

Beanstalk



LET'S TALK CULTURE

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STRONG START, SHARP MIND

Creating environments and experiences that shape a child's holistic development

Early Childhood Conference 2018
Nurturing young minds, building strong foundations



THRIVE

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

WIN! MADE-FOR-PARENTS 'ARTFUL CONVERSATIONS' RESOURCE KITS



NURTURING YOUNG MINDS: BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS



Quality learning begins with educators. The Government is committed to supporting and developing our early childhood educators. Last year, we announced the establishment of the new National Institute for Early Childhood Development as the key training provider for the sector. This year, we launched a three-year national campaign to raise the profile of the sector and highlight the important role of our educators. We will provide enhanced training and resources to deepen the specialist expertise of our Mother Tongue Language teachers. We are also refining the SPARK Quality Rating Scale to include the 0 to 3 years to better support quality in the early years.

This year, some 39,000 children from 670 preschools took part in the 4th edition of 'Start Small Dream Big', a President's Challenge initiative. The children have collectively served more than 1.2 million hours on community service and raised over \$250,000 for various charity causes. We hope even more preschools, parents and partners will come together to support the children in their community efforts as we celebrate the 5th anniversary of 'Start Small Dream Big' next year.

Children thrive on warm and nurturing relationships. As the National Scientific Council on the Developing Children, Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, aptly pointed out: "Nurturing and stable relationships with caring adults are essential to healthy human development beginning from birth."

Quality relationships and learning experiences in early childhood have a deep and positive impact on a young child's brain and holistic development.

It is therefore timely that we have chosen "Nurturing Young Minds: Building Strong Foundations" as the theme for this year's Early Childhood Conference in October. We thank the 1,500 conference participants and over 10,000 exhibition visitors for making this event a huge success. We hope you have enjoyed the experience, and had opportunities to pick up practical tips and strategies for delivering quality learning experiences for our children.

At the conference, we gave out 18 ECDA Awards to outstanding and promising educators and preschools for their professional excellence and exemplary contributions to early childhood care and education. We also renewed the call for more trained educators to join and stay in the sector, as it continues to expand to meet increasing demand for preschool services.

Eugene

MR EUGENE LEONG

Chief Executive Officer
Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA)



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Early Childhood Development Agency

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PICTURE THIS!

Ms Goh Ai Yat spoke on “Building Visual Literacy to Unlock the Power of A Child’s Visual Mind” in her keynote presentation. Combining words and pictures can activate the whole mind to engage in myriad behaviours, such as learning, problem-solving, sharing ideas and much more.

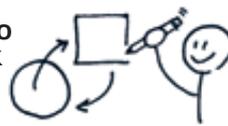


Ms Goh Ai Yat
Managing Consultant
of SBF Group
and Visual
Thinking Trainer



BOOSTING THE VISUAL MIND

1 ENCOURAGE CHILDREN TO DRAW WHAT THEY THINK OR HEAR. Children should be encouraged to draw their ideas as a way to talk about what they hear and think. For example, when they are read to, children can draw simple pictures of the characters and settings in the story. This will help them learn to use their visual imagination and memory for better understanding.



2 AFFIRM CHILDREN’S EFFORTS. Don’t judge the “quality” of children’s drawings; instead praise them and use their drawings to start deeper conversations. When a child has a picture to point at and talk about, they are more confident in their ability to share.



3 USE STRUCTURED VISUAL THINKING TO HELP CHILDREN UNDERSTAND STORIES. After a storytelling session, use the “visual decoder” to get them to draw who is involved in the story, where and when the story took place, and the lessons learnt. This way, they can process the storyline better and improve their ability to grasp more complex concepts.



