

SCHOOLASTIC NEWS

IMPACT-FOCUSED SCHOOL COMMUNITY MAGAZINE

Exclusive Interview with
Mr. Sunil Bajaj, Director,
SCERT, Gurugram, Haryana
The Rapid Aging Paradox: Progeria,
A Rare Disorder



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**THE RISE OF
EXPERIENTIAL
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The School Membership Program helps the school instill experiential learning, holistic development, skill building and financial literacy in children further preparing them for their life after school.

available as a standalone engagement activity

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Daily Bookstagram Fix

Reading, as a cultural practice, is witnessing a decline in popularity, with digitalization taking center stage. Today, nearly all content and books are available online, prompting many to prefer reading digitally instead of purchasing physical books. Despite this shift, the benefits of reading remain undeniable, contributing immensely to personal growth and development. Reading ignites a passion that allows us to imagine and deeply connect with the stories we consume. People explore diverse genres, from horror and real-life accounts to biographies and art-inspired tales, enriching their perspectives.

In response to changing times, platforms like Bookstagram have emerged, blending traditional reading habits with social media trends. While Bookstagram provides a new avenue for readers to engage with literature, it differs

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Editorial Lead

Dear Schoolastic Readers

Welcome to the December issue of Schoolastic News! As the year winds down and the school calendar brims with activity, we're thrilled to present a vibrant edition that celebrates the achievements, creativity, and collective spirit of our dynamic community.

This month, we bring you highlights from extraordinary events across schools, from the mesmerizing performances at the Annual Day of **Jaypee Public School, Noida**, to the warm reception of young athletes at the **68th National School Games** in Jammu & Kashmir. Another spotlight is the GNPS FairGaze MUN in Dalhousie, an exceptional collaboration with **Guru Nanak Public School**, which underscored the power of dialogue and diversity in fostering global connections.

We are honoured to feature an exclusive interview with **Mr. Sunil Bajaj, Director of SCERT Gurugram**, whose pioneering contributions—such as to NCERT textbooks and innovative mathematics labs—continue to shape education and inspire inclusivity. Complementing this, **Ms. Varsha Singh, Vice Principal of Career Defence School, Haryana**, shares a thoughtful piece, "Education: Sculpting Souls, Shaping Leaders," emphasizing the transformative potential of learning in building future leaders.

Our pages also include a delightful exploration of **Bookbins** and their mission to promote a culture of reading. Founder **Dr. Marut Amrutiya** shares his personal journey of discovery through books, showing us how reading nurtures personal and intellectual growth.

This issue is a celebration of our shared energy, passion, and creativity. From student voices to expert insights, it's brimming with inspiration and a testament to the incredible talent within our community.

We hope these stories ignite your curiosity and encourage you to embrace collaboration and learning as we move toward the new year. Thank you to all who contributed to making this edition memorable.

Here's to a December filled with discovery and growth!

Warm regards,

Bhavna Sharma

Editorial Lead

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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH **MR. SUNIL BAJAJ,** DIRECTOR, SCERT, GURUGRAM, HARYANA



Introducing Mr. Sunil Bajaj, an esteemed educationist and Director at SCERT Haryana, Gurugram, with over 20 years of service experience in the field of education. His significant contributions span across various renowned institutions such as NCERT, NIEPA, HBCSE, KVs, IGNOU, and SIASTE, where he has served as a resource person. Mr. Bajaj has presented his scholarly work at both international and national platforms, including prestigious events at Helsinki University, ICME 15 Sydney, IIT Gandhinagar, HBCSE TIFR Mumbai, and RIE NCERT, among others.

A highly respected figure in mathematics education, Mr. Bajaj was honored by the Governor of Haryana for his innovative development of the

Mathematics Lab at SCERT. He has created numerous Teaching-Learning Materials (TLMs), including "Sogol," which was selected for display at the Mathematics Lab of HBCSE, TIFR Mumbai. He has also been an author and member of NCERT's textbook development team, contributing to Class 12 Mathematics textbooks, Exemplar Problems, and Mathematics Lab Manuals for classes 11 and 12.

Beyond his role as an author, Mr. Bajaj has published articles in various educational magazines, participated in the development of a math kit and module for early learners, and played an active role in reviewing textbooks for classes 9 and 11. His unique puzzles such as the Harbans and Kashmiri Amrit puzzles have gained recognition, with publications in

renowned journals like At Right Angles by Azim Premji University. Furthermore, he has been instrumental in the professional development of teachers at both national and state levels, including his work with National PM e-Vidya Channel and the Kendriya Vidyalaya.

