

Beanstalk



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Jul-Sep 2018

AT HOME WITH THE WORLD

What it means to raise globally-minded children

ESSENCE OF CULTURE
How the Mother Tongue Language can strengthen cultural roots



THRIVE

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

»» WIN! A CREATIVE BOX WITH ART MATERIALS TO CREATE YOUR OWN PUPPET



FROM SELF TO OTHERS



spearheaded by the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA), is doing just that. A total of 670 preschools and some 39,000 children are now on board the 4th annual edition of "Start Small Dream Big", which affirms the importance of service learning and volunteerism. It is nearly five times as many participants as the inaugural launch in 2015.

Art and music can also help nurture and broaden young minds. We invite parents and educators to the ECDA-National Library Board Expert Series Seminar, which will be held on 28 July (Saturday) at the Woodlands Regional Library. At this seminar, you can pick up practical tips to develop your children's critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Our early childhood educators play a significant role in our children's early years. It is vitally important for parents to work with our educators to support their development and learning. This Teachers' Day, please join us in affirming and appreciating the role, commitment and passion of our educators.

Former US President Franklin D. Roosevelt once said, "We cannot always build the future for our youth, but we can build our youth for the future."

As parents and educators, let us work together to nurture our children to be globally-minded – to have compassion for others, to care for the environment and to contribute towards a better community, country and the world at large!

MR EUGENE LEONG

Chief Executive Officer
Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA)

The Information Age is fast creating a world without borders. For our children to thrive in this interconnected world, they need to be aware of the world around them, appreciate different perspectives and cultures, embrace new ideas, as well as acquire the skills and attitude for creative thinking, problem solving and global citizenship.

At the same time, our children should be secure and rooted in their identity as Singaporeans, and in our collective heritage and culture.

Research suggests that our children should have opportunities to be engaged in culturally rich and diverse experiences, participate in environmental and sustainable practices and to volunteer in community service. These opportunities enable them to develop a value-system that is based on respect, care and compassion.

"Start Small Dream Big", a President's Challenge initiative



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RAISING A GLOBALLY-MINDED CHILD

PARENTS AND EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS DISCUSS HOW TO NURTURE A GENERATION OF CHILDREN WHO ARE GLOBALLY, SOCIALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS, AS WELL AS RICH IN VALUES.



MAIN PHOTO On: Anurandha; Shirt: Dress CRAYON, Ribbon Pumps; Melissa. On: Austen; Shirt & Shorts: Cotton On Kids; Slogan Tee, Snap-back & Slippers: Seed Heritage. On: Lucas: Full outfit: Seed Heritage. On: Noeli: Dinosaur Printed Tee: Seed Heritage; Fedora & Jogger: Pants: Kookies + Milk; Sneakers: Stylist's own. On: Louise: Full outfit: Seed Heritage; Unicorn Printed Pumps: Melissa. On: Nur Syarah: Full outfit: Seed Heritage. On: Ahmad Lufti: Full outfit: Marks and Spencer. Denim Sneakers: SPINGLE; Star: 360. PAGE 3 On: Edna: Full outfit: Model's own. Photo: Kelvin Chia Styling. Sharon Tan assisted by: Kane Tan Grooming. Manisa Tan & Felicia Ng

WHAT DOES BEING "GLOBALLY CONSCIOUS" MEAN TO YOU PERSONALLY? AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO NURTURE CHILDREN WHO ARE GLOBALLY-MINDED?

Anurandha d/o Subramaniam: Globally-conscious individuals are aware of their environments, issues and the people around them. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected and interdependent, we come in contact with people from all over the world. It is critical for children to respect this diversity and embrace the concepts of equality and fairness. Nurturing this mindset begins in the early years and continues as part of our children's lifelong journey.

Toh Ai Lin: Being globally conscious is to go beyond our immediate four walls or our shores. It is about understanding what other cultures entail. A globally-minded child is one who is able to appreciate and empathise with others, opens up to the diversity and richness of each culture, and understand that every culture is beautiful in its own way. With increased globalisation made possible by technological advancements, it is crucial to nurture my daughter's global awareness so that she can thrive in this rapidly changing world.

Edna Ng: To be globally conscious, one needs to start with oneself — knowing who you are, appreciating the community you belong to and being culturally rich. Young children are eager to learn new things, and their early years are prime for exposure to different cultures. As adults, we can help them understand and respect different cultures, their traditions and customs. These will give them the skills to appreciate cultural diversity when interacting with others now, and later in life.

Ahmad Lufti Bin Abdul Rashid: A globally-minded child learns to confidently and sensitively communicate with different people. He becomes aware of their differences, and is open and respectful of them. Inculcating values is important as everyone has a part to play in ensuring racial harmony, especially in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society like Singapore. Our children have to learn to appreciate the diversified world that we live in. They can only do this by observing what we say and do. We have to be their role models.

Young children are eager to learn new things, and their early years are prime for exposure to different cultures. As adults, we can help them understand and respect different cultures, their traditions and customs.

Ms Edna Ng



EC PROFESSIONALS, HOW DO YOUR CENTRES AIM TO INCULCATE THIS SENSE OF CULTURAL AND SOCIAL AWARENESS?

Edna: We have in place a Friendship Programme at our Kindergarten. The intention is to provide our children with opportunities to interact and learn from other children of different backgrounds, including those from Malaysia, Taiwan and the French preschool in Singapore. As part of the programme, children and teachers take turns to visit one another's centre, with the host putting up cultural performances, organising traditional games and serving local food. We introduced this programme some years back as we realised that our children would benefit from being exposed to cultures and traditions beyond their own. We want them to experience diversity and develop appropriate social skills in their early years, so that they grow up to become respectful and confident adults.

Anu: At our preschool, teachers make current affairs an integral part of our curriculum. For example, in the week that the Jurong Region Line was announced, the children learnt about public spaces and transportation. The teachers also discussed with the children why a new MRT line is needed, and how increased connectivity makes travelling more convenient. Moving beyond our shores, we also expose the children to what is happening regionally. For example, we gathered newspaper articles on the haze situation, its impact on the environment and brainstormed possible solutions. This helps the children make meaning of the news instead of merely being fed with the information.

WHAT ARE SOME THINGS WE NEED TO TAKE NOTE OF WHEN EXPOSING CHILDREN TO CURRENT AFFAIRS OR ROLLING OUT FRIENDSHIP PROGRAMMES?

Anu: We need to ensure that the news is developmentally appropriate and relevant. How we unpack the news is also important to make it engaging and meaningful for the children. News on road accidents or natural disasters may negatively affect children so it's important to tune into the children's emotional state. Keep parents updated on topics and issues discussed. Encourage them to continue the discussions at home to further strengthen their children's understanding. For the young ones in the playgroups, you can expose them to simple and appropriate images, as most content may be too complex and abstract for their understanding. Draw links between the news and the children's daily lives and routines. Making such connections will help them understand and appreciate the issues at hand.

Edna: Plan ahead if your centre is interested in putting together a friendship programme. It is important to rally the teachers and be specific about

the learning objectives and the key insights that you would like the children to take away. Also draw up a plan on how you want to achieve the objectives. Involve children in researching the culture of the children they will be visiting. You can also get parents to contribute as well by involving them in activities, such as teaching traditional games or chaperoning visits to the international preschool.

WHAT ARE SOME BENEFITS TO THE CHILDREN AS A RESULT OF THESE EXPERIENCES?

