



ASHA

# XPRESSIONS

NEWSLETTER,  
NOVEMBER 2021 - MARCH 2022



## WELCOME BACK!

With the many COVID waves and lockdowns, we welcomed our students back for onsite sessions from 8th November onwards, according to the Government directive. The students were divided into 2 batches with both batches coming for 3 days a week. This helped maintain social distancing in the classroom. All the therapies were also provided on site except for dance which was conducted online.

## EARLY INTERVENTION

Three new students joined the Early Intervention Mother and Child program for whom Portage assessments were conducted. This helps in planning the intervention and identifying if the children need therapies. The therapists also worked with the new parents to help understand their child's condition and present status.

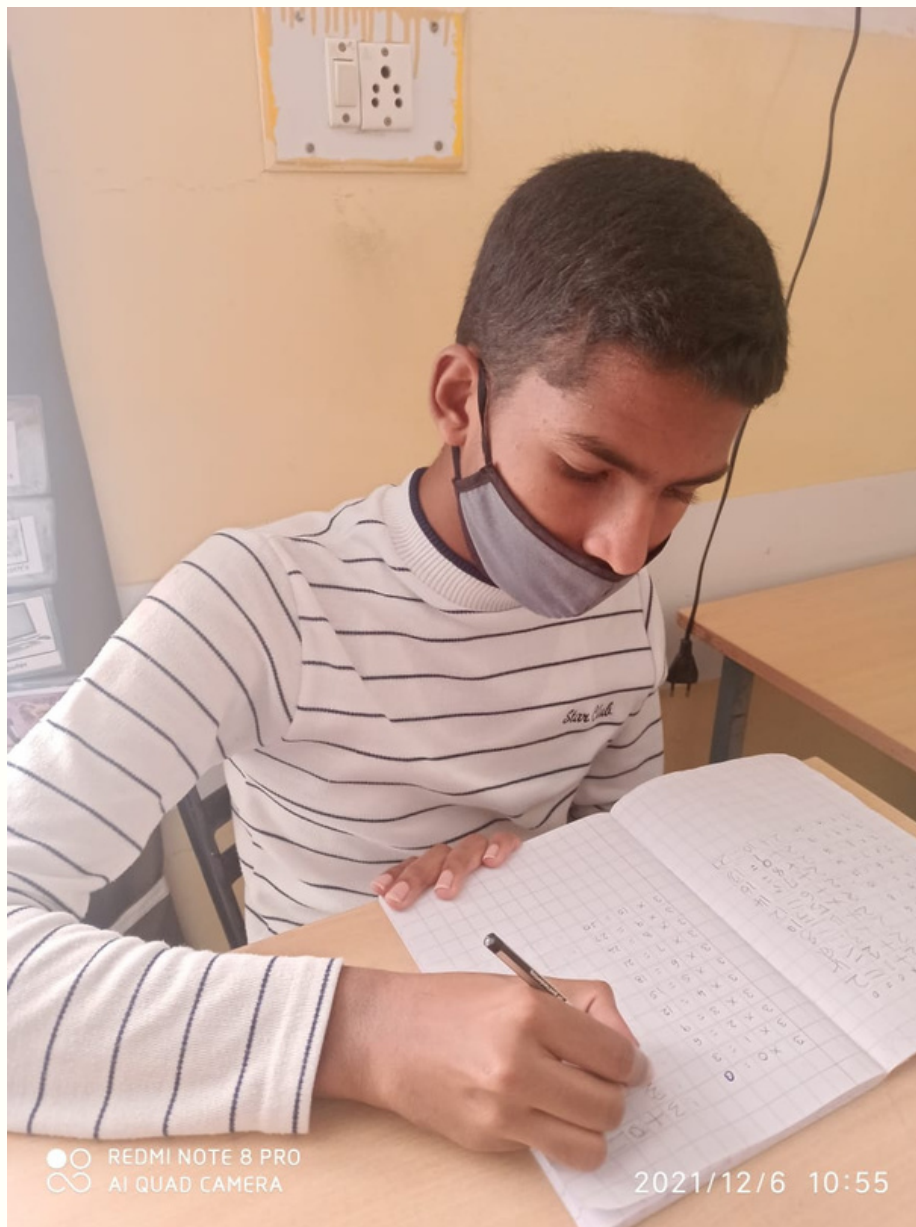
Being a mother child program, the mothers accompanied the students to the centre. The students have made good progress with cognitive skills such as matching object with object, objects with picture and sorting. Improvements have also been noticed in communication with some students using PECS to communicate.



## PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

With the school closures due to the pandemic, the parents had ample opportunity to work hard in improving activities of daily living in the children such as helping around the house, arranging items, cleaning the house and helping the mother in the kitchen.

For the senior students, November was devoted to observation of the students and address any gaps in learning and behaviour problems. The teachers revised the work done and took note of how much the students have learnt.



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## THERAPIES

Communication being one of the deficits in children with autism, the speech and language therapists worked on improving communication through various methods. Some students who do not prefer to use words, communicate using pictures. The students use a collection of pictures and point or hand over the picture card to the teacher or parent to convey their needs and emotions.



### SPEECH THERAPY



### ONLINE DANCE SESSION



## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

21 women have been enrolled in to the training program. The participants are mainly mothers of students at ASHA and women in the community.

In November, Ms. Hanumakka and Ms. Mamatha, resource persons from Nav Prabhuthi Trust conducted a workshop on 26th November on Diya Painting. The session helped the participants understand how to prepare diyas for painting, mixing primary colours to create new shades, design patterns, types of brushes to use and how to dry the diyas in a short amount of time. Diyas are a good source of income during the Diwali festivities and opened new opportunities for the participants.

Another session on pot painting was conducted by Ms. Hanumakka, resource person from Nav Prabhuthi Trust on 27th November. The session explained the types and designs of pots, how to decorate the pots, creating designs and painting them using high quality waterproof paints. The pots can be used as show pieces or decorative pieces at events such as weddings.



**DIYA PAINTING**



**POT PAINTING**

## VOLUNTEERING

Volunteers from TCS conducted Children's day on 30th November. There was an online cultural program with singing and music by the volunteers. The students of ASHA also performed a drums circle. ASHA also showcased artwork done by the students. The volunteers presented the children and teachers with snack boxes.

## AWARD

Academy for Severe Handicaps and Autism has been ranked 1st among special schools in India for the year 2021-22 for the second time by EducationWorld India School Rankings 2021-22. The ranking was based on 10 parameters such as infrastructure, quality of teaching, safety, parental involvement.



**We thank the Government of Karnataka, Corporates, philanthropic partners, volunteers and friends for supporting our work.**

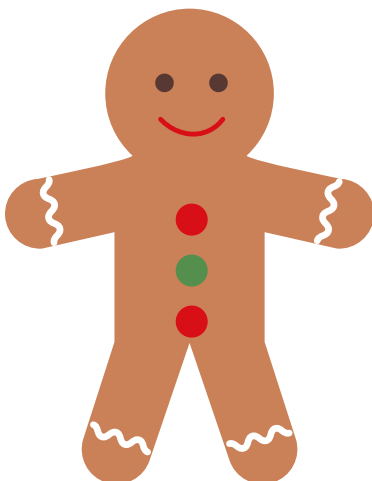


# DECEMBER

## IT'S CHRISTMAS!



Christmas was celebrated on 23rd and 24th December. The children and teachers came to school dressed in red, green and white and the day consisted of lots of fun activities. The students had a lot of fun with song and dance, the students baked cakes and exchanged gifts.



**CAKE!**



## EARLY INTERVENTION

The children in the early intervention program have shown improvements in gross and fine motor skills. Many children have shown improvement in cutting with scissors, folding paper, throwing a ball, jumping, pedaling a tricycle and stringing beads.

The teachers have also been working with the mothers to collect data about the number of times the child does the required activity and reinforcements used. This data helps the mothers and teachers to come up with ways to teach the child effectively.