LEARNING TO SEE AND SEEING TO LEARN

Visual-led activities can also develop children’s curiosity and love for learning. Ms Goh suggested starting with these:

- ▶ **CREATE VISUAL STORYMAPS OF BOOKS.** When reading a book, ask the child to create a quick drawing of each new character as they are introduced in the text. This will help him “see” the characters vividly and build a visual map of the storyline.
- ▶ **DRAW CHECKLISTS FOR DAILY ACTIVITIES.** Like adults, children too may struggle to remember everything they need to do at times. Encourage the child to draw a little checklist of the clothes he needs to wear and of his morning ritual (eat breakfast, brush teeth, etc.).
- ▶ **DRAW HOME-MADE BOARDGAMES TOGETHER.** Children enjoy playing games. One way to nurture a love of learning is to create simple board game “maps” that break processes down into a series of simple steps.
- ▶ **RECOUNT THE DAY BY DRAWING OUT ONE OR TWO ACTIVITIES BEFORE BED.** Talking about the drawings will help him enhance his ability to recall as well as improve his language and communication skills.

Panelists (from left)
Ms Loh Huiling,
Ms Goh Ai Yat,
Ms Suhana Binte
Salleh, Ms Gigi Luk,
Ms Jane Mayriel Singh
and Mr Brendan Khor



IN EXCHANGE

Keynote presenters Dr Luk and Ms Goh were also part of a six-member panel discussion — Ms Jane Mayriel Singh, Senior Teacher, The Little Skool-House International; Ms Loh Huiling, Senior Educarer, PCF Sparkletots; Mr Brendan Khor, father of three girls; and Ms Suhana Binte Salleh, ECDA Fellow and Cluster Quality Manager, NTUC First Campus, who moderated the discussion.

Among the topics discussed were those on visual literacy, the impact of electronic devices on brain development and the importance of creating environments to support children’s learning. One topic that sparked a lively discussion was how parents can facilitate mother-tongue language (MTL) learning, especially when they are not fluent in that language. Mr Khor shared that he sought the help of his children’s grandparents. Dr Luk added that it was important to learn together with the child. She said, “This way, you can both pick up the language and improve your fluency — you grow together.”

LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

Throughout the two-day conference, the exhibition was abuzz with educational activities for educators as well as families.

At Kidz Amaze’s specially-designed obstacle course, children tried out a simplified version of the Standard Obstacle Course that National Service (NS) recruits go through. The four-station course had little ones walking over tyre ‘stepping stones’, crossing monkey bars, crawling through a tunnel, and racing to pack an army bag of essentials as quickly as possible. After the obstacle course, they learned how to fold a cardboard-model military truck and were encouraged to write thank-you notes to their fathers for serving the nation as NSmen.

“The obstacle course is a good way for my children to develop their gross motor skills, and at the same time be exposed to NS,” said Madam Fatimah, 29, who came with her daughters Khawla, 6, and Sumayya, 7. “I’m sure they will have many questions for their father about his NS days when we go home!”

The Artground, which provides art experiences for children, conducted two of its most popular gardening-inspired workshops. Participants learned to make seed dumplings out of clay, compost and seeds, and created textile art prints using flowers and leaves.

Ms Jiahui Huang, 37, found that her children, Tracy, 6, and Ernest, 4, enjoyed getting their hands messy. “We plan to grow the seed dumplings at home. By watching the plants grow, they will hopefully learn to treasure the environment,” said Ms Huang.



IN THE HERE AND NOW

Developing mindfulness in children.

Mindfulness — the practice of focusing on the present moment — is not easy to achieve. However, Ms Iris Lim, Principal of Chiltern House Preschool, believes that children can be taught mindfulness and adds that they have an advantage over adults. “Children have less ‘noise’ or thoughts occupying their minds,” said Ms Lim as she talks about her workshop on the “Impact of Mindfulness on Children”.

Participants learnt how mindfulness helps children and educators alike — to be aware of themselves and their surroundings; be accepting or non-judgmental about themselves and others; manage their emotions and calm down; and show kindness and empathy.

Together with Ms Masita Abdul Rahim, Head of Centre and Ms Doreen Ng, K2 teacher at Chiltern House Mountbatten, Ms Lim guided participants through four age-appropriate mindfulness exercises for children (see sidebar).

