

Safeguarding Child Rights

SAKTHI – VIDIYAL'S CHILD POLICY

A Commitment



SAKTHI – VIDIYAL

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Facilitated by : Dr. Sujatha Rita and Dr. C.Jim Jesudoss together with the staff,
Volunteer team and Vidiyal Child Rights Movement.



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 Tamilnadu Societies Registration Act S.No. 50 of 1993. The motto of Sakthi is to work with the 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 adolescent training programmes. 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 is based under the auspices of Sakthi-Vidiyal which houses runaway, abused, exploited and abandoned children. Sakthi Vidiyal is given the responsibility of running Childline services (Toll free number 1098) in Madurai city from 2012. The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, 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, 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 it can fully assume its 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 person's 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 home, 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 7 Child Resource Centers in socially and economically disadvantaged areas in Madurai. Vidiyal has a Drop in Centre for street and working children. 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.



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 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 has 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 remain 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.





Every Right for Every Child





Empowering Children through Rights Based Approach





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





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 provide a caring and safe environment to street and working children
- ✿ To enable rescue and rehabilitation of children in distress
- ✿ To provide basic needs to children coming from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- ✿ To ensure development of socially excluded children by prioritizing their Rights
- ✿ To address the social disadvantage of children by focusing on celebrating self
- ✿ To teach life skills and values
- ✿ To encourage children to celebrate our diversified culture
- ✿ To prevent children from becoming child labourers
- ✿ To ensure opportunities for education and vocational training
- ✿ To provide opportunities to acquire computer skills and to access information technology
- ✿ To ensure Child Rights in society by providing child rights education to all stakeholders
- ✿ To monitor various social structures including the family and school and ensure protection of children from abuse, exploitation and discrimination






STRUCTURE

1. The Board of Sakthi comprises of child development professionals, social workers, psychologists, educationists and eminent citizens. The board is the policy making body and is responsible for financial management.
2. The core team comprises of the Executive Director, Project Director, Programme Director, Head – Volunteer Programme, Project and Field Co-ordinators and Counselors. They engage in a participatory decision making process with regard to the implementation, monitoring and concurrent review of the programmes and projects.
3. Children participate in the working of the organization with representation in the board and in committees working for the welfare of the child.
4. 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.
5. The Executive Director implements child rights, monitors and evaluates periodically the child protection strategies and systems, outlines the rules and procedures in child management and sets guidelines for the conduct of staff.
6. The working staff is led by the Executive Director who implements programmes for child rights, through Project and Programme Directors, assisted by Project, Programme and Field Coordinators, Support Staff, and Volunteers.
7. The Project and Programme Directors implement, monitor and evaluate the programmes for child provision, child development, child protection and child participation.

STRUCTURE

8. Administration and financial management staff report to the Executive Director.
9. The Programme Coordinator and Field Coordinators are responsible for the effective and efficient management of the Child Resource Centres and work directly with the communities.
10. Support Staff and Volunteers work directly with children at the Child Resource Centres.
11. The Project Coordinator is responsible for the effective and efficient management of the Children's Home and Vidiyal nursery school.
12. 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.
13. The Volunteers Forum called 'Muhangal' meaning 'Faces' works in the Child Care Centers and in the children's forum providing leadership, care and protection of the younger children.
14.  Vidiyal works with Olirum Muhangal (Radiant Faces) the alumnus of Vidiyal to engage themselves with children in the programmes, camps and activities of Vidiyal and Vidiyal Child Rights Movement.
15. The alumni forum nominates two persons from their membership to take part in the discussions and decisions of the managing committee of the society.



2. STRATEGY

1. Affirmative action and positive bias for equity is the essence of all our programs.
2. We respect and ensure child participation in matters concerning children.
3. We promote and implement child rights through our projects and programmes with the children and in the family, community, schools and in society.
4. We support children's growth and development including their participation and decision making in child related matters.
5. We collaborate with other organizations to promote education and skill training.
6. We establish appropriate mechanisms and programmes for the protection of children in the organization, family, community and schools.
7. We participate in the implementation of Juvenile Justice System and access the existing Government structures for the protection of children.
8. We create opportunities for children to come together to form their own base units.
9. We work with our Alumnus forum to integrate child rights in communities and society.
10. We initiate and work with coalitions to advocate for child rights.
11. We work with and for children to build and access children's federations and establish linkages with local, state, national and international child forums.
12. We utilize the Right to Information Act to ensure Child Rights.
13. We monitor implementation of laws that foster social inclusion and development of children against discrimination and prejudice.

3. SYSTEM

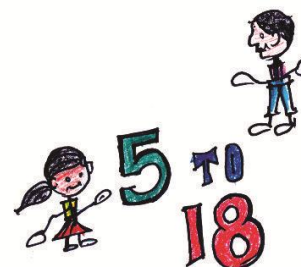
**Children enjoy privileges
and priority in every sphere of the
Organization**



3.1 RIGHT TO LIFE

3.1.1 AGE

1. Every person below the age of eighteen is a child.
2. Children coming to Vidiyal are divided into five age groups –
Beginners 5 – 8; Primary 9 – 10; Junior 11 – 12;
Intermediate 13 – 14 and Senior 15 – 18.
3. Age appropriate training methodologies are adapted to impart knowledge and skills.



3.1.2 IDENTITY

1. Registration of birth and name is mandatory. Children are facilitated to get the necessary documents from the Government to ensure social security and social welfare.
2. The profile of every child in the Organization is maintained confidentially together with health and psychosocial care records.



3.1.3 CHILDREN'S HOME

The children's home is an undertaking under the aegis of Juvenile Justice

The provisions of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act are implemented at the children's home.



3.1.4 FOOD



1. A nutritionist is consulted for the provision of nutritious, timely and sufficient food. Seasonal vegetables and fruits are provided. Three main meals and snacks are provided at the Children's Home.
2. Supplementary food is provided to all children attending the Child Resource Centres.
3. Food that is donated is scrutinized for nutrients and fitness for consumption.



4. Quality and taste of the food is ensured by the Project and Programme Directors and implemented by the staff in charge.
5. The staff and children are provided with the same standard of food in all programmes.

