

Beanstalk



OUT AND ABOUT
The benefits of outdoor play
and cool tips from SportsSG

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Apr-Jun 2017

RAISING A RESILIENT CHILD

The importance of nurturing social-emotional
development in the early years

**LET'S TALK
ABOUT ART!**
A museum resource
kit to help children
enjoy artworks



THRIVE

TIPS AND IDEAS FOR THE **PHYSICAL, LANGUAGE, COGNITIVE**
AND **SOCIO-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT** OF YOUR CHILD

»» WIN! AN ALL-ACCESS PASS TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE!



IN THIS ISSUE

RAISING CONFIDENT & RESILIENT CHILDREN



care services to support young families, but also to provide more professional development opportunities for our early childhood educators.

In February 2017, the Early Childhood Development Centres Bill was also passed in Parliament, and marks a milestone for the early childhood sector. With this, parents will be assured of higher and more consistent quality of care and education across all child care centres and kindergartens. More than ever, our early childhood educators play a key role in making a positive difference in the lives of our young children.

This year, the Early Childhood Conference will be held from 6 to 7 October at Suntec Convention and Exhibition Centre. The theme is "Inspiring Leadership: Nurturing the Future". We invite educators, parents and children to join this exciting event, especially the resource-rich and fun-filled exhibition.

Our children look to us as role models to support and guide them. Lao Tzu once said, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime." Let's work together to equip our children with the right skills, values and mindset to meet life's challenges!

Healthy social-emotional development matters! Many studies have linked happiness and success in later years to a young child's quality of relationships and well-being in their early formative years. "Happiness is love. Full stop," said George Vaillant, the principal investigator in the 75-year Grant Study at Harvard University. As early childhood educators and parents, we can build positive relationships with our children, with a healthy dose of love. Such relationships enable them to develop the resilience to bounce back from life's challenges, and lead a happy and successful life.

ECDA is committed to continue working closely with the sector and parents to ensure that all our children have a good start in life. During the recent Committee of Supply debate, we shared plans not only to increase the provision of infant

MR EUGENE LEONG

Chief Executive Officer
Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA)



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STRONG AND STEADY

FOR CHILDREN TO GROW UP CONFIDENT AND RESILIENT, THEIR SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT BOTH AT HOME AND IN PRE-SCHOOL NEEDS TO BE SUPPORTED. EDUCATORS AND PARENTS DISCUSS HOW THIS CAN BE DONE.



THIS SPREAD ON: Norhidayah: Blazon Down Shirt, Mark's and Spencer; Jeans Crayon On Gauthier; Denim Patchwork Shirt, Yellow Crew Tee & Dinosaur Printed Joggers; Milk Shakes; Stylized's own; Mdm Norhidayah: Rocio Polo; Mdm Norhidayah: Rocio Polo; Mr Dexter See: Stylized's own; Mr Dexter See: Stylized's own; Ms Keren David: White Button Down Shirt & Mustard Pleated Skirt; UNIQLO; Statement; Necklace; LOUISA Photo Hong Chee; Van Styling Sharon Tan assisted by Jessica Khor; Hair: Hongling Makeup Sharon Ikw.

My wife and I try not to be overly protective and let [our son] explore his surroundings on his own now that he has started to walk. We remain in close proximity so that should he fall and be upset, we are there to offer comfort and encouragement.

Mr Dexter See

WHAT COMES TO MIND WHEN YOU HEAR THE TERM "A CHILD'S SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT"?

Ms Keren David: When we talk about a child's social-emotional development, we refer to the relationships he has with adults and peers. It also refers to a child's sense of self-identity in relation to others, the recognition of his abilities, expression and regulation of emotions, and development of empathy, as well as a sense of confidence and competence.

Madam Norhidayah Binte Noorzali: The term brings to mind a child's awareness of his emotions, and his ability to handle and adapt to different settings – at the playground, in pre-school or at home – as well as with different groups of people, whether it is with siblings, older family members, friends or teachers.

Ms Juanita Binte Johan Ong: Social-emotional development also refers to the child being able to regulate his feelings and moods, which in turn affects his behaviour – how ready he is to learn, and how supported and equipped he is in managing setbacks or stress.

Mr Dexter See: In my view, the social-emotional aspect of a child's development is how the child expresses himself, and his interactions with others in different settings, environments or situations.

WHY IS NURTURING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS IN CHILDREN SO IMPORTANT?

Ms David: It is widely accepted that the development of social and emotional skills has an impact on a child's mental well-being and lifelong learning. This learning includes life skills such as problem-solving, thinking, planning and decision-making. Having such skills also lead to better mental health and well-being. Children who have positive social and emotional skills are more likely to

Mr Dexter See
30, IT Security Engineer, Father of a boy, 11 months



become effective learners, confident adults and better-engaged citizens.

Dr Chong Shang Chee: Indeed, research has found that emotional experiences in early childhood potentially shape the learning, longer-term outcomes and mental health of individuals. This means that apart from the genes (or biological makeup) of a child, his environment and interactions with others have the potential to shape his development, and contribute to strengthening his confidence and resilience.

PARENTS, WHAT DO YOU DO AT HOME TO HELP FOSTER YOUR CHILD'S SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT?

Mdm Norhidayah: Every moment can become an opportunity for a child to pick up social and emotional skills. Instead of chastising my daughters when they misbehave, I find that when I take the time to identify and acknowledge their feelings, and explain what just happened, they are then able to make their own observations and decide on the right course of action when a similar incident crops up again. They become more aware of their behaviours and how their actions can affect others.



