

Group 4 Teen Youth - Teacher Guidelines 2012



Aum Sai Ram

Sathya Sai Education Wing (SSE / Balvikas) – South Africa

SSSE Group 4 (Ages 15, 16, 17) –“Teen Youth Program”

Preface:

Traditionally, the Sathya Sai Education / Balvikas program culminated after 9 years of attendance (3 years for each group).

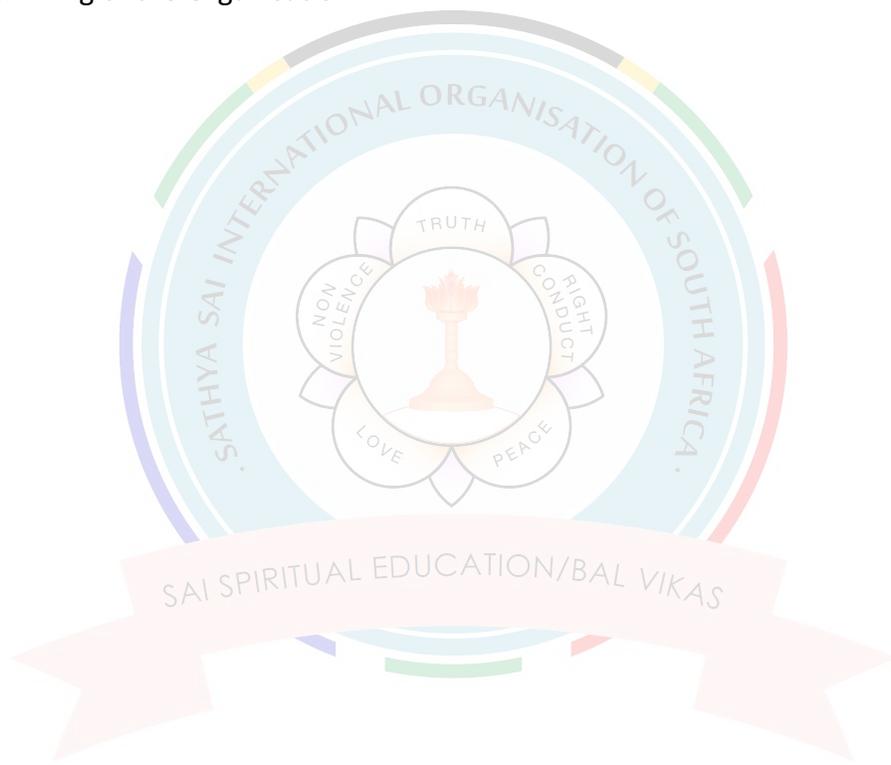
A child would generally start when he/she is 6 years old and be around 14 years of age after 9 years when he/she should graduate.

It has however been found that there is a gap of a few years between the completion of the Balvikas program and the entry of these children into the youth wing of the Sathya Sai Organisation.

During these “in-between” years, many children have strayed from the activities of the Organisation as this age group was not given adequate attention and instruction/guidance to continue with the wholesome development of their tender characters.

It is to this end that a Group 4 / Teen Youth Program has been introduced. The SSE programme is essentially constructed for the 6-17 year old age group and is divided into four major groups, which span 3 years each. The Group 4 is designed to be a bridge from SSE/Bal Vikas to the Youth Wing.

The Group 4 / Teen Youth Program is designed to take the child through a further 3 years (as an extension of the Balvikas program) which would then adequately prepare the child to merge into the Youth Wing of the Organisation.



