

The Opentree Foundation's Play Programmes Update Report for October 24' to March 25' (Half Yearly - FY 24-25)

Play fosters patience and persistence



Arjun engaging with our block category game - Blix Car

Arjun (name changed), is a grade two student studying in Pragati English Medium school of Borivali. During a recent play session, Arjun and his group were given the “Blix Car”, a construction game where students build cars using mechanical tools and parts, by following instructions from a manual.

Games like these involve multiple skills simultaneously - decoding instructions, connecting information, collaborating and communication. Most of Arjun's group found the game daunting, and they struggled with deciding where to start from, eventually getting frustrated. While the rest of them began to complain and convince the OPW to change the game, Arjun was determined to try.

Even as his teammates moved to another game, Arjun decided to try building the car all by himself. He could see the other children enjoying an engaging, relatively easier game, and while that discouraged him a little bit, he was determined to try. At some point, he asked the OPW for help - specifically to find out the order of the steps. He seemed to have a strategy in place, and knew exactly what he needed support with! As the OPW supported and guided him, Arjun carefully listened and followed the steps, and patiently continued working on his car.

At the end of the session, Arjun had completed his car. The rest of the group was in awe of Arjun's patience and persistence. The teacher, too, appreciated his efforts, using this as an opportunity to inspire the rest of the class to not give up on something just because it looks difficult.

When students play, they naturally practice skills like resilience, which stay with them long after the play session is over. By facilitating play and playful conversations at the end of each session, our OPWs draw students' attention to the positive changes within them. Skills acquired during play become a part of students' cognitive and behavioural process, and have the potential to transform the way they think, feel, learn and make choices over their lifetime.

- Story from Toybank's Play Centre MU.352, R.H.Kate School, Govandi



Key Updates from October 2024 to March 2025

1. Capacity Building Trainings for the Team

Our Outreach Playworkers(OPWs) go through a series of capacity-building training throughout the year under our 'Playworkers Unnati Workshop Series'. These trainings are focused on training them on programme content, playful facilitation, classroom management and overall to ensure smooth delivery of the programme. Along with programmatic pieces of training they are also trained in Communication skills, engaging volunteers on the field, partnership building and documentation of impactful stories. These workshops also create space for OPWs to exchange notes and encourage cross-learning from each other's experiences.



Toybank's OPWs attend a series of capacity-building workshops

2. On-ground Play2Learn Sessions

Play is the primary way in which children explore a world that is not in their control. TOF's Play2Learn centres are safe spaces for children to explore and engage in developmentally-appropriate play sessions. The play sessions are an hour-long session that start with energisers, fun and movement-based activities and are aimed at starting the session on a joyful note. This is followed by children engaging in carefully-curated and strategically chosen games and play-based materials. Our Programme team members and Play Centre Facilitators (PCFs) support children to understand the games, learn through them, work in groups, help them think independently and more. The play session ends with another energiser, in addition to children sharing what they liked the most about the day's play session and what they learned. These play sessions are conducted with children between 3 to 13 years at government-aided and government schools, private schools, community centres and childcare institutions.

From October 24' to March 25', the Programme team members and PCFs conducted **17,388 Play2Learn Sessions** across Maharashtra.





Children play carefully chosen board games in groups that help them develop 21st-century life skills such as collaboration, communication and critical thinking.

3. 'Power of Play' Workshops for Play Centre Facilitators(PCF):

On-ground training sessions were conducted with the school teachers (PCFs) to make them aware and knowledgeable on play-based learning and re-orient them on TOF's play programme. These training sessions help them understand the impact of developmentally appropriate play on the childhood to adulthood outcomes in children. They are trained on new games and how to effectively use them in classrooms, as part of their daily teaching, in order to build a healthy and stronger student-teacher bond.

Our Programme Team conducted **50+ 'Power of Play' workshops** training **1,322 Play Centre Facilitators** of Maharashtra during this period.



Teachers from different Play centres participated in the activities, played games during the training sessions.

4. Replacement of Games:

The programme outreach team conducts stock and quality checks at TOF's Play centres and initiates the process of restocking the games and play material at the centres. These games are categorized as per age groups: Pre-primary, Primary and Secondary and as per the six categories of games in the TOF Play2Learn Programme, i.e. SPBANG: Strategy, Puzzle, Blocks, Alphabetics, Numerics and General. The team ensures that children have access to not just age-appropriate and category-wise games, but also that these games are in good condition. This also allows the PCFs and programme outreach team to conduct play2learn sessions smoothly. **During this period 12,295 Games across 390 play centres were replaced.**



5. Volunteer Engagement

Volunteers play a crucial role in supporting the TOF team to ensure children continue to learn through play. The volunteers supported us with on-ground Play sessions at TOF's Play centres providing support to our OPWs in classroom management and increasing the student engagement with Play.

