the amount of the sale. Guests, enjoying their sandwiches, had interesting puzzles to solve, while a poem on numbers was a surprise. Multiplication through straw activity was enjoyable.

At the Science exhibition one of the parents was heard commenting, "I learnt surface tension in 10th grade but these 8 and 9 years olds are explaining it so easily!" The creativity of children who made beautiful crafts from discarded things amazed the appreciative parents.

At Auro Mirra, every language is given equal importance and our regional language Kannada was well represented and enjoyed as children recited poems, quizzed parents on their Kannada vocabulary and displayed pictures of eminent poets.

Every corner of the Hindi exhibition had something exciting to offer guests, as they were warmly welcomed in our national language. The children entertained them by enacting songs at the rhyme and poetry corners. The recitation of Rahimdas and Kabirdas couplets delighted the audience.

'*Macavity the mystery cat*' at the English exhibition (enacted by the children), was thoroughly enjoyed by every-one. It was fun to watch parents read a tongue twister passage. Spell bee made them think about long forgotten spellings (blame it on autocorrect options). Hearing the children recite poems in different languages made the parents proud. The integral method of learning was evident throughout the Display Day.





Aircraft Museum

Children were flying with their imagination when we announced the field trip to “Aircraft Museum”. The pilots of Champa, Jasmine and Gladiolus groups took off from AMIS with much excitement and danced till the destination. It was admirable to watch the children’s expressions when they saw real fighter planes, helicopters, gliders, parachutes and engines. Their interest evoked a lot of questions - “Can we sit in these planes?”; “Who made them?”; “Why are they used for fighting”; “What is the name of this plane?”; “How can a small engine enable the plane to fly?”; “Where do we fill the gasoline for planes?”; etc. After their long stroll, the fish in the pond calmed their spirits and rumbling tummies were soon ready to gorge on the food. They were eager to share their goodies with their friends. They wanted to revisit the runway and were excited to see a helicopter hovering and few even commented, “It’s creating noise pollution”. The children thoroughly enjoyed the day and carried back cherished memories.



Places of Worship

“Are we going to the fields?” was the question asked by a curious ward when we announced to the Champa, Jasmine and Gladiolus groups that we were going on a field trip to different places of worship. If we ponder on the question, learning really is much like watching the fields where new crops arise, beaming at the world. The children were amazed to see different architecture and their receptive minds quickly embraced the different ways of worship. Some eagerly knelt down at Church, wore the turban at Gurudwara, applied ash on their foreheads at the Temple or bowed down at Mosque - while constantly questioning the significance. The religious leaders welcomed everyone with smiles and showered children with sweets, irrespective of religious background. The children returned happily to school, learning the importance of respecting all religions.

Learning is fun

In the beginning of the academic year, didis of Champa, Jasmine and Gladiolus groups wanted to make learning a fun experience. So every time the children felt thirsty, they had to spell the word W-A-T-E-R. The curious learners soon started learning the language of spelling. One day, a didi overheard a child asking her friend, “Does it feel nice to hug your M-O-T-H-E-R and P-L-A-Y with her?” The children started wishing their class aunty and didis, M-O-R-N-I-N-G!

Didi: Children, how can we remember the spelling of “u” in cloud?

Child 1: Didi, half of “o” is “u”.

Didi: Very good.

Child 2: Didi, if we remember five, we can spell “bee-hive”

Didi: Very good. You have correlated what you learnt in Math to EVS.

Kreedotsav



The primary students had been looking forward to “Kreedotsav 2014-2015” and zealously waited to set foot on the playground, beautifully decorated with hula-hoops, basketballs, tennis rackets and frisbee. The children looked lovely in their orange sports T-shirts. The event started with the brisk marching of children who carried placards showing their support for various causes like ‘Swachh Bharat’, ‘Eye Donation’, ‘Road Safety’, ‘Joy of Sports’, ‘Thank the Trees for their Countless Gifts’ and ‘Stop Child Labour’. Harvinder didi declared the sports meet open, which was followed by the oath taking ceremony by the children.



The individual and group races brimmed with energy as participants re-received constant boosting from family and friends. This kept the atmosphere great throughout the day. As they ran, jumped, and balanced their way through the various events, we realised that there were budding sports stars in our midst. The drill and pyramid displays captured the attention of the audience who applauded their extraordinary performances. The children were handed certificates in appreciation of their efforts by Rajanikanthji, Secretary of Aurobindo Bhavan, Harvinder didi, Yamini didi and some parents. Each child carried back the certificate as a treasured possession. Sports’ day is a great learning forum for children as it teaches them to stay focused, helps them realize their potential and the importance and value of working as a team.

“As soon as children find something to play, they lose their instability and learn to concentrate” – Maria Montessori.

The drumming was a wakeup call for the audience to get ready for the Pre-primary sports day “Kreedotsava 2015”. Children marched like little soldiers and reminded us of long forgotten games. Our childhood memories emerged where marbles, tops, catapults, hopscotch, skipping ropes, bows and arrows

were treasured toys. The benefits of playing these games are immense which no online games can offer.

