



NURTURING POTENTIAL: A HOLISTIC ASSESSMENT OF CHILD DURING EARLY GRADE & NEP-2020

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RESEARCH ARTICLE



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Abstract

NEP 2020 focuses on Holistic development of the child through nurturing potential. At the early grade, it is possible to ensure holistic development through nurturing potential & holistic assessment of the child. Nurturing potential of child for Holistic development at early stage focuses on development in physical, intellectual, social, emotional, and spiritual aspects. Child at early stage develop empathy for others and to be able to sustain relationships (Denham, 1998). The early grades at school are the peak sensitive periods for Social & Emotional development. The sensitive period for emotional development starts at birth and wanes at puberty (Begley, 1996); while peer social competence begins around 3 years and extends up to 6 or 7 years (Doherty 1997). This study focuses on Holistic Assessment for nurturing potential of child at early grade in different areas like intellectual, physical, social, emotional, spiritual developments. This study is relevant for the teachers, parents & all other stake holders to meet the requirements of child literacy, numeracy, social and emotional learning at early grade.

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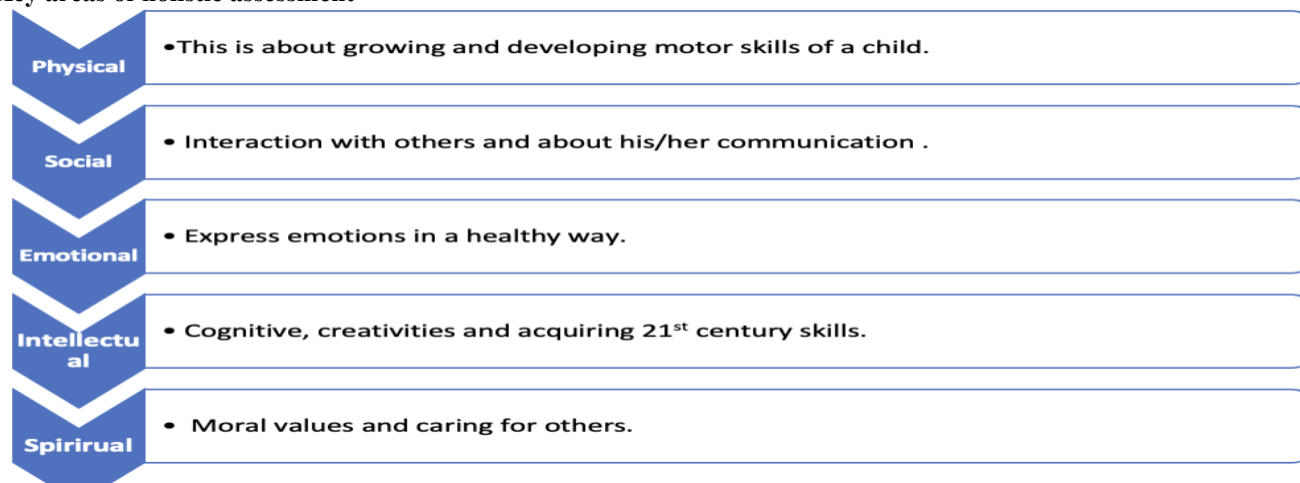
Introduction

Holistic development of a child at early grade focuses on development in social, emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual aspects. A child's home, School also impact their overall development through holistic assessment. There are sensitive periods when a child requires positive stimulation for the brain to establish the neural pathways and with this also happens the elimination of those elements that are not being stimulated (McCain & Mustard, 1999). During the pre-school years the brain and nervous system grows rapidly and at six years it attains 90% of its adult size (Tanner, 1978). The Holistic Assessment for Learning focuses on measuring early grade development for purpose of learners' literacy, numeracy skills and physical, social, emotional, spiritual developments. As a part of transforming assessment for student development, The Objective of the Holistic Assessment for Learning is to focus on child's holistic development at school to monitor the progress of students in their early grade and improve the relevance of instruction to meet the literacy, numeracy (intellectual), social, spiritual, social, emotional learning gaps that they identify. Continuous feedback & follow up action is needed both formally by teacher, peers & non formally by parents, siblings. Child's holistic development is possible if there is continuous holistic assessment is made at school.

Holistic Assessment at early grade

In order to enable the child to succeed and reach at their potentiality to it's fullest extent, all aspects of their development must be assessed holistically. Encouraging holistic development in the early years is the responsibility of teachers. They must think that their children development in different aspects are not difficult and just requires continuous effort. Starting in the early grade, holistic development needs to be assessed holistically. At early years child need to be assessed from various aspects. It may be important to focus on a child's intellectual abilities during the early years, but it is also equally important for a child to develop skills in different areas such as:

Key areas of holistic assessment



The early grades are crucial & vital period to lay the foundation for a healthy, happy, peaceful & prosperous life in future. NEP 2020 shifts assessment away from rote, summative testing toward regular, formative, competency-based assessment intended to support learning and development. It also proposes a 360-degree, multidimensional Holistic Progress Card (HPC) covering cognitive, affective and psychomotor development.

For children aged 3–8 years, the Foundational Stage includes three years of preschool/Balvatika and Grades 1–2. Assessment should therefore be developmentally appropriate and embedded in children's everyday learning experiences.

