

Enriched learning environments for at-risk children with Toybank's Play2Learn Program

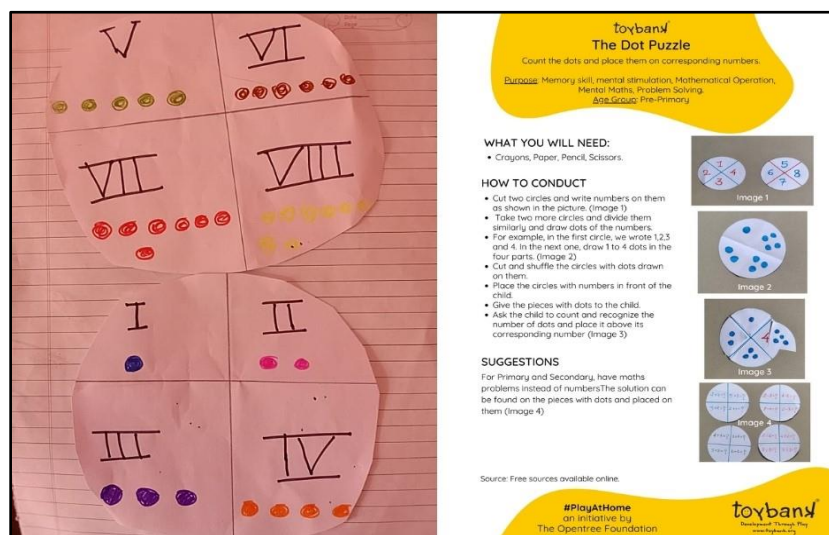
Renowned ECE consultant Rae Pica highlights the need for play, *"I shouldn't have to defend play for children any more than I should have to defend eating, sleeping, and breathing."* However, the most basic necessity for development—safe play spaces—remains elusive for at-risk children in India, especially as the pandemic and lockdown prolong. Enriching their current learning environments at home and in their immediate surroundings requires dedicated and consistent efforts. Thus, Toybank's digital Play2Learn Program continues to ensure disadvantaged children stay resilient and learn to face the adversity and digital divide with confidence whilst also defending, protecting and promoting their Right to Play.

Every day, **51,922 children** are learning and staying resilient through Play in safe spaces. We guide and support **2,152 teachers and 7,560 parents** through **433 support groups**. (As of 30th June 2021)

Toybank's Play2Learn Program included these efforts in the past three months.

Strengthening foundational learning

With virtual learning in its second year, children struggle to brush up on the basics just as they did in traditional classrooms. As the curriculum has narrowed, students are practically learning on their own with inadequate support from teachers. Hence, Toybank's Play2Learn Sheets are curated to promote foundational learning, support caregivers to strengthen children's basic understanding of complex subjects, and to mitigate learning gaps. For instance, interactive games such as Spelling Jigsaw, Rhyming Hunt, and Homophones are being used to improve their vocabulary and pronunciation.



A teacher customizes Toybank's Play2Learn sheet Dot Puzzle to help her children revise the Roman numeral system

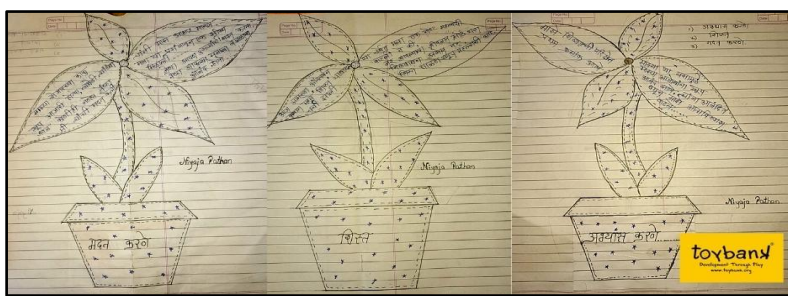


Socio-emotional development and habit building

Just when our children saw signs of normality, the lockdown was reinstated. To help them face this, Play2Learn Sheets focused on rebuilding healthy routines and understanding emotions so that children could work on their anxieties.

Teachers highlighted that the digital Play2Learn Program is helping children relieve stress by encouraging them to ask questions and express their emotions. "Playsheet Strength Flower asked children to focus on their unique advantages and encouraged them to look at themselves through a positive lens. It allowed them to introspect and recognize their good qualities and boost their self-confidence," shared one of our partner teachers.

Children also mapped their daily routines through the play activity 'What I do Before and After' so that they could identify and inculcate healthy habits like brushing their teeth twice a day and helping caregivers in household chores.



A child creates three strength flowers, highlighting their strengths in helping people, studies and discipline

Story of Resilience: Pravin and his parents learn balanced living through Toybank's Buddy Program

Pravin (name changed) grew restless, reserved, had no playtime and no friends to talk to in the initial days of the lockdown. This was partly due to school closure and partly because his teacher parents were stringent about his academic performance, thus affecting their familial bond. When Toybank mapped him with a Big Buddy for the Toybank Buddy Program, he had a safe space to open up. Pravin proudly told his buddy, "When I grow up, I want to be an IT Engineer. Science is my favourite subject. I love to solve and learn from science playsheets." He also shared his anxiety about his parents' high academic expectations of him, and how they packed his day with online classes, homework and private tuitions, leaving him little time to express his stress.