## SELF HELP SKILLS

## MAGNETIC FISH GAMES

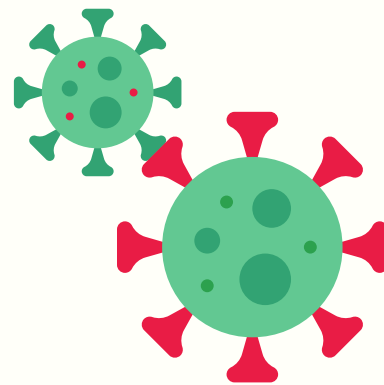
## COUNSELLING

Parent and family counselling is important for families to come to terms with the child's condition and as well as to unburden themselves.

Some of the common problems faced by mothers were mainly due to change in routine due to online classes. Many were not able to manage time effectively. The counsellor helped the mothers by creating a schedule and ensuring effective time management.

Other issues that the counsellor discussed were differences of opinion and disinterest shown by some spouses in the upbringing of the child. Absence of the father throughout the day increased pressure on the mother. Taking care of children all by themselves became a big challenge.

Also, rising costs due to COVID and inflation also affected family wellbeing. Difficulty in covering the cost of household expenses and cost of education was a constant source of worry.



## PRIMARY & SECONDARY EDUCATION

The younger students have shown good improvement in functional academics including theme based lessons, comprehension and motor skills.

A great amount of learning happened during preparing for the Christmas celebrations. All the students participated in cooking and made cakes for Christmas. This exercise helped children understand measurements, follow a list of materials, learn to mix the ingredients and taking care while baking.





## COOKING & SPECIAL NEEDS

*By Anand Krishnan*

Cooking is a great way to practice skills learnt in the classroom. So what skills are used while cooking? Let's see!

Cooking involves the use of basic communication skills like following one step instructions, listening and comprehension and answering questions throughout.

There's also fine motor skills such as washing vegetables/fruits and chopping.

Cooking also reinforces behaviour such as waiting – for the food to cook, turn taking – in group cooking and following directions of the teacher.

There's academics involved as well! The children can learn to measure out ingredients, work on fractions, dividing the recipe or finished dish with the group, doubling the quantity of ingredients required in the recipe and budgeting for the ingredients required.

And let's not forget other skills such as identifying and sequencing skills required while cooking.

Lastly, cooking is a great way to build rapport with your child and is an ideal means to engage them productively. It's an essential life skill too! What are you waiting for? Start cooking!



## PRE VOCATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING

In December, the senior students received functional academic training required for vocational skills. This involved teaching students in using a calculator to calculate amounts and money for change quickly. The teachers also focussed on teaching measuring - quantities of products and liquids. Further, the students were taught to understand quality such as clean and dirty. This helps in maintaining a better work environment for the student.



## PARENT TRAINING WORKSHOPS

A workshop was conducted by Dr. K.S. Jagadish on 11th December. The topic was on Naturopathy and how it helps individuals with special needs. The workshop was on Zoom and was attended by 40 parents.

## YOGA

Yoga is being conducted online and onsite at ASHA. Each student receives 30 minutes of yoga per week.





## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

In December, two workshops were conducted by trainers from Nav Prabhuthi Trust on 11th and 18th December on block printing on gift wrappers. All the women attended the program. The feedback received was good and during the training, the mothers displayed their own creativity in design and was appreciated by all.



## VOLUNTEERING

Volunteers from a corporate company conducted a virtual activity over Zoom on Simple art and craft. The volunteers showed how to create fun art work using thumbs and ear bud painting. The session concluded with dance for children on 18th December.

# JANUARY

## A NEW YEAR

The school reopened on 2nd January after the Christmas break. Considering the Government COVID regulations, intervention was provided online for all the students including speech, yoga, dance, music, art and craft.

The school was again closed for onsite sessions from 6th to 31st January.

