



Summer Edition- June 2016

IECB NEWSLETTER

असतो मा सद्गमय ।
तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ।
मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Growing-up with IECB

by Krithika Iyer

When my friend Dr. Ruta Kapre started Gita classes in Sep 2014, I was reminiscing my teenage days, it was those times when my parents would have Vishnu-Sahstranamam every Saturday among few Tamil friends of theirs, which would then end with soondal (boiled lentils) prasadam in ONGC colony, Ahmedabad. So I welcomed the initiative to gather with few friends to practice Sanskrit shlokas and soon it became something that the kids looked forward to.

But little did I know that, what started for fun at Ruta-Sachin's place would inspire them to start a school?! Hard to believe!! They stood their ground, registered the school and set it up and running. But after the luke-warm intro-session, which resulted in me having more questions than answers. I still wanted to support my friend Ruta for the courage and the effort she took to build a team with a few like-minded, dedicated persons around her, I decided to bring kids to set the ball rolling for the school.

The school managed to get few kids- they started to learn- Hindi, Gita-shlokas and Indian history and Geography. After 2 months since its inception, we saw how the school would cheer my son, Vishu, up after a bad loss at his football game. As adults we found inspiration in the activities and program conducted for/by parents- like Marathon dream and supporting neighborhood bio farmers. It even inspired me to share in one session- "how Bharatanatyam helped me stabilize my personal health".

Then there was the aftermath of Paris attack. On 22Mar2016 the abhorring airport and metro blasts happened in Belgium. There was chaos all around. Now as a Belgian I was more alert, I reported things that were out of normal to the local police, stayed up as a responsible parent, spread awareness but then the dichotomy hit- wait I too am a Belgian of migrant origin- a brown person after-all! Doubts started to creep in, "do they believe me?" On the Wednesday that followed 22Mar2016, only a few brown people showed-up with their children. I was also eyed by employees at the swimming pool. But I did not react. Then I

met my colleague at work of Moroccan origin who said, life has got just more difficult for them personally. Then my neighbours who had their spring sales said that they heard from several of their immigrated Belgian customers that, they felt people behaved differently towards them since the attacks. In fact, I took a flight from Frankfurt (as Brussels airport was not operational) where I was subjected to physical body checks while the 2 white women ahead of me were not touched.

I read several op-eds discussing the dichotomy of migrant Belgians, who were here in a developed peaceful part of the world but their thoughts and actions corresponded to that of someone in a war-zone. This would sometimes leave me extremely upset but I would then bounce back. Me and my partner started discussions in the family to understand how we were dealing with the new reality after 22 Mar 2016, we discussed hours-on-together on both positive and negative stories. After a few rounds of discussions, we realized that we were not low; we were still confident and happy people. I recollected that I had laughed-off the episode of extra body-check to my colleagues as a good massage from police. More than that I could laugh at racist jokes, brush off disparate behaviour from strangers (white locals). I realized that there is some kind of reinforcement that I get. Is it the company I keep? The things I do in my personal time and space? The topics I talk or share? Or may be its all of aforesaid. Think good, be good and you'll only attract good.

And, here I find the India Education Centre Belgium contributing greatly to our lives. The positivity that people bring-in is something to look forward to. Be it is the IECB-running group, where members inspire one another to take part in runs through-out Belgium or it is a write-ups for IECB Newsletter, there is constant inspiration to out-better oneself. It is rewarding to see our children take pride in our roots/origins; they proudly say where they come from. It gives them (and us) the confidence not just to embrace Belgium fully to become mainstream but also strive to be shining beacons of Gen-Y and Gen-Z Belgians. What we do here with the school and among parents give me a lot of hope that our children will not be torn between the two worlds of "developed Belgium" and "developing India". They will simply develop perspectives and the ability to see perspectives. Needless to say, I am convinced of IECB.

