



## AN APPROACH FOR EDUCATIONAL SKILL IMPROVEMENT OF CHILDREN AT ELEMENTARY LEVEL

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**ABSTRACT** Childhood is a distinct phase of human life span. Psychologist conceive of childhood as highly eventful; and unique time of life that lays the foundation for the adult year. There are distinct periods within childhood in which children master special skills and complete a new life task. We value childhood as a special time of growth and change; we invest our resources in caring for and educating them. From the Government's side and society's side, as a whole, budgetary provision is made to provide basic primary schooling to each child in India since 2002. Universal elementary education Sarve Shiksha Abhiyan made mandatory for all children. The skills for educational growth of children at elementary level can be categorized basically into reading, writing, and math skills. This paper discusses about the ways in which the improvement in these skills can be achieved.

**KEYWORDS** : childhood, math skills, reading skills, writing skills,

### INTRODUCTION

Reading expert Steve Stahl (2002) believes that the three main goals of recognizing instruction should be to help children: 1. Automatically recognize words, 2. Comprehend text, 3. Become motivated to read and appreciate reading. Children's writing emerges out of their early scribbles, which appear at around two to three years of age in early childhood. Children's motor skills usually become well enough developed for them to become printing a letter and their name. Normally, most four-year-olds can print their first name; five-year-olds can reproduce letters and copy several short words. There are some developmental changes in the way children think about mathematics and their math ability at different grade levels. There are also the basic principles and standards ready for school mathematics at different levels.

### METHODOLOGY FOR IMPROVING SKILLS

#### Reading -:

Reading is a process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency, and motivation. Reading is important when it comes to obtaining and consolidating knowledge (what you read). It is a skill that needs to be exercised in order for your knowledge to increase. You would not ride a bike one time and say you are the best at riding a bike, would you? Reading is essential for children because it increases their vocabulary, and helps them become a better communicator by being well-spoken and articulate. According to The Daily Leader, "Reading comprehension separates the passive reader from one who is an active reader, interacting with the text. A person who is well-read, well-spoken, and knowledgeable on a variety of topics tends to move ahead more rapidly, get promotions more often, and generally succeed in their profession." We want children to grow and become successful individuals, and in order for that to happen, reading must be incorporated and practiced as much as possible.

#### Ways to help improve your children's reading-

- **Surround them with as much reading material as possible.** The more accessible reading material is, the more your children will want to pick it up and read it. This can vary from books, magazines, to newspapers.
- **Spend 15 minutes a night reading to your children.** Once you are finished, ask them comprehension-based questions about the setting, characters, or plot. Let them think and recall what happened in the story. This will demonstrate how well their listening skills and comprehension skills are.
- **Let your children read to you.** Children get excited when a parent gives them one-on-one time. Let them practice their recognition of letters and words, and their fluency. Make sure to show them enthusiasm because your reaction has a great influence on how hard they will try to become great readers.
- **Take trips to the library or bookstore.** Let your children explore the heaps of genres and books presented in a library or bookstore. Let them pick out a book that interests them.
- **Be knowledgeable about your child's progress and problems.** Research what your child should be able to read at a certain age group. Discover if your child(s) is struggling with pronouncing certain words and sounds. Note his/hers progress and problems and address them accordingly. You can purchase additional learning tools such as educational learning books, computer worksheets, textbooks, or even hire a tutor.

#### Writing-:

Writing is a skill that involves taking words and creating a text. As mentioned before, reading is the process of obtaining and consolidating knowledge, as to where writing is the process of combining new thoughts from that knowledge and experience. Writing is used to express one's thoughts and share them in an insightful way. We use writing as a tool to separate and organize our thoughts. A lot of children and adults struggle with trying to get their words onto paper. Practicing writing will increase this skill and in the long-term, make an efficient and literate writer. If a person cannot write well, it can affect them forever. Poor writing skills such as grammar and fluency in writing can send red flags to future employers because it shows you do not know how to express what you are saying effectively and efficiently.

#### Ways to improve your children's writing-

- **Provide children with as many writing tools as possible.** Make sure there are notebooks, construction paper, crayons, pencils, or pens around. Let them choose a writing tool and let them write! Encourage them to write stories about fiction or non-fiction. As long as they are writing, they are learning.
- **Have your children write letters.** Letters are slowly becoming obsolete in today's world, but they still play an important role in a child's growth in writing. Letters are a different form of writing and capture a kid's attention. Have your children write a letter to their friend or a relative and have them write about whatever they want. This gives them the freedom and luxury to tell a story about anything.
- **Let them keep a journal.** Keeping a journal will give your children a sense of privacy with their writing. In a journal, they can express the way they feel without having to worry about it being criticized. They are free to express their thoughts on a wide variety of subjects and events.
- **Write together.** Writing together is extremely important. Children want to feel involved and engaged with their parent. You can take turns writing a short story and reading it to each other, or create a mini book. You can even have your children write up things for you such as a shopping list. The possibilities are endless!
- **Give them prompts.** Assign your children a specific type of prompt. This gives them access to learning how to write different types of stories/essays. Four major types of essays are:
  - Narrative- tell a story to the reader
  - Descriptive- paint a picture to the reader
  - Expository- explain the facts to the reader
  - Persuasive- convince the reader

#### Arithmetic math:

Arithmetic is the branch of mathematics that deals with the study of numbers (manipulation of whole numbers, fractions, and decimals.) The basic calculations include: addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division. Basic math is used in everyday life and is usually mastered in early elementary school. After children master math, they are introduced to more complex types of mathematics; algebra, geometry, and calculus. Without mastering math, your child will struggle trying to learn various other types of mathematics. Besides math helping a child with learning other types of mathematics, we use

math when it comes to counting money, figuring out how much will be taken off the cost with a discount or coupon, balancing a checkbook, how much to tip a server when wanting to tip 18%-20%, or seeing how much of a pizza pie is left. Whatever it is, math is being used.

