

Young Children and Mothers

A Walkthrough of Pratham's Early Years Programs



New Education Policy 2020 in India provides new opportunities

	Foundational					Preparatory			Middle		
Age	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-8	8-9	9-10	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14
Grade	Pre-primary years			Grade I	Grade II	Gr III	Gr IV	Gr V	Gr VI	Gr VII	Gr VIII

New priority: Age 3 to 6 added as part of “foundational stage” in the education system. First time that early childhood has been formally considered a part of the education system.

Clear goals: Every student will attain foundational literacy and numeracy by Grade 3

Clear timelines: Highest priority of the education system will be to achieve universal foundational literacy and numeracy in primary school by 2026.

New opportunities: The policy document welcomes involvement of communities in helping to achieve national goals

*Building onto the launch of the NEP 2020, the Ministry of Education launched the ‘**NIPUN Bharat**’ mission – a national mission solely dedicated to the achievement of children’s foundational abilities by the time they pass out of Std 3.*

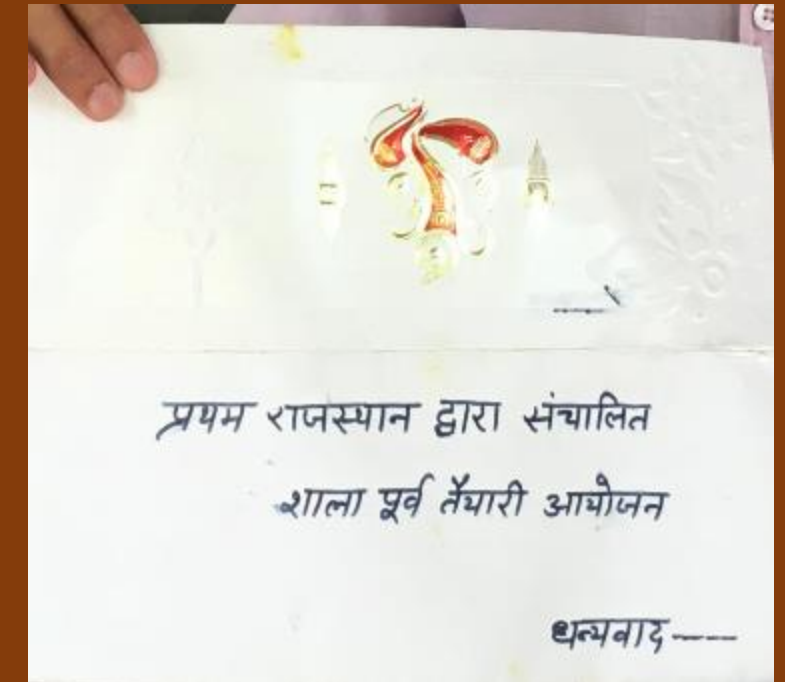
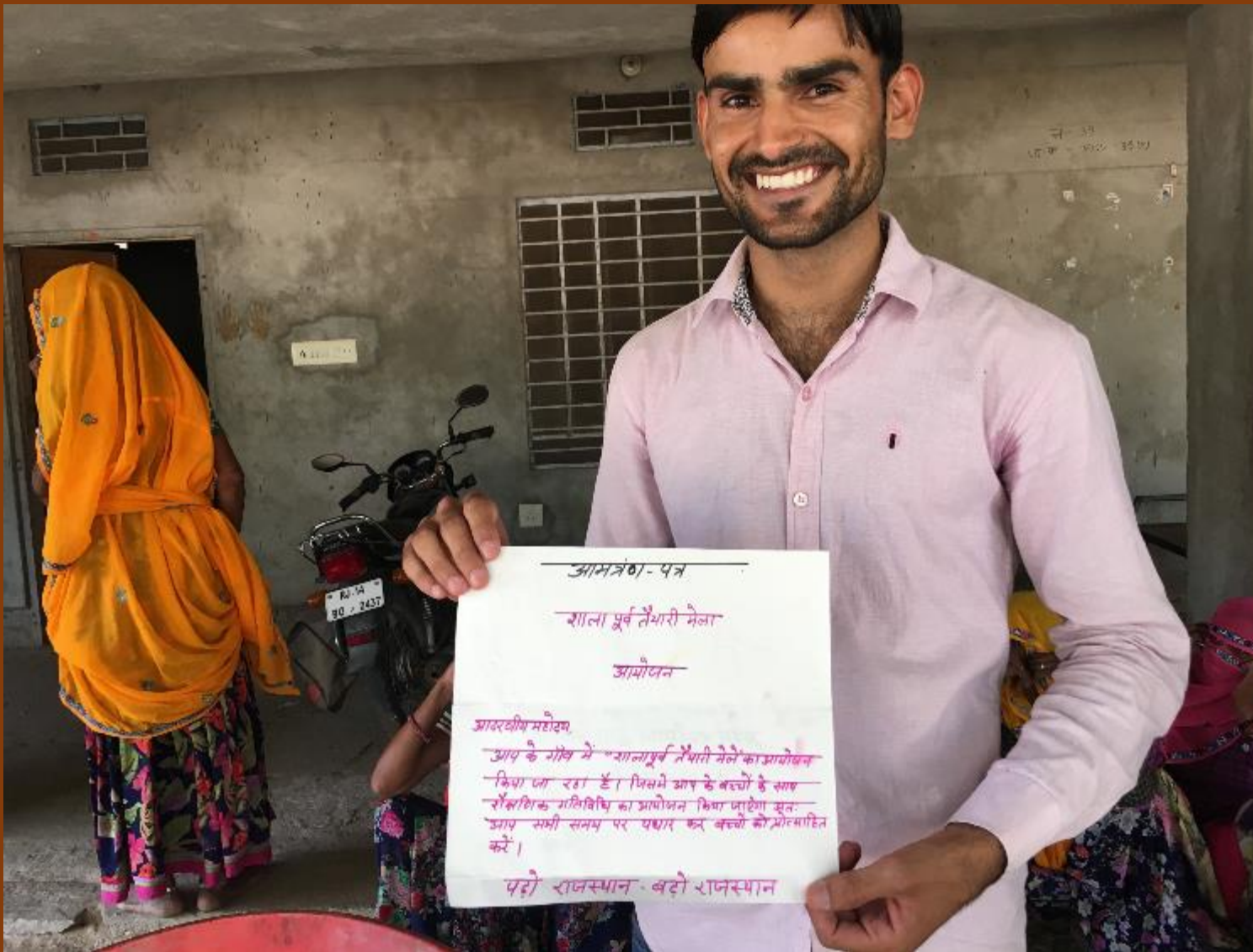
We are going to give you a glimpse of what mothers and young children do in Pratham's programs through the year

