UNIT 2  ROLE OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS IN GUIDING CHILDREN

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2.1 INTRODUCTION

Young children at the elementary school stage interact continuously with the environment, ranging from home to school and to neighbourhood and through the media to the global environment. Society needs children as citizens to respond effectively and responsibly to the optimum the extent of their abilities in their surroundings.

From the standpoint of the needs of society, it is important to organise for the child an appropriate curriculum in which no one area of learning receives overemphasis at the expense of others.

Teachers and parents are expected to understand children regarding their developmental needs and the probable problems arising out of ignorance of parents and teachers to meet these needs. They should also be aware of the importance of providing the conducive environment to children for their optimum development.

2.2 OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- explain the need and importance of understanding the problems of children;
- list out various problems associated with physical and health needs;
- list out various problems arising due to non-fulfilment of social and emotional needs of children;
- understand the significance of providing conducive environment for the all-round development of children; and
- explain the need for improving home-school interaction.

2.3 UNDERSTANDING NEEDS AND PROBLEMS OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

The understanding of needs and problems will help in planning activities at home and school for promoting physical, intellectual, social and emotional development of children.
2.3.1 Physical and Health Problems

The normal development of child whether it is educational, social or emotional gets affected by the child’s physical conditions. Low academic achievement, learning disability or intellectual backwardness may be the result of defective hearing, defective speech, poor sight or lack of sleep. Children labelled by teachers as inattentive, lazy, disinterested or dull would definitely improve if teachers and parents recognize the physical deficiency and also plan some action to help such children. The improvement in the general health of the child is likely to result in increase in the child’s motivation, happiness and interest in school and other activities.

The teachers and parents should be familiar with the normal habits of their child’s age-group and should be observant enough to detect any deviation from the behaviour(s) that are usually expected. Watching children in play fields who have problems in running, jumping, throwing or catching is one way of identifying disabilities. Attention also should be given to children who show signs of abnormality like drowsiness, headache, paleness, sneezing, coughing, bad breath, discharging of watery eyes, sore throat, etc. These children require some medical help which could be provided by the school, if such facility exists or parents could approach local doctors.

a) Defective vision

Children having visual problems often show academic backwardness, emotional disturbance and lack of social adjustment. It is not difficult for teachers and parents to detect children with short sightedness, long sightedness, squint eyes, colour blindness, etc. One could suspect poor vision when a child shows lack of interest in work requiring good eyesight, confuses similar objects of different colours, screws up his/her eyes when trying to focus on words or objects, holds his/her book too close or too far from his/her face, is unable to differentiate figures and letters in reading and spelling, complains of blurred images, headache and fatigue of eyes. Children having these types of problems should be taken to doctor or eye specialist for medical help.

Teachers could help such children by making suitable seating arrangements so that he/she gets good light without glare, giving less writing work and conducting more of oral examinations.

b) Hearing difficulties

A child with a hearing defect is at major disadvantage in normal social interactions. Hearing defect may become the cause for dullness and inattention and s/he may be blamed for not obeying instruction or orders from parents and teachers.

One could suspect hearing problems when a child fails to score in oral examination, fails to answer when questioned, commits errors in carrying out instructions, leans forward when somebody speaks to him/her, turns his/her head to one side when listening, speaks in usually loud or weak voice or consistently withdraws from the group.

One could screen such children by holding a watch close to each ear in turn. A child with normal hearing should be able to hear the tick of the watch when there is no background noise.

The teacher can help the child having such difficulties by seating him/her in the first row in the classroom, standing near him/her while teaching and urging him/her to watch the lips of the persons who are speaking to him/her.

It is always advisable to take hearing defective children to ENT consultants or to the local hospitals.
c) Speech problems

Common speech problems are stammering, stuttering or lisp or aphasia. Speech problems may be due to either physical or psychological conditions. The physical causes can be malformations of the throat and vocal organs, nasal obstructions, and abnormalities in the structure of the tongue or cleft palate.

The details regarding speech problems with respect to types, nature, identification and remedial measures are discussed in Block 2: Dealing with Special Problems of the Course NES-104: Guiding Socio-emotional Development of Children.

Fig. 2.1: Demanding speech at a wrong time may check child's fluency

d) Teeth problems

Many children have dirty, unsightly, decayed teeth. Such teeth may affect the facial appearance and speech, which will result in embarrassment for the child, unhappiness and absenting himself/herself from school.

