

## Performance for communication skills of children in Himachal Pradesh

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### ABSTRACT

A study was undertaken with a view to identify the developmental deficiencies in boys and girls with reference to communication skill development and to study the impact of intervention programme on skill development. A total of 1000 (half male and half female) children in the age group of 3-5 years were selected along with their mothers in each state. These children were subjected to age appropriate Winland Behaviour Scale for assessment of their skills. In order to select the children for intervention programme 20% of the low performing children were worked out in various villages. This sample having the lowest mean performance was further divided into two groups of 10% each, one group was given intervention programme and other remained as control for the purpose of comparison of intervention sample. There were half male and half female in each age group. Comparison of mean of boys to that of girls over the different age groups of 3.0 to 4.0 years, 4.0 to 5.0 years and in overall mean revealed that the boys were better than the girls in different age groups for communication sub-domain of socio-emotional competence of the children. which may be attributed to comparatively better interactions parents or care givers towards boys. Overall mean performance of the sample was  $96.6 \pm 12.66$  which was significantly higher ( $t = 28.90^{**}$ ) than the low performing sample with an average increase of 40.2%. The highest percentage of decrease in the sample for communication skills was observed in the village Banjar (54.4%) followed by Salooni (45.9 %), while the lowest decrease was observed in the village Barthin (32.0%).

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The involvement of parents is especially important for pupils with emotional and behavioural problems. Educational interventions with pupils with all kinds of behavioural and emotional problems have consistently emphasised the importance of involving families (Kamps and Tankersley, 1996) and parents of children who are receiving specific help have been shown to benefit from receiving help themselves, both by developing the parents' own skills and ensuring that the messages of home and school give to young people become more congruent (Middleton and Cartledge, 1995). Specific programmes to develop emotional and social competences have been shown in a wide range of studies throughout the world to work better where schools involve the pupils' homes and families in the process (Walberg, 1984; Haynes and Comer, 1996; Gettlinger *et al.*, 1994 and Ronen, 1994). For example, some schools have successfully asked parents to help pupils with assignments and projects which look at the applicability of social and emotional learning in the home context, such as communication skills (Elias *et al.*, 1997).

In recent years, it has become increasingly clear that social and emotional skills underlie all other areas of development (Shonkoff and Phillips, 2000). In fact early social and emotional competence are associated with continued competence and may help reduce the risks for

later problem behaviors. Attainment of positive social and emotional status has been shown to relate to important skills including communication cooperation and emotional regulation. (Schore, 2001). Routine care giving interactions affect children's social and emotional capacity by actually influencing the structure and function of the brain.

Intervention aimed at strengthening the parent-child relationship, reducing behaviour challenges and enhancing child and parent social-emotional capacities which exists in making communication effective. Examples include Interaction Guidance, Infant-Parent Psychotherapy (Lieberman and Van Horn, 2005), and the Incredible Years Curricula (Webster-Stratton and Reid, 2003). However, it is important to recognize that with higher levels of disturbance, change in parent-child relationships becomes more difficult to achieve.

### METHODOLOGY

A total of 1000 children (half male and half females) in the age group of 3-5 years were selected along with their mothers in 12 villages in different districts thought Himachal Pradesh representing the whole state. These children were subjected to age appropriate Winland Behaviour Scale for assessment of their communication skills (Sparrow *et al.*, 1984). In order to select the children