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Facilitating Early Intervention for Children with Multiple Disabilities- The Vidya Sagar Experience- A Sharing

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Three-fourths of children with disabilities at the age of five years and one fourth between 5 and 19 years in India do not go to any educational institution (UNESCO Report, 2019). If children with disabilities are to be included in the education system, their needs are to be considered at every level of the system. Early and intensive intervention can have a profound impact on the quality of life for children at risk and their families. Early detection and early intervention not only minimizes the risk of secondary disabilities, but also stimulates early development, increases functional abilities, supports families and creates better opportunities for inclusive education.

Vidya Sagar has been working with persons with multiple disabilities for the past 33 years through its Institution and community-based programs. Recognizing the need to reach the last child in the community, we run and support six EI centers across the state both in the cities and small villages. We take into consideration the need of the community, the terrain, and the local resources.

We believe in looking at the child as a whole and follow a trans disciplinary approach, where professionals from various discipline work, learn and share across traditional professional boundaries and offer an integrated and holistic program that is meaningful for the child and the family. We work in partnership with the medical professionals, families and the community.

Supportive environment is set up to help a child learn through play and senses. Key areas of focus are, physical and motor development including experiencing variety of movement, functional use of hands, providing rich experiences and the language that describe the experience, concept learning, communication development and supporting the emerging sense of self. We also use assistive technology as a tool for intervention. This presentation is a sharing of Vidya Sagar's work.