Mr. Bajaj's dedication to advancing mathematics education, coupled with his development of animated math activities in collaboration with IIT Delhi, makes him a key contributor to modern pedagogical approaches in India. In this interview, we explore his remarkable journey, innovations in math education, and his vision for the future of teaching and learning.

Read the excerpt below to learn more about him through our Journalist, Ms.

Swati Priya.

• **How has your role evolved at SCERT over the years, and what key milestones have you achieved during your tenure?**

I began my journey with SCERT Haryana in 2004, initially setting up the Mathematics Department, which I led as

Since 2023, I have been serving as Joint Director, continuing to drive innovation and quality in educational policy and teacher training at SCERT Haryana. For a year I had also been assigned the responsibilities of the Director, SCERT. Each step has been an opportunity to impact education at a larger scale, shaping programs that benefit both

My collaborations with esteemed institutions like NCERT, NIEPA, HBCSE, and IIT Delhi have been invaluable in shaping my approach to mathematics education. Through participation in numerous conferences and workshops, I have gained insights that have inspired me to design innovative, animated math activities and create effective Teaching-



Head of Department for several years. This foundational role allowed me to develop and implement several key initiatives to enhance math education across the state. Later, I transitioned to the position of Deputy Director, where I expanded my focus to broader educational programs and reforms.

educators and students across the state.

• **You've collaborated with esteemed institutions like NCERT, NIEPA, HBCSE, and IIT Delhi. Could you share how these collaborations have shaped your approach to mathematics education?**

Learning Materials (TLMs). One notable project, 'Sogol,' was selected for display at the Mathematics Lab of HBCSE, TIFR Mumbai, reflecting the program's quality and creativity. Additionally, the Mathematics Lab developed at SCERT Haryana earned recognition as the best lab in Asia, a milestone that highlights



our commitment to excellence in math education.

• You were honored by the Governor of Haryana for your work in developing an innovative mathematics lab at SCERT. Can you elaborate on what makes this lab unique and how it benefits students and educators?

The Mathematics Lab at SCERT Haryana stands out as a unique and innovative space designed to make complex mathematical concepts accessible. The lab features hand- made 3D models that visually represent topics like differentiation, integration, and 3D geometry concepts often perceived as challenging by students. These models provide a tangible, interactive experience that helps both students and educators grasp these

abstract ideas with ease. The lab's success has been recognized on various platforms, and being honored by the Governor of Haryana for this



achievement underscores its positive impact on mathematics education.

• As an author and contributor to

NCERT textbooks and lab manuals, what challenges did you face in aligning the curriculum with the evolving needs of students?

As an author and contributor to NCERT textbooks and lab manuals, one of the main challenges was developing fresh ideas, questions, Teaching-Learning Material (TLMs), and activities that resonate with students' evolving needs. To create activities that closely reflect real-life situations, we conducted numerous discussions with both teachers and students. These activities were trialed with many students, and the results were carefully analyzed to make further improvements. A significant initiative was the introduction of puzzles, designed to enhance problem-solving skills and engage students in a



way that's both educational and enjoyable.

• What is the story behind the development of "Sogol"? How do you incorporate creativity into your teaching materials to make learning math enjoyable?

'Sogol' was inspired by a Teaching-Learning Material called Ganit Mala (developed by Zodo Gyan), which, while effective, was costly, challenging to handle, and relied heavily on demonstration. To address these issues, I designed 'Sogol' as a more accessible, durable, and cost-effective alternative.

Its versatile strips can be used across multiple concepts, including place value, fractions, decimal fractions, measurement, estimation, and operations like addition, subtraction, and multiplication, starting from Class I. 'Sogol' has been displayed at the HBCSE Mumbai Math Lab and presented at

institutions like Azim Premji University and NCERT, where it received considerable appreciation. It's also been successfully implemented in the NISHTHA teacher training program, making math learning hands-on and enjoyable for students.

• In your opinion, how can digital tools and animated activities (such as those you developed with IIT Delhi) revolutionize math teaching in India?

The Mathematics Laboratory at SCERT

experience the benefits of the lab environment in a digital format. Such digital tools have the potential to revolutionize math education in India, making learning more engaging, scalable, and accessible.

• As an experienced educator, what message would you like to give to young students struggling with mathematics?

My message to young students struggling with mathematics is to

• How do you see your role evolving in the coming years, especially in contributing to India's educational landscape?

