

Topic: CHILD DEVELOPMENT

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Role of nursery schools/balwadis

Pre-school children between the age of 3-5 years go to nursery schools in urban areas. Nursery schools fulfil the basic needs of small children. These schools have an added responsibility of preparing the child for the schooling ahead. The children are initiated into the learning processes in play-way methods. For example, they play and dance to nursery rhymes. Can you recall some of these nursery rhymes you learnt in your childhood? The privately run nursery schools are relatively more expensive than the usual nursery sections attached to the main schools. Balwadis provide education to the children in rural areas. They are similar to the nursery schools in towns. Children learn to draw and paint. They learn to make things with sand, plasticine/mud. They also learn to identify different shapes and colours. Nursery schools/balwadis promote the social development in children as they learn to share things and communicate in a social group. The environment in these places helps in the development of language among children. Teachers in these schools often check the hair, nails and clothing of children to make the little ones conscious of personal hygiene and grooming. Do you remember your teacher narrating a story to you in your childhood? It developed your listening skills, memory and comprehension. Children learn to fantasize and have flights of imagination during such story-telling sessions. It enhances their mental development.

The Ways Day-Care Centers and Preschool s Help the Young Child's Development:

Good Health: By balancing activity, rest and making sure that all children have medical check-ups and are immunized against certain diseases.

Skills: By improving skills already formed and teaching new ones under the teacher's guidance and supervision.

Speech: By making children's vocabularies larger and widening their interest.

Emotions: By teaching children to express their emotion in socially approved ways.

Social Behaviour: By teaching socially approved behaviour patterns.

Social Attitudes: By teaching children to be tolerant of those who are different to add to the group and to be good sports, good followers, and good leaders.

Creativity: By encouraging children to express their creativity in ways that will please them.

Discipline: By teaching children, through consistent and fair discipline, to obey rules and respect those in authority.

Self-concept: By stressing self-confidence, and feelings of self-worth. Easier Adjustment to school by teaching skills that are basic to school work.

Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) Integrated Child Development Scheme was launched in 1975 with the main assumption that a package of multiple services is more effective than providing these facilities one at a time. Initially ICDS was extended to a small population. Today the expansion of ICDS projects has increased considerably.

Objectives of ICDS

- (a) Improvement of health and nutritional status of children of 0-6 years of age.
- (b) Laying foundation for psychological, social and physical development of the child.

(c) Reduction in the incidence of malnutrition, morbidity, mortality and school dropout rates among children.

(d) Effective coordination of the policy and implementation among different departments in order to promote ICDS.

(e) Enhancing capabilities of mothers to look after normal health and nutritional needs of the children.

TARGET GROUP

Integrated Child Development Scheme targets at reaching out the package facilities to the following age-groups:

(a) Children 0-6 years of age

(b) Adolescent girls between 11-18 years.

(c) Women between 15-45 years of age.

(d) All pregnant and lactating women.

PACKAGE OF SERVICES RENDERED BY ICDS

It includes:

(a) Supplement Nutrition,

(b) Immunization,

(c) Health check-ups and Referral Services,

(d) Nutrition and Health Education,

(e) Non-formal Education.

The scheme has successfully reached almost 40% of the deprived children. Double amounts of supplements are given to children below 50-60% of the lowered nutritional standards. ICDS provides nutritional supplements through the

schools/and primary health centres. Have you heard of mid-day meals? It is one venue for providing children with cheap yet nourishing protein and carbohydrate supplements. Roasted Chana and milk powder are the usual food supplements

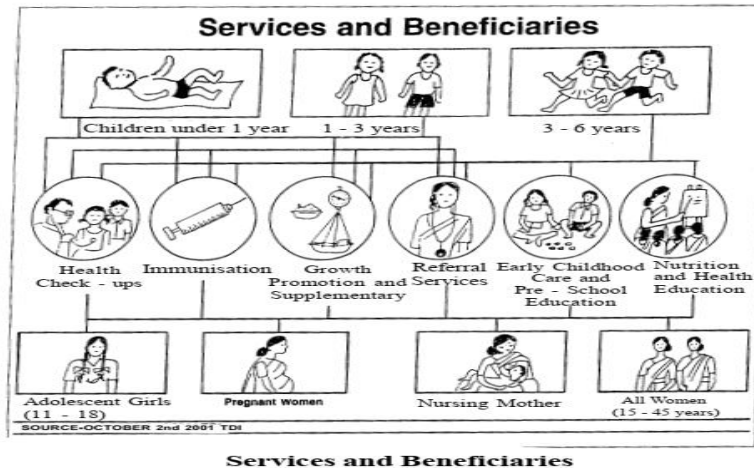


Fig. 1 - Services and Beneficiaries

All children should be immunized within the first year against the six killer diseases of early childhood. Can you name these diseases studied in the earlier chapters? The facilities of health check-ups and referral services are provided in the Government hospitals and municipal dispensaries. Prenatal and postnatal facilities are provided to mothers and new born babies. The rural as well as the tribal areas are also provided with these medical facilities on regular basis. The medical facilities are fully funded under the Government's five-year plans except for the cost of supplements which is borne by the states. The mother in the productive years of life are made aware of the importance of spacing, and restricting the size of the family. The relationship between maternal status and healthy child is highlighted. Mothers with poor maternal status and low weight gain during pregnancy period give birth to children weighing less than 2.5 kgs. (normal weight at birth for Indian children). Such children remain shorter and lighter than their counterparts. They often rate low in their performance throughout life. ICDS contributes not only to the achievements of women and child goals related to health, nutrition and early child development but also to

other primary health care goals and the goals of universal elementary education, as enunciated in the National Plan of Action for children 1992. ICDS facilities are provided to the rural population through Anganwadis. All possible efforts are being made to impart formal as well as informal health and nutrition education. Radio, TV and movies carry these messages to a large section of the population living in urban as well as rural areas.

To highlight on the quality of child care services

- The location of the centres to be easily reached from all sides.
- Safe, clean and spacious environment. Both covered and open space for indoor and outdoor activities. The amount of space should be adequate in relation to the number of children to move about freely at **1.5** square meter per child. A minimum area of two square meter of play space per child is desirable.
- The building should be strong and sturdy, bright and attractively painted, with good lighting and adequate ventilation.
- Potable water supply and proper drainage is a must.
- Toilets should be well maintained and free from contamination.
- Proper storage is necessary to prevent pilferage, infestation and maintain quality of food.
- Good menu planning and cooking is essential to provide good nutrition to the children.
- Food service is equally important to make the children eat well and enjoy meal time. This also includes the place, furniture and how food is served.
- Food safety and sanitation are important to protect the health and safety of children.
- Play materials must facilitate the all-round development of children