



# ཨ་བྷི་ལྷོ་གས་གྲུབ་སྦྱི་ཚོགས། ABILITY BHUTAN SOCIETY

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## Family Empowerment Programme Newsletter

Family Empowerment program is one of the clinical activities which gives platform to parents to gather together and participate in activities. It is an opportunity for them to experience the reality of children with disabilities and have them realize to overcome the situation and be the change in the society. Family Empowerment program is conducted during last Friday of every month with various activities.

### March

Family Empowerment program was conducted on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2019 at ABS centre facilitated by Ms. Jaishree, Special Educator from India and Social Workers of ABS. A total of 19 parents participated. The objective of this program was to make parents be in their children's shoes and support them in overcoming their difficulty. It also aimed to encourage the parents and let their children perform their best of their ability. The activity commenced with the story of rabbit and tortoise focusing on the morale of helping one another. Then it moved on session where parents experienced multiple emotions. Parents were journeyed out in the open air, had them enclosed in a dark room with disturbing pictures and moved them to a warmer room with serene music. Each activity was aimed in making realization of the life of children with disability. A parent expressed her emotion of how these activities impacted in understanding the ground position of her child and how it made her emotional.

The program wrapped up with the election of parent representatives of ABS through formal voting. Out of the six parent nominees, four parents were elected namely Mr. Chado Rinchen, Mrs. Sonam Dechen, Mr. Passang Sherpa and Dr. Suresh. Mr. Chado Rinchen, who secured maximum vote was nominated to the Board of Trustees. The remaining three parents were considered as parent representatives. The roles of parent representatives are to facilitate activities, act as the voice of parents, initiate programs and take leadership roles. In 2019, ABS



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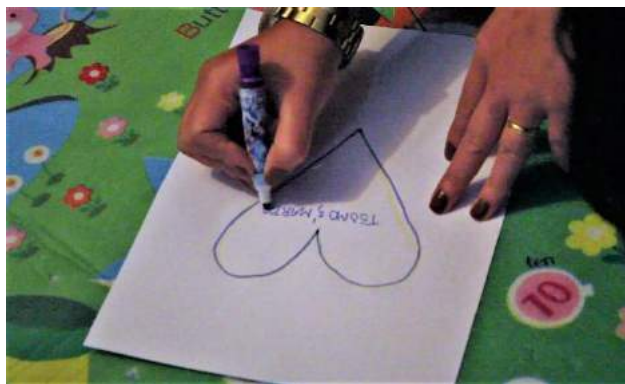
initiated to include parent in Board Member to encourage in decision making and promote participation.



Story telling (Rabbit & the tortoise)



Blind fold activity



Finding oneself



Election



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### APRIL- PAY-BUY-EAT

The children were given some money before they entered the shop. As the children saw baskets full of fruits, vegetables and snacks, their smitten smile lingered, and their tummy grumbled. They knew they had to grab a bite or at least hold it, but the shopkeepers just wouldn't let them have it. Some cried, some ran over to the parents to ask for it and some simply stared. But they were simply not given. Then the parents were asked to let their child give the shopkeepers the money as per the prize given. The children gave the money and they had what they wanted. In the next round, they instantly gave the shopkeeper the money and pointed at the food they wanted. They knew, they had to pay to buy and to eat! It was a whole new experience for the children to understand the concepts of money and buying. Mrs. Jayashree, special educator and a volunteer at ABS with the help of social workers organized this activity and ended the day with much anticipation for next round.





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### MAY

Children are the most precious gifts of all. What sometimes are taught by parents are sometimes is taught by the children. Their innocence reminds us of the world that they are yet to explore and a fright it develops within as to what may become of them if they are to fall the victims of us. We define a society but we leave the society to define our children. Children regardless of their gender, colour or their disability needs guidance. A short film was shown to the parents about child molestation and it was reminded that it could happen to anyone, be it a girl or a boy. Believing that a child with disability cannot understand and neglecting to advise should be evaded. Rather, they should be constantly reminded and a trust should be built between parents and their children so that the children will come forward and share. A difference between a good touch and bad touch should clearly be distinguished to them.