In the coming years, I see my role evolving to make a broader impact on India's educational landscape. This includes organizing conferences at SCERT and inviting experts to foster a collaborative learning environment. I aim to bridge the gap between higher education and school education by



Haryana took six years to develop, and from the beginning, there was a strong desire to make its resources accessible to schools across Haryana. However, establishing a physical lab in each school was both costly and logistically challenging. To overcome this, we partnered with IIT Delhi to transform all math models and activities into animated digital content. This approach allowed us to share interactive, high-quality resources with teachers across the state, enabling students to

approach it with a growth mindset. Research from Stanford University highlights that all students can excel in math when provided with challenging problems and encouraged to solve them independently. The key is to persist, learn from mistakes, and not lose confidence after setbacks. In Haryana, we've introduced a 'Puzzle Corner' in every school to foster this mindset allowing students to engage with math creatively, build resilience, and discover the joy of problem-solving.

integrating advanced research from national and international institutions into our curriculum. Additionally, I plan to focus on identifying key areas for the personal and professional growth of teachers, improving the infrastructure at SCERT and DIETs, and establishing resourceful Block and Cluster-level centers' staffed with experts. These initiatives are envisioned to create a strong, interconnected educational system that supports both educators and students.

FAIRGAZE OFFERINGS

School Membership Program

The School Membership Program helps the school instill experiential learning, holistic development, skill building and financial literacy in children further preparing them for their life after school.

available as a standalone engagement activity

1. ONLINE WORKSHOPS

Conducted by professional mentors for students, teachers and parents focused on knowledge and skill building.



available as a standalone engagement activity

3. COUNSELLING SESSIONS

Organized for school children with expert counsellors to highlight and destigmatize important mental health issues



available as a standalone engagement activity

2. FAIRTALKS

Panel discussion organized on integral subjects around the education of India, covers ideas and perspectives from eminent panel of educationists.



available as a standalone engagement activity

4. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOAL CAMPAIGNS

Led by eminent educationists and esteemed judges. Intricately designed to promote and implement UN SDGs in the school community.



5. CUSTOMIZED ONLINE SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Covers all school activities, events and achievements of the school, engages children to fetch stories/content of the school further furnished and designed by FairGaze.



6. MODEL UNITED NATIONS & VARIOUS EVENTS & CONTESTS

FairGaze organizes MUN for students of member school who role-play as UN delegates and simulate a session.

Children get opportunities to show case their talent in various creative contests by FairGaze.



available as a standalone engagement activity

7. STUDENTS' JOURNALISM TRAINING & SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

FairGaze trains students on journalistic skills, hosting webinars, hosting MUN, audience management etc.



8. SCHOOL'S MEDIA COVERAGE & PRPOMOTIONS

FairGaze brings the schools' activities, events highlights, mission and vision of the school leaders outside to the entire K-12 fraternity.



9. BRAND EXPOSURE

FairGaze has partnered with Dabur, Decathlon, Fortis, etc to bring sponsorships and organize students' focused engagement activities & contests.



Recent FairGaze Engagements

NEWS COVERAGE



68TH NATIONAL SCHOOL GAMES IN JAMMU: ARRIVAL OF THE JHARKHAND TEAM

The 68th National School Games, which began in Jammu on November 7, 2024, and will run until December 10, 2024. On November 15, the Jharkhand team arrived to compete in Under-17 Fencing, consisting of 17 athletes. The Jharkhand team received a warm and traditional welcome in Jammu, with officials from the Department of Youth Services and Sports adorning the players and staff with garlands, reflecting the region's hospitality. Members of the department, including Mukesh Sharma, Mandeep Singh, and Jasvinder Kour, were present to honour their arrival. Deputy Director Jatinder Mishra commended the team's preparation and motivated them.



GNPS FAIRGAZE MUN 1.0



FairGaze MUN, in collaboration with Guru Nanak Public School, Dalhousie hosted the GNPS FairGaze MUN 1.0, featuring two committees: ECOSOC and ILO. Each committee focused on addressing important global issues, with students actively engaging in discussions. Their presentations highlighted their deep understanding of complex topics and their ability to think critically. Delegates gained invaluable insights into international relations, stepping into the roles of global leaders while expanding their knowledge, making new connections, and broadening their perspectives.



EVENT COVERAGE



JAYPEE PUBLIC SCHOOL,
NOIDA



ANNUAL DAY



FairGaze proudly covered the Annual Day celebration at Jaypee Public School, Noida, a grand event themed Global Symphony—Celebrating Diversity. Held on Saturday, 16th November 2024, at 11:30 a.m. at the esteemed Jaypee Institute of Information Technology (JIIT), Noida, the event was a vibrant showcase of cultural heritage and artistic expression.