Anu: We have observed that the children are more aware and curious about what is happening around them. They have a deeper understanding of issues and

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Ms Anurandha d/o Subramaniam



Ms Anurandha d/o Subramaniam
36, Educator at Mindchamps Preschool @ Changi Business Park

A globally-minded child learns to confidently and sensitively communicate with different people. He becomes aware of their differences, and is open and respectful of them. Inculturating values is important as everyone has a part to play in ensuring racial harmony, especially in a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society like Singapore.

Mr Ahmad Lufti Bin Abdul Rashid

are more confident in sharing their experiences with their peers. Their command of language has also improved.

Edna: The Friendship Programme has opened up opportunities for the children to make new friends and learn new things. For example, from their friends at the French preschool, the children in my kindergarten now have a better understanding of the French lifestyle, food, culture and language; everything from the food they eat to the songs they sing and the games they play. They have also learnt simple French greeting phrases. The experience has piqued their curiosity and opened their minds to beyond what they are accustomed to.

PARENTS, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THESE PROGRAMMES CONDUCTED AT YOUR CHILD'S CENTRE?

Lufti: The current affairs programme has been enlightening for my daughter. It is good that she is exposed to a wide range of topics and issues — from science, health and the environment to sports, music and even politics. The class discussions have also helped to broaden her mind and deepen the way she thinks. I am pleased as this has sparked her curiosity to know and learn more.

Ai Lin: The cross-culture sharing experiences from the Friendship Programme have given my daughter an opportunity to interact with children whose first language isn't English. It has been an enriching experience for her. I find that she now is more appreciative of another person's culture. Not to mention that she has had a fun time, too!

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO ENCOURAGE YOUR CHILD TO HAVE AN OPEN MIND AND THINKING THAT GOES BEYOND THE 'SELF'?

Lufti: My wife and I make it a point to expose our daughter to different art forms. We take her to the museums and Esplanade Theatres on the Bay, especially if there's a children-focused programme going on. The latter often holds free cultural performances, like the Malay *dikir barat* and Korean folk dance. After each outing, we



Mr Ahmad Lufti Bin Abdul Rashid
35, Civil Servant, Father of a 3-year-old girl



WINDOWS TO THE WORLD

TEACHERS SHARE TIPS ON WHAT ELSE PARENTS CAN DO TO FOSTER A GLOBAL MINDSET IN THEIR CHILDREN.

- ✓ Create a cosy current affairs corner at home with your child. Select interesting newspaper articles together with your child to put up in the corner.
- ✓ Watch the local and international news together. Engage your child in conversations.
- ✓ Visit museums and put together a 'cultural' scrapbook. Revisit the contents periodically.
- ✓ Borrow books from the library to find out more about different cultures.
- ✓ Look for ways to reach out to the community. Discuss with your preschool how you and your child can be involved. For instance, you could take part in fund-raising events for social causes.



THIS SPREAD On Anurandha: Cardigan: Stylist's own, Stripe Shift Dress: Yacht 21, On Nur Syaurah: Full outfit: Seed Heritage, On Ahmad Lufti: Full outfit: Marks and Spencer, PAGE 6 On Ai Lin: Belted Blouse: CRAYON, Jeans: Model's Own, On Louise: Full outfit: Cookies + Milk.

COVER On Nur Syaurah: Full outfit: Seed Heritage, Windbreaker: Seed Heritage, Emotion Printed Tee & Beige Shorts: Cotton On Kids, Socks & Sneakers: Stylist's own, On Anurandha: Blouse: Seed Heritage, Jeans & Flats: Stylist's own.

Ms Teh Ai Lin
50, Secretary,
Mother of a
6-year-old girl



have conversations to help her better understand the whole experience.

Ai Lin: As parents, we play an important role in moulding our children's understanding and appreciation of different cultures. My husband and I talk to our daughter about the festivals celebrated in Singapore and their significance. We also bring her to gatherings and weddings when we are invited by friends of other races. These are good opportunities for her to understand different cultures.

NATURE AS A LEARNING TOOL

OUTDOOR EDUCATOR MS JANET ROBERTSON SHARES HOW SHE USES NATURAL MATERIALS TO DEVELOP ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS IN CHILDREN.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF TAPPING ON NATURE AND NATURAL MATERIALS TO CREATE TEACHING AND LEARNING RESOURCES FOR YOUNG CHILDREN?

All materials have their own 'voice' — a language of possibilities. Some materials are intentionally 'close ended' (such as insert puzzles), while others (such as blocks) offer more possibilities. These manufactured resources, though useful and necessary, may not have the inherent complexity of natural materials. For example, no two leaves are the same, and each pebble or stone is unique. This complexity enables for more interpretation and encourages imagination and creativity.

HOW CAN A SUSTAINABILITY MINDSET BE NURTURED IN THE EARLY YEARS?

Sustainability is a complex issue and is more than just about the 3Rs (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle). Simply taking natural materials without regard for their provenance, so children can play with them, is in itself an unsustainable act. Many of the materials commercially available are also not harvested or transported in a sustainable manner.

Ms Janet Robertson
Outdoor teacher at
Mia Mia Child and
Family Study Centre,
Institute of Early
Childhood at Macquarie
University

Currently, teaching young children about sustainability tends to focus on the negative aspects of issues like climate change. We can actually shift our focus away from the negative and towards the positive. For instance, we can teach our children to appreciate nature so that they will fall in love with the earth and what it has to offer (this is known as biophilia). This will help create individuals who care enough to be custodians of the planet and its resources.

CAN YOU OFFER SOME TIPS TO OUR EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONALS WHEN USING NATURAL MATERIALS AS A TEACHING TOOL?

- Trust that children will be imaginative and find ideas with the natural materials you have at hand.
- Speak to the relevant authorities about your desire to use natural materials from the preschool's surroundings, and together explore how this can be done.
- Learn to appreciate the local natural materials like leaves, twigs, pebbles, and bark that are found in Singapore.
- Add natural materials to existing play spaces, instead of creating an exclusive space for natural material play.
- Always check the safety of new items. Create a checklist so you can assess the potential problems (if any), such as if they might be a choking hazard, a skin irritant or poisonous if ingested. ♥

CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

LEARNING TO APPRECIATE THE RICHNESS OF THE MOTHER TONGUE LANGUAGE.



Children learning Tamil through the art of Rangoli drawing at St. Francis of Assisi Kindergarten (Jurong West)

Having been a Tamil Language teacher for 13 years, Mrs Usharani Ramu understands the importance of Mother Tongue Languages (MTLs). "MTL classes are not just about learning the language," says the educator from St. Francis of Assisi Kindergarten (Jurong West). "It's a time for teachers to share the meaning of cultural festivals with children and introduce them to various aspects of their heritage." These include folklore, food and ethnic wear.

Learning about their culture and heritage in their Mother Tongue also strengthens a child's mastery of the language. "There are so many words that are unique to a specific race, culture or heritage that are simply

non-translatable," explains Ms Idayu Hussain, a Malay Language teacher at SGM Murni Childcare Development Centre. An example is 'jelak', a Malay word that describes the feeling when you've had too much to eat of a particularly rich food. Many of us are familiar with the sensation, but to describe it succinctly in an English word proves impossible.

Mastering MTLs has other benefits beyond heightening cultural awareness. As Ms Gao Rong Fang shares, it can also bring families closer and strengthen bonds. "A K1 student's grandmother expressed that her grandson could now communicate a lot better with her in his Mother Tongue," recalls the Mandarin teacher at MOE Kindergarten @ Dazhong.

