

## AMI Primary Assistants Course (3-6 years)

- Aditi Ganesh

The 11<sup>th</sup> AMI Assistants course in Chennai, took place in Navadisha Montessori Foundation between June 5 and 15, 2017. The faculty which headed the students included Hemalatha Rangarajan, Ramya Sridhar and Dipa Srikumar.

Rafaela Raeela shared her experience of doing the course...

*"I've learned so much in these two weeks! I will definitely take away the patience and calmness of each of the three instructors. For me, the way they dealt with us, our questions, our anxieties, even our eventual scepticism, without confrontation and with plenty of opportunities for independence, is a proof of how powerful and effective this training was. The course deepened my understanding of how to work with children and also gave me confidence on the validity of the work that I was already doing independently, adding more context and substance to it. I definitely leave the course as a better person than I came in, more mature, self-aware, and thus more prepared to work with children in a way that suits their needs, and not mine. Thank you very much!"*

**The ten day course gave the students an opportunity to connect with the philosophy of Montessori and also arrive at a new perspective towards viewing children**

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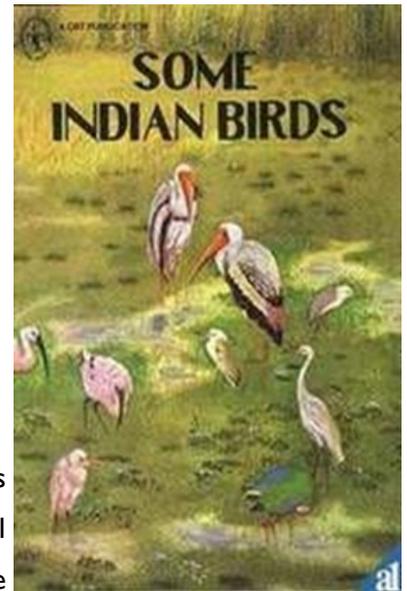
*Books are real and magical, simple and transcendent, right here and beyond, and an essential part of children's lives! We bring you a series of reviews of books suitable for children of different age groups. Watch this space in every issue for a different book!*

## Book Corner

- **Tarunya Gouthaman**

### **SOME INDIAN BIRDS**

Author - N. N. Majumdar  
Illustration - S. Basu Roy Choudhury and Pranab Chakravarti  
Publisher - Children's Book Trust, New Delhi, 1970  
ISBN No. - 81-7011-067-X



The book gives a glimpse about different Indian birds found in our country. The author talks about the physical features, habitats, food and lifecycle of each bird. The

content is compiled into brief paragraphs which are easy to read. Each page contains information about one bird supported by a lovely watercolor picture of the bird in its natural environment. This book is excellent for children who are bird lovers in the age group of 6-12 years. The book is also available in Hindi, Marathi and Bengali.

To get similar books visit the website [www.childrenstrust.com](http://www.childrenstrust.com)

## Role of Art in a Child's Life

- **Mehak Hemnani**

*In this special feature, we bring to you life stories of renowned artists, highlighting their childhood experiences and inspirations that made them what they are today.*

**Milind Date** is one of the finest Bansuri Players in the world. He is critically acclaimed for his immaculate Bansuri - Bamboo flute - playing and composing. He is one of the senior most disciples of world famous Bansuri virtuoso – Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia. With more than 3000 performances to his credit, Milind has a vast experience of performing on various stages and for various sizes of audience, ranging from 20 – 50000!

Milind is based in the city of Pune and began his musical training at the age of 21. He lived in an area of Pune which is quite old, traditional and conservative with a rich culture. Almost all the big theatres in Pune, around that time, were about half a kilometre from where he lived. Various smaller venues, where concerts, musical events and other such programmes were held, were at a shouting distance.

Hence, he would sneak into many such events and would have the opportunity to listen to some of the best musicians in the world, such as Ustad Bismillah Khan and Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia. This artistic atmosphere influenced him to a great extent and helped build his interest in music.

Milind's musical inclination was not tapped in his childhood. As a result, he does not remember having much childhood experience of playing music other than the creation of music using vessels at home. Later, however, he did play in the band section of RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh). As a part of it, he played almost every instrument in the band – trumpet, cornet, bugle, bagpipe and the like. He even created his own compositions and was one of the best players in the band of 50. Although his friend encouraged him to learn classical music, Milind didn't seem very keen initially. However, the one thing, he says, that truly inspired him was Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia's concert.

*He says, "As a child, I was exposed to some of the best music in the world"*

Milind underwent training under Pandit Ajit Soman in Pune for about 18 months. Later, he received the opportunity to learn under the Maestro - Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia in Mumbai following the Guru-Shishya Parampara. Within 2 to 3 years, Milind started playing the flute professionally. He even performed with the likes of Asha Bhosale, Suresh Wadkar, Jagjit Singh and eventually, his training eased down. Nonetheless, he says there are many aspects in musical training – theory, practical, technical etc. and thus, Milind was under his Pandit's continuous guidance from 1989 – 2000. He still learns from Mr. Hariprasad but not on a daily basis due to Milind's extensive travel schedule.

