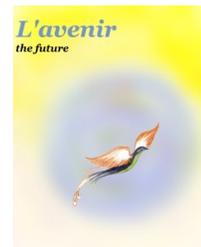


L'avenir *the future*

a preschool of the Gnostic Centre



AGASTYA

April - September 2012

A sweet little child
With a distinct smile
Solitude he enjoys
And aspires to go long miles
He likes to explore
and has an inquisitive mind
he appears very happy
and always kind
communicates through his eye
ready to fly up a little high☺

OUR FIRST OBSERVATIONS

'Didi give me red colour didi... I want blue colour didi...I want more green...' and that is how our tall, sensitive, innocent and peace loving Agastya started interacting with his new didis. We still remember the first day of his school when he entered L'avenir gate. When we saw his focused and confident walk it made us think that he won't take time to settle in a new place, but our assumption was wrong. Agastya took quite a long time to adjust in a new environment. He was very happy to come to the school and enjoyed doing all the activities sitting next to his mother. Emotionally he appeared in two minds: seeing other children playing he wanted to join them but yet was not ready to leave his mother. He was not ready to accept the new changes. In his initial days he used to be very talkative and playful and also at times shared his feelings but everything would take place in front of his mother. He was able to express himself through small sentences and that too more like a whisper.

Physically he appeared as a healthy child. He showed a good body control and body co-ordination. He was not very fond of playing and participating in the morning games. He was able to hold the big objects like balls, cushions, sticks, mallets, bowls and buckets. But there was a need to develop the strength in his fingers and arms. He was able to hold the fine objects such as paintbrush, crayons and any small and thin objects properly.

During the first month Agastya was quiet, observant and enjoyed exploring different corners that we used to set up for the children. He was mostly involved playing with paint, colouring, solving different animal puzzles and listening to stories. He showed fondness towards animals. Quite often we saw him going through animal books or creating a jungle with plastic animals, etc. Mentally Agastya appeared very sharp in understanding any instructions or grasping any concepts. He was also able to read the letters of his name and would recognize all the letters of the alphabet. Though he enjoyed listening to music and watching children dance but he felt shy to participate with the group.

At present...

Our sweet Agastya has come a long way to enjoy his first schooling. After the summer break we could see a positive change in him. He appeared more settled from within and also he gave us an impression as though he was truly missing the school during the summer break. In the month of July he seemed very happy and enjoyed coming to school. The first two weeks he liked being with Sunaina didi. Therefore we gave him the time and let him be with her and gradually helped him to interact with Mamata didi and Jayashree didi too. He has now developed a good relation and trust with all the didis. Though with our motivation and encouragement he is gradually opening up a lot, we still feel the need to help him become more talkative and interactive in the group.

Physically, Agastya comes across as a healthy child. He walks straight with a good posture like a young soldier. Initially Agastya did not like participating in the morning physical but a little bit push and encouragement have brought some sort of excitement in him. Now he loves running on the track with didis and his peer group. In a couple of weeks he has improved his speed of running and developed stamina. These days he has opened up in learning and enjoying a few physical equipments for e.g., climbing on the jungle gym, net ladder, tunnel, bamboo monkey bar and walking on the low height slanted wooden plank. His favourite equipment is the bamboo monkey bar. Most often we see him standing on the top of the ladder without any help. He also enjoys running and chasing didi.

Agastya enjoys spending some time just playing with colours. Every day he asks for his favourite colours saying, "didi I want red and blue colour." While scribbling or painting, he shows good eye-hand coordination and also a good control over fine motor. He uses big strokes while painting. He is fond of play-dough and enjoys kneading, squeezing, pressing and rolling activities and can be busy for a long time. Initially he would be hesitant touching any fluid (fevicol, paint and gum) with his hands but now he is not. Now-a-days he enjoys spreading paints with his palm rather than using the paint-brush.