IECB events

30 Jan 2016: First weekend school day

13 Feb 2016: Marathon Dream (Lekha Warrior and Venu Gopal Goru)/weekend school

27 Feb 2016: Is natyashastra genesis of Physiotherapy?(Krithika Iyer)/weekend school

5 March 2016: Organic myth (Steven Desmet)/weekend school

13 March 2016: weekend school

9 April 2016: Photography tips and tricks (Nishant Deshpande)/weekend school

17 April 2016: How to talk to kids: alternative to punishment (Dr. Aiste Grubliauskiene)/weekend school

24 April 2016: Sport facilities in Belgium (Sunil Bhadouriya)/weekend school

8 May 2016: IECB 6km group running at '15km Woluwe'

22 May 2016: Health and nutrition guidance (Dr. Vijaya Bhagvat)/Weekend school

5 June 2016: Good touch and bad touch (Titoo Khambayate)/weekend school

19 June 2016: Hobbies and sports and origami session (Raj Kini)/weekend school

4 September 2016 : Being in Belgium (Sehul Shah)/weekend school

11 September 2016: BARS (Rupal)/Weekend school

2 Oct 2016: Why natural cosmetics (Ruta Kapre)/weekend school

20 Nov 2016: Men are from mars and women are from venus (Dr. Prishnee)/weekend school

(Other upcoming topics: Health and nutrition guidance, Pregnancy in Belgium)

Please check our website www.indiaeducationcentre.eu for further updates and location.



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Weekend school page

Admissions for weekend school

Weekend school for kids under IECB is running since January 2016. We started with 4 kids in January and over the period of 5 months more and more kids get attracted towards weekend school. The admissions for academic year 2016-2017-starting from September 2016 are open now. Taking into account valuable feedback from many of you and Indian community around, we have tried to introduce as many interesting topics as possible.

Syllabus structure:

School is intended for kids of 5 year and above age. Before beginning of each school year parents will receive a detailed syllabus. During each class we will print the class notes for kids. The topics which we intend to cover in the syllabus are:

My India (in English):

Basic level: India map, cities, rivers, national anthem, food differences, cultural and linguistic plurality, Stories from Indian mythology and legends etc., introduction to Indian music/instruments etc.

Intermediate level: Great kings in Indian history, Indian climate, Natural vegetation and wildlife etc.

Advance level: Architectural aspects of Indian heritage, Indian freedom movement, tracing changes through

thousand years-regions and empires, new kings and kingdoms etc.

Sanskrit (instructions in English):

Basic/Intermediate/advance: Shlokas/subhashitas and Geeta recital, focus on pronunciations

Hindi:

Basic level: Devanagari- letters writing, reading, rhymes, and basic words

Intermediate level: writing and reading small sentences, basic conversation

Advance level: Writing and reading big paragraphs, fluent conversation

Khel-Indian games:

In each month there will be a 'khel' (games) session. It will include traditional Indian games like, lingorcha, carom, chess etc. We will start this session with shlokas and will conclude with kids-yoga, Surya-namaskar and relaxation.

Group 1: age 4-7

Group 2: age 8-12

Fees

In order to follow the syllabus and to run the school activities smoothly, regular attendance of kids is required. Therefore kids need to register preferably for the whole year. However, admissions will be possible every semester until Sept or Feb. In case of sickness it's possible to reimburse the school fee for that day upon showing

valid certificate by doctor.

For IECB members:

Yearly fee for all classes (classes + khel): Euro 290 (due on/before 31st August)

If paid in two instalments: Euro 150 per semester (due on/before 31st August and 31st Jan)

Yearly fee for all classes except khel sessions: Euro 210

Yearly fee for only khel sessions: Euro 80

For non-members:

Yearly fee for all classes (classes + khel): Euro 360 (due on/before 31st August)

If paid in two instalments: Euro 185 per semester (due on/before 31st August and 31st Jan)

Yearly fee for all classes except khel sessions: Euro 260

Yearly fee for only khel sessions: Euro 100

(You can become IECB member at any time of the year by paying a yearly membership fee of euro 50. Membership will give you right for reduced school fee but also for the parents right to attend all IECB sessions for free or with reduced rates. (±20 sessions per year). You will also receive IECB newsletter every season).

For more information about previous sessions and IECB please consult our website www.indiaeducationcentre.eu or write us at indi.edubel@gmail.com



Museums for children in Brussels and surroundings: an introduction

by Dheepa Rajan

With the flurry of 1- and 2-day holidays in Belgium in April and May, I was suddenly faced with the task of finding activities for my almost 4-year-old for these one-off days off school. In past years, these school holidays were spent mostly at home on a weekend rhythm of eating and sleeping. I realized quickly that this year would be different, with an avid pre-schooler ready for stimulation who no longer took afternoon naps.

