

CHILD POLICY



SAKTHI - VIDYAL

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Sakthi-Vidiyal's Child Policy

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About Us

Sakthi is a Voluntary Organization founded in 1993 in the city of Madurai a city steeped in religious traditions with its famed Meenakshi Temple. Sakthi is registered under the Tamil Nadu Societies Registration Act S.No. 50 of 1993. The motto of Sakthi is to work with socially excluded communities, especially Women and Children.

Vidiyal, a programme of Sakthi, was initiated in 1996 and is an active advocate of Child Rights. It is an accepted and well-recognized resource agency for child and community development programs. Vidiyal works in eight localities with socio-economically disadvantaged communities living in appalling conditions. Vidiyal has established and runs Child Resource Centres in each locality.

The Vidiyal Child Rights Movement, a child-led organization, was initiated in the year 2000 to enable child participation and decision-making in child-related matters.

Since 2004, the Reception Home under the Juvenile Justice system for Madurai District has been under the auspices of Sakthi-Vidiyal, which houses runaway, abused, exploited, and abandoned children. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)—such as No Poverty, Zero Hunger, Good Health and Well-Being, Quality Education, Gender Equality, Clean Water and Sanitation, Affordable and Clean Energy, Decent Work and Economic Growth, Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, Reduced Inequalities, Sustainable Cities and Communities, Responsible Consumption and Production, Climate Action, Life Below Water, Life on Land, Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, and Partnerships for the Goals are integral to Sakthi-Vidiyal's programmes.

Preface

"Childhood is entitled to special care and assistance, convinced that the family, as the fundamental group of society and the natural environment for the growth and well-being of all its members and particularly children, should be afforded the necessary protection and assistance so that the child can fully assume his or her responsibilities within the community, recognizing that the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love and understanding. Considering that the child should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society, and brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity."- The Preamble of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Children are easy targets for exploitation because they are dependent on adults and social institutions for their development. They are unaware of their rights and unable to voice their concerns formally. Millions of young persons around the world are exploited in different ways. Children are forced to work in factories, in backrooms, on the street, and in the sex trade. They are sold as slaves and drafted to fight in wars. The violation of children's rights is pervasive throughout countries and fuels struggling economies. Exploitation of children is not restricted to the public sphere. Children are too often the recipients of violence in their own homes, where a high percentage of abuse-sexual, physical, emotional, and psychological takes place. Conditions of constant conflict or poverty inevitably propagate societal ills.

Vidiyal works with street and economically disadvantaged children and was established in 1996 as a program of Sakthi. Sakthi-Vidiyal, over the last 20 years, has initiated the Vidiyal Child Rights Movement and has established 22 Child Education Centres in socially and economically disadvantaged areas in Madurai. Vidiyal abides by the standards set by the Juvenile Justice Act and works with the Juvenile Justice System and Reception Home. It maintains a Children's Home for children coming from abusive and broken families through judicial custody and stands in lieu as the children's guardians. Vidiyal works with Childline as an outreach arm of its community program. The programs at Sakthi-Vidiyal promote child rights, provide resources for child-related issues, and hold forums for children to think, implement activities, and participate in children's networks.

Acknowledgement

Our Heartfelt Gratitude to

The Vidiyal Community who has made the completion of this Child Policy possible.

Our Vidiyal Child Rights Movement Leadership who, with their enthusiastic participation, extended their vital support and synergized the process.

Our Volunteer Team—Muhangal and Alumni—Olirum Muhangal for their critical understanding of child rights that stretched our thinking and challenged us to set benchmarks. Their participation strengthened our commitment and provided our motivation.

Our Staff Team for their persistent work and willingness to abide by established best practices and to look forward with commitment to new standards in child rights practice.

Our thanks extend to individuals and organizations that have played a key role in deepening our insights.

Our sincere appreciation is extended to the Sakthi Board for their unwavering support.

Our sincere thanks to our partners, NewDawn India - United Kingdom. Their mindfulness and perspective in working with children have added value to the Policy.

Our appreciation to Dr. Sujatha Rita, who facilitated and worked with us to initiate and complete the process of upgrading our Child Policy.

The Child Policy

Is a statement of intent that demonstrates a commitment to safeguard children at SAKTHI - VIDIYAL. Vidiyal sees itself as being responsible for ensuring that those benefiting from and working with the organization act prudently and take all reasonable steps within their power to ensure that the welfare of children remains paramount.

Sakthi – Vidiyal recognizes its legal duty that all children without exception have the right to protection from abuse regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, ability, sexuality, or beliefs. Children are an especially vulnerable group and therefore Vidiyal stress the importance of having safeguards for their protection.

Sakthi - Vidiyal provides children with an environment that supports Child Rights by the provision of information and knowledge critical for personal growth, enabling children to participate in activities and develop decision-making capacities, be aware of their safety, and the milieu to partake in fun and the learning activities of childhood. Emphasis is given on education, health, play, and recreation.



Our Vision

Every Right for Every Child

Our Mission

**Empowering Children through Rights
Based Approach**

Core Belief

**We Believe in Children being the
Present and Part of Building a
Peaceful and Just Society.**



OUR VALUES

- **Every child is accepted.**
- **Every child is entitled to dignity and respect.**
- **Every child is unique and has the innate capacity to achieve their potential.**
- **Participation of the child is central to every sphere of the organization.**
- **Discipline and Boundaries are essential to build a child's character.**
- **The family is the basic unit to provide care and security to every child.**



OBJECTIVES

- To create a congenial environment for the integrated and holistic development of children
- To restore childhood to all children
- To ensure care and protection of street connected children
- To provide basic needs to children coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- To ensure development of socially excluded children by prioritizing their Rights
- To teach life skills and values
- To encourage children to celebrate our diversified culture
- To ensure opportunities for education and vocational training
- To ensure Child Rights in society by providing child rights education to all stakeholders
- To work with various child related social structures including the family, community and school and ensure protection of children from abuse, exploitation and discrimination
- To ensure children's right to participation and enable children to build their own movement for their voice to be heard in various platforms
- To plan along with the children and ensure their participation in all decisions in relation to their rights
- To facilitate children becoming agents of social change
- To network with likeminded organizations to address various issues affecting children
- To lobby and advocate with the government to bring favorable changes in child related policies





STRUCTURE



- ☀ The General Body of Sakthi comprises of child development professionals, social workers, psychologists, educationists, former Vidiyal Children and eminent citizens.
- ☀ The Managing Committee is elected by the General Body and is responsible for the overall functioning of the organization and for taking such steps as may be necessary to promote the objects of the Society.
- ☀ The core staff team comprises the Executive Director, Director – Child Development, Director – Child Protection, Director – Child Participation, Director – School Education and Digital Media, Chief Accountant, Digital Media Trainer, Head Volunteer, Superintendent, Academic Trainer, Project Coordinator, Cluster Coordinators, Team Lead – Fellowship Programme and Learning and Assessment Coordinator who engage in a participatory decision-making process with regard to the implementation, monitoring and concurrent review of the programmes and projects.
- ☀ Children participate in the working of the organization through representation from the Vidiyal Child Rights Movement in the Managing Committee meetings and in committees working for the welfare of the child.
- ☀ The Executive Director is responsible for designing, implementing and directing projects and programmes in consultation with the board. The Executive Director is accountable for Financial and Personnel management.
- ☀ The Executive Director implements child rights, monitors and evaluates periodically the Child Policy and works with strategies and systems, that promote the development, participation and decision-making capabilities of children. Sets guidelines for the conduct of staff, trainers, caregivers, volunteers, interns and others are provided and commitment ensured during their time.