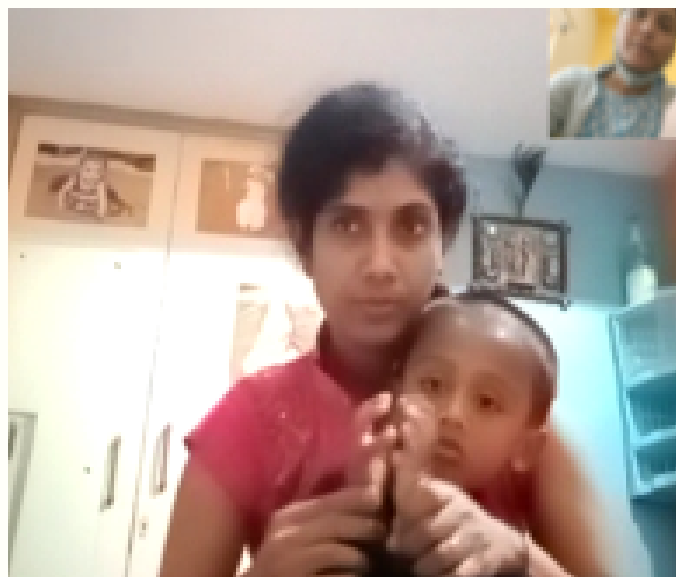


## EARLY INTERVENTION

In January, the early intervention program was delivered online with more than 150 sessions provided by the teachers. The students have made progress in motor skills and cognition. Many children have learnt to differentiate between colours, pointing to body parts, differentiating between environmental sounds and imitating animal sounds.



*Fine motor skills activity.*



*Learning to greet*



*Learning to wear sandals*



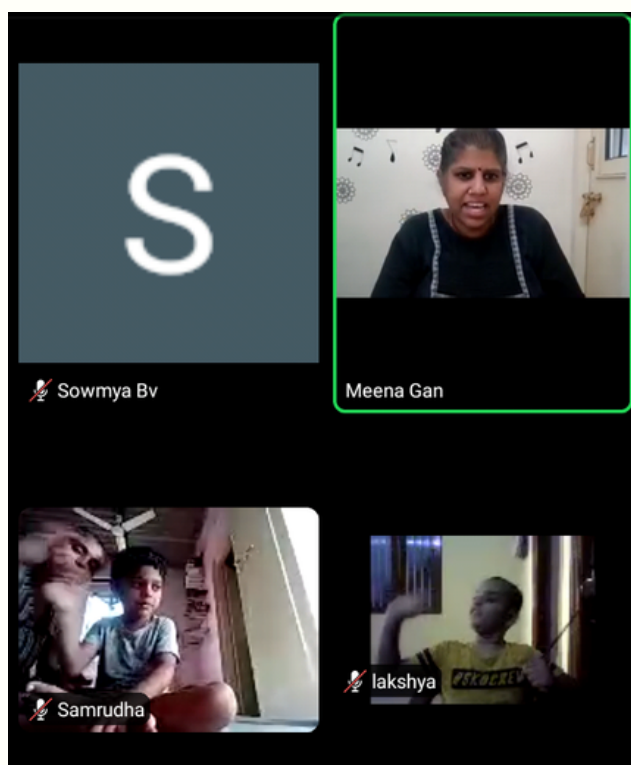
## ART

The art teacher, Mrs. Bharathi, conducted 10 sessions on art and craft for the students in January.



## MUSIC

3 sessions were conducted in January by Dr. Meena Ganapathy.



## HOW MUSIC HELPS INDIVIDUALS WITH AUTISM

Music has been known to improve social interactions in children with autism, and neuroimaging studies have shown that circuits important for emotion and memory processing are engaged during music listening. According to a random controlled study conducted in 2018 (Sharda et. al.), a group of children with autism between the ages of 6 – 12 years were part of a musical intervention program for a period of 8-12 weeks while the other was a control group.

Based on parent feedback and a resting MRI scan, it was found children who were in the music intervention group showed improvements in language, social relationships, and family quality of life compared with the control group.

Though the study was limited on parent reports, it shows that music does have its benefits with children with autism.