An Experiential Platform

These real-life applications of MTLs will take centre stage at the upcoming MTL Symposium (MTLS) 2018, organised by Ministry of Education. The theme for this year, "Our Mother Tongues As Living Languages", reflects its focus on the relevance of MTLs to daily life. Participants can pick up useful tips on how to use MTL effectively through workshops and sharing sessions. Other highlights include exhibitions and performances, as well as an award ceremony to recognise outstanding preschool MTL educators.



Learning Chinese Language through the Shared Book Approach at MOE Kindergarten @ Dazhong

FOSTER YOUR CHILD'S MTL APPRECIATION

- STRIKE A BALANCE** "Expose children to English and their MTL during daily interactions," suggests Ms Hussain.
- EMBRACE TRADITION** "Play cultural games, attend plays and watch videos of MTL performances together," advises Mrs Ramu.
- READ TOGETHER** "When parents and children read an MTL book together, they can have a discussion about the book. Ask questions like 'What do you see?' or 'What will happen next?' in your Mother Tongue," recommends Ms Gao.

SAVE THE DATE!

MTL SYMPOSIUM 2018
18 August 2018 (Saturday)
11am to 8pm
Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre Level 4, Halls 405 & 406



Learning the Malay language through cultural traditions at SGM Murni Childcare

Families can also rediscover the relevance and joy of using MTL. It is important to encourage parents to participate in the various programmes. Ms Hussain says, "I believe that when children see their parents' efforts and how involved they are, it will further spark their interest in the Mother Tongue Language." ♥

NURTURING YOUNG MINDS: BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CAN HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON A CHILD'S BRAIN GROWTH AND HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT. FIND OUT HOW AT THE ECDA EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE 2018.

Now in its sixth year, the ECDA Early Childhood Conference to be held this October will focus on the theme of **"Nurturing Young Minds: Building Strong Foundations"**. The conference is an exploration of creating quality experiences that shape a child's brain and holistic development in a child's early years. There are more than 40 interactive workshops and eight exciting Learning Journeys lined up during the Conference. For the Learning Journeys, you get to visit the Artground, Asian Civilisations Museum, ECDA Fellows' Centres and more. Parents and children are also welcome to check out the child-centric exhibition. Enjoy the interactive performances and take part in fun activities that promote play, communication, relationship building and other aspects to support your children's brain development, learning and well-being.



KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Dr Gigi Luk

Associate Professor of Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education



Ms Goh Ai Yat

Consultant of SBF Group & Visual Thinking Trainer

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

ECDA AWARDS 2018 PRESENTATION CEREMONY

Join us on 5 October (Friday) as we honour the achievements of outstanding and promising EC Professionals committed to deliver high quality early childhood care and education, and centres that excel in teaching and learning, as well as innovative practices.

SPARK CERTIFICATE PRESENTATION CEREMONY

Come celebrate on 6 October (Saturday) with a special group of preschools that have achieved their SPARK Certification, which recognises their continued efforts in providing quality preschool education.

LEARNING JOURNEYS

Choose from eight exciting learning journeys to discover the learning possibilities beyond the preschool classrooms at the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore, Artground, Asian Civilisations Museum, Far Eastern Kindergarten, Gardens by the Bay, Health Promotion Board, Living Sanctuary Kindergarten and The Caterpillar's Cove Child Development and Study Centre.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Dr Gigi Luk, Associate Professor of Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Dr Luk's area of interest includes connecting research and learning through the lens of cognitive neuroscience as well as how language experiences shape children's development and learning. Her research is highly relevant to brain and holistic development in the early years. EC professionals can learn how to enhance their existing pedagogical practices to develop children holistically.

Ms Goh Ai Yat, Consultant of SBF Group & Visual Thinking Trainer

A former senior banker, Ms Goh conducts programmes that promote an entrepreneurial mindset and agility in an ever-changing business environment. EC professionals will find visual thinking strategies a useful tool to facilitate and support children's learning. Strategies include helping children make sense of information through observations, making connections and synthesising them to make learning more effective and meaningful.



The children drew their favourite landmarks in their neighbourhood

We made the model train together, visited the underpass and had fun!

Jayden Chua, 6

posters and created models of the HDB flats found in their community and the train checkpoint. These works chronicling the project were displayed, mini gallery-style, at the centre and shared with parents and guests at an open house.

Connecting The Past To The Future

"Exploring the past helps children appreciate the work of earlier generations. It creates a shared sense of history, which is important part of their development. They also learnt that by having a strong community spirit and caring for the environment, one can contribute back to society," says Regina. ♥

ROOTED IN TRADITION

CHILDREN AT PCS WOODLANDS CENTRE DISCOVER MORE ABOUT THEIR NEIGHBOURHOOD'S PAST.

"Do you prefer the old Marsiling or the new Marsiling? Which is your favourite place in Marsiling?" These were some questions that children at Presbyterian Community Services (PCS) Woodlands Centre at Marsiling Drive posed to senior citizens and long-time Marsiling residents.

"As seniors shared memories of their neighbourhood from the 1970s onwards, the children travelled back to a time when Singapore was just starting to develop. It sparked their interest and curiosity," says teacher Regina Angeli Andal.

Making History Come Alive

This history project, dubbed "Tracing Our Roots", was conducted from October 2017 to March 2018. It helped children learn more about their neighbourhood, its past, as well as appreciate the area's significant landmarks.

Funded by ECDA's Innovation Grant (IG), preschools under the Mentor-Initiated IG are mentored by experienced centres that demonstrate quality in their project implementation. In this case, PCF Sparkletots Preschool at Whampoa Blk 112, which won the ECDA Innovation Award 2016, took on the mentorship, sharing its

Learning about family history as they make a family tree out of recycled materials



experiences with a similar history project it had initiated.

Learning Beyond The Classroom

Aside from conducting interviews with the senior citizens, the children also took a neighbourhood walk to explore places of significance. It was a journey of discovery. On learning that the oldest underpass in Singapore is right in front of their school, the children brainstormed for ways to protect the underpass and maintain the cleanliness of the area.

Another significant Marsiling landmark was the Woodlands Train Checkpoint. It gave Regina the opportunity to discuss with the children the idea of having a shared history and culture with Malaysia.

To document their enriching learning experiences, the children together with their teachers made

POP UP

PCS Woodlands Centre receives funding support from the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) under the Partner Operator (POP) Scheme. The POP scheme helps operators keep fees affordable, build capabilities to raise quality and improve career prospects for early childhood professionals. Visit bit.ly/POP-Scheme for more information on the initiative.



Parents had a chance to view the exhibits chronicling the history project at an open house



ECDA INNOVATION AWARDS

View innovation projects that have won the 2017 ECDA Innovation Awards at bit.ly/ECDA-Awards-2017-Innovation-Awards

BUILDING A CARING NATION

THIS YEAR'S "START SMALL DREAM BIG" INITIATIVE FOSTERS A STRONG COMMUNITY SPIRIT.



Minister for Social and Family Development and Second Minister for National Development Mr Desmond Lee (in green) reciting the national pledge with SAF veterans and preschoolers

The fourth edition of "Start Small Dream Big" (SSDB), a President's Challenge initiative by ECDA to encourage young children to give back to society, kicked off on 6 April 2018.