I am by no means a museum or culture expert so here is just a simple introduction (definitely not comprehensive in scope) to a few museums in the Brussels area for you to take your children on a rainy day (not an entirely rare occasion in this part of the world).

Toy museum, Brussels (www.museedujouet.eu)

After a bit of internet research and seeking advice from friends, I took my daughter to the Musée des Jouets near Botanique in Brussels on a Sunday morning. We arrived at 11am when a puppet show (in French) was about to start for an extra 2€. My daughter was enthralled with the husky-voiced elderly lady (who sounded to me as if she'd been smoking all her life) telling the story of Princess Lilli Jolie completely by heart, with perfect voice modulation and a knack for bringing the children into the story at the right moments.

The museum is located within a grand old turn-of-the-century Brussels house, dusty and creaky as if to prove its age. The house is chocked full of toys -- from

handmade dolls to wooden trinkets to old-style pushchairs. Every corner is overflowing with toys and more toys and the museum rules allow children to touch and play with most of them. One has the impression, however, that whatever has been given to the museum has been put there for storage and display; it is not really curated or organized much.

Nevertheless, my daughter was delighted with a kitchen corner and decided to spend 45 minutes there play-cooking while I play-ate -- until the museum receptionist kicked us out for their lunch break at 13:00. If you have children under 5, this museum with its old-world charm is definitely worth a visit!

Toy Museum, Mechelen (www.speelgoedmuseum.be)

I hear from many friends that this museum is much more sophisticated than its Brussels incarnation. I have personally not yet made it down there but a bit of online research and a brief phone call shows that they are clearly more organized and professionalized than the Brussels Toy Museum. Firstly, they have a permanent exhibit as well as curated temporary ones. They have a web site that doesn't seem to be designed and managed by students and where information can be located easily. They have a lending service for games and toys as well as an official play corner for children where they can be left briefly while parents enjoy a break in the café. My impression is that older, 10+ children would also have plenty to be entertained by here, along with their under-5 siblings. ..So this will doubtless be our next rainy day destination).

Museum of Natural Sciences, Brussels (www.naturalsciences.be)

The Museum of Natural Sciences is a part of the Royal Belgian Institute of Natural Sciences and may not immediately sound child-friendly to first-time parents getting used to typical children's activities in Europe. What makes it tailored for children is the way the exhibits are organized, the explanations provided, and the interactivity of the displays.

One of the most impressive collections is the Dinosaur Gallery, a humongous 3000 m2 space with dozens of minutely pieced-together dinosaur bones. It is the largest room in Europe entirely devoted to dinosaurs, their discovery, lives and evolution. For younger children such as my daughter, the sheer size of the dinosaurs and the awesome impression it makes when entering the room is what constitutes the fun of the museum adventure. For older children, it is probably worth participating in the various organized tours, camps, and other such activities on offer by the museum.

Museum of Ixelles, Ixelles (www.museumofixelles.irisnet.be)

One of my good friends who is a teacher in a Flemish school in the centre of Brussels highly recommended this museum. Apparently, this contemporary art museum has won many prizes and is constantly trying to innovate and create. Upon first visit, it may not seem particularly geared towards children but they have several children's workshops and guides specialized in explaining art to children. Apparently, it complements what children are introduced to in art class in school from about ages 6/7 upwards -- so I will have to wait a couple of years to take my daughter but it will definitely be on my to-do list!

Crossword for kids

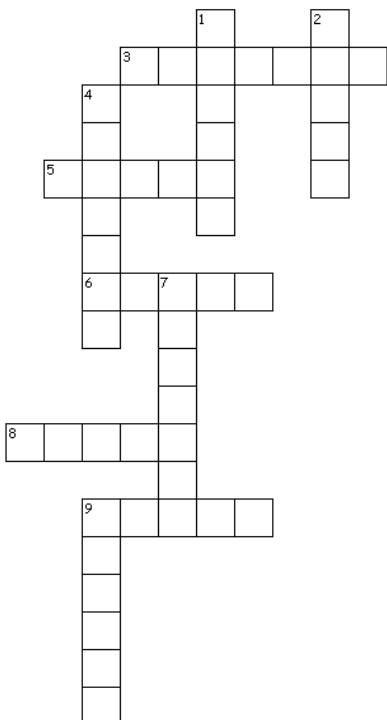
Test your knowledge over India

Across

3. Most popular and famous sport from India 5. Most sacred and famous river in India 6. A desert animal 8. Tasty summer fruit from India 9. A language spoken by large population in India