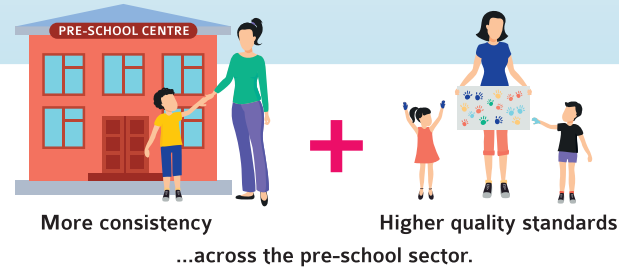
Ms Juanita Binte Johan Ong
37, Educator, PCF Sparkletots @ Punggol West Blk 271A

Mr See: I try to be as present as I can as a father, and respond to my son's babble, gestures and cries. This is just my way of reassuring him that all is okay, and that I am here. My wife and I also ensure that he is acquainted with extended family members so that he is not fearful of different faces. We try not to be overly protective and let him explore his surroundings on his own now that he has started to walk.

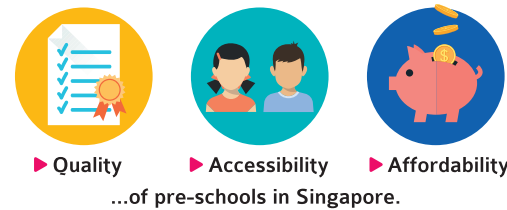
A BILL FOR THE BETTER

AN OVERVIEW OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CENTRES BILL THAT PLACES ALL CHILD CARE CENTRES AND KINDERGARTENS UNDER A COMMON REGULATORY FRAMEWORK.

The ECDC Bill ensures:



This move is part of the Government's overall efforts to enhance:



This Bill marks an important milestone in our efforts to raise the quality of early childhood development in Singapore. It will give parents greater confidence that Singapore is a good place for families.

Mr Tan Chuan-Jin,
Minister for Social and Family Development



This new ECDC Bill will pave the way for higher and more consistent quality in early childhood care and education. This will ensure that every child is provided with a strong and holistic foundation for a good start in life.

Mr Eugene Leong,
Chief Executive Officer, ECDA



Presently...

Child Care Centres and Kindergartens come under the Child Care Centres Act and Education Act respectively.



Going Forward...

HIGHER AND MORE CONSISTENT STANDARDS

- All centres to be licensed
- All persons working in pre-schools, including enrichment vendor persons, need to be approved
- Longer licence tenure of up to three years for better-performing centres



ENHANCED REGULATORY MEASURES

- Greater investigative powers to manage more complex cases
- More graduated enforcement approach for breaches
- Greater control on centre closure to minimise impact of service disruption



On 28 February 2017, a new Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDC) Bill was passed in Parliament. Under this ECDC Bill, all child care centres and kindergartens will be licensed under the same regulatory framework. This follows from an extensive public consultation and engagement with stakeholders in the sector.



For Parents

GREATER PEACE OF MIND with more assurance of quality across all pre-schools

The Bill assures parents like myself that educators are of an expected standard and that the pre-school meets the stringent requirements. Quality, passionate early childhood educators impart not only academic knowledge but also valuable life skills to children.

Ms Tan Sock San,
Mother of five

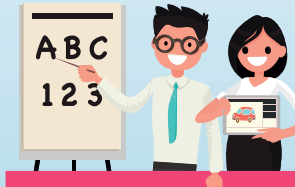


For Teachers

GREATER PROFESSIONAL STANDING with streamlined registration requirements across the early childhood (EC) sector

With this Bill, the expectations of educators in terms of our role and responsibilities are clearer. With these more standardised and consistent standards in place, I hope our society will regard EC educators as professionals who play an important role in children's development.

Ms Sophia Ng,
Educator at Arise Kindergarten



For Operators

CLEARER AND MORE CONSISTENT SET OF REQUIREMENTS, whether for Child Care Centres or Kindergartens

This Bill provides clearer guidance for pre-school operators to improve and maintain the quality of services we provide. The "higher baseline standards" required of all centres, in my opinion, are necessary as they ensure staff quality and also high hygiene and safety standards. The framework supports all EC stakeholders.

Ms Cheryl Ng,
Director of Paper Scissors Stone Montessori Kindergarten



LOOKING AHEAD

The ECDC Bill is expected to come into operation over the next year after the detailed regulatory requirements are gazetted. Thereafter, existing child care centres will be licensed under the new ECDC Act while existing kindergartens will have up to a year to obtain their licences under the new Act.

BEYOND THE BILL

ECDA has been introducing various measures to support manpower attraction, development and retention, in collaboration with the EC sector. These include:



► Early Childhood Manpower Plan

► Professional Development Programme

► Various training awards and scholarships for aspiring teachers

A IS FOR ART

CHILDREN AND EDUCATORS FROM TWINKLEKIDZ @ BENDEMEER EXPERIENCED ART WITH THE *ARTFUL CONVERSATIONS* RESOURCE KIT AT THE NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE.



Observing a painting at the National Gallery Singapore

You may think the paintings in a museum won't hold a child's interest or provide him with meaningful learning experiences, but research in neuroscience and child development suggests otherwise. "Exposing young children to museums provides them with the opportunity to follow their curiosities and make new discoveries," says Ms Elaine Chan, Manager (Education) of National Gallery Singapore. "The Gallery provides a positive learning environment that encourages children to observe, wonder, describe and reason. Young children make personal connections to what they see in a museum, and they respond well when stories are part of their experience," she explains. "Direct encounters with artworks will help children to absorb unique stories of culture and history."

To enhance museum visits, ECDA, in collaboration with the Gallery, developed *Artful Conversations* – a resource kit to equip educators to plan and deliver art-related experiences with children. The resource kit was

When children are involved in making and appreciating art, be it their own or others', they are given an opportunity to express what they are thinking, and how they are feeling

Ms Wong Seet Fun

developed in consultation with Ms Wong Seet Fun, Early Childhood Art Educator and Dr Jacqueline Chung, ECDA Fellow and Senior Principal of St James' Church Kindergarten. It comprises eight activity cards, designed to complement the six learning areas in the Nurturing Early Learners (NEL): A Curriculum Framework for Kindergartens in Singapore, while focusing on the elements of art.

