

# THE FIRST 1,000 DAYS MATTER!



number of EC professionals will be participating in the Professional Development Programme for Educators, which will start in the second half of 2017. Parents can also refer to the resource guide mentioned in this issue — "Growing with Your Child".

Leadership is also key to improving child outcomes at our pre-schools. Since 2016, the ECDA Fellows have been working closely with the EC fraternity to enhance quality and professionalism. To further drive quality excellence in the sector, we will be inviting qualified EC professionals to step forward later this year to apply to become an ECDA Fellow.

Leadership is not just the responsibility of the centre leader or principal. All EC professionals at all levels can exercise leadership. At ECDA's upcoming 5<sup>th</sup> Early Childhood Conference, EC professionals can find out how you can exercise leadership and initiative to make a difference in our children's lives.

It takes skill, patience and self-awareness for us to develop warm, stable and nurturing relationships with young children. But it is worth it. As Dr James Comer, Maurice Falk Professor of Child Psychiatry at the Yale University School of Medicine's Child Study Center aptly puts it, "No significant learning occurs without a significant relationship".

This makes our work with young children worthwhile!

MR EUGENE LEONG

Chief Executive Officer  
Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA)

Research makes clear that the first 1,000 days presents a critical window of opportunity to shape our young child's brain development, language and social skills, executive functions and future life course. The key word is 'Relationship'. Not flashcards. And certainly not i-Nannies.

"The most important factor for developing healthy circuits in a growing baby's brain is the 'serve and return' nature of the infant's interaction with caring adults around him, through which he acquires the language skills on which all subsequent learning is based," said Professor Jack Shonkoff, Director of the Harvard Center for the Developing Child.

In this issue, we discuss how parents and early childhood (EC) professionals can infuse nurturing and language-rich interactions through care routines, age-appropriate play and reading. In addition to ECDA's Early Years Development Framework, a



# Contents

## FOCUS

**02 The First 1,000 Days**  
Creating the right experiences for the brain development of young children

## IN THE NEWS

**06 Building a Strong Foundation in Bilingualism**  
A symposium that shows how to nurture a child's appreciation for the Mother Tongue Language

**07 Inspiring Leadership: Nurturing the Future**  
What to look out for at the ECDA Early Childhood Conference 2017

## EC LANDSCAPE

**08 Instilling Positive Values in Children**  
Fostering the spirit of giving in pre-schoolers

**10 The Joys of Fellowship**  
Make a difference in the early childhood sector as an ECDA Fellow

## INNOVATION & RESEARCH

**11 Staying Ahead with Tech**  
Using smart solutions to improve administrative processes and parent engagement

**12 Stronger Together**  
An IBAP project that helps centre leaders better engage with parents



## MY TEACHER, MY SCHOOL

**14 Say it with Heart**  
Notes of appreciation from children, parents and a principal to their teachers

**15 Praise for Early Childhood**  
PPIS Child Development Centre – Bukit Batok nurtures positive learning dispositions through PRAISE

## ASK THE EXPERTS

**16 Q&A**  
How to understand the learning needs of your infant and toddler

## THRIVE

**18 Growing with Your Child: The First Three Years**  
Supporting your child's development from birth to 36 months

**21 A Snack from the Straits**  
A local delight even a child can prepare

**22 Pretty in Pin**  
Make a brooch for teachers on their special day

## WELLNESS

**23 Get Ready for Parenthood**  
Tips for parenting newborns and helping new parents ease into their roles

## MAILBAG

**24 We've Got Mail!**  
Parents on how they enhance their children's learning through fun and play

## FUNTIMES

**25 Picture Perfect**  
A D-I-Y photo holder to frame a picturesque moment



Early Childhood Development Agency

### EDITORIAL PANEL

Angela Anthony  
Jennifer Law

### EDITORIAL CONSULTANT



Senior Editor Ronald Rajan  
Contributing Senior Editor Agatha Koh Brazil  
Editor Dennis Yin  
Assistant Editor Fairiza Mansor  
Senior Writers Wanda Tan, Phyllis Hong  
Writer Ashutosh Ravikrishnan  
Senior Art Director Don Lee  
Art Director Samuel Ng  
Senior Business Relationship Manager Michele Kho  
Contributors Ealbert Ho, Mark Lee, Elisabeth Lee



### ON THE COVER

From left Muhammad Fauzi Bin Ravi, Mika Zarif Bin Muhammad Fauzi, Diya Kanna, Anastasia Tan, Hansel Lee, Nanthini Sativil

Art Direction Samuel Ng  
Photography Ealbert Ho  
Styling Sharon Tan  
assisted by Jessica Khor  
Hair Annie Tay  
Make-up Cherylynn Koh

Beanstalk is a quarterly publication by the Early Childhood Development Agency and is published by Mediacorp Pte Ltd. Copyright is held by the publishers. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited. Printed by KHL Printing Co Pte Ltd.