Spiritual Objectives

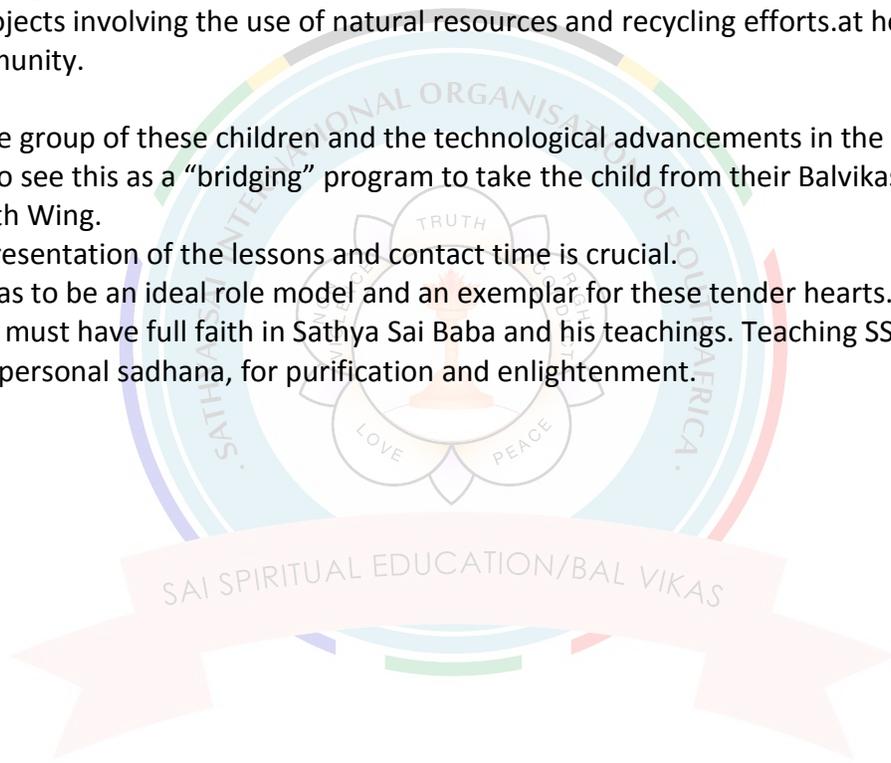
- Demonstrate increasing integration of objectives from Group 111.
- Encourage self –motivation and regular routines in spiritual practice.
- Establish a sense interdependence of self and society; deepen the understanding of one’s role, and responsibility, to society.
- Increase the ability to make dharmic choices when facing moral dilemmas.
- Demonstrate human values by meeting life’s challenges with love, confidence and an understanding of others.
- Establish habits of conservation of resources and continue all disciplines of the COD program.
- Develop a keen awareness of the effects of one’s choices with regards to media, companions, and activities.
- Deepen the practice of sense and mind control.
- Foster excellence in all endeavors, without straying into egoistic competition.
- Apply all aspects of the curriculum in daily life and develop awareness of the self as an exemplar, through leadership roles, e.g. Assisting/mentoring roles with younger children.
- Provide increasing emphasis on selfless, loving service through participating in local and regional service and activities.
- Initiating service projects with peers, especially in environmental issues. Taking the lead in projects involving the use of natural resources and recycling efforts.at home and the community.

Given the age group of these children and the technological advancements in the world, the guru needs to see this as a “bridging” program to take the child from their Balvikas graduation into the Youth Wing.

Hence the presentation of the lessons and contact time is crucial.

Every guru has to be an ideal role model and an exemplar for these tender hearts.

SSE teachers must have full faith in Sathya Sai Baba and his teachings. Teaching SSE/Bal Vikas is part of their personal sadhana, for purification and enlightenment.