SUCCESSFUL TEST DRIVE

On 25 January 2017, 16 children aged four to six from TwinkleKidz @ Bendemeer, accompanied by their educators and the centre's principal

Ms Linda Song, visited the Gallery. With the *Artful Conversations* resource kit in hand, the educators guided the children to selected artworks highlighted in the activity cards. As they gathered in front of the chosen artworks, the children were asked open-ended questions such as "What do you see?"

Ms Wong, who was also on the learning journey, explains, "The open-ended questions, that come without 'right' or 'wrong' answers, help direct the children's attention to specific details such as colours, shapes and textures in the artwork. Such questions also encourage the children



Ms Elaine Chan going through museum etiquette



Sketching in one of the galleries

to learn and appreciate different art elements such as patterns and lines as well." The ability to recognise and appreciate these art elements enables the children to express their own thoughts, emotions and creativity. "Art can then form their first language before they even learn how to read and write," says Ms Wong.

One of the activity cards also encourages children to draw the facial expressions of the people they see in the paintings. Sprawled on the floor of the Gallery, the children clearly found delight in the hands-on activity as they put their pencils to good use. "When children are involved in making and appreciating art, be it their own or others', they are given an opportunity to express what they are thinking, and how they are feeling," says Ms Song. "This builds their self-esteem, knowing someone values their decision-making."

CULTURAL AWARENESS

The excursion to the Gallery was the first time for most of the children. "The new experience at the Gallery opened their cultural awareness and creativity," says Ms Song. Back at the centre, the children talked excitedly about the etiquette required when visiting the Gallery – such as speaking softly and respecting the artist by not touching the artworks. "It started the children thinking about how they want their own works to be displayed in the centre, and how they want others to recognise their process of creating something."

The educators at TwinkleKidz @ Bendemeer found the materials

in the resource kit useful. "The activities were clearly labelled with the learning domains from the NEL," Ms Song explains. "This helps our educators to pick out activities that will complement their curriculum plans. The kit is also convenient for the educators when they do observations and evaluations of the children's learning, as they are then able to document these under the rightful learning domains and assess whether the learning outcomes have been met."

On its part, the Gallery welcomes little visitors with open arms. "Every trip to the Gallery has the potential to be an exciting and meaningful learning experience for pre-schoolers. The Gallery's collaboration with ECDA fulfils not just that, but has made museum learning accessible for both pre-schoolers and early childhood educators in Singapore through *Artful Conversations*," says Ms Chan. ♥

NOW AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD

HEY EDUCATORS AND PARENTS!

The *Artful Conversations* resource kit is now available for download. Just go to <http://bit.ly/ArtfulConversations> for a printable copy! Make your next visit to the museum an enriching one for the family.



Talking about artwork



Using the resource kit as a guide

WIN! A COPY OF *ARTFUL CONVERSATIONS* AND AN ALL-ACCESS PASS FOR A FAMILY OF FOUR TO THE NATIONAL GALLERY SINGAPORE*, WHICH FEATURES THE WORLD'S LARGEST PUBLIC DISPLAY OF MODERN SOUTHEAST ASIAN ART.

JUST TELL US...
The title of the resource kit developed by ECDA and the National Gallery Singapore, and why you would like to visit the museum.
Submit your answer to beanstalk@mediacorp.com.sg with your name and contact details.
Closing date: 31 May 2017

* Valid for one year from 1 December 2016 for one-time use only.



ECDA's CEO Mr Eugene Leong addressing the participants



is important in all relationships, even between adults at work or in marriage. When educators reflect the 3Rs in their interactions, they are good role models for children," says Dr See.

The 3Rs project has enhanced the staff's understanding of the types of interactions, and the resources have been useful in reinforcing learning points. "The concepts of being respectful, responsive and reciprocal are not new, but having them formalised made us more mindful and conscious about practising them," says Ms Wendy Tan, the centre's Principal.



Ms Wendy Tan sharing her experiences of the 3Rs project

To encourage parents to practise the 3Rs at home, Ms Tan plans to publicise the approach in the centre's monthly newsletter. "Another great takeaway of the workshops is the knowledge that the early years are very important in children's development. This is empowering for the educators and centre attendants, and affirms the value of their work," she adds. ♥

A Winning Combination

Practising the 3Rs can result in win-win situations too, say Ms Thamarai and Dr See. Children feel good and valued when their needs are met. This helps them to develop trust, and empathy for others. With fewer fretful children in class needing to be calmed, educators can then channel their professional energies into engaging the children more effectively. "Secure children are more confident in exploring their environment. They are more adventurous and learn better. The impact is life-long and can influence their future relationships," says Ms Thamarai.

The benefits of a healthy social emotional development are evident at MacPherson Sheng Hong Childcare Centre. "After caregivers practised the 3Rs, the children were observed to be more comfortable and settled better in the centre," says Ms Tan. She also observed more warmth and spontaneity in the interactions between educators and children.

conducted workshops that equipped centre leaders with the skills to guide and support their educators in applying the 3Rs approach in daily interactions with the children – through the use of videos, activities and case studies.

Research shows that unsatisfactory relationships can lead to frustration in young children – even if they are not capable of expressing this well – and also poor self-esteem. "Showing respect, responsiveness and reciprocity

Showing respect, responsiveness and reciprocity is important in all relationships, even between adults at work or in marriage. When educators reflect the 3Rs in their interactions, they are good role models for children.

ECDA Fellow Dr May See

Dr May See, Senior General Manager, MY World Preschool



Ms Thamarai, Cluster Quality Senior Manager My First Skool

EC PROFESSIONALS TRADE TIPS



THE INAUGURAL PROJECT SHOWCASE FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADERS SAW A RICH EXCHANGE OF KNOWLEDGE- AND EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICES.