Let us start with a school readiness mela!



COME
LET US GET
“READY”
TO
START
SCHOOL

An afternoon in Early Years Village
Mela in Dausa Rajasthan



Come let us get children ready for starting their first year in school. Melas (fairs) are being organized in village after village. The focus : the child and his or her mother and a set of activities that they can do together for “getting ready” for school.

Come join us this afternoon for a mela in a village in Dausa – Rajasthan.



The sarpanch's house has a long verandah. That's where the mela is being set up. Volunteers are getting ready. There are counters for different activities. One volunteer at each counter. Now everyone is waiting for mothers and children to arrive.





The first mother has arrived. Now she is with her child at the “registration” desk. A colourful report card will be filled out with all the details of the child.

Mom and child will go from one counter to another. Lots of activities. Lots of helpers.

Here, the child’s height and weight will be measured by the enthusiastic young volunteers standing behind the desk.

Now more and more mothers are arriving with their children. Older brothers and sisters have also come along. Lots of people are coming to see what is going on.

Sarpanch ji is taking an active role. He is a busy man. And in the wedding season, he has to attend so many marriages in his panchayat. But he decided to get the mela going before he goes.





Can you walk on a curving line? Do you need help?
Sarpanch-ji is happy to help too.





Here is the counter for paper folding activities. What can you make with this piece of newspaper?



Mother and child are both paying close attention.



Here is the sorting and arranging table with activities.

Can you sort different types of things – the onions together, the potatoes in one pile and how about the tinda?

Can you arrange the stones from the biggest to the smallest?



Although the focus is on the child who will go to Std 1, the excitement is shared by all. That's what melas are all about.

At the colouring counter, you get to do colouring of shapes. Some like to do it on the table and some others prefer the floor.





