

Beanstalk

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LET'S GO OUTDOORS!

Discover flora and fauna through fun learning journeys

NURTURING THE FUTURE

Developing leadership qualities in children and educators



THRIVE

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

Early Childhood Conference 2017
Check out the key highlights at this year's early childhood event!

WIN! A 1-YEAR FAMILY MEMBERSHIP TO GARDENS BY THE BAY

IN THIS ISSUE

INSPIRING LEADERSHIP, NURTURING THE FUTURE



Development Programme for centre leaders. We also gave out 24 ECDA Awards to educators and centres for their exemplary achievements and contributions to teaching and learning, as well as innovative practices.

Needless to say, we were delighted with the turnout of some 1,500 educators for the professional conference and over 10,000 children and their families for the educational exhibition. At the conference, we also celebrated the conclusion of Start Small Dream Big 2017 — 34,000 children from over 550 pre-schools contributed more than 1 million hours in community services and raised over \$200,000 in cash donations for the President's Challenge beneficiaries and other community organisations.

The success of the Early Childhood Conference is due to the unstinting support of the early childhood fraternity, families and our community partners. We thank everyone who contributed to this conference.

In this fast-paced globalised world, we need everyone — educators, centre leaders and parents — to take up the leadership mantle to nurture our children to embrace the future with confidence and resilience. As John Quincy Adams puts it, "If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."

Let's all play our part in nurturing the future!

MR EUGENE LEONG

Chief Executive Officer
Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA)

Early childhood educators, parents and, of course, our young children, are beneficiaries of Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's recent announcements in his National Day Rally speech in August. There will be many more affordable and quality pre-school places throughout Singapore. The set-up of a new National Institute of Early Childhood Development will further enhance the quality of early childhood care and education. Educators can also expect even more rewarding career and professional development pathways in future.

To support these changes, leadership plays an even more critical role. Reflecting this, the theme of this year's Early Childhood Conference in October was "Inspiring Leadership: Nurturing the Future". During this annual high point for our sector, we issued a fresh call for nominations for ECDA Fellows, and launched a new Professional



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Beanstalk clinched the APEX 2017 Award of Excellence in the Magazines, Journals & Tabloids (Print +32 pages) category!



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FOLLOW THE LEADER

TEACHER-LEADERS WERE LAUDED AT THIS YEAR'S EARLY CHILDHOOD (EC) CONFERENCE.



MORE THAN
34,000
CHILDREN FROM OVER

550
CENTRES TOOK PART IN
SSDB 2017,
RAISING OVER

\$200,000
IN CASH DONATIONS FOR
THE PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE
BENEFICIARIES AND OTHER
COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS.

THIS IS THE HIGHEST
AMOUNT RAISED SO FAR,
IN THE THREE YEARS SINCE
THE MOVEMENT WAS
INITIATED. PRE-SCHOOLERS
ALSO SPENT MORE THAN

1 Million Hours
ON COMMUNITY SERVICE.



Minister for Social and Family Development Mr Desmond Lee delivering his opening speech

Now into its fifth year, the annual Early Childhood Conference, organised by the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA), was held on 6 and 7 October at Suntec Singapore Convention and Exhibition Centre this year. Some 1,500 early childhood professionals attended the professional conference, with the theme 'Inspiring Leadership: Nurturing the Future'. The focus was on the importance of educators embracing effective leadership practices to give our young children a good head start.

On the first day of the conference, Professor Manjula Waniganayake from Macquarie University, Australia, shared her insights on the issue of pedagogical leadership. On the 2nd day, Dr Low Guat Tin, a former associate professor from the National Institute of Education, spoke about early childhood education as a passion-filled profession. The two-day sharing was capped by an insightful panel discussion, featuring Dr Low,

Prof Waniganayake and early childhood practitioners.

Other highlights included the annual ECDA Awards, presented by Minister for Social and Family Development Mr Desmond Lee to exemplary educators and centres; and the Singapore Preschool Accreditation Framework (SPARK) Certificate Presentation Ceremony, graced by Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Education Ms Low Yen Ling. Minister Lee also presented tokens of appreciation to partners of ECDA's 'Start Small Dream Big' (SSDB) movement, which encourages our children to give back to society.

Our educators benefited from the professional development opportunities in the 37 concurrent workshops over the two days. Some workshops were tied with learning journeys — 10 in total — held prior to the conference to places such as Gardens by the Bay and the Asian Civilisations Museum. Over 10,000 families and educators also visited the varied exhibition booths and fringe activities specially curated by ECDA, the Ministry of Education, ECDA Award-winning centres and community partners.

LEADING PEDAGOGY

Prof Waniganayake spoke on 'Being and Becoming Pedagogical Leaders'. In her presentation, she distinguished pedagogy ("how you teach and learn") from curriculum ("what you teach and learn"). "Teacher-leaders", she told her audience, "are in the driver's seat in driving pedagogical leadership." As such, they would need to not only possess teaching expertise, but also have the willingness to learn and be open to alternative interpretations, even from young children.

Why do teachers make good pedagogical leaders?

Teachers are best placed to be in charge of shaping pedagogical process because they engage directly with children, and assume day-to-day responsibility for their learning. Centre principals and directors tend to be tied up with running their centres, so they may not be able to devote sufficient time to pedagogical leadership.

What is needed for effective pedagogical leadership?

Teachers must have *agency*; they must be knowledgeable and well-informed so that they can speak with authority about their work in guiding children's learning and development. Working with staff teams is the norm in early childhood settings. It is necessary to think about the distribution of work when collaborating with colleagues. This should be done with intentionality, meaning that teachers must plan and be purposeful by having conversations with the team about how to create the desired teaching and learning outcomes.



Professor Manjula Waniganayake

Professor of Early Childhood, Macquarie University, Australia

On Saadhana: Red Round Neck T-shirt, Seed Heritage, Printed Backpack & Hairband Stylist's Own; Photo: Hong Chee Yan Styling Sharon Tan assisted by Jael Ong Hair & makeup Jane Lau & Leny On Kids: Denim Shorts Seed Heritage, Printed Backpack & Hairband Stylist's Own; Photo: Hong Chee Yan Styling Sharon Tan assisted by Jael Ong Hair & makeup Jane Lau & Leny On Kids: Denim Shorts Seed Heritage, Printed Backpack & Hairband Stylist's Own; Photo: Hong Chee Yan Styling Sharon Tan assisted by Jael Ong Hair & makeup Jane Lau & Leny On Kids: Denim Shorts Seed Heritage, Printed Backpack & Hairband Stylist's Own; Photo: Hong Chee Yan Styling Sharon Tan assisted by Jael Ong Hair & makeup Jane Lau & Leny



IMDA's 'Lab on Wheels' bus



Tinkering with tech toys

YOUNG TECHIES

Technology was a big draw for visitors at the exhibition space. Mr Tan Guoxian, a physics teacher, signed up his son Cayden, four, for a gamed-based coding activity at the Infocom Media Development Authority (IMDA) 'Lab on Wheels' bus. "The activity was a good way to get Cayden interested in computation. It was suitable for his age and he was able to follow the step-by-step instructions without any handholding from me," said Mr Tan.

At the Science Centre Singapore (SCS) booth, children were encouraged to tinker with tech toys. SCS also showcased its collaborations with three pre-schools on the Innovation Guidance Projects. "Many people think that science is too complex for pre-schoolers but that's not true," said Mrs Anne Dhanaraj, SCS' Senior Director of Education Programmes. "With the right resources and activities, parents and educators can make science lessons very engaging for children."

PASSION-PACKED

Dr Low Guat Tin's presentation on 'Remaining Passionate About What I Do and Doing My Best' had the audience bursting into laughter, while taking in the rich insights, amusing videos, stories, images and memes. Such was her way of keeping her audience engaged as she talked on the topic of passion, and how being passionate can make one's "vocation feels like vacation".

