



*A Science Magic Show
at the Lower Primary*

There is a practice in the School that has proved to be effective whenever the teachers feel that they are not reaching a child. Simply put, it is to bring the situation to everyone's attention and to act collectively towards the child. It almost always has a positive result.

A fourth-standard boy was showing very little interest in school activities. He usually avoided teachers and spent his time in the company of a friend whom he liked to control. He was competitive towards other children and liked to show that he knew more than they did. When the Lower Primary children built a dam, he insisted on being the "President of India" to inaugurate it and said that no one else could be President because India has only one. He had few friends and when he called a meeting to organize a restaurant, only one boy joined him.

The teachers discussed the situation and felt that among the factors that were dampening his enthusiasm for learning at school was the fact that his parents were teaching him at home and applying pressure on him to excel academically. He was reading a lot from his family's extensive book collection, and when his father, who was working abroad, would telephone, he would quiz his son on his readings. At school the boy just wanted to avoid learning situations, and while he tolerated the company of teachers, he did not welcome them. Perhaps he did not want them to interfere with his control of his friend.

Even after meetings with the parents to explain the effect of their pressure on the child, the situation did not change. The boy continued to keep apart. Finally, the teachers decided upon a collective approach to encourage the child. Wherever the boy went in the School, whenever

he went to get something, all the teachers made a point of having a brief conversation with him. It might have been a smile, a comment, or an actual exchange, but it was a consistent and joint effort.

Within days, the result could be seen. The boy began interacting with teachers and participating in activities. He was able to organize his restaurant and enjoyed its success. Everyone noticed how he had changed and become more talkative and smiling.

The story is not over. From these beginnings of new relationships, the teachers can continue to build. It is small breakthroughs such as these that keep a child developing and growing over the course of his time in the School.