On 15 February 2017, 14 ECDA Fellows came together to share their Inquiry Based Action Plan (IBAP) projects at the inaugural Project Showcase for Early Childhood (EC) Leaders.

The ECDA Fellows have been conducting the IBAP projects with about 100 centre leaders over the course of 2016 to improve and strengthen strategic planning, curriculum innovation and parent engagement, among others. Some 300 centre leaders and senior teachers attended the event to pick up innovative ideas and practical tips from a range of IBAP project topics.

Ready, Plan, Action

One IBAP project was the 3Rs (Respectful, Responsive and Reciprocal interactions) project, led by ECDA Fellows, Ms Thamarai, Cluster Quality Senior Manager at My First Skool; and Dr May See, Senior General Manager at MY World Preschool Ltd. The 3R interactions help to form warm and nurturing relationships that play a critical part in the healthy social-emotional development of infants and toddlers. The project was implemented at MacPherson Sheng Hong Childcare Centre from September to October 2016. Ms Thamarai and Dr See also



DEMONSTRATE RECIPROCITY

- Recognise that infants and toddlers want to interact with you and that these interactions are important to them.
- Be available to young children and respond to them consistently.
- Respond to infants' coos, giggles, babbles and even gestures.



RESPOND TO YOUNG CHILDREN

- Observe the child's behaviour and how he reacts.
- Be attentive to each child's needs.
- Assure the child that you are always there for him.



PRACTISE THE '3R's PRACTICAL TIPS BY DR SEE AND MS THAMARAI:

BUILD RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

- Keep eye contact and speak in a gentle voice.
- Talk to children during routines and activities.
- Allow children to learn at their own pace.

LEVEL UP

Educators are key to determining the quality of young children's experiences in their early years. A range of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses is available as part of ECDA's efforts to further develop EC professionals. At least 20 hours of CPD per year is recommended for centre leaders, teachers and educators.

When it comes to social-emotional development, educators may want to:

- Pick up strategies on Understanding and Supporting the Social Emotional Development in Children Aged 3 Years and Below (SEDUSTB15E).** Learn how to utilise tools to monitor and evaluate classroom routines, as well as establish a collaborative relationship with parents.
- Find out how to develop strong foundations for positive Teacher-Child Interaction and Classroom Management (CPATICM15E).** Learn how to encourage frequent, caring and respectful communication as well as maintain a well-managed class.
- Get tips on Planning an Active Curriculum through a Responsive Environment in Chinese Language (CPAPACT14C),** based on the Early Years Development Framework. Learn how to design a programme that is suitable for infants and toddlers.

Check out the full list of courses at www.ecda.gov.sg/Educators/Pages/Continuing-Professional-Development.aspx.

THE RIGHT TRACK

Keen to learn more and pick up new ideas and strategies from the IBAP projects? Here is the list of IBAP projects that were presented. Applications for new classes of ECDA Fellows' IBAP projects are opening soon. Centre leaders who are keen to participate can write to ecda_pp@ecda.gov.sg. Here are the CPD modules offered under the IBAP:

- Developing ECCE Leaders Skills in Observing Children's Learning through Art Viewing
- Connecting the Dots - From Survival to Maturity
- Developing ECCE Leaders' Capacity to Conduct Parent Engagement Activities
- Equipping Leaders for the Early Years Programme (Birth-3 years old)
- Narrative Assessment: Connecting the Dots between Children's Learning through Learning Stories
- Building ECCE Leaders' Capacity to Engage Parents: Parenting for Character
- Helping Leaders to Develop the Habit of Reflection
- Building the Sector's Capacity in Curriculum Innovation



A CALLING TO CARE AND EDUCATE

NEW INITIATIVES TO RAISE INFANT AND CHILD CARE QUALITY.

By 2020...

Number of infant care places to increase to over **8,000**



1,000 more infant educators



At the 2017 Committee of Supply debate, the Ministry of Social and Family Development announced new initiatives to attract more persons to become infant educators and to develop more rewarding careers in the early childhood sector. They are part of the Government's commitment to make Singapore a great place for families and to ensure a good start for every child.

THE INITIATIVES:



1 Pilot new Allied Infant Educator (AIE) job role and apprenticeship mode of training

Why?

Attract more individuals with the right aptitude and competency, and to further develop experienced infant educators

Who?

- Individuals, including mature women, who prefer more hands-on training → Train to be **Allied Infant Educator (AIE)**
- More experienced infant educators → Progress to be **Senior Infant Educators (SIE)**

What?

- Structured on-the-job training and supervision by trained SIE mentor
- AIEs to work closely with existing certified infant educators to provide quality care and conduct planned activities
- Emphasis on aptitude and competence, rather than academic qualifications
- AIEs can receive further training to be certified as Infant Educators

When/How?

Training sessions to begin on **27 March 2017**. For more details, go to <https://thescout.typeform.com/to/szLEq7>.



2 New Professional Development Programme (PDP) for Educators

Why?

Support the professional and career development for Early Childhood (EC) professionals who are interested in the early years of child development

Who?

- Educators with at least three years of relevant EC experience, and who are nominated by their employer

What?

- A structured three-year programme for Educators to hone competencies and prepare for larger job roles, while working and earning an income
- Combination of core training, community sharing, elective courses or projects
- Up to **\$12,000** in cash incentives, upon completion of yearly programme milestones

When/How?

Nominations are open until **12 May 2017**, and the programme is scheduled to begin in the **second half of 2017**.

Visit [https://www.ecda.gov.sg/Pages/ECDA-PDP\(E\).aspx](https://www.ecda.gov.sg/Pages/ECDA-PDP(E).aspx) for more information.



3 New Advanced Diploma for Teachers supported under SkillsFuture Study Award

Why?

Support skills deepening and the professional development of experienced EC teachers

Who?