As an EC practitioner who has been in the industry for some time, how do I keep my passion alive?

When you see meaning in the work that you do, you will surely be filled with passion. Remind yourself that you are making a huge difference in children's life during their important early years when you teach or care for them. If you're feeling jaded, talk to people who are passionate about something — anything — and see them come to life as they enthusiastically talk about their passion. Passion is contagious and enthusiasm is a great source of energy.

In what ways can EC practitioners remain engaged and passion-filled in the face of increasing demands and expectations?

Find a quicker, more efficient way to complete administrative or other more mundane duties so you can spend more of your work hours doing the tasks that you enjoy, such as spending time with the children. To re-ignite or sustain your passion, do more of what you like. Think of teaching not as a job, not as a career, but as your calling. This will come through in your quality of work. You have to enjoy your work to be able to do well in it — have fun!



Dr Low Guat Tin
Former Associate Professor, The National Institute of Education, Singapore

IN CONVERSATION

Dr Low Guat Tin's talk was followed by a plenary session. She was joined by Prof Waniganayake, Dr Geraldine Teo-Zuzarte, Centre Director of The Caterpillar's Cove Child Development and Study Centre, who was the session's moderator, as well as Mr Johnny Goh, Principal of Sunflower Kinderhub @ Ang Mo Kio, Ms Kartini Binte Sudirman, Educator at PCF Sparkletots @ Bukit Panjang and Ms Amanda Poh, Educator at St. James' Church Kindergarten, Gilstead.

The panel addressed questions from the participants, and discussed ways in which educators in their respective centres could contribute to lesson plans, and suggest activities that resonate well with the children. Prof Waniganayake was all for this collective effort, which she deemed necessary for a supportive working environment. The panelists also discussed about work-life balance and how each one is responsible for working out their individual needs, expectations and priorities in striving for a balance.



Dr Geraldine Teo-Zuzarte with Professor Waniganayake



Inside the 'Leadership for Learning' workshop

LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

ECC 2017 featured 37 concurrent workshops for EC professionals, covering a wide repertoire of topics and issues. Of these, one was especially complementary to the conference's theme. Titled 'Leadership for Learning: What Centre Leaders Can Do', the workshop provided a sneak peek into the Leadership Series (see box). It was conducted by Dr Sum Chee Wah, Advisor, Pre-school Education, and Ms N Pushpavalli, ECDA Fellow and Principal of Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Kindergarten.

A good leader needs much more than "leadership traits", pointed out Dr Sum. The word "traits" implies that one is either a born leader or not, she later explained to *Beanstalk*. "However, a person can in fact develop leadership skills," she said. "A lot of the time, leadership begins with the relationships you've built and fostered. Remember, a leader is not a leader if he has no willing followers." So learning about how to be a good leader is a lifelong journey; it's about knowing oneself, being reflective, understanding different contexts and the complexity of different situations, understanding personalities and the needs of people, being persuasive and managing relationships, as much as being strategic and having leadership drive.

A leader should also have a vision, and be able to persuade others to share his/her vision and show the way to achieve that vision. "You cannot be micro in your perspectives," she stressed. "Instead, you must have a vision for the centre, and a vision for the group of educators and educators whom you are leading. Only then can you nurture a culture that is supportive of achieving the vision."

Participant Ms Noraini Mansoor, who will helm Nobleland Arts N Learning Place @ Punggol as its principal in November (after five years of teaching in the same organisation), found the session "extremely enlightening". For Ms Noraini, what stood out most from the workshop was the importance of learning, and not just for the children. "Educators, and leaders especially, have to continually hone their skills and develop their personal mastery in order to be an effective role model for the educators they are leading," she said. ♥

A lot of the time, leadership begins with the relationships you've built and fostered. Remember, a leader is not a leader if he has no willing followers.

Dr Sum Chee Wah, Advisor, Pre-school Education



Ms N Pushpavalli engaging participants in a discussion



A workshop participant sharing her experience

THE LEADERSHIP SERIES

Comprising eight comprehensive modules, the series aims to enable those in leadership positions to:

- Revisit their understanding of leadership, their values, mission and vision
- Reflect on their leadership practices and renew their commitment to be better leaders
- Learn practical tips that can be put into practice immediately
- Understand the important association between teachers' learning and children's learning
- Support a learning culture within their centres
- Build a sense of fraternity with other leaders

To sign up for or learn more about the Leadership Series, please visit [ONE@ECDA](#).



Amused audience at the ECC 2017



Participants of the plenary session

COVER On: Alethea: Red Striped Top, Denim Jacket, Khaki Berms & Red Floral Embroidery Headband Seed Heritage, Brown Owl Flats, Melissa On Bala; White: Linen Shirt, Blue Striped Round Neck Tee & Grey Cargo Pants; Marks and Spencer On Alaina: Denim Dress, Embroidered Sling Bag & Butterfly Hair Clips Seed Heritage, Red Pants Cotton On Kids, Khaki Hat Kookies and Milk, Pink Owl Flats, Melissa On Penny; Floral Embroidered Shirt, White Round Neck Tee & Brown Loafers Mark's and Spencer, Khaki Shorts Seed Heritage, Black Backpack Herschel On Zach; Pink Round Neck Tee, Blue Printed Jacket, Jogger Pants & Black Shoes Cotton On Kids, Blue Cap KidStyle On Saadhana: White Denim Flare Seed Heritage, Blue Round Neck Tee & Metallic Pink Heart Necklace Cotton On Kids, Pink Dot Grey Cap, Styler's Own, Pink Stan Smith Shoes Adidas



Mr Lee making his first ECC appearance as Minister for Social and Family Development

A PROFESSION OF LEADERS

KEY MOVES TO STRENGTHEN EDUCATORS' LEADERSHIP CAPABILITIES UNVEILED AT THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE 2017.



- Who can qualify: To join the programme, Centre Leaders and Lead Teachers must be nominated by their employers.
- What it comprises: 180 hours of professional development over three years, including compulsory modules, an ECDA-funded overseas study trip and projects. Participants will receive cash awards of up to \$15,000 in total.
- When it starts: Employers have until 8 December 2017 to nominate their eligible Centre Leaders and Lead Teachers at [www.ecda.gov.sg/Pages/ECDA-PDP\(L\).aspx](http://www.ecda.gov.sg/Pages/ECDA-PDP(L).aspx).

Growing the Fraternity of Pinnacle Leaders

The pioneer batch of 14 ECDA Fellows is set to complete their three-year term in March 2018. ECDA has started the recruitment for the second batch of ECDA Fellows who will be appointed next April.

They are, like the pinnacle leaders before them, expected to drive quality improvements in the early childhood (EC) sector and develop the fraternity of EC professionals. For more information on the ECDA Fellows Programme, please visit www.ecda.gov.sg/Pages/ECDA-Fellows.aspx.

Enhanced Support for Early Years

ECDA has launched an Early Years Development Framework (EYDF) Educators' Guide. Based on the EYDF, the Educators' Guide contains practical tips and suggested activities to help educators strengthen their interactions with infants, toddlers and nursery children. The EYDF Educators' Guide is also a useful resource for centre leaders, as they lead their teams in the reflection and application of best practices. Pre-schools can look forward to Continuing Professional Development sessions in 2018 to learn how to use this Guide effectively. ♥

One month into his new role as Minister for Social and Family Development, Mr Desmond Lee made his debut appearance as host of the ECDA Early Childhood Conference (ECC) on 6 October 2017. He spoke to the 1,500-strong crowd of pre-school educators. "Our profession needs to grow and develop, so we can play our part in nurturing our future generation," said Mr Lee. In particular, he announced three initiatives "to strengthen teachers' leadership capabilities collectively".

Grooming Strong Leaders

Following the successful roll-out of the Professional Development Programme (PDP) for Teachers in 2016, and the PDP for Educators early this year, a new PDP for Leaders was launched at the conference.