Agastya enjoys sitting and eating in one place. He starts moving when he has eaten sufficient food from his tiffin. Though he eats slowly, he mostly tries to finish it. He seems very content with whatever he brings in his tiffin. Now Agastya has become independent in taking out and putting his tiffin box back in his bag. Independently he also cleans his hands before and after having his tiffin.

Emotionally, he is a very sensitive child. He feels hurt if someone speaks to him loudly or snatches things from him. In such a situation he becomes insecure and starts crying. In the middle of this term when children had started interacting with each other they also appeared excited exchanging each other's food. In this process of eating from others' tiffin they also tried to eat from Agastya's tiffin box which made our sensitive Agastya a little insecure. Due to this unpleasant experience Agastya would refuse to eat tiffin sitting in the group. He preferred eating either sitting alone or waited till all the children had gone out for free-play. However we resolved this issue by sharing a lot of stories and discussing in the group. For a week while having tiffin we also gave individual attention and sat next to Agastya to make him feel safe and secure. All this helped Agastya to feel free and enjoy his tiffin with his friends.

This is not the only incident where Agastya has become a little insecure there are many incidents, for example - if someone snatches things from his hands or pushes him, instead of taking a firm action he starts crying. Though at times with his soft voice he tries to

make his friends understand his feelings by saying, 'no this is Agastya's toys' and so on, but his voice is not so audible. Therefore seeing everything we felt that Agastya needs to become a little assertive to defend himself. Not only assertive, we also feel that he needs to widen his friend circle. On this issue we had a meeting with Agastya's mom and came up with an understanding that it is not only in the school but at home also Agastya appears the same. Therefore after going over different incidents we came up with three points to work upon.

1. To make him physically more active and participative. As Agastya does not seem to be happy participating in the morning physical exercises.
2. Help him to make friends and interact with them.
3. Help him to develop the confidence to say 'NO' and deal with conflicts.

Action taken:

- Through stories and a lot of motivation we were able to achieve the first aim. Now Agastya seems happy while participating in the morning games. As he has started participating in the morning physical we can see a lot of change in Agastya's interaction with others. We have noticed that the day he does morning exercises, throughout the day he appears more happy and active.
- To make friendship or to interact with others we are helping Agastya to take responsibility, such as - distributing papers or colours while doing painting, helping his friends by carrying their water-bottle or toys, telling stories in the group, going for nature walk by holding his peer's hand, etc. At present we have started doing this only with those children with whom Agastya feels more comfortable and likes being with them such as Sachkrit, Arav G., Anee and Kainaa.
- To help him become a little assertive at present whenever we see someone trying to snatch his toys or disturb him or push him back, in such situation a we stand next to Agastya and ask him to say loudly 'NO' to that particular child. We have noticed that it is very difficult for Agastya to say 'NO' and that too loudly. But still we have to help Agastya to know how to defend himself.

Though we can see a positive change in Agastya in terms of enjoying the morning physical and interacting with his peers but still in the coming term we would like to continue with the same effort so that Agastya can become more talkative, friendly and a little assertive.

A glimpse of Agastya's learning pattern: from our daily observation

First day -As Agastya was crying so Mamata didi took him to the Creativity lab. When he reached there he stopped crying and saw a tray filled with sticks. He took sticks from the tray and placed them in the front of alphabets. After doing so with sticks he moved on to chalks and repeated the same way. After exploring with chalk he saw that a bowl of water was kept on the edge. So he picked up the sticks (which he had given the shape of alphabets) and put them in the water. He stayed there for some time just looking at the bowl. He went back and picked up all the chalk and put it in the same bowl and stayed looking at it for some time. After that he started collecting and putting different objects one-by-one and observing them in the bowl. At the end he lifted a big sized soil clod and put it in the bowl. As the clod was big it soaked all the water. When Agastya could not see water in the bowl he lifted the bowl and turned it upside down and went out from the creativity lab.