- For **experienced EC teachers** who are Singapore Citizens with at least three years of EC experience

What?

- New Advanced Diploma in Early Childhood Teaching and Learning (ADECT)** to support EC teachers to upgrade and take on lead teacher roles in the sector
- SkillsFuture Study Award** worth **\$5,000** to support teachers embarking on **ADECT**

When/How?

Application details for ADECT will be released in the **second quarter of 2017**.

For more information, go to [https://www.ecda.gov.sg/Educators/Pages/SkillsFuture-Study-Award-for-Early-Childhood-\(EC\)-Sector.aspx](https://www.ecda.gov.sg/Educators/Pages/SkillsFuture-Study-Award-for-Early-Childhood-(EC)-Sector.aspx).



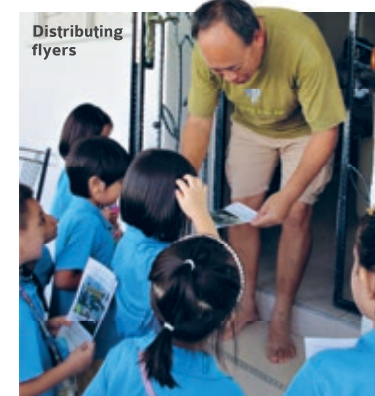
HELLO, NEIGHBOUR!

AT MOE KINDERGARTEN @ FARRER PARK, CHILDREN LEARN WHAT IT MEANS TO BELONG AND BE PART OF THE COMMUNITY.



The early years is a crucial time to develop children's sense of belonging, and respect and empathy for others. A child who empathises can understand the feelings and perspectives of others. These are important aspects of children's social and emotional development.

To nurture children's social and emotional development, MOE Kindergarten @ Farrer Park embarked on the Hello Neighbour! Project over several months in 2016. Funded by the ECDA Innovation Guidance Project 2016 grant, the project comprised a series of various community-engagement activities – the aim of which was to encourage children to reach out to their neighbours. "It is never too early to instil a sense of neighbourliness and community in young children," says Centre



Photos courtesy of MOE Kindergarten @ Farrer Park

Head Ms Chua Pin Chin. "At MOE Kindergarten, we believe that instilling in children the value of showing respect and empathy should start in the formative years as they are most teachable during this period."

Devised By Kids

The children came up with creative ideas that met the needs of different groups of people in their community. For example, the children created a "gardening exercise" for the elderly at Chung Hua Tong Senior Activity Centre and through the process, learnt to understand the needs of the elderly. During World Water Week in June, they helped spread water conservation awareness by designing and distributing flyers with water-saving tips to households near the kindergarten. The children were at first nervous about knocking on doors and talking to strangers, says Ms Chua. However, their confidence grew when the neighbours greeted them warmly and were willing to listen to their message on water conservation.

The Hello Neighbour! Project also gave the children opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility and ownership as they needed to follow-up on activities they had a hand in planning. "This made the learning very real for them," says Ms Chua. "The immersive experience teaches children to be tolerant, respectful and accepting of differences in the community." ♥

The immersive experience teaches children to be tolerant, respectful and accepting of differences in the community.

Ms Chua Pin Chin



Knocking on residents' doors



CELEBRATING DIFFERENCES

TIPS FROM MS CHUA ON HOW PARENTS CAN NURTURE AN APPRECIATION FOR DIVERSITY IN THEIR LITTLE ONES:

- Children tend to ask a lot of questions especially about people or customs that are less than familiar to them. Seize this opportunity to help them understand that people of different religions and races make up our community.
- Introduce children to greetings and phrases used by different ethnic groups. This is a practical way to introduce the concept of cultural diversity.
- Use books that feature stories with characters of a different ethnicity, culture or religion to help children develop a sense of identity, as well as an understanding of those who are different from them.

LEARNING AND MOVING TO THE BEAT

CHILDREN UNDER THE ARTIST-IN-SCHOOL SCHEME (AISS) PICK UP GREATER CONFIDENCE, SELF-EXPRESSION SKILLS AND CREATIVITY THROUGH THE PROGRAMME.

Walk into Just Kids Learning Place (Bukit Batok) and you are likely to be greeted by the happy sounds of children making music with percussion instruments such as hand drums, stick drums and the xylophone. As they learn musical concepts, the children have also become more motivated to learn and express themselves, says Ms Daphne Chum. Ms Chum, the centre's Lead Teacher, knows how important a well-crafted music curriculum is for children's confidence, self-expression and creativity. The centre uses the AnyBody Can Drum (ABCD) Rhythm programme, which was developed and conducted by OneHeartBeat Percussions (OHB). It introduces musical concepts such as pitch and texture, but the sessions are not just about making music. "They also encourage children to work together and share with one another," says Ms Chum, 28.

OHB's ABCD Rhythm programme was invited to be part of AISS for Pre-Schools. This scheme — an initiative of the National Arts Council and ECDA — aims to expose children to quality arts programmes by pairing arts practitioners with pre-schools. Centres pair up to collaborate for richer learning experiences. Educators learn different strategies to incorporate dance, drama, music or visual arts into their curriculum to enrich children's experiencing. Such specialised training is vital, as educators require specific skills to help children express themselves confidently, says Mr Syed Ibrahim, OHB's Programme Director.

This hands-on approach allows educators to observe and learn how to facilitate music-making in a friendly, inspiring and encouraging manner.

Mr Syed Ibrahim



Expressing themselves through musical instruments

LEARNING TOGETHER

Over eight weeks, Ms Chum and members of OHB worked together to co-deliver music lessons to the K1 children. These hour-long sessions comprised child-led activities to empower children and to encourage in them a sense of confidence. The sessions were informative not just for the children, but also for the educators. "I picked up new ideas on how to encourage children to be creative with sounds and rhythms," says Ms Chum.