MOVING UP THE PROFESSIONAL LADDER

THE FIRST BATCH OF PARTICIPANTS FROM THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR EDUCARERS HAS BEEN OFFICIALLY APPOINTED.



Mr Tan Chuan-Jin noted that PDP(E) will equip educarers with valuable skills and strengthen their competencies

After 10 years in the early childhood (EC) sector, educator Ms Elfie Rohaiza Binte Ahmad is still very passionate about her work with children. Now, she wants to do more to develop herself professionally and further her career. To do so, the 33-year-old has enrolled in the Professional Development Programme for Educators, or PDP(E) for short, supported and nominated by her centre leader. PDP(E) is a three-year programme (see sidebar) that enables educarers to hone their competencies and prepares them for larger job roles.

A total of 76 PDP(E) participants were appointed in July this year. "I signed up for PDP(E) to expand my knowledge and hone my skills. The programme will give me a greater professional edge, and also boost my confidence in working with parents and colleagues," says Ms Elfie.

The Institute of Technical Education graduate does not foresee any difficulty

in meeting the 180 programme hours required of the participants. Instead, she is glad for the flexibility to chart her own learning. Apart from a compulsory core training course, participants of PDP(E) can choose from a variety of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities. Ms Elfie is most excited about the "Showcase of Learning", as she feels it is a good opportunity to network and share with fellow educarers.

At the inaugural PDP(E) appointment ceremony held on 28 July 2017 at the National Museum of Singapore, then-Minister for Social and Family Development Tan Chuan-Jin said, "PDP(E) will equip educarers with knowledge and skills to develop respectful, responsive and reciprocal interactions with infants and toddlers." He also encouraged educarers to see parents as partners and establish trusting relationships with them because "building strong families is the foundation of a stable society".

The PDP(E) is part of the overall effort to enhance the professional and career development of EC professionals, and is in line with the increasing focus on children's development in their early years. ♥



GOING ONE STEP FURTHER

WHAT IS PDP ABOUT?

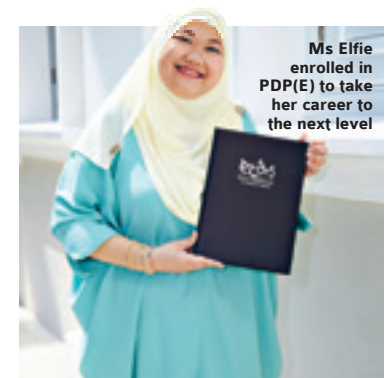
The Professional Development Programme for Educators, PDP(E), was introduced by ECDA in March 2017. The three-year structured programme is in line with the national SkillsFuture movement. Participants can:

- Receive compulsory core training.
- Participate in Communities of Practice to learn and exchange ideas and experiences with other educarers.
- Be involved in a Showcase of Learning to share good practices
- Opt to choose CPD activities in a language they are comfortable with.
- Attain qualifications to teach wider age groups through the Teacher Training Programme Modules.
- Receive up to \$12,000 over three years upon completion of programme and service milestones.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Singaporean or Permanent Resident EY1/EY2/L1 educarers, preferably with at least three years of relevant teaching experience

Find out more at [www.ecda.gov.sg/Pages/ECDA-PDP\(E\).aspx](http://www.ecda.gov.sg/Pages/ECDA-PDP(E).aspx) and look out for the next application window in early 2018.



Ms Elfie enrolled in PDP(E) to take her career to the next level



CREAM OF THE CROP

EXEMPLARY EDUCARERS, TEACHERS, LEADERS AND CENTRES GOT THEIR MUCH-DESERVED RECOGNITION AT THE 2017 ECDA AWARDS FOR EXCELLENCE IN EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT.

Since its launch in 2013, the annual ECDA Awards for Excellence in Early Childhood Development has been the high point of the Early Childhood Conference year-on-year.

On 6 October 2017, at the 5th ECDA Awards, we celebrated the achievement of exemplary educators and centres for their professional excellence. Educarers, teachers and leaders cheered their winning peers enthusiastically as the latter's names were announced. Giving out the prestigious awards at the Suntec Convention Centre was Minister for Social and Family Development Mr Desmond Lee. Minister Lee congratulated the winners for excelling in their teaching and learning, and for innovative practices in the early childhood sector.

This year, two new categories — the 'Promising Awards' and the 'Roll of Honour for Early Childhood Innovation Mentor Centre' (see Page 10 on what the four Mentor Centres have to say) — were introduced. The 'Promising Awards' category was introduced to recognise and motivate early childhood professionals who show strong potential for professional excellence early in their careers. The winners had been chosen for their interactions and relationships with children, their curriculum and pedagogical practices,

their professional standards, as well as the efforts to partner and collaborate with families and the community (see box). Overall, 24 early childhood professionals and centres received the 2017 ECDA Awards (see sidebar for list of winners).

OF POTENTIAL AND PROMISE
Winners of the inaugural Promising Awards category talk about their aspirations.



Ms Gerene Lee



Ms Jazlyn Choo

Winning the Promising Early Childhood Educarer Award affirms my passion to teach and help children find joy in learning. To me, an educarer must have the ability to love and respect children as individuals with their unique strengths and interests. We all have moments when the day's activities don't go as planned, or when children don't respond well to certain classroom management techniques. When this happens, I try to do things in a different way or seek advice from my colleagues.

Gerene Lee, Learning Vision @ Work Pte Ltd (Nanyang Polytechnic) (Promising Early Childhood Educarer)

JOB WELL DONE!

Hearty congratulations to all the winners of the ECDA Awards 2017:

PROMISING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCARER AWARD

- ▶ Lee Si Min Gerene
Learning Vision @ Work Pte Ltd (Nanyang Polytechnic)

PROMISING EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER AWARD

- ▶ Jazlyn Choo
My First Skool at Blk 209 Ang Mo Kio

PROMISING EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADER AWARD

- ▶ Dawn Chua
My First Skool at Blk 55 Toa Payoh

OUTSTANDING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCARER AWARD

- ▶ Nur Farhana Binte Abdul Razak
E-Bridge Pre-School Pte Ltd (Yishun)

- ▶ Zhao Yilin
The Ascension Kindergarten

OUTSTANDING EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER AWARD

- ▶ Jane Mayriel Singh
The Little Skool-House International (Bu-The-Vista)

OUTSTANDING EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADER AWARD

- ▶ Neo You Xian Gillian
My First Skool at Blk 209 Ang Mo Kio
- ▶ Doreen Lim Yen Lee
PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Cashew

OUTSTANDING CENTRE FOR TEACHING & LEARNING AWARD

- ▶ Living Sanctuary Kindergarten
- ▶ My First Skool at Blk 245 Bishan

EARLY CHILDHOOD INNOVATION AWARD (DISTINCTION)

- ▶ PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Nanyang Blk 922
Project Title: Speech Choir
- ▶ The Caterpillar's Cove Child Development and Study Centre @ Jurong East
Project Title: Strategies for Thinking: Fostering Toddler Inquiry through Provocations

EARLY CHILDHOOD INNOVATION AWARD (MERIT)

- ▶ Blossom Educare Centre
Project Title: What's News?
- ▶ MY World @ Ang Mo Kio
Project Title: 'I Spy with My Arty Eyes'

EARLY CHILDHOOD INNOVATION AWARD (COMMENDATION)

- ▶ My First Skool at Blk 140 Serangoon North
Project Title: "I feel, I show, I express": Promoting Socio Emotional Expressions through Dramatisation
- ▶ My First Skool at Blk 140 Serangoon North
Project Title: Questioning Strategies to Promote Curiosity and Learning
- ▶ PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Whampoa Blk 85
Project Title: Cookery
- ▶ PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Sembawang Blk 789
Project Title: Our Young Explorers
- ▶ St. Paul's Church Kindergarten
Project Title: Edible Plants in a Nostalgic Garden
- ▶ The Little Skool-House International Pte Ltd - At OCBC Centre
Project Title: Children's Beautiful Dream Garden

ROLL OF HONOUR FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD INNOVATION MENTOR CENTRE AWARD

- ▶ Odyssey, The Global Preschool (Fourth Avenue)
- ▶ Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Kindergarten
- ▶ St. James' Church Kindergarten (Harding)
- ▶ The Ascension Kindergarten

BE INSPIRED

Interested to know what drives the ECDA Award winners to strive towards professional excellence? Be motivated and moved by their inspiring words in these videos at <http://bit.ly/ECDA-Awards2017-Video>.