Teachers and parents could talk to children and influence them in keeping their teeth clean and have needed dental care.

e) Physical handicaps

Physically handicapped children require special attention of teachers. Crippled children may be having difficulties in using stairs; it is advisable to have senior class students to assist them. It is also desirable that crippled children are provided seat near to the door of the classroom. Games, field trips and other activities either in school or at home should be organised keeping in view the type and nature of handicaps. Extra help or services other than those that are absolutely necessary should not be offered, as they tend to create dependency and feeling of helplessness in the disabled children.
f) Other problems

One can find children with other kinds of problems such as nervous tension (symptom such as constantly repeated throat clearing, coughing, shoulder shrugging, neck twisting, restless movements of arms and legs), rheumatic fever, epilepsy, asthma, etc. Such types of children require a detailed diagnosis by doctors and appropriate treatment.

Children who are overweight or underweight as compared to normal children, should not be a serious concern, if they are otherwise healthy and participating in all curricular and co-curricular activities. But teachers/parents should be concerned with children who are continuously losing weight.

2.3.2 Social and Emotional Problems

a) Studying social relationship in the school

If individuals are social misfits during the elementary school stage, it is difficult to change at later stages. The social attitudes acquired during the earlier stage of life will affect throughout the life stages.

A child needs to experience a mutual feeling of warmth and friendliness with some of the children in his/her group. There must be at least one person who is his/her friend. Some times a child does not do well in examination or gets involved in some activities disturbing the class to get the attention of teachers and friends.

When children are not accepted socially, they react in different ways. They become diffident, shy, withdrawn and even may become aggressive. The child who does not have a friend and is timid, may often daydream, stay indoor, stand aloof while other children play.

The child who does not have friends or peer group to interact or play may feel that he/she not liked or wanted. Such a child may become rebellious and defiant toward his/her teachers and he/she may do anything to get the attention of other children and teachers.

![Fig. 2.2: A child who does not co-operate may lose friends](image-url)
Parents who do not allow their children to invite their friends or parents who are ambitious and always want their children to lead in the class at the cost of fun and friends, will often come in the way of social progress of children.

Families where there is a constant nagging, bickering and quarrelling among members may hamper the child's social progress. When parents compare the child with his/her brother or sister who is more gifted or talented, the child may feel insecure. The child who is not appreciated and accepted at home may become timid, withdrawn and afraid of larger groups.

Physical appearance makes a lot of difference to many children in making friends. Teachers may have to tell the children about the advantage of neatness, cleanliness and pleasing appearance in winning friends. Physical abnormality may become a disadvantage to many children socially. However, some physically handicapped children are very popular with their peer groups.

Friendships are generally based on similarity of interests, abilities or socio-economic background of children. A child who is slow learner or one who is gifted or talented or one who is coming from low socio-economic background, may find it difficult to meet others on common level.

b) Identifying the isolates

In any group, one can find a few children who are accepted and liked by their classmates; few children who are actively rejected and disliked by many and few who are simply ignored by everybody. But, the child who is disliked or rejected will not be aware of the reasons for rejection.

Teacher can identify children who take part in all school activities and also those children who are always left out. However, it may be difficult for teachers to identify such children who are not so obviously chosen or rejected. Teacher can make use of sociometric devices to identify stars, populars, isolates and cliques in a given group. For other details regarding sociometric devices, you may refer to the earlier unit of this Block. Teachers should allow a child to sit next to his/her best friend on occasions like his/her birthday or friend's day, etc. This will help in overcoming many problems.
Studies have indicated a direct relationship between social adjustment and scholastic achievement. It is the teacher's responsibility to try and help isolated children to gain acceptance in the group. An understanding look, a smile and a friendly pat from the teacher will have a positive effect on children.

The disliked or rejected can be helped by making them aware of the reasons and also planning and implementing some remedial programmes such as making groups consisting of disliked or rejected and popular children for various work, such as assignment during school day programmes.

c) Aggressive behaviour

Aggressive behaviour will become positive when it takes the form of ambition, initiative, enterprise and self-confidence. It will be negative when aggressive behaviour takes the form of hostility, resentment and hatred. Teachers and parents should make attempts to promote positive forms of aggressive behaviour.

Aggression is a natural, instinctive trait that is necessary to a certain degree. A child who is bold, persistent, takes initiative without permission and sometimes resists authority, may develop to be a stronger and dynamic personality, whereas a child who is quiet, gentle, does not quarrel, who has the admiration and approval of teachers and parents may not acquire the qualities to become a leader.

