

## Special children exceed expectations

Special Correspondent



*Children participate in the sports day organised by Madhuram Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children in Chennai on Friday. Photo: M. Karunakaran*

*They participated in 25 different tasks*

**Chennai, February 19, 2011:** On Friday, the 130 special children who participated in the sports day organised by Madhuram Narayanan Centre for Exceptional Children proved that early intervention could do wonders.

Children with cerebral palsy, autism and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder aged below six competed in 25 different tasks ranging from sorting vegetables, stringing beads, bursting balloons and finding hidden shells in sand bowls.

All the events were timed and the children got 30 seconds to two minutes to complete. In some events, a few children from mainstream schools also participated.

Several children surprised their teachers with the performance. Visually impaired children who participated in a race had to follow the sound of the bell and cymbals coming from the finish line.

For the teachers it was tough to keep an eye on the stopwatch, as they wanted to watch their wards' progress.

According to the teachers, the sports day is a way to assess the children's abilities. "After they finish training they must go to special schools or be mainstreamed as they do not have peers here," said Sumithra Manohar, coordinator, Programme Implementation of the Centre.

The Centre's founder director Jaya Krishnaswamy said the idea of the sport day was to ensure that the children understood the process that they learnt.

All participants received certificates and mementos at the event, which was inaugurated by Ajay Kudva, former Kerala State and south zone cricketer.

This year, 10 children of the Centre will join mainstream schools while eight will leave for special schools for older children.