"This hands-on approach allows educators to observe and learn how to facilitate music-making in a friendly, inspiring and encouraging manner, before they attend a three-day Artist-Facilitator workshop," says Mr Syed, 62. The workshop encourages educators to think of themselves as musical and acquire musical skills.

Learning about these musical and facilitation theories has given Ms Chum and the educators a greater confidence to explore new sounds and rhythms with the children. As a result, the children have taken ownership of their own learning. "They are able to express their ideas freely in their music class, explore and be creative without being inhibited," she says. The children have also become more

supportive of their peers' efforts — creating "motivating chants" for one another and applauding their classmates' musical efforts. ♥



MUSIC IN THE HOME

Mr Syed from OneHeartBeat Percussions recommends some ways to support your child's appreciation for music at home:

- ▶ Allow space for children to explore, experiment, discover and lead. Everyone is musical in a broad sense.
- ▶ Encourage children to take musical risks and create original works.
- ▶ Support growth and music appreciation by letting children pick up musical skills, without worrying about whether they are playing 'right' or 'wrong'.

To find out more about AISS for pre-schools, write to CPDadmin@ecda.gov.sg

BACK TO BASICS

A CHILD'S EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT IS THE CORNERSTONE OF TEACHING AT MY FIRST SKOOL AT BLK 264 SERANGOON CENTRAL.



Learning to cultivate social-emotional skills in class

If values and good habits are picked up when young, the Ace Character Building programme stands children from My First Skool at Blk 264 Serangoon Central in good stead. Under this programme, the nursery 2 and kindergarten children of this SPARK-certified pre-school attend weekly lessons to understand what socially-acceptable behaviours are, as well as cultivate healthy emotion-management skills. "This is an intentional and planned approach to help children better relate to others, and understand the difference they can make to their environment," explains Principal Ms Poh Jia Yi.

The centre employs the '3E' strategy in the programme — Example, Environment and Experience. 'Example' refers to educators leading by example, 'Environment' is creating a conducive learning environment, and 'Experience' is giving children the chance to experience the values in action. For instance, the children took turns guiding their blindfolded classmates around the room to learn the concept of responsibility. "As guides, the children experience how vulnerable the visually-impaired are. They also feel a sense of duty. It helps them to better internalise the value of responsibility," says Ms Lin Xin Juan, an educator at the centre.

When beliefs and practices pervade home and pre-school, a meaningful and trusting home-school relationship is built.

Ms Poh Jia Yi



Guiding a blindfolded classmate

POSITIVE PARTNERSHIPS

Feedback from parents has been positive. A parent, Madam Lee Ying Ying, says her daughter enjoys the activities and is now more aware of her own emotions. "She tells us things she has learnt in pre-school such as how to calm herself down when she feels angry," says Mdm Lee. "After learning eco-friendly practices

The Singapore Pre-school Accreditation Framework (SPARK) aims to help pre-schools raise their quality by serving as a guide and providing quality benchmarks. It also provides recognition and support for pre-school leaders in their effort to improve teaching and learning, administration and management process. For more information on SPARK, visit www.ecda.gov.sg/SPARKinfo.



Taking on classroom responsibilities

from the educators, she also now uses recycled paper to draw on. She even complimented my husband and I when we reused old newspapers at home!"

Implementing the programme has also led to stronger partnerships between the educators and parents. Seeing positive changes in their children piqued parents' curiosity and they became more supportive of the parent-child activities the centre organised. Says Ms Poh, "When beliefs and practices pervade home and pre-school, a meaningful and trusting home-school relationship is built." Such partnerships bring consistency to the children's lives and help nurture their social and emotional development. ♥

TRIED AND TESTED

Here are some tips on strengthening your child's social and emotional skills, from Mdm Lee Ying Ying, mother of Foo Zhi Xin, 6.

- ▶ **BE INQUISITIVE ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS**
"We want the child to be independent but not feel isolated. Make it a point to ask about his day so he knows there is support for him."
- ▶ **BE MORE AFFIRMING**
"Refrain from excessive reproaching and focus more on your child's good behaviours. Give compliments to reinforce the right attitudes as this will help develop his sense of self-confidence over time."

- ▶ **SPEND QUALITY TIME BY READING TOGETHER**
"Books will teach your child how he can cope with different situations, and also help him to develop empathy. Choose books that emphasise love and respect for family, friends and animals, as well as those that encourage your child to overcome fears and meet challenges."

Q&A

SUPPORTING YOUR INFANTS' AND TODDLERS' SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT.



For Educators

How can I foster emotional literacy in pre-school children?

It is important to help young children become aware of their feelings and emotions. The key to helping them become successful and well-adapted adults is how we support them in managing and expressing emotions. Before children can learn to regulate their emotions, they must first learn how to identify them. The richer a child's emotional vocabulary bank, the better he will be able to identify, understand and respond appropriately to the feelings and emotions in himself as well as those around him. Here are some strategies to help children achieve this:

- ▶ Model and coach children to recognise, identify and communicate how they are feeling or how somebody else might be feeling (e.g. You look **disappointed** that you cannot play with the blocks today).
- ▶ Explicitly teach the vocabulary necessary for children to express their feelings and help expand their emotional vocabulary bank (e.g. **frustrated, thrilled**).
- ▶ Introduce new words (e.g. I am **pleased** that you are able to wait your turn) to express feelings through activities which involve stories, songs and games.

Why is it important to form a secure attachment with my baby, and how can I go about doing this?

The quality of love and care parents give during their infant's first years of life has tremendous and long-term impact on the child's learning, development and well-being. Forming an early secure relationship or attachment with your child is crucial. Here's how you can foster a tightly knit parent-child connection from the get-go:

Tip #1 Regularly hold or cuddle the infant in ways that are comforting to him. Observe him closely to understand the meaning of his sounds, cries and even gestures. This will help you respond promptly and appropriately, and make the infant feel loved and valued.