STRUCTURE



- ☀ The Executive Director implements programmes for child rights, through the Directors – Child Development, Child Protection, Child Participation and School Education and Digital Media who are assisted by Project, and Field Coordinators, Support Staff, and Volunteers.
- ☀ The Directors – Child Development, Child Protection, Child Participation and School Education and Digital Media implement, monitor and evaluate the programmes for child provision, child development, child protection and child participation.
- ☀ Administration and financial management staff report to the Executive Director.
- ☀ The Academic Trainer, Student Counsellor, Project Coordinator and the Cluster Coordinators are responsible for the effective and efficient management of the Child Education Centres and work directly with the communities.
- ☀ Street Educators, Animators and Volunteers work directly with children at the Child Education Centres.
- ☀ The Superintendent, Child Welfare Officer, Counsellor and the support staff of the Children's Home are directly responsible for ensuring the safety and care of children living in the children's home.
- ☀ The Volunteers Forum called 'Muhangal' meaning 'Faces' anchor Vidiyal's Child Education Centres. The children transition into youth and join as volunteers and are nurtured through a yearlong internship programme and then with periodical capacity building training programmes. They provide leadership, care and protection to the younger children.
- ☀ The 'Olirum Muhangal' meaning 'Radiant Faces' are the Alumni of Vidiyal who engage themselves in participating in Vidiyal activities and share their resources and expertise.
- ☀ The Executive Director is responsible for the implementation and monitoring of the Child Rights Protection Policy and ensures that appropriate action is taken when concerns relating to the rights or safety of children arise.

STRATEGY

- ☀ Affirmative action and positive bias for equity is the essence of all our programs.
- ☀ We respect and ensure child participation in matters concerning children.
- ☀ We promote and implement child rights through our projects and programmes with the children and in the family, community, schools and in society.
- ☀ We support children's growth and development including their participation and decision making in child related matters.
- ☀ We collaborate with other organizations to promote education, skill training and child related advocacy initiative.
- ☀ We establish appropriate mechanisms and programmes for the protection of children in the organization, family, community and schools.
- ☀ We participate in the implementation of Juvenile Justice System and access the existing government structures for the protection of children.
- ☀ We promote meaningful participation of children in the planning, decision-making, implementation and review of the programmes and activities of the organization.
- ☀ We create opportunities for children to come together to form their collective.
- ☀ We facilitate the Vidiyal Child Rights Movement thereby establishing a Child Led Organization.
- ☀ We work with children to build and access children's federations and establish linkages with local, state, national and international child forums.
- ☀ We work with our alumni Olirum Muhangal and other Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to integrate child rights in communities and the society.
- ☀ We initiate and work with coalitions to advocate for child rights.
- ☀ We utilize Right to Information Act to ensure Child Rights.
- ☀ We monitor implementation of laws that foster social inclusion and condemn discrimination and prejudice.

SYSTEM

*Children enjoy privileges
and priority in every
sphere of the
Organization*



3.1 RIGHT TO LIFE

3.1.1 AGE

- ✱ Every person below the age of eighteen is a child.
Children coming to Vidiyal are divided into five age groups
- ✱ Beginner 5 years – 7 years; Primary 8 years – 9 years; Junior 10 years – 11 years; Intermediate 12 years – 13 years and Senior 14 years – 17 years.
- ✱ Age appropriate training methodologies are adapted to impart knowledge and skills.



3.1.2 IDENTITY

- ✱ Parents are facilitated to register their children's birth and obtain the children's birth certificate to ensure access to social security and social welfare benefits of the Government.
- ✱ The profile of every child in the Organization is maintained confidentially together with health and psychosocial care records.



3.1.3 SHELTER HOME

- ✱ The shelter home is an undertaking under the aegis of Juvenile Justice and the provisions of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act are implemented.
- ✱ The details of children admitted for judicial custody are uploaded in the designated online portal prescribed by the government.



3.1.4 FOOD

- ✱ Three main meals and snacks are provided at the Shelter Home. The dietary needs and restrictions of individual children are taken into consideration in the provision of food. Quality and taste of food is ensured by the Director – Child Protection.
- ✱ Quality and taste of the food served during programmes is ensured by the Directors - Child Development, and Child Participation and implemented by the staff in charge.
- ✱ The staff, volunteers and children are provided with the same standard of food in all programmes



3.1.5 WATER

- ✱ Standards for water storage facilities especially drinking water are maintained.
- ✱ Adequate potable water is provided at all Child Education Centres and at the Shelter home



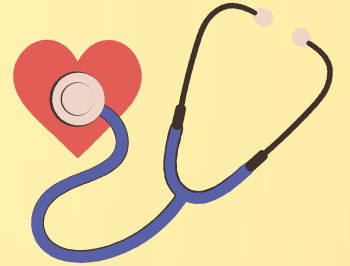
3.1.6 CLOTHING

- ✱ All Children are provided with sufficient clothing.
- ✱ Children living in the community and who are covered under the sponsorship programme are given yearly two sets of school uniform. Clothes for special occasions are purchased by the children in selected shops.
- ✱ The quality of donated used clothes is checked before need based distribution.



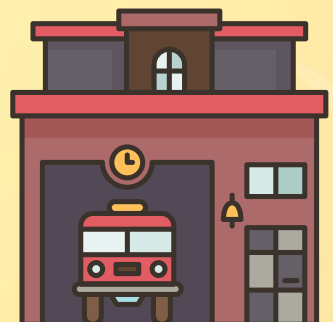
3.1.7 HEALTH

- ✱ Parents are educated to access government health care services for minor health issues.
- ✱ Major health care needs are attended to with priority. Contact with a range of specialists and paediatricians are established and emergency medical aid is ensured in hospitals.
- ✱ Health awareness programmes are held for children through the Science Forum to enable them to be protected from seasonal health hazards.
- ✱ All staff and volunteers undertake training on First Aid.
- ✱ A first aid box is maintained and periodically stocked / replenished at each Child Rights and Development / Education Centre and Shelter Home.
- ✱ Counselling services are provided for children.
- ✱ Psychosocial care is ensured through mentorship and periodical family interaction programmes.

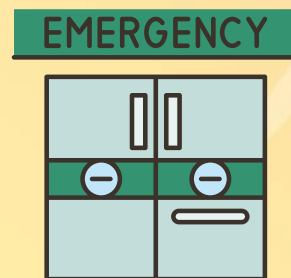


3.1.8 ACCIDENTS / MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

- ✱ All Staff and Volunteers should have the contact phone numbers of the Executive Director, Director - Child Development, Child Protection, and Child Participation and will contact them in each emergency.
- ✱ First aid will be provided at the Child Education Centers as needed. All other injuries / accidents encountered at Vidiyal will be referred to the nearest government hospital. Parent and the Executive Director will be informed.
- ✱ Children meeting with an accident during trips, outings and travel will be transported by the government ambulance service to the nearest government hospital escorted by the staff / volunteer. The Director - Child Development, Child Protection, Child Participation, Executive Director and Parents /guardian are informed.
- ✱ If the accident involves several children, the staff member / volunteer will contact the Government ambulance service and escort the children to the government hospital for emergency treatment and services. The Executive Director will be informed about the nature of accident and the names of the injured children and the office will contact parents /guardians.
- ✱ Accidents occurring due to fire, flood and other unforeseen circumstances will be dealt by contacting the respective agencies – fire service, disaster management center and related services. The Executive Director will follow up and oversee the rescue and relief endeavours.

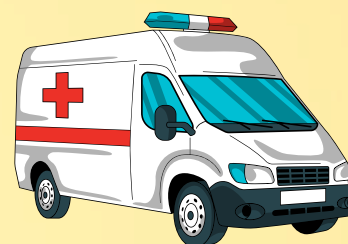


- ✿ In the event of staff / volunteers being involved in an accident with the children – Government ambulance service will be contacted and the Director – Child Development, Child Protection, and Child Participation will be informed and the office will contact the family.



