



The Balwadi Social Vision

Introduction

Balwadi is the most important part of a learner's Hunar Ghar experience. It is when they learn the code and conduct of being a Hunar Ghar member and it defines the expectations of their interactions with Hunar Ghar for the decade that they will be with us.

In balwadi, we want our children to be full of wonder. We want to create an environment where our children feel protected and looked after, so they are not afraid to make mistakes, to explore and to expand their curiosity of the world around them.

We want our children to be aware of others and the environment around them. We want them to treat others as they would wish to be treated, to respect the environment and take responsibility for their actions.

We want our children to be healthy and happy. We want them to keep themselves clean and tidy, to be able to identify and respond to their feelings and to always try their best.

Balwadi provides the foundation a child needs to succeed at Hunar Ghar. Children joining balwadi are young; there are many aspects of their personal and social behaviour that are still undefined. It is the responsibility of balwadi, therefore, to not only teach the required literacy and numeracy basics, but also to prepare our children emotionally and mentally for the next stage in their academic journey.

This document aims to set out the balwadi social vision and the role of the balwadi teacher in this vision. Clear activities can be specified that help a child learn to count to 10, but much less so for teaching them to be courteous and considerate. This document therefore is a guideline of how the balwadi teacher can implicitly incorporate Hunar Ghar values into the daily activities in balwadi.

Hunar Ghar Values

- Be inquisitive and explorative in your learning
- Be self-experimenters
- Be attentive and interested in classroom activities
- Be able to meaningfully care for themselves
- Look after and respect other people
- Look after and respect materials
- Continue to learn to love learning
- Continue to learn to try hard and persevere
- Be interested in the world around you
- Feel safe and looked after
- Be able to come to school in a manner where you are able to learn

Outcomes

Creativity and Curiosity

We want balwadi children to:

- Use creative thinking and creative approaches
- Take initiative as they explore the world
- Embrace trial & error
- Be ready to have a go



Young children naturally possess curious and creative minds. In balwadi we want to develop this ability to think creatively and to encourage their imagination. Doing so will teach our children to come up with innovative solutions when faced with unexpected situations and challenges.

How to achieve this:

Provide opportunities to create

In order for our children to develop as creative thinkers, we need to provide them with opportunities to create. Balwadi should be filled with physical objects – blocks, string, tiles etc. - that can be used for building, designing and creating.

Ask Questions

We want to nurture our children's creative thinking and curiosity through asking 'what if' questions, rather than giving direct instructions. We want to encourage them to observe and wonder about the world around them.

Through encouraging exploration through trial and error, we want our children in balwadi to learn to not be afraid of failure and to be always willing to try again.

Use play as a learning tool

Children learn through play. We want our children in balwadi to have the freedom to explore their curiosities and extend their knowledge of the world through unstructured play times. By having the freedom to explore, our children learn cause and effect, the benefits of trial and error and the give and take of relationships with others.

Reflect in Closing Circle Time

Reflection is also an important part of the creative process. We want to encourage our children in balwadi to reflect on what they learn each day through Circle Time and through displaying their work around the classroom so the children can physically look back at what they have done.

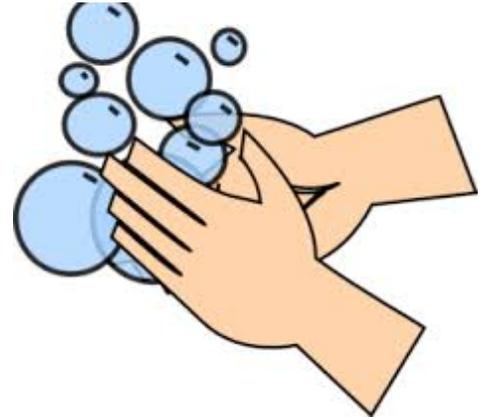
We want to nurture our children's creative thinking and curiosity through asking 'what if' questions, rather than giving direct instructions. We want to encourage them to observe and wonder about the world around them.

Through encouraging exploration through trial and error, we want our children in balwadi to learn to not be afraid of failure and to be always willing to try again.

Health and Hygiene

We want balwadi children to:

- Respect and care for themselves properly
- Come to Hunar Ghar ready to learn
- Understand how to make healthy choices



In balwadi, we want our children to be healthy and to come to school ready to learn.

We provide our children with important knowledge about personal hygiene that they do not learn at home. We teach our children the importance of looking after their health, which will benefit them throughout their lives.

We want our children to have good attendance and to arrive punctually. We want them to arrive neat and tidy so that they are ready to learn.

We want our children to learn to take personal responsibility of keeping themselves and their clothes as clean as possible throughout the day so that they are always in a fit state to learn.

How to achieve this:

Promote washing hands

In balwadi, our children learn to wash their hands after using the latrine, and before and after every meal.

Promote healthy food

We want our children to appreciate and enjoy fruit and vegetables, and to understand that these foods help us grow.

