

Life skills education for social competence of primary school children

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■ **ABSTRACT :** Life skills are the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour that enable children to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Life skills are a group of psychosocial competencies and interpersonal skills that include decision making, problems solving, critical and creative thinking, effective communication and interpersonal relationships, coping with emotions and stress, self-awareness and empathy. All these skills are interrelated. Life skills develop on a continuous basis and are used throughout the life. Childhood is considered as a critical period in the life span of an individual, whatever is taught and learnt during this stage has long lasting impact in one's life. In any community, children face the odds in their life from the early years and throughout their life, hence, it is important to develop healthy life skills from the early years in order to develop social competence through interpersonal problem solving skills. The present study was undertaken in Hisar to promote interpersonal problem solving skills of 6-8 year old children with the objective to make them competent from the early years so that they can solve their day to day problems competently through critical and creative thinking and communicate effectively to develop healthy interpersonal relations and act as a productive member of the society when they are grown up. Intervention programme was provided to these children for a period of one month to promote their interpersonal problem solving skills. Results indicated that after exposure to intervention programme, there was significant improvement in problem solving skills of children.

■ **KEY WORDS :** Life skill education, Social competence, Primary school children

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The importance of learning life skills in childhood years is often over looked by people. However, life skills need to be taught early in children's life for them to become all-rounded educated persons. Without life skills education, children will not be able to apply what they have learned in school to their everyday life. Life skills are taught from the time a child is born, teaching these skills must continue throughout their academic learning experiences. During elementary school years most important life skills that can be developed are social skills. Teaching children how to share, wait for their turn, to be polite to others, and well-mannered are skills that can be developed during these years of education. Respecting their peers, playing together and working together in groups and helping one another are all life skills that children are taught in school and at home; however, these skills will help them throughout their life-span.

(Tyrer, 2010).

According to WHO, life skills are the abilities for adaptive and positive behaviour, that help individuals to deal efficiently with the demands and challenges of everyday life. Every school should provide comprehensive, integrated life skills education that can enable young children to make healthy choices and adopt healthy behaviour in their lives. The life skills cover a broad range of skills and include core skills and additional areas that can be addressed in a culturally sensitive manner. As described by World Health Organization core skills that are developed include decision making, problem solving, creative thinking, critical thinking, effective communication, interpersonal relationship skills, self-awareness, empathy, coping with emotions, and coping with stress. The additional areas in which a culturally sensitive approach is needed include goal setting, assertiveness, and negotiation skills.