

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](#) of the Karnataka Education Minister to open Lower Primary Schools (LPS) from October 21, 2021. Continuous school closure has had **catastrophic consequences for children**, on the academic, emotional, nutritional, social and economic fronts. The harm is maximum for children in LPS, in terms of [malnutrition](#), [child abuse](#), [child labor](#), and [school dropout](#). India is now ranked 101 of 116 Countries in the Global Hunger Index and providing mid-day meals to children is critical for their nutrition. 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. Parents 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**

- Open LPS and anganwadis from the 21st October (immediately after the Dasara break).
- Provide guidelines for safe reopening of schools and for helping children to resume learning.
- Parents who do not want to send children to school should not be compelled to send, though the evidence about benefits from schooling must be communicated to them
- **Most parents, who want to send their children to school must NOT be deprived of the opportunity, rather the [fundamental right of their children to education](#), because some parents are unwilling to send.**

Suggested measures for school reopening:

- Engage parents and them in the school reopening plans: Bring every child back to school.
- Open schools safely: with health and sanitation measures and priority vaccination of teachers
- 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 \(NCEE\)](#) has 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 NCEE 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-ko>
<https://educationemergency.net/2021/09/coalition-releases-research-brief>
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