

Focus on formative, continuous assessment of pre-school students: NCERT

New curriculum and teaching guidelines have been released by the framework body

Assessment of pre-school students should be formative and continuous, mentions the new curriculum released by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

“It implies observing and documenting the development of a child, day-to-day experiences, behaviour, artworks and interactions to address the learning gaps,” NCERT stated in the recently released pre-school curriculum which also describes the role of teachers, administrators, policy planners and other stakeholders in providing good quality preschool education to children.

‘DOCUMENT CHILDREN’S LEARNING’

The council, in a letter to its affiliated schools, has also said that teachers must document each child’s learning in a variety of ways. In the curriculum, it has suggested various tools and techniques that can be used by the teachers to assess students. The framework body emphasises on the upkeep of anecdotal records comprising how and where children spend time, their social relationships, use of language, modes of interaction and knowledge about health and nutrition habits.

It also suggests teachers to maintain a portfolio of each student consisting of an adaptable collection of his/her work over the time. “This type of assessment also focuses on the child’s strengths and demonstration of knowledge and skills,” read the pre-school curriculum. Emphasising on the need of observations by teachers, the revised curriculum adds, “The observation could be planned purposefully for observing a child or group of children in a specific situation.”

The guidelines also instruct the teachers to draft a checklist of learning outcomes, behaviours or traits of a child in a particular development area. “A teacher is to determine whether these traits exist in a child or not. He/she has to mark on the checklist as ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ to indicate whether a particular child exhibits a behaviour during the observation period,” the curriculum states.

‘USE RATING SCALE’

In a first, the NCERT also suggests use of a rating scale. “A rating scale is a tool used for assessing the performance of tasks, skill levels, procedures, processes, qualities, quantities and end product. Rating scales are similar to checklists except that they indicate the degree of accomplishments rather than just yes or no,” the new curriculum reads.

ASSESSMENT GUIDELINES RELEASED BY NCERT:

Assessment must be based on children’s activities, health, nutrition, physical and social well-being

Each child should be assessed individually

On no account, should children be made to take any form of test or examination, both oral and written

The purpose of evaluation at the pre-school stage is not to label a child as 'pass' or 'fail'

Assessment should provide direction for learning new skills

Assessment should focus on child's strengths rather than deficits

The progress of children should be recorded for each aspect of development on a continuous basis

Assessment should help in identifying children who have some special needs

The teachers should plan activities based on the assessment of children

Parents and teachers need to monitor progress of children collectively