**Ways to improve your children's Math-**

- **Teach them to write their numbers efficiently.** In order for children to learn math, they must know how to write their numbers correctly. Have them trace over numbers you give them.
- **Purchase additional learning tools.** Sometimes school just is not enough. If your children are struggling, purchasing learning tools like textbooks or educational learning books can help. The web also has great learning tools. With a quick search, you can find practice worksheets or educational online games.
- **Show them how to do the problem patiently.** Even though your child is starting to become frustrated, you need to make sure you are patient. If you are patient, it can bounce onto the child. Take your time explaining the problem and show them that it does not matter how long it takes to do a problem.
- **Help them learn mathematics vocabulary.** Mathematics has a lot of concepts to remember. Your children will never get a real grasp on what they are learning unless they understand its vocabulary. Take the time to research and really explain what a concept means to them and then have them define the new terms. If your children are having a hard time understanding, have them show you they understand by doing simple problems.
- **Incorporate math daily.** Incorporating mentalmath everyday is very important. The more practice, the better they will become. Have your children count coins for you at the grocery store, or ask them to tell you the change. Ask your children to measure the width and height of different things in your house and compare them.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The need for improvement in the skills of the children can be assessed through various tests. The elements of the test can be vocabulary, motor control, visual perception and auditory discriminations etc. Some of the tests are described below:-

**Vocabulary test** – This test measures the ability of the child to identify the objects within the range of experience of his/her at the entry grade level of 1 to 5.

**Visual perception test** – This test measures the ability of child to identify similarity of geometrical figures, letters and numbers

**Auditory discrimination test** – This test measures the ability of child to discriminate the similar and dissimilar beginning sound of various letters and words.

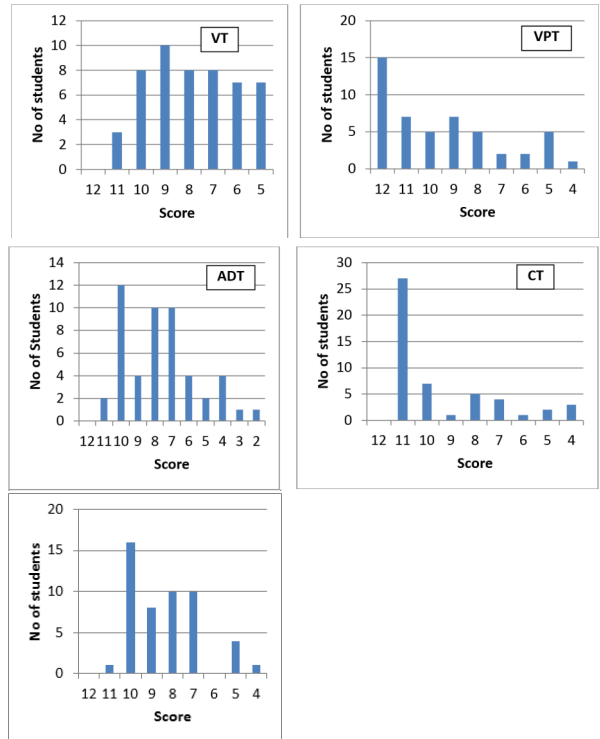
**Copying test** – This test measures a combination of visual perception and motor control which are required in learning to write.

**Math Test** – This test measures the ability of child to do counting, simple arithmetic operations.

The implementation of the above test is carried out in a school and samples of 150 children were considered. A test format is made for different set of skill tests. The total possible scores of each sub-test are as mentioned in Table 1. The scores obtained by the students are plotted against the number of students falling in that score. It can be observed that, students have performed well in VPT and CT while they lag in VT test. The performance is average in ADT and MT test. The test results are plotted and shown in Fig 1. Therefore, these test reveal that there is scope for improvement in reading skill linked to ADT, Mathematical skill linked to MT, Reading and writing together linked to VT.

**Table 1 List of tests for elementary school skill tests**

S.No.	Test code	Test description	Score
1	VT	Test-1 Vocabulary Test	12
2	VPT	Test-2 Visual Perception Test	12
3	ADT	Test-3 Auditory discriminating Test	12
4	CT	Test-4 Copying Test	12
5	MT	Test-5 Math Test	12
		Total	60



**Figure 1 Score of students for VT, VPT,ADT, CT and MT test**

**CONCLUSION**

The result shows that there is need of improvement in the elementary educational skills in the children especially in vocabulary and visual perception skills. The results of the study are important to the teachers engaged in teaching students of elementary schools. The teachers can implement the ways mentioned in this paper at elementary level for improvement of skills in reading, writing and mathematical field.

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