- ✿ All staff / volunteers have knowledge and training in handling child specific issues including managing epilepsy.

- ✿ Sudden onset of illness in a child will be handled by staff / volunteer with first aid, and if necessary, call for the Government ambulance service for transport to the government hospital. The information is conveyed to Director - Child Development, Child Protection and Child Participation and through them to the Executive Director, parent/guardian. A detailed reporting of the incident will be noted in the child's health record.



- ✿ In the case of death of a child at any of the centers, the Executive Director will be informed. The Executive Director will contact the parent / guardian and the police. In the case of death of a child at the shelter home the Executive Director will be informed and the reporting protocol under the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 will be followed.
- ✿ A Record will be maintained about any accident, illness and death that have occurred in the premises or during a programme.

3.1.9 ENVIRONMENT

- ✱ A clean environment is maintained in the Shelter Home and in all Child Education Centres.
- ✱ All our campuses and premises are tobacco, drug and alcohol free.
- ✱ The staff and volunteers demonstrate and participate in maintaining clean surroundings in the premises and during programmes.
- ✱ The children's forums are responsible for the cleanliness of the Child Education Centres and the Shelter Home.
- ✱ Children are encouraged to follow civic responsibilities.



3.1.10 MEETING WITH PARENTS / GUARDIANS

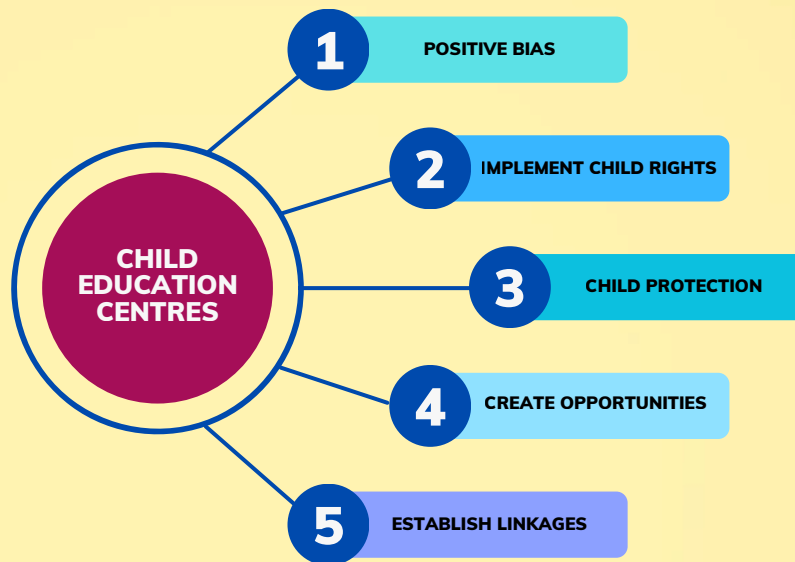
- ✱ In the rural project, Fathers' Forums and Mothers' Forums are held separately on a quarterly basis. In the urban programme, Fathers' Forums are held quarterly and Mothers' Forums are held every two months. These forums include awareness and parenting sessions on matters relating to the rights, protection, development and well-being of children, to facilitate and ensure child - parent interaction and relationship.
- ✱ To enable the Parents to become active defenders of the rights of their children / wards, we choose topics that impart knowledge on child rights, child protection and child psychology.



3.2 RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

3.2.1 CHILD EDUCATION CENTRES

- ✦ The Child Education Centres function between 5 pm and 8 pm on all days except Sundays. The centres function throughout the year and provide opportunities for the integrated and holistic development of children through creative and educational programmes.
- ✦ The Main Centre is a multi-faceted resource centre that provides space for child representatives of Vidiyal Child Rights Movement to meet, brainstorm, plan and review programmes.



3.2.2 EDUCATION

A. FORMAL EDUCATION

- ✦ Children attending the Child Rights and Development / Education Centres are encouraged and helped to complete their homework. Additionally, assistance is provided for subjects that children find difficult. Volunteers/staff are placed in each centre to support children in their education.
- ✦ Children are motivated to complete schooling and pursue college or vocational education based on their aptitude and interest.
- ✦ Street Educators / Cluster Coordinators routinely visit the homes of children to monitor and sustain parental and child interest in school attendance. Absenteeism in children is decreased through family interaction.



VIDIYAL



- ✦ Parents and Alumni members from the community are motivated to visit the schools periodically and participate in the School Management Committee (SMC) meetings.
- ✦ Appropriate alternate opportunities for education and vocational education are provided for children with learning difficulties and children with inadequate foundation at the primary education level.
- ✦ Parents of children with special needs are facilitated to access educational institutions which have facilities for their integrated holistic development, through appropriate contacts and linkage
- ✦ Children who show interest in academic development are provided with opportunities for higher education and are supported with internships and job placements.
- ✦ Career guidance is held yearly to disseminate information and ensure career choice.



B. EXPERIENTIAL AND CREATIVE LEARNING

- ✦ Age-appropriate responsibilities are entrusted to children through consultation and discussion. Weekly sessions are organised in each Child Rights and Development / Education Centre to impart Child Rights Education to all children through creative means.
- ✦ The Ripple Circle provides opportunities for children to develop an understanding of society and social issues through social analysis.
- ✦ The Movie Club provides opportunities for children to develop critical appreciation of films, including Tamil films on social themes, world cinema, short films and documentaries, and to learn short-film making.
- ✦ The Science Forum provides opportunities for children to develop a scientific outlook and keep abreast of developments in the field of science.
- ✦ Every child coming to Vidiyal will get opportunity to participate in quarterly trainings. Between 5 years and 17 years, age appropriate trainings/workshops are organized to capacitate children.



**RIPPLE
CIRCLE**

**MEDIA
CLUB**

**SCIENCE
FORUM**

- ✦ Children are imparted with information and knowledge on Financial Management which include, the value of money, its usage, and the value of small savings.
- ✦ All adolescent children participate in group sessions on Vidiyal's "Sexual Health Intervention Programme (SHIP)". Their right to reproductive health care is explained with appropriate information on sex and sexuality.
- ✦ Adolescent children are enabled to work through their age-related development stage and move towards adulthood.
- ✦ Life skills programmes are held during adolescence together with basic human and civil rights that is inclusive of legal rights pertaining to daily life.
- ✦ Every year the Girl Child Day is celebrated through a series of creative programmes.
- ✦ Every year boys are nurtured on values of gender equality through programmes on 'Champions for Change' – Boys Standing for Gender Equality.



C. COMPUTER AND DIGITAL MEDIA EDUCATION

- ✦ Every child coming to Vidiyal will be given opportunity to become computer literate through basic computer education at the main centre and Shelter Home.
- ✦ Children who have the aptitude for technical skills will be provided with advance level of training. Access to internet is supported with safeguards.
- ✦ Children are supported by staff to learn, explore and develop their skills and knowledge about digital technologies.
- ✦ Children are supervised in their learning and provided with opportunities to experiment and improve their digital creativity.
- ✦ Age-appropriate digital literacy and safety standards are maintained.
- ✦ Open communication and consistent rules about media literacy are supported. Children are provided with opportunities to learn and use Artificial Intelligence.

3.2.3 VIDIYAL TRAINING CENTRE

- ✦ All trainings and workshops for children, staff, volunteers, interns and other stakeholders such as college students, voluntary organizations working for children and network partners are held in this centre.
- ✦ The centre is provided with the necessary facilities and equipments.
- ✦ The centre is equipped with security cameras to protect and ensure safe participation.
- ✦ Staff members with expertise are provided with opportunities to facilitate trainings and workshops for other organizations and networks.



3.2.4 VOCATIONAL TRAINING

- ✦ Children who have the aptitude for technical training are given opportunities to join in courses offered by CSO's, ITI's, Government Polytechnic Colleges and Community Colleges.