3.1.5 WATER



1. Standards for water storage facilities especially drinking water are maintained.
2. Adequate potable water is provided at all Child Resource Centres and at the children's home.

3.1.6 CLOTHING

1. All children are provided with sufficient clothing.
2. Children living in the community and who are covered under the sponsorship programme are given two sets of school uniform
3. The quality of donated used clothes is checked before need based distribution.
4. Children under the sponsorship programme are given opportunities to visit selected shops to purchase new clothing of their choice for special occasions.



3.1.7 HEALTH

1. Medical needs are prioritized and attended. Contact with a range of specialists and pediatricians are established and emergency medical aid is ensured in hospitals.
2. Health awareness programmes are held for children to enable them to be protected from seasonal health hazards.



3. Height and weight of the children are checked at quarterly intervals and the specific needs of the child are attended.
4. Health checks and follow up is done on a quarterly basis and as required. Health records are maintained for all children.
5. Children are de wormed once in six months.
6. Children are screened for dental and optical care and referral services are utilized.
7. All staff will undertake a First Aid course at the St. John's Ambulance Services or equivalent services.
8. A first aid box is maintained and periodically stocked/replenished at each Child Resource Centre and Children's Home.
9. Counselling needs are attended to with priority.
10. Psycho social care is ensured through mentorship and periodical family interaction programmes.

3.1.8 ACCIDENTS/MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

1. All staff, volunteers and community mentors should have the contact phone numbers of the Executive Director, Programme Director and Project Director and should have the knowledge that they can call these numbers at the time of emergency.
2. All community mentors will be available informally at the centers during programs in case of requirement – medical emergencies.
3. Children meeting with an accident at Vidiyal and in the Child Resource Centers will be managed by the staff member/volunteer at the respective place. Priority will be given to ascertain injuries and provide first aid.
4. If a child has fallen due to rough play or from a height and has visibly hurt himself or herself, the child will not be shifted and the staff/volunteer in charge will immediately call the Government ambulance service while administering first aid to the child. Inform the Programme Director / Project Director / Executive Director, parents/guardian. The child will be admitted only in the Government hospital for treatment and follow up.

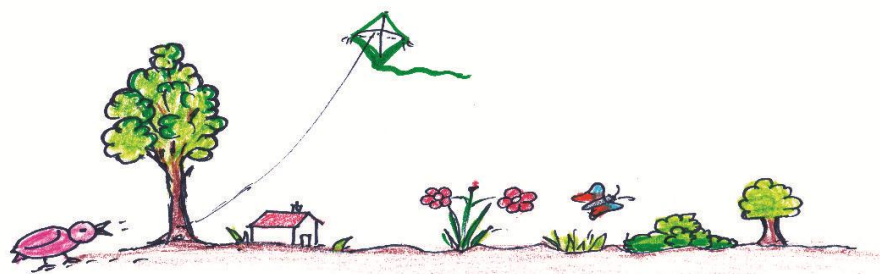


5. If the accident involves several children, the staff member/volunteer will contact the Government ambulance service and follow instructions if any given by the para medical staff. The Executive Director will be informed about the nature of accident and the names of the injured children and the office will contact parents/guardians.

6. 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.
7. In the event of staff/volunteers being involved in an accident with the children – Government ambulance service will be contacted and the Programme Director / Project Director will be informed and the office will contact parents/guardians.
8. All Vidiyal staff/volunteers are trained in the management of an epileptic fit. 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 and the information is conveyed to Programme Director / Project Director, parent/guardian. A detailed reporting of the incident will be noted in the child's health record.
9. In the case of death of a child at any of the centers, the Executive Director will be informed, followed by information to parent/guardian and the police if necessary. 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.
10. 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

1. A clean environment is maintained in the Children's Home and in all Child Resource Centres.
2. The staff and volunteers demonstrate and participate in maintaining clean surroundings in the premises and during programmes.
3. The children's forums are responsible for the cleanliness of the Child Resource Centres and children's home.
4. Children are encouraged to follow civic responsibilities.



3.1.10 MEETING WITH PARENTS/GUARDIANS

1. Monthly and bi-monthly awareness programmes and parenting sessions are held for the mothers and fathers of children attending the child resource centres to facilitate and ensure child- parent interaction and relationship.
2. Topics are chosen to impart knowledge on child rights, child protection and child psychology to enable the parents to become active defenders of the rights of their children/wards.



3.2 RIGHT TO DEVELOPMENT

3.2.1 CHILD RESOURCE CENTRES

1. The Child Resource Centres function between 5pm and 8 pm on all days except Sundays. The main centre works through the year between 9.30am and 8.30 pm.
2. The main centre is a multi-faceted resource and training centre with creative training programmes. It is a planning and meeting centre. Demonstrations and events are held here aimed at the integrated, holistic development of all children.



3.2.2 EDUCATION

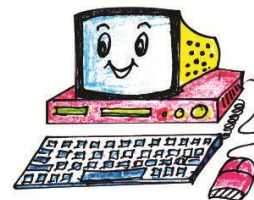
1. Children attending the Child Resource Centres are encouraged and helped to complete their class work. Tutorials are provided to children for subjects that children find difficult. One or more Volunteers are placed in each centre to support children in their education.



2. Children are motivated to complete schooling and pursue college / vocational education based on their aptitude and interest.
3. Support Staff routinely visit the homes of children to monitor and sustain parental and child interest in attending school regularly. Absenteeism in children is decreased through family interaction.
4. Parents/Alumni/Mentors are motivated to visit the schools periodically and participate in the Parents –Teachers Association.
5. Appropriate alternate opportunities for education/vocational education are made for children with no schooling, learning difficulties and children with inadequate foundation at the primary education level.
6. Children with special needs are admitted in educational institutions which has facilities for their integrated, holistic development.
7. Children who show interests in academic development are provided with opportunities for higher education and they are supported with internships and job placements.
8. Children showing special interest to learn languages are given the opportunity.
9. Open house is held once a year to facilitate interaction with family members of the child and staff.
10. Career guidance is held yearly to disseminate information and ensure career choice.



