

Report on the Counselling Workshop held on 04/11/2007

The counselling workshop on “Parenting of young children” was held on 4 November 2007 in the Darshan Bhavan of Jadavpur University. This workshop, organized by Atmaja, was designed and conducted by the counselling experts (See the list below) of SAMIKHANI and the Centre for Counselling Services and Studies in Self-development of Jadavpur University. About 12 members attended this workshop. It started around 11:00 AM and went on till about 6:00 PM because of active interest of the participants and very thoughtful and insightful explanations and inputs from the experts. Many issues related to parenting (problems and ways to deal with them) have been addressed and discussed. The major issues that were raised by the parents include the following; some of the suggestions are mentioned in *italics*:

1. Scaring or threatening to deny favourite items while feeding or putting to bed, etc.
Not to be encouraged. However, boundaries of good and bad behaviour have to be set clearly and rewarded when the child follows them.
2. How to react when a child does something wrong.
This should always depend on the age of the child. A very small child should be scolded if s/he does something dangerous—such as play with fire or medicines. Above the age of four or five, the parents should try to explain to the child why something is bad.
3. Problem of attention deficit.
If parents feel there is a serious problem, then they should consult an expert to see if child has any psychological problems. Otherwise, activities like making a mala from beads, sorting, puzzles, counting backwards etc can help to improve concentration.
4. Lack of attention and seriousness in studies.
Avoid scolding and too much pressure. Encourage physical activities, like sports, games, swimming, etc.
5. Dealing with TV-addiction.
Set fixed rules about time slots. Be firm. Offer alternative leisure activities.
6. Disobedience or defying instructions.
Try to avoid confrontations. See if there is any other reason for defiance—such as attention-seeking. Try to distract, instead of scolding the child.
7. Problem of being introvert, or not responding to situations.
Try to take child to singing classes/drawing classes, start with activities within family or friends where the child will feel comfortable.
8. Lack of focus on extra-curricular activities.
Children like to try out new activities, such as cricket, guitar etc. It is usual that they begin something and soon lose interest. Usually they find one or two things that they enjoy and stay with that.

9. Forgetfulness and lack of sense of responsibility.
Try to understand the problem. Is s/he forgetting things s/he dislikes? Is s/he enjoying the reputation as a forgetful, dreamy person? Address the problem behind the problem.
10. Problem of over-indulgence.
Children need discipline and routine. They need to learn that they will not always get everything they want in life. It is important that they learn to tackle disappointment. Overindulgence will not help the child.
11. How to say NO to a child.
It is important to say NO firmly and stick to it. Do not make it a major issue of prestige. If the child is older, talk and explain why you are saying No, if too young, distract the child.
12. Disagreement between father and mother about ways of parenting.
Avoid conflicts in front of the child when young. When older, you may offer your differences to the child as a choice.
13. Problem of bullying at school or outside.
Try to help the child to deal with or tackle the situation. Intervene only if very necessary.
14. Disapproval of child's friends.
Children try out various friends and peer groups when they are at a certain age. One should not interfere too much. The child experiments, but is also conscious of his/her parents' training.
15. Imposition of parents' views on the child.
Once the child is old enough, allow him the freedom to choose.

List of counselling experts:

Name	Contact No.	Specialization
Madhabendra Nath Mitra	2466-4305 ,9339779100	-
Jolly Laha	2466-3504 ,65137944	Adult Counselling & Play Therapy
Soumitra Basu	2435-1499	Students' Counselling & Couples' Counselling
Nitai Mukherjee	9874328547	Child Psychiatry, Social Work, Psychiatric Social Work & Special Education
Sujata Roychoudhury	9830230042	Students' Counselling & Individual Counselling
Rinku Pathak	9830603960	Students' Counselling& any type of counselling, except Play Therapy
Sadhan Chakraborti	9433063400	Marital Therapy & Family Therapy