

Adapting To Challenging Times

- by *Samhita Johnson*

Who would have thought that there will be a day when a tiny organism invisible to the naked eye would change how the mighty humans live and would bring everything to a standstill and force us to rethink the way we go about doing the most mundane tasks in our lives.

Like all other sectors even teaching had to evolve and we as teachers had lots to learn and reinvent ways to deliver classes.

It all began on a day that was just another exciting day at school! My class generally has 16 children, but due to the global pandemic outbreak, several children opted to stay home with their families. Gradually, the number dwindled to six children and, finally, resulting in a shutdown!

The current COVID-19 crisis has drastically changed lives for many children and their families, causing school closures for a prolonged period. Uncertain of when schools would reopen, we, the teachers, were scrambling to find ways to support our children from afar through distance and online teaching.

When I began to think about interacting with my young learners through distant learning, I realized I had a lot to learn myself. Throughout my student life, I was never exposed to digital or remote learning, but I just knew I wanted to be a part of something I felt would benefit my learners. However, I was determined to adapt and contribute to children that depend on traditional classroom setup and hands-on learning.

At first, I found the entire experience overwhelming to transition from a physical space to virtual online classes. Both—teachers and the children—struggled to adapt to digital sessions due to an unfamiliar learning eco-system. Later, I realized **adaption is the new normal!** As the saying goes, 'CHANGE IS CONSTANT,' an oxymoron prevalent in present days, I accepted that changing demands in the teaching space with an open mind. Today, I am fortunate to have enough knowledge to host traditional classroom sessions as well as virtual sessions.

I treasure the experience of adapting the online setup and sharing the space with my young learners. Although technology cannot substitute real-time learning experience, it has offered an alternative means to establish a connection between the teacher and the student.

Today, we realize the importance of access to quality learning in the early years to help young children on a brighter path to lifelong learning. While the Ministry of Education work to expand access to learning through a variety of different methods, we as educators and parents must ensure that early childhood education is incorporated within these efforts to promote holistic early childhood development.