3.2.5 LEISURE, PLAY AND CULTURE

- ❖ Psychomotor activities are conducted in all Child Rights and Development / Education Centers and in the Shelter Home for 10 to 15 minutes every day before the commencement of study time, using activities from the book “Thulli Thulli”, to stimulate the brain through physical activity and prepare children for learning.
- ❖ Opportunities are created for sports and games both in the Main Centre and in the Shelter Home.
- ❖ Children are provided opportunities to learn and play indoor games at all Child Rights and Development / Education Centres and in the Shelter Home.
- ❖ Weekend play activities are organised in all Child Rights and Development / Education Centres.
- ❖ Annual sports meet is organised during Pongal season to promote cultural and sport activities.
- ❖ Children are encouraged to form forums on Science, Sports, Tamil, Theatre, Art, Journalism and Social Action to provide opportunities for physical, social, psychological and intellectual development. The Tamil Forum provides opportunities for children to develop their public speaking skills. Children are encouraged to produce handwritten magazines through the Journalism Forum. These forums are headed by children and facilitated by Volunteers and Staff.
- ❖ Theme based experiential activities are developed based on current trends, interests, and identified needs.
- ❖ A children’s library is maintained and children are encouraged to read books. Interested children form a library management team to facilitate easy access to and procurement of children’s books. Volunteers are in charge of weekly reading sessions to encourage the reading habit and critical thinking in children.



❖ Periodic trainings are organised for the children in charge of the library. Appropriate information related to library management techniques, documentation and library science is provided.

❖ Every month children of one Child Rights and Development / Education Center visit the Bus Library and have fun filled reading sessions.

❖ Children are motivated to learn traditional art forms and opportunities are provided through formal training programmes during school vacations.

❖ Children are facilitated to join the “Children’s Theatre” troupe. They are encouraged to perform in various arenas. Their interests and skills are sustained through ongoing trainings.

❖ In cultural performances, children are given opportunities to exhibit their skills and talents.

❖ Picnics and exposure visits are organised for children, covering historical places, trade and factory settings, and places of environmental interest.

❖ A day camp titled “Jolly Camp” is organised during the summer vacation for 10 days. This camp serves as an induction programme for new children joining the Organization and a special renewal, commitment and fun for Vidiyal’s children.

❖ A residential camp is organised during quarterly holidays for children above 10 years having regular attendance to the Child Rights and Development / Education Centers.

❖ Once in three years, an adventurous and challenging trekking programme is organised for the senior children to build self-confidence and to stretch their abilities.

❖ Children are encouraged to develop their skills in swimming and cycling.



- ✦ Children who have special skills in drawing and painting, theatre, singing and folk art are enabled and encouraged to train children from other children's organizations.
- ✦ Periodical training is organised for the young facilitators of the children's movement and they are encouraged to participate in their movement and with child networks.
- ✦ Children are facilitated to choose appropriate service projects to develop social behaviour, social conscience, and humanitarian values. Every quarter, children in the upper age groups visit homes for the aged, home for the blind and differently abled to render service. Every year children save, collect, contribute and raise funds to support a neighbourhood charity.
- ✦ Children are encouraged to participate in gardening.

3.2.6 SPONSORSHIP

A. ELIGIBILITY AND SELECTION CRITERIA

- ✦ Children from excluded communities, belonging to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, semi-nomadic tribes and minority communities are eligible for sponsorship.
- ✦ Children whose parents are engaged in scavenging work on a temporary or contract basis are eligible for sponsorship.
- ✦ Children whose parents are engaged in unorganized labour are eligible for sponsorship.
- ✦ Children whose parents are infected with terminal diseases are eligible for sponsorship.
- ✦ Children of single mothers or deserted mothers are eligible for sponsorship.
Disabled children are eligible for sponsorship.
- ✦ Sponsorship is given to children who are regular to the Child Rights and Education Centers established in urban communities.
- ✦ Children whose mothers attend the Mothers Forum meetings regularly are eligible for sponsorship.



B. APPLICATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

- ✦ Parents or guardians of children apply for sponsorship in the prescribed application format.
- ✦ The Sponsorship Decision-Making Committee comprises the Executive Director, volunteers and members of the staff team.
- ✦ A sponsored child's case history, periodic progress reports and photograph are kept in safe custody and may be accessed only with the permission of the Executive Director.

C. COMMUNICATION AND RELATIONSHIP WITH SPONSORS

- ✦ A sponsor receives a brief profile of the child along with a photograph. Children periodically write and send cards to their sponsors.
- ✦ Staff responsible for child sponsorship programmes receive regular orientation on child protection, particularly in relation to communication with sponsors and sponsor visits. They are responsible for maintaining the confidentiality of information and ensuring the appropriateness of gifts, as well as children's safety and participation during sponsor visits.
- ✦ New Dawn India, based in the United Kingdom, makes the final decision regarding the allocation of sponsorship in consultation with the Executive Director.
- ✦ Children allotted sponsorship are given appropriate details about their sponsors.
- ✦ The postal address, email address, website address, social media details, telephone numbers or any other contact or communication details of the sponsor or child are not shared with either party at any time.
- ✦ Contact between the sponsor and the child is established only through Sakthi - Vidiyal and New Dawn India.
- ✦ Letters from children to sponsors are screened by the Executive Director.
- ✦ Sponsors are encouraged to write letters to their sponsored children through Sakthi - Vidiyal. The letters are orally translated into Tamil for the children. Children write letters to their respective sponsors in Tamil, which are translated into English and sent to the sponsors through New Dawn India.

D. SPONSORSHIP SUPPORT AND CONTINUITY

- ✦ Strangers, donors, suppliers, service providers and vendors are prohibited from contacting or having any communication with Children who discontinue their association with Sakthi - Vidiyal due to migration or other personal reasons are given three months to return before the sponsor is informed and the sponsorship is discontinued.
- ✦ When a sponsor discontinues sponsorship, Sakthi - Vidiyal is informed through New Dawn India, and the child is informed appropriately about the discontinuation. Efforts are made to find a new sponsor for the child.
- ✦ When young people have opportunities to pursue studies abroad after the age of 18, interested sponsors are encouraged to extend support to them.



S P O N S O R S H I P

3.3 RIGHT TO PROTECTION

3.3.1 SAFETY

- ✦ All children and young people, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial or ethnic origin, religious belief and sexual identity have a right to protection from harm and abuse.
- ✦ Child safety norms are developed for each situation and due consideration is given to the norms in every programme.
- ✦ Every staff, volunteer, intern, sponsors, donors are prescreened before direct contact with the children.
- ✦ Audit mechanisms are incorporated in our systems to verify and validate procedures and expected and stated behavior.
- ✦ Staff and volunteers always work in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations.
- ✦ Children are encouraged to contact recognized staff members at any time while encountering unexpected danger from a known or unknown person or persons.
- ✦ Staff members, while maintaining confidentiality about children's confidences, will share information about safety concerns, including whether children are being treated with respect.
- ✦ Different adult - child ratios are followed in all the projects and programmes. For older children above the age of 10 years - a ratio of 1: 20 and for younger children below the age of 10 years - a ratio of 1:10 is followed. In the Shelter Home for the care of children with special needs and during emergencies and health issues the ratio is 1:1.
- ✦ At the time of probation, the probationer is not allowed to take children independently for any programme. He or she is always monitored by a long-term staff and feedback is documented.