Following the Guru-Shishya Parampara, Milind is also involved in teaching the flute. He says earlier he used to get students in the age group of 25 – 30 years but recently 15 – 16 year olds have also undergone training under him. Milind feels the appropriate age for children to begin learning to play the flute would be 8 -10 years. This is not because flute playing is difficult but he feels that to develop any skill related to art, one must have a liking or inclination towards it. Nevertheless one cannot put an age limit on when children develop interests, he has met a child of about 6 – 7 years who has been playing flute since 4 years of age.

Moreover, Milind feels, not just playing flute or some other musical instrument but any kind of art education is extremely important in a child's life, be it painting, sculpting, craft or anything else. According to him, art is one of the most important parts of our culture. Hence, art education can give the children an inside view of the rich culture that prevails around the world. No matter what one wishes to become in life, knowledge of any art form always enriches the person. He quotes, *"Art is a part of everyday life and should be! Its education is important for the sustenance and growth of our culture."*



For creating interest in art among children, Milind suggests many ways;

- \* Putting up paintings in the classroom,
- \* Introducing them to various musical instruments,
- \* Inviting a different artist every week and requesting him or her for a small demonstration of his or her skill in front of the children.

However, Milind also expressed that art should not be treated like any other school subject. He prefers the Guru-Shishya Parampara, where each person is taught according to his or her individual abilities. The reason for this preference is that it is more personalized and, here the Guru teaches as per the shishya's strengths and areas of improvement.

*Food is comfort, security, art, connects to us on many levels – emotionally, philosophically, spiritually and most importantly food is love! In this series we bring to you simple recipes with tips on involving the children of different age groups in the art of food preparation*

## Little Chef

- Kavneet Chadha

### BHEL PURI

#### METHOD

- Cut the potatoes into small pieces
- Place onions, potatoes and coriander in a bowl
- Combine peanuts, salt, tamarind chutney and mint chutney to the above
- Toss gently until the ingredients are mixed well
- Add puffed rice and mix once more
- Serve fresh

*PLEASE NOTE: Children below 3 years of age will need support, by way of preparation of the ingredients and collaboration while making the dish. Children more than 3 years of age can measure the ingredients and prepare the dish with little supervision initially and independently thereafter.*



### INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup puffed rice
- 1 medium onion chopped
- 1 medium potato, boiled
- 3-4 tbsp tamarind chutney
- 3-4 tbsp mint chutney
- Salt, to taste
- 2-3 tbsp peanuts, roasted
- 4 tbsp finely chopped coriander



## Path to Independence

- Vidhya Ramalingam

*Fostering independence in children is one of the greatest supports that the adults can provide to raise a confident and self-assured child. It all begins with how the children are helped to take care of themselves at the home front. This section is focused on how the children are helped to help themselves function independently.*

Divya shares the process of supporting her daughter Advaita who is 6 years old to dress independently. Divya recalls that initially she encouraged Advaita to wear jackets and sweaters. She made sure that these clothes had large buttons or zippers so that child can handle them with ease. Gradually she learned to button and unbutton, zip and unzip the clothes which later helped her with the clothes that had smaller buttons. Advaita was also shown how to wear t-shirts through the head and she would also try this on her little soft doll while at play.



Divya feels that, it is important for the child to understand that different clothes are worn in different manner as there is a wide range especially for girls like frocks, t-shirts, trousers, leggings, lehengas, etc. She recollects that it was very challenging, helping the child to do with the bow knot in the frocks. With trousers also Advaita took a while to understand that she had to put one leg at a time to wear them. Divya further adds that Advaita was also shown how to wear her daily wear clothes especially the night suits and now with practice she can wear them without help.



To help with the entire process, Divya made necessary changes in her daughter's environment. She spared one full cupboard for Advaita. The clothes were sorted and put in an organized style for her to know and find her choice. The frequently used clothes were placed at an approachable height in the cupboard and all the accessories were kept at the bottom. The occasionally used ones were kept on the top shelves and a sturdy stool was placed near the cupboard for her to reach them but certainly under adult's supervision.

Divya says that Advaita now can independently dress herself most of the times. She needs help for some kind of clothes like the tight fitting ones and the clothes that takes time to wear. But, she attempts to break the process into several steps and wear them. Of late, she has come up with the idea of looping the belt into the trousers and wearing them instead of wearing them and looping the belt. Divya states that Advaita now at 6 years can dress independently, however, it is a process.



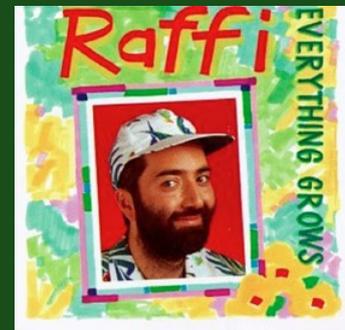
## Good Reels

- **Roopa Sundar**

*In this segment we are bringing out reviews and related articles on films and music for children.*

This issue includes a review of Raffi's eighth music album for children, 'Everything Grows' brought out in 1987.

