

# **ORGANISATION OF RURAL BALWADIES**

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# Organisation of Rural Balwadies

## Need to set up Balwadies in the Villages / Slums

The majority of Indian children, especially in the rural areas, come from poor homes. The parents are usually overworked and overburdened with day-to-day worries and anxieties. Often they are illiterate and unaware of the principles of healthy and hygienic living and the desirable ways of bringing up children. They are not aware of the different phases of child growth and development. Therefore, they fail to give special care to their children at the appropriate stages. Establishment of Balwadies or Kuzhanthaigal Kappagams (pre-primary institutions) with trained Balasevikas (preschool teachers) will help to compensate for some of the home factors the children miss to a great extent, by providing rich and stimulating environment to children.

The major developments in industry, technology and agriculture have affected the patterns of family life, in that the joint family system has already started disintegrating. Moreover, owing to the enhanced adult participation in economic activities, the number of working mothers is on the increase. A Balwadi would relieve a working mother and also provide the child with tender care. The pursuit by the child, of purposeful well planned activities would promote the growth and development of the child.

Balwadies can help also in the development of school readiness in children through suitable programmes and activities and can thus greatly help in the universalisation of primary education in the country and reduce the school drop outs.

In view of these reasons, it is necessary to give priority for the provision of pre-school education, especially to those children who belong to weak, backward and deprived sections of the community.

## The Objectives of Balwadies

The Balwadies aim at the total development of the child-physical, motor socio-emotional and cognitive. The objectives drawn-up by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and incorporated in the Report on the Education Commission are:

- a. To develop in the child a good physique, adequate muscular co-ordination and basic motor skills;
- b. To develop in the child good health habits and to build up the basic skills necessary for personal adjustment, such as dressing, toilet habits, eating, washing and cleaning;

- c. To develop desirable social attitudes and manners; to encourage healthy group participation and make the child sensitive to the rights and privileges of others ;
- d. To develop emotional maturity by guiding the child to express, understand, accept and control his feelings and emotions ;
- e. To encourage aesthetic appreciation;
- f. To stimulate intellectual curiosity and to help the child understand the world in which he lives, to foster new interests through giving opportunities to explore, investigate and experiment;
- g. To encourage independence and creativity by providing the child with sufficient opportunities for self-expression; and
- h. To develop the child's ability to express his thoughts and feelings in fluent, correct and clear speech.

The activities for the Balwadi are suggested towards the fulfilment of the specified objectives as follows :

- A. Activities to learn and practice the basic principles of healthful living.
- B. Activities for emotional and social development.
- C. Programmes for intellectual, language and aesthetic development.

**A. Activities to learn and practice the basic principles of healthful living**

This objective includes the following minor objectives and relevant activities.

1. THAT THE CHILD DEVELOPS THE HABITS OF PERSONAL CLEANLINESS THROUGH ACTIVITIES SUCH AS :
  - i) Keeping the nails clean
  - ii) Brushing the teeth daily
  - iii) Combing hair
  - iv) Keeping the body clean
  - v) Keeping the clothes (dress) clean
  - vi) Practice of toilet habits
  - vii) Washing the hands before eating food
  - viii) Washing mouth after taking food
  - ix) Eating food without mess
  - x) Using handkerchief as and when necessary
  - xi) Blowing nose properly
  - xii) Washing his handkerchief, towel, tumbler, lunch box etc., and keep them clean.

- xiii) Developing proper postures such as how to sit while eating and how to stand while talking, and
- xiv) Developing proper habits of living in well ventilated places and open surroundings.

## 2. DEVELOPS THE HABIT OF KEEPING CLEAN THE ROOMS, SURROUNDINGS, BATH ROOM, TOILET ETC.

### Suitable activities

- i) Picking up bits of paper from floor
- ii) Dusting the furniture
- iii) Sweeping floor, play field
- iv) Pouring water after using the toilets
- v) Putting things, play equipment in proper place and
- vi) Keeping the floor neat and clean by using indigenous materials like clay, white clay etc.

## 3. LEARN ABOUT CONDITIONS WHICH LEAD TO COMMON AILMENTS :

Some of the precautionary points to be presented to children are :

- i) Use handkerchief when the nose is running
- ii) Cover the mouth while coughing
- iii) Do not spit everywhere
- iv) Do not pickup anything from the ground and eat it.
- v) Do not eat stale food.

