

Herald Cafe



THE INVISIBLE LOAD: MENTAL LABOUR IS DRAINING WOMEN



A GOAN SUMMER IN DELHI

Young learners explore the web for edutainment

YouTube has become a go-to platform for entertainment and learning for everyone, including preschoolers. These videos can offer educational content, just before they head to their first school



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The holiday season presents a valuable opportunity for parents to support their children's early development in a relaxed and nurturing environment. Parents of soon-to-be kindergarteners can play a significant

role in preparing their child for this exciting new milestone. While too much screen time is not recommended for them, YouTube can be an effective tool when used in moderation. As they step closer to exploring the world on their own, make them more independent by also teaching them to complete simple tasks on their own.



Making learning fun at home

Sr Susan Dias, a pre-primary teacher at St Joseph Convent Pre-Primary School, Aquem, Margao advises, "By engaging in activities and routines that promote academic, social, and emotional readiness, parents can help their child transition smoothly into kindergarten and set them up for a successful year. Begin by reading books with the child, play educational games, watch educational videos which include alphabet and phonics, number recognition and counting, shape and colour recognition."

She further adds, "Besides this, view videos recognizing and managing emotions, stories about empathy and self-awareness. Sing songs, and recite rhymes together which helps the child to develop social skills, doing some role-play, teaching them how to share, take turns, and cooperate with others."

Importance of quality and moderation

Fatima Dias, a pre-primary teacher at Fr Agnel Multipurpose Pre-primary School, Verna, highlights the importance of quality and moderation of watching videos. "Children's social-emotional development is fostered as they observe interactions and learn about feelings under parental supervision. Furthermore, action tunes and craft movies can stimulate fine motor abilities and inventiveness. However, quality and moderation are key—parents should prioritize educational content, actively engage with their child during screen time, and balance digital exposure with real-world play," she says.

The essence of parental bonding

Teaching for 43 years, Christine Alphonso of Happy Hearts Montessori Pre-Primary School, Porvorim, is always happy to welcome a new class of students every year. However, over the years, she has noticed that parents are dedicating less time to the child and only a 25 percent of parents make the effort to teach the children fundamentals before school. "When parents spend more time with their children, it gives them the comfort to share everything. The initial bonding is very important and the same can be done while reading books or watching videos with them, rather than just putting on the video and leaving the child alone. Parents can sing the songs with them to make their bond stronger. Once they start school, they will feel comfortable to share whatever happened in class," says Christine.

YouTube can prepare children for one of their biggest early life steps. By turning holiday screen time into a gentle introduction to school life, parents can help ensure that their child begins kindergarten with confidence and excitement.

Beginning kindergarten with confidence and excitement

Videos such as 'My First Day at School' or 'Kindergarten Morning Routine' allow children to visualise key parts of the day at school. "Psychologists agree that repetition and routine help children feel safe. Watching these videos repeatedly, especially with a parent by their side, helps young minds process the new environment and build positive expectations. Parents can pause to explain scenes, ask questions like 'What would you do next?' or relate the video to the child's future school. To make the experience more engaging, parents might even consider creating simple role-play games at home based on what their child has seen online, or recording a 'pretend school day' video together," explains Sr Perpetua Fernandes of Daya Mata Niketan Pre-Primary School, Mardol.

Transitioning into a formal learning environment

Parental involvement is key to maximizing the benefits of these digital tools. Sr Monica Colaco of St Theresa's Convent Pre-Primary School, Raia says, "Beyond academics, a wide array of YouTube content focuses on developing essential soft skills, which are crucial for a smooth adjustment to school life. This early exposure can significantly ease the transition into a formal learning environment."



Some of the best YouTube channels for pre-schoolers:

Blippi: Explores various places like zoos, museums, parks, and teaching kids about colours, shapes, animals, and everyday objects in a fun, upbeat way.

Pinkfong: Best known for the viral 'Baby Shark' song, it also includes educational videos that teach children about numbers, shapes, animals, and good manners. The animations are bright and visually appealing.

Super Simple Songs: Full of simple, easy-to-understand songs on things like colours, shapes, numbers, and common phrases in a child-friendly way.

Cocomelon: Features catchy songs and nursery rhymes focusing on alphabet, numbers, days of the week, and animal sounds.

Little Baby Bum: Features nursery rhymes, educational songs, and fun animated characters and covers topics like animals, colors, numbers, and shapes, with sing and dance along.

National Geographic Kids Offers short, engaging videos that introduce pre-schoolers to nature, animals, and the environment.