Students enthralled the audience with mesmerizing dance performances representing diverse cultures, beautifully highlighting the unity in India's diversity. In addition to dance, the students staged captivating acts and skits, creatively portraying the rich traditions and cultural essence of various Indian states. The event was a heartfelt celebration of inclusivity, creativity, and the spirit of togetherness.



The Annual Day left the attendees spellbound with its energy, enthusiasm, and artistry, making it a joyous occasion to cherish and remember. It reflected the hard work and dedication of the students, staff, and organizers, leaving an indelible mark on everyone present.



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EDUCATION: SCULPTING SOULS, SHAPING LEADERS

MS. VARSHA SINGH, VICE PRINCIPAL, CAREER DEFENCE SCHOOL, HARYANA

Knowledge has three components. Creativity, righteousness, and courage. The combination of these characteristics can generate enlightened citizens."

Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam, former President of India

Leadership and learning should never be considered separate, distinct elements in educational programs. Each of us must always be willing to learn and lead as we strive towards academic, professional and personal excellence in schools. Knowledge gained in classrooms has to be augmented by practical experience in the community. With this concept in mind we should structure a very strong community program which provide different opportunities to students to take leadership initiatives and prove themselves in different roles .

Academic program coupled with vast selection of outstanding athletic and extracurricular activities can make any school a vibrant, welcoming ,child centered environment where student can grow into leaders.

EDUCATION LAYS THE FOUNDATION FOR THE FULFILLMENT OF A PERSON'S DREAMS AND ASPIRATIONS.

In this times of immense change uncertainty and opportunity it is imperative that we as educator continue to ask ourselves what is mean to be educated? Is getting 99% marks is enough to say that "I am educated" ...we must check the real life application of what the student has learnt ...is he/she able to utilise his/her learning to real life? or to deal with the daily life issues??

I personally feel that any institution worth its name has the onus to Infuse



fresh life into the contours of a decadent educational system of today ready to totter at any moment by the blow of frenzy of 'westernism and consumerism ' The only 'Mantra' that can revive and salvage the collapsing value system would be social sanitization in schools.

The education of today should make it there business to churn out children rich in sensitivity and sensibility which is strongly imbued in them so that they can be ambassadors of compassion can fortify their courage of conviction,

espouse a cause and have the tenacity to hold on to their conviction and not to be deterred or intimidated by obstacles ,resistance and oppositions.

I would like to say in the end that the boulders that came in the way of our long journey of education should prove to be a milestone to make education an immortal and the educators to be remembered till eternity. What sculptures is to a block of marble

Education is to the human soul.

"Turning Pages, Capturing Stories: Your Daily Bookstagram Fix "



In response to changing times, platforms like Bookstagram have emerged, blending traditional reading habits with social media trends. While Bookstagram provides a new avenue for readers to engage with literature, it differs significantly from traditional books. It offers book recommendations, reviews, and a variety of content centered on reading and literacy, creating a vibrant online community for book lovers.

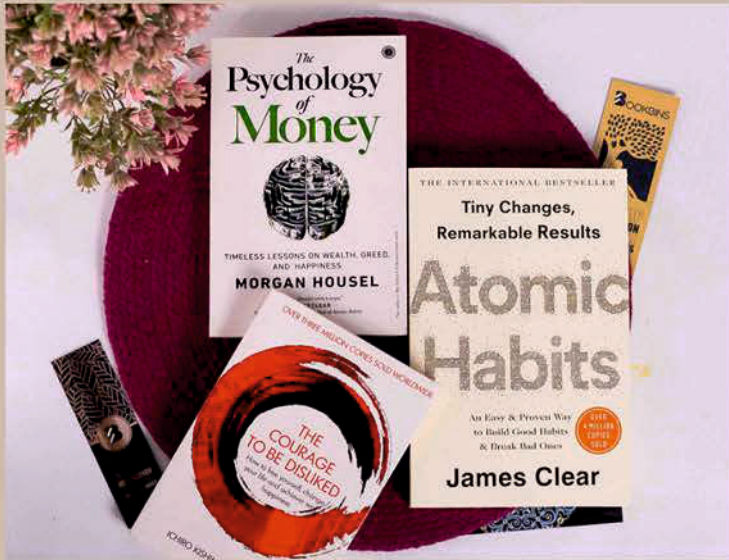


Reading, as a cultural practice, is witnessing a decline in popularity, with digitalization taking center stage. Today, nearly all content and books are available online, prompting many to prefer reading digitally instead of purchasing physical books. Despite this shift, the benefits of reading remain undeniable, contributing immensely to personal growth and development. Reading ignites a passion that allows us to imagine and deeply connect with the stories we consume. People explore diverse genres, from horror and real-life accounts to biographies and art-inspired tales, enriching their perspectives.