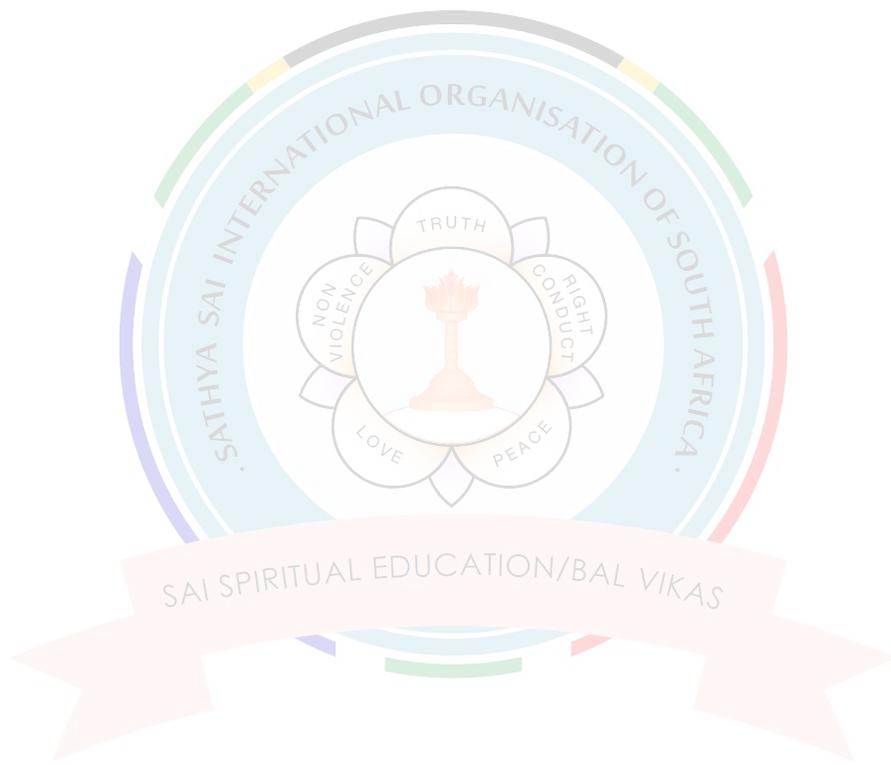
Class Presentation:

Although the “formal” class lessons/presentations do not necessarily have to take place in a classroom, the guru should still ensure that their formal lesson plan is done, using the 5 transformational techniques.

There will certainly be over-lapping of content covered over the 3 years; however, as per the directive of the SSE International Body, this document serves as a broad guide to the South African context, where the following areas are recommended as the underlying themes of the content to be covered in the Group 4, First year.

- **I to WE to HE**
This aspect clarifies the transformational thought process of the child thinking or believing that he/she is only an individual being (I).
The process of transformation should show how they are really part and parcel of the integrated-interdependent world/society that they live in (WE).
Thereafter moving to the understanding that all are one, all are God (HE).
- **Sai Baba as a Role Model**
Swami has been the perfect Role Model for all ages. Using Swami as the Role Model to emulate in this program, we are capturing Swami’s life, however paying particular attention to His teenage years and studying the relationships He maintained with His friends, teachers and family members – also taking into account the love that He showed to animals and nature.
- **9 Point Code of Conduct & 10 Principles**
These two sets of guidelines form the wholesome development of the child, both as an ideal devotee and as an ideal citizen. What is the 9 Point Code of Conduct? How do we use it? Life Application.
The children should know these 2 sets of guidelines off by heart – the reason for this is that if they know it off by heart, there would be a greater chance of them following or putting it into practice as it would be etched in their minds.
- **Health & Diet**
Understanding, care and management of the body are essential in the path of life. Every child should be taught, as directed by Swami, how to take care of the body, the effects of the different type of foods on the body, benefits of a vegetarian diet, exercise and pranayama should all be covered under this area.
- **Prayer and Meditation**
As part of each of our daily sadhanas, this topic is on going and all of what has been learnt in the previous 9 years is essential. On going mastery of those skills are to be acquired throughout these 3 years. The practice and Silence and Namasmara are to be emphasized as part of each child’s daily sadhana.

- *Sense and Mind Control*
Control of the senses, Mastery of the Mind and Refinement of the Intellect is part of the requirements towards our long term goal, therefore it is imperative that every child has a full understanding of this and it's relationship towards our long term goal.
- *Handling of emotions; Peer Pressure*
Identifying Positive and Negative Pressure at school and family. Identifying it, examining it; Understanding it, finding alternatives etc....
- *Nature as a Reference and Care for the Environment*
The child needs to understand:
 - a) his/her link and relationship with nature
 - b) the infallible law of nature, i.e. discipline, routine, inter-dependence.
 - c) how to care for the environment
 - d) by caring for the environment, he is actually taking care of himself
- *Leadership: Foundation and essential qualities of a leader*
Swami as a leader/Role Model; what qualities does Swami possess? Etc.
Identifying and developing these qualities.
Organizational skills e.g. Scheduling study habits, work space
- The Integration of the Five Human Values and putting into practice is 3HV an overarching theme throughout the curriculum.