## 4. DEVELOP GOOD FOOD HABITS

Although home environment nurtures food habits and little can be done by a Balwadi, yet keeping in view the fact that mostly parents in rural areas are themselves not aware of the principles of nutrition and the constituents of the various food items, the preschool teacher in the Balwadi has to help children to develop good food habits. This can be done in two ways.

- i) Creating an awareness in the child about good food, especially about vegetables, fruits, milk and milk products like curds, and cheese and
- ii) Creating in the child such attitudes that he may take his food willingly and cheerfully at regular timings.

To develop the habit of personal cleanliness, mid-day meal programme would be an important activity of the Balwadi. It can be organized with the help of community resources or with the help of the local authorities like the Panchayat Samiti or the Municipal Corporation.

## **B. Activities for Emotional and Social Development:**

This major objective can be further divided into the following minor objectives in the context of a Balwadi.

- 1) Develop sound emotional expressions and control.
- 2) Develop proper social relations with the equals, elders and adults.
- 3) Live harmoniously with the community.
- 4) Develop self-confidence in the child to
  - a) Express his emotions spontaneously and with control.
  - b) Develop socially acceptable habits.
  - c) Develop respect of property of one's own and others.
  - d) Develop self-assertion and a sense of independence; and
  - e) Participate in the social activities of the community.

The Balasevika should feel satisfied if she finds the emergence of the following behavioural outcomes in the children.

- 1) The child is not disturbed when some of his needs are not met instantly;
- 2) Expresses his emotions spontaneously;
- 3) Has control over strong emotions like anger, outbursts, crying fits;
- 4) Greets his equals, elders and adults in a proper manner;
- 5) Waits for his turn in a group;
- 6) Shares his things with others;
- 7) Can perform well the role of a leader as well as a follower;
- 8) Develops friendship with others; and
- 9) Shows sympathy to fellow children during periods of sorrow, suffering, accidents or loss.

Opportunities need to be provided to children with adequate guidance to develop as indicated above. To develop patriotism and responsible citizenship, the children need to learn to

- 1) Respect the national flag,
- 2) Sing the national anthem, and
- 3) Participate enthusiastically in national festivals.

Development of self-confidence, is of utmost importance for proper emotional growth. Self-Confidence can be fostered by providing children with opportunities to:

- 1) Speak clearly and confidently;
- 2) Sing spontaneously and clearly;

- 3) Narrate stories ;
- 4) Recite rhymes ;
- 5) Talk freely with others ;
- 6) Participate in dramas ;
- 7) Play ; and
- 8) Work confidently while engaged in gardening and other activities.

**C. Programmes for Intellectual, Language and Aesthetic Development :**

This objective can further be spelt out as to develop in the child.

- 1) Observational abilities through the five senses of touch, sight, sound, smell and taste.
- 2) Scientific attitudes to develop objectivity, curiosity and spirit of adventure.
- 3) Reasoning by inducing him to understand the cause and effect relationship and inculcating in him the ability to solve problems at his level ; to think and talk in sequence ; to judge situations and spatial relations.
- 4) Science and mathematical concepts, namely, the concepts of the human body, time and season, shape, size and colour, living and non living things, number and volumes.
- 5) Proper attitudes of listening and comprehension.
- 6) Power of verbal and non-verbal expression by developing appropriate vocabulary, proper use of words and use of creative and imaginative expression.
- 7) Readiness to read by developing identification, discrimination, comparison, synthesis and construction of words and sentences.
- 8) Readiness to write by developing small muscle control, eye span and eye-hand coordination
- 9) Aesthetic sensitivity in the child so that he may appreciate beauty in nature ; man made art and craft ; rhythm and harmony in music and also take to creative expression in the forms of speech, action and activity.

In addition to developing attitudes and values through the curriculum, the preschool needs to offer also the following services.

**1. HEALTH SERVICES**

The young child should receive health services which should include :

- a) Immunization against common communicable diseases, such as smallpox, tuberculosis, tetanus, diphtheria, whooping cough and poliomyelities.

- b) Monitoring of growth and development to detect deviation from normal and to ensure intervention for preventive action through maintenance of health cards.
- c) Provision of benefits of improved environmental sanitation and adequate water supply, and
- d) Use of mass communication media to receive health education.

These services constitute an essential factor for the success of the family planning programme and vice versa. Therefore, a close link should be established between these activities to support each other.