So many things to do here.
Name the animals and birds,
play with letter and tabs.
But shall I eat some biscuits
first? Then there are shapes to
name, straws to count and
numbers to recognize.





All activities are done.
Report card is filled.

Now each child will get a
small kit to take home.

This is our first mother
and child duo to
complete all activities
this afternoon.

Mother and child can
continue to do activities
together for the next
month until school
opens.

We may even have
another mela just as the
vacations get over.



But wait wait wait.....
before going home, Grandmother
also wants to make sure she
understands what is in the kit.

See you in a month or so just before
schools open.

Pratham's practices have been referenced in national policy documents

‘School Readiness Mela’

For mothers and children entering Std I

This event may be organized in the village or community a few months before enrolment into Std I and once again at the time when Std I classes begin. In the community-based mela, children and mothers participate in different activities (walking on crooked lines, jumping rope, folding paper, categorizing objects, arranging objects by size, colouring, counting, recognizing colours, shapes, numbers, and letters). Such activities span a range of cognitive and developmentally appropriate foundation skills. The demonstrations and active participation of mothers help everyone in families and in the community to see that school readiness is based on a breadth of skills. Mothers and other family members also practice such activities.

Children's progress is visible in the second mela. Anganwadi workers, Std I teachers, and mothers participate actively in such events.

Concept source: PRATHAM

From NIPUN Bharat [document](#), p 239

School readiness melas are being scaled up by the government in Maharashtra



In 2022, Pratham launched a 'Pahile Paul' (first step) school readiness campaign with Government of Maharashtra, school readiness melas took place in 47,000+ schools across Maharashtra



In 2023, acknowledging the success of the school readiness campaign, the Education Minister of Maharashtra launched the second year of the 'Pahile Paul' campaign

School readiness mela campaign in Maharashtra

(आयोजकांसाठी)

शाळा पूर्वतयारी अभियान

गेले कित्येक महिने आपण प्रभावित झालेले आहोत. याचा परिणाम मुलांच्या शिक्षणावरही झालेला आहे. काही मुले येत्या शैक्षणिक वर्षात इ. 1 लीत दाखल होतील. पण प्रत्यक्षात त्यांना अंगणवाडी किंवा बालवाडीचा अनुभवच घेता आलेला नाही. या मुलांची व्यवस्थितपणे शाळा पूर्वतयारी होणे फार आवश्यक आहे. ज्यामुळे पुढे जाऊन त्यांना वाचन-लेखन शिकताना कोणतेही अडथळे येऊ नयेत आणि ते व्यवस्थितपणे शिकू शकतील. यासाठी मार्च-एप्रिल-मे 2023 मध्ये आपण सर्वांनी मिळून शाळा पूर्वतयारी अभियान महाराष्ट्रभर चालवायचे आहे. या अभियानात गाव पातळीवर मुलांच्या माता (आई), ग्रामपंचायत, अंगणवाडी, शाळा आणि स्वयंसेवक (volunteers) यांची मुख्य भूमिका असेल. आपण समजून घेऊ की ह्या अभियानाचे स्वरूप काय आहे आणि आपल्याला नेमके काय करायचे आहे.

स्टेप - 1

इ. 1 लीत दाखल होणारी मुले व त्यांच्या मातांची नोंद करणे.

इ. 1 लीत दाखल होणाऱ्या मुलांच्या घरी जाऊन त्यांच्या मातांना मेळाव्याबाबत माहिती घ्यायची आहे. तसेच मातांचे गट बनवायचे आहेत

आपल्याला काय करायचे आहे ?

- ✓ इ. 1 लीत दाखल होणारी मुले व त्यांच्या मातांशी संपर्क साधा.
- ✓ अशा 5-6 मतांचे मिळून गाव बनवा या गटाशी तुम्हाला शेवटपर्यंत संपर्कात रहायचे आहे.
- ✓ इयत्ता 6 वी से 10 वी च्या मुलांना लहान मुलांचे समूह बनविण्यासाठी मार्गदर्शन करा.

स्टेप - 2

गावात शाळापूर्व तयारीचा पहिला मेळावा आयोजित करणे.