- ✦ Designated staff members accompany children while attending residential programmes and network meetings. Protection during a network programme, travel and transit is collectively ensured by the staff team with assigned duties.
- ✦ Strangers, donors, suppliers, service providers and vendors are prohibited from contacting or having any communication with children.
- ✦ Children are prevented from entering into vulnerable situations and if such situations emerge unexpectedly children are removed immediately to a safe place.
- ✦ Girl children are always accompanied by female staff / volunteer while attending programmes.
- ✦ It is mandatory for the parents / guardians to sign the consent form while taking the child for residential programmes and network meetings.
- ✦ Parents, staff and volunteers are responsible to escort children to their homes after 10.00 PM.
- ✦ The general public and visitors are not permitted to take photographs of children at the centre and in public spaces.
- ✦ When children are taken into public places staff members / volunteers are designated to provide vigilance and ensure any unwanted encounters with the public.
- ✦ Staff and volunteers are prohibited from downloading, storing and sharing of child inappropriate images via mobile phones and other electronic devices
- ✦ Staff, Volunteers, interns and visitors are not permitted to allow children to access their personal mobile phones, iPod, laptops and other electronic devices.
- ✦ Weapons, drugs, pesticides, chemicals and sharp objects are kept in secure and locked places where children have no access.

- ✦ Fire extinguishers are kept in the premises of the organization and regular fire drills are held for children and staff. Staff members are oriented in fire prevention measures.
- ✦ Children and staff are given training on disaster preparedness and disaster management.
- ✦ Counselling sessions are offered for children in need of psychological support.
- ✦ Through thematic camps children are nurtured with values of equality and equity.
- ✦ The concept “Caste is null and void” is upheld and encouraged in practice. Reconciliation events are held to promote peace and community co-existence.
- ✦ People interested in adopting a child are guided to access Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA).

3.3.2 ABUSE

- ✦ Abuse is never the choice of children and never their fault.
- ✦ Abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.
- ✦ At the time of a reported child abuse or suspected abuse an enquiry is conducted with due consideration for the best interest of the child.
- ✦ When an abuse has occurred, the child is provided with psychosocial care and rehabilitation measures.
- ✦ Inappropriate behaviour and abusive relationship with children are subject to legal action and public exposure.



✦ Children of the same age and gender stay together in camps and other residential programmes.

✦ Letters, phone calls and emails are screened before it reaches a child to avoid placing children in vulnerable situations.

✦ The Executive Director receives and disburses gifts, cash awards, material supplies to children given by staff, guests, visitors, interns, donors, sponsors, resource persons, and volunteers. Direct contact with children is not allowed.

✦ Recognized staff members accompany donors and sponsors while visiting the projects and programmes.

✦ A consent form is signed by the child and the parent when the child joins the Organisation, providing consent for photographing and video recording the child and for the appropriate use of their photographs and videos in reports and other digital media.

✦ Children's photographs are not identified with their names in any of the Organisation's publications, including print and electronic media. Informed consent of the child and parent is mandatory.

✦ Children's images and stories are stored in safe custody of the organization and have restricted usage.

✦ Children are consulted periodically in designing, reviewing and modifying the safety norms and procedures followed in the organization.



3.3.3 SEXUAL ABUSE

- + Every child coming in contact with Vidiyal is provided with adequate knowledge on Child Protection mechanisms including Childline's toll free number 1098.
Safe boundaries in relating to people are demonstrated consistently and taught to children on a regular basis.
- + Staff and volunteers are trained to recognize processes pertaining to the grooming of children for sexual abuse and to observe children's behaviour, especially marked changes in behaviour and to ensure appropriate care and supervision.
- + Songs with obscene lyrics and karaoke version of such songs are not used in any of the programs
- + Every year age appropriate education is given to children on 'Protection from Sexual Abuse' by trained staff and volunteers.
- + Children, staff and volunteers are periodically educated about the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012 and reported abuse is dealt according to the law.
- + Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate / unsafe touching is prohibited under every circumstance.
- + Rough physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay are prohibited.
- + Allegations made by a child against another child or against a staff or volunteer is recorded, challenged and acted upon.
- + A reporting system is in place when
 - a. A child is touched accidentally,
 - b. He / She seems distressed in any manner,
 - c. A child appears to be sexually aroused by one's actions and
 - d. A child misunderstands or misinterprets something one has said or done.



- ✦ When sexual abuse is perceived as a possibility by the child, the child is taken into protective custody.
- ✦ The Executive Director is the point person for reporting any abuses or perceived threats of sexual abuse of children. Any complaint made to the Executive Director is recorded and acted upon with immediacy.
- ✦ Young sex offenders at the Shelter Home are reported in writing by the superintendent to the Child Welfare Committee. Young sex offenders at the Child Education Centre are referred to the appropriate services.
- ✦ Staff and volunteers are fully supported and protected when in good faith he/she reports his/her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.
- ✦ Any suspicion that a child has been abused by either a member of staff or a volunteer is reported to the Executive Director, who takes the steps considered necessary to ensure the safety of the child in question and any other child who may be at risk.
- ✦ Anyone working, in a paid or unpaid capacity, cannot decide whether or not child abuse has taken place. They have the responsibility to act on concerns through contact with the Executive Director.

3.3.4 CHILDREN ABUSING OTHER CHILDREN

- ✦ We acknowledge that children are capable of abusing other children to assert their dominance and control over those who are vulnerable.
- ✦ We work with children's insecurities revealed through bullying, violence, verbal, physical and sexual abuse of other children.
- ✦ Children who abuse or hurt other children are helped to understand their behaviour, manage their feelings and develop positive ways of relating to others.



3.3.5 INHUMAN TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

- ✦ Parents and community members are sensitised about harmful traditional practices and superstitious beliefs that affect children.
- ✦ Children are encouraged to develop a rational outlook and question myths and beliefs that may harm or negatively affect them.
- ✦ Parents are encouraged to use positive and non-violent methods of discipline in raising their children.
- ✦ Children are protected from harmful traditional practices and rituals that affect their rights, safety and well-being.
- ✦ Children affected by harmful traditional practices are provided with appropriate protection and support, including legal intervention when necessary.



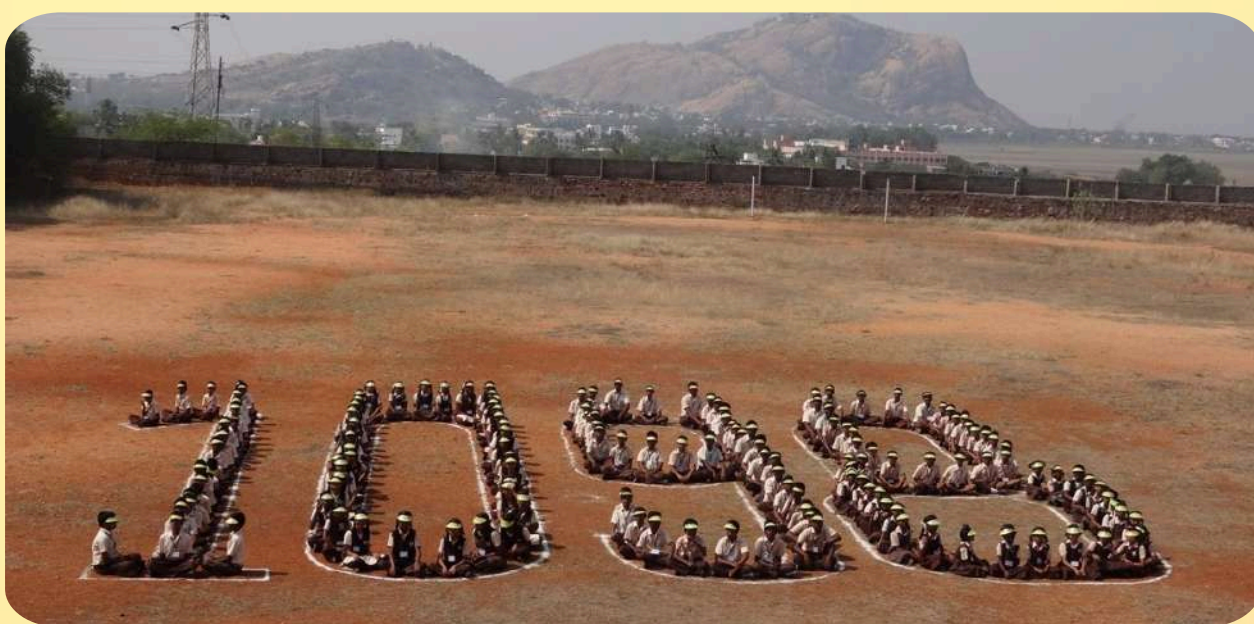
3.3.6 DRUG ABUSE AND PEDDELING

- ✦ Adolescent children are provided training on 'Prevention and Protection from Drug and Alcohol Abuse' and are helped to say 'No' when faced with peer and societal pressures.
- ✦ Children with drug or alcohol addiction, and children affected by alcohol or drug abuse in their families, are provided appropriate referral support to organisations offering de-addiction and related services.
- ✦ Parental awareness programmes are conducted on the impact of alcohol and drug abuse and the importance of developing healthy families.