## 2. NUTRITION SERVICES

The preschool age child is most vulnerable nutritionally. The following minimum nutritional services should, therefore, be provided :

- a) Nutritional support by means of supplementary feeding to all preschool children in the weaker economic segments of the population. This being necessary, measures should be taken to produce nutritious foods with local resources at cheap prices and to make them available to those in great need;
- b) Facilities for the detection of early cases of malnutrition in all health agencies, to prevent the cases from reaching a stage of no return of necessitating rehabilitation ; and
- c) Nutrition education through appropriate methods at all levels and with the help of all relevant agencies.

## 3. EDUCATION SERVICES

Balwadi programmes provide scope for motor and physical growth opportunity for children to live and learn with other children and adults, and to learn about the world around. Facilities like the Play Centres, Balwadies and pre-primary schools should be available for learning through activities and aesthetic and cultural experiences. To facilitate this, emphasis should be on training the staff in the utilisation of locally available materials for play and also on encouraging production of cheap, play equipment for this age-group.

## 4. SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES

Strengthening family life, family life education, utilising effectively services available for preschool children; assistance to families for resolving social, emotional and economic problems and community involvement in preschool children's programmes, are some of the major areas where social welfare services should be used effectively.

## **How to Organise a Balwadi**

### **Essential Features of a Balwadi Building**

The following are essential in a Balwadi building

#### **1. THE SITUATION**

A Balwadi must not be situated far from the main habitation of the people. It should be about a quarter or at the most half a mile from the campus of a village or town. It must also have some open space which could be used for gardening and outdoor play.

#### **2. THE BUILDING**

The first thing needed in a Balwadi building is spaciousness. Children must have freedom of movement. Their progress should not be hindered on account of shortage of space. So the rooms must be at least 18' x 22' with wide lobbies. The number of rooms must be in proportion to the number of children in a Balwadi. One room and a lobby with open space are required for 20 to 25 children. If there are more children, more rooms must be added.

The rooms must be well-lighted and well-ventilated.

#### **3. THE COMPOUND**

The open space should be big enough for a play ground. Materials for outdoor exercises should be provided in one part, open space should be left for outdoor games and the third part should be utilised for children's garden. If open space is big enough, a portion can be reserved for a kitchen garden, and another for children's experimental gardening.

### **Duration-Working Days and Hours**

Young children can participate actively in the school programme for about three hours a day only. More than three hours will exhaust them.

The duration of the Nursery School may, therefore, be three hours and preferably in the morning. For the two-and-a-half-year olds this period may be shortened by half an hour. Children of this age group may come to school half an hour late in the morning or may go back home earlier. However if the Balwadi aims to cater to the needs of working mothers, then the children should be kept in the Balwadi for the whole day and proper arrangements for their meals and rest should be made in the Balwadi.

The working hours of the teachers and the other adult helpers should be at least one hour more than the school hours. The teachers should come to school at least fifteen minutes before the school time, to see to the

cleanliness of the class room and also to welcome the children. After the school is over the teachers should stay back to arrange the room, keep the materials in their proper places and then plan and prepare for the next day's programme.

It is best to have a five day week for the children so that the teacher is free on Saturday to do the home visits, to see to the repair of the equipment, or evaluate the week's programme.

### **Schedule of the Day**

Good organization is essential if all adults are to work to best advantage. Written work schedules are more satisfactory than verbal directions. Below is a sample schedule for a short day. This is the schedule for Balwadi with feeding programme. The activities can be modified according to the area and specific objectives of the school.

8.30— 9.00	Arrival and health inspection Children directed to own groups or activities.
9.00—10.00	Planned activities in small groups with materials and equipment which will develop physically, socially and intellectually.
10.00—10.30	Toilet and rest period.
10.30—11.30	Planned activities-earlier activities may be continued and new ones introduced. Emphasis should be placed on quieter activities toward the end of the morning.
11.30—12.00	Toilet, washing and preparation of lunch.
12.00—12.30	Lunch period
12.30— 1.00	Toilet and washing
1.00— 3.00	Sleep period
3.00— —	Washing Toilet Home or play.

If there is no school lunch programme the children may go home and return after lunch. If there is only one session it closes at 12 or 12.30. These days people prefer two sessions as the mothers are employed and there may not be anyone to take care of the child at home.