Down

1. Most clever person in the court of Akbar. Many folk tales are popular for his wit 2. Capital city of India 4. National bird of India 7. Rainy season in India 9. National sport of India



Thought corner

by Dr. Prishnee Datta, (Ph.D.),
Clinical and Developmental Psychologist/
Psychotherapist

Indians are generally fun loving, and love giving a hug when we meet each other, especially observed among the exuberant Sikh community and Indian men and women. Touch conveys more than words, as depicted in the image above. So here is some food for thought: how about hugging someone next time you meet to feel a sense of closeness, wellbeing and community! Be the vehicle to spread some happiness in a person's life.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF HUGGING

- Hugging makes us feel good.
- More hugs equals lower blood pressure.
- Hugging may alleviate or soothe our existential fears.
- Hugging can be good for our hearts.
- Adults can benefit from hugging the most as it decreases feelings of loneliness.
- If you are feeling stressed, give someone a hug. When we embrace,

immediately the amount of the stress hormone Cortisol produced in our bodies is reduced. Hugs also make our bodies release tension and send calming messages to the brain, when done mindfully.

- Well-hugged babies are less stressed than adults when done in the early years of life.

Image source: <http://www.spiritualunite.com>



Hugging is good medicine.

It transfers energy and gives the person hugged an emotional lift. You need four hugs a day for survival, eight for maintenance, and twelve for growth. Scientists say that hugging is a form of communication because it can say things you don't have the words for. And the nicest thing about a hug is that you usually can't give one without getting one.

Believe in yourself

by Lekha Warrior

Believe in yourself
the line is not far..
Cross over first & become a star
Jump over quick,
Jump over nimble
Take your determined step and move on,
don't worry about the stumble.

Don't get too comfortable
in your cushy seat,
when there are so many other
challenges to meet.

The world has so much more
than what you imagine,
It can only get possible when you
get rid of mundane.

Better yourself with arms more than one,
Be positive and live life like its just begun
When you feel that your day is just not right,
Remember there are so many terrors that get
absorbed in the night.

Be happy, be brave
Your path has much to offer,
The best days of your life
are just around the corner

Recipes with local and seasonal ingredients- Broccoli

It is one of the best vegetables when it comes to nutrients. It is an excellent source of vitamin C and vitamin K. Raw broccoli also contains moderate amounts of several B vitamins and the dietary mineral manganese. Broccoli contain a compound called sulphoraphane which can function as an anti-cancer agent. Boiling broccoli reduces the levels of sulphoraphane, with losses of 20-30% after five minutes, 40-50% after ten minutes, and 77% after thirty minutes. (Less cooked- more healthier!).

Broccoli guacamole

- 2 broccoli florets
- 1 garlic clove
- 2 spring onions
- ½ green pepper
- Juice of ¼ lemon or lime
- ¼ bunch coriander
- salt



Peel and boil the florets or steam them until tender in 8 min. Press the garlic. Cut the onions and peppers very fine. Use only the leaves of the coriander and chop very finely. Puree of boiled broccoli florets and add garlic and lemon juice. Mix then the rest and add salt as per taste. Serve with tortilla chips or chapati/nan.

source: <http://www.dewittebeek.be/category/broccoli/>

'Brussels Mandir'- A brief story.....

Sachin Kinge and Sidheswar Vazare

The Indian community of Belgium or the least around the Brussels know about 'Brussels Mandir' and probably visited it sometime. But most of them do not know is the groundwork done behind the foundation of it.

For decades Indians have immigrated in Belgium in small pockets. Gradually the community thought of setting up a platform for Indian families to interact. And the idea of 'Indian Cultural Centre (ICC)' was put forward in 2010. Further was also proposed foundation of a Mandir under ICC as a place for Indians with diverse thoughts to come together. Rather than setting up an Indian regional or language specific organization the ICC and the Mandir has been devoted to enforce unified Indian identity only! The temples' central location in Evere is just coincidental; but as it turned out to be an ideal one due to recent growth in Indian expat population in the vicinity. However, the most heartening were the efforts of the Indian community to raise the funds for establishing the Mandir, when most of the financial institutions turned away from, even partially, lending, on the grounds of being an initiate of a Non-Profit Organization! But it proved to be a very tiny hurdle to stop the community from moving forward. The contributions were raised by door to door persistent efforts of the founders finally leading to the groundwork of the Mandir in 2012.