Rigid discipline, unreasonable demands, too much pressure to learn faster than he/she is capable of learning, tendency among parents and teachers to find fault with child's creative efforts or imposing things on children, over protection at home, or not
Getting attention at home and school work which is too difficult, etc., may result in child's hostility, tension, nervousness, rebellion, temper tantrums, withdrawal, indifference and other undesirable reactions. Hence, parents and teachers should try to understand the probable causes for their children's aggressive behaviour.

Studies have found suppression and repression of anger, fear, hate, jealousy and other emotions to be closely related to asthma, arthritis, stomach ulcers, high blood pressure, heart disease, pains in the back, neck and shoulders and other physical ailments.

Teachers and parents should help the children to release their emotions by playing with dolls. Children need many opportunities at school and home to sing, to play outdoor games, to use finger paints and to express their feeling through puppets, rhymes and dramatics.

Ample opportunities should be provided for children to play. Play has an important role in the development of the child. The details regarding the role of play in facilitating development and play as remedial measures in dealing with social and emotional problems are dealt in Block 2 of the Course NES-102 and Block 2 of the Course NES-104 respectively.

d) Other problems

The other areas of social and emotional problems like withdrawal, fear, anxiety, phobia which are discussed in detail in Block 1 of the Course NES-104.

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<th>Check Your Progress</th>
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Note: Compare your answer with those given at the end of the block.

1. State whether the following statements are true by a tick mark (✓) on the statement number letter:

i) The physical condition of the child affects his/her social and emotional development.

ii) The improvement in child's general health results in his/her increased interest in school work.

iii) The child who has hearing difficulty confuses figures and letters in reading.

iv) The child who has defective vision fails to score in oral examination.

v) Teeth defect affects facial appearance.

vi) The child who has speech problem avoids speaking in a group.

vii) The only reason for children to disturb the class is for getting attention of teachers and friends.

viii) For normal development, the child should have mutual feeling of warmth and friendliness.

2.4 PROVIDING CONDUCIVE ENVIRONMENT

Children generally encounter problems that are of concern to the teacher and parents. Many of these problems arise due to the non-availability of healthy and conducive environment at school and home for children's normal growth and development.

Children's problems

1. No one listens to me.

2. I wish I had more friends.

3. I am afraid of some things.
Also, one can often hear teachers and parents making statements about children. The common ones are the following:

**From teachers**

1. Fights all the time.
2. I can’t take any work from ........................................
3. I can’t spend all my time with these slow children.
4. Parents do not show any interest in them.

**From parents**

1. ................. always makes me angry.
2. I am not going to let these kids suffer like I did.
3. If only someone could help me to keep ................. out of trouble.

### 2.4.1 School Environment

**a) Teacher’s personality**

The teacher’s personality affects students’ behaviour, their relations with each other and their attitude towards learning. Children gradually adopt their teachers’ ideas, whether they are desirable or not. If the teacher is friendly and courteous, he/she stimulates thoughtfulness, helpfulness and consideration in the children. A good learning situation depends largely upon satisfactory interpersonal relationships, and hence the teacher’s personality is vital.

![Fig. 2.5: A friendly teacher can compensate bad home environment](image-url)
A teacher, like anyone else, responds differently to different persons. It is important, therefore, that the teacher be flexible enough to function effectively with all children, regardless of their appearance, age, sex, intelligence, socio-economic status and behaviour traits.

All children, especially the very young ones who are getting their first concepts of school life, deserve to have pleasant, friendly teachers who instill in them a love for learning.

b) Pupil-teacher relations

Effective teaching involves thorough planning and organization of learning materials, interesting and challenging presentation, teaching methods that are suitable for the children in the class and good techniques of classroom management.

Problems of motivating children, creating interests, seeing children participation and providing for individual differences never develop in classrooms where there are wholesome pupil-teacher relationships.

c) Classroom environment

Physical features of the classroom should be pleasant and conducive to learning. Apart from proper lighting, ventilation and placement of furniture that are basic, there are other essentials. Teacher should provide for attractive surroundings like bulletin boards, exhibits, charts, globes, maps and other intellectual stimuli.

Teacher should make a conscious effort to be more positive in their approach to make the classroom an attractive place.

d) Teachers sensitivity to children’s needs and problems

One of the most important characteristics of a good teacher is the ability to identify children’s problems and needs. When children are comfortable or at ease with the teacher, they can give their full attention to learning.

The good teacher does not place emphasis wholly upon academic achievement, but recognizes and appreciates many other types of abilities and leadership qualities in children.

When teachers are sensitive to the needs of children, they are quick to notice the ones who seem unable to excel in anything, who are afraid to talk in front of a group, who are too easily discouraged or who are consistently inattentive in class.