In addition, they also contributed their support through participating in Tata Mumbai Marathon (TMM) 2025, Game Collection Drives and Crowdfunding.

Total number of Volunteers engaged during this period: 549



Toybank volunteers engaging through various activities such as engaging at play sessions, spreading awareness on Play through Tata Mumbai Marathon(TMM) and game collection drive



Additional Activities Throughout The Year:

A. POSH & POSCO Training for the Team:

In November 2024, our team of 56 members, including our Outreach Play Workers completed their mandatory training on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (PoSH) and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO). This expert session, facilitated by Mrs. Nandeeta Wagh sensitised our team on respectful and safe professional conduct, at the workplace as well in spaces where they work for children's development. It also served as a platform where our team could clarify their questions related to children's safety and prevention of sexual harassment. This enables our team to be compliant to child protection guidelines, and maintain a space of respect and safety among each other.

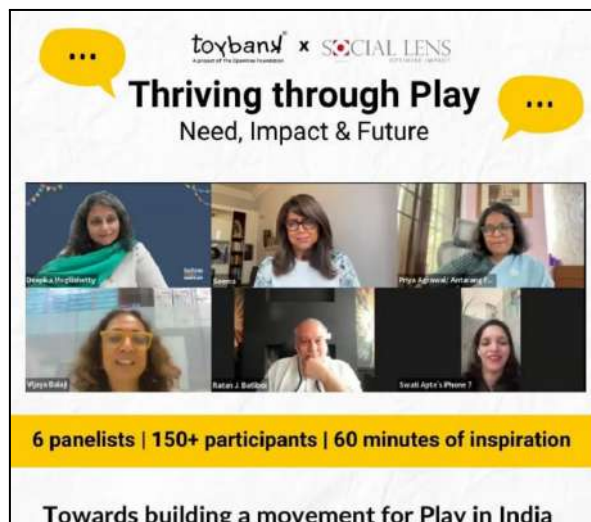


Toybank's entire team completed their mandatory training on the Prevention of Sexual Harassment (PoSH) and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO)

B. Awards, Recognition and Thriving through Play:

1. Digital Roundtable: Thriving Through Play:

We organised a [digital Roundtable: Thriving Through Play](#), where Ratan Batliboi, Deepika Mogilishetty (Ekstep), Swati Agrawal (Antarang Foundation) discussed systemic barriers and solutions for equitable access to Play in India. The Roundtable was moderated by Vijaya Balaji (Social Lens). This was attended by over 150 participants and prompted a strong interest in collaboration, partnership and research on play.



Digital Roundtable: Thriving through play organised to discuss solutions for equitable access to Play in India



2. Play Being Recognised World Wide:

Qimpro Gold Standard for Excellence in Education recognised Shweta Chari, the Co-founder and CEO of the organisation as one of the visionary leaders for excellence in quality management for Education.

Additionally, Our initiative **Using Play to Better Our World**, was selected as a part of [HundrED Global Collection 2025](#) as one of the **100 most scalable and impactful global innovations**. We were selected out of **3000+ innovations**, reviewed by a panel of experts, and received a bursary to present our work at the HundrED 2024 Summit in Helsinki.



Play being recognised through Qimpro Gold Standard Award and The Opentree Foundation being selected for HundrED Global Collection 2025

3. Play Summit - Child Wellbeing through Play:

We organised our first ever **Play Summit - Child Wellbeing through Play**, in collaboration with the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), which was attended by 150+ educators, social sector professionals, child development experts, researchers, philanthropists, policymakers. The keynote was addressed by Ms. Farida Lambay, co-founder, Pratham Education Foundation, and Mr. Anmol Sagar, IAS, the CEO of the Zilla Parishad, Latur, where our play programmes impact over 10,000 children. Highlights included the launch of Play is Everywhere, a crowd-sourced digital archive, and India's first play-based assessment framework.



150+ educators, social sector professionals, child development experts, researchers, philanthropists, policymakers attended The Opentree Foundation's first-ever Play Summit - Child Wellbeing through Play



4. Masterclass on Assessing through Play:

We conducted a [Masterclass on Assessing through Play](#) for 150+ educators & practitioners, organised by Bachpan Manao, Badhte Jao. The purpose of this masterclass was to encourage more educators to make play a part of their classrooms, by showcasing the effectiveness of Play as an assessment tool, and presenting insights from our play-based assessment framework.

Invest to Rebuild Childhoods through Play

Investing in Play to make mental well-being and learning accessible for at-risk children is the need of the hour. Your support will build back the well-being and happiness of over 1,50,000 children who continue to Play and learn!

Thank you and Happy Toybanking!