Today's fast-paced generation values quick and convenient access to everything, and Bookstagram aligns perfectly with this demand. Among the various social media platforms, Instagram is the most popular, with a rapidly growing user base. This has fueled Bookstagram's popularity, though many people are still unaware of how it simplifies access to reading and makes it more approachable.

For those looking for a complete reading experience, Bookbins stands out as a dynamic online platform. Bookbins is one of the fastest-growing digital reading platforms, designed to support and enhance readers' journeys. It not only provides access to a versatile range of content but also helps users explore their reading interests and offers tailored assistance for their literary pursuits.



Bookbins serves as an online bookstore with a mission to revive the essence of book culture in a digital age. It aims to reconnect people with the joys of reading, ensuring they don't feel distanced from the traditional book experience, even in a virtual environment. With its comprehensive approach, Bookbins creates an engaging platform for both seasoned readers and newcomers to rediscover and cherish the art of reading.

The Story of Bookbins

Bookbins originated from a simple idea: making books affordable for students relying on pocket money. It began with a conversation between its founder and his book vendor—now a business partner and brother, Vikas. In February 2021, Bookbins launched its Instagram page to increase visibility for its book-selling venture. As the founder's reading habits grew, he began sharing valuable lessons from books, catering to those unable to purchase them or seeking quick, actionable insights. This shift marked a pivotal moment for the platform. The journey was not without challenges. In the early days, growing the Instagram presence was an uphill battle, marked by setbacks and moments of discouragement. However, persistence bore fruit. It took two years to reach the first major milestone of 10,000 followers. With the unwavering support of the community, today they have more than 300,000 enthusiastic reader followers just on their Instagram & they are available on almost all the social media platforms!

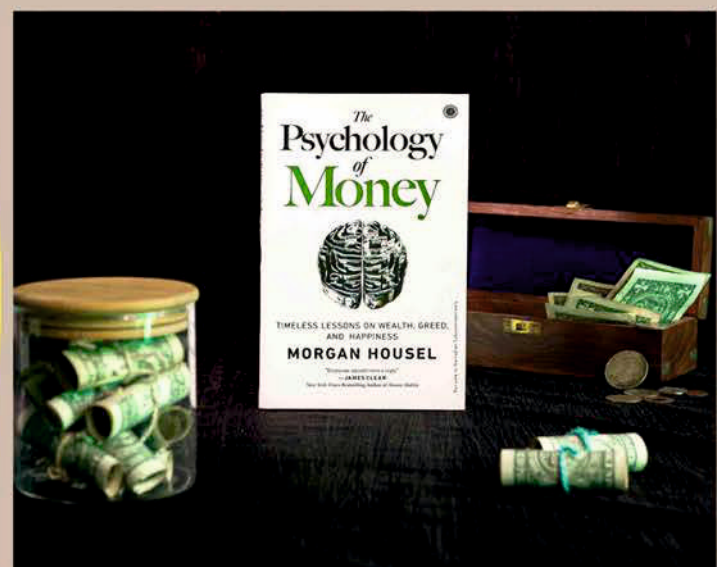
FOUNDER OF BOOKBINS



Dr. Marut Amrutiya

Dr. Marut Amrutiya, a 28-year-old budding entrepreneur and passionate reader, is currently pursuing his post-graduation (MD in Pharmacology) in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India. While his journey began as a medico, his love for books and entrepreneurship has driven him to explore new horizons alongside his medical career.

His reading journey began in the 10th grade when he secretly devoured Hindi and Gujarati books borrowed by his elder sister from her college library. Years later, during his MBBS internship, a friend introduced him to The 5 AM Club, reigniting his passion for reading. From struggling to read a page or two daily to now reading over 50 pages a day, his transformation has been remarkable!



RARE AWARENESS

THE RAPID AGING PARADOX: **PROGERIA,** **A RARE DISORDER**



Have you ever wondered if there is an existing disorder depicting the ever-evolving world we live in, where kids and teenagers age rapidly through the decisions and actions they put forward? Progeria is a rare genetic disorder that causes rapid aging within people, primarily starting in their childhood or early adulthood years.