3.3.7 CHILD MARRIAGE

- ✦ Children, parents and community members are made aware of the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 and the legal age of marriage.
- ✦ Children are educated about accessing Childline services and the toll-free number 1098 for help in preventing child marriage.
- ✦ Children are educated on the consequences of child marriage and supported to postpone marriage until they reach the legal age of marriage.
- ✦ Through the Sexual Health Intervention Programme (SHIP), children are provided with scientific and age-appropriate knowledge on sexuality, including the physiological consequences of early marriage, consanguineous marriages and adverse socio-cultural norms related to child marriage.
- ✦ Children, parents and community members are encouraged to question and challenge harmful social norms and attitudes that contribute to child marriage and the devaluation of girls.



3.3.8 DISCRIMINATION

- ✦ Discrimination against any child on the basis of caste, gender, religion, ability, appearance, background or any other identity is not accepted.
- ✦ Children shall not be ridiculed or portrayed in a discriminatory manner on the basis of caste, colour, complexion, height, weight, ability, appearance, gender, place of living, parental occupation or cultural orientation in any performance or publication of the organisation.
- ✦ Projects and programmes are primarily intended for children from difficult circumstances and disadvantaged backgrounds, including Dalit children and girls, with special provision to ensure their participation.
- ✦ Affirmative action is ensured for girls and Dalit children.
- ✦ Children are supported to overcome feelings of shame or blame associated with caste and to participate in decision-making processes that help them confront and challenge discriminatory practices.
- ✦ Discriminatory practices, particularly in schools, are addressed through lobbying and advocacy and, where necessary, through appropriate legal action based on children's reports and available evidence.
- ✦ Collaboration with other organisations is undertaken to encourage public participation in preventing and addressing discriminatory practices, particularly in schools.
- ✦ Mothers, fathers and children are enabled to actively participate in Gram Sabha meetings to raise issues of discrimination and other concerns affecting children and seek their appropriate resolution. Village Child Rights Protection Task Forces are constituted to create a community-level safety net for the protection and well-being of children.



3.3.9 VIOLENCE

- ✦ Violence as a means to resolve issues is forbidden.
- ✦ In every programme, children are educated about alternate problem solving methods through demonstration and opportunities to practice.
- ✦ Corporal punishments are forbidden in the premises and programmes of the organization.
- ✦ Violence and emotional abuse are unacceptable.
- ✦ Staff and volunteers are encouraged and educated with alternate discipline methods to address behaviour issues of children.
- ✦ Parents are educated about discipline techniques and boundaries as part of child rearing.
- ✦ Movies are selected for age-appropriate viewing.
- ✦ Age-appropriate responsibilities are entrusted to children with consultation and discussion.
- ✦ Staff and volunteers are not allowed to use children to run errands and do personal work.
- ✦ Psychosocial protection is ensured through periodic debriefing especially after programmes, events and incidents that have initiated violence in the community or elsewhere.



STOP
VIOLENCE

3.3.10 CHILD LABOUR

- ✦ Children and communities are made aware that child labour can lead to sexual and economic exploitation and restrict children's rights to education, health and a safe and secure future.
- ✦ Wherever opportunities arise, awareness on the harmful effects of child labour and relevant laws is promoted in collaboration with government departments.



3.3.11 SUBSTANCE ABUSE

- ✦ Children are made aware of the risks and harmful effects of substance use and addiction on their health and development.
- ✦ Children are supported to develop the ability to resist peer pressure and coercion that may lead to substance use.
- ✦ Counselling and appropriate support are provided to children affected by substance use.

3.3.12 ONLINE SAFETY

- ✦ Children are educated about online risks and safe online practices, including the protection of personal information, responsible online communication and social interaction, and the safe use of browsers, apps, search engines, cameras and other digital features.
- ✦ Children are encouraged to maintain a healthy balance between online activities and other aspects of their lives, critically analyse online content, and set appropriate boundaries for accessing digital content.
- ✦ Children are educated about online risks, including exposure to pornography and child sexual abuse material, grooming, cyberbullying, online sexual exploitation and harassment, identity theft, phishing, hacking, financial fraud, online footprints, morphing, sexting, stalking and sextortion, and ways to protect themselves.



3.3.13 VISITS BY TRUSTEES, SPONSORS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF NEW DAWN INDIA

- ✦ Trustees of New Dawn India are welcome to make informed and scheduled visits to Sakthi - Vidiyal.
- ✦ Any person representing New Dawn India for a visit is certified by its trustees and undergoes the procedures established by New Dawn India for such visits.
- ✦ Visits to communities and the homes of children are at the discretion of the Executive Director. Recognised staff members accompany sponsors, donors and other visitors during planned visits to projects and programmes.
- ✦ Sponsors may visit their sponsored children only at Sakthi - Vidiyal and under staff supervision. Any inappropriate behaviour towards a child results in the visit being curtailed and the matter being reported to New Dawn India.
- ✦ Visitors and donors are expected to maintain safe and appropriate boundaries in their interactions with children.
- ✦ Visitors and donors are encouraged to maintain safe boundaries while relating to children.
- ✦ Visitors and donors are oriented on the expected dress code prior to their visits.



3.3.14 PANDEMIC

Our Pandemic policy pays attention to prevent and mitigate exacerbated behavioural and mental health crisis among children

SURVIVAL

- ✦ Children are provided with age-appropriate and reliable information about the pandemic or emergency, its possible impact and the precautions to be followed.
- ✦ Relevant guidelines and preventive measures issued by the Government and Health Department are communicated to children and their families in an appropriate and understandable manner.
- ✦ Appropriate support is extended to address children's immediate health, nutritional and other essential needs, based on the nature and impact of the emergency.
- ✦ Special attention is given to children's psychosocial well-being and to addressing anxiety, fear, disrupted routines, domestic violence and other challenges arising from the emergency.
- ✦ Connection and communication with children, their families and communities are maintained, adapting appropriate methods according to the situation.
- ✦ Additional care and support are provided to young children, children with disabilities, children who are ill and others who may require it during a pandemic or emergency.

DEVELOPMENT

- ✦ Appropriate and meaningful activities are developed to support children's continued learning, development and well-being during periods when regular programmes and routines are disrupted.
- ✦ Children are supported to maintain meaningful routines and continue working towards their learning and developmental goals, wherever possible.
- ✦ Creative, innovative and appropriate methods, including technology-based approaches where feasible, are adopted to continue engaging with children and supporting their development.

PROTECTION

- ✦ Children are supported to recognise risks, seek help and access appropriate channels of communication and support during the pandemic or emergency.
- ✦ Special attention is given to preventing and responding to increased risks of violence, abuse, neglect and exploitation that may arise during pandemics, emergencies and prolonged disruptions.
- ✦ Continued attention is given to the prevention of child labour, child marriage and other protection concerns that may increase during periods of crisis.
- ✦ Information on children's safety, health and protection is shared with parents, community groups and child protection mechanisms, as appropriate to the situation.
- ✦ All actions and decisions concerning children are guided by the best interests of the child.