Some 39,000 children from over 670 preschools have joined the SSDB movement this year, almost five times as many participants as during the inaugural run in 2015. In line with the SG Cares national movement, this year's theme, "Caring for Others Together", aims to inspire the young ones to contribute towards building a more compassionate and inclusive society, through simple acts of care and kindness.

Two preschool operators, My First Skool and Kidz Meadow, share their plans for their respective SSDB projects, which will be implemented from April to September this year.

Learning By Serving

A total of 80 My First Skool (MFS) centres have come on board this year's SSDB project. Their aim is to make service learning an inherent part of their curriculum in a creative and relatable manner.

"We need to 'unpack' the concept of service learning for young children.

That means getting children to understand that, in receiving care from the people around them, they too can reciprocate," says MFS' Deputy General Manager Ms Thian Ai Ling.

Service learning activities are now carried out at each centre in any of four tracks: Caring for My Family; Caring for My Friends, across different races and backgrounds; Caring for the Community, especially seniors; and Caring for the Environment and Animals. The educators are also developing a children's storybook to foster values such as caring and sharing, and an Educators' Guide for teachers and parents, comprising activities and ideas for games to promote service learning. These resource materials will be published in the four main languages and shared with other centres.

"We want children to think: 'I can, in my own way, extend help to others,'" says Ms Thian. "Volunteerism is not merely the number of community hours; it is the simple acts one can do to brighten someone else's day."

One of the participating centres is My First Skool at 10 Jurong West, where a celebration was held on 12 April 2018 to launch their SSDB project. Minister for Social and Family

Development and Second Minister for National Development Mr Desmond Lee joined the children in various activities. This included a plant-potting activity, card and board games in the different Mother Tongue Languages, a presentation on Singapore's history by Singapore Armed Forces veterans, and serving food to senior visitors from NTUC Health Silver Circle.

Speaking at the event, Mr Lee noted that SSDB is a good way to create "teachable moments" for children and impart values such as empathy and appreciation for diversity. "A good preschool system should not only prepare our young for our national education system. More importantly, we want preschools to be holistic and inculcate values like active citizenry, compassion and caring for others."

Mrs Ruby Rajesh, 36, who attended the event together with other parents, remarked that the project will benefit her daughter, Reina, 6, who is in K2. "I want Reina to learn good values and morals while she is still young, so that she will be more likely to hold on to them when she grows up," says Mrs Rajesh. ♥

Through your projects, you show love and care for people around you, and you make Singapore a better place to live in.

Associate Professor Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Social and Family Development, in his Facebook video to children as part of the SSDB 2018 Virtual Launch



Scan the QR code to find out more about the SSDB 2018 Virtual Launch.



A plant-potting activity underway at MFS at 10 Jurong West during its SSDB project launch

Photos by Kelvin Chia

ON THE HORIZON

SSDB will culminate in a finale exhibition showcasing the participating centres' community projects on 5 and 6 October 2018, in conjunction with ECDA's Early Childhood Conference. In the meantime, check out what they are doing at www.startsmalldreambig.sg.



A Project C.A.R.E. pledge board displaying personal messages from Kidz Meadow students

no one can do everything but everyone can do something

FROM 2015 TO 2017, OUR PRESCHOOLERS HAVE SPENT A TOTAL OF more than 1 million hours ON SSDB-RELATED COMMUNITY PROJECTS.



Law and Home Affairs Minister K. Shanmugam (back row, right) was the Guest of Honour at Kidz Meadow's SSDB launch on 20 April

PILOTING C.A.R.E.

Aligned to the SSDB theme, all six Kidz Meadow preschools have embarked on an initiative called Project C.A.R.E. (being Caring, providing Aid, being Responsive, showing Empathy). Their focus is on three areas: Care for the Differently Aabled, Care for the Elderly and Care for Safety.

To develop empathy and to better comprehend the challenges faced by people with disabilities, children had opportunities to emulate painting using their mouths and feet. Visits to senior care centres will give the children an opportunity to interact with seniors. Lessons in basic first aid will help them to understand how they can ensure their own safety and that of others.

"It is important that we guide our young children to embrace and understand the values embodied in Project C.A.R.E.," says Ms Hanisah Binte Mohd Taha, Senior Educator at Kidz Meadow Childcare @ Buangkok Crescent. "These young children will one day lead the country. Hence, character building should start now."

Project C.A.R.E. is the result from a collaboration among Kidz Meadow, the Singapore Red Cross (SRC), Association for Early Childhood Educators (Singapore) and Preschool Market. It serves as a two-year curriculum for SRC's brand new Red Cross Junior Club. The Club is open to all K1 and K2 children, who will acquire basic first aid skills during the two years there. The children will also go on learning journeys to the Red Cross House and have volunteering opportunities with SRC. Preschool teachers will receive first aid training from SRC as well as an Educators' Guide containing suggested classroom activities in the three focus areas. The

Kidz Meadow educators were involved in co-creating this guide.

"The SSDB project is an opportunity to work in partnership with preschools. Children are never too young to learn how to perform basic first aid, or at least stay calm and ask an adult for help in an emergency," said SRC's Ms Angeline Yong, Head of Red Cross Youth, at the launch event.



WORLD CITIZENS OF TOMORROW

SUNFLOWER KIDDY STAR PRESCHOOL'S CURRICULUM IS GEARED TOWARDS BROADENING CHILDREN'S HORIZONS.



As part of the "Around The World" project, the children get an introduction to Egypt with the "mummy dance"

Did you know that the rulers of ancient Egypt wrote their names in hieroglyphs carved in oval-shaped frames called cartouches? Ever wonder how food scraps, when turned into compost, benefit the environment? At Sunflower Kiddy Star Preschool, a SPARK-certified centre, children regularly learn such fun facts on their way to becoming world citizens.

"Children need to think beyond themselves, their country and culture — and care about what happens around the globe," says the centre's Principal Ms Patricia Ng. "We want our children to have a positive attitude towards the world around them, so that they can interact with people from diverse backgrounds. For example, when hearing about an earthquake in Japan, we want them to have compassion and empathy, and stimulate their thinking of how to make the world a better place."

The centre's holistic curriculum

helps to inculcate a global mindset in children. It comprises eight types of "smart activities", including "Nature Smart" which is complemented by "Around the World" projects. These projects, each focusing on a specific country, introduce children to different people, languages, food, places of



After learning about the Great Pyramid of Egypt, children built a pyramid model with straws

interest, music, sports, as well as flora and fauna unique to those countries. Children are thus exposed to current topics or issues not just locally but internationally, and gain an appreciation for diversity at an early age. This strengthens their sense of belonging and identity as Singaporeans.

WONDERS OF THE WORLD

Ms Suhailah, a K2 teacher at the centre, recalls the children's excitement and enthusiasm during their "Around the World" project on Egypt. Besides creating their own cartouches, the children learnt the Egyptian mummy dance and used straws to build miniature models of the Great Pyramid. They also discussed the similarities and differences between the flags, national anthems and currencies of Egypt and Singapore. In other Nature Smart-themed lessons, Ms Suhailah conducted a composting project with the children, where they learnt about the importance of protecting endangered animals and their habitats.

Ms Suhailah gives credit to the SPARK Quality Rating Scale (QRS), especially the item on Discovery of the World, for guiding her lesson plans which aim to develop the right attitude in children towards the environment. "The QRS has made me more intentional in asking children open-ended questions to stimulate their thinking and facilitate their learning. I am also more mindful about planning differentiated activities to cater to the different abilities of children in my class," says Ms Suhailah. ♥

WHY GLOBAL-MINDEDNESS?