Ms Dawn Chua

It is a great honour to be the recipient for the Promising Early Childhood Teacher Award. Winning this award motivates me to further enrich the experiences for both the children and their families, and also challenge my own professional boundaries. I find it important for teachers to be creative in exploring various strategies to help children learn. Having children work in groups will also develop their problem-solving skills. As teachers, we should always be willing to try over and over again.

Jazlyn Choo, My First Skool at Blk 209 Ang Mo Kio (Promising Early Childhood Teacher)

I believe strongly in instilling good morals in young children, and in respecting all cultures. Every child needs to be treated with love, affection and respect. I care more about developing the whole child than focusing solely on the academics. My aspiration is to continue building teams that are strong professionally, highly cohesive and competent. My wish is for all new leaders to persevere and pursue their passion in early childhood. Don't give up on what you really want to; until the day you realise your dreams.

Dawn Chua,
My First Skool at Blk 55 Toa Payoh (Promising Early Childhood Leader)



LEADING THE WAY

PAVING THE WAY FOR A CULTURE OF INNOVATION
ACROSS THE EARLY CHILDHOOD FRATERNITY.



Odyssey, The Global Preschool
(Fourth Avenue)



Ramakrishna Mission
Sarada Kindergarten



St. James' Church
Kindergarten (Harding)



The Ascension Kindergarten

Innovation is key to driving quality and achieving excellence in curriculum and pedagogical practices. For the next three years, Odyssey, The Global Preschool (Fourth Avenue), Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Kindergarten, St. James' Church Kindergarten (Harding) and The Ascension Kindergarten will partner ECDA to mentor and support other pre-schools under the Early Childhood Innovation Mentor Centre initiative.

These mentor centres have been exemplary in sustaining a culture of innovation and have clinched two or more prestigious early childhood (EC) innovation awards. The four centres were appointed to the Roll of Honour for EC Innovation Mentor Centres at the recent ECDA Awards 2017.

Beanstalk speaks with the four mentor centres about the niche areas they are championing.

Odyssey, The Global Preschool (Fourth Avenue)

Championing Environmental Awareness

"Apart from raising our children to be global citizens, our teachers and parents are also encouraged to be advocates for the environment," says Ms Drizzle Hshieh, Odyssey's Curriculum Mentor. The centre seeks to minimise the carbon footprint of its daily operations, while teachers facilitate child-initiated projects where parents are also involved in activities such as maintaining an orchard garden for the centre's Green Club. We also collaborate with community partners such as the Singapore Zoo to enhance our environmental initiatives.

Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Kindergarten

Championing Children's Social-Emotional Development

Our teachers adopt classroom-management strategies such as modelling and showing appreciation, encouraging

children to acknowledge and affirm one another's appropriate behaviours and actions, and empowering children to make choices. Through this collective energy, we help children to understand the consequences of their actions, look for possible solutions, and become competent and resilient. "Young children who develop a positive sense of self and strong social-emotional competencies will grow up confidently to meet challenges in life," says the centre's Principal, Ms N. Pushpavalli.

St. James' Church Kindergarten (Harding)

Championing Character and Values Development

Class projects at St. James' Church Kindergarten (Harding) are intentionally linked to developing desirable character traits and values such as love, patience and kindness in children. For example, "From Me to We", the children are inspired to think about others, while "The Little Red Box" allows them to voice their dreams for Singapore's future. "Through each project, the children develop an appreciation for nature, their community and the world," explains the centre's Senior Principal and Academic Director, Dr Jacqueline Chung.

The Ascension Kindergarten

Championing Purposeful Play

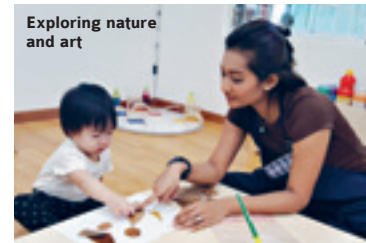
"Play comes naturally to young children. Through this, they explore, discover and learn. Purposeful play is when the educator intentionally selects resources and materials in order to achieve specific learning outcomes. Skilled teacher facilitation and choice of materials are the essence of purposeful play," says Mrs Dianne Seet-Swee, its Principal. Outdoor lessons at the centre's soundscape and playscape areas, as well as regular 'play days' in the timetable, bring out the children's curiosity, exploration, ability to make connections and creativity. ♥



Find out more about these inaugural batch of mentor centres at bit.ly/Awards-ECInnovationMentorCentres

A HEART FOR THE YOUNG

THIS YEAR'S OUTSTANDING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCARER AWARD
RECIPIENT MS NUR FARHANA BINTE ABDUL RAZAK SHARES
HER JOY AND EXPERIENCE WITH INFANTS AND TODDLERS.



Exploring nature and art

Ms Nur Farhana Binte Abdul Razak

Age: 29

Centre: E-Bridge Pre-School Pte Ltd (Yishun)

Number of years as an infant educator: 12



Infants learning with their sense of touch as they feel the texture of flour

What is your biggest motivation as an EC educator?

The children are my biggest motivation. It heartens me when I see the excitement and joy on their faces when we go through the day exploring new materials and making new discoveries, talking and relating during the various caregiving tasks (e.g. mealtimes, bathing). I experience a sense of fulfilment as I watch them grow, learn from the daily experiences and gradually become independent. My belief is to love and respect each infant and toddler as a unique individual.

What was your greatest challenge when you first joined the EC profession?

I joined the EC profession at the age of 18. I had no experience of working with infants and toddlers then. During a work trip to a child care centre in Taiwan, I saw how the teachers construct a profile of each child based on his needs, strengths, likes and dislikes and in the context of his family. Using this, they developed and extended the child's interests and continually reflected on their practices. I was inspired to do likewise and challenge myself as an educator — reflecting and questioning myself on my approaches

and practices, as well as how I interacted with the children.

Tell us an unforgettable work experience.

When E-Bridge first started, inquiry-based learning was not introduced at the infant care level. This form of active learning starts with posing questions, problems or scenarios. I took it as an opportunity to grow and researched about this learning method. I sought the support of colleagues and family members, and together we brainstormed, constructed and reviewed ideas which we could put into practice. I was delighted to see how the infants were responding, discovering and learning from the new inquiry-based learning activities.

What are your aspirations now as an educator?

Understandably, many parents are busy. But I want to make it a point, even if it is for a few minutes, to share with them an idea or two. These can be activities that they can try with their children at home and play a more active role in their children's development and strengthen parent-child bonds. I have a keen interest in infant pedagogy and hope to attend more professional development courses." ♥

I was delighted to see how the infants were responding, discovering and learning from the new inquiry-based learning activities.

Ms Nur Farhana Binte Abdul Razak

ASPIRING TO BE EDUCARERS?

Nur Farhana shares some tips on working with infants and toddlers:

- ▶ Give children the **freedom to move without restrictions**. They develop muscle strength, coordination and learning to master their skills. Gadgets like walkers and bumbo chairs restrict their natural movements.
- ▶ Create opportunities for **uninterrupted play and access to the outdoors**. Let children come in contact with nature and have myriad experiences to explore, discover and learn.
- ▶ Engage the children in **talk... and more talk** to stimulate their cognition and language.