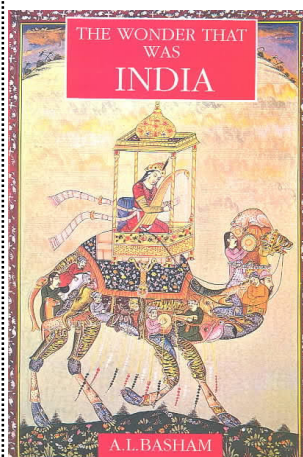
ICC arranges several cultural events. Such as Indian Brussels Mela on 15th of August every year with several interesting activities of folk dances, Indian cuisine.

In 2012 and 2015 Shri Shri Ravishankar jee visited the Mandir. Other festivals are celebrated too such as Janmashtmi, Maa Durga Jagaran. Of course, apart from attending the festivities and providing funds in order to support the activities there are many ways the community can contribute to the Mandir activity, as the founding committee insists. "Mandir Seva" can be even in participating small activities of the Mandir or even coming forward to build new community specific initiatives. After all, such noble initiatives should inculcate humility and a strong bonding within Indian community in Belgium.

Wonder that was India by A. J. Basham

- a book review

by Prabhat Avasare



In times when images about India were filled with negative stereotypes, indologist Basham wrote a shining book mainly aimed at western audiences about ancient Indian history and culture. It is said that this book has "decolonized" Indian history - so is the greatness of the book and its impact on generations of Indian historians even after more than seventy years.

The book talks about ancient Indian civilization from Harappa till arrival of Muslim invasions. It talks about Vedas, cultures, religions developed in India during that period,

how societies were structured in those times, how political structure was organized, how everyday life in those times

was. How arts, cultures and religions flourished, how advanced languages and literatures were in those times. How the society was trying to pursue intellectual and philosophical questions more than being materialistic - with a clear emphasis that such an advanced state of society is unparalleled in history of mankind.

What struck me the most while reading the book was not the scholarly attitude in detailing facts about India but an incredible amount of author's love and respect towards India - it is so overwhelming! It makes me wonder how much efforts the author must have taken to comprehend ancient languages and literature to create such a scholarly commentary. It is this book which made me look ancient India in its true and glorious form. For a person interested in ancient Indian society, this book is an important landmark to experience.

Huffing my way through the Woluwe Run

By Dany Mani



Social media often draws a lot of flak - for its anonymous trolls, for personal moments paraded publicly, for....well you get the idea. However, often it succeeds in achieving what it was meant to in the first place - help one meet

like-minded people. That preamble Dear Readers was to tell you how I found myself at the Woluwe Run.

I was new to Brussels and was on the look-out for fellow fitness enthusiasts. That's how I found myself putting up a post on a Facebook page for Indian Expats. 'Anybody out there who would like to jog/train together?' -was the gist of the message sent across. Fortunately for me, a member of IECB reached out and I was welcomed very warmly into a group of running enthusiasts. "Why don't you try the Woluwe Run?" they said. And try I did!

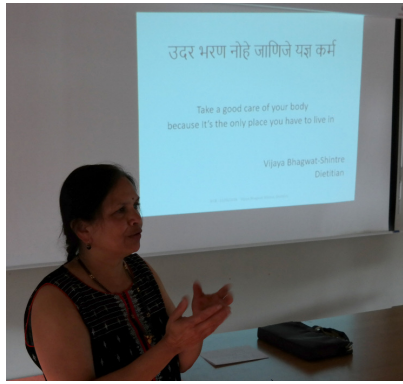
The 6KM run was an eye opener; to the beauty of Brussels and to my lack of stamina. After months of being cocooned in a jacket, I absolutely loved the sunny day and as the route took us through Parc Malou, I was delighted to have witnessed such charming sights. However, at the 3km mark, the charm faded away as my body began to protest. Sad to say, my body wanted to lie flat on the nearest horizontal surface. I realized that my hourly visits to the gym hadn't really helped me build the required stamina to sail through a 6Km run. With three more Kms to go, willpower was my only saviour. Thus, 50 minutes later, I huffed and puffed my way to the finish line. I must say though, there is something about the euphoria of achievement even when every muscle in your body is screaming in pain.