All teachers need to know how children grow and develop and to be familiar with the typical behaviours of each age level.

Teacher who knows something about the factors that have influenced the lives of children are better prepared to accept them without reacting adversely to their undesirable behaviour.

If the teacher knows that child’s annoying attention getting behaviour springs from the need for affection, that his/her day-dreaming is really an escape from unpleasant or intolerable situations he/she may find some way of relieving the underlying cause of the trouble. At least the teacher is expected to be more patient, sympathetic and understanding.

2.4.2 Home Environment

A statement has been made that “children bring their families to school.” When children arrive in school, they bring with them the values, the culture, and the language of their family. They tend to reflect the emotional and physical health of that family.

a) Parents as teachers and guidance workers

The responsibility of teaching and guiding children before they reach school age, rests with the parents. Even after the child enters the school he/she still spends much
more time under the direction of parents than in school. Obviously, the parents are extremely important in determining the directions of the growth and the kind of a person into which the child will develop. The impact that the parents and the home have had upon the child before entry in school is clearly affected as follows:

Generally, parents perform the role of teachers at the pre-school stage. When the child enters school he/she has acquired about 5 years of intensive education; whether it is good or bad depends to great extent upon how parents have performed this role. From here on, the education of the child is a co-operative undertaking by the school, the parents and the community. It must be based on a sound understanding of the growth and development of children.

Children continue to follow the patterns of behaviour, good or bad, which they have learned in their homes. If their early experiences have helped them learn to like and trust people, they will be self-confident and outgoing in their contacts with others outside the home. If they have been reared in an environment that has provided a wide variety of experiences and responsibilities and the freedom to express themselves, they are more likely to be co-operative, considerate, resourceful and self-reliant.

On the other hand, children from unhappy, inadequate homes are almost certain to show the effects in undesirable relationships outside the home.

Children whose parents are overcritical, dictatorial and demanding of great accomplishment, are likely to feel uncared and insecure.

Fig. 2.6: A good experience will be very conducive to a child to grow
If children are victims of overprotective mothers, they usually react by becoming either bossy and dominating or timid and withdrawn.

When parents are quarrelsome or nervous, the children learn to act in the same way. When the child's need to feel loved, respected, important and successful has not been met at home, he/she will try in one way or another to satisfy it elsewhere.

b) Factors (home) influencing the child's behaviour

i) Sibling relationship within the family seems to affect the school adjustment of the child. The only child sometimes makes abrupt adjustment when s/he enters school. S/he has not had the competition of brothers and sisters in the home and must learn to give and take with peer groups outside the home. The only child may enter school with a more adult vocabulary and reaction to things because of primary association with adults in the home. This may sometimes cause a teacher to overestimate his/her real ability because of the tendency to judge children against adult standards and modes of behaviour.

ii) Children from large families usually lack the material advantages of those of smaller families. They may lack the feeling of being unique individuals because of the very fact of numbers. Disturbing or withdrawing behaviour in the classroom may be a pointer to this effect. On the other hand, they may have gained experiences in working with others; they may have learned to share and assume responsibility and they may have learned to take initiative.

iii) Variations in ability among members of the family may result in behavioural problems. The child who is compared with a sibling in intelligence, physical qualities, sports, etc., may consciously receive the partial treatment of the parents.

iv) Adults in home grand parents, aunts, etc., may be included in the adult population of the home. In a home including grandparents, the child may be constantly in contact with varying forms of direction. The grandparents representing a generation different from that of parents may have correspondingly different methods of child rearing. The child may suffer due to these differences.

v) Parental relationship — physical and emotional distance. Parents may travel to earn their livelihood for shorter/extended periods depending upon the nature of their occupation. Children may thus not be able to see them everyday. Some parents are on their shifts and the family may get together as a unit only on holidays. Physical distance may come in the way of the parent-child relationship.

Emotional distance may vary with the family and with members of the family. But unlike physical distance, it may vary in a qualitative sense.

vi) Parents' expectations of the child. Parental attitudes towards the child, explicitly or implicitly indicated, probably form the greatest single influencing factor in shaping the child's behaviour pattern. Many things about the child may influence these attitudes of acceptance or rejection.

Children of very young parents or of parents well above the child bearing years face different environmental problems.

Parents with high intelligence, who have been able to achieve at a high level, usually expect their children to be successful. It is difficult for many parents to realize that their children may be less able than they are.