Tip #2 Engage in playful interactive games that hold the infant's attention such as finger rhymes. Provide a wide variety of materials during play and explain what you are doing or what is happening, and what to expect.

Tip #3 Your infant is sensitive to your emotions and your feelings, and can absorb these easily. Keep your anxieties to yourself and reassure your infant that he is safe and secure.



For Parents



ASK THE EXPERTS



MS AVA WONG is a curriculum specialist at MY World Preschool. She believes in developing teachers who are key in promoting quality early childhood care and education for young children. As an ECDA Fellow, Ava works closely with ECDA to develop sector-wide early childhood resources for professional development, curriculum leadership and sector partnership.

MS N. KANNIGADEVI is a Senior Capability Manager and Special Needs Mentor at Presbyterian Community Services. She has over 25 years of experience working with children, including those with special needs, and their families. Kannigadevi holds a Master's Degree in Early Childhood Education and Child Development from Wheelock College, Boston, USA.

THRIVE

grow

Put together a sumptuous, edible bouquet for mum on her special day

p21



play

Create your own kite to play with dad on Father's Day

p22



learn

Workshops and programmes to support your child's mental well-being

p18

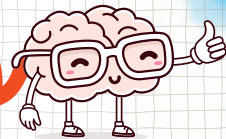


BUILD A SANDCASTLE

... learn ...



MINDFUL matters



For more information on HPB's Colours of the Mind (COTM) programme, visit 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:

Displaying out-of-character behaviour

Impulsive changes in interests and habits

Sudden changes in appearance and eating habits

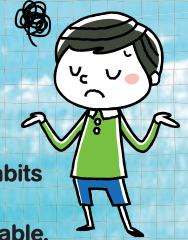
Temperament changes (irritable, agitated, moody, stressed or anxious)

Rebellious or aggressive behaviour

Extended absence or deliberate social withdrawal

Struggling to pay attention/ increased lethargy

Sleep 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.

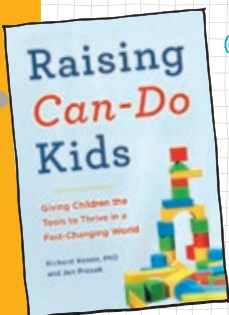


"I Can be the Best Me" Puppet Show

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.

FRUIT BOUQUET

MAKES 1 BOUQUET

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



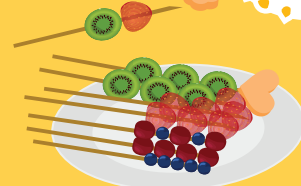
1 Rinse the fruits thoroughly with water and dry them using paper towels.



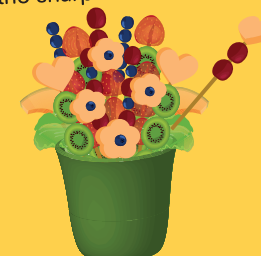
2 Prepare the fruits. This includes removing the hull from the strawberries and the stems from the grapes and berries.



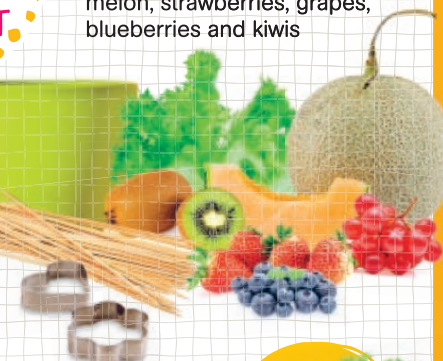
3 Cut the melons into thick slices and cut shapes out of the melon with the cookie cutter.



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!

LET'S GO OUTSIDE!

THE BENEFITS OF OUTDOOR PLAY FOR CHILDREN ARE MANIFOLD. SPORT SINGAPORE LISTS SOME.



3 Healthy Lifestyle Habits
Exposure to outdoor play from a young age leads to a healthy lifestyle as an adult — a child who has developed a habit of exercising regularly and eating healthily is more likely to sustain these good habits as an adult. Obesity, weight issues and heart problems are prevalent among adult Singaporeans. It is crucial for your child to stay active in order to reduce the risk of health problems in later years.



1 Improved Physical Literacy
Physical literacy is when a child is mastering his fundamental movement skills. In playing outdoors, a child gets to explore a range of movements and develop skills such as running, jumping, throwing, catching and even balancing. These skills enable a child to carry out basic everyday tasks.



5 A Happier, More Confident Child
Outdoor play makes children happier too, say scientists. When a child exercises, endorphins, dubbed "happy hormones", are released and this can improve the mood of the child. Playing at the playground or a park outdoors also gives children the opportunity to make new friends and pick up important social skills at a young age. Most of all, outdoor play gives children valuable bonding time with their parents. ♥

4 Sharper Cognitive Abilities
Participation in outdoor play and other physical activities can also affect a child's ability to think creatively, learn, and solve problems. Taking part in physical activity releases hormones which in turn, can provide a nourishing environment for the growth of brain cells. The growth of new brain cells helps to foster a positive mental well-being; it also enables the child to focus and concentrate better. Physical activities lead to an increased heart rate — more oxygen is pumped to the brain and, this in turn, boosts a child's memory capability.



2 A Stronger, Injury-Free Body
Being active lays the groundwork for a stronger and more resilient body. Outdoor play and frequent movement in open spaces lead to stronger bones, muscular strength and flexibility. In turn, this physical growth strengthens a child's resilience; he will be less-prone to muscular injuries in the future.