Some Guidelines and Activities:

1. Activities that the Group 4 class should engage in :
30 minutes of Discussion time (Study Circle format) at every session
(This forms the theoretical knowledge sharing component of the program and the base on which their spiritual enquires rest).
Ideal literature to discuss would be Swami's discourses or Sanathana Sarathi that is freely available to all.
There is a 4 volume set of books called "My Dear Students" which is highly recommended for Group 4 - 1st year students as these discourses are broken in to smaller sub topics and is very simple to understand. These topics are also very relevant to the lives of this age group of children.
These volumes should take them through second year after which they can move onto Summer Showers in Brindavan – particularly the 1990 series of discourses.
Sathyam Shivam Sundaram, Eshwaramba the Chosen Mother and the Loving God series are all excellent recommended reading.

Any other material or relevant stories can also be brought in to supplement or enhance the topic you are dealing with in that particular week.

During discussions, remember to bring in examples that can be backed up by science and spirituality. These age groups of children are interested in "real" things – facts and figures that you can prove. Remember these children are from the information age, bombarded with the internet, DSTV and the media so they do not want some airy-fairy story, they want things that are going to challenge their mind leaving them in awe of how something like that is possible.

E.g. you are talking about Lord Rama or Hanuman as an ideal devotee – don't tell them the same story they heard for the last 9 years – bring out some angle that would inspire them to think about it differently than just a 5000 year old story.

Take pictures of the NASA satellite photos to class showing the bridge between India and SriLanka - that would certainly leave them wondering. Take pictures of the Caves that was said to be Ravan's palace.

This changes the dynamics of the discussions and inspires the lines of thinking among the children that this is no longer a fantasy or fairy tale legend.

An important component of this aspect of the class is to grow the faith of these children towards God – Sathya Sai Baba.

Bring out in your stories and examples of real experiences of transformations that took place in people. Things that would certainly inspire their faith in Swami.

The Thought for the Day (as produced by Radio Sai) also have a profound way of something within you. Select the ones that mean something to you.

These are all Swami's words so they are the 100% truth.

2. This program aims to develop the child wholesomely so the other major component of this program is that of developing the Leadership abilities within each child.

In order for this to blossom, the “Tell Me – Show Me – Let Me Do” approach is encouraged. This means you are fully guiding the development.

First, you give the instruction, guidance or share the knowledge, explain why, etc. – this is the “Tell Me” part.

Second, you have the “Show Me” component – this is where the teacher gets involved, gets his hands dirty and does the actual demonstrations. He shows the children by way of his example which is the right way of doing it.

Finally, comes the “Let Me Do” component, where you allow the child to experiment and experience on his own first hand. Sometimes, they will make mistakes, but that is part of the learning process, allow the mistake to take place, then discuss ways of avoiding the same mistake to be made again.

This three pronged approach quantifies the end result.

This applies to any fascist – be it teaching them a new sadhana or evening gardening.

Tell them first

Show them by your example,

And finally, let them do for themselves.

It is like learning how to swim or riding a bicycle – no matter how much you TELL them or Show them – you are not going to achieve the desired result until you get them to DO IT themselves.

