

# Portfolio Use in Sangareddy Anganwadis

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The two broad methods of assessment that are appropriate for the Foundational Stage are **observations of the child and analysing artefacts** that the child has produced as part of their learning experience.

An artefact in an early childhood classroom refers to an object created by a child during the teaching-learning process. Artefacts could be used by looking at the child's work and seeing how their level of understanding of a particular Learning Outcome affected what they were able to produce. Artefacts provide a rich source of information about a child's strengths and abilities.

A portfolio is an intentional collection of significant work samples and records of children that allow for assessment by providing evidence of effort and accomplishment related to specific Learning Outcomes. The Teacher should analyse the portfolio of the child with regard to specific outcomes and mark the child's progress against competencies. The organization of a child's portfolio should clearly indicate outcomes to be achieved. Each child should have a dedicated folder to store their relevant artefacts.

Source: National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage 2022. Section 6.2 Methods and Tools of Assessment. p. 173, pp. 177-78.

In the context of the Sangareddy *anganwadis*, teachers maintain portfolios, which contain complete information about a child – their work, developmental checklist, information from parents, and teacher narratives and observations.

At the beginning of the year, teachers create a folder/bag for each child with the child's details labelled on it so that it can be easily identified. This is used to hold the child's drawings and craft work, teacher observations, narrative summary and workbooks of the child in chronological order. At the end of each quarter, based on each child's portfolio, the teacher fills out their assessment card provided by the Department of Women and Child Development (DWCD) and keeps it in the child's portfolio.

In this article, we present two case studies of teachers' use of portfolios to understand children's progress and provide opportunities, and also how these are used to explain the process of their child's progress to parents.

## Case study 1: Organising and maintaining portfolios

*Malleswari, anganwadi teacher, Nagasanpalli, Sadashivapet project, Sangareddy district, Telangana*

Malleswari joined as an *anganwadi* teacher in 2002 in a village in the Sadashivapet Block of Sangareddy district, Telangana. She has completed class X.

Currently, 13 children in the age group of 3-6 years attend her *anganwadi*.

However, she started organising the portfolios only in 2015. Initially, she used the portfolios as part of the classroom display. So, she arranged small bags labelled with the respective child's name and basic information (date of birth, gender, parents names and contact number). What to keep in the bags, or how the contents could be used as records of the children's development was learned only over a period, through capacity-building programmes, learning from peers and personal experiences. Gradually, she developed an understanding of the benefits of children's portfolios and their importance in assessing children's development.

She started keeping children's artwork and workbooks in the portfolios. When her supervisor visited the centre and suggested that she add dates to the children's work as soon as it was completed, she began to follow this practice. It helped her in sharing the progress made in children's work with their parents at the parent-teacher meets. Her next challenge was that when parents asked about a particular work done by their child, she could not recall all the details. So, she started adding a brief description of each work along with the date. In subsequent meetings, she could describe the child's work to the parents. Parents were very happy because they could see their child's development over a period of time.

Maintaining portfolios helped Malleswari in using them to plan and provide more learning opportunities where required. She also realised that keeping a portfolio of work for each child helped her fill their assessment cards more accurately – until this time she had thought that the only way to understand children’s development was through observation.

It also helped her in focusing on each child’s needs and providing support to them in their day-to-day activities. Added to this, it allowed the children to see their portfolio bags and work, which is not only exciting but also encourages them to talk about and describe various aspects of their work. Malleswari also encourages children to look at and talk about each other’s work, which helps them develop social interaction skills and appreciation of others’ work.

Malleswari shares the portfolios with government primary school teachers at the end of the year when the children are ready to move to primary school. For those joining private schools, the portfolios are given to their parents so they can share these with the children’s new teachers. This enables these teachers to understand the children’s progress

and use these as a baseline for the academic year ahead.

### Case study 2: Analysing artefacts

*J Indira, anganwadi teacher, Lingapur, Narayankhed project, Sangareddy district, Telangana*

Indira has been actively conducting preschool programmes and providing developmentally appropriate opportunities to children for their holistic development since 2018. Additionally, for the last three years, she has been maintaining portfolios and written observations for a better understanding of children’s development.

In one of the capacity-building workshops for *anganwadi* teachers, she brought the portfolio bag of a child and explained to other teachers how she had been using it. In that session, she took samples of filling colours (within a space) and explained how the child’s fine motor precision and control improved over the months due to continued practice. The improvement in the skill of colouring can be seen clearly from the work sample of colouring a ball within an outline done in September 2022 when compared to colouring a flower and leaf in October 2023. (Figures 1&2)



Figures 1 & 2. The improvement in the child’s colouring skill is evident.

In one of the parent-teacher meetings (ECCE Day in the context of *anganwadis*) Indira showed a child's portfolio to her parent, who had taken the child out of the *anganwadi* and enrolled her in a private preschool, and explained how she had maintained the child's work and progress. The parent was so overwhelmed and happy that she sent her child back to the *anganwadi*, which the child is now attending.

### Conclusion

The significance of the portfolio as a record of a child's progress is now clearly understood by many *anganwadi* teachers in Sangareddy, who maintain and utilise portfolios effectively to understand children's developmental progress.

This practice has resulted in a positive shift in the parents' and community's perception of *anganwadis* – from being just feeding centres to becoming learning centres. Consequently, parents send their children to *anganwadis* more regularly and spend more time with them at home listening and playing with them, telling stories, etc. The community also supports the *anganwadi* in various ways – from providing necessary play and teaching-learning materials, to offering rent-free spaces to run the centre or help with clearing, cleaning and levelling open areas around the centre for use by the children etc.



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