

Teachers' Handbook for Foundational Literacy and Numeracy Grade 1 & 2



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Chapter 1

Introduction of Foundational Stage



1.1 *What is the Foundational stage?*

The initial eight years in a child's life are pivotal as the brain develops at the fastest speed during this stage. According to findings in neuroscience research, approximately 85-90% of a child's brain is already formed by the age of 6. This stage lays the foundation for enduring well-being, the cultivation of essential learning capacities. During this stage, children learn communicative skills, understand the environment, develop new relationships, a sense of self and grows physically and cognitively. Hence, it becomes imperative to furnish developmentally appropriate emotional, social, and intellectual experiences that foster sustained and comprehensive brain development during this period. These experiences need to be holistic so that they serve to engage various regions of the brain to establish a strong network of neural connections. The absence of stimulating experiences during these formative years can have detrimental implications which adversely impact a child's performance and motivation to learn in higher grades.

James Heckman (2007) proved that investment in early years yields maximum returns as early childhood programs can have substantial positive impacts on children's cognitive, socio-emotional, and economic outcomes, leading to better educational attainment, reduced social disparities, and improved economic productivity.

These first eight years are also named as the **foundational stage**. The Foundational Stage pertains to children aged 3 to 8 years and encompasses various educational institutions throughout India. It marks the initial phase in the restructured 5+3+3+4 Curricular and Pedagogical framework for School Education outlined in the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.



3-6 years - ECCE is provided in Institutional setting such as Anganwadis and Pre-schools. At this pre-primary stage, school readiness is the most critical component for the smooth transition of children to formal learning.



6- 8 years - The primary school years begin from this stage. At this stage, foundational literacy and numeracy become critical as it lays the foundation for more complex skills such as problem solving, critical thinking etc. and learn new information from other disciplines.

1.2 *Why is Foundational Literacy and Numeracy important?*

The Foundational stage is also a critical period for the development of literacy and numeracy skills. These skills are closely associated with children's communication with people in their environment, their interaction with print, drawings, counting things, estimating quantities etc. A stimulating environment at home and at school is important for the children to acquire appropriate FLN skills to become independent and engaged readers and writers who are able to read and write to learn and express themselves.

The provision of developmentally appropriate and high-quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) during foundational stage serves as a potent equalizer in society, offering every child an optimal opportunity to evolve into a considerate, self-regulated, creative, and productive individual and citizen.



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