Ms Low Yen Ling (eighth from right) and ECDA CEO Mr Eugene Leong, with this year's SPARK recipients



Receiving the SPARK honour from Ms Low



the quality of their education programmes. The updated QRS puts greater focus on teaching and learning practices and includes clearer clarification notes. It is also aligned with the new licensing framework under the Early Childhood Development Centres Act. The QRS-Updated Edition will be distributed to pre-schools from mid-October.

Second, the SPARK logo has undergone a subtle but important revision. "The SPARK logo has been refreshed with ECDA's colours, reaffirming our commitment to the mission of providing a good start for every child," said Ms Low. ♥

Two changes to the SPARK framework were also announced during the ceremony. First, an Updated Edition of the Quality

Rating Scale (QRS) is now ready for use. The QRS spells out the SPARK requirements and serves as a self-appraisal tool for centres to evaluate

THAT EXTRA SPARK!

ECDA WELCOMES MORE PRE-SCHOOLS TO THE SPARK FRATERNITY.



A regular key event at ECDA's annual Early Childhood Conference, this year's Singapore Preschool Accreditation Framework (SPARK) Certificate Presentation Ceremony was held on 6 October 2017. A total of 225 kindergartens and child care centres received their SPARK certification and re-certification from Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Education Ms Low Yen Ling. With

that, 770 pre-schools — representing 40 per cent of pre-schools island-wide — are now SPARK-certified, up from 601 (or 30 per cent) last year. "The SPARK logo has become a trusted and much sought-after hallmark of quality to the sector and parents," said Ms Low in her speech. "I am heartened that although SPARK is a voluntary quality assurance framework, more pre-schools are recognising the value of going through SPARK, and have come forward to be certified... The process of certification is rigorous, but well worth it."

More Support for Pre-schools

In 2016, it was announced that the validity period for SPARK certification would be extended to six years, and that a mid-term Developmental Visit (DV) would replace the re-certification assessment at the third-year mark. The ceremony this year marked the last time SPARK re-certification was awarded after three years. So far in 2017, DVs have been carried out in 162 pre-schools, and another 171 will be due for DVs in 2018.

The DVs, which provide targeted coaching and practical guidance to help pre-schools progressively improve their practices, have been warmly received. Madam Hafisah Binte Othman, Principal of PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Serangoon Blk 226, told *Beanstalk* that her centre has benefited from its DV in March this year. The purpose of the half-day session "was to coach rather than assess", said Mdm Hafisah, who added that she and her teachers "can see increased children's engagement at the centre" after implementing the advice given by the DV officer.

I am heartened that although SPARK is a voluntary quality assurance framework, more pre-schools are recognising the value of going through SPARK, and have come forward to be certified... The process of certification is rigorous, but well worth it.

Ms Low Yen Ling



A PARENT'S GUIDE TO SPARK





SPARK is... a voluntary quality assurance framework by ECDA to assist pre-schools in raising the quality of their programmes catering to four- to six-year-old children.

SPARK certification is... awarded to centres that have met the quality standards in teaching and learning, management and administrative processes to enhance the holistic development and well-being of young children. It is valid for six years.

A CHILD'S EXPERIENCES IN A SPARK-CERTIFIED CENTRE

<p>Child... Our Focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Activity-based learning in meaningful contexts ▶ Purposeful play ▶ Quality interactions with peers and adults ▶ Positive learning dispositions, such as perseverance, reflectiveness and inventiveness ▶ Current issues 	<p>Holistic development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Daily music / songs ▶ Elements of Art ▶ Showing care and respect for the world around them ▶ Daily story-telling ▶ Daily phonics and word recognition ▶ Gross and fine motor skills ▶ Healthy habits and safety practices ▶ Numeracy concepts and skills ▶ Self-management skills ▶ Social skills
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GO ONLINE Visit www.ecda.gov.sg/sparkinfo/Pages/Home.aspx for a full list of SPARK-certified pre-schools in Singapore.

CREATIVELY SPEAKING

AT PCF SPARKLETOTS PRESCHOOL @ NANYANG BLK 922, SPEECH AND DRAMA LESSONS HAVE TAKEN ON AN INNOVATIVE TWIST.



Speech choir participants having fun

In the pre-school curriculum, speech and drama lessons usually involve singing, storytelling and role-playing. But from last year, PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Nanyang Blk 922 has conducted such activities with a twist — the children recite poems and rhymes in unison (minus the music), which are accompanied with choreographed movements. This creative way of teaching the arts and language — known as speech choir — won the centre the ECDA Early Childhood Innovation Award 2017 (Distinction).

“My educators and I constantly look for ways to provide children with quality learning experiences,” says the centre’s principal, Ms Noorhayati Binte Zahari. “We like the idea of a speech choir because it is holistic and can be integrated into the six learning areas in the Nurturing Early Learners (NEL) curriculum framework. The speech choir strengthens children’s language skills and helps them synchronise speech patterns with physical movements. The children learn to express themselves creatively and also engage in counting and patterning.”

The centre applied for the ECDA Innovation Grant, which supported Ms Noorhayati and her team’s participation in a workshop conducted by a local music training company. There, the educators picked up techniques and learnt how to tailor

the speech choir experience to meet the developmental needs of pre-schoolers. The educators chose content that triggered conversations about values and dispositions (such as Robert Frost’s *The Road Not Taken*). Books such as *We’re Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen had educators exploring different sensorial textures through speech. To bring these descriptions to life, educators brought in real mud, grass and water for the children to feel the different textures and discuss appropriate speech sounds.

The speech choir was initially conducted only during the school holidays. But after seeing its benefits on the children, Ms Noorhayati and her team decided to introduce a 45-minute session once a week during the curriculum hours. “Children have gained confidence in expressing themselves verbally and communicating with each other,” says Ms Noorhayati.

Ms Poh Soh Hoon, mother to K1 pre-schooler Renee Yeo, believes that speech choir has taught her daughter the importance of teamwork. “It makes her more aware of how to cooperate and work together in groups,” says Ms Poh.

For Renee, five, the element of teamwork stands out the most. “Reciting the rhymes or poems is interesting. It is fun as I get to perform with my friends too.” ♥

The speech choir strengthens children’s language skills and helps them synchronise speech patterns with physical movements. The children learn to express themselves creatively and also engage in counting and patterning.

Ms Noorhayati Binte Zahari,
Principal, PCF Sparkletots Preschool @
Nanyang Blk 922



Reciting rhymes with movement

NOTES TO GET STARTED ON SPEECH CHOIR

Hone your own public speaking skills so that you can guide children more confidently and effectively:

- ▶ Learn when to pause for breath as you read. This allows you to read aloud long sentences without interrupting the flow.
- ▶ Practise proper articulation and diction. This ensures that performed words are clear and audible.
- ▶ Project your voice correctly so that you have a strong stage presence.



INQUIRING MINDS



AN AWARD-WINNING PROJECT BY THE CATERPILLAR’S COVE CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND STUDY CENTRE @ JURONG EAST SHEDS LIGHT ON HOW TODDLERS THINK AND LEARN.



Children at The Caterpillar’s Cove inventing and constructing with materials



Experimenting with clay



Learning concepts through the use of aluminium foil

Young children are naturally curious and they learn through watching, touching, smelling, tasting and, sometimes, by taking things apart. “Toddlers are no exception. They have specific characteristics that require an observant, intentional and responsive educator to extend their thinking,” says Ms Cynthia Tan, the principal of The Caterpillar’s Cove Child Development and Study Centre @ Jurong East.

To gain an understanding into how these young minds make sense of the world around them, the centre embarked on a study, “Strategies for Thinking: Fostering Toddler Inquiry Through Provocations” under the ECDA-funded Innovation Grant. The project won the centre the 2017 ECDA Early Childhood Innovation Award (Distinction).



Making sense of how ramps work

Getting Hands On

Some 20 toddlers, aged two to three years old participated in the project. Over four months, educators observed the children’s behaviours as they interacted with materials such as aluminium sheets and clay, as well as pieces of cardboard constructed into ramps. Through their observations, Ms Tan and her team identified four broad indicators of how toddlers think as they learn.