Raffi Cavoukian, known worldwide as Raffi, is a Canadian singer and songwriter. Raffi has brought out numerous music albums for children since 1975 and is most famous for his song 'Baby Beluga'.



This album, a collection of 15 songs, is singable, danceable and absolutely enjoyable.

The music is delightful and brings out happiness and love. The songs are centered around themes suitable for children like bath time, nature, animals and more. It comes with a copy of the lyrics. It includes a couple of instrumental tracks and even a traditional French song about planting cabbages with different parts of the body and a Japanese song to welcome spring! 'Everything Grows' and other albums of Raffi are available on Amazon.

**An excerpt from the album -**

Everything grows and grows  
Babies do, animals too  
Everything grows  
Everything grows and grows  
Sisters do, brothers too  
Everything grows

A blade of grass, fingers and toes  
Hair on my head, a red, red rose  
Everything grows, anyone knows  
That's how it goes.....

# In memory of Annette Haines

*She has been involved in the field of Montessori education since 1972 with an extensive background in the Children's House classroom*

Dr. Annette M. Haines who was well known in the Montessori Community passed away on July 22, 2017 at St. Louis. She was the Director of Training for the Montessori Training Center of St. Louis and the Chairperson of the AMI Scientific Pedagogical Group. Annette was AMI trained at both levels Primary and Elementary. Additionally, she also had a Bachelor of Arts degree in English Literature from Washington University, a Masters Degree in Education from Cleveland State University, and a Doctorate in Education from Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville with research focused on concentration and normalization within the Montessori Prepared Environment.



Few words from people who knew Annette...

*I met Annette when I was part of the examination in one of the courses held at USA, at the Trainers Meetings and several other times. She was such a wonderful and great person. She was trained by a person who was trained by A.M. Joosten in Sri Lanka so it was always great to talk to her and exchange notes. She was a pillar of strength at AMI and we will miss her. - Zarin Malva*

*I first met Annette in a Trainers Meeting in the Netherlands. I was newly trained. A few of us went for a walk and I walked beside her and we had a long chat about different aspects of training. She was not only a great public speaker but listened very fully to others, she gave even a conversation her whole attention and responded with interest. She will be missed terribly by her close colleagues and friends. I also met Annette for the last time in the Netherlands. I had a warm conversation with her without realising that it would be the last one. Her research film, a longitudinal study on Montessori outcomes filmed in Vancouver, her film on concentration and the editing of the 1946 lectures and the wonderful introduction she has written to the book are her lasting legacy to our movement. - Rukmini Ramachandran*

*I have been on the AMI Scientific Pedagogical Group, of which Annette has been the Chairperson, for 5 years. She was a wonderful knowledgeable person who led the committee with humour and efficiency. She will be sorely missed. On a personal note I will always remember the day she informed me personally that I had reached AMI trainer status and will always remember the 2 weeks we spent together at the first Hyderabad Trainers seminar. - Ruby Lau*

*I met Annette Haines during my first Seminar in Hyderabad. She was our first Seminar leader. Her lecture on Absorbent Mind was mind blowing. It was not just her ideas that impressed us but it was her style of delivery and apt use of visual medium to drive home the ideas that created a deep impact. The way she held her position as the seminar leader and mentor for all of us was something everyone of us aspired to be. - Ramya Sridhar*

# Bird Watch

Standing at a window have you seen a bird and wondered what it is called? Bird life flourishes even in our crowded cities. Read our special series on some common birds found in India. You may become a 'birder' by the end of our series!

- Roopa Sundar & Tarunya Gouthaman

## Baya Weaver

*Ploceus phillippinus*

PHYSICAL FEATURES

These are sparrow-sized (15 cm) and in their non-breeding plumage, both males and females resemble female house sparrows. They have a stout conical bill and a short square tail. Non-breeding males and females look alike, dark brown streaked fulvous buff above, plain (unstreaked) whitish fulvous below, eyebrows long buffy, bill is horn colored and no mask. Breeding males have a bright yellow crown, dark brown mask, blackish brown bill, upper parts are dark brown streaked with yellow, with a yellow breast and cream buff below.

CHARACTERISTICS

In nesting colonies, males build elaborate nests woven from strips of grass – swinging vase-shaped structures with a long entrance. The nests are often built near water or hanging over water where predators cannot reach easily. Their calls are a continuous *chit-chit*...sometimes ending in a wheezy *cheee-eee-ee* of males in a chorus. They feed on grains, seeds and insects.

HABITAT

Common resident in grasslands and cultivated areas all across the plains of the Indian subcontinent.

FUN FACTS

- Despite my species name, I am not found in the Philippines
- Occasionally I like to indulge in dust bathing
- Building or repair of nests is done by males only



Baya Weaver female (above), inspecting the nest built by the male (below)



Baya Weaver nests hanging over water

**Modern observations and child-study have led us to realise that as soon as the child can go out of doors, we must take him with us.**

**- The Absorbent Mind, Maria Montessori**

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