

Muskan Foundation

Muskan Foundation's association with MDVI children started as early as February 2007, under the leadership of Mrs. Dipti Gandhi who perpetuated a new lease of life for children with multiple disabilities. The main objective of this venture was to bridge the gap in schools and education centers, which are usually not equipped to handle multiple disabilities along with blindness. Muskan Foundation aims to provide a spectrum of customized services ranging from early intervention, education, therapy, counseling and MDVI awareness. The foundation commenced its work with a small group of 4 children, which has swelled to 104 students in three centers and more than 200 children receiving regular therapy. (Taken from their official website)

Programs and Services provided -

Special Education Program

Early Intervention Program

Mother Toddler Program

Vision Rehabilitation Therapy

Physiotherapy

Sensory Integration Therapy

Occupational Therapy

Speech Therapy

Art based Therapy

Pre - Vocational Training

Set up of the Center -

The center was divided into about 5 rooms each with different class setups. One of the rooms had table and chairs used commonly. One room had chairs with removable attachments like straps to help the child sit straight and tables which could be fixed after the child sat in the chair for the children with Cerebral Palsy. One room had mats placed on the floor along with table and a

couple of chairs. They even had a computer in the room. The fourth room had a cushioned mats on the floor and a tub filled with balls used for occupational therapy. They had a rack full of different materials they used with the children teaching aids, toys etc. The center even has an outdoor area which has a swing and slide set.

Objectives:

To know about the setup of a special school.

To observe how teachers work with children with multiple and different special needs.

To plan and assist teachers to conduct activities with the children having different needs.

To understand the importance of the Individualized Educational Plan

To understand the challenges faced by the teachers/parents of the children with special needs.

Observation - Day 1 (August 28, 2018)

On the first day when we went to the organization we were made to sit in what was their occupational therapy room. The teacher from there introduced us to exactly what the organization does and how do they do it. She then showed us their teaching aids which were handmade. She explained it to us that the teaching aids they make they try to do it in such a way that everyone is able to get benefited from the teaching aids and even excess money is not utilized. She showed us their picture cards, their story books, their shapes books etc. We were then asked to go around and observe the children doing various kinds of activities. She told us that there were children with multiple disabilities in the organization. Multiple disability refers to a child who has more than one disability. As per the THE NATIONAL TRUST FOR THE WELFARE OF PERSONS WITH AUTISM, CEREBRAL PALSY, MENTAL RETARDATION AND MULTIPLE DISABILITIES ACT, 1999 , “Multiple Disabilities” means a combination of two or more disabilities as defined in clause (i) of section 2 of the Person with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 (1 of 1996). According to Individual with disabilities education act (1990)(IDEA) in the USA a child is considered multiply handicapped if she/he has two or more handicapping condition that require educational attention which cannot be met by arrangement for single disability. Muskan Foundation works with

children having Multiple Disabilities with Visual Impairment(MDVI).The National Trust Act has included and given a comprehensive description of this condition, which includes

Deafblind (visual impairment + hearing impairment)

Visual impairment + hearing impairment + mental retardation

Visual impairment + mental retardation

Cerebral palsy + mental retardation / hearing / speech / visual problem

We then dispersed seeing various children working with various teaching aids.

Observation - Day 2 (September 04, 2018)

On the second day we went in another time slot and observed different children. The part which stood out for me that day was that everyone was made to sit together with the teachers and they tried to make it a fun time for everyone. They were putting dabs of talcum powder on the hands of the children and asking them to smell it. To feel the texture of it. Similarly they did it with lemons and coffee powder. They also brought a perfume and sprayed it on each child's hand. The next thing they did was they played some music and everyone started dancing to it. It was however observed that some children during the circle time were not able to get the attention of the teachers most of the times. They were no doubt having fun but it was only amongst them. Then after the circle time we dispersed. The children sang the national anthem and went off home for the day. Some went in a van some had their parents or relatives come pick them up.

Observation - Day 3 (September 11, 2018)

On the third day when we went to the organization the children were a little less. We observed the children with whom we were going to conduct the activities the next day. They had ADHD. We observed them playing with the blocks one child made something similar to the telescope and then would hold it in his hand and try seeing through it, when we would copy him he would erupt in giggles. He was then given a puzzle to do. But the child was not in the mood to do it so he simply was either talking to the other child sitting there or to the teacher, after a bit of coaxing she was able to ask him to do a little of it. But then the child was clearly not in a mood to do the activity so the teacher suggested him to put his head down and sleep for some time. It was observed that the child had a habit of getting really loud at times and get what people would call

as “hyper” The teacher in such cases would simply rub her hand over her palm and say softly. The child would immediately understand and lower down his volume. He then slept for a while, woke up and then did another activity which was a colouring activity. A paper with a square drawn was given to him and he had to fill it with colours. It was observed that the child had understood the concept of colours, shapes, and numbers to a large extent.

Observation and Conduction of Activity - Day 4 (September 18, 2018)

The activity chosen to do with the child was a block matching game. Since the child already knew the basics it he was able to do it. The main objective of the activity was to see if the child was able to do the activity when portrayed in a different way. The child when playing with the blocks clearly showed that he knew what he was doing and was not doing it just out of habit.

The next activity planned for him was the creative activity, since everyone was doing their hand prints he wanted to do it as well. He sat in the chair and waited patiently for us to get the paints and the paper. He chose his favorite colour blue. I helped him paint his hand and we took a print of it. He knew exactly how to position his hand and press with his other hand so that the print comes in a good way.

The other activity he was asked to do was the counting activity. The blocks were kept in front of him he would count but he would sometimes miss one and other times he would count the same block twice. He still had some confusion with the concept of numbers.

Then they had their snacks and sang the national anthem and then they went off to their home.

Individualized Education Plan

When asked about their I.E.P, the teacher explained that An Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written statement of the educational program designed to meet a child's individual needs. Every child who receives special education services must have an IEP as per his/her individual needs, style of learning, grasping capacity. The IEP has two general purposes:(1) to establish measurable annual goals for the child; and (2) to state the special education and related services and supplementary aids and services that the public agency will provide to, or on behalf of, the child. When constructing an appropriate educational program for a child with a disability, the IEP team broadly considers the child's involvement and participation in various areas as listed below

Fine Motor

Gross Motor

Communication/ Language Skills

Concept development/cognition

Academics

Reading

Writing

Arithmetic

Socialization

Orientation and Mobility

Spatial awareness

Sensory Awareness

Pre vocation

| Muskan Foundation | |
|--|--|
| Goregaon Centre | Tenement No 20/77, Ground Floor, Goregaon Yeshwant Nagar Co-operative Housing Society Ltd., Yeshwant Nagar, Off S. V. Road, Goregaon (West), Mumbai 400062. Phone No. +91 7506094898 |
| Bandra Centre (Administrative Office) | 15 Prashanti, Opposite MHADA Building, near Matoshree Bungalow, Kalanagar, Bandra (East), Mumbai 400051. Phone No. (022) 26592745, +91 9930386115, +91 993018106 |
| Sahabhaav (Old Age Home) | Nirman Vihar, R.J. Road, Pump House, Andheri East, Mumbai – 400093 Phone No. 9699696997/7777079797 |