1 Toddlers manipulate resources to investigate, invent and construct. “Toddlers often use both big and small motor movements to help them make sense of the materials they are working with,” says Ms Tan. In this project, they used various parts of their bodies to poke, flatten and make marks on the clay. This helped them to discover the material’s properties.

We hope that the project and its findings can highlight the capabilities of toddlers and communicate the need for more support to strengthen the infant-toddler curriculum in Singapore.

Ms Cynthia Tan, Principal,
The Caterpillar’s Cove Child Development
and Study Centre @ Jurong East

2 Toddlers problem-solve using different methods, including by trial and error, reason and logic. For example, when a cardboard ramp tore, one toddler asked for tape to mend the tear. “The use of tape reflected his thinking about cause and effect. He seemed to have an understanding of the materials he was working with,” explains Ms Tan.

3 Toddlers understand mathematical ideas and concepts. The toddlers noticed the varying sizes of the materials. “One toddler asked for a bigger piece of aluminium, demonstrating his concept of size,” she says.

4 Toddlers explore ideas and theories using imagination, creativity and play. Ms Tan recalls one toddler rolling a self-assembled toy car down the ramp. After each try, he would extend the length of the car by adding extra parts. “When asked why, he told us he wanted it to be a fast car. Play was a way of exploring his theory that the larger the car, the faster it goes.”

Based on these observations, the centre further strengthened its curriculum to better facilitate the thinking processes of their toddlers. A toolkit has also been created to guide other educators to better facilitate inquiry in toddlers. ♥

Q&A

PAVING THE WAY TO LEADERSHIP.

For Parents



Q How can I equip my child with problem-solving skills to tackle day-to-day challenges and take the lead?

Encourage your child to think of solutions whenever he is faced with difficult situations. Adopting such an approach will help boost his confidence, his ability to persist in the face of challenges and develop his thinking skills.

Tip #1 Children love to ask questions such as “Why is...?” and “How did...?” The next time your child asks such a question, use these guiding questions — “what do you think..?” or “what will happen if...?”. Encourage him to explore possibilities and consequences.

Tip #2 When your child makes a mistake or gets upset when he fails at a task, assure him that it is alright and to try again. Remember to acknowledge his feelings as this will help him regulate his emotions. Talk him through the problem and discuss how it can be resolved.

Tip #3 Give your child a chance to look for alternatives and solutions to problems instead of jumping in to resolve it for him. Assure him that you have faith in his ability to manage the problem. Provide support by offering different solutions and allow him to think through choices.

Tip #4 In choosing toys, pick ‘open-ended’ ones such as building blocks and figurines. Such toys encourage creative play and help your child develop problem-solving skills.

Q How can we influence our teaching practices and the way we learn, and become change agents?
As early childhood educators, it is important to acknowledge that teaching and learning practices are continually evolving. We are the main change agents — we teach and learn in response to new developments.

Here are some strategies on how you can be a change agent and make a difference:

- ▶ Reflect on your current teaching and learning practices.
- ▶ Examine how your curriculum, pedagogy and assessments are planned, implemented and evaluated.
- ▶ Consider the profiles of families you work with, your centre’s organisational goals, technological advancements and national policies.
- ▶ List down your views on changes you are aware of and what other changes you would want to put in place for your curriculum, pedagogy and assessments.
- ▶ Check out developments on the international front.
- ▶ Share and discuss with fellow colleagues on possible changes as well as anticipated challenges.
- ▶ Involve your centre leader in the collaborative decision-making process.

It is also worthwhile to remember that attributes such as courage and perseverance are fuel to driving the changes you want to make.



ASK THE EXPERTS



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

DR KARUNA MARTHENIS is a SkillsFuture Manager at Temasek SkillsFuture Academy, Temasek Polytechnic with more than 30 years of experience in the early childhood sector. She has worked with children, families and practitioners in early childhood settings, and conducts training for pre-service and in-service early childhood educators.

THRIVE

grow

Make your own fruity jelly delight

p21



play

Have fun creating puppets from ice-cream sticks

p22



learn

Discover the rich biodiversity of Gardens by the Bay

p18



BAKE A GINGERBREAD MAN

Learn



Ms Debbie Chen (left) leading educators on the Gardens tour

A Wonderland OF FLORA and FAUNA

A UNIQUE LEARNING EXPERIENCE AWAITS CHILDREN AT GARDENS BY THE BAY.

When Ms Debbie Chen pointed out the heaviest tree in the Flower Dome – an African Baobab (*Adansonia digitata*) that weighs about 32,000kg – to a group of pre-schoolers on an excursion, one little boy piped up: “How did you bring it over?” This question caught Ms Chen, Senior Manager (Education) at Gardens by the Bay (the Gardens) by surprise. Yet, it was a welcome reminder of the insatiable curiosity of young children to learn new things.

This anecdote was related by Ms Chen, as she led a group of 40 educators on a recent learning journey around the Gardens. Entitled “Explore a World of Plants”, the tour on 7 September 2017 was one of the 10 learning journeys organised as part of the ECDA Early Childhood Conference 2017. Ms Chen said, “The Gardens is an outdoor classroom that can tap into children’s sense of wonder and promote active learning. It offers a wide range of programmes and a multi-disciplinary journey for pre-schoolers. There are iconic structures, novel displays, as well as native and non-native plants.”

Besides plants from all over the world, the Gardens is also home to fauna. There are a myriad variety of birds, butterflies and

dragonflies. A visit to the Gardens is also an opportunity for educators to teach the young ones about the importance of protecting the natural habitats of plants and animals, and of the environment as a whole. “The Gardens is also the perfect place for educators to develop vocabulary and reinforce concepts such as opposites, numbers, shapes and colours,” Ms Chen said. For example, educators can draw the children’s attention to the varying heights of the Supertrees or how plants vary in appearance.

FRUITFUL PARTNERSHIPS

During the tour, educators visited each of the following stops – The Baobabs, Olive Grove, Chinese Garden and Malay Garden (see sidebar) and brainstormed about the activities they could organise for their pre-schoolers. “This learning journey has been an eye-opener. It gave us ideas on how to introduce these stops to the children and the discussions we could have with our pre-schoolers,” said Ms Nurizzati Aqilah

Gardens by the Bay: An outdoor classroom with varied learning opportunities



Participants engaging in a discussion

For them, being able to see real exotic plants up close is a totally different experience from merely looking at pictures of such plants.

Educator Ms Nurizzati Aqilah Binte Iskandar Mulia, participant of the Gardens by the Bay Learning Journey



Binte Iskandar Mulia, a Senior Teacher and Curriculum Coordinator at Little Mighty Me Pte Ltd, a child care centre.

A follow-up workshop to the learning journey was held on 7 October 2017 where educators then developed a more detailed learning experience plan for their pre-schoolers.

“Educators do understand how children learn. In view of this, partnerships with pre-schools enable the Gardens to design useful learning resources (see sidebar),” said Ms Chen. Similarly, educators like Ms Nurizzati have gained more knowledge by learning from professionals who are experts in their field. “Partnering other agencies helps us value-add to our curriculum plans. It also gives children access to different resources, learning opportunities and settings. These experiences work wonders in broadening their horizons and enriching their learning,” said Ms Nurizzati.

For instance, the Cooled Conservatories makes it possible for children to see temperate-climate plants. “For them, being able to see real exotic plants up close is a totally different experience from merely looking at pictures of such plants,” said Ms Nurizzati.