Another video was shown about the chess player Darpan Inani who is visually impaired. He stressed that visibility is not important while playing chess but a vision that is created in his mind is vital. He is the first person with visual impairment to win against a sighted player in the Creon

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Open in France in the rating category in 2018. Likewise, parents were encouraged to look into their child's ability and have them engage in group activity as to build their self-esteem.

Moreover, the social workers involved the parents in an activity. They were asked to put a sock on one of their hand and with it button the coat within one minute. Another activity was conducted having parents to call out the colours instead of reading the names. To understand a child with disability and their difficulty is vital to assist them.

### *Day 2; Children of ABS on a movie adventure*

The children galloped as they went inside the movie hall, anticipating to see the wonders of their imagination. Obscured to see the crowd, the uniform chairs, the big white screen with huge people popping out, the sound and the chattering of the mass; oh all the marvels they have witnessed in one day. As the lights faded and the darkness seeped in, children neared to their parents and sought for their comfort. Slowly their eyes were attached to the screen wondering what people were doing there while some pondered on whether it was real. On the right-side corner, a girl deeply drowned, widened her eyes and hardly blinked while she forgot to eat her chips. On the left side, a boy spoke to his mum pointing at the screen. At the back side, a father tried to get his son inside the hall but he couldn't. His son, stayed by the door and peeped in to see the movie. Few minutes later they were both inside but just by door. The son was anxious to see the people and tried to avoid but his curiosity drove him nearer and after some minutes, both settled down on a chair. In few seats away, a mother carried her child outside to calm her down from crying and came in few minutes later. Children were emerged in their imagination. Some children made some noise and some stood quiet. In few of the scenes, the parents covered their



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children’s eyes to protect them from fright. It was a flabbergasting experience for all. Children didn’t make much noise as expected nor did they misbehave. They were simply mesmerized.

The lights were turned on and once again witnessed the rushing crowd. Their smiles spoke their heart and parents were thankful for this opportunity. Passang Sherpa, a parent said, “I have never taken my son out for a movie thinking that he will not want to be inside the movie hall. I did have some trouble taking my son inside in the beginning but slowly he settled down and watched movie till the end.” When the movie ended Passang’s son pulled his hand and tried to take his father back inside the hall. Parents expressed that understanding the movie is not important for their children but having had the opportunity to watch it together with the rest and getting exposure was a very important experience for them.

Once again on behalf of parents and children, Ability Bhutan Society would like to thank Dasho Sangay Tsheltrim for your generosity in funding the tickets for all. Around 60 viewers including children, parents and staffs were present in Lugar Theatre in Thimphu. This experience was only possible because of you. Thank you



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Day 1; buttoning coat activity



Day 2; inside the movie hall



Day 1; presenting short video clip



Day 2; Group photo

## JUNE

Family Support program for the month of June was conducted today on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2019 at ABS centre. A total of 10 parents participated. The objective of this program was to understand that "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much" – Helen Keller. Teamwork is the greatest strength one can have together for a common goal. The activity started with two teams building a shape with a strong foundation by using only straws and tape. Then it moved on to building a pyramid from plastic cup by using strings and rubber band. Last activity was having to



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walk around the centre with balloons in between each person. All these activities passed on the message of how much teamwork can make a difference.

The smiles, the laughs and the energy they put in their team to win the rounds of activity filled the atmosphere. The few hours that they were engaged, it was nourishing to see them leave their worries, live in the moment and have fun together. While we talk about disabilities, we often forget that it is the families/caregivers that struggle the most. Like any parents, they do the best for their child and make sure they receive the best services. They often forget to take care of themselves while they stress so much on their child's health. It is important to understand that by taking good care of themselves, they will be able to take better care of their children. And by coming together as a team, they will be able to achieve so much beyond their imagination.

