

Aadhaarshila - The foundation for excellence in education



Aadhaarshila - The Foundation stone (ATFS) is an educational institute that lays the academic foundation for children in elementary, middle, and high school. Its objective is to create interest in learning and an understanding of the subjects by generating an urge to excel and succeed in life.

The name Aadhaarshila comes from Samskrit language: Aadhaar + Shila, where Aadhaar means foundation, and Shila means stone.

Gauri Chandna, the co-founder of ATFS said, “We at ATFS believe that every subject is interesting and fun if students understand the basic concepts. With this philosophy in mind, we have built a stress free and personalized learning environment that utilizes each child's learning potential and creates an urge to excel academically.”

ATFS offers various year around and summer programs focused on building math, science and reading skills. Through accelerated learning, as well as, personal training and guidance programs, it provides a customized approach for each child. The child's needs and assessment of current skill level forms the basis for designing the best-suited academic path for the child. “We stride consistently in a personalized way towards achieving the child's goals which inculcates good study habits and also builds confidence along the way,” said Gauri.

Gauri started ATFS out of her passion to provide a unique service to the community. Her experience and knowledge comes from her engineering background, as well as, various project management assignments she handled working as a consultant in software companies. Gauri's pleasant personality and analytical ability blend very well in providing a relaxed yet growth-oriented environment for kids.

Born and brought up in Chandigarh (India), educated at a convent school, Gauri was a self admitted mischievous child until ninth grade. Then, a math tutor in 10th grade inspired her to learn math and science. When Gauri obtained good grades that year, she felt as if she had conquered math and science—slain the monsters that they were. “Once you taste success, there is no turning back,” she said. After that, she held on to the academic urge like a lifesaver, and became a successful engineer, and now a successful educator.

She met her husband Niraj, also an engineer and co-founder of ATFS, during college years. From 1997 to 2001, they traveled for training and work, both separately and together after marriage, to Mumbai, Calcutta, Delhi, Japan, New Jersey, and Massachusetts. During 2001, often they had to leave their 2-year old son, Ansh, at a day care center, sometimes for as long as 12 hours in a day. “One day,” Gauri said, “We thought to ourselves that this is not life.”

Gauri and Niraj had planned a New Year's party in December 2001—but they couldn't stand the thought of entertainment while their life plan hung in a limbo. They cancelled their party and stayed up all night discussing their next step in life. Gauri wanted to spend more time with Ansh, and also do more community service. They thought about giving up their careers and buying a grocery store, convenience store, motel, and starting a catering business. In the early hours of the morning, they saw the light. They decided that Gauri would quit her job and start a tutoring service. She would become the tutor that inspired her to learn back in 10th grade.

Hence, Aadhaarshila - The Foundation Stone was born in March 2002.

In the beginning, she tutored seven days a week—including odd hours such as 7 am to 9 am, and 9 pm to 11 pm. “This was the

hardest time in my life,” she said. Initially she used the toy room to teach, then, as the class grew, she moved to the dining room. By the end of 2002, the growing demand necessitated finishing their basement and opening a formal institute of learning. Now the programs are more structured. The “After School Learning” program works great for working parents. In this program, children get exclusive time and help to finish homework before their parents take them home. Any spare time is utilized in constructive activities like concept learning and accelerated learning through puzzles, worksheets etc. The “Focused Summer Camp” is an academically rich program designed to keep children occupied during the summer. The stress free environment, blended with active learning techniques, prepares children for standardized tests such as MCAS, SAT I, SAT II and AP exams. The “Accelerated Learning” program is best suited for children who need the extra challenge and have the desire to move ahead in class. This program is also offered remotely for those who live far away from ATFS center. The “Personal Training” program is appropriate for children who want personal guidance in their academic paths.

ATFS, with six teachers, has tutored more than 25 students since its inception. ATFS is located in Shrewsbury, MA, but students from Waltham, Chelmsford, and even from as far as Connecticut, come to ATFS for learning. Here is what some of the students say about ATFS:

“I like the after school program because I get all my homework done before I go home with the added flexibility and guidance to move ahead in class,” said Sunanda Sharma (6th grader).

“I like Aadhaarshila because I have the liberty to learn a lot and get extra practice for a test and move ahead in any subject without being limited by the class’s pace,” said Samvaran Sharma (8th grader).

“Aadhaarshila the Foundation Stone is an integral part of my daily routine. I’ve been coming to Aadhaarshila for a year and a half to do my homework and excel in my classes at school. I’ve developed great new friendships and ATFS has become almost like a second home to me. I used to be timid and hesitant about school and taking tests. Now, I’m always eager to be challenged and share the knowledge I’ve acquired at Aadhaarshila. Thanks to the positive-minded and excellent teachers,” said Aurnab Bando (10th grader).

“I am taking my PSATs and SATs this year and I feel so much more confident already since I have done so much practice here at ATFS while I am also getting A’s in my class,” said Punit Shah (11th grader).

ATFS is located at 41 Toblin Hill Drive, Shrewsbury, MA 01545. You can reach ATFS online at www.atfsonline.com, by phone (508) 845-0140, (617) 335-7337 or by email gauri@atfsonline.com.