

On the road to *quality*

The Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) has announced a new Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Masterplan to raise the quality of early childhood professionals.

WITH THE LAUNCH of the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Masterplan, better career prospects as well as professional development opportunities are in store for early childhood leaders and educators in Singapore.

To be rolled out in stages from the first half of 2014, the masterplan was first announced by Minister Chan Chun Sing, Minister for Social and Family Development, on 20 November 2013 at the Early Childhood Development Agency's (ECDA) inaugural Early Childhood (EC) Conference. ➔

The masterplan is a key component of the government's plan to attract, develop and retain EC professionals and raise the quality of Singapore's early childhood sector. It aims to provide continuous, relevant and timely professional development opportunities for educators to upgrade themselves so as to enable them to play a pivotal role in the provision of quality early childhood programmes.

"There cannot be a quality childcare sector without quality teachers. Teachers are at the core of all we do...[they] are the ones who deliver the quality programmes for our families and children," said Mr Chan.

Key features of the masterplan include two career pathways, CPD courses as well as support measures and incentives for EC professionals to continually upgrade themselves. The sector will be informed of the details of these incentives in the second half of 2014.

The two career pathways are designed to cater to the different aspirations of EC professionals. The first — the teaching track — provides career advancement opportunities for those who aspire to build their expertise in teaching and learning, as well as the grooming of the next generation of committed teachers.

The second pathway — the leadership track — will groom those who aspire towards leadership positions in the sector.

The masterplan also includes core CPD courses for EC professionals which have been developed in consultation with the sector through surveys and focus group discussions conducted in 2013. Core courses, which will cover essential knowledge and skills, are open to all certified EC professionals. In addition to

core courses, the masterplan will include milestone courses which will prepare professionals for their roles in either the teaching or the leadership track. ECDA will set out guidelines on the recommended CPD training hours for each teacher per year as well as the number of core courses they are encouraged to attend over a period of time.

THE CPD MASTERPLAN
— WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

	2014	2015
CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MASTERPLAN	Structured Professional Pathways and CPD courses	Incentives and Recognition for CPD
	Core courses and CPD seminars begin	Alternative modes of CPD (online, individual/group)
SUPPORT MEASURES FOR CPD	Additional CPD days with flexible staffing arrangements for all centres	Online Teacher Database and CPD Management Portal
	ECDA Training Awards for full-time Polytechnic students (launched in Aug 2013)	Qualified Relief Teacher Database and Courses
MENTORSHIP AWARDS AND SCHOLARSHIPS		Harmonised Degree & Part-Time Diploma Scholarships
		Induction and Mentoring Framework



Main Image Getty Images

An online portal for teachers to plan their individual training roadmaps is also in the pipeline.

Mr Chan also announced support measures that would enable EC professionals to pursue upgrading opportunities without compromising their teaching commitments. For a start, ECDA is looking into establishing a pool of qualified relief staff that centres can tap on when their teachers are away for training.

Ms Krisnaveni d/o Palanasamy Krishnasamy, an assistant supervisor with PCF Sparkletots Childcare Centre, feels that the announcements came as a boost to the sector. "The industry is growing, so we really need more centres, we need more quality programmes and we need to upgrade the skills of our teachers...with more training, everyone stands to benefit: the teachers, the children, the parents, the centres," says Ms Krisnaveni.



TOWARDS LIFELONG LEARNING

Calling all centre leaders, teachers and educators! In the efforts to increase the quality of the Early Childhood (EC) sector, EC professionals are encouraged to undertake at least 20 hours of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) per year.

A series of core courses is being rolled out starting this February. These core courses cover the following areas:

- Child Development, Learning Environments and Curriculum
- Family and Community Engagement
- Leadership and Administration
- Innovation and Research

Besides core courses, EC professionals can also attend conferences and seminars, partake in web-based learning or sign up for work attachments and study trips.

Sign up today!

For more information on the ECDA Professional Development Prospectus 2014, log on to www.growatbeanstalk.sg



It's SO APParent!

Support for parents to help their children realise their full potential is readily available, thanks to a slew of new resources developed by ECDA.

APPARENT IN SG is a free mobile app designed for the parents of newborns, toddlers and children below the age of seven.

It provides ready access to a suite of parenting content, the latest research in child development, news from the early childhood sector, and other resources to connect parents and educators.

Using the app, parents can tap on, bite-sized and practical tips on raising confident, creative and caring children which are updated weekly. These tips cover a range of important developmental areas from language development, creativity, thinking skills and physical development to social and emotional development.

Designed by the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA), the app is available for download from the Apple Store and Google Play. Users are also able to use the app to access a calendar of parent-oriented events organised by ECDA and its partner agencies, as well as a mobile version of this magazine, *Beanstalk*.

The app was launched by the Minister for Social and Family Development, Mr Chan Chun Sing at the 2013 Early Childhood Parenting Conference on 23 November 2013. The half-day conference for parents with young children was themed, "Every Child Developing Appropriately".

In his opening address, Mr Chan spoke about what it means to be a successful parent today.

"What is the definition of success? My own definition for success," said Mr Chan, "is that [my children] will be able to do justice to the blessings that [they] have — for themselves, for their family, and for their community."

He told parents at the conference that "we have to be careful not to pin our own expectations and unfulfilled dreams on our children."

"Whatever [children's] strengths are, I think it is important



A mobile version of the parenting toolkit is also available via the APParent in SG app.

Download the app from the App Store on iTunes and Google Play today!



that we provide the foundation and confidence for them to do justice to what they have," he said.

"We need to accept our children as they are. We need to work with them to grow their strengths and overcome their weaknesses." ECDA also launched a new online portal and a parenting toolkit in addition to the parenting app, at the conference.

The online portal, named *Grow@ Beanstalk* (www.growatbeanstalk.sg) is for parents with children below the age of six and early childhood educators. Visitors to the portal can access a range of holistic and age-appropriate content on child development and community resources.

The *Parenting Moments* toolkit is also available for download from the portal. It contains practical tips on child development as well as ideas and suggestions to build strong and positive parent-child bonding and relationships. ♥



CALLING ALL PARENTS

ECDA is carrying out Singapore's first national study on early years parenting and would like to encourage parents to support this by participating in a 20-30 minute face-to-face interview. This study is aimed at understanding:

- Parenting practices in Singapore and how these are shaped and influenced;
- Issues and challenges parents face at different stages of their parenting journey; and

- Support and resources needed, as well as sources of information parents rely on.

As a token of our appreciation for your time, you will be presented with a \$5 NTUC FairPrice Voucher after the interview. Email your interest to participate in this study to randolphtang@unisim.edu.sg and danielkohkw@unisim.edu.sg.

Please call 6248 6103 for enquiries.