*M. Sharda, C. Tuerk, R. Chowdhury, K. Jamey, N. Foster, M. Custo-Blanch, M. Tan, A. Nadig, K. Hyde, Music improves social communication and auditory–motor connectivity in children with autism. Transl. Psychiatry 8, 231 (2018).*

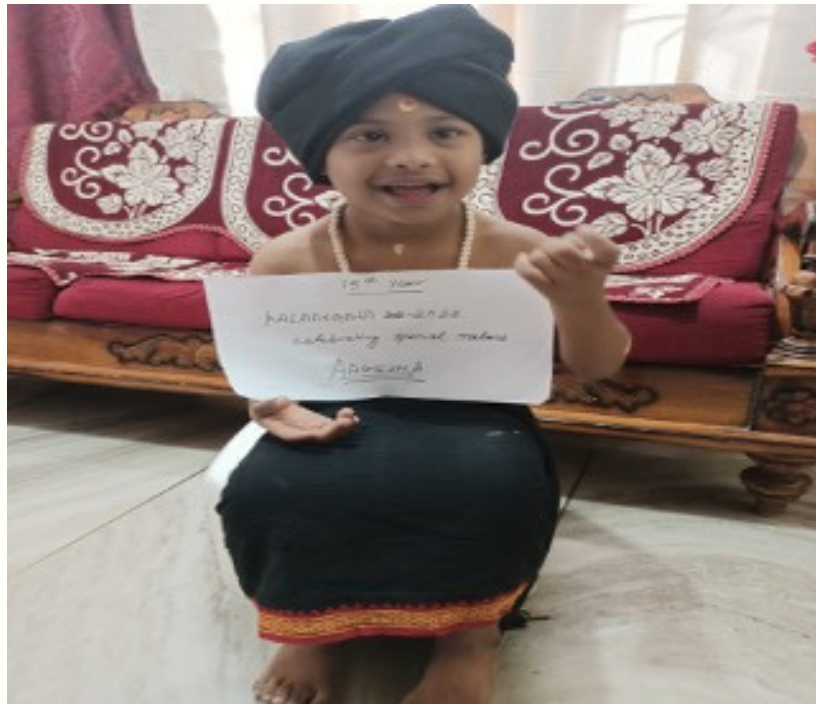


# KALAANGANA 2021

The event is being conducted for 2 months - January and February and entirely online due to the pandemic. Each school sends videos of the students performing dance, yoga, fancy dress, singing and others and the students are ranked by judges.

This year, our students and parents were enthusiastic and participated whole heartedly in the competition.

Rahul and Vinayaka won awards in yoga, Sumeghana, Keerthana and Ashish won prizes for dance, Varun, Ashish, and Lakshya won prizes in music and Likith, Yoshitha and Sridhar won prizes for fancy dress.





## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

ASHA is proud to associate with AWAKE - Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Karnataka (AWAKE) as an implementing partner for our women's empowerment program. AWAKE is a not-for-profit, Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) established in 1983, based in Rajajinagar, Bangalore that works towards empowerment of women through entrepreneurship development to improve their economic condition.

ASHA along with AWAKE kickstarted our partnership with a 12 day Entrepreneurship Development Program (EDP).

The 12-day program was conducted from Monday to Friday from 10 to 4 PM, coordinated by Mr. Sadashiva S. from AWAKE, Mrs. Sujata Sathyamadhava and Ms. Sindhu Jayan from ASHA.

The topics addressed were:

- a) Entrepreneurship qualities
- b) Entrepreneurial competencies
- c) Project ideas – venture analysis, business operation and management
- d) Marketing and selling techniques
- e) Women empowerment schemes
- f) Book keeping
- g) Licensing, GST and taxation
- h) Industrial and market exposure
- i) Packaging, branding, patenting, trademarking, registration
- j) Market analysis



## WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

The Entrepreneurship Development Program had 27 participants consisting of parents of children with special needs, teachers and women from the local community.

Apart from theory, the training also included an outdoor market exposure where participants were given a certain amount of money and were asked to purchase products and sell it in the market for a profit. The participants also got to visit other enterprises including a health food manufacturing unit, machine tools and a beauty salon. This gave them an actual picture of how an enterprise works.

The overall feedback from the participants was positive. The participants appreciated the depth and knowledge of the resource persons, their practical experience was invaluable. At the end of the program, the women were highly motivated to start something of their own and enjoyed the market exercise where the participants had to make sales on their own. This practical experience was an eye opener and made them realise how a marketplace works including competition from other sellers, selling conditions and challenges. The participants appreciated the sessions on taxation, regulations, book keeping which are important to run any business.

The field visits to other enterprises also helped the participants build networks and think about the products and services they would like to develop and sell.



