Child Protection Service (2016-17)

Aim of our project

Child Protection Service wants to achieve general awareness-building, acceptance of gender issues and opening of the eyes towards possible child abuse in Auroville and its surroundings. The particular approach we use starts with the grass-roots, and aims at protecting our children by creating awareness from a young age onwards. We promote this education with youths of both genders and with working women in Auroville.

Activities of the year

This year we held our programme in government schools, Auroville outreach schools, and Auroville units. Sessions were led by four part-time staff members. We reached 573 students in 4 government schools and 4 Auroville outreach schools, and 35 staff of Auroville units.

We start a class by sharing about Human Anatomy with students. Then we ask them how we can protect ourselves. From there we take them through thinking about cleanliness, healthy food and various other issues related to our body, health and environment. We show children from 6 to 18 years old the 10-minute video made by Child Line in India. The video has 12 languages, and we use the Tamil and English version. Afterward we discuss about the story in the video and what they understood. We again emphasize what are the ‘Good’ and ‘Bad’ touches, when they have to be alert and seek help.

We teach the older children, of 12-18 years old, about parts of the body (mainly the Reproductive System), Child Rights, Abuse, Domestic Violence, and Child Labour as provided by the ‘Unicef’ books and information from the internet. We also teach children aged 6 years to 14 years through story-telling methods.

Outcomes

During our class we ask the students to reflect what they have learned from the classes:

- There are safe and unsafe touches. We should be aware of this.
- We will teach this information to others.
- Any abnormal incident about child abuse should be immediately reported to the parents.
- Give respect to the female child.
- Don’t throw female babies away. Families should take care of baby girls.
- To learn the functions of the reproductive organs (for both genders).
- We should not treat the children like slaves.
- In all aspects give equal rights to both genders.

The following points came out from the children:

- Parents often do not trust the adolescents girls when they want to go out to do some things. The parents should listen to girls’ opinions and suggestions.
- Girls need more freedom to express their ideas and to be independent.