
Chapter 3

Phase – II Development of an Educational Transition Programme (ETP) to Facilitate Transition from Home to Pre-school

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The Phase-II of the study on transition from home to preschool aimed at preparing an educational package for parents and teachers to facilitate the process. Based on the results of Phase-I and analysis of the available literature this package was developed. The investigator also drew upon her own experience of five years while working with new entrants and their parents in Chetan Balwadi, the Laboratory nursery school of the Department of Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS), Faculty of Home Science, The M.S. University of Baroda, Vadodara.

Initially a broad outline for the package was prepared and discussed at length with experts (n=4) in the field of both Early Child Development and Communication. This outline was then used to develop a video film (Appendix D) and a pamphlet (Appendix E) for parents and teachers to help them understand the process of transition more precisely and in turn facilitate the child's adjustment in the school.

3.1 Why Video ?

In the field of education the use of video is not really new. In recent years, its scope has been widened considerably and lot of attention has been focused on its use in educational institutions.

However, in India studies using the media of video have still not been undertaken in the field of transition from home to preschool. Apart from the growing need, video also has many advantages. In video, where visual information is provided by using moving images along with their speech, thus, engaging two senses, sight and hearing, at the same time, making for better impact and retention. Moreover, use of music also helps in breaking the monotony and holding the interest. Essentially it can be viewed and replayed at anytime and as many times as required. The retention of the information received through this medium is quite high as compared to the oral information imparted alone. Therefore, it was decided by the investigator to develop a video which can be used to sensitize parents and teachers towards various significant issues of transition from home to preschool. The Development of a video under an Educational Transition Programme entailed-

- Planning and developing a video script
- Production - Video shooting
- Commentary - Recording the script
- Editing - Post production
- Previewing

3.1.1 Developing a video script

A broad guideline was prepared to aid in shooting of specific scenes. The outline was kept flexible in order to avoid creating fixed boundaries. Natural interactions of parents, children and teachers were thought to be relevant and therefore were purposely shot. Out of the six schools undertaken in the present study for phase I, two schools were selected for video shooting, one with English as a medium of instruction and the other with vernacular medium – Gujarati. The schools readily agreed for due permission for video shooting. The teachers and supervisors of preschool section were also informed about the film being shot.

Initially, a descriptive commentary was written, which was then transformed into the required format of a script for video film. The two steps involved were -

- Developing written content
- Deciding appropriate visuals

3.1.1.i Developing written content

The script was developed based on, the results of Phase-I, review of literature and the actual experience of working with new entrants. The script contents included were -

- a. Children's behaviour during transition
- b. Parents role in the transition process
- c. Role of school during transitional phase

a. Children's behaviour during transition

Anxiety, curiosity, anticipation and fear await the children who enter the new environment of a school. Some of them are very sensitive. They are emotionally very attached to their parents and therefore, may take a lot of time to come out of the phase of separation. It is therefore necessary to understand their emotions and deal with them carefully. A great deal of precaution and skill is required as children enter a completely new set up (Fabian, 2000).

The children may enter school with mixed feelings. On one hand, they may be excited about the new things – bag, water bag, tiffin all of which they will be carrying to school. On the other hand, they may be apprehensive about the new environment and strangers they will be facing. They need to be prepared for this situation and this aspect was emphasized in the script with more focus on the characteristics of young children. The script also highlighted differences amongst children inspite of certain similarities. With this background some children may adjust easily and quickly whereas it may not necessarily be the same for the others.

b. Role of parents during transition from home to preschool

This transition period is not only difficult for children but parents also get anxious and curious. Some amount of fear is there along with the excitement of their child all set for the school. The script therefore, laid stress on helping the parents realize the importance of preparing the child for this transition and not leaving the child totally unprepared in a new situation. In the script this aspect was covered under following categories -

- Opinion of parents
- Parental feelings when they leave their child crying in the school
- Disadvantages of not preparing children for school
- Expert comments on the importance and ways of preparing the child for transition
- General tips for parents

Opinion of parents

How to bring up a child? Is a very complicated question in itself. Each parental outlook towards life varies based on individuals. In turn, this outlook towards life influences their child's rearing which has a great impact on the child's nature and behaviour.

