



**News from DIYA's intervention centre for children with autism,
Tirunelveli, South India**

September – December 2017

Happy new year to all of us from Diya!

CM's insurance scheme for children with autism

We've had some wonderful news this last couple of months. Diya Trust has been chosen for the Chief Minister's insurance scheme. The scheme chooses one centre from each district and the children registered in that centre are paid for a portion of their therapies on a monthly basis. Not only is it a seal of approval of a sort, but also, once the scheme begins working fully, we should be able to do even more for our children. The scheme is particularly intended for children under 6. However, getting children under 6 can be difficult, as identification, acceptance etc and ability to access therapies is all really complicated in India.

Please pray that we are able to make the most of this wonderful opportunity that God has given us.

More young children

We also want to thank God for bringing in families with young children. Recently we've had about 4 new children (under-5s) join us. We've had a few other families approach us, but then not actually come for any work – possibly because of denial. Please pray that we become known as a centre for young children and that parents who hear of us, will put in the work necessary to actually bring their children to us.



New premises

We are becoming quite aware that not only is our venue too small for our number of children, but several families have also reported that we are very hard to access. We need new premises and despite several leads, nothing has worked out so far. Please pray that God opens the right doors and leads us to the place which is right for us.

Assessment camp

As a centre empanelled for the insurance scheme, we are the only ones for the district. Tirunelveli is a pretty large district, much of it is rural. This means that areas are quite spread out and it is harder for much of the population to access our service which is based in Tirunelveli town. However, to spread the word, we organised a camp in Eruvadi, a small village about an hour from Tirunelveli. We were able to get help from the local pastor and a school to organise this. We had about 15 families attend. We were able to identify 3 children under 5 who could benefit from coming to us. However, travel is an issue. Please pray for these families.



We also had some children with cerebral palsy attend the camp. It was good to have Kumar there to do an assessment. Most of them will need some sort of long term follow up. We've advised them about this. Please pray that parents are able to sustain their motivation and keep up these appointments.

Working with the government

We've requested funds to employ a part-time speech therapist and occupational therapist. This will need a change in current government policy. Our request is being considered. Please pray that this will be answered affirmatively. We thank God for our three teachers. We've had stability and no changes in staffing for the last couple of years. What we're struggling with is recruiting speech therapists and occupational therapists. They're very hard to come by and most prefer to keep a private practice. Please pray that God brings the right people in.

Work in Kodaikanal

We thank God for blessing Kumar's work in Kodaikanal. More recently, we seem to have had a slight increase in the number of outpatients and the number of surgeries. However, there still remain a great number of struggles. Please pray that we remain sensitive to God's leading about how He wants to respond to these situations.

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