Second day -Today in the morning Agastya seemed settled. He was carrying some white flowers in his hand which he had got from home to give to didis. After saying bye to his

dad he asked Mamata didi to take him to the creativity-lab. Seeing him interested Mamata didi took him to the creativity-lab. Agastya took a quick look at the set up and made himself busy scribbling with the coloured chalk. After doing a little bit of scribbling he took a mallet and started breaking the chalk into small pieces. After that he took all the small pieces of chalk and put them in a bowl which was filled with water. As soon as he put the coloured chalk in the water, the water became colourful. After seeing colour in the water Agastya seemed very excited. He moved on to putting different things in the water. Today he was not only putting objects from the creativity lab but also collected from the playground too. After he was through with the activity he moved on to an other activity. He took a waste poster color bottle (which had some dried white colour in it). Firstly, Agastya filled water in the bottle and then took a stick and started mixing it. After mixing the colour he started colouring on the tree with his finger. Once he was through with colouring on the tree he poured rest of the colour under the tree.

Third day - Jayashree didi had prepared pasting activity in the creativity lab. After having tiffin Agastya went to the creativity-lab to explore something. When he saw some children were already doing pasting Agastya also opted to do the pasting activity. After he finished his pasting he went near the Champa tree and poured all the remaining fevicol under it. After that he went back to Jayashree didi to take more fevicol. Though Jayashree didi gave him the fevicol, she wanted to see what he is doing with it. She saw Agastya pouring the fevicol under the Champa tree. And then he asked for another helping. Then didi guided him saying, 'Agastya trees ko fevicol nahi hum water deten hain'. After hearing from didis Agastya got busy pouring water instead of fevicol.

Fourth day - Agastya wanted to play in the creativity lab so he went there and saw his friends were playing with water. He also wanted to join their game, he could not because he was wearing socks and didn't like that they should get dirty. So he preferred playing alone. He lifted a tray which contained small glass bottles with lids. He started sorting out the similar sized bottles together. First he did it with bottles and then with caps. After doing sorting he made a shape while placing small bottles together and caps together and called Jayashree didi showing his creation. He pointed out towards the shape saying, 'I have made an animal'. When didi asked him which animal is it, he replied 'tortoise'. We were amazed to see the way Agastya had organized the bottles, the shape was so accurate that it seemed like a tortoise.

Fifth day - Agastya went to the creativity lab with Mamata didi. He was holding a toy elephant in his hand. As soon as he went near a tub (which was filled with water) he put the elephant into the water saying, 'Elephant bath le raha hai'. When he saw that the elephant was floating on the water he questioned didi, 'elephant uppar kyu aa raha hai?' So didi questioned him back, 'how do you take bath?' He replied, 'main mug se leta hun'. And without saying anything he took a plastic glass and started pouring water on the elephant thinking that the elephant might stand in the water. When it did not happen he took a big piece of soil clod and put it on top of the elephant... due to the weight of the soil clod the elephant went inside the water. Agastya appeared very happy thinking that now the elephant will remain inside the water. But when the soil clod mixed in the water the elephant popped out again. Seeing the elephant floating on the water made Agastya a little sad. By that time rest of the children also had come to the creativity-lab. Seeing many children in the creativity-lab Agastya went out without saying anything. Though he left the lab but his attention was there only. We observed that when all the children had left the creativity-lab Agastya once again went back to the lab and took the elephant out (which was covered

with mud), cleaned it properly with the help of Mamata didi and put it on the mud house to get it dry.

Agastya loves spending most of the time exploring things in the creativity lab. The creativity-lab is a small laboratory for him where he keeps on experimenting with different things which is helping him to expand his learning in a more practical way. If we see our everyday observation and evaluate it, it shows that there is a continuity in his experiment.

Overall Agastya has made a good progress, he is enjoying learning by exploring and experimenting with his hands. He has a habit of enjoying working quietly. In the coming term we would like to work on the following aims to make our sensitive Agastya emotionally strong.

ROAD AHEAD

- To make him physically more active and participative.
- Help him to make friends and interact with them.
- Help him to develop confidence to say 'NO' and deal with conflicts.

With best wishes
Sunaina, Mamata & Jayashree