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Balagokulam

Hindu Dharma for Kids, Teachers and Parents

Parent Handout



Hindu Temple and Cultural Center of South Carolina

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WHY BALAGOKULAM?

Amidst the busy lives we lead, we rarely find time to talk to our kids (they are our future!) about our Dharma and culture and explain them as to who we are and how our Dharma is different from other religions.

As part of our Dharmic observances, we perform Pooja and Yagna, apply tilak on the forehead, break coconut, celebrate festivals and undertake a variety of vows and austerities. There are good reasons for all of these observances. We are sure most of our kids would like to know why we perform these rituals.

Not only do we not have time to explain to our kids about these activities and other aspects of our rich culture and heritage, many of us do not know or understand the reason behind all these activities. As a result, our kids are ill informed about our Dharma and culture and they have no source to find the correct information. Besides, they are exposed to information about other religions from sources like church run preschools, schools, media, library, basketball teams etc.

If we do not provide our kids with the right information and do not provide a forum for answering the questions they have, they are likely to get misguided and feel lost in the society they live in and end up with misconceptions about our Dharma.

Balagokulam is a humble effort to create a generation rooted in our Dharmic culture and provide them with a forum where they can find the correct information and understanding about our Dharma.

The best part is that the kids will have a lot of fun – making new friends and strengthening existing friendships – learning about their culture and heritage.



WHAT TO EXPECT

The more our children feel connected to our Dharma, the less likely they are to absorb the misinformation from other sources. **Balagokulam** is strictly based on **Sanatana Dharma** principles.

The curriculum is geared toward learning and development of a wholesome personality. The learning includes both mental and physical activities with a good proportion of songs and shlokas. While we may use various sources to make a curriculum and find content for the teachings, our purpose is to teach our kids about Hindu Dharma principles and insights only, you can be assured about that.

Balagokulam is held every Sunday from 10:30 am to Noon at the temple. Here is a sample curriculum:

| | |
|---------------------|--------|
| Assembly | 5 Min |
| Exercise/Stretching | 5 Min |
| Surya Namaskar | 5 Min |
| Games | 30 min |
| Shloka/Bhajan | 20 Min |
| Story /Discussion | 20 Min |
| Prarthana | 5 Min |

Kids will be provided with a snack and drink at the end of each class.

Balagokulam is free and all kids 5 years and older are welcome. Pick up time is 12:00 pm.

DO'S AND DON'TS

- ☞ Please do not walk into a class in progress. If you need to talk to your child or pick up early, please talk to a Balagokulam Administrator and have him call your child.
- ☞ Please do not stand outside a class in progress and distract the kids.
- ☞ Please be punctual and make sure your child reaches at least 5 or 10 minutes before the commencement of the class (10:30 am).
- ☞ Please be sure to pick your child by 12:00 pm or latest by 12:10 pm.

HOW CAN PARENTS HELP?

The most important help you can provide is the moral support to the organizers and volunteers.

Here are the other ways you can help:

- ☞ Spread the word about Balagokulam and explain to other parents why it is important to bring our kids to Balagokulam.
- ☞ Volunteer as a teacher/shikshak. The more teachers/shikshaks we have, easier it will be to run the school.
- ☞ Volunteer for administrative/organizational help.
- ☞ Volunteer for the snack & drinks for the children.
- ☞ While enrollment is free, any financial help you can provide is welcome. Please make checks payable to HTCCSC and mark it is for the Balagokulam.
- ☞ Kids 15 and older are encouraged to volunteer for Balagokulam. Kids who volunteer for 3 months will be given a certificate of appreciation by the temple.



We need your support and feedback. If you have any suggestion to make Balagokulam a better experience for our kids, please let us know, we are open to all ideas.

We have a designated Coordinator and a few volunteers for Balagokulam to respond to all your queries and concerns. Please see reverse for details.

For more details, please visit our website:
<http://www.hindutemples.org>