The suggested duration for children of different age groups in the Balwadi is given below:

SUGGESTED DAILY SCHEDULE FOR A BALWADI

Duration - Approximately 4 Hours

Approximate time to be allotted in minutes	Programme for preschool children of the age group 2½ to 3½ years	Programme for preschool children of the age group 3½ to 4½ years	Programme for preschool children of the age group 4½ to 5½ years
5—10	Exchange of greetings between the children and the preschool teacher. Free conversation.	Exchange of greetings and free conversation.	Exchange of greetings and free conversation.
15—20	Cleanliness check - up - Personal cleanliness activities to be done by the teacher in order to keep the bodies of the children clean.	Cleanliness check - up - personal cleanliness activities to be done by the children with the assistance of the teacher.	Cleanliness check - up - personal cleanliness, activities to be done by the children with the assistance of the teacher.
20—30	Outdoor play activities. (The helper may watch the children at this time)	Organized activities on alternate days with stress on, activities pertaining to the development of language, science and mathematical concepts construction and creative activities on alternate days. Visits to the near by spots once in a week.	Constructive and creative activities on alternate days. Organized activities pertaining to the development of reading readiness and science and mathematical concepts on alternate days. Visits to the nearby spots once in a week.
10—15	Keeping the play equipment at the proper place with the help of the children.	Keeping the equipment at the proper place with the help of the children.	Keeping the equipment at the proper place with the help of the children.

Approximate time to be allotted in minutes	Programme for preschool children of the age group 2½ to 3½ years	Programme for preschool children of the age group 3½ to 4½ years	Programme for preschool children of the age group 4½ to 5½ years
30—40	Organised group activities eg. music for three days in a week, observation of nearby spots once in a week. Outdoor / indoor science activities once in a week and dramatization once in a week.	Outdoor play activities and gardening (The helper may watch the children at this time)	Outdoor play activities and gardening (The helper may watch the children at this time)
15—20	Toilet, washing and preparation for the mid - day meal.	Toilet, washing and preparation for the mid-day-meal.	Toilet, washing and preparation for the mid - day meal
20—30	Mid - day meal.	Mid - day meal	Mid - day meal
20—30	Rest and free play	Rest and free play	Rest and free play
20—30	Story - telling, puppet - stories, picture book conversation and other creative activities.	Painting (Scribbling), clay modelling and other constructional and creative activities.	Painting and clay modelling and other constructional and creative activities.
5—10	Singing and prayer. Departure of the children after exchange of good - bye or 'Namaste'.	Singing and prayer. Departure of the children after exchange of good - bye or 'Namaste'.	Singing and prayer. Departure of the children after exchange of good - bye or 'Namaste'.

### **Teacher-Pupil Ratio**

The teacher-pupil ratio is the most critical factor for the effective working of the Balwadi. As the children are very young in the Balwadi, this ratio has to be very high. The ideal teacher-child ratio for the younger age group of children will be 1:8 or 1:10 but as it is not possible in a country like India, we may stretch it to 1:20 for the younger age group and 1:25 for the older group, provided an adult helper's services are available to the teacher.

There should be at least two adults present with the children at all times as accidents or any other emergency may arise at a moment which demands from the teacher individual attention for the child in trouble. In such a case if there is no other adult present the rest of the children will be neglected. This is absolutely necessary especially where the Balwadi programme has to be conducted in more than one room or when the children are allowed to play indoors and outdoors at the same time.

### **Teacher Training**

To work with small children effectively and fulfil the objective of Nursery School Education a teacher should have special training in this field. A sound knowledge of the development characteristics of children is essential for running the Balwadi programme effectively. The objectives and educational values of the programme can be easily defeated by faulty procedures, mistakes in the presentation of play activities and wrong guidance. So it is very necessary that teachers should have some Supervision from time to time.

It safeguards the possibility of misinterpreting Balwadi procedures. Short refresher courses, workshops or even visits to other schools give new ideas to the teachers and thus increase their efficiency.

### **Equipment for the Balwadi**

Here is a list of equipment required for a Balwadi with 40 children. These are some kinds of equipment which are absolutely necessary to provide all round development of the child.

#### **Outdoor play equipment (Development of large muscles)**

<b>Name of the Item</b>	<b>Quantity</b>
1. Jungle gym (Bamboo)	1
2. Swings	2
3. Tricycles	1
4. Two-wheeled baby cycle with support	1
5. Rubber balls (large)	2
6. Rubber balls (medium)	2

Name of the Item	Quantity
7. Watering cans	6
8. Rope ladder	1
9. Monkey swing	1

### Indoor Play Equipment

Doll's corner, 4 or 5 dolls. Household articles such as cooking materials, tea-set, doctor's set. A box full of costumes made out of old dresses, handbags, shoes, caps, peg board, rattlers, musical instruments, number board and gardening equipment (These may be collected from parents).