11. Weekly sessions are organized in each Child Resource Centre to impart Child Rights education to all children through creative means.
12. Once a year a training workshop is organized on Child Rights with current information.
13. Every child coming to Vidiyal are given the opportunity to become computer literate. Opportunity to learn basic computer education is provided at the main centre and Children's Home.
14. Ability based learning via computers is facilitated for every child in Vidiyal.
15. Children who have the aptitude for technical knowhow are provided with advance level of training to meet their needs. Access to internet will be supported with safeguards.



16. At adolescence all 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.
17. Adolescent children are enabled to work through their development stage and move towards adulthood.
18. Children are educated on the ill effects of pornography.
19. Life skills programmes are held in late adolescence (15-18 years) together with basic human and civil rights that is inclusive of legal rights pertaining to daily life.
20. Every year the Girl child is celebrated through a series of creative programmes.



3.2.3 VOCATIONAL TRAINING

1. Children who have the aptitude for technical training are given opportunities to join in such courses offered by NGOs, ITI, The Government Polytechnic, Colleges and Community Colleges. Appropriate job placements are gained for them through linkages with service organizations and industries.

3.2.4 LEISURE, PLAY AND CULTURE

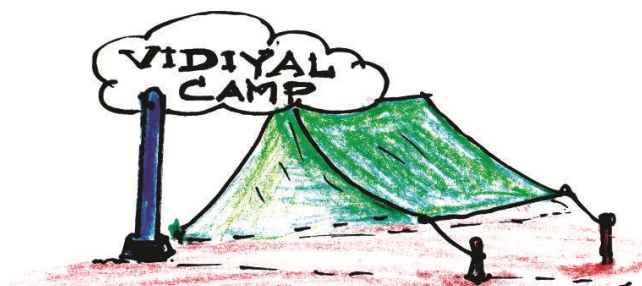
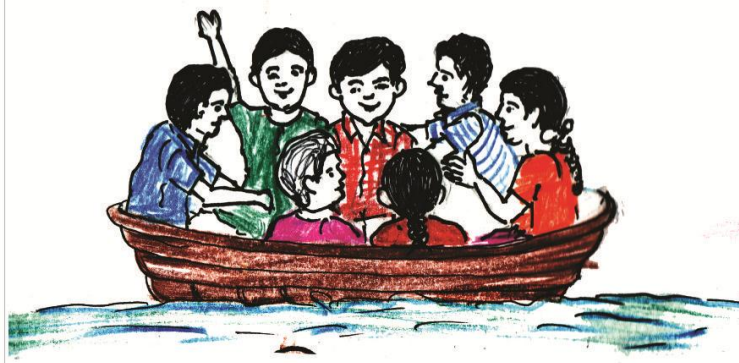
1. Opportunities are created for sports and games both in the main centre and in the Children's Home. Quarterly trainings are organized in indoor and Outdoor games.
2. Weekend play activities are organized in all Child Resource Centres.
3. Information regarding sport and game events is provided and children are encouraged to participate in competitions conducted by various associations
4. Annual sports meet is organized during Pongal season to encourage potential in sports.
5. Play grounds are used for organized sports activities.
6. Children are encouraged to form forums on



Science, Sports, Theatre, Art, Literature, Journalism, Social Action and Martial Arts to provide opportunities for sensory development and physical, social, psychological and intellectual development. These forums are headed by children and facilitated by volunteers and staff.



7. Theme based experiential activities are developed based on current trends and interests.
8. A children's library is maintained and interested children form a library management team to facilitate easy access for the children.
9. Volunteers are in charge of weekly reading sessions to encourage the reading habit in children.
10. Appropriate information related to library management techniques, documentation and library science is provided. Periodic trainings are organized for the children in charge of the library.
11. Noncommercial and alternate journals are subscribed to encourage critical thinking in children.
12. At 18 years of age the youth are encouraged to take memberships in public libraries.
13. Children are motivated to learn traditional art forms and opportunities are provided through formal training programs during school vacations.
14. Children are facilitated to join the "Children's Theatre" group. They are encouraged to perform in various arenas. Their interests and skills are sustained through ongoing trainings.
15. In every quarter picnics and exposure visits are organized for children, covering historical places, trade and factory settings, and places of environmental interest. The Sponsored Children with regular attendance are taken on a two day excursion.
16. A day camp titled "Jolly Camp" is organized during the summer vacation for 10 days. This camp serves as an induction program for new children joining the Organization.

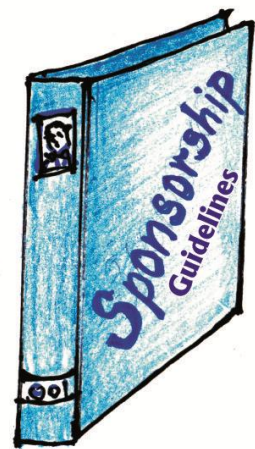
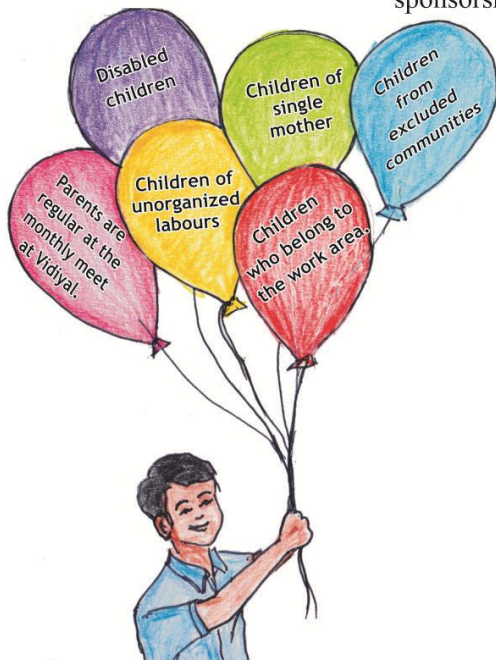


17. A residential camp is organized during quarterly holidays for children above 10 years having regular attendance to the Child Resource Centres.
18. Once in three years, an adventurous and challenging trekking program is organized for the senior children to build self-confidence and to stretch their abilities.
19. Children are encouraged to develop their skills in swimming and cycling.
20. On their 18th year, the youth are given opportunities to gain training in two wheeler and four wheeler driving from an authorized driving school. Finance is provided for the training and for the fees for their driving license.
21. Children who have special skills in drawing and painting, theatre, singing, folk art and martial art are enabled and encouraged to train children from other children's organizations.
22. Periodical training is organized for the young facilitators of the children's movement and they are encouraged to participate in their movement and with child networks.
23. Children are facilitated to choose appropriate service programs to develop social behaviour, social conscience, and humanitarian values.
24. Children are encouraged to participate in gardening and in pet management.