- It awakens children's curiosity and exercises their exploration and analytical skills.
- It increases their awareness of, and respect for, different cultures.
- It builds their social and emotional intelligence to adapt to new experiences.
- It reinforces their own identity as Singaporeans.

NO ONE SIZE FITS ALL

WINNER OF THE 2017 ECDA OUTSTANDING CENTRE FOR TEACHING & LEARNING AWARD, MY FIRST SKOOL AT BLK 245 BISHAN, SHARES ITS RANGE OF PRACTICES.

Each child is different. This is a premise that underscores the teaching and learning approach at My First Skool at Blk 245 Bishan. Executive Principal Rabeah Binte Mohter explains that the centre plans differentiated learning activities based on their children's learning needs and abilities. "It is important that children feel good about themselves and what they can achieve. This feel-good factor motivates them to want to learn more," says Rabeah.

NURTURING INDEPENDENT LEARNERS

The child-centric approach at the centre empowers children to also take ownership of their own learning and be self-directed learners. At the learning corners, children get to choose from 'learning baskets' the activities that they want to work on. Educators are also at hand to encourage them to attempt more challenging tasks. For example, a simple sorting activity can be tied to include a higher order thinking skill like classification.

Working actively behind the scenes are teachers who are tuned-in to the specific learning needs of each child. Armed with this knowledge, they are better able to design and plan activities that are developmentally appropriate, and yet provide the children with a stimulating and engaging experience. Children are observed for their interaction with the materials, their conversations with peers and the questions they raise while they are engaged at the different learning corners.

"This approach helps teachers to better understand how each child is progressing and the support needed, and the suitability of the materials



Differentiated learning activities are based on children's learning needs and abilities

and resources in the environment. The learning spaces are continually reviewed and the teachers are also able to deliver the programme more effectively with this understanding," explains Rabeah.

PARTNERSHIPS AS A TEACHING STRATEGY

Beyond the classroom, the centre is also intentional in its collaboration with community partners. "We look specifically at the expertise, campaigns and even projects undertaken by the various community partners. The partnership needs to value add to the curriculum and ultimately benefit the children. Activities should also be aligned with issues that are relevant for children," elaborates Rabeah.

For instance, to build social-emotional awareness in our older



An officer from Bishan Police Centre giving a talk on crime prevention

children, the centre invited the Neighbourhood Police Centre to give a talk on anti-bullying. The learning becomes more powerful when they hear it directly from the professionals, highlights Rabeah.

Last year, as part of their Values in Action project, students from Cedar Girls' Secondary School visited the centre to work with the children on using recycled materials for planting. The wealth of learning from these partnerships cannot be underestimated. To illustrate this — the centre's partnership with Sri Warisan Performing Arts Group allowed the children to further relate and apply their understanding of the elements of music when they learnt about the Zapin which is a form of dance and music from the Malay culture. ♥



Children get to choose the activities they want to work on while a teacher guides and encourages them

SUSTAINING QUALITY TEACHING & LEARNING



- BUILD ON THE STRENGTHS OF YOUR EDUCATORS** in terms of their teaching and learning capabilities, as well as their interests, to create a strong and motivated team.
- KEEP ABREAST OF RESEARCH, PRACTICES AND CHALLENGES IN THE EARLY CHILDHOOD FIELD.** Use this as a frame to guide the teachers to reflect on their teaching practices as well as how the children in their centre are learning.
- CULTIVATE A CULTURE OF OBSERVATIONS AND REFLECTIVE PRACTICES** to refine teaching practices with the intent of creating relevant and meaningful learning experiences for children.
- ENCOURAGE AND SUPPORT EDUCATORS IN UNDERTAKING MINI-RESEARCH PROJECTS** that focus on enhancing the quality of teaching practices.

Find out more about My First Skool @ Blk 245 Bishan at bit.ly/Awards-MFSBlk245Bishan



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

My Teacher, My School



Ms Wan Ling, Pre-School By-The-Park Pte Ltd

I am particularly grateful to **Teacher Wan Ling**. She has consistently worked with me over the months to help Rebecca overcome her shyness. When I saw Rebecca singing and dancing at the centre's Mother's Day celebration, I was beaming with pride. Seeing how Rebecca is developing socially and becoming a more confident preschooler, as well as judging from her often-cheeky exchanges with Teacher Wan Ling, I know she is a happy preschooler.

Ms Michelle Cheow, mother of Rebecca Maxine Tan, 4



Ms Nina Suriani, SGM Little Kidz @ Rivervale

Dear **Teacher Nina**, You are an inspiration to Abdul. Thank you for your constant guidance and patience. Thank you for never giving up and always believing in Abdul. Thank you for your warmth and understanding. Thank you for all that you have done for Abdul. Lastly, thank you for being YOU!

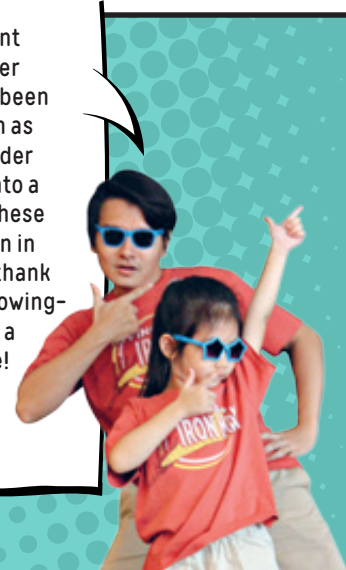
Ms Khatijah Binte Mohamed Yusof, mother of Abdul Haqq Bin Abdul Shukor, 5



Mrs Amy Koh, Pentecost Methodist Church Kindergarten

Preschool education has been important in building the character of our daughter Natalie. Her teacher, **Mrs Amy Koh**, has been instrumental in inculcating values such as forgiveness and moral uprightness. Under her guidance, Natalie has blossomed into a more well-rounded and vibrant child. These values have continued to guide her even in her transition into primary school. We thank Mrs Koh for being a part of Natalie's growing-up years. You have been more than just a teacher. You are Natalie's moral heroine!

Mr Tan Yong Hua, father of Natalie Tan, 7, who graduated from Pentecost Methodist Church Kindergarten in 2017



We are very blessed to have **Teacher Dhilah** as our kids' teacher during their pre-nursery years. She takes time to keep us updated on their development and addresses our concerns very promptly via Whatsapp. This is very reassuring for us, as we may not have the time to be at the centre to clarify some of our concerns. Both our kids have adapted quite quickly to life at the preschool. Thank you, Sunshine Kids, Teacher Dhilah and all the other teachers!

Mr Ong Kwang Yong Roy, father of Reanne Ong Xuan Ru, 2



Ms Fadhilah, Sunshine Kids Care Centre @ Tampines Pte Ltd



Ms Christina, Skool4Kidz Centre @ Waterway Banks

Our son, Nawfal, used to whine about not wanting to go to preschool. Now, it is such a pleasure to see how he is adapting and enjoying his days at the centre. He has shown vast improvement in various areas, including his social and leadership skills. I am grateful for the patience and care that **Teacher Christina** has provided to him. He was given the opportunity to lead as a class monitor. This will give him a strong foundation for his future. A Big Thank You, Teacher Christina!