She had brought a group of K2 children to the Far East Organization Children’s Garden at the Gardens previously. During that excursion, Ms Nurizzati had merely drawn the children’s attention to different plants. “However, after the learning journey, I feel more confident of myself. I have picked up skills on how to engage the pre-schoolers and have meaningful and enriching discussions with them,” she said. ♥

Let's go down the gardens' path

“A Garden Adventure” is one of the projects under the ECDA Innovation Guidance Project (IGP) initiative that works with community partners to improve programme quality and teaching-learning practices, and to sustain or extend innovation. IGP participants can participate in a full-day training as well as two half-day sharing sessions, where they will pick up the required skills and knowledge to carry out innovative activities with their pre-schoolers. Participants are also required to submit lesson plans or a learning journey tool kit at the end of the project.

The ECDA Innovation Projects, which IGP is a part of, were introduced to improve the quality of pre-school programmes and encourage pre-schools to explore less conventional learning experiences. Interested centres can sign up for IGP 2018 at www.ecda.gov.sg/Educators/Pages/ECDA-Innovation-Projects-Grant.aspx

GET HANDS-ON, GET CREATIVE!

Here are some activity ideas for children after their visit to The Gardens:

- ▶ Make a baobab tree using an old bottle and fill it with water to demonstrate the tree’s ability to store water in its trunk.
- ▶ Recreate an olive tree with recycled materials to show that olives grow on trees.
- ▶ Role-play as bamboo swaying in the wind to hone children’s music and movement skills, as well as to teach them the concept of flexibility.
- ▶ Introduce a variety of food that uses coconut in different forms.

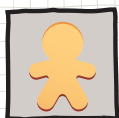
ADDITIONAL LEARNING RESOURCES



Pre-schools can visit both the Flower Dome and Cloud Forest as part of a 90-minute facilitated school programme. As for a shorter 45-minute programme, pre-schools can visit either the Outdoor Gardens or one of the Cooled Conservatories. For self-guided journeys, educators and parents can download activity sheets and a mobile app.

Books suitable for pre-schoolers are also on sale at The Gardens. Find out more at www.gardensbythebay.com.sg/en/education.html

OUTDOOR LEARNING EXPERIENCE FOR CHILDREN



18 Beanstalk



Oct-Dec 19

KEEP IN MIND

Ms Debbie Chen shares her pointers on organising learning journeys for pre-schoolers:



- 1 Have specific learning outcomes; this way you can plan a more meaningful experience and activities.
- 2 Design a holistic experience that includes pre- and post-learning journey activities. This would ensure that the children are well-prepared for the visit and their learning can be reinforced.
- 3 Be familiar with both the venue and content so that you can focus on engaging the pre-schoolers during the visit, instead of being distracted by the need to look for directions.

Win

Develop Your Child's Appreciation For Nature

LIST THREE ACTIVITIES THAT YOU CAN DO WITH YOUR CHILD AFTER A VISIT TO GARDENS BY THE BAY.

HOW TO WIN

Submit your answer to beanstalk@mediacorp.com.sg with your name and contact details.
Closing date: 30 November 2017



TOP PRIZE X 1

FRIENDS OF THE GARDENS ONE-YEAR FAMILY MEMBERSHIP FOR 2 ADULTS/SENIORS AND UP TO 3 CHILDREN AGED 3 TO 12
Includes unlimited admission to Flower Dome, Cloud Forest, OCBC Skyway, two-hour complimentary parking, invitations to Gardens' workshops and events, retail and dining discounts and a welcome pack

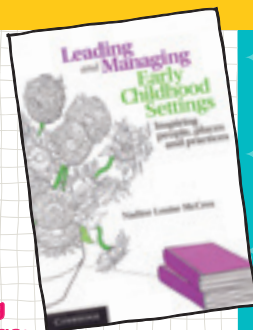


CONSOLATION PRIZE X 3

GARDENS BY THE BAY \$20 CASH VOUCHER
Redeemable at Gardens by the Bay ticketing, retail shops, Children's Garden Café and Conservatory Café

THE POWER OF Inspiration

BOOKS THAT MOTIVATE AND NUTURE LEADERSHIP SKILLS



Leading and Managing Early Childhood Settings: Inspiring People, Places and Practices
By Nadine Louise McCrea

Combining theory, research and practical applications, this book provides an innovative approach to help educators understand the different ways they can lead and manage effectively in the field of early childhood education. Key issues such as professional communication, team collaboration, policies and pedagogy design are explored, and each chapter comes with reflective and critical thinking questions to reinforce the concepts. This is an invaluable resource that educators can draw on to implement positive change in their leadership and management styles.

Contributed by Azizah Osman, Senior Librarian, National Library Board

Overcoming Personal Challenges
By Vic Parker

Every challenge can be overcome if you turn it into an opportunity. Read about how a group of young individuals, including a disabled Olympic medallist, an anti-bullying child activist and a sports prodigy from an underprivileged family, went against all odds to surmount adversity in their lives. Their inspiring life stories will help you prepare your child with the courage and fortitude to overcome their own personal challenges, as well as lend a helping hand to the less-fortunate.

Contributed by Marhama Mohamed, Librarian, National Library Board



Jiggly DELIGHT

HURRAY! THE HOLIDAYS ARE HERE! TREAT YOUR CHILD TO THIS FRUITY WATERMELON JELLY AND HAVE FUN MAKING IT TOGETHER.



WATERMELON JELLY

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- ▶ 3g kanten powder (or agar-agar powder as replacement)
- ▶ 300ml (or 1¼ cups) watermelon juice. You may also use other fruits, such as strawberry, apple or pear.

SERVES 4

FOLLOW THESE STEPS

1 Taste the watermelon before using it to make the jelly. If it is bland, you may add a little sugar to the juice for that extra sweet kick.

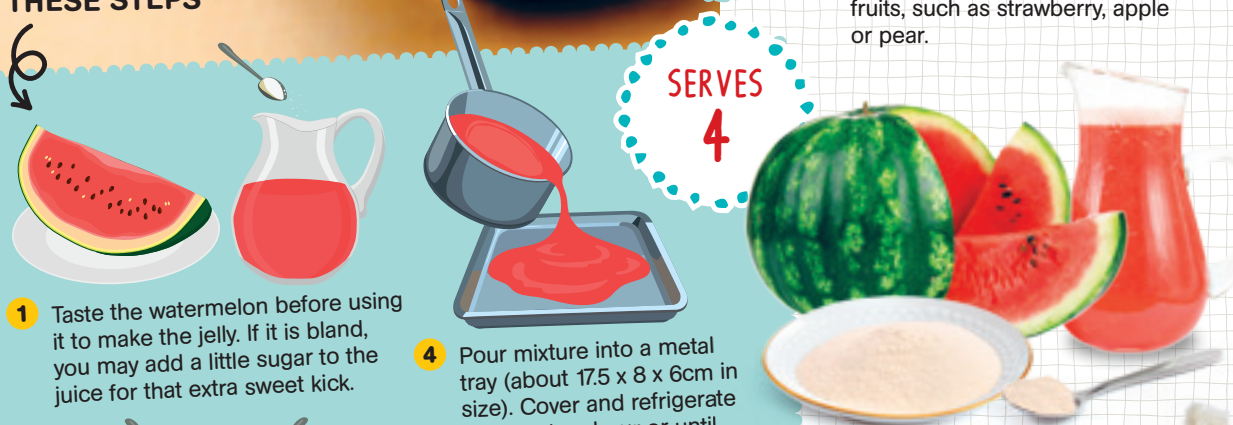
2 Mix kanten powder with 5 tsp of watermelon juice.

3 Pour 100ml of watermelon juice in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Remove from heat. Stir in kanten mixture, followed by the remaining juice.

4 Pour mixture into a metal tray (about 17.5 x 8 x 6cm in size). Cover and refrigerate for about an hour or until jelly is set.

5 Cut the watermelon jelly into cubes and arrange on individual serving plates.

6 Garnish with a drop of condensed milk, or other ingredient as desired.



WHAT IS KANTEN?

Kanten is a white and semi-translucent algae-based gelatinous substance that is similar to agar (or agar-agar), but they come from different seaweeds. Kanten powder is sold at supermarkets that stocks Japanese foodstuff.