3.2.5. CRITERIA FOR SPONSORSHIP

1. Sponsorship is given to children who are regular to the Child Resource Centres
2. Children whose parents are regular members at the monthly mother's meet and father's meet at Vidiyal are entitled to sponsorship
3. Children who secure adequate stars in the token economy system are included for sponsorship
4. Children from excluded communities, either belonging to scheduled castes or scheduled tribes are eligible for sponsorship
5. Children, whose parents are engaged in scavenging work on a temporary or contract basis are eligible for sponsorship
6. Children, whose parents are engaged in unorganized labour are eligible for sponsorship
7. Children, whose parents have studied up to 12th standard are eligible for sponsorship
8. Children, whose parents are infected with terminal diseases are eligible for sponsorship
9. Disabled children are eligible for sponsorship
10. Children of single mother or deserted mother are eligible for sponsorship



3.3 RIGHT TO PROTECTION

3.3.1. SAFETY

1. Child safety norms are developed for each situation and due consideration is given to the norms in every program.
2. Every staff, volunteer, intern, sponsors, donors are prescreened before direct contact with the children.
3. Our regular meetings and one to one interaction is a mechanism for the child to voice their concerns.
4. Audit mechanisms are incorporated in our systems to verify and validate procedures and expected/stated behavior.
5. Staff and volunteers always work in an open environment avoiding private or unobserved situations



6. Children are encouraged to contact recognized staff members at any time while encountering unexpected danger from a known or unknown person or persons.
7. Different adult - child ratio are followed in all the projects and programs. For older children a ratio of 1: 20 and for younger children a ratio of 1:10 is followed. In the Children's Home for the care of children with special needs and during emergencies and health issues the ratio is 1:1.

8. At the time of probation the probationer is not allowed to take children independently for any program. He or she is always monitored by a long term staff and feedback is documented.
9. Designated staff members accompany children while attending residential programs and network meetings. Protection during a network program, travel and transit is collectively ensured by the staff team with assigned duties.



10. Strangers are discouraged from becoming familiar with children. Food and gifts are not accepted.

11. Children are prevented from entering into vulnerable situations and if such situations emerge unexpectedly children are removed immediately to a safe place.
12. Parents, community mentors, staff and volunteers are responsible to escort children to their homes after 10.00 pm.
13. The general public and visitors are not permitted to take photographs of children at the centre and in public spaces.
14. Downloading, storing and sharing of child inappropriate images via mobile phones and other electronic devices are prohibited.
15. Staff, Volunteers, interns and visitors are not permitted to allow children to access their personal mobile phones, iPod, laptops and other electronic devices.



16. Weapons, drugs, pesticides, chemicals and sharp objects are not kept in places where children have access.

17. 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.

18. Children and staff are given training on disaster preparedness and disaster management.

19. Counselling sessions are offered twice a week for children in need of psychological support.



20. Children's safety in their residential communities is maintained by the mentorship program which is designed and executed with community participation.

21. Mentors are given quarterly input on child rights and child related issues. Mentors are encouraged to contact the Organization for assistance, information and legal aid.
22. Through thematic camps children are nurtured with values of equality and equity.
23. The concept "Caste is null and void" is upheld and encouraged in practice.
24. Reconciliation events are held to promote peace and community co-existence.
25. People interested in adopting a child are guided to a licensed agency.



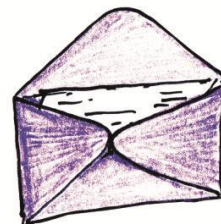
3.3.2. ABUSE

1. Abuse is never the choice of children and never their fault.
2. Abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual and neglect.
3. 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
4. When an abuse has occurred the child is provided with psychosocial care and rehabilitation measures.
5. Inappropriate behaviour and abusive relationship with children is subject to legal action and public exposure.



6. Norms of not touching, grooming, using suggestive language, messaging, keeping personal meetings and secrets is avoided with all children especially the girl child.
7. Children of the same age and gender stay together at the time of camps and other residential programs.
8. The Executive Director is the point person for funding partners, government officials, interns, visitors and persons representing other organizations for contact and assistance. He may depute a recognized staff for follow up and further action.

9. The Project Director and Program Director are the point persons for local donors, community leaders and school authorities for contact and assistance. They may depute a recognized staff for follow up and further action.
10. No persons including staff, guests, visitors, interns, donors, sponsors, teachers, volunteers, resource persons and funding partners are allowed to take any child for their personal programs or for overnight stay in their personal or official capacity.
11. Letters, phone calls and emails are screened before it reaches a child to avoid placing children in vulnerable situations.
12. Letters from children to sponsors are screened by the Project Director.



13. The Project 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.
14. The sponsored child and the sponsor remain in contact only through official channels.
15. Recognized staff members accompany donors and sponsors while visiting the projects and programs.
16. The core norms to be followed are developed by consulting with the children, for organizing joint programs with other NGOs, CBOs and coalitions.
17. Children's images are photographed or video graphed only with the prior permission from the Organization. Informed consent with Vidiyal Child Rights Movement is mandatory.
18. Children's consent and official permission is required for usage of children's photographs in any media.
19. Children's photographs are not identified with names in any of the publications including the print and electronic media.
20. Children's images and stories are stored in safe custody of the organization and have restricted usage.
21. Children are consulted periodically in designing, reviewing and modifying the safety norms and procedures followed in the organization.
22. Staff are available to care for and protect children with special needs.