Ms Siti Munirah Binte Abdul Latiff, mother of Mohammad Nawfal Bin Mohammad Nizar, 6



Ms Alexis, Rainbow Cove Montessori

My wife and I made the decision to enrol Isla in Rainbow Cove the minute we met **Teacher Alexis** on our first visit to the preschool. She greeted us with such warmth that we immediately felt at ease with her. Her mannerisms assured us that our daughter would be in safe hands. We knew that Teacher Alexis was going to be the right fit for Isla. We can see that the children's happiness and comfort are her top priorities. Thank you, Teacher Alexis and Rainbow Cove!

Mr Zinesh Gavin, father of Isla Zoey Gavin, 5



Q&A

TEACHING YOUR CHILD TO RESPECT AND EMBRACE ONE ANOTHER'S DIFFERENCES.



When is the best time to introduce children to global issues, and how can we foster their global mindset?

Young children are highly impressionable. The early years are a good time to raise their awareness of issues around us and beyond, and help sow the seeds for children to develop a value system of openness, flexibility in embracing another's perspectives and being socially and environmentally responsible.

The early childhood curriculum provides an excellent frame to weave in these elements. We can enhance young children's awareness and understanding of both local and global issues, and help shape their behaviours and attitudes. It can start as early as the toddler stage. Some strategies include interactive hands-on experiences, inquiry-based learning and project work, discussions, and questioning techniques.

As educators and educators, we can foster our children's global mindset in the following ways:

- ▶ **Introduce songs and music from the different ethnic groups** including those from around the world.
- ▶ **Visit places of cultural interest** such as the Chinatown Heritage Centre, Malay Heritage Centre and the Indian Heritage Centre.
- ▶ **Select issues that are relevant and tangible for children, based on their interests and developmental stage.** These include animal welfare, the plight of children around the world, and reaching out to the elderly.
- ▶ **Use circle time** to discuss issues on a regular basis. Children learn from sharing and exchanging perspectives and ideas with their peers.
- ▶ **Invite speakers from different nationalities and cultures** to speak to the children about their diverse backgrounds.

For EC Educators



How can I help my child respect and appreciate other cultures and diversity in our increasingly cosmopolitan society?

Our children will encounter cultures and practices that are different from their own. Research tells us that children become aware of ethnic differences as early as age three, with many children being able to categorise people based on racial and gender characteristics. It is thus important for parents and educators to introduce cultural diversity education from a young age.

Through this, children will learn important values and skills such as empathy and embrace different perspectives that will help them develop healthy social relationships. Nurturing an appreciation for cultural diversity makes for a more inclusive society, where differences are celebrated, not merely tolerated.

Here are some practical ways to develop your children's appreciation of diversity and other cultures:

- ▶ **Read with your child picture books** that describe different cultures and practices. Help them understand how and why other people may do things differently.
- ▶ **Encourage cross-cultural friendships** through play dates.
- ▶ **Draw attention to how people can be classified.** This can be along different cross-cutting dimensions such as interests, hobbies and skills, and not just ethnicity or other visible cues.
- ▶ **Be a good role model.** Create a family environment where adults are culturally sensitive and respectful. It is worthwhile to remember that values are caught and not taught.



ASK THE EXPERTS



DR CHEUNG HOI SHAN is an Assistant Professor of Psychology from Yale-NUS College. She specialises in child development, with a research interest in parenting and attachment, children's peer relationships, and school bullying. She is also a member of the Research Committee at the Singapore Children's Society.

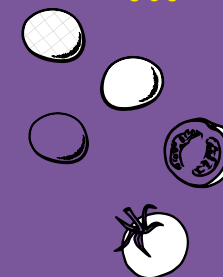
ZAITON MOHD ALI is an Executive Principal and Head in Iyad Perdaus Child Development. She has been an adjunct lecturer since 2012 in SEED Institute, teaching Early Years module and Mentoring, and is an ECDA Fellow appointed to train and mentor other early childhood professionals, and develop sector-wide resources.

THRIVE

grow

Yummy treats for National Day

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learn

Explore nature through fun walks

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RESPECT OTHER CULTURES

play

Make hand puppets from recycled materials

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NATURE

Matters

TEACHING CHILDREN ABOUT THE NATURAL ECOSYSTEM AROUND US AND OUR PLACE IN IT HELPS THEM BECOME BETTER PEOPLE.

CULTIVATING CHILDREN'S LOVE FOR NATURE

Environmental issues can be complex. Making it easy for a five-year-old to understand and appreciate nature can be challenging. NParks has developed a set of educational materials that focuses on native biodiversity. These materials have been designed in consultation with ECDA and the Ministry of Education to ensure they are age-appropriate and aligned with the Kindergarten Curriculum Framework, shares Mr Lim.

The educational package was given out to all preschools licensed under ECDA. Each set includes a picture book which uses rhymes to introduce common plants and animals. It also comes with a DVD featuring a character called Peeky the Pangolin, which explores Singapore's trees, wildlife and parks, posters, picture word cards and a Snap Card Game featuring native animals and plants.

The local species of flora and fauna featured in these materials are commonly found, so children are able to see real-life examples around them, which enhances their appreciation and love for nature. To extend their learning at home, parents can access more resources such as activity sheets, videos, and a plant and animal directory from www.nparks.gov.sg/learning.



Photos courtesy of NParks, Kiddiewinkie Schoolhouse @ Novena and Zion Kindergarten

For toddlers and preschoolers, exploring the outdoors with their parents is not just an enjoyable way to bond. There are plenty of teaching and learning opportunities in the lush green pockets of our 'City in a Garden', which is home to a rich diversity of flora and fauna.

With the growing interest in our natural environment and how our actions are affecting it, Mr Lim Jiang Jim, Group Director of the National Biodiversity Centre in NParks, explains that it has become even more important for children to understand big concepts like biodiversity and sustainability.

He says, "Our younger generation are our future leaders. By communicating to them the importance of conserving our biodiversity, they will hopefully realise that there is a need to strike a balance between ensuring our environment is conserved, and the progress of urbanisation."

BUILDING GOOD VALUES

Teaching children to do their part in caring and protecting our environment reinforces the values of care, responsibility and civic-mindedness as well. Mr Lim explains, "As we share our environment with other living things, it is essential we are considerate to them. No less important is the need to be mindful towards other people. For example, by not removing plants and animals from their natural habitat, other park visitors will be able to learn about them and enjoy their beauty."

APPRECIATION OF BIODIVERSITY IN NATURE



WALK THIS WAY

Sign up for a guided walk or plan your own route. Check out NParks' list of guided walks and DIY Trail Guides at www.nparks.gov.sg/gardens-parks-and-nature/walks-and-tours



OUT AND ABOUT

But nothing beats getting close to nature in person, and the various parks across the island offer plenty to see and do.

Mr Lim elaborates, "At Singapore Botanic Gardens and some other parks, walks and workshops for preschool children are accompanied by storytelling sessions and books, which come with stickers and fun activities like connect-the-dots, crossword puzzles and word searches. During the walks, trained guides encourage children to engage their senses, for example by smelling flowers, feeling the texture of leaves or touching tree bark. The children also learn how to observe and document nature through drawing, colouring, making bark rubbings and labelling plant parts."

Many of our parks offer nature trails suitable for families, including easy routes for children below six, such as the Bishan-Ang Mo Kio Park trail, the Pasir Ris Park trail and the Woodlands Waterfront Park trail.