In Phase-I of the study parents were interviewed regarding child's preparation for transition from home to preschool. From these dialogues, the investigator selected some of the responses for inclusion in the video film. These selected feedback were illustrative of varied opinions of parents about child's preparation for school.

In two of the interviews parents stated that they did not prepare their child for school as it was felt to be not necessary, whereas expecting good performance in the school interviews, one of the respondents loaded the child's mind teaching alphabets and numbers. However, one of the parents described the school atmosphere to the child. The child was taken to the garden to let know about the garden equipments which would also be available in the school. Thus, making the whole experience of going to school to be more interesting and inviting.

Parental feelings when they leave their child crying in the school

During Phase-I, the parents were asked to express their feelings when they left their child crying in the school. Out of the total 34 parental interviews, 03 were included in the video film. These live shots helped parents to relate their feelings and also understand the sense of horrible feelings, during the process of transition. Some of the feelings expressed by the parents included -

- *“Kaash school principal sharoo na divaso ma maa-baap ne school ma aavava de to kevu sarru.”* (I wish the principal of the school allowed me to be with my child for the initial few days).
- *“Use rota dekhkar ek kshan ke liye mujhe aisa laga ki main oose apane saath vapis le jaaon magar kisi tarah oose choda aur ghar aake khud rone lagi.”* (When I saw her crying I thought of taking her back home but somehow I left her and came home and cried).

Disadvantages of not preparing the child for school

The results of phase-I clearly indicated that parents need to know the importance of preparing the child and also appropriate ways of their preparation. They need to be sensitise towards the needs of their child and understand them as parent’s attitude has an absolute bearing on child’s mind.

Some of the parents in their interviews during phase-I stated that their child did not feel like going to school. They also noted certain changes in the child’s behaviour when they started going to school. The changed behaviour included -

- Sleepless nights (disturbed sleep)
- Murmuring during night
- Loss of appetite

- Does not want to go to school and says “*mummy aap mere school kyon nahi aa sakti*” (mummy why can’t you come to my school).
- Irritability

Opinion of the subject expert (Early Child Development)

Prof. Prerana Mohite, Head - Department of HDFFS, Faculty of Home Science, the M.S. University of Baroda, was requested to address the parents regarding child’s preparation for transition. Apart from being the Head she is also the Director of Early Child Development - Learning Resource Centre (ECD-LRC), funded by UNICEF.

While addressing the parents the subject expert emphasized on helping the child to establish relationship with others, follow a daily routine and undertake activities independently. In fact, emphasis on reducing the pressures of interviews in the school on children was strongly stressed. The message for parents was to let the child experience happiness and feeling of joy while going to school.

General tips for parenting

The video film included various tips on parenting which were found to be completely missing in child’s preparation for the school. These word of advices were identified through the interviews with the

parents during phase-I. Some of the tips included in the video were in regard to preparing the child physically, socially and emotionally as -

- according to school timings develop daily routine of the child well in advance
- encourage children to eat independently
- help the child understand that clothes for party, school and home are different
- encourage children to select their own clothes
- dress-up children according to the season
- encourage children to express their needs and wishes

Along with these suggestions, appropriate parenting strategies were also advocated. These were included as certain do's and don'ts in the form of visuals to help the parents understand better and remember while interacting with their children.

c. Role of school during transition phase

School's role in facilitating the whole journey from home to preschool is also very important. In the educational package developed in the form of video the role of school was discussed in terms of -

- tips for the teachers
- recommendations for school

Tips for teachers

Teachers can help boost the personality development of a child. A teacher is regarded as a guru who guides the child and has a great impact on the overall development (Chaudhary, 2000). A teacher has a special place in child's life and accordingly can either make or mar a child's future.

Children are very sensitive to difficult situations and the new atmosphere for example in the school. Each child reacts to these situations in a different manner. For some children it may be pleasant and for others may be unpleasant and disturbing. Thus, teachers need to understand the psychology of children and be observant and sensitive towards their needs. Developing a warm and affectionate relationship with children can help build a rapport with them and therefore they need not feel scared to share their feelings with the teacher.