Children represented the spirit of sportsmanship as they cheered for one another and stayed true to their oath. It was adorable to watch little Chrysanthemum’s team spirit as they ran with a focus. Drill by senior KG was remarkable. Excitement was in the air as they participated in races like placing the cone, gathering the balls, hurdles and hula hoops. The energy of the day never ended, though the Sports day came to a beautiful end.



Can it have an impact?

Auro Mirra believes that education without values is incomplete. Different themes were chosen for each month with the aim of inculcating the values through songs, skit, stories, sharing of experiences and quotes. We were eager to hear if it made a difference in their lives and interviewed a few of them.

Excerpts from the interviews-

Didi: Children, we've been having different themes throughout the year. Do you think it is helpful?

Tejas: Yes didi, especially the theme "Truth" inspired me the most.

Didi: Can you share how it was helpful in your life?

Tejas: It made me realise how others felt when I lied.

Didi: Can you share an incident?

Tejas: I had broken a window glass and blamed it on my little brother who is 6 years old. My mother believed me and started shouting at him. I felt very bad seeing my brother, helpless and sad. I realised how it made him feel and told my mother the truth.

Didi: That was very courageous of you Tejas.

Manvi: Didi, I used to be very talkative and found it difficult to be quiet. So when we learnt about "Peace", I decided to speak less.

Didi: Isn't it boring to keep quiet? How do you keep yourself quiet?

Manvi: No didi, it's not boring. In fact I like it. I think of the blue sky and how the eagle soars without flapping its wings. I enjoy thinking about it and it helps me to be in peace.

Didi: Do you think keeping quiet is being peaceful?

Manvi: No. That's not peace. Once my friends were arguing about a table. It was my habit to tell my friend if she was wrong. But I decided I am going to solve the problem without supporting or hurting anyone. I spoke to them saying that the table belongs to school and not to anyone in particular. My friends were able to understand and realize their mistake.

Rocky: The theme "Progress" has helped me the most.

Didi: What do you understand by the word progress?

Rocky: Not to give up and keep trying.

Didi: Did that attitude help?

Rocky: Very much didi, especially when I started learning skating. Though it took me some time to learn, whenever I felt discouraged I told myself not to give up and keep trying and now I can skate well.

Didi: Did it help you change the perception of what you thought of yourself?

Rocky: Yes, I want to keep trying and not give up easily.

Deesha: The theme "Courage" helped me the most.

Didi: So how did you develop courage? Did some story or incident impact you?

Deesha: Yes, Yamini didi always tells us to be bold and I have noticed that whenever she forgets to attend a meeting, she always takes responsibility for her actions and does not give excuses. So I decided to imitate her and take responsibility for my actions, even when I was tempted to give excuses for them.

Alaina: I learnt a lot from the theme "Truth", didi.

Didi: What did you learn?

Alaina: When I told my mother that I lied to her. I was surprised by her reaction. Instead of being angry at me she appreciated my decision of speaking the truth and started believing in me more. This made me take a decision that I will never lie to my family.

Didi: Do you lie now?

Alaina: Yes, but only when I am joking with my friends.

Experience of a Parent

Our daughters, Indira and Ishaani began their journey at AMIS with UKG and Nursery. Indira was an extremely introvert child, whom I have seen blossom over these 2 years into a confident, active girl. She required personal attention in class, as she was too shy to ask for doubts. Her didis made extra efforts to speak to her constantly to ensure that she understood. They have been extremely kind and helpful in her journey and I would like to thank each and every one of them.

Ishaani is an active girl who does not talk about school at home! So we get to know about her school life only from her didi during the regular Parent Teacher Meet. She started off in Nursery and was instantly taken into the love and care of her didi and Aunty. She never cried on leaving us, while going to school. That speaks a lot of how much she liked going to AMIS! She has graduated from Nursery to LKG and now going to UKG without us even realizing that she is studying. But when she speaks difficult words and sings some lovely songs, we realize that learning has been happening - only that we never felt the pressure of it.

Indira and Ishaani will definitely miss this school as we are moving to another city (even we would)!!

- *Ramakrishna and Pallavi*

My Journey in AMIS

The reason for which I joined AMIS was to learn and groom myself. Looking at the change in me from the day I joined, I feel that I am on the right track.

Nature plays a pivotal part in children's learning and witnessing the connection, enhanced my sensitivity towards the surroundings. I love to see a boy in my class running behind butterflies trying to catch them. It made me appreciate the time table of children which includes gardening. The children enjoy sowing seeds and are proud to talk about their little seeds growing plants.

The theme "Courage" helped me overcome my stage fear, which otherwise was a difficult task. Making arrangements for the assembly, preparing the children for compering, selecting costumes for Annual day and deciding the places for field trip have made me more creative and independent, which are quite contrary to my previous work experience, where I was told what has to be done.

The accessibility of authorities was easier and they were willing to give their time to clear my doubts and queries. I learnt a lot from my co-teachers as well and I strongly believe that all of us have a healthy relationship where we help each other always.

Looking back I realize that every single experience has added feathers to my wings.

- *Manmeet Kaur*



School reopens on June 1st 2015



Happy Holidays !!!