आपणाला सगळ्यांच्या मदतीने सामील होणाऱ्या माता व मुलांसाठी मेळाव्याचे आयोजन करायचे आहे. या मेळाव्यात विविध क्रियाकृतींद्वारे माता आपल्या मुलांकडून कशाप्रकारे शाळा पूर्वतयारी करून घेऊ शकतात या बाबत समजावले जाईल.

इ. 1 लीत दाखल होणाऱ्या सर्व मुलांना शाळा पूर्वतयारीचा एक सेट दिला जाईल. माता रिपोर्ट कार्डच्या मदतीने क्रियाकृती समजाविल्या जातील.

आपल्याला काय करायचे आहे ?

- ✓ प्रत्येक गावांमधून मेळाव्याचे आयोजन करायचे आहे.
- ✓ पहिल्यांदा मुलांचे मूल्यमापन करून रिपोर्ट कार्ड घ्यावे आणि मूल्यमापनाची माहिती स्वतःसोबत ठेवावी.
- ✓ आई व मुलांसाठी school readiness pack घ्यावा.
- ✓ Tablet अथवा मोबाईलद्वारे व्हिडिओ दाखवून मातांना त्या काय करू शकतात याची माहिती घ्यावी.

A handbook was provided to all teachers to train them on conducting school readiness melas



Mother and child doing activities at the 'cognitive development' stall

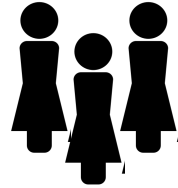
Mother and child with the child's report card



In 2022, school readiness melas were organized in **47,000+** schools across Maharashtra

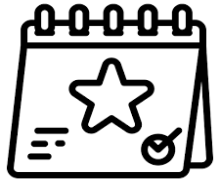
The melas saw **~2.9 million participants**, including **~1.3 million children**, **~640,000 mothers**, and **~220,000 volunteers**

Mothers and young children in Pratham programs



Mothers' groups by hamlet/neighborhood

Mothers come together as a group in their neighborhood to meet, discuss and practice activities with their children. "Idea" card or video is sent to mothers' groups every week.



School readiness "melas" in the community

To get children ready for formal school/Grade 1 and to demonstrate how mothers can engage and support their children's learning.



Direct connection with families: Sharing of activity ideas via phone messages

This is to encourage family members especially mothers to do activities with their young children.



Mothers' activity workshops in schools

This helps to build strong links between school teachers and mothers.

Mothers groups in the neighbourhood



Why is it helpful to have mothers in groups?

- Mothers offer support to each other
- Opportunities to understand and practice together
- Overcomes issues of lack of access to technology

How to work with mothers in groups?



Mothers living in the same hamlet form groups



Pratham sends digital 'idea videos' weekly to leader mother



Mothers meet weekly to discuss the 'idea cards'



Mothers do learning activities at home with children



Let's see how this works !

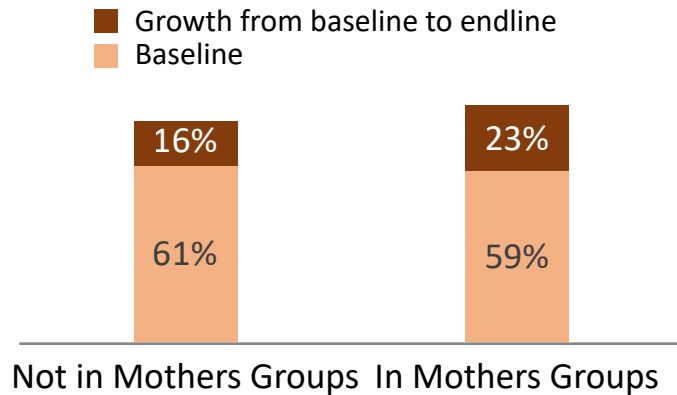
Pratham shares weekly 'idea videos' to mothers' groups of Anganwadi children and grade 1-2 children