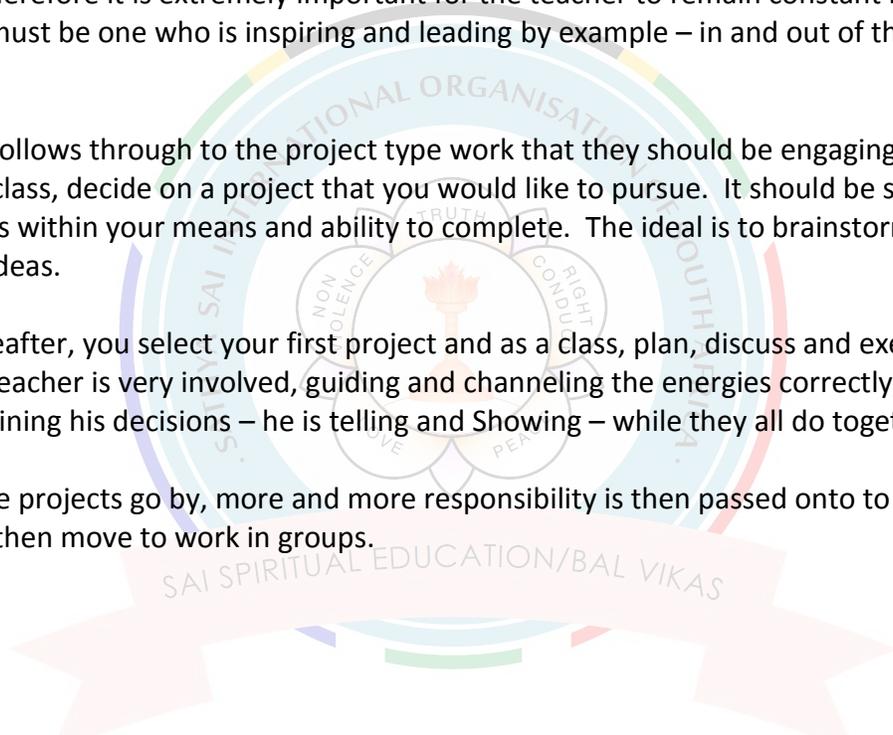
This is the experiential approach required in Group 4 and not a lecture type of approach.

Also remember that they are going to be following the example that you as the teacher set therefore it is extremely important for the teacher to remain constant in all areas and must be one who is inspiring and leading by example – in and out of the classrooms.

3. This follows through to the project type work that they should be engaging in. As a class, decide on a project that you would like to pursue. It should be something that is within your means and ability to complete. The ideal is to brainstorm and list a few ideas.

Thereafter, you select your first project and as a class, plan, discuss and execute. The teacher is very involved, guiding and channeling the energies correctly, all the while, explaining his decisions – he is telling and Showing – while they all do together.

As the projects go by, more and more responsibility is then passed onto to the children who then move to work in groups.



Please keep in mind that the projects the class chooses must be something that they can then look back at and feel proud of their achievement or accomplishment once complete. This feeling of satisfaction would inspire them to do more. The projects must be sustainable and as they progress, the direction should leave to projects where the outcome or benefit must be for others around you. Thereafter this feeling of accomplishment turns to feelings of self satisfaction after seeing the joy others experience as a result of your efforts. This fosters the principle of serving others and the fundamental decision making abilities.

So the second part of the class or session time must go towards project work. This forms the practical component and a host of different skills tend to surface thereafter.

Some examples of projects could be:

- a) Setting up of a mini recycling depot at your centre
Remembering of course the spiritual significance of recycling
- b) Setting up of a vegetable patch or some garden project.

Remember the type of project chosen must at the end of it be able to show some sort of sense of accomplishment to the children. This sense of achievement would be the motivation or driving force for them being enthusiastic about pursuing more projects on their own.

**** Ashram cleaning is NOT a project.**

This is just a centre activity that the Teen Youth along with the rest of the centre can get involved.

4. Movie Afternoons

Understand that children of this age group generally enjoy watching movies as a social event. Cater for this need by arranging Movie Afternoons.