PARTICIPATION

- ✦ Appropriate opportunities, including virtual and technology-based engagement where feasible, are created for children to remain connected with one another and participate in learning, activities and programmes during periods of disruption.
- ✦ Children's Forums are supported to remain connected and provide opportunities for children to share their experiences, concerns and understanding of the situation, ask questions and seek information and support.
- ✦ Children's views and experiences are taken into account while adapting programmes and developing appropriate responses during pandemics and emergencies.

3.4 RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION

- ◆ Children attending Vidiyal's Child Education Centres are facilitated to form base groups based on their area of residence and age group.
- ◆ The children's base groups together constitute the Vidiyal Child Rights Movement, a federation of children's groups. As Vidiyal's work expands, new base groups may be formed and become part of the Vidiyal Child Rights Movement.
- ◆ Sakthi – Vidiyal facilitates the Vidiyal Child Rights Movement in information sharing, capacity building, decision-making, alliance building and campaigning for child rights.
- ◆ Children elect their representatives based on periodically reviewed criteria.
- ◆ Girls' participation in leadership is ensured through proportionate representation.
- ◆ Two representatives from the Vidiyal Child Rights Movement are invited to participate in the Managing Committee meetings of Sakthi – Vidiyal once every six months, with a specific agenda allocated for them to share and discuss matters concerning children.
- ◆ The Vidiyal Child Rights Movement is consulted when new projects and ideas for new programmes are developed, and children's views are taken into consideration in the decision-making process.
- ◆ Children are consulted in the design and periodic review of the organisation's projects and programmes, and appropriate changes are made based on consensus.
- ◆ The Vidiyal Child Rights Movement is consulted for planning and organizing joint programmes with other NGOs, CBOs and coalitions.
- ◆ Information received through the internet, emails, circular letters from other NGOs and CBOs, and invitations for programmes and training is scrutinised, and appropriate information is shared with the representatives of the Vidiyal Child Rights Movement through an information register.

- ◆ Resource persons and experts from different walks of life are invited to interact with and share relevant information and experiences with children through various programmes.
- ◆ Relevant coalitions are initiated and engaged with to create and strengthen opportunities for children's participation.
- ◆ Children of the Vidiyal Child Rights Movement are facilitated to develop collective leadership and to participate and represent at local, district, state, national and international platforms and networks.
- ◆ Children's participation in children's movements and child networks is facilitated through training that strengthens communication, leadership, interpersonal and analytical skills.
- ◆ Equal opportunities are ensured for children to participate in programmes organised by other organisations and networks. Translation support is provided when children interact with persons speaking other languages or participate in national and international programmes.
- ◆ Working with people's organisations to advocate for and enable meaningful child representation in relevant social and governance structures, including the Grama Sabha, Village Level Child Protection Committees (VLCPCs) and Local Bodies.



4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND STAKEHOLDERS

4.1 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- ◆ The Executive Director is the point person for funding partners, donors, government officials, interns, visitors, and persons representing other organisations for contact and assistance. He may depute a recognised staff member for follow-up and further action.
- ◆ The Director – Child Development, Director – Child Protection and Director – Child Participation are the point persons for local donors, community leaders and school authorities for contact and assistance. They may depute a recognised staff member for follow-up and further action.
- ◆ Staff are available to care for and protect children with special needs.

4.2 STAFF RECRUITMENT

- ◆ During the screening and selection process, prospective staff are assessed for their acceptance of and alignment with the organisation's values and principles, including its commitment to Child Rights, annihilation of caste, gender equality, non-discrimination and secularism.
- ◆ All staff joining Sakthi - Vidiyal are expected to have an understanding and acceptance of Child Rights.
- ◆ Every new staff member signs an undertaking to adhere to the norms of the Child Policy for the protection of children and their rights.
- ◆ An induction programme is held for all new staff, providing orientation on the organisation, its Child Rights approach and practices, the Child Policy and other policies relevant to their work, and concluding with field visits and an introduction to the children.
- ◆ Staff have a probation period of one year after which a performance appraisal is done using participatory methods and continuance is based on the appraisal.
- ◆ Staff and volunteers are provided with orientation and training on positive and non-violent approaches to discipline and behaviour management to ensure the protection and well-being of children.

4.3 VOLUNTEER INDUCTION & DEVELOPMENT

- ◆ Children who complete their schooling and are interested in voluntary work are encouraged and provided opportunities to develop as trainee volunteers.
- ◆ Every trainee volunteer signs an undertaking to adhere to the norms for protecting children and their rights.
- ◆ Trainee volunteers undergo a yearlong internship, during which they are placed in Child Education Centres and supported through on-the-job learning, mentoring, training and reflection.
- ◆ Trainee volunteers are supported to develop the skills required to facilitate children's forums and the Children's Movement.
- ◆ The internship and training process prepares trainee volunteers with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and understanding required to work with children, including Child Rights, Child Protection, organisational policies and their duties and responsibilities.
- ◆ On completion of the internship, trainee volunteers are assessed for their skills, attitude and readiness to work with children before being given responsibilities as volunteers.
- ◆ Qualified volunteers are expected to possess skills in reading, writing and arithmetic. They are expected to have language skills especially in Tamil and English.
- ◆ Only volunteers who have completed the required preparation and training are assigned responsibilities involving direct and independent work with children.
- ◆ Every volunteer is expected to give a minimum of 3 hours in a day. The hours may increase during weekend and special programmes. In a week each volunteer is expected to give a minimum of 21 hours.
- ◆ Volunteers work directly with children in the Child Education Centres. They report at 5.15 PM to the Child Education Centre and receive children with greetings and a pleasant look. They leave the centre at 8.15 PM after ensuring proper clean up and locking the centre.

4.4 INTERNSHIP

All interns shall read, understand and adhere to the Child Policy and the Code of Conduct applicable to persons who work with or come into contact with children. Interns shall sign the required undertaking before commencing their internship. Serious violations of the Child Policy or the Code of Conduct may result in appropriate action, including termination of the internship. Where appropriate, the referring college or institution shall also be informed.

4.5 CODE OF CONDUCT

The following Code of Conduct sets out the essential standards of behaviour expected from all persons who work with or come into contact with children through Sakthi-Vidiyal. These standards are non-negotiable and shall be followed at all times to ensure that the rights, dignity, safety and well-being of every child are respected and protected. Any violation of these standards will be taken seriously and addressed in accordance with the Organisation's policies and procedures.

A. RESPECTFUL AND NON-DISCRIMINATORY BEHAVIOUR

- ◆ Staff, volunteers, interns and other persons who have contact with children shall communicate with children in a respectful and child-appropriate manner. No person shall use language or engage in behaviour that is abusive, ridiculing, condemning, emotionally harmful or psychologically harmful towards a child.
- ◆ Staff, volunteers, interns, trainers, caregivers and other persons associated with Vidiyal shall not discriminate against any child on the basis of caste, gender, religion, ability, appearance, background or any other identity.
- ◆ Staff and volunteers are not allowed to use children to run errands and do personal work.



B. SAFE AND APPROPRIATE INTERACTION

- ◆ Staff, volunteers, interns and other persons working directly with children shall ensure that their interactions with children take place in an open and observable environment and shall avoid private or unobserved situations with children.
- ◆ Staff, volunteers, interns and other persons who have contact with children shall not engage in any form of unsafe or inappropriate touching, grooming, use of suggestive language, inappropriate messaging, personal meetings or keeping secrets with children.
- ◆ Staff, volunteers, interns and other persons who have contact with children shall not use corporal punishment or any other form of physical punishment to discipline children.
- ◆ Staff, volunteers, interns and other persons who have contact with children shall not engage children in rough physical or sexually provocative games, including horseplay.
- ◆ Staff, volunteers, interns and other persons who have contact with children shall take appropriate steps to prevent children from entering unsafe or vulnerable situations and ensure their safety when such situations arise.

C. PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES, PERSONAL CONTACT AND COMMUNICATION

- ◆ Staff, volunteers, interns, donors, suppliers, service providers, vendors and other persons or stakeholders who have contact with children shall not independently contact or communicate with children or their families except through arrangements authorised by the Organisation.
- ◆ They shall not share their personal contact details with children or their families or seek the personal contact details of children or their families for personal purposes.
- ◆ Staff, volunteers, interns and other persons who have contact with children shall not show undue favouritism or provide preferential treatment to any child in a manner that may compromise professional boundaries or create inappropriate dependency.
- ◆ Staff, guests, visitors, interns, donors, sponsors, teachers, volunteers, resource persons and funding partners shall not take any child for their personal programmes or for overnight stay in their personal or official capacity.

D. PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

- ◆ Staff, volunteers, interns and other persons working directly with children shall maintain confidentiality regarding children's personal information and shall share information about safety concerns, including concerns about whether children are being treated with respect, only with the appropriate persons or through the appropriate mechanisms.
- ◆ Staff, volunteers, interns and other persons who have contact with children shall not photograph, video record, audio record or otherwise capture or use images or personal information of children through their personal devices except with authorisation from the Organisation and in accordance with its policies and procedures.
- ◆ No person shall collect or use information from children for personal purposes. Any collection or use of information relating to children shall be only for authorised purposes and in accordance with organisational policies and procedures.

E. DIGITAL SAFETY AND USE OF ELECTRONIC DEVICES

- ◆ Staff, volunteers, interns, donors, suppliers, service providers, vendors and other persons or stakeholders who have contact with children shall not independently contact or communicate with children or their families except through arrangements authorised by the Organisation.
- ◆ They shall not share their personal contact details with children or their families or seek the personal contact details of children or their families for personal purposes.
- ◆ Staff, volunteers, interns and other persons who have contact with children shall not show undue favouritism or provide preferential treatment to any child in a manner that may compromise professional boundaries or create inappropriate dependency.
- ◆ Staff, guests, visitors, interns, donors, sponsors, teachers, volunteers, resource persons and funding partners shall not take any child for their personal programmes or for overnight stay in their personal or official capacity.

F. RESTRICTIONS ON GIFTS, MONEY AND MATERIALS

- ◆ Staff, volunteers, interns and other persons who have contact with children shall not give gifts, money or other materials directly to children

G. PROHIBITED PRACTICES AND SUBSTANCE USE

- ◆ Staff, volunteers, interns and other persons who have contact with children shall not participate in or promote harmful traditional practices or rituals that affect children, whether in the community or in their personal lives.
- ◆ Staff, volunteers, interns, visitors and other persons associated with the Organisation shall not use drugs, tobacco products or alcohol on the premises of the Organisation or during its programmes and activities.

H. REPORTING CONCERNS AND UPHOLDING THE CODE OF CONDUCT

- ◆ Staff, volunteers, interns and other persons who have contact with children shall promptly report any concern relating to the safety, protection or well-being of a child, including suspected abuse, exploitation, neglect or other forms of harm, through the appropriate mechanisms of the Organisation.
- ◆ Any violation of the Child Policy or this Code of Conduct shall be reported through the appropriate mechanisms of the Organisation.
- ◆ All persons covered by this Code of Conduct shall cooperate in addressing concerns and uphold the standards and principles contained in the Child Policy and this Code of Conduct.
- ◆ No person shall intimidate, threaten, punish or otherwise retaliate against a child for raising a concern, making a complaint or reporting a violation.



5. SKILLS

Staff, volunteers, interns and other persons working with or coming into contact with children shall develop and demonstrate the skills required to promote and protect Child Rights and contribute to the safety, well-being, development and participation of children. These include:

- ◆ Knowledge and understanding of Child Rights, child-related issues and the needs and situations of children.
- ◆ Ability to understand and respond appropriately to the different needs, concerns and situations of children and provide appropriate guidance and support.
- ◆ Skills to communicate effectively with children, build supportive relationships and use child-friendly approaches, tools and practices that contribute to their development and well-being.
- ◆ Ability to identify children's concerns and protection risks, maintain appropriate professional boundaries and facilitate access to appropriate services, support systems and referral mechanisms.
- ◆ Skills to facilitate children's participation, collective action, leadership and involvement in planning, decision-making and activities that concern them.
- ◆ Ability to use appropriate creative methods, including theatre and the arts, to promote Child Rights, participation and the holistic development of children.
- ◆ Ability to build supportive relationships and networks that help children access their rights, protection and appropriate support.



6. STYLE OF FUNCTIONING

Sakthi-Vidiyal shall follow a child-centred and child-rights-based style of functioning in all its work with children. Staff, volunteers, interns and other persons working with or engaging with children shall promote relationships and practices that recognise children as rights holders and active participants in their own development and in matters affecting them.

- ◆ Build caring relationships with children based on mutual trust and create an environment in which children feel safe, valued and confident to express themselves.
- ◆ Recognise the individuality, capacities, needs, experiences and evolving abilities of every child and respond appropriately to their situations and concerns.
- ◆ Listen to children with sensitivity and seriousness, including making efforts to understand concerns and needs that children may find difficult to express openly.
- ◆ Encourage and enable children to make informed choices and participate meaningfully in decisions and matters affecting their lives.
- ◆ Consult and involve children in the planning, implementation and periodic review of programmes and activities concerning them, taking their views into consideration.
- ◆ Recognise and appreciate children's progress and achievements and provide constructive support that encourages their growth and development.
- ◆ Encourage children's initiatives, collective action and leadership, and provide opportunities for them to participate and represent their concerns at appropriate forums and platforms.
- ◆ Promote equal opportunities for all children to access information, programmes, platforms and opportunities that contribute to their growth, development, protection and participation.
- ◆ Facilitate children to access relevant information and knowledge and encourage them to develop the communication, leadership, interpersonal and analytical skills required for meaningful participation.

- ◆ Work with children's groups, movements, networks and other relevant organisations to strengthen children's collective participation and representation in society.
- ◆ Children's queries and points of view shall be responded to with consideration to reasoning, facts, practical difficulties in execution, humour and acceptance.
- ◆ Periodically reflect on and review programmes and practices, with the participation of children where appropriate, and make changes based on their experiences, concerns and emerging needs.



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**Celebrating Childhood
Championing Child Rights**



“A commitment to every child, a step towards a peaceful and just society”



Sakthi is a non-profit organization established in 1993. VIDIYAL, meaning “dawn” in Tamil, was initiated as a programme of Sakthi, committed to the cause of children from socially excluded communities and those from the most disadvantaged backgrounds in Madurai, South India. Vidiyal reaches out to high-risk children and their families. Through our work, children gain education, skills, and self-confidence within a caring and supporting environment. Innovative programmes are designed, which include short stories, songs, theatre, thematic children's camps, and enriching activities. Our programmes are designed to meet the specific and individual needs of children and adolescents.

In 2000, children came together to form the Vidiyal Child Rights Movement. This movement works for the participation of children in matters concerning them and against all forms of child exploitation.

Sakthi - Vidiyal and Vidiyal Child Rights Movement participate and facilitate in the initiatives of networks supporting Child Rights, The Forum for Promotion of Child Participation (FPCP), Federation of Children's Movements for Right to Participation (FCMRP), National Forum for Child Participation (NFCP), Campaign Against Child Labour (CACL), Young Voices National Movement and National Action & Coordination Group-Ending Violence Against Children (NACG-EVAC)-India .