MEET THE EXPERT Sport SINGAPORE

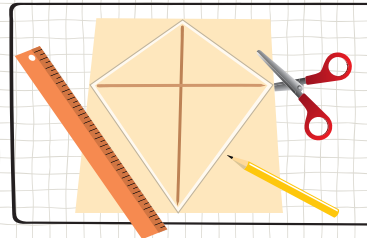
This article is written in consultation with Ms Miriam Lee of Sport Singapore (SportSG). A former national athlete who holds a BSc in Exercise and Health Science from the University of Western Australia, she plans programmes for children at SportSG's ActiveSG Athletics Club. For more information visit www.myactivesg.com/academy/athletics.

GET MOVING

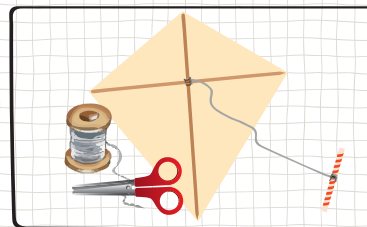
Try out fun activities for children aged three to six! Go to www.myactivesg.com/start-out/children-youth/guide-for-parents/fundamental-movement-skills.

FOLLOW THESE STEPS

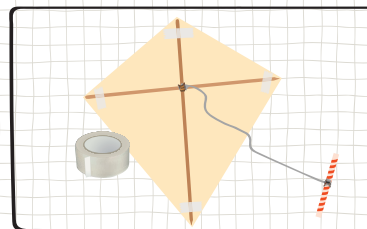
1 Cut the parchment paper into the shape of a diamond. Lay out two skewers to make a cross.



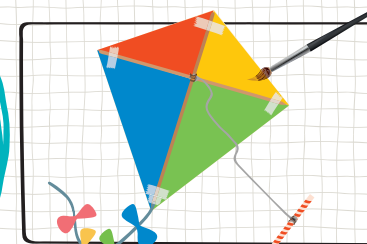
2 Tie one end of the string into a knot around where the skewers cross each other. Tie the other end of the string around a much shorter skewer.



3 Securely tape or glue the skewers to the paper.



4 To create the tail, use three to five rectangular pieces of parchment paper. Tie knots around the mid-section of each of these rectangular pieces along the length of another string or tape one end of this string to the bottom of the kite. Decorate the kite by painting it or using glitter glue. ♥



HIGH UP in the Sky

MAKE THIS MINI PAPER KITE WITH DAD AND FLY IT TOGETHER DURING THE FATHER'S DAY WEEKEND!



MAKES 1 KITE

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

This simple-to-make mini kite guarantees fun times with Dad. Best of all, it can be made using commonly-found items around the house. Everyone and anyone can create a kite without a trip to the art store. Decorate the finished product any way you fancy to make it your very own!



DID YOU KNOW?

A kite's tail helps it fly with more stability by adding some weight to the lower end. A kite that doesn't have a tail may spin and roll a lot when you fly it.



LOUD AND PROUD

Hey kids! Get your parent to snap a photo of you with the kite you made and send it to beanstalk@mediacorp.com.sg. Include your full name, age and contact details and your creation may be published in the next issue of Beanstalk!



WE'VE GOT MAIL! 😊

PARENTS ON HOW THEY RAISE THEIR CHILDREN TO BE CONFIDENT LITTLE PEOPLE.



Ms Li's sons during a family holiday



My husband and I have been letting our three sons do things for themselves. These include picking out their own outfits, tucking themselves in at bedtime, and packing their own suitcases when we go on a holiday. They may not always get things right, but practice makes perfect, and we always praise the boys for their efforts. It is our hope that they grow up self-assured and confident.

Debra Li,
Mother of three boys
aged 3, 5 and 7



I believe in 'letting go' so as to give my daughter opportunities to overcome challenges on her own, and to develop self-confidence and grit. She knows she has the space to explore and to make mistakes. But she knows too that she can count on me if she is unable to manage on her own. I always remind myself to let her problem-solve before rushing in too quickly to help.

Nazurah Omar,
Mother of a 4-year-old girl



Ms Nazurah's daughter playing confidently



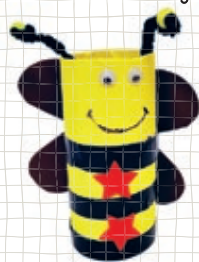
As a mum, I try to understand my elder daughter's personality, and give her lots of encouragement to build her self-confidence. I realise that when I use encouraging words, my daughter reacts more positively and is more motivated than when I simply cuddle her or buy her toys. She is now a self-confident four-year-old, capable of feeding and cleaning up after herself.

Sarah Lau,
Mother of two girls
aged 2 and 4

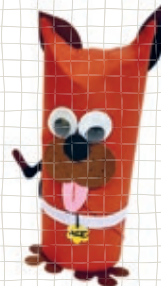


ROCK AND ROLL

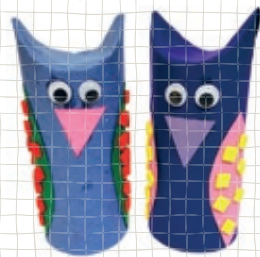
In the January-March 2017 issue, we asked you to show us the puppets you made from toilet rolls. Here are some outstanding entries:



Choo Si Jie, 4



Julyssia Ong Si, 6



Muhammad Sheraz Bin Zed, 5

Photos courtesy of Debra Li, Nazurah Omar and Sarah Lau

FACES AND FEELINGS

MATCH THE FACIAL EXPRESSIONS TO THE CORRECT EMOTIONS.

HEY PARENTS! To make sure your child truly understands these feelings, tell him or her a story or describe a scenario that typically conjures up each emotion. For more fun, both you and your little one can also animate the emotional expressions in front of a mirror!

LEARNING BEGINS AT HOME

Your child is learning all the time. Share with us how you create an enriching home environment to enhance your child's learning through fun and play. Attach a photo with your anecdote, and your submission may appear in the next issue of *Beanstalk!*



Send your story to beanstalk@mediacorp.com.sg with your name and contact details.

We have three \$30 NTUC FairPrice vouchers to give away, and you may be one of the winners.