



SAATH
Creating Inclusive Societies

Child Friendly Spaces (CFS)

Case Stories- Building Secure and Nurturing Spaces for Children



ABOUT SAATH

Saath Charitable Trust is a Gujarat-based non-profit organisation established in 1989 by Mr Rajendra Joshi. The organisation works to empower vulnerable urban and rural communities by developing inclusive and sustainable solutions in the areas of livelihood, education, health, governance and child rights. With over three decades of grassroots engagement, Saath has enabled thousands of individuals—particularly women, youth and marginalised groups—to build secure and dignified futures through capacity-building, entrepreneurship support and integrated development models. Recognised for its participatory and community-driven approach, Saath collaborates closely with local institutions and government agencies to create long-term, scalable impact.

Among its key education initiatives is the Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) programme, implemented at construction sites across Ahmedabad. The programme addresses the unique vulnerabilities faced by migrant children, whose lives are often marked by constant mobility, unsafe living conditions and disrupted access to schooling. Child Friendly Spaces establish dedicated learning and care environments within construction sites, providing stability, safety and continuity during critical early childhood years. By delivering education and child development services directly within the communities where families live and work, the programme ensures that highly transient and marginalised children are not excluded from essential early learning opportunities.

Child Friendly Spaces (CFS)

Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) are safe and structured environments established at construction sites to support the holistic development of children growing up in highly vulnerable conditions. Many of these children face poverty, malnutrition, unsafe surroundings and disrupted access to education. CFS provides a nurturing space where children can learn, play and receive emotional support, along with daily nutritious meals and hygiene awareness. By creating stability and routine within transient communities, the programme strengthens children's physical, emotional and cognitive foundations.

Currently, the programme operates through **six Child-Friendly Spaces**, including **four centres in Ahmedabad and two centres in Jaipur**. Till date, CFS has benefited **12,269 children** across the centres, with **507 children enrolled into formal schools**. As of June 2026, **247 children** are currently attending the centres, continuing their journey towards mainstream education with confidence and resilience.





Core Components of CFS

A. Safe, Structured Environment

CFS are secure, child-friendly physical spaces that promote emotional safety and offer structure through guided daily routines. They function as protective bubbles amidst unsafe and unpredictable surroundings.

B. Child-Centered Activities

Every activity in a CFS is designed with the child's developmental stage in mind. Activities include:

- Group games and physical movement to support motor skills
- Art, music, storytelling, and drama to foster creativity
- Informal learning and life skill-building
- Emotional expression through drawing, role play, and discussions

C. Psychosocial & Emotional Support

Trained facilitators observe children closely, offer supportive listening, and create trust-based relationships. Signs of trauma or distress are identified early, and referrals to professional support services are made when necessary.

D. Parent and Community Engagement

CFS works closely with caregivers and community members to build a safety net around the child. Engagement includes:

- Awareness sessions on child protection, rights, and mental well-being
- Parenting workshops on discipline, communication, nutrition, and hygiene
- Feedback loops to adapt activities based on community needs

E. Linkages to Essential Services

CFS acts as a bridge to vital services, including:

- Health checkups and referrals
- Nutrition and food support
- Early education and school enrollment
- Child protection systems and counseling

Case Stories

Growing Stronger Every Day: Trisha's (Name Changed) Inspiring Journey

Centre Name: Ganesh Housing Centre
Child's Name: Trisha (Name Changed)
Father's Name: Ajay Singh (Name Changed)
Mother's Name: Nisha Singh (Name Changed)
Child's Age: 24 Months
Gender: Female
Village: Sanawada, Taluka: Rasda, District: Dahod, State: Gujarat



Ajay Bhai is a resident of Sanawada village and lives in a joint family of six members, including his parents, brother, sister, wife, and daughter. Earlier, the family depended on a small piece of agricultural land for their livelihood. However, due to limited landholding and irregular crop production, their income was insufficient to meet household expenses. Concerned about supporting his family and improving their living conditions, Ajay Bhai migrated to Ahmedabad in search of better opportunities.

He initially worked at the Ganesh Housing construction site, transporting construction materials using tractors. Through his hard work and dedication, he gradually progressed into labour contracting, helping labourers from outside find employment at construction sites. Over time, the family's financial condition improved, providing them with greater stability and security.

Ajay Bhai and Nisha Ben have one daughter, Trisha. When Trisha was first enrolled at the centre, she was 18 months old. At the time, she appeared physically weak, underconfident, and less active compared to other children. Recognising her developmental needs, the centre staff counselled the parents and encouraged them to enrol Trisha so that she could benefit from proper care, nutrition, and early childhood development activities.

Initially, both parents were reluctant to leave their daughter at the centre. As Trisha was their only child and had been born after many years of hope and prayers, they were extremely protective of her. Ajay Bhai felt she was too young to stay away from her mother, while Nisha Ben was anxious about how she would adjust to a new environment. Understanding their concerns, the centre staff invited the family to visit the centre and explained the various facilities and activities available for children. They assured the parents that Trisha would receive proper care, attention, and a safe learning environment.

Although Ajay Bhai gradually developed confidence in the centre after observing its environment, Nisha Ben continued to feel anxious. To support the family further, the centre offered her employment as a helper. This not only provided an additional source of income but also reassured her of being close to her daughter during the day.

When Trisha first joined the centre, she cried frequently, remained withdrawn, and was hesitant to interact with other children. She struggled to walk confidently, could not climb stairs independently, and rarely participated in activities. The centre staff patiently supported her through play-based learning, action songs, group activities, and regular social interaction. They continuously encouraged her to develop new skills and build confidence at her own pace.

Over time, Trisha became comfortable in the centre environment. She began participating actively in activities, interacting with other children, and developing greater confidence. **At the time of enrolment, she weighed 8.700 kg and measured 79.3 cm in height.** With regular nutrition, care, and developmental support, **her weight increased to 9.360 kg, and she became healthier, more active, and energetic.**

Today, Trisha confidently participates in centre activities, enjoys playing with her peers, climbs stairs independently, and follows instructions with ease. Her social, physical, and communication skills have improved significantly, bringing immense joy to her parents. Ajay Bhai and Nisha Ben are grateful for the care, guidance, and support provided by the centre, which has played an important role in their daughter's growth and development.



Snapshots of Childhood at CFS





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