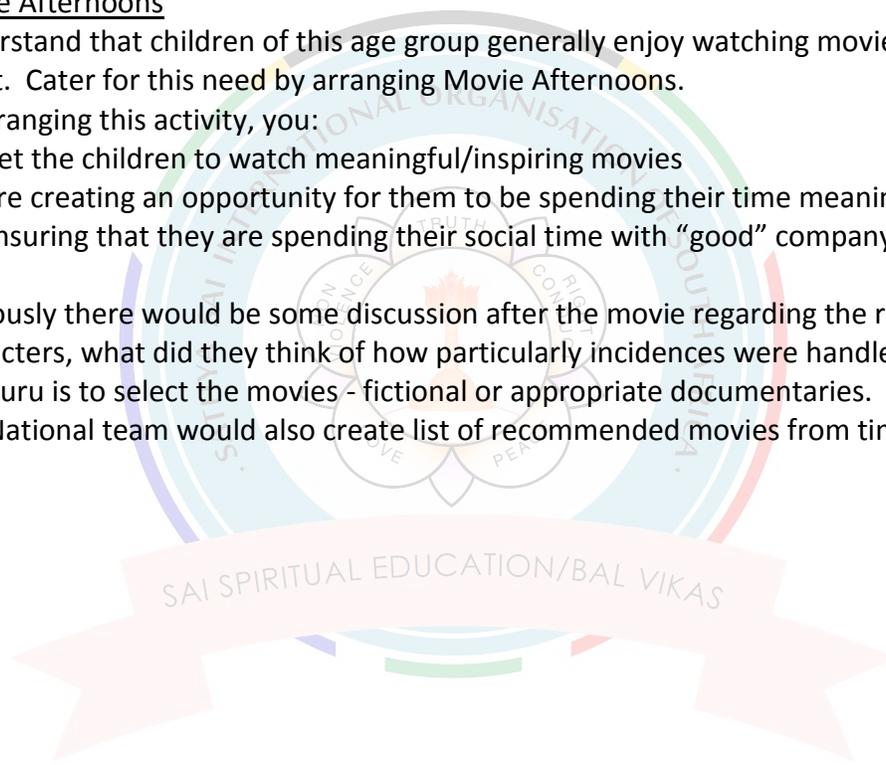
By arranging this activity, you:

- a) Get the children to watch meaningful/inspiring movies
- b) Are creating an opportunity for them to be spending their time meaningfully
- c) Ensuring that they are spending their social time with “good” company

Obviously there would be some discussion after the movie regarding the roles of characters, what did they think of how particularly incidences were handled, etc.

The guru is to select the movies - fictional or appropriate documentaries.

The National team would also create list of recommended movies from time to time.



5. Sporting Activities

Children of this age group generally fall into 2 categories:

a) Those that are very good at sport

b) Those that don't want to embarrass themselves because they don't play well.

Unfortunately, we accept that society only likes and encourages those individuals that DO play well. It is therefore our responsibility to create opportunities for ALL of our children to participate – informally initially – just to get the participation of every child. Ensure that those children in a shell are freed.

Gradually, the class themselves would form teams and play each other, etc, etc.

Our job is to create the opportunities for them to go out onto the field to get started.

Sport not only increases their physical activity and gets them fit, but it also aids by helping to produce more of the “happy” endorphins as they exercise and release their stress and tensions of school.

Engage in games like Volleyball, Netball, table tennis, etc – including team building type activities. These games keep them in closer contact with each other as opposed to soccer or cricket.

6. Workshops

As the year/s progress, get the Teen Youth to plan, organize and setup different types of workshops. The aim of this is to develop their organizing / planning skills.

Obviously the type of workshops that they plan should ideally be focused on some area of their sadhana so that they are learning content as they research, plan and prepare.

Example:

- Food Workshop
- Music Workshop
- Health & Fitness
- Meditation Workshop
- Sense and Mind Control
- Silence
- Why COD?
- Understanding the Mind
- Components of the Intellect
- Unity of Faiths
- Balance of Nature
- Etc



7. Technology

Most children this age are very advanced when it comes to technology.

We need to harness this skill they possess and create forums for them to use their skill in propagating the teachings of Sai.

We are looking at starting an SSE Facebook page for example, or similar where these children can start interacting on it.

This leaves the children still using the technology but channeling their time in a more appropriate way.

8. Admin / Notes

It is recommended that each child carry a note book with them where they can take down notes, etc as reminders of the discussions that take place.

Each study should also use the book to make notes in preparation of the topic that is going to be discussed for study circle that week.

9. The 9 Point Code of Conduct and the 10 Principles

These 2 important guidelines must be discussed extensively and every child in the class should know these by heart and understand them clearly. These 2 documents form the foundation for a strong character and a true devotee.

10. Debates

As part of the class activity, debates on relevant spiritual topics need to be held.

