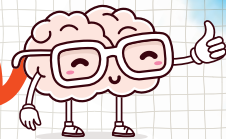


... learn ...



# MINDFUL matters



For more information on HPB's Colours of the Mind (COTM) programme, visit [www.healthhub.sg/programmes/72/COTM](http://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/72/COTM).

## WHY IT IS IMPORTANT TO SUPPORT CHILDREN'S MENTAL WELL-BEING SO THAT THEY CAN BETTER NAVIGATE LIFE'S UPS AND DOWNS.

Every parent needs to keep in mind that the mental health of their child is just as important as his physical health. Being strong mentally creates a foundation for healthy behaviours and academic achievements. "Positive mental health enables children to enjoy life and believe in their own abilities to cope with life's ups and downs," says Ms Nisha Kumar, Senior Manager at the Mental Health Education Department of the Health Promotion Board (HPB).

A healthy mental state of mind enables a child to think clearly, develop socially, learn new skills and build self-esteem. Children

with healthy mental well-being are able to function positively; they are willing to learn and can adapt to different situations. They also have social intelligence (the ability to build and maintain good relationships with family and friends) as well as emotional intelligence (the ability to maintain a positive attitude and manage emotions in difficult times). "Ultimately, [mental well-being] enables a child to develop a positive outlook and perspective that lead to a healthy adulthood," says Ms Nisha.

To empower and encourage parents to start building a strong foundation for their child's mental wellbeing, HPB has developed the Colours of the Mind (COTM) programme. Targeted at those with children between six to 12 years old, COTM comprises a questionnaire (to help to assess

and understand a child's mental state), and a workshop. The COTM workshop equips parents and caregivers with the relevant knowledge and skills to build and enhance mental wellbeing in their children.

## WELLNESS ALL AROUND

Early childhood (EC) educators have a key role to play in equipping young children with the relevant social-emotional skills to handle the stresses of everyday life. The HPB will continue to train EC educators to do this, and this training forms part of a holistic suite of recommendations by the NurtureSG Taskforce. Set up in 2016, the aim of the Taskforce is to equip children and youth with the skills and knowledge to embrace healthy living. It is co-led by Minister of State for Health Dr Lam Pin Min and Minister of State for Education Dr Janil Puthucheary.

The Taskforce also aims to cultivate healthy eating habits and regular physical activity in children through programmes in schools. The recommendations will see:

- More emphasis on HPB's healthier meals programmes in pre-schools, mainstream schools and Institutes of Higher Learning.
- The Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) working together with pre-schools to ensure that children's nutritional needs are met through well-balanced meals. Fruits and calcium-rich foods will form a regular part of the children's diet, and sugary drinks, deep-fried and processed food will not be served.
- The minimum daily time for physical activities for full-day pre-schools programmes increase from half an hour to an hour, of which 30 minutes will be conducted outdoors.
- More importance given to ensuring adequate and quality sleep in children. HPB will provide information on its benefits as well as tips on how to promote and inculcate healthy sleep habits and establishing regular and relaxing bedtime routines for children.

These enhancements, which will further enrich children's experiences, will be implemented over the next year under the new Early Childhood Development Centres Bill. All recommendations will be consolidated into the NurtureSG Action Plan, to be launched in June this year. ♥

# CRY FOR HELP

When you notice some or all of the following signs, which might be more extreme or last longer, it could mean your child is experiencing significant emotional and social distress. Parents are encouraged to seek help at this point of time:

**D**isplaying out-of-character behaviour

**I**mpulsive changes in interests and habits

**S**udden changes in appearance and eating habits

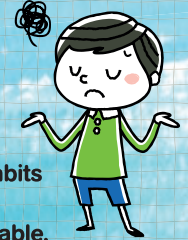
**T**emperament changes (irritable, agitated, moody, stressed or anxious)

**R**ebellious or aggressive behaviour

**E**xtended absence or deliberate social withdrawal

**S**truggling to pay attention/ increased lethargy

**S**leep disturbances



## Help is Available

Most General Practitioners have the relevant skills to assess non-complex mental health issues in children, and can also provide referrals to see a specialist. If you have a concern, you can also call the **Institute of Mental Health's 24-hour helpline at 6389 2000**, or to set up an appointment. You can also get help from these social service providers:

- Fei Yue Family Service Centre
- MCYC Community Services
- Morning Star Community Services
- Students Care Services
- Singapore Children's Society



MENTAL WELLNESS FOR CHILDREN

## TAKE HEED, PARENTS

Here's how to nurture a confident and resilient child, says Ms Nisha.

**1** When your child faces a challenge or problem, try to get him to think of the situation as an opportunity to learn and grow. A positive perspective can help him work through the situation and make more appropriate choices and decisions.

**2** When your child experiences intense feelings, remember that the key is to help him identify these feelings before finding ways to manage them. Model and demonstrate to your child some useful ways to moderate emotions such as taking deep breaths or counting to 10 before reacting or responding.



**3** Resilience also means giving the body and mind a chance to recover and recharge. One way to manage stress is to lead a healthy lifestyle for the best quality of life. This means getting your child to eat right, sleep well and get enough exercise.

**4** Always be available for your child, and remain approachable so he can seek help and support. Avoid solving problems on his behalf, but work with your child to come up with alternatives or solutions. This helps to build his confidence to deal with future challenges.

# MENTAL BOOSTERS

THESE PROGRAMMES AND RESOURCES FROM THE HEALTH PROMOTION BOARD ARE SPECIALLY TAILORED FOR PRE-SCHOOLERS AND THEIR EC EDUCATORS.