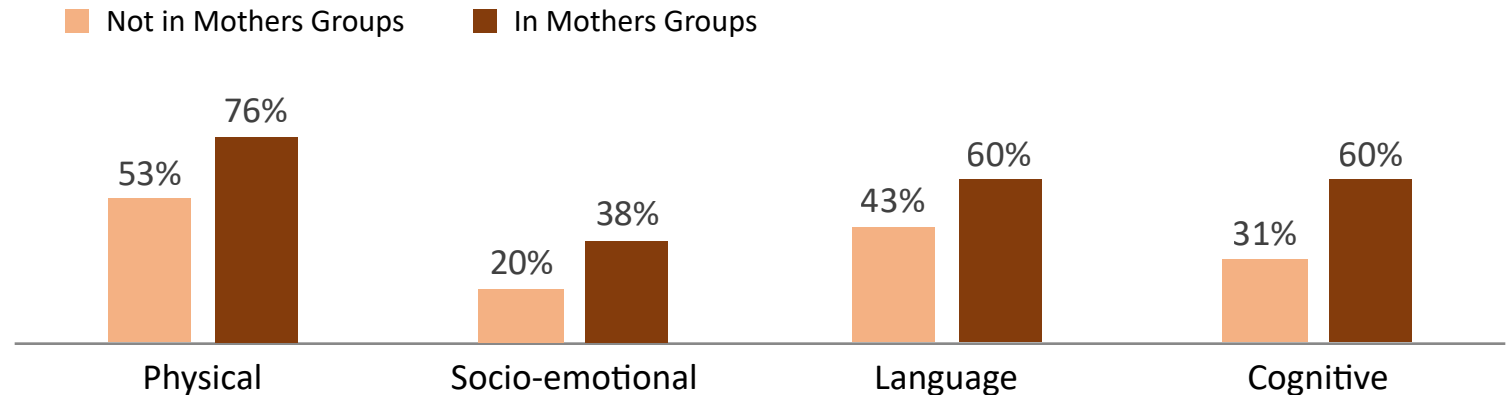
Click [here](#) to access the idea video

Does working in 'groups' really help?

Practices: Do mothers spend time on child's development?



Understanding: Can mothers name at least one activity under each developmental domain? (Endline)



The above results show that mothers who were part of a mothers' group (a) were more likely to spend time on their children's development, and (b) had greater understanding of preschool education,

Note: These results are from a deep dive study Pratham conducted in Gujarat to understand the difference the impact of being part of a mothers' group on mothers' practices related to and understanding of preschool education.

Scaling up mothers' groups in Maharashtra



Following the 'Pahile Paul' school readiness mela campaign in Maharashtra, Pratham supported the government in **forming and engaging mothers' groups** across all schools as a core part of the state's broader NIPUN Maharashtra FLN mission.

Since the start of this initiative, Pratham has facilitated:

- Formation of **~263,000 mothers' groups**
- Across 36 districts
- Reaching **~1.2 million mothers**
- And **~1.7 million children**

Mothers' activity workshops in schools

What are mother workshops?

- Monthly / quarterly events organized at the school level attended by mothers.
- Example Punjab

Why do mother workshops?

- Builds a connection between school teachers and mothers
- Increases motivation of mothers to work with their children at home
- Increases mothers' knowledge on children's development



A mothers workshop implemented in Punjab

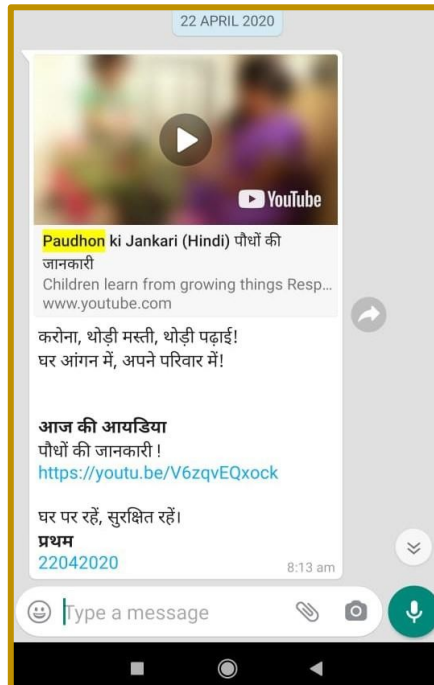
Connecting to mothers directly

Why share remote learning messages?

- Provides mothers and others in the family with simple teaching-learning activities to do at home with children
- We used this a lot during COVID and have continued to do so since then

How does Pratham share remote learning messages?

Through WhatsApp – we sent out a video to a mother explaining how plants grow



In return, we received the above responses!

Thank you!



Pratham also does in-class instructional activities with young children in Anganwadis and Schools