3.3.3. SEXUAL ABUSE

1. Vidiyal prevents child sexual abuse from occurring at the institution and has systems, processes and procedures to respond to and thoroughly investigate abuse.
2. Staff and volunteers are trained to recognize processes pertaining to the grooming of children for sexual abuse and to observe children's behavior especially for marked changes in behaviour.
3. Every child coming in contact with Vidiyal is provided with adequate knowledge on Child Protection mechanisms including Childline's toll free number 1098.
4. Safe boundaries in relating to people are demonstrated and maintained with consistency. Safe boundaries are taught to children on a regular basis.
5. Staff and volunteers are fully supported and protected when in good faith he/she report his/her concern that a colleague is, or may be, abusing a child.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. Every year age appropriate education is given to children on 'Protection from Sexual Abuse' by trained staff members.
9. Children, staff, volunteers and mentors are periodically educated about the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012 and reported abuse is dealt according to the law.
10. Allowing or engaging in any form of inappropriate touching is prohibited under every circumstance.
11. Rough physical or sexually provocative games including horseplay are prohibited.
12. Allegations made by a child against another child or against a staff or volunteer is recorded, challenged and acted upon.

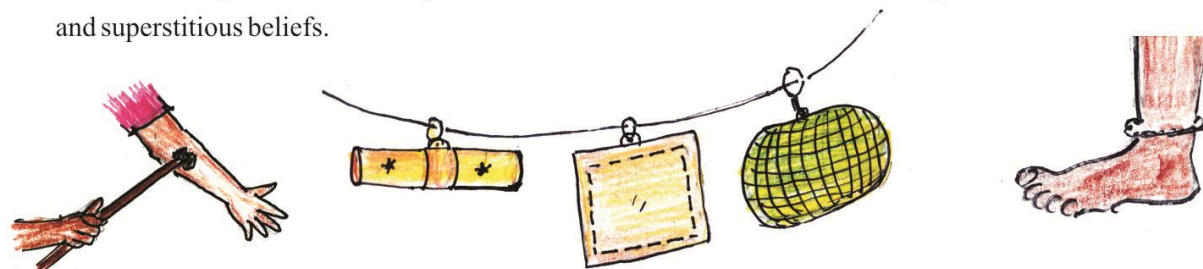


13. A reporting system is in place when
- a child is touched accidentally,
 - he/she seems distressed in any manner,
 - a child appears to be sexually aroused by one's actions and
 - a child misunderstands or misinterprets something one has said or done.
14. When sexual abuse is perceived as a possibility by the child, the child is taken into protective custody.
15. 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.
16. When a sexual abuse is reported the procedures are in compliance with the POCSO Act.
17. Young sex offenders at the Children's Home are reported in writing by the superintendent to the Child Welfare Committee. Young sex offenders at the Child Resource Centre are referred to the appropriate services.



3.3.4 INHUMAN TRADITIONAL PRACTICES

- Once a year, a training program is organized for parents on the devastating impact of harmful traditional practices and superstitious beliefs.
- Scientific outlook is developed in children through imparting contemporary knowledge in debunking myths.
- Parents are taught alternate disciplinary methods to manage children.
- Participation in the traditional practices or rituals that affect children is forbidden
- Children who approach the Organization for support when affected by traditional practices are protected through legal measures.
- The community is reached through street theater for sensitization and action against harmful traditional practices and superstitious beliefs.



3.3.5 DRUG ABUSE AND PEDALLING



1. Guests, visitors, students, interns, donors, funding partners, resource persons, volunteers, parents and government officials are forbidden from using drugs, smoking and consuming alcohol in the premises and programs of the organization.
2. Training is given on 'Prevention and Protection from Drug and Alcohol Abuse' to adolescent children. Children are supported to say 'No' when faced with peer and societal pressures.
3. Children addicted to drugs and alcohol and children affected by alcohol and drug abuse in the family are supported with referral services to appropriate organizations dealing with de addiction.
4. Parental awareness programs are conducted on the menace of alcohol and drug abuse for developing healthy families.



3.3.6 CHILD TRAFFICKING

1. Awareness programs on trafficking related issues are used to combat and prevent child trafficking.
2. Joint initiatives are undertaken through Campaign against Child Trafficking (CACT).

3.3.7 CHILD MARRIAGE

1. Children are educated on the consequences of child marriage and enabled to postpone their marriage age.
2. The Community and Parents are sensitized about the Child Marriage Prohibition Act 2006 and the legal marriage age through awareness programs and media.
3. Prevention of Child marriages are facilitated through Childline.
4. Children are educated to access toll free number 1098 for help.

3.3.8 DISCRIMINATION

1. Ridiculing children on any basis including caste, colour complexion, height, weight, ability, appearance, gender, area of living, type of work and cultural orientation is avoided in any performance or publication of the organization.
2. Children coming from difficult circumstances, disadvantaged backgrounds, dalit children and girl children are given priority and reservation in all the projects and programmes of the organization.
3. The organization ensures positive bias and affirmative action for the girl child.
4. In cultural performances all children are included and given equal opportunities to exhibit their skills and talents.
5. Caste is dealt as null and void obliterating the basis of shame and blame in children. Children's participation and decision making is strengthened to confront and challenge discriminatory practices.
6. Legal action is initiated against discriminatory practices in schools based on children's reports and evidence
7. Vidiyal collaborates with media for public participation in preventing and stopping discriminatory practices especially in schools



3.3.9 VIOLENCE

1. Violence as a means to resolve issues is forbidden.
2. In every programme children are educated about alternate problem solving methods through demonstration and opportunities to practice.
3. Corporal punishments are forbidden in the premises and programmes of the organization.
4. Violence and emotional abuse is unacceptable.
5. Staff and volunteers are encouraged and educated with alternate discipline methods to address behaviour issues of children.





6. Parents and community mentors are educated about discipline techniques as part of child rearing.
7. Songs with obscene lyrics are not used in any of the programmes.
8. Movies are selected for age appropriate viewing.
9. Age appropriate responsibilities are entrusted to children with consultation and discussion.
10. Adults are not allowed to use children to run errands and personal work.
11. Psychosocial protection is ensured through periodic debriefing especially after programmes, events and incidents that have initiated violence in the community or elsewhere.