## VOLUNTEERING

On 31st January, volunteers from a corporate company conducted a simple art and craft activity for children. The event was online and students and parents took part in it from their homes.



# FEBRUARY

## EARLY INTERVENTION

The students in the early intervention program have made some notable improvements. Being a mother and child program, the parents are the main teachers and they get to spend maximum time with their children with guidance from the teachers. The children are learning a lot through imitation. One of the students has started noticing his family members and imitates his grandmother washing clothes. This is an important development as the child can pick up a lot of skills. Another child too has started sorting vegetables in imitation of his mother. Many of the children have learnt to identify colours, point to familiar objects, animals and fruits.



## VOLUNTEERING

On 19th February, volunteers from a corporate company conducted an online session over Zoom for children and parents on art and craft and making a dream catcher.

On 26th February, volunteers from a corporate company conducted an online session over Zoom on balanced diet and nutrition for children and parents.

## EVENT

ASHA participated in the Bangalore International Centre NGO Hub'ba on the 26th and 27th February. The Hub'ba is a yearly event and is a platform where NGOs can display their work and products for the visitors to know more about them, their work and purchase products. This year, there were 60+ non-profits who displayed their work. ASHA received many visitors and explained our work.

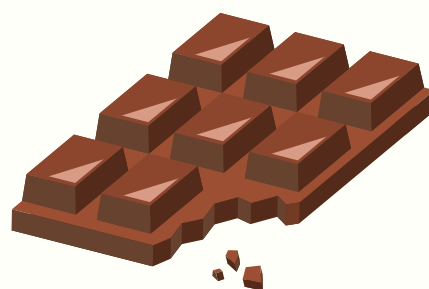


# WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

## HOME MADE CHOCOLATES

The women's empowerment program was conducted by our implementing partner – AWAKE - Association of Women Entrepreneurs of Karnataka at ASHA.

As part of the program, a workshop on making home-made chocolates as a vocational skill for children with autism and a source of income for women was conducted on 15th February. 26 women including mothers attended the full day session which involved choosing the correct type of chocolate, adding flavours, tempering the chocolate, mixing and using moulds to create different shaped chocolates. The mothers learnt to make chocolates to help teach their children a vocational skill that can be useful in the future.

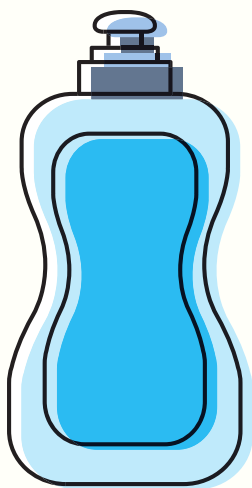




# WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

## CHEMICAL PRODUCTS

A workshop on making chemical products for cleaning was conducted on 16th February. 26 women attended the full day session and learnt how to make phenyl, dish washing liquid, floor cleaner and multi-purpose cleaner for home and commercial use.



# WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT

## BAKERY PRODUCTS

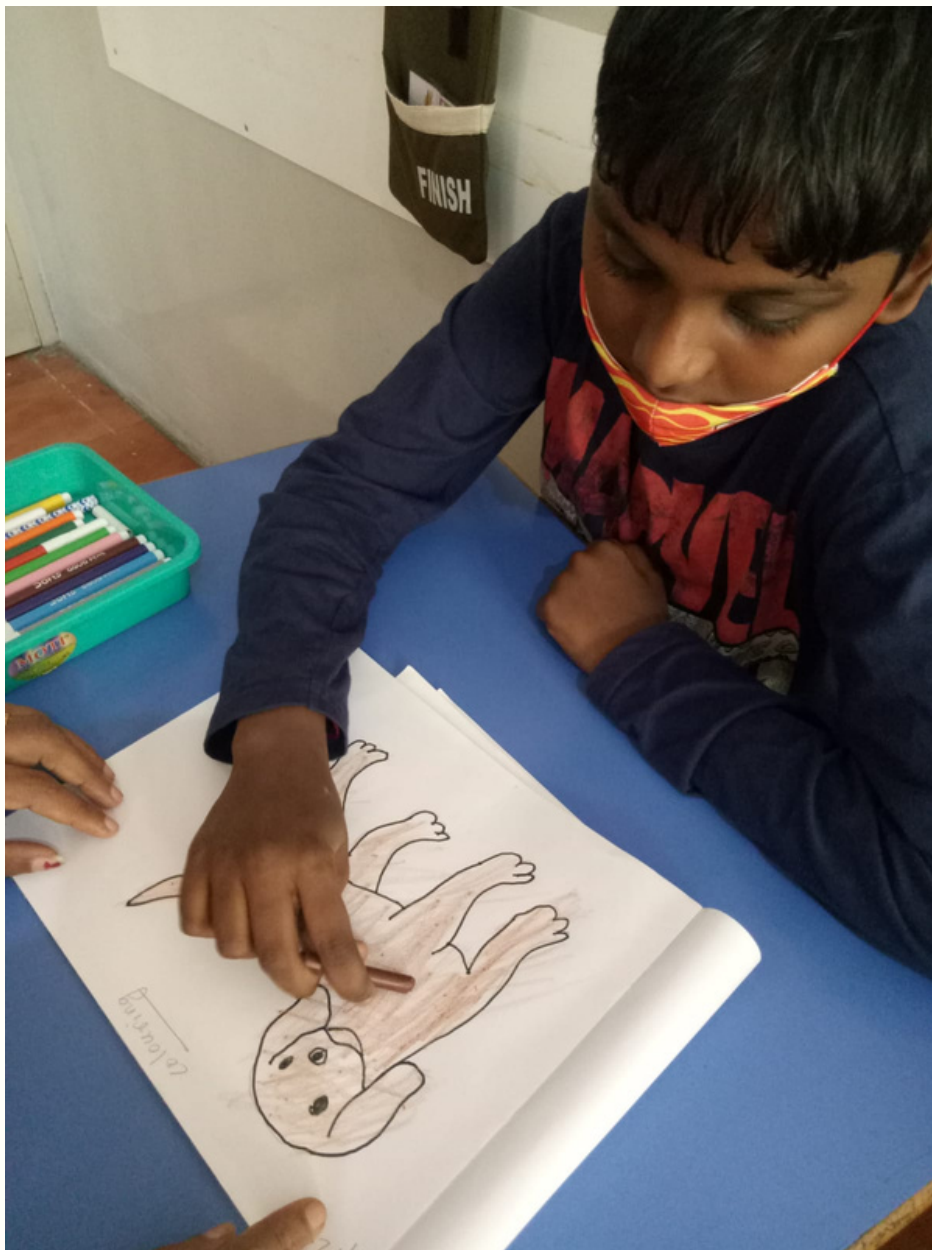
A workshop on bakery products was conducted for 22 women on 28th February at AWAKE, Rajajinagar. The women learnt what ingredients are required to make quality baking products and the women got practical experience and baked cakes, cookies and cupcakes.



# MARCH

## PRIMARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

With the year coming to a close in a month, the students have made good progress despite a combination of online and onsite sessions. The students have learnt to sort pictures, pick sight words, write sight words and arrange correct answers. This has helped the students communicate and learn academic skills in the classroom.





## PRE VOCATIONAL SKILLS TRAINING

In March, the teachers worked on simulating the activities such as weighing and packaging groceries such as pulses and grains. These activities were for students who have a higher level of functioning.

The teachers also worked with the students on stocking items according to type. These activities help the students to get trained in working in a supermarket or grocery store. For students with a lower level of functioning, were trained in sorting vegetables.



*Chopping vegetables*



*Stacking items*



# SUMMER FUN!

As part of Women's empowerment and to bring awareness and involve the local community, ASHA organised a Summer Fun program on 13th March 2022. The event had stalls consisting of food, home made snacks, fabric products for sale and fun activities planned for the children. The women got a taste of what business entails and feedback on their products.







# INAUGURATION OF EARLY INTERVENTION UNIT

ASHA, with the support of United Way, Bengaluru, inaugurated additional workspaces for the early intervention program on the 24th March 2022. Excited to have the young ones get the best out of our new facility.



## Academy for Severe Handicaps and Autism

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