

B. SINGAPORE PRESCHOOL ACCREDITATION FRAMEWORK (SPARK) 2.0**1. What is SPARK?**

The Singapore Preschool Accreditation Framework (SPARK) is a quality assurance framework to assist preschools in Singapore in raising their quality.

SPARK aims to provide recognition and support for preschool leaders in their efforts to improve teaching and learning, and administration and management processes to enhance the holistic development and well-being of young children. It serves as a guide for preschools to understand what they should be striving to achieve so as to provide quality care and education to young children up to 6 years of age. It also provides a benchmark for preschools to measure themselves against and establish for themselves the extent of their achievement.

SPARK Certification encompasses two tiers: SPARK Certification and SPARK Certification (Commendation). The latter is awarded to centres with strong processes in Teaching and Learning, as well as Curriculum, Leadership and Pedagogy.

2. What are the objectives of SPARK 2.0?

SPARK 2.0 takes stock of SPARK's impact on preschool quality since its introduction in 2011 to ensure the framework remains effective in supporting preschools' quality improvement. It aims to foster a culture of ownership and accountability, allowing preschools to take charge of their own quality journey through reflective practices and continuous improvement to enhance EC care and education in Singapore. The revised framework seeks to ensure our preschools continue to place children at the heart of their quality assurance efforts, creating positive learning environments that support their holistic development and well-being.

3. What are the tenets of SPARK 2.0?

SPARK 2.0 has been designed to enhance the quality of EC care and education in Singapore. It is built upon three key tenets, namely: child-centred quality, ownership in improvement quality and reflective practitioners.

The revised framework fosters continuous improvement and integrates various policies and initiatives into preschool quality standards. By focusing on these tenets, SPARK 2.0 aims to elevate the overall quality of the EC sector, ensuring a strong foundation for our youngest learners.

4. What are the key changes to SPARK 2.0?

SPARK 2.0 takes into consideration global and local quality assurance trends, refreshed national EC frameworks and initiatives, sector's feedback and readiness to achieve higher quality. It adopts a validation approach where it recognises the diverse landscape of the sector and empowers preschools to take greater ownership of their own quality improvement. The current SPARK instrument, Quality Rating Scale (QRS) will no longer be used from 2025. For SPARK 2.0, a new tool will be rolled out to support preschools in the next bound of our preschools' quality journey.

5. How is the new tool different from the QRS?

The new tool contains five criteria, compared to eight in the QRS. It uses bands instead of scores to specify quality standards for each criterion. It also emphasises a more reflective approach, focusing on self-appraisal and improvement planning. Preschools will be expected to develop targeted improvement plans that leverage their strengths, address areas recommended for growth, and cater to the specific needs of the children they serve.

6. How can SPARK 2.0 improve educator's teaching practices?

SPARK 2.0 encourages educators to reflect on the intent which underpins their teaching practices. By doing so, educators can evaluate their current teaching methods and explore innovative approaches that may better achieve their goals and ultimately enhance the learning experiences of their children.

7. Why is there a reduction in criteria?

The reduction in criteria is part of an effort to streamline processes across different areas to improve efficiency and effectiveness of practices. Items that overlap with the licensing process or reflect requirements that are already widely implemented across preschools have been removed. This allows for a more focused and efficient evaluation system, while also providing greater flexibility for preschools to implement impactful strategies tailored to their children's unique needs.

8. How will SPARK 2.0 impact the quality of EC care and education provided to children?

SPARK 2.0 will enhance the quality of EC care and education by encouraging child-centric curriculum, allowing teachers to adopt methods that are more responsive and adaptive, and fostering an environment where each child can thrive. By emphasising flexibility and reflective practice, the framework encourages educators to deliver high-quality, child-centred education that promotes the child's holistic development.

9. When will SPARK 2.0 be implemented?

SPARK 2.0 will be rolled out in January 2025.

10. How will ECDA provide support for preschools in implementing SPARK 2.0?

Training workshops on how to use the new tool will be provided from January 2025.