

For immediate release

**Commence Lower Primary Schools along with Mid day meals from 21st October
End Exclusion: RESUME and RENEW Education for 60 lakh Children!**

October 15, 2021

We welcome the announcement the Karnataka Education Minister to open Lower Primary Schools from October 21, 2021. Continuous school closure and the limited reach of online/remote learning has had **catastrophic consequences for children**, on the academic, emotional, nutritional, social and economic fronts. The harm is maximum for children in Lower Primary Schools, in terms of [malnutrition](#), [child abuse](#), [child labor](#), and [school dropout](#). The **harm from opening is minimum**, as there is conclusive evidence that young children are least vulnerable to the Covid virus and cases and fatalities are negligible.

However we read, with dismay that the Department is considering discussing the school opening issue with parents before deciding the opening date, as this may delay the opening further. Parents across the state have overwhelmingly stated that they want schools to open. One study found **95%+ rural parents want schools to be opened**. They want their children to access learning opportunities, not available to most during school closure. They want **nutritious hot cooked meals** for their children.

In any case, as department will keep attendance optional, parents who are unwilling to send their children to schools, can keep them at home. So there is absolutely no reason to further delay school opening. We demand that the Government must act now to **RESUME and RENEW Education for 60 lakh children in Karnataka Lower Primary Schools and Anganwadis**

- State Governments should open Lower Primary Schools and anganwadis from the 21st October (immediately after the Dasara break).
- Guidelines should be put in place for safe reopening of schools and for helping children to resume their learning.

Suggested measures for school reopening:

- Open schools safely: health and sanitation measures; vaccination and testing of teachers; pre-planned seating arrangements; limit numbers per classroom as needed
- Communicate with parents and engage them in the school reopening plans: Bring every child back to school.
- Provide Mid-Day Meals to all students, with **nutritional supplements** like eggs, milk and chikkis.
- Design effective strategies for schools and teachers to support students' socio-emotional well-being and address learning gaps.

The National Education Emergency Coalition has already shared school opening guidelines and a research brief with the department and is ready to provide support in terms of appropriate curricular resources to meet the socio-emotional learning needs of all children.

- National Coalition on the Education Emergency

(a group of individuals, organizations and networks across the country which have come together to 'resume and renew' school education. The Coalition working groups produce research studies, curricular resources, guidelines for school opening to support governments, teachers, parents and communities to address the **Education Emergency**)

<https://educationemergency.net/2021/08/resume-and-renew-education-for-26-crore-children-kn>
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