3.3.10. GUIDELINES FOR CHILD SPONSORSHIP

1. Parents or guardians of children apply for sponsorship in the prescribed application format.
2. The sponsorship decision making committee comprises the Executive Director and staff team.
3. A sponsored child's case history, periodic progress reports and photograph is held in safe custody and is accessed with permission from the Executive Director.
4. A sponsor receives a brief case history of the child along with a photograph.
5. Children write and send cards to their sponsors periodically for authenticity. Once a year a photograph of the child is sent to the sponsors.



6. Staff responsible for child sponsorship programmes, undergo regular orientation in Child Protection with regard to sponsor communication and sponsor visits.
7. They are responsible for confidentiality of information, appropriateness of gifts and safety and participation in sponsor visits.
8. New Dawn India based in the United Kingdom decides the final allocation for the sponsorship programme in consultation with the Executive Director.
9. Children allotted sponsorship are given necessary details about their sponsors.
10. The postal address, email id, website address, phone numbers and any other communication identity of the sponsor and the child is not exchanged with either sponsor or child for any reason and at any time.
11. The contact between the sponsor and the child is established only through Sakthi - Vidiyal and New Dawn India.
12. Sponsors are encouraged to write letters to their sponsored child addressed to Sakthi - Vidiyal. The letter is orally translated to the child in Tamil.
13. Children write letters to their respective sponsors in Tamil and the same is translated to English and send to the sponsors through New Dawn India.
14. Children discontinuing from the Organization due to migration and other personal reasons are given three months to return to the Organization before their sponsors are informed and sponsorship cancelled.
15. A sponsor discontinuing sponsorship informs Sakthi - Vidiyal through New Dawn India and the child is informed about discontinuation of sponsorship. A new sponsor is found for the child.
16. Children are for their safety and protection not allowed on holidays in India with sponsors or to go abroad with sponsors on home visits or holidays.
17. If and when youth have opportunities to study abroad after 18 years of age, interested sponsors are encouraged to extend support to them.



3.3.11 VISITS BY TRUSTEES/SPONSORS OF NEW DAWN INDIA

1. The trustees of New Dawn India are welcome to make informed and scheduled visits to Sakthi - Vidiyal.
2. Any person sent by New Dawn India is certified by the trustees and undergo the procedures laid by New Dawn India for visits.
3. Visits to the community and houses of children are always at the discretion of the Executive Director. Recognized staff members accompany sponsors and donors while visiting the projects and programmes on planned visits.
4. Sponsors visit their sponsored child only at Sakthi - Vidiyal under staff supervision. Inappropriate behaviour with children curtails the visit and a report is submitted to New Dawn India.
5. Visitors and donors are encouraged to maintain safe boundaries while relating to children.
6. Visitors and donors are oriented on the expected dress code during visits

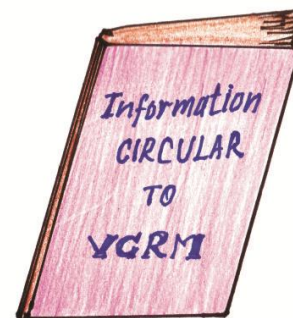


3.4 RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION

1. Children coming in contact with the organization are facilitated to form their base groups on area of residence and age group.
2. The children's base groups together form a federation – the Vidiyal Child Rights Movement.
3. The Vidiyal Child Rights Movement is facilitated by Sakthi – Vidiyal for information sharing, capacity building, decision making, alliance building and for campaigning for child rights.
4. Every new child is empowered through a series of training programmes before formally joining the Vidiyal Child Rights Movement.
5. Children elect their representatives based on a periodically reviewed criteria.
6. Girl children's participation in leadership is ensured by proportionate representation
7. Two representatives from the Vidiyal Child Rights Movement are invited to participate in the management committee meetings of Sakthi for agenda concerning children.
8. Vidiyal Child Rights Movement is consulted and informed decisions are taken when new projects and ideas for new programmes emerge.
9. Children are consulted while designing and periodically reviewing the projects and programmes of the organization and appropriate change is effected based on consensus.
10. Children are enabled to prepare budgets for their programmes.
11. Information received through internet, emails, circular letters from other NGOs, CBOs, invitations for programmes and training are scrutinized and appropriate information is shared with the representatives of Vidiyal Child Rights Movement through an information register.



12. Child appropriate information and posters are displayed on the notice board of the main centre and children's Home.
13. Appropriate television programmes and newspapers are available for children at the main Child Resource Centre and in the children's Home.
14. Child related appropriate information available with various Government departments are collected and presented to the children.
15. Experts from different walks of life are invited to share information and encourage children to access appropriate information for their growth, development, protection and participation.
16. Initiating and working with coalitions ensures participation of children.



17. The children of Vidiyal Child Rights Movement are facilitated to develop collective leadership and to participate and represent children in local, district, state, national and international children's organizations and networks.

18. Participation in the children's movement and child networks is facilitated through trainings emphasizing communication, leadership, interpersonal skills and analytical skills.



19. Equal opportunities are ensured for children to attend programmes of other organizations and networks. Translation support is ensured for children while interacting with persons speaking in other languages and when they attend national and international programmes.
20. Children are enabled to defend themselves in legal proceedings under the Juvenile Justice System by educating them on the Juvenile Justice Act.
21. Working with people's organizations to advocate for and enable child representation in all structures of the society.



4. SATFF

4.1 RECRUITMENT

1. All staff joining Vidiyal are expected to work with children and to have an understanding and acceptance of Child Rights.
2. Every new staff signs an undertaking to adhere to norms protecting children and their rights.
3. An Induction programme is held for all new staff – orientation about the organization, child policy, personnel policy, child rights, child psychology and concludes with field visits and introduction to the children
4. 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.
5. Staff endorse that caste is an unjustifiable concept.
6. Membership with caste affiliated associations and political parties are unacceptable.
7. Periodic training programmes are organised for staff and volunteers on alternate discipline methods to handle children.
8. Every staff is given the opportunity to attend capacity building programmes conducted by other organizations and training institutions.
9. Staff engaging as resource persons/ consultants in training programmes with other organizations and coalitions is encouraged.
10. Performance appraisal is done once a year.