Hutchinson-Gilford progeria syndrome, also known as HGPS, is a type of progeria that begins in an individual's childhood years, causing them to appear older than their current age. As they grow up, they don't gain the expected weight. However, they develop certain facial features such as a thin nose, thin lips, and a small chin. Children suffering from HGPS usually die through heart disease between the ages of 6 to 20. Tiffany Wedekind is the oldest

survivor to suffer from progeria, surviving up to 44 years.

Werner syndrome is a type of progeria, which begins in an individual's adulthood. Individuals suffering from this syndrome often experience greying of hair, shorter-than-average height, and unusual facial features, with an increased risk of sarcoma, thyroid cancer, and skin cancer. Progeria is predominantly caused by a change in one gene, known as Lamin A (LMNA), which holds the nucleus of a cell together. When this gene experiences any change, a flawed protein known as 'progerin' is produced which damages the nucleus, leading to premature aging and cell death. Studies have shown there is no particular cure for progeria. However, certain treatments can help in aiding this disease. Occupational

therapy can help patients with progeria develop their lifestyle, while physical therapy can help build muscle strength through workouts and movement. Several medications, such as statin and nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs, can help patients decrease the liver's production of harmful cholesterol, as well as decrease inflammation. In conclusion, progeria is a rare genetic disorder with no clear treatment but supervised solutions which can help patients improve their lifestyle while experiencing rapid aging.

By:
Nayra Shah
Class - 8

Navrachana International School,
Vadodara

RARE AWARENESS

EARLY SIGNS AND DIAGNOSIS OF AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD)

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) refers to a very complex neurodevelopmental condition causing individuals to perceive and interact differently with the world. Variability exists in the severity of the behavior and the symptoms it manifests. Early diagnosis is important because once a child is diagnosed with ASD, they can begin to learn how to properly deal with the sensitive interactions and necessary skills that make up a normal life. For parents, caregivers, and healthcare professionals, it is important to understand early signs and diagnostic processes in order to get timely intervention.

Autism Spectrum Disorder Early Signs.

The presentation of ASD often occurs in early childhood, before age 3. While every child develops at his or her own pace, some behavioral markers may indicate that additional testing of sight or hearing is needed. These early signs can be categorized into two main areas: restricted or repetitive behaviors plus social communication.

• Social Communication Challenges

Limited Eye Contact:

People with ASD may not look at caregivers or others around them. You might notice that they aren't interested in making or maintaining eye contact, which can be the first sign.

Delayed or Absence of Speech:

As many as 80 percent of children with ASD have delayed speech development or never learn to speak. They may not gesture, such as indicating or waving.

• Difficulty with Social Interactions:

Kids with ASD may have difficulty engaging in typical social interactions.

Never responding to their name or showing little interest in playing with other kids, requiring very little social cues such as body language or tone of voice, are some of the things they may not notice.

• Restricted and Repetitive Behaviors (RRBs)

Repetitive Movements:

Activities such as hand flapping, rocking, or spinning objects are repetitive and so can be observed in a child with ASD. Often self-soothing in nature, they can form as a way to cope with sensory overload.

Intense Focus on Specific Interests:

A child with ASD may become fixated on a single topic, an object, or a routine in that he shows an intense, narrow interest in that matter. So they could be obsessed with trains, dinosaurs, or getting toys in a particular order in line.

Early Diagnosis of the Importance

Early detection of ASD is key to early intervention, which has a big potential for improving children's outcomes. Childhood is a critical time in their lives, and the sooner a child can be diagnosed, the more soon they are able to access services like speech, occupational, and behavior intervention, to name a few.

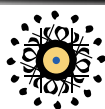
Diagnostic Process for ASD

Because there's no single medical test, like a blood test, to diagnose ASD, it can be difficult to diagnose. Rather, healthcare professionals present children's symptoms and behavioral issues to behavioral assessments and developmental screenings. The following steps are often part of the diagnostic process:



In conclusion, early signs of autism spectrum disorder are recognized, and accurate diagnoses are sought as they are crucial to support children with ASD. There is wide variation in symptoms of ASD, but parents and caregivers still must be on the lookout for how their child develops in terms of social communication and behavior. Early diagnosis gives the child an opportunity for timely intervention and can make a big difference to a child's potential. Concerned about your child's development, it's important to talk to a healthcare professional that can walk you through the diagnostic process and help you with the proper resources and contacts.

By:
Parth Yadav
Class - 12
Anand School for Excellence,
Haryana



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