### Building Block Corner

A shelf with different sized and shaped building blocks to construct different structures as given below.

i) 8 Rectangular planks	L 8" B 4"	Thickness 1"
8 Small Bricks	L 6" B 3"	.. 1"
8 Big Bricks	L 8" B 4"	.. 2"
8 Arches	L 8" H 5"	
8 Semi circles	Radius 4"	
8 Cylinders	Height 6"	Diameter 2"
8 Triangles	Base 8"	Height 4"

All these building blocks should be painted with different bright enamel colours.

- ii) A box of small building blocks-96 pieces, size of bricks being 4" in length, 2" in width and 4" in thickness.
- iii) Wooden trains, cars, trucks, pulling toys.

### Constructive Material

- i) Different types of plastic materials which can be fitted together, like multimoons, house building sets, etc.
- ii) Wooden construction toys like Magic Man, Pink Tower etc.
- iii) Picture puzzle trays.

Pictures of animals, cars, buses etc. should be of interest to children. There should be at least 2 trays of puzzles with two or three pieces which can be fitted by very young children. There may be a few puzzles with four or five pieces for the older group. These materials are not readily available in the market.

**Threading the Beads**

1 Kilo of small beads of three basic colours-Red, blue and yellow.  
500 big wooden beads, plastic thread  
6 plastic-medium sized bowls

**Painting, Drawing and clay and Plasticine Work**

Brush painting for 4 double sided easels where 8 children can work.  
20 big brushes, No. 12  
Big sheets of paper  
Different powder colours-3 basic colours, 750 gms each and 5 bowls for finger painting.  
Crayons-12 boxes of crayons and Big sheets of paper  
clay-keep a basin full of wet clay ready  
Plasticine - 6 packets.

**Carpentry Tools**

6 Hammers  
Nails  
Pieces of soft wood (Dismantle a few packing cases and use these planks)

**Play with Paper**

10 scissors (Small and blunt headed)  
old magazines  
old newspapers  
gum, thread

**Collage Work**

Wool pieces, cloth pieces, silver and gold paper (collected from toffees, biscuit packets), feathers, leaves, seeds, saw dust burnt match sticks etc.

**Picture Books**

At least 20 selected picture books.

**Musical Instruments**

4 small drums  
1 big drum for teacher's use  
6 or 8 pairs of bells  
4 pairs of manjiras

**Science Equipment**

1 powerful magnifying glass  
1 brass of powerful magnets

### **Articles for Cleaning Activities**

- 6 small brooms
- 6 dusting cloth
- 6 small buckets
- 1 tin of Vim
- 1 packet of soap powder

### **Other Articles Required in Balwadi**

- 6 small plastic bowls - for different handwork activities
- 40 plastic plates - for snacks
- 40 tumblers - each child should have a separate tumbler
- Towels - if there are adequate funds, each child should be given a separate towel
- 20 aprons - can be made out of old shirts
- 2 display boards
- 1 First Aid Box

### **Necessary Wooden Equipment**

Chair	...	1
Table	...	1
Blackboard	...	1
Shelf	...	1

### **Kitchen Equipment**

Cement tub	...	1
Buckets	...	2
Mugs	...	4
Aluminium Dekshi with lid	...	2
Aluminium basin	...	2
Large spoon	...	1
Spoons medium	...	3
Frying pan	...	1
Plates	...	45
Plastic container	...	3
Tins big size	...	2
Tumblers	...	45
Stove big	...	1
Knife	...	1
Sieve	...	1

Muram	...	1
Cleaning brushes	...	1
Waste paper basket	...	1
Carpets	...	45
Napkins	...	45

A Balwadi teacher should be a good collector. She should collect plenty of waste material, good pictures, different types of butterflies, insects, birds' nests etc., to show to children. She should be interested in everything, for then only can she make children interested in their surroundings.

### **Ways and Means to Increase Facilities in Pre-school Education**

Considering how crucial the preschool years are, one cannot doubt the immediate need for expansion of preschool education facilities. But the problem is one of finding the required resources. It is certainly a hurdle but not one which cannot be surmounted. Ways and means could be thought of in using inexpensive methods of preschool education. Some of these may be:

- 1) to involve the community in the endeavour and enlist their support in cash or kind for this movement.
- 2) to devise play equipments out of indigenous materials which are easily available in the rural areas.
- 3) to train local women through short term courses for teaching the children whenever trained teachers are not available.

Thus there are ways and means of expanding facilities for preschool education. One should not be under the misconception that it is exorbitantly expensive. What is important are careful programme planning and adequate teacher preparation, so that whatever schemes are undertaken in the field are operatively effective and advantageous to children.

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