The highlight of the run for me came somewhere around the 5km mark. There I was, painfully slow-jogging my way uphill when a 60-something-year-old man breezed past me (Wow!) but not before he advised me to jog without scrapping my feet!

Someday, I hope to be fit enough to breeze past a much younger person on an uphill run!

Food for thought: mindful eating

a session By Mrs. Vijaya Bhagwat-Shintre
written by **Mugdha Baviskar**



With her abundance of knowledge and experience, Mrs. Vijaya Bhagwat-Shintre gave us a very practical and informative session over "Health & Nutrition", the indispensable aspects of our lives. As stated by her, health indeed is a very broad concept and it depends on a range of varied factors. Health is defined as "a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity" by the World Health

Organization.

With changing times, the focus on "health" has shifted more towards "diet". Mrs. Shintre insisted that we should not stress ourselves over the so called "Fad diets". Thanks to the likes of Facebook, Twitter and the numerous articles in the newspapers written over the perfect diet that people like me often end up having all the knowledge about the nutritional aspects of foods but fail to practice what is preached.

Often viewed from a physical point of view, psychology & mental Health is equally important for a healthy body. Poor mental health is a risk factor for chronic physical health conditions and depression is often connected to these. Thus having a healthy body is often just a result of a healthy mind.

For years now, our parents have advised us to have a king size breakfast before heading to school or work. Mrs. Shintre reiterated the same and suggested that we should indeed opt for multi-grain bread instead of sugary breakfast snacks.

With the advent of globalization, we often have negative perceptions of certain foods like fats. But not all fat is bad and in fact there are 8 Essential fatty acids that cannot be produced by our body and must be consumed. As per Mrs. Shintre, we must re-think before completely omitting certain foods and in fact consume them in moderation. I have always heard my mother saying "too much of anything is bad" and I can see it certainly applies to food.

The session was concluded with a line from a Marathi Shloka "Udarbharan Nohe Janiye Yadnyakarma" which in fact means eating is not merely filling your stomach but a sacred act of consuming a healthy meal and be humbled and satisfied with the food. With so much to read, listen and ponder over, I would like to wish everyone "Mindful eating, Mindful living"!!!

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Closed on Sunday
Website: www.krishna-restaurant.be
Email: s.chunivan@skynet.be
Owners: Mr & Mrs A.S.Chunivan

Right from the start we wanted to put the accent on refining meals and preparing fresh products with an Indian touch.

We offer a buffet on the last Friday of every month.

An Ideal venue for Birthday & Anniversary celebration.

Offering take away and catering for outside (only for big group)

(Buffet)

Every last Friday of the month (with an exception of the months of July and August) we organise a buffet evening offering you a wide choice of starters and main courses (also with a selection of vegetarian specialities).

We dare recommending you these evenings because it is an excellent opportunity to taste a great deal of our Indian kitchen.

PRICE BUFFET ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT: 27.00€/person (drinks not included). 5 starters, 7 main courses (3 vegetarian meals, 2 chicken meals, 2 lamb meals + rice, naan, salads), desserts



No-Go-Tell

a session by Titoo Khambayate
written by **Ruta Kapre**

Be it a boy or a girl; be it in India or Europe or rest of the world, many of us have gone through some sort of child abuse. Especially when your shyness creates a communication gap between you and parents, one is predisposed to face harrowing experiences. After going through the unfortunate turns of events, kids may have a life-time trauma, altered perception for life and overall could develop a negative mind-set.

So rather than waiting for 'ugly' moments happen to our kids and then over react, why not be proactive and educate our kids to be strong and bold enough to defend themselves to a degree! It's better to build awareness in them through proper parental guidance. For this matter a simple no-go-tell principle (shout no, Go away from that person and tell a safe adult about the bad touch you got)



Ones self-esteem develops in the childhood and is built on the foundations of respect to mind and body. Any abuse from strangers or close ones through inappropriate and unwanted 'proximity' to our body or mind can live a scar.

Through 'Good-Touch and Bad-Touch' sessions Titoo Khambayate has done a great job of putting this bold subject in front of parents. Why not spread words to more parents?

If you are interested to contribute in the newsletter or participate in any of the activities of IECB or have any questions do write us at indi.edubel@gmail.com

Website: www.indiaeducationcentre.eu



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