Most importantly, parents should lead by example, says Mr Lim. "When children see their parents keep a respectful distance from wildlife and ensure shared spaces are kept clean, there is a higher chance that they too, will do their part to conserve our biodiversity."

NETWORK OF LEARNERS

Preschools which are part of the NParks and ECDA Innovation Guidance Project initiative have come up with innovative and fun ways to help children appreciate and understand biodiversity. Called "Our City In A Garden", this initiative ties in with the ECDA Innovation Projects Grant which provides funding and training to help participating centres to engage and partner with the communities they are part of.

One of the participating preschools is Kiddiewinkie Schoolhouse @ Novena. The preschool has created an eco-garden designed to get the children involved in investigating plant growth requirements, soil use and nutrition. Here is how the children were involved:

- ▶ Brainstormed, and shared ideas and suggestions for the design of the garden
- ▶ Helped recycle used PET bottles and containers for use as planters
- ▶ Took turns to plant and care for the garden's various vegetables, herbs and non-edible plants
- ▶ Got to eat the fruits of their labour during mealtimes



Children from Kiddiewinkie Schoolhouse @ Novena recycling used PET bottles as planters for their eco-garden



Planting vegetable seeds with the help of Parent Volunteers

BRINGING THE COMMUNITY TOGETHER

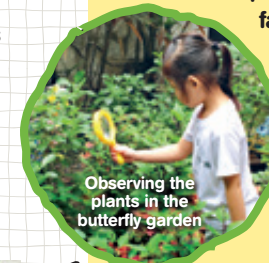


Community In Bloom, an NParks programme, aims to foster community spirit among people of all ages through the love of gardening.

Preschools that sign up are given horticultural advice on how to start and maintain innovative themed eco-gardens within their compounds, which can be used as a curricular tool. Activity booklets and other information can be found at www.nparks.gov.sg/gardening/community-in-bloom-initiative/cib-schools.

Preschool teacher Anusha from Zion Kindergarten (Tavistock) says the centre had previously tried growing vegetables and other plants, but failed. After attending a course under the "City In A Garden" Programme, she and a colleague decided to register with Community In Bloom for advice on setting up a butterfly and a vegetable garden.

"Our objective was to expose children to various flora and fauna," Anusha shares. "Azza, an NParks Community In Bloom Manager, helped us identify a location with favourable sunlight and drainage.



Observing the plants in the butterfly garden

She provided us with informative books on plants, as well as seeds and gardening tools.

We were taught how to protect the plants from pests, how and when to water, fertilise, and prune the plants. It was a learning experience for

the teachers."

The children got to choose what they wanted to grow, and the preschool invited both its former and present preschoolers' parents and grandparents to share their gardening knowledge.

"I enjoyed planting seeds and watering the plants. And I like looking at the butterflies," quips six-year-old Arielle Ho. "The trees provide oxygen for us and make our environment nice!"



Principal Suzana Mohamad Ali notes that the concept of biodiversity can be difficult for a young child to grasp. However, preschools can create opportunities for children to observe, explore, express and collaborate, in order to help them understand the concept.

She elaborates: "We plan experiential learning within a discovery context where the children see, feel, touch and smell the plants around them. Through these hands-on experiences, learning is further broken down into bite-size, age-appropriate activities that the children can understand and build on for further learning."

Ms Suzana adds, "These experiences with nature can enhance and deepen children's thinking about the role we play in the whole ecosystem." ♥



GARDEN VARIETY

NParks is organising a series of fun family-friendly activities, including bird watching and mass chalk art drawing, from July to September. Registration for these events is required unless otherwise indicated. For more details, visit www.nparks.gov.sg/events

FOR YOUR DAILY DOSE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD INSPIRATION...

Grow@Beanstalk is your one-stop early childhood (EC) resource portal for inspiring stories, useful tips and activity ideas, as well as the latest happenings from the EC sector.



Visit www.ecda.gov.sg/growatbeanstalk, or scan the QR code



You can also share your passion of "Giving a Good Start to Every Child" by "liking" our Facebook page for daily content, and engaging with other parents and EC educators.

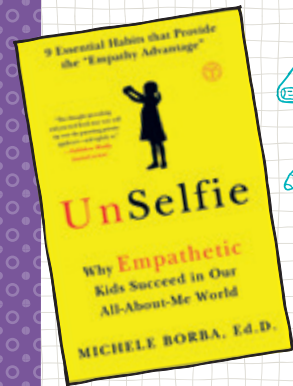


Connect with us at www.facebook.com/beanstalksingapore, or scan the QR code



Reading THE WORLD

BOOKS THAT INSPIRE GLOBAL-MINDEDNESS IN CHILDREN.



UnSelfie: Why Empathetic Kids Succeed in Our All-About-Me World
By Michele Borba



In today's self-centric world, raising children to be compassionate and mindful of others can be a tough challenge. In this book, Dr Michele Borba emphasises the importance of cultivating empathy in children. Her book offers age-by-age strategies to help parents and educators develop this essential skill in their children for a better future.



Contributed by Shirley Lim, Librarian, National Library Board



One Land, Many Cultures
By Maureen Picard Robins



People from different parts of the world reside in the United States. In this book, young readers will discover more about their languages, foods and customs. The colourful maps, images of mouth-watering dishes and a picture glossary will spark children's interest in exploring other cultures and foster their global awareness.



Contributed by Manemegalai A, Librarian, National Library Board



RED, WHITE & Yummy

ENJOY THESE SAVOURY TREATS WHILE YOU WATCH THE NATIONAL DAY PARADE!

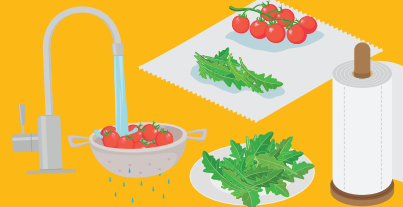
TOMATO & CHEESE SKEWERS

FOLLOW THESE STEPS

MAKE AS MANY AS YOU LIKE

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

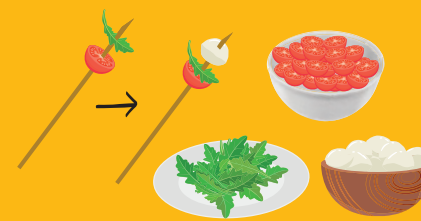
- ▶ Cherry or grape tomatoes
- ▶ Mini mozzarella cheese balls
- ▶ Fresh rocket leaves
- ▶ Salt and pepper
- ▶ Balsamic vinegar
- ▶ Wooden skewers or satay sticks



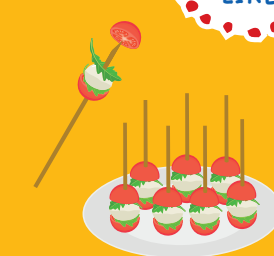
1 Wash and dry the tomatoes and rocket leaves.



2 Slice the tomatoes in half.



3 Thread half a tomato, rocket leaf and mozzarella ball on the skewer.



4 Finish by threading another rocket leaf and the other half of the tomato.



5 Drizzle balsamic vinegar over the skewers. Sprinkle a little salt and pepper. Enjoy! ♥



FUN WITH PATTERNS

Teach your children about **patterning**. As they thread the ingredients through the skewers, they learn about sequencing and anticipating which food item comes next. These skills are an important part of mathematical skills development.



Instead of mozzarella cheese balls, you can use reduced fat cheese cubes as a healthier choice!