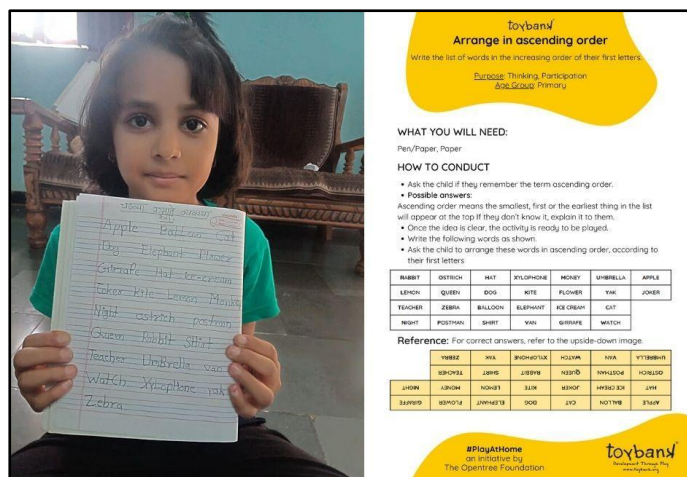
Pravin's Big Buddy sent him short films, YouTube videos of experiments and science-based Play2Learn Sheets, but he was unable to engage with these due to his parents. Understanding the roadblock, the buddy and Toybank's Program Officer set up a meeting with Pravin's parents. Through a presentation, we explained the importance of a healthy balance between academics and other activities for children. His parents acknowledged the impact of these high standards on Pravin's behavior and academics and that they would work with his buddy to be more balanced.

— Story shared by Akash Sable, Toybank Program Officer



Benefits of the Toybank Play2Learn program

- Meaningful engagement at home
- Accessible and self-directed learning
- Safe spaces at home
- Stimulating learning environment
- Opportunity for normal development, building autonomy and exploration
- Reducing the severity of potential trauma caused by fear and uncertainty
- Enabling caregivers to focus on their responsibilities
- Promoting opportunities for early learning and responsive caregiving



Children arrange words in ascending order of the alphabet in Play2Learn activity

Volunteering during Covid-19

Close to **500 volunteers** (corporate employees, students and individuals) continue to support us in virtual Play2Learn Sessions, Buddy Program sessions, video editing, research work, Play2Learn activity designing, and translations on a weekly basis.

Parents of our children tell us how Toybank's Buddy sessions and playsheets have been a boon for them during the lockdown. Various interesting activities keep children self-motivated. Being meaningfully engaged reduces restlessness in children and anxiety in their caregivers.

Global Good Awards UK Finalists

In 2019, Toybank won the Global Good Award for Best Education and this year, Toybank has been selected as one of the finalists for the 2021 Global Good Awards—COVID Crisis Champions.

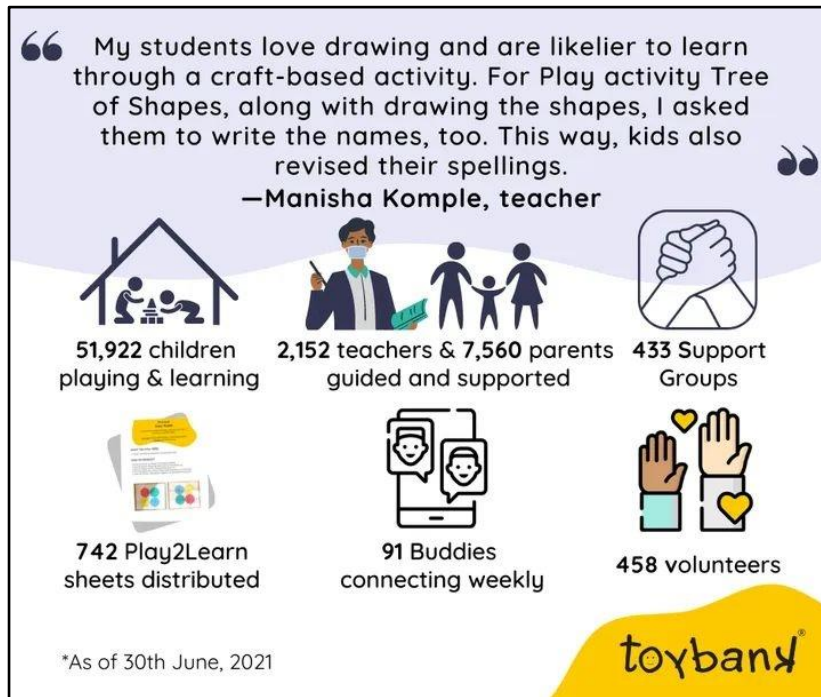
Our work across India

Toybank's partners are the backbone of our infrastructure. They have taken Play to some of the remotest pockets of the country, especially during the pandemic. With their support, we disseminated our Play2Learn activities to states beyond our base Maharashtra.

"In the past few months, Shabdha (name changed) has enjoyed the Play2Learn activities. She gathered a group of friends who do not have access to phones and requested our staff to arrange a space for them to play together. For these children, Toybank's activities have been something to look forward to every week." —Testimonial by Oasis India, Bangalore, Karnataka



Supporting Toybank for enriched learning and equitable childhoods



Outreach figures as of the 30th of June 2021

As we have seen through the two waves of COVID-19, the need for resilience, mental well-being and quality learning during the early years of childhood is crucial for children to resolutely face inequalities and crises.

We are paving the way for at-risk children to negotiate their way around learning losses, the digital divide and gaps in social-emotional development. As Toybank bolsters its efforts to rebuild childhoods with equity, your support will go a long way in continuing and strengthening our work.

Thank you and Happy Toybanking!