5. SKILLS

5.1 KNOWLEDGE

1. Familiarity and knowledge of child rights and child related issues.
2. Child friendly approaches and practices.

5.2 SUPPORT

1. Empathize with children and tease out problems.
2. Solution oriented.
3. Recognize that different children need different kinds of supports.
4. Recognize importance of supports.
5. Separate oneself from a situation.
6. Advice and support plans.
7. Remain the professional in the staff child relationship. .
8. Assess and interpret the needs of children and child led organizations.
9. Adequate responses to needs of children.

5.3. INITIATIVE

1. Plan programs with children on child rights.
2. Analyze child circumstances and devise optimum solutions.
3. Design child friendly tools for children with children.
4. Recognize what needs to be done and do it.
5. Use theatre and the arts.



5.4 NETWORK

All staff will have:

1. Awareness of range of voluntary organization working for the cause of children.
2. Ability to build a data base for appropriate need based referral to access services for children.
3. Ability to recognize opportunities and act upon them.
4. Ability to represent the organization at all forums.
5. Confidence to make connections in a social and work context.
6. Ability to recognize synergies between organizations and children
7. Leadership qualities.
8. Ability to build relationships.



6. STYLE OF FUNCTIONING

1. Dignity and respect of the child is maintained by every individual who interacts with and relates to the child.
2. Caring relationships are built on mutual trust and empower children to share in decision making.
3. Staff are congruent in their communication and in their participation with children.
4. Acceptance, humour and pleasant approach are expected while relating to people and children.
5. Staff understand, the needs of children and respond with timeliness, appropriateness and maturity.
6. Appreciation is given to children regarding their progress and growth.
7. Constructive feedback is given when appropriate.
8. Children's needs are prioritized and appropriate standards are met
9. Responsibilities and duties primarily recognize the welfare of the child as paramount.
10. Relationship with the children is based on positive regard and avoidance of power and control needs of the staff.
11. 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 of abuse.
12. Children's queries and points of view are responded with consideration to reasoning, facts difficulties in execution, humour and acceptance.
13. Listening to children and understanding, hearing and acting on what is not expressed is seen as crucial for genuineness and concreteness in working with children.
14. Child rights perspective is essential in action and implementation.
15. Belief in the child's innate capacity to express and make choices is supported and fostered.
16. Presence of mind and independent prompt action is encouraged and supported especially when advocating child participation, decision making and protection.

Dignity & Respect

17. Provisions are the right of the child and staff maintain deference in attending to children's needs.
18. Faith in children, respecting the opinion of children, accepting and recognizing child leadership and permitting children to be decision makers and supporting child participation and initiatives is practiced.
19. Communication and relationship is based on accepting differences, being open, nonjudgmental, unconditional, genuine, respecting the child's confidences and maintaining confidentiality and prioritizing child protection.
20. Transactions of money and purchase are abided by standards of best practice and best price
21. Interns, student placement is encouraged and supported with strict adherence to the expectations of Sakthi -Vidiyal and the acceptance of the Child Policy norms.
22. Dignity of labour is maintained.



7. INTERNSHIP

7.1 GENERAL

1. At a given period we take two students from an institution/college/referral agency. If the college wants to send more students from other departments, permission is needed before sending the students
2. Students bring an authorization letter from the college signed by the principal or the head of the department
3. A meeting with the faculty to discuss the placement is always welcomed.
4. The Executive Director of Sakthi – Vidiyal is the person in charge of finalizing student placements.
5. The Programme Director is responsible for managing the day to day affairs of the placement students.
6. Any specific requirements for student placements needs to be discussed and finalized prior to the placement.
7. Walk in placements are not accepted
8. Interns are expected to adapt to the day schedule of Vidiyal – attendance is six days a week.
9. Students are expected to follow the timings of Sakthi – Vidiyal. On a normal day our working hours are as follows: Morning 09.30 am to 01.30 pm; Evening 04.00 pm to 08.00 pm. No waiver will be given in this regard. This timing may be changed and extended on days having special programmes and events. Students are expected to adapt and be accommodative to this changing schedule.
10. Late attendance is unacceptable.



11. If the student is taking leave during the placement period, he or she is expected to get the leave approved from the college/department with prior notice to Sakthi – Vidiyal. Students are expected to compensate their absence later with prior approval from Sakthi – Vidiyal.
12. Students are expected to come in formal clothes with proper haircut.
13. Usage of mobile phones during working hours is prohibited
14. Interns are expected to work hard for long hours and adapt to any situation that arise during the internship.
15. Skills and talents of interns are always linked to the needs of Vidiyal's programme.
16. Costs for injuries sustained during the internship is covered by the intern through insurance or personal means
17. Interns are not eligible for honorarium or stipends or any financial compensation from Sakthi - Vidiyal
18. Placement students are expected to sign an undertaking to abide by Sakthi -Vidiyal's Child Policy and organizational principles. Non compliance to the signed undertaking would result in cancellation of the placement without prior notice and would be intimated to the college/department.
19. We expect the college/institution sending students to orient the students about the mandatory norms regarding placements and encourage them to avoid defaults.



7.2 FOREIGN STUDENTS

1. Foreign interns are expected to fill the prescribed application form displayed in the website of the organization.
2. Prospective foreign interns will be interviewed by the Executive Director / Member of the board, through email or other electronic devices.
3. Selected foreign interns are provided with a letter of invitation and enabled to apply for entry visa for internship
4. Foreign student will not be allowed to come on tourist visa for internship.
5. Foreigners must register with the Police upon arrival.
6. Interns are expected to sign an undertaking with regard to child protection and they are expected to adhere to the Child Policy of our organization.
7. Staff may assist the foreign intern in finding boarding and lodging by providing appropriate information. The intern must arrange their own living, health, travel and finances.



8. Interns are expected to adapt to the time schedule of Vidiyal which is six days a week.
9. Interns are expected to work hard for long hours and adapt to any situation that arise during the internship.
10. Skills and talents of interns are always linked to the needs of Vidiyal's programme.
11. Costs for injuries sustained during the internship is covered by the intern through insurance or personal means
12. Interns are not eligible for honorarium or stipends or any financial compensation from Sakthi Vidiyal.