SWIPE RIGHT

Rami Malek, Emma Corrin part ways after two years



The 'Night at the Museum' actor Rami Malek and 'The Crown' alum Emma Corrin have split after two years of dating. They first got involved in romance rumours in July 2023, when the pair were seen together at a Bruce Springsteen concert in London. The couple was rarely seen in public as they were keen to keep their relationship private. Sources say Corrin, 29, who found fame and won a Golden Globe after playing Princess Diana in 'The Crown', has been separated 'for some time' from Malek, 43, who got an Oscar for his turn as Freddie Mercury in 'Bohemian Rhapsody'.

Sheryl Crow and LeAnn Rimes join 'The Voice' as mentors



The 'Voice' singing competition show recently announced that LeAnn Rimes and Sheryl Crow are joining the show as this season's mega mentors. LeAnn will join coaches John Legend and Adam Levine while Sheryl will join Kelsea Ballerini and Michael Bublé as each team prepares for the playoffs, which kick off on April 28. This marks LeAnn's debut as a mega mentor on the show while Sheryl is returning for the first time since she assumed the role on season 4. Each singer will help guide the contestants through their most high-stake performance yet. After the playoffs, the coaches choose two contestants to move on to the live shows.



A first look of Johnny Depp was released of his upcoming film. He is sporting a salt-and-pepper beard and long, slicked-back hair for the thriller film 'Day Drinker' alongside Penélope Cruz.

Fab cast announced for new Harry Potter series

Great news for Potter heads: HBO has officially confirmed six cast members for Hogwarts professor roles in its upcoming Harry Potter television series set to premiere in 2026

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The new confirmation includes four actors, previously reported to be part of the series, in addition to two new ones. This announcement has created an overwhelming joy for the Hogwarts fans as it offers a novel retelling of JK Rowling's globally cherished book series Harry Potter. The show is due to begin filming this summer, with the first series airing potentially as early as next year. Showrunner Francesca Gardiner and executive producer Mark Mylod said, "We're delighted to have such extraordinary talent onboard, and we can't wait to see them bring these beloved characters to new life."

SEVERUS SNAPE: Snape, an enigmatic character in the JK Rowling series, known for his icy exterior, gets a revamp as British actor Paapa Essiedu is playing him in this TV adaptation. Gracefully portrayed by the late Alan Rickman in the Harry Potter film series, this character was shaped by a past filled with abuse and rejection. Impressive shows of Paapa include 'I may destroy you' and 'Gangs of London'.

ALBUS DUMBLEDORE: Dumbledore is a revered and powerful wizard, the headmaster of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, and a mentor figure to Harry Potter. The character known for his wisdom, kindness, and formidable magical abilities will be played by American actor John Lithgow. Albus Dumbledore was previously played by the late Richard Harris in the first two films, and after his death, late Michael Gambon for the rest of the movies. John Lithgow said, "It's going to define me for the last chapter of my life, I'm afraid. But I'm very excited."

RUBEUS HAGRID: The groundskeeper at Hogwarts, Hagrid, is a half-giant wizard with a kind heart and fondness for magical creatures. His weakness for taking care of large and sometimes dangerous creatures often leads him to trouble. This role was portrayed by the late Robbie Coltrane for the Harry Potter movies. For the TV adaptation, Nick Frost, an English actor and comedian, will be appearing. His films include 'How to Train Your Dragon' and 'The Sparks Brothers'.

ARGUS FILCH: Argus Filch is a Squib and the caretaker of Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry. Filch, who was one of the least popular members of staff, was never far from any students causing mess or trouble and was always keen to dole out punishments for any minor misdemeanour. This character was played by David Bradley for the movie series. Paul Whitehouse will be gracing the screens as Argus Filch for the Harry Potter TV series. He is popularly known for shows and movies like, 'The Fast Show', 'Mortimer and Whitehouse: Gone Fishing', 'The Death of Stalin', and more.

MINERVA MCGONAGALL: McGonagall is the head of Gryffindor House, a Transfiguration professor, and the Deputy Headmistress of Hogwarts. Despite her stern exterior, McGonagall cares deeply for her students and will help them. This character was brought to life by the late Dame Maggie Smith. For the TV adaptation of the same, Janet McTeer, an English actress known for her performances in movies and shows like 'Wuthering Heights', 'Albert Nobbs and the Menu' and 'Ozark' is onboard.

QUIRINUS QUIRRELL: Quirrell is a half-blood wizard. He was the Muggle Studies professor at Hogwarts, though he later became the Defence Against the Dark Arts professor. Quirrell's meek facade hides his intelligence, cunning, and willingness to serve Voldemort. This character was played by Ian Hart for the movies. The TV adaptation of the series will feature Luke Thallon, who has appeared in numerous stage productions, including Patriots, Albion, and Tom Stoppard's Leopoldstadt. He was most recently seen in a Royal Shakespeare Company production of Hamlet, playing the titular role.