NCF-FS 2022 explicitly states that formal tests and examinations are inappropriate for the Foundational Stage. Assessment should be natural, continuous, diverse, evidence-based and sensitive to individual differences.

NCF-FS recommends observation, analysis of children's work/learning evidence, anecdotal records, portfolios, checklists and teacher narratives as sources of assessment evidence.

The NIPUN Bharat framework connects assessment with foundational literacy and numeracy while emphasizing the child's health and well-being, communication, cognitive development and engagement with the environment.

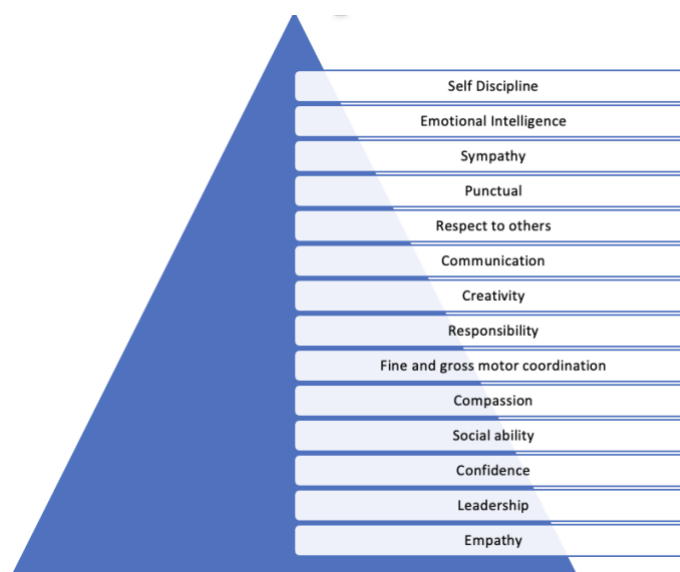
The PARAKH Holistic Progress Card for the Foundational Stage, developed in 2023, operationalizes the NEP 2020 vision by documenting children's progress through multiple dimensions rather than relying only on academic marks.

CBSE subsequently developed/adapted HPC prototypes for Foundational Stage children aged 3–6 years and Grades 1–2, emphasizing regular, formative and age-appropriate competency assessment and inputs from children, peers and parents.

By 2024, PARAKH had developed HPCs across all four stages of schooling, and the Government reported the implementation of competency-based assessment initiatives nationally.

A peer-reviewed article by Anitha and Narasimhan (2021) provides useful developmental justification for NEP 2020's emphasis on early childhood, play-based learning and holistic development.

Key factors that need to be assessed at early grade



Teacher need to do continuous & holistic assessment of the child at early grade for holistic development. Steps may be taken up by the teacher for holistic development of the child through holistic assessment in different areas through different activities as follows:

Physical

- Engage the children in motor activities or big movements and explore the ways how they climb, jump, swing and run and provide necessary tips to improve. Also take follow up action to encourage them at school with the help of other teachers & peers. Compare the previous performance with the present performance. Give continuous feedback for development in physical aspect through continuous assessment.
- Enable the child to practise fine motor skills & small actions, like holding a crayon, shaping play dough, digging in the sand or playing with blocks, doing puzzle, playing with ball, cycling, walking, yoga for kids, pranayama etc. for kids at school followed by assessment.

Social

- Engage children to build social skills by connecting with other children and adults at school & it's assessment .
- Practise actions like sharing, enjoying a meal together, going on an outing, punctuality, telling truth, respect to elders, affection to the youngers, completion of assigned work in time etc. & it's assessment from time to time.

Emotional

- Encourage child to create awareness about others through reading different books and stories . Enable them to learn empathy at school with assessment by teacher.
- Sharing of experiences and discuss the outcomes of the events followed by assessment.
- Be aware of child's emotional thinking & action. Observe & continuously guide the child with expecting more refined behaviour from time to time along with it's assessment.

Intellectual

Developing child's cognitive skills comes with exposure to play. Because healthy mind persists in healthy body. Playing and learning is contemporary to each other so far as early years are concerned. Ensure the learning of child during playing followed by assessment.

- Active participation i.e learning by doing is to be ensured at school along with continuous assessment.
- Enabling the child for creating an interest in different topics and developing vocabulary that leads to intellectual development & it's continuous assessment.

Spiritual

- Talk about family moral values, belief and traditions followed by assessment at school.
- Telling stories on moral values along with follow up assessment.
- Encourage the child to think for self and perform responsibility for others & it's assessment.
- Teach child to take care of his/her environment & it's continuous assessment.
- Set up play area in a planned way for child at early grade and encourage the child to respect /value and enjoy his/her belongings & make continuous assessment.
- Engage child to participate in prayer to develop spiritual value & it's assessment from time to time.

Conclusion

Child holistic development is integrated & comprehensive phenomenon. Holistic assessment & all round development during early grade are positively dependent to each other. In terms of functional outcomes, during early grade human development (such as improved school achievements, peer interactions, morality, social values, communication skills etc.) need to be assessed continuously with proper feedback. Child centred, family focused, community based, holistic care and education during early grade is essential for securing the well being and rights of all children. The Record for Early Childhood Growth and Development attempts to integrate the different facets for optimal child development in the assessment procedure, and encourages a programme of communication with the primary caregiver to support child nurture. Stakeholders like parent, teacher, sibling, peer, school administrator, community members etc.

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