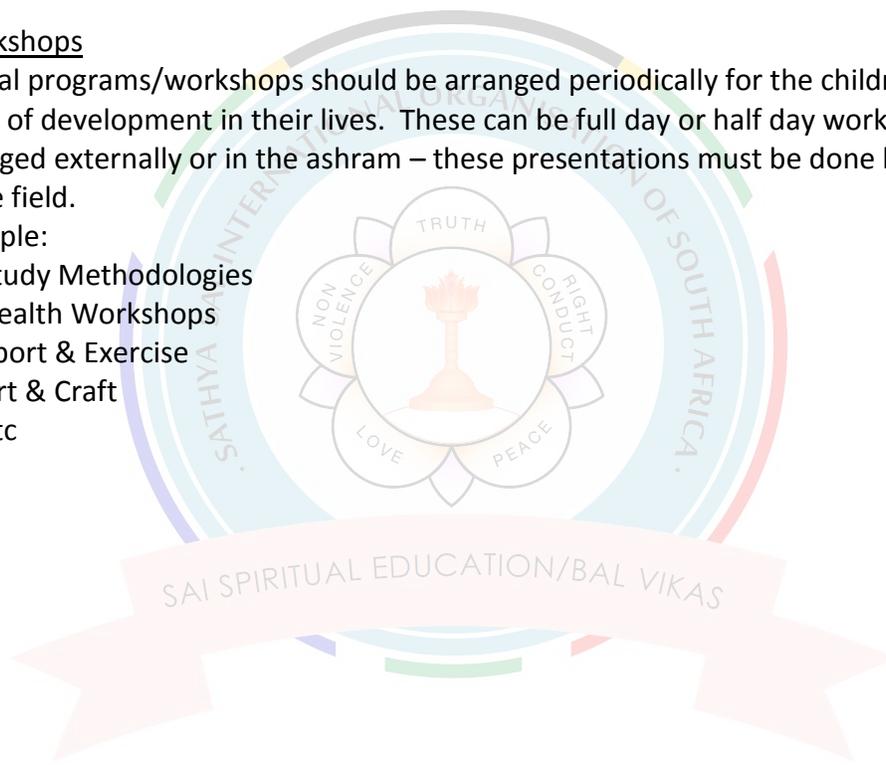
Preparing for a debate encourages the child to think deeper – obviously the topics selected by the guru for discussion/debate with pertain to their sadhana and spiritual growth / evolvment.

11. Workshops

Special programs/workshops should be arranged periodically for the children to aid areas of development in their lives. These can be full day or half day workshops arranged externally or in the ashram – these presentations must be done by specialists in the field.

Example:

- Study Methodologies
- Health Workshops
- Sport & Exercise
- Art & Craft
- Etc



12. Vedic Classes

This is a must and should continue.

13. Bhajan Training

The guru must ensure that all children are attending Bhajan Training or setup specific Bhajan Training Sessions so that every child does learn and is able to sing bhajans.

14. Centre Activities

The Group 4 class should get involved in the various seva programs of the centre.

“There was once a major Seva program going on in Prashanti and everybody was out busy serving, except for a group of Balvikas children who were seated in the mandhir. Swami came out of his residence straight these children and questioned them as to why they were not involved in the seva – the were too small and not allowed was their answer – Swami immediately advised them that they should never give up on an opportunity to seva and advised that they should at least go serve those who are serving by at least serving them water.

Similarly, our children at this age need to understand why Swami has spelt out the importance of Seva. Therefore they should get involved in all areas.



THE “TEEN” COMMANDMENTS

1. Don't let your parents down - they brought you up.
2. Choose your friends with care – you can become what they are.
3. Be master of your habits – or they will master you.
4. Treasure your time – don't spend it, invest it.
5. Stand up for something good, else you will fall for anything.
6. Select only a date that will make a good mate.
7. See what you can do for others, not what they can do for you.
8. Guard your thoughts – what you think, you are.
9. Don't fill up on this world's crumbs – feed your soul with the love of God.
10. Give your all to God – He gave everything to you.