One must remember that, there should be a sense of care and not scare in the child's mind and heart for parents and teachers. Scolding, beating, ignoring and snubbing can all hurt the child's little heart. The child may get depressed and scared and may refrain from interacting and speaking in the class. A feeling of inferiority, insecurity and lack of confidence may develop in the child.

It needs lot of time and effort to help children adjust in the unfamiliar environment but if we, as teachers are ready to give this sort of commitment surely, schools will be definitely a better place to live in (Jasrai, 2001).

In the video film, therefore, tips for teachers were included in form of certain do's and don'ts for teachers. The main focus was on teachers behaviour with children. The teachers should not compare individuals instead, be able to understand and accept such differences amongst children. This was supported with suitable visuals for better retention.

Recommendations for school

One of the main recommendations was to allow the parents to be with their child during the inceptive days in the school. It was also suggested that schools may have a shorter duration for the new entrants to begin with and then gradually extend the school timings. The program should not be very rigid but flexible suiting the needs of young children in a completely new environment.

3.1.1.ii Deciding appropriate visuals

Once the detailed contents of the script were determined the script was subjected to an exercise to decide corresponding visuals. The type of visuals, such as, scrolled message, freezed screen with

write-up, commentator's shot, specific visuals in slow motion, etcetra were decided for each objective. As far as written messages were concerned, help of the computer experts was taken.

3.1.2 Video shooting – production

The shooting was done by a professional videographer and a technician. The investigator was also actively involved in all aspects of planning, shooting and filming. The complete format of the video film was visualized by the investigator and discussed in detail with the cameraman prior to the actual shooting. The scenes, angles and the objectives which needed to be highlighted in the video film were also discussed with the cameramen, for necessary focus. Moreover, the investigator was present throughout the shooting sequences, giving suggestions and directions to the cameramen. In the selected schools, the camera shooting was organized i) on the very first day of the school for new entrants ii) in the middle and iii) at the end of the first week. Normal behaviours of the children were more emphasized and captured on the film throughout the shooting process.

The total footage of the shots was of about 75 minutes. The footage was then viewed very critically by the investigator in order to prepare a tentative list of important shots which were to be retained in

the final version of the film. This exercise was repeated for 3-4 times by the investigator in order to finalize the shots to be retained. Based on these selected shots a detailed script was written by the investigator in Hindi. A thorough feedback was solicited from the experts both in the field of Early Child Development and Communication (n=4) and others who had good command over Hindi language (n=2). Based on their feedback necessary modifications were made in the script.

3.1.3 Recording the script – commentary

The content was written with necessary heading and captions. An effort was made to use simple and suitable words which can be easily followed by the viewers. For the whole exercise to be more realistic, the researcher decided to be the commentator and thus rehearsed several times before the actual audio recording.

Voice modulation, necessary pauses and emphatic expressions were also kept in mind while practicing. The voice of the commentator need to be pleasant, understandable and clear. All these aspects were also kept in mind by the researcher, thus ensuring voice quality throughout the film presentation. The audio recording for the commentary was accomplished in a commercial audio recording centre based at Ahmedabad.

3.1.4 Post production – editing

The researcher and the cameramen screened the video film again for first level editing based on the final script. This took three sessions of 5-6 hours each. The final editing based on computer was accomplished in a commercial studio at Ahmedabad, by the investigator, cameramen, technical expert and two other professionals.

This whole process of final editing involving incorporation of film title, titles for the shots, back-ground music, synchronization with commentary and other technical inputs lasted for a total of 24 hours broken into three sessions of 6-8 hours each. The video film with a total span of 15 minutes was finally ready for viewing (Appendix C).

3.1.5 Previewing

The final film was previewed by the guiding teacher and, researcher along with the videographer and other professionals. Before the film was screened for parents and teachers, this previewing was done to ensure -

- no repetitions
- matching of the script with the shots and commentary
- duration of screening