## Zippy's Friends

This programme equips children with the social skills needed to navigate their social environment (classroom, future primary school, playground etc.) more effectively. It also gives children the emotional skills to identify and express their feelings, as well as coping skills to deal with everyday challenges. Educators teaching this programme are required to go for training.



## Teachers' Training – Socio-emotional Learning Component

This three-hour workshop enhances EC educators' understanding of young children's socio-emotional development and equips them with skills in storytelling.



## Colin Cool Loses His Cool

A storybook resource for EC educators on how to guide children in identifying and expressing their feelings in an appropriate or acceptable manner. It offers suggestions on ways to make children feel better when they experience negative emotions.

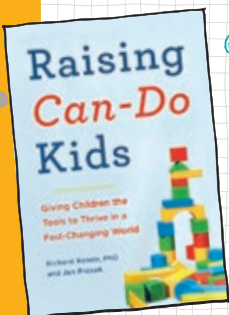


## "I Can be the Best Me" Puppet Show

An interactive puppet show-cum-workshop that teaches children about keeping a positive mindset and understanding their own personal identity.

# EVER Ready

BOOKS TO HELP YOUR LITTLE ONES TACKLE NEW EXPERIENCES WITH CONFIDENCE.



## Raising Can-Do Kids: Giving Children the Tools to Thrive in a Fast-Changing World

By Richard Rende & Jen Prosek



In this fast-changing world, is it necessary to create paths for your child to be successful? Can you nurture a child to cultivate entrepreneurial skills? Psychologist Richard Rende and entrepreneur Jen Prosek believe you can, and have collaborated to write a parenting book that mobilises the latest child development research to help parents nourish the entrepreneurial skills of their children. Each chapter is devoted to an essential trait of entrepreneurship, including curiosity, inventiveness and optimism, and shows how parents can nurture these qualities in their child.



## Pig and Small

By Alex Latimer



Pig and Bug want to be friends. But they soon discover that it is harder than it seems. What Pig wants to play, Bug is too small for; and what Bug wants to make, Pig is too big for! Will they have to say goodbye, or can they make their friendship work? This is an endearing tale of how two friends decide that they shouldn't give up on their friendship despite the differences between them, and find something they can do together.



Contributed by Nurfarahin binte Mohamed Amin, Associate Librarian, National Library Board

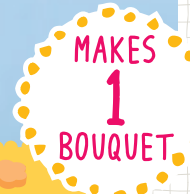
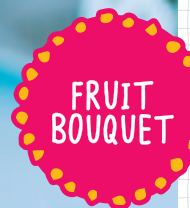


Contributed by Mardhiah Binte Mahamood, Associate Librarian, National Library Board



# A YUMMY Surprise!

MAKE THIS NUTRITIOUS FRUIT BASKET FOR MUM ON HER SPECIAL DAY AND PUT A SMILE ON HER FACE.



## WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- ▶ Iceberg lettuce (for the base)
- ▶ An opaque bowl or vase
- ▶ Wooden skewers (or satay sticks)
- ▶ Flower- or heart-shaped cookie cutter
- ▶ Assorted fruits such as rock melon, strawberries, grapes, blueberries and kiwis

## FOLLOW THESE STEPS



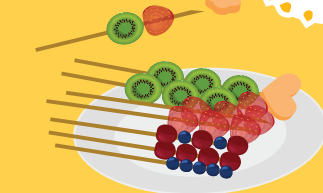
1 Rinse the fruits thoroughly with water and dry them using paper towels.



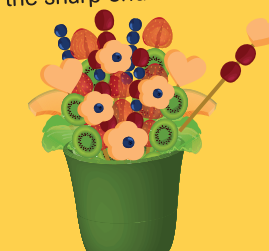
2 Prepare the fruits. This includes removing the hull from the strawberries and the stems from the grapes and berries.



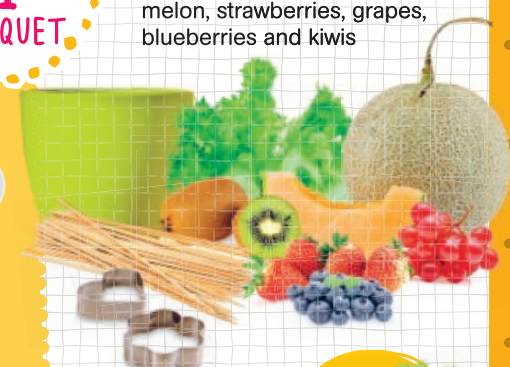
3 Cut the melons into thick slices and cut shapes out of the melon with the cookie cutter.



4 Slide the cut fruits through the satay sticks to assemble your fruit skewers. Get creative with your design but make sure to leave enough space on the sharp end of the stick.



5 Place the lettuce in the vase/ bowl and start inserting the skewers into the base. Your tallest skewers should go to the centre, and as you work your way to the outer edges, the skewers should decrease in height. ♥



## ALL HAIL THE KALE

You can also add vegetables such as curly kale to act as leaves for your bouquet. A member of the cabbage family, kale is low in fat but packed with beta carotene and vitamin C. Kale is also one of the richest vegetable sources of calcium.

## 2+2 A message from the Health Promotion Board:

Eat two servings of fruit and two servings of vegetables a day, every day! For more tips, go to <https://www.healthhub.sg/programmes/56/fruits-and-veggies>.



**ADULT SUPERVISION NEEDED!** You will need to use a knife when preparing this treat. Be sure to get a grown-up to assist you!