8. RESEARCH

1. Informed consent of the child and the Vidiyal Child Rights Movement is required for the purpose of academic research with prior permission from the Organization.
2. A recognized staff member is present at the time of interview to ensure the safety of the child. Any objectionable behaviour automatically leads to termination and forfeit of the continuation of the research study.
3. All academic research findings are shared with the Organization and the Vidiyal Child Rights Movement



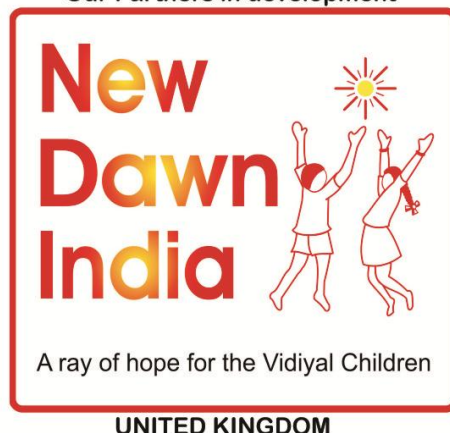
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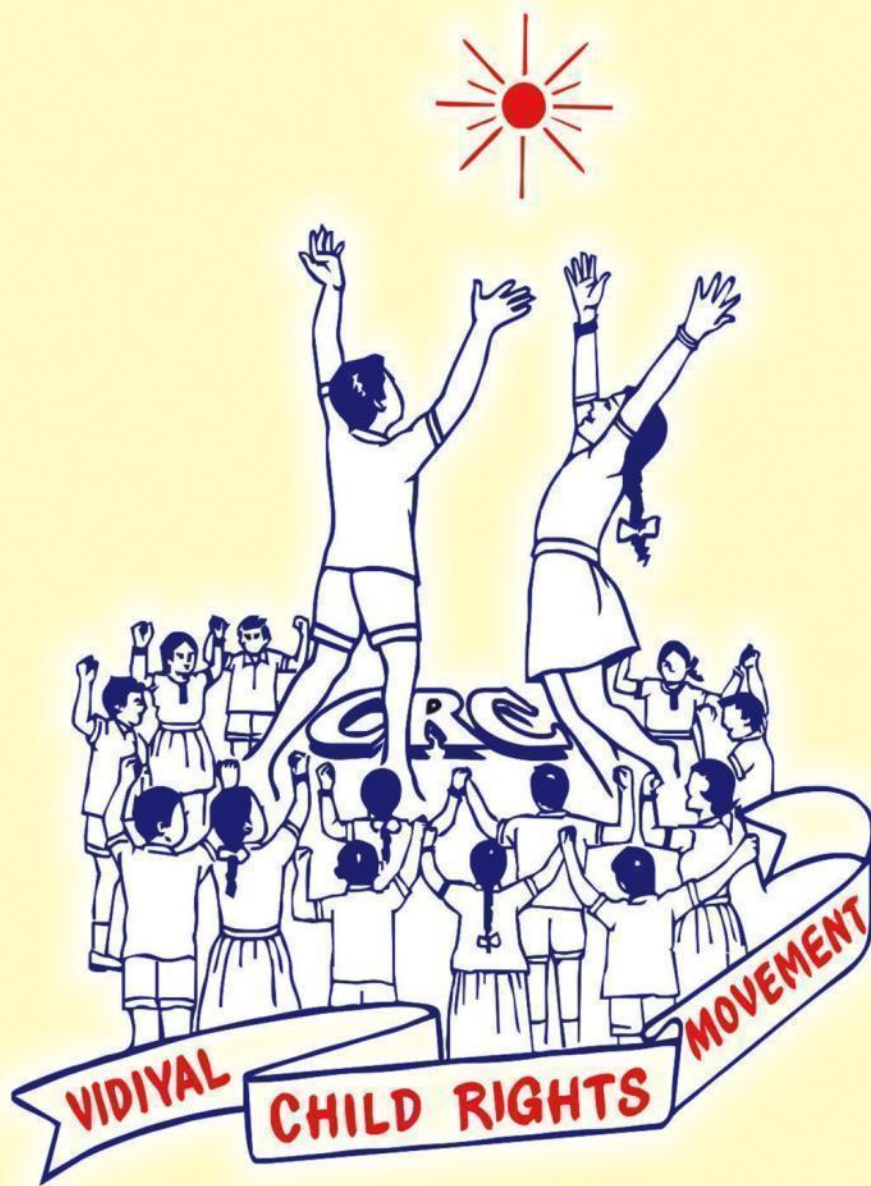
The New Dawn India is a charitable Trust founded in 1990 (Reg. Charity no.1001536). It is a Christian charity based in East Anglia, UK, and has supported the work of Sakthi-Vidiyal in Madurai, Tamilnadu, India, since the inception of the Vidiyal programme in 1996.

The New Dawn India -Policy Statement

New Dawn India is committed to practices that safeguard children and protect their welfare. The welfare of the children is our paramount consideration. We recognize and accept responsibility to develop awareness of the issues that may cause children harm, in accordance with the Children Act.1989 & 2004. However, in our situation we are concerned with the welfare of children in India and therefore also need to be aware of the Child Protection Guidelines in India and the Child Policy of Sakthi-Vidiyal which includes the Child Protection standards. Whilst visiting the projects in India, Trustees and supporters are expected to comply with the child protection standards of Sakthi - Vidiyal.

Our Partners in development





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 street and working children 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 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 matter concerning them and against all forms of child exploitation.

Sakthi - Vidiyal and Vidiyal Child Rights Movement participates and facilitates in the initiatives of Networks supporting Child Rights, especially The National Movement of Working Children (NMWC), The Child Rights for World Social Forum (CR4WSF), The Campaign against Child Trafficking (CACT), The Forum for promotion of Child Participation (FPCP), Federation of Children's Movements for Right to Participation (FCMRP), Tamilnadu Child Rights Observatory (TNCRO) and National Forum for Child Participation (NFCP).