All children, in some respect, become a means of realizing unfulfilled family ambition or for maintaining and developing standards already achieved. Problems arise with children when the pressure of ambition becomes so strong that the child has little opportunity for exercising his/her own initiative.
The family is the most important factor in the development of children. The child who has secure family bonds is able to meet the requirements of schools and other agencies in the community.

Many factors like socio-economic level, siblings and adults within the home, parental attitude, ability of the child and parental expectations influence the child’s development.

2.4.3 Home-school relations

The home and the school are two major agencies that influence the child’s development. If they work together and there is mutual understanding, the child will profit. When children have problems and are being studied by the school, invariably the home must be brought into the picture. If the home is unwilling or unable to cooperate in working with problems, the school faces a difficult time. It seems that the better understanding the teacher has of the use of the time spent away from school, the better understanding the teacher will have of the child in school.

Parents and teachers should know each other as human beings with feelings, interest and abilities, and not as impersonal names. Both are interested in the success of the child. Working together as a team, they are much more likely to assure that success.

a) The functions of home-school relations

The major function of home-school relations then is to provide an opportunity for parents and teachers to work jointly for the welfare of the children.

To help both parents and teachers to know more about the children with whom they are concerned, one should try to answer certain questions. Some of these are: What are the characteristics of different age groups? How do individual children get along with their classmates at school? What is their relationship within the family? Some of these questions to be answered by parents, while others are better answered by teachers.

Parent-Teacher Association meetings, school and home visits and working together on school functions help teachers and parents become better acquainted and able to communicate with one another. Parent-teacher conference is one of the best means of promoting feeling of goodwill in the home-school relationships.

b) Report card

The marks on report card do not always convey the messages that the teacher intends or the results that he/she hopes for. Generally, report cards is used by parents as a means of comparing the child’s performance with the neighbours’ children which ultimately results in the punishment or reward to the child. Parents should be helped by teachers to interpret and use the information (marks) for discussing strengths and weaknesses of children, so that they can plan together for helping the child in weak areas.

If report card indicates unsatisfactory progress, report card should be supplemented by a letter. The letter should begin with a positive comment about a subject he/she has done well followed by suggestions for improving in other areas. Derogatory remarks and unfavourable comments in report card may destroy the possibility of good relations between school and home.
Check Your Progress

Notes: a) Write your answers in the space given below.
   b) Compare your answers with those given at the end of the block.

2. State the factors which contribute to conducive school environment:
   i) .................................................................
   ii) .................................................................
   iii) .................................................................
   iv) .................................................................

3. State the factors which influence home environment:
   i) .................................................................
   ii) .................................................................
   iii) .................................................................
   iv) .................................................................

2.5 LET US SUM UP

In this unit, you have studied needs and problems relating to two major areas of child's development, namely, physical and health and socio-emotional. You have also studied how each one of the problems will ultimately affect the child. Hence, there is a need to identify children with problems in advance.

An understanding look, a smile and a friendly pat from the teacher will make significant difference in dealing with socio-emotional problems of children.

It is important that both teachers and parents should make all out efforts to provide conducive environment (school and home) for the normal development of children.

The other units appearing in other blocks of this course and courses NES-102, NES-103 and NES-104 also provide guidelines for teachers and parents to deal with various kinds of problems faced by children.

2.6 UNIT-END EXERCISES

1. Discuss with the head of the institution (primary school) and write down activities which are considered necessary to improve the home-school relations.

2. Analyse report cards issued by the school and make your observations regarding the content, teacher's observations and information which are important but are not given in the report card.

3. Take the assistance of a school teacher (if you are not a teacher). Ask students of a section of 5th class to write down two names of the students of their section with whom they would like to sit in the class in the format given below.

   Name ..............................................  Class ..........................  Date ..........................

   Mention two names of the students of this class by the side of whom you would like to sit in the class.
   1. .................................................................
   2. .................................................................

   Analyse the responses and identify isolates and populars (you may refer to the Unit 1 of this Block for this exercise).
ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Unit 1
2. (i) e, (ii) b, (iii) a, (iv) c
3. (i) T, (ii) T, (iii) T, (iv) F, (v) F,
   (vi) F, (vii) T, (viii) T, (ix) F, (x) T
4. (i) c, (ii) d, (iii) b, (iv) c, (v) a

Unit 2
2. i) Proper lighting and ventilation.
   ii) Bulletin boards, exhibits, charts, globes and maps.
   iii) Placement of furnitures.
   iv) Attractive surroundings.
   v) Cordial teacher-pupil relationship.
3. (i) Values (ii) Culture (iii) Language (iv) Interpersonal relationship.