Offer Assistance

If a child arrives at school not in a state ready to learn, or if a child gets dirty during the day, it is the teacher's responsibility to help that child so that they are able to participate in the day's activities.

Be Supportive

Many of our children are the first in their families to attend school and to experience the responsibility of attending regularly and punctually. The balwadi teacher therefore must offer as much support as possible to families struggling to adjust to this new responsibility.

Responsibility and Respect

We want balwadi children to:

- Respect other people
- Respect school materials and the surrounding environment
- Respect school rules
- Resolve conflict peacefully
- Be compassionate and empathetic towards other people
- Share information, interests and ideas
- Accept responsibility for actions



We want our children at Hunar Ghar to interact positively with the environment and people around them. We want them to embody the values of Hunar Ghar.

A balwadi child is compassionate and kind. They share, help others, play happily without conflict, treat others kindly and wait their turn. They are able to admit to mistakes and to understand the importance of apologising. They are perceptive of other's feelings and are able to 'put themselves in somebody else's shoes'.

How to achieve this:

Create the right atmosphere

We want our children to learn in a respectful and friendly classroom atmosphere, where the balwadi teacher acts as a role model and is caring and attentive. It's important that each child feels a sense of belonging in balwadi, as this will increase their self-esteem and give them the confidence to explore and try new things.

Good communication

Good communication is vital for creating a happy environment in which every child is able to learn. Through stories, role-plays and other activities, we want to encourage the children to improve their communication skills, to learn how to vocalise their thoughts and feelings, as well as developing their empathy towards others.

Focus and Success

We want balwadi children to:

- Concentrate on the task at hand and work hard
- Follow oral directions (up to 3 steps)
- Work well independently and in a group
- Complete work in a reasonable amount of time
- Recognise strengths and accomplishments
- Make plans and follow through



Balwadi is the first experience for children in an educational environment, and being able to focus on tasks is often challenging for new learners. We want our children to increase their attention spans and focusing abilities over the two years they spend in balwadi.

We want our children to become able to follow multi-step oral directions, to keep noise in the classroom to below a level that is distracting to others and to develop good listening skills.

How to achieve this:

Follow the schedule

The balwadi schedule provides the right balance of mental and physical activity, so that our children are able to engage in each of the day's activities without tiring (either mentally or physically). By having a range of activities that require both independent and group work, we want to teach our children the difference skills needed for working on their own and for working as a group.

By following a daily schedule, we want to teach our children about completing tasks within allotted times.

Champion a 'trial and error' approach

We teach our children to learn the value of perseverance by emphasising how we can learn from our mistakes and by advocating a 'trial and error' approach to tasks.

The Teacher's Role

The balwadi teacher is a guide. Balwadi is a transitional period for the children. It is their first experience of adapting to a new environment and is therefore a sensitive time. It is the balwadi teacher's responsibility to guide and reassure the children through this first stage of life as a member of the Hunar Ghar community.

The balwadi teacher is a nurturer. Young children possess a desire to learn and an innate curiosity. It is the balwadi teacher's responsibility to maximise this and to expand and develop the children's interests.

The balwadi teacher is flexible. Young children have short attention spans and each child will have a different learning style. It is the balwadi teacher's responsibility to adapt and to be creative when teaching so that every child is engaged in each activity.

The balwadi teacher is supportive. We want our children in balwadi to learn from their mistakes and to see failure as part of the journey to success. It's the balwadi teacher's responsibility to create an atmosphere where this is possible by offering specific praise and by motivating the children to keep trying.

The balwadi teacher should remember the following guidelines in the day to day running of balwadi:

1. Give Direction (but don't dictate)

- As much as possible, set tasks where you avoid telling the children exactly what to do. Give the children freedom to explore and discover through trial and error and encourage them to try out their own ideas
- Guide children to solutions through posing questions and motivate with supportive comments

2. Nurture Children's Creativity

- Teach the children not to be afraid of failure by encouraging them to learn from their mistakes and to try again
- Create tasks where the emphasis is on the process of discovery and exploring rather than a successful result

3. Be Creative Too

- Similar to 'Give Direction' - act as the children's partner in the learning process rather than always being the leader
- It's important to be flexible and understanding with young children, for example letting a child take a break if they need one – a child won't learn if they're upset or tired

- Be on the look out for situations that can be used to teach a lesson about Hunar Ghar values, either as they happen or referred back to later on in the day (i.e. closing Circle Time)

4. Give Praise

- Focus on reinforcing positive behaviour with specific praise that refers to the good deed.
- Praise a child's perseverance, even if they are yet to succeed. Praise a child's ability to learn from their mistakes, be it an academic one or bad behaviour.

5. Follow the Daily Routine

- While it is important to be flexible and adaptable to different situations that might arise, this should be done within the framework of the balwadi daily schedule
- Following a consistent routine day after day gives children a sense of security, which in turn encourages them to take risks and make choices that open the door to exciting learning opportunities

Above all, a balwadi teacher must have an enthusiasm and passion for children.