As the summer vacation begins, parents were instructed to engage in the following activities during the vacation (July month). **IT TAKES A SINGLE STEP TO JOIN THE REST.**

- 1<sup>st</sup> week: All the parents gather together with their children and do one activity (eg. Visiting vegetable market, going for a movie, bank, etc.) and have their child engaged.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> week: Form groups within parents or with any of their family members and have their child engage in household activities.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> week: All the parents gather in a park and organize games by themselves and play with the children.
- 4<sup>th</sup> week: Only the parents gather and do one activity together.

ABS wish them a fruitful adventure and hoping for everyone's support.





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### AUGUST

“Jarim Dusa, Jarim Dusa, who’s that girl?; Jarim Dusa, Jarim Dusa, who’s that boy?” With the beat of each sound, excitement filled the hall, the crowd cheering and the children waving their hands up in the air. They walked on stage with their parents/caregivers besides, equally enjoying the moment. Children were all dressed up to showcase the garden theme, by which showered their beauty with their magnificent beam. Oh, what a sight that filled everyone’s eyes with delight. The first stage performance (fashion show) by the children of ABS at Changangkha MSS. However, children were not the only one who had fun today but parents who were engaged to a surprise PT exercise were also entertained.

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Following the program, Mrs. Pema Yuden from ABS and Ms. Tashi Yuden from DPAB presented on the importance of early intervention and social inclusion to the parents of ABS and Changangkha MSS. “I did not know about the child’s developmental milestone and importance of early intervention until today. It is very essential for every parents of children with and without disabilities to be aware in order to provide early intervention” a parent said.



### Day 2

#### “YOYO” (You are Own Your Own)

Disaster is unpredictable and ruthless as it does not spare anyone. In case of earthquake, flood, fire and other disasters, it is very crucial that all people know the preventive measures and understand the condition that are prevailing in the county. As part of Family Support Program, ABS arranged an activity on Disaster focusing on earthquake, flood and fire. Parents were divided into three groups and were presented a situation each. They had to have a strategic plan to rescue a child with disability who was caught in the catastrophe. Every member of the group made sure to rescue the child with down syndrome who was scared to see the rumbling walls, a child with autism who was terrified to hear and see the heated red flame and a child with cerebral palsy who couldn’t move himself, suffocated as he swallowed the water. Based on these situations, group presented their plan and expressed the difficulty they faced, having the child not

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understand what they were instructing. However, with some action and assurance, they were able to move the child to a safer place. Mr. Ugyen Wangchuk, ED supplemented on the disaster management plan of ABS and presented on the evacuation strategic route of the ABS center.

Soon after, Mr. Jabchu from Disaster Management presented on the preventive measures before, during and after the occurrence of disasters such as flood, fire and earthquake. “You are on your own” said Mr. Jabchu, as when such disaster arises, you must protect yourself, thus to know the preventive measures is very important.

A team from Bhutan Toilet organization also visited to present on the portable Chapto toilet, the first model that they have designed which is convenient to use by children and old aged.

Around 10 parents participated in the program.



### SEPTEMBER

Like any other months, ABS again engaged the parents in activities that aim to empower and support them. This month, it was focused on entrepreneurship and employment. Parents were divided into groups and were presented possible business topic each. They were asked to discuss about the ideas/strategies to proceed with their business and even advertise their products. These skills helped parents realize about the potential business that their children can start when they



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grow up. They were encouraged to explore the opportunities for their children so that they develop interests and find a dream to live in nearby future.

A moral initiative of ABS volunteers and social workers.





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### OCTOBER

All the activities carried out every month as part of the family support program was reviewed ON 25/10/2019. Ms. Jayasheree, volunteer in ABS along with the social workers and other volunteers of ABS has been working tremendously hard, striving to empower parents/caregivers by organizing various activities till date. Starting from blind folding activity, shopping game, fashion show to exposing them to entrepreneurship, all added to team work and growing within. Parents/caregivers were equally supportive in making family support program a successful one. At the end of the day, each parent was asked to reveal one thing that their child is able to do and is proud of. The list came flooding as parents said “singing, dancing, organizing things, eating, toileting...”

In the midst of focusing what our children cannot do, we often forget what they can do. Appreciate your child’s ability and support their potential. Everyone grows up to become somebody.