Visit www.healthhub.sg/live-healthy/1495/dear-dairy to find out the benefits of dairy products.



Adult supervision is required and child will need to be assisted when using the knife.

TREK THIS OUT!

EMBARK ON FIVE KID-FRIENDLY WALKS AND DISCOVER THE DIFFERENT SIDES THAT MAKE OUR LITTLE RED DOT SPECIAL.

LITTLE MOUSE AND HIS BIG HOUSE

There once was a little mouse named Paul.
He always wanted to make a house that was big and tall.
He told everyone at school
But they called him a fool
And said, you can't do that because you're too small!

So he went home and got his tools that night
And worked and worked until the sun shone bright.
When everyone saw how big his house was that day,
They all wanted to come over and play.



NO STRINGS ATTACHED!

Make your own hand puppets from recycled materials you can find around the house like paper bags and decorate with bits of construction paper and coloured markers. Use them to tell a story, like this one about a mouse and the house he built. Or come up with your own stories! ♥

MAKE YOUR OWN PAPER BAG PUPPETS

WHAT YOU'LL NEED



PUPPET play

GIVE YOUR CHILD'S IMAGINATION FREE REIN WITH THESE EASY-TO-MAKE HAND PUPPETS.

Together, create your own stories and characters, and act them out. This boosts your child's creativity, communication and problem-solving skills. Plus, you get to spend fun quality time together!

WE HAVE 5 BOXES UP FOR GRABS!

In each Creative Box, you'll find five story cards with developmental tips by experts, as well as art materials to create puppets and a puppet theatre to bring the story to life! To win, send a picture of your handmade puppet to beanstalk@mediacorp.com.sg. Include your child's full name, age and your contact details. His/her craftwork could be featured in the next issue of Beanstalk!



3 The Go Green Trail

Inspire a love for nature and its wonders on this trek through Bedok Reservoir. With bird- and butterfly-attracting plants and shrubs, the water catchment area is home to kingfishers, blue-throated bee-eaters and herons. See if you can spot them! For an exciting finish to your day out, head for Singapore's only treetop obstacle course, Forest Adventure, located within the reservoir.

Download a DIY trail guide from www.nparks.gov.sg/gardens-parks-and-nature/walks-and-tours/going-on-a-diy-walk



4 The Public Art Trail

Art stimulates a child's imagination and creativity, and public art in particular, encourages interaction, like the giant toy kit installation outside Raffles Place MRT. The artwork even leaves a blank spot for your child to step on and pose for a picture. Continue your stroll along the Singapore River towards the Asian Civilisations Museum, and spot iconic sculptures, such as the one with five boys jumping into the river, called 'First Generation'.

Plan your itinerary with the help of www.publicarttrust.sg/Public-Art



5 The Food Heritage Trail

There's plenty to savour and discover thanks to our eclectic food culture. Broaden your child's palate by encouraging him to try different cuisines. Sample nasi padang and make a stop at the Malay Heritage Centre; or stroll down Joo Chiat and Katong, and admire the Peranakan shophouses, some of which have been converted to eateries serving nyonya fare. There are also different regional Indian cuisines to choose from in Little India.

See www.visitsingapore.com for foodie recommendations in different parts of Singapore. When planning for this trail on a group basis, do bear in mind food allergies and food restrictions of participants, if any. ♥



1 The Back To School Trail

Prepare your child for primary school by checking out some of Singapore's oldest school buildings, while at the same time, sharing your fond school memories with him. Many of these former school buildings are clustered in the Civic District, so it's possible to cover a few stops on your walk. Did you know that Tao Nan School used to be housed in the Peranakan Museum at Armenian Street? Or that the former CHIJ (Town Convent) and St Nicholas Girls' School occupied the present-day CHIJMES on Victoria Street?

Get the trail guide from roots.sg/visit/trails/heritage-schools-trail



2 The Singapore River Trail

Introduce your child to the activities and communities that flourished along the waterway. Begin your trek from Cavenagh Bridge, the oldest surviving bridge spanning the Singapore River, built in 1869. Nearby, you'll find busts of notable foreign leaders and personalities who have close links to Singapore. Other points of interest include Masjid Moulana, Singapore's only underground mosque and the former Thong Chai Medical Institution.

Plan your route with roots.sg/visit/trails/singapore-river-walk

HOW TO GET MORE OUT OF YOUR WALK

- Plan the trail with your child. Give suggestions, but let him have a say in what he wants to see or do.
- Do a scavenger hunt list and ask him to spot as many as he can.
- Ask him to identify colours or shapes, or describe the textures and flavours that he encounters on the walks.
- Take photographs of things that capture his interest on your walk. Work together on a scrapbook and continue the conversation.



WE'VE GOT MAIL! 😊

PARENTS SHARE HOW THEY RAISE A GLOBALLY-MINDED CHILD.



Dressing up in national costumes on Racial Harmony Day



Reading and discussing the news with my two boys. Being involved with missions helps in teaching the kids about cultural differences. Reminding them not everyone is the same but treating all with respect and kindness. As a family, we also volunteer for causes including special needs. Dressing up in our national costumes in preschool helps them appreciate and learn more about other cultures.

Shannen Quek,
mother of two sons, aged 7 and 4



As the world gets more interconnected, my wife and I have made it a point to broaden our children's perspectives on different cultures through immersive experiences. Rather than merely being 'outsiders looking in', our recent trip to Kyoto, Japan, saw them experience life as a local, by staying in a traditional machiya house, sampling the local obanzai (home-cooked) cuisine and even dressing up in kimonos!



R. John, father of two daughters, aged 4 and 2



Music is a window to other cultures



I expose my two sons to a wide range of music — Chinese pop music, Malay rock anthems, English folk songs, classical concertos, jazz jams, new age epics, Turkish ballads, electronica — to ensure that they understand that there is a variety of musical expression. Music is far more accessible and a great window into the other cultures. It is an ever-present reminder that we are part of a larger world.

Ariel Tam, mother of two sons, aged 7 and 4

TEE TIME



We showed you how to make a handprint T-shirt for Dad in the Apr-Jun 2018 issue and asked you to share your creation with us. Here are three fun styles from our little designers!



Chloe Tho, 2



Lennon Soh, 4



Lynden Soh, 3



SaiKrishna, 3

Photos courtesy of Ariel Tam and Shannen Quek

MATCH THE LANDMARKS

LINK THE ICONIC STRUCTURES WITH THE COUNTRIES THEY ARE FOUND IN.



SINGAPORE



MALAYSIA



AUSTRALIA



UNITED KINGDOM



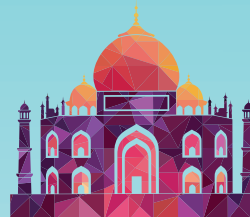
MERLION



BIG BEN



STATUE OF LIBERTY



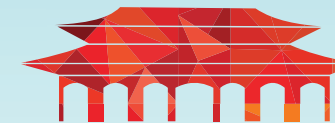
TAJ MAHAL



COLOSSEUM



SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE



FORBIDDEN CITY



BOROBUDUR



INDIA



CHINA



ITALY



INDONESIA



UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



HOW TO PLAY: Match each landmark with the corresponding country flag.



HEY PARENTS!

This fun activity raises children's awareness of our neighbouring countries, as well as those around the world.

NURTURING YOUNG MINDS: BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS

Parents, share your tips and strategies to strengthen your child's physical, language, thinking, social and emotional development. 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.