For information on the benefits of eating fruits and vegetables, visit www.healthhub.sg/programmes/56/fruits-and-veggies and www.healthhub.sg/live-healthy/1291/fun-fruity-facts.

This recipe first appeared in *Shojin Ryori: The Art of Japanese Vegetarian Cuisine*, published by Marshall Cavendish.



Adult supervision is needed when boiling the watermelon juice.

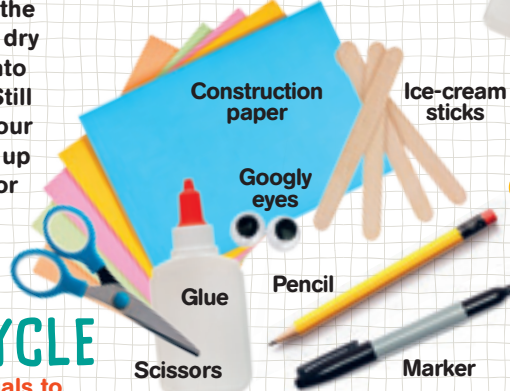
GO Wild and make a ZOO!

TRANSFORM USED ICE-CREAM STICKS INTO CUTE ANIMAL PUPPETS.



Keep your ice-cream sticks after you have enjoyed the sweet treats. Wash and dry them, and turn them into animal stick puppets. Still feeling creative? Use your imagination and come up with exciting stories for the puppets.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED



LET'S RECYCLE

When you re-use materials to make something new, that's called recycling. It's a great way to cut down on waste and be kinder to our planet Earth.

ANIMALS, TWO BY TWO!

Make lots of animal stick puppets to stage a puppet show for your family and friends.



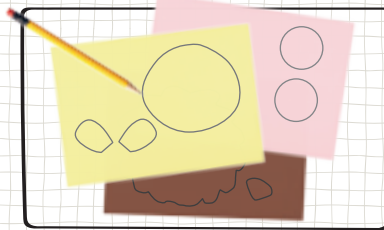
WILD SNAPS

Hey parents, send a snapshot of your child with his/her stick puppet to beanstalk@mediacorp.com.sg. Include your child's full name, age, contact details and his or her photo. Selected craftwork will be published in the next issue of Beanstalk!

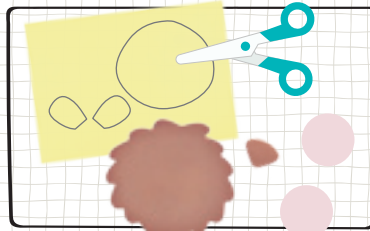


FOLLOW THESE STEPS

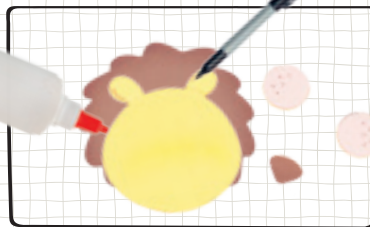
1 With a pencil, draw the shapes you need for the animal of your choice on the construction paper. For example, to make a lion, you need a face, a mane, a nose and cheeks.



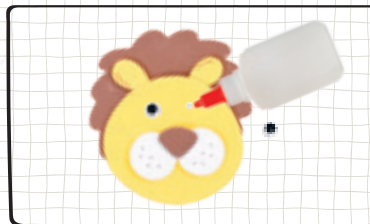
2 Cut the shapes out with a pair of scissors. Be careful and get a grown-up to help you.



3 Glue the shapes together to create the lion's face. To make your puppet come alive, add details to the ears and cheeks with a black marker.



4 Paste the googly eyes onto the lion's face.



5 Finally, use glue to attach the lion to one end of the popsicle stick.



LOOKING BACK TO PLAN AHEAD

A YEAR-END REFLECTION HELPS US BUILD A HEALTHIER 2018



1 Be a Good Role Model

Young children are impressionable and mirror the actions of their parents. It is therefore important that you set the right example. For instance, if you don't want them to get hooked on mobile devices, don't be glued to them yourself. How you communicate with your child is equally important. Remember he is listening attentively to you and absorbing your words, even the tone you use.



2 Get Active Together

Sports and physical activity should be an integral part of you and your child's daily routine. The benefits of staying active include improved health and self-esteem. Engage your child in floor-based play, even before he can crawl. Take the stairs with your child instead of the lift, or stroll around the neighbourhood together. You can also sign up for a free ActiveSG membership at www.myactivesg.com to receive \$100 credit, which you can use for admission into swimming complexes, as well as for booking sports facilities and programmes.

3 Cultivate Good Eating Habits

Good nutrition is important for a child's growth and wellbeing. HPB's "My Healthy Plate" guide suggests that your child consume a variety of food from these food groups: Brown rice and wholemeal bread, fruit and vegetables, as well as meat and other dairy or calcium-rich foods. Remember to also let them drink plenty of water and be mindful of the fat, salt and sugar content in their food.



4 Share the Joy of Reading

Build a strong language foundation by having conversations and reading to your child. Bring him to the library to select a book of his choice to read. Create a bedtime story routine. This will enhance his communication skills and vocabulary, as well as strengthen the bond with your child. Include stories in your mother tongue so that your child can learn to appreciate the language at an early age.



5 Love Your Child Unconditionally — Remember That No One is Perfect

Don't be hard on your child if he does not respond well to some of the things that you are doing. Your child is unique and, as parents, you can support his individual strength by being patient, respectful and interested in his growth and development.



6 Chart Resolutions Together

Make resolutions with your child. It is a great way to help your child take ownership of some aspects of his daily experience. Have him name three things he did well this year. Then ask him to list three things he would like to do or improve on next year. Talk through the resolutions and help him break it down into simple and practical steps or actions.

WE'VE GOT MAIL! 😊

PARENTS SHARE HOW THEY NURTURE LEADERSHIP QUALITIES IN THEIR CHILDREN.



Looking after baby brother



A good leader is responsible, respectful and understands the importance of relationships. We reinforce these values in our daughter through her role as big sister. She is involved in all day-to-day activities of her little brother, from feeding him and playing with him to coaching him in his schoolwork and ensuring he packs up after playtime. Both siblings have grown very close in the process.

Sarah Chua, Mother of a six-year-old daughter and four-year-old son



Making decisions is a leadership quality. I start our storytelling sessions by writing an opening sentence. My daughter then takes the lead to continue the story. As she narrates, I write it down. I offer suggestions when she gets stuck and let her decide how she wants to carry on with the story. This makes her feel empowered and confident of herself. We print a copy of the stories and she enjoys sharing these with her mummy.



O Hung Lun, Father of a four-year-old girl



Leading through reading



We always involve our older daughter in family activities such as grocery shopping, cooking and housecleaning. She also looks after her younger brother and takes the initiative to read storybooks to him every night. They enjoy each other's company very much and through their time together, have learnt to share and care for each other. Our son has also developed an interest in reading.

Bek Sir Sir, Mother of a six-year-old girl and 15-month-old son

CREATIVE BADGES

In the Jul-Sep 17 issue, we asked you to show us the brooch you made. Here are three outstanding entries:



Adi Rahman Nur Rahim Bin Haminorrashid, 5



Aimee Hoh Yee Huey, 2



Taylor Ngiam Lok Kee, 6

Photos courtesy of Sarah Chua and Bek Sir Sir

LOOK CLOSELY...

THE TWO PICTURES LOOK THE SAME, BUT ARE THEY?



HOW TO PLAY

See if you can spot the differences between the two pictures.

HINT: There are five differences altogether!



HEY PARENTS!

Spot the Difference is a fun game that helps your child focus and sharpen his observation skills.



ANSWER



BOOST YOUR CHILD'S CRITICAL-THINKING SKILLS

There is no one solution to an issue, problem or challenge. Tell us how your child has been creative in solving problems, or how you have guided him in finding possible solutions. 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.