Having never practised mindfulness before, Ms Siti Zulaifa Bte Sukardi, a K1 teacher at Iyad Perdaus Child Development Centre (Jurong East), felt calmer after trying the various exercises during the workshop. “Mindfulness is shown through actions as well as words. I have to practise or believe in it myself, if I want children to do the same,” said Ms Siti Zulaifa. She expressed interest in following the workshop’s recommendations to carry out mindfulness exercises while transitioning between classroom activities, so that the children can “calm down and concentrate on the next activity”.

Mindfulness is shown through actions as well as words. I have to practise or believe in it myself, if I want children to do the same.

Ms Siti Zulaifa Bte Sukardi, a K1 teacher at Iyad Perdaus Child Development Centre (Jurong East)



Principal of Chiltern House Preschool Ms Iris Lim explaining the impact of mindfulness on children



Educators trying out the mindfulness exercises

MINDFULNESS MADE EASY

1 MINDFUL BREATHING

This calming exercise clears the mind. Invite children to lie down. Let them hold a stuffed toy on their abdomens. With the stuffed toy as a ‘breathing buddy’, it will help them focus on breathing deeply in and out. The children can see their abdomen moving inwards and outwards in time with their breaths.



2 INTERNAL WEATHER

This activity helps children be attuned to their feelings and of those around them. Invite children to sit cross-legged in a circle, close their eyes, and imagine what the weather is like inside them. They then take turns saying out loud whether it is “sunny” (i.e. happy), “cloudy” (sad), “stormy” (angry), etc.



3 MINDFUL WALKING

This activity helps children develop awareness of one’s body and movement. Invite children to walk silently around the room, without making eye contact with anyone but making sure not to bump into others. Ask them to act out how they would walk in different scenarios (if they feel excited, tired, scared, etc.).



4 GRATITUDE BOX

This activity encourages children to reflect and think about what it means to be grateful. Invite children to sit cross-legged in a circle, close their eyes, and think of someone or something they are thankful for. Then ask them to pass an imaginary box around the circle, and take turns to put their ‘gratitude’ into the box.



COVER On Benny: Outfit, Marks & Spencer, Sneakers; Stylist's own; On Allison: Outfit, Seed Heritage, Socks; Stylist's own; On Mader: Full outfit, Seed Heritage, Socks & Shoes; Stylist's own; On Lynn: Denim, Jacket, Seed Heritage, Floral Dress & Headband Gingersnaps, Shoes; Seed Heritage, Socks; Stylist's own; On Nur Erdina: Knitted Sweater, Marks & Spencer, Denim, Cellophane Crayon; On Sebastian: Outfit, Seed Heritage.

OF ALL STRIPES

Teaching diverse learners in the classroom.

Though most educators recognise that children are unique and learn differently, the question is how to tailor different teaching styles to meet the needs of each child in a preschool classroom.

Sharing her insights and expertise on this topic at the “Connecting Diversity in Learning” workshop was veteran early childhood educator Mdm Alisa Bte Mahad. Mdm Alisa is currently a Senior Learning Support Educator in the Development Support & Learning Support Programme with the Special Education Needs Team in PCF. Joining her in conducting the workshop was Ms Karen Wong, a Principal Learning Support Facilitator at the Department of Child Development, KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital.

We need not create multiple lesson plans for different children. What we need to do is to differentiate our teaching or instructions to respond appropriately to the different needs of children.

Mrs Pauline Chia, Vice Principal of Faith Kindergarten



Mdm Alisa Bte Mahad shares practical advice on tailoring teaching approaches



Participating educators warming up with an ice-breaker activity



The workshop has helped debunk misconceptions for principal Mrs Pauline Chia

DIVERSE LEARNERS, DIFFERENTIATED TEACHING

Mdm Alisa urged educators to first reflect on their beliefs, values and thoughts as a starting point. “We have to respect diversity and be sensitive when interacting with others regardless of their abilities, upbringing and culture,” she said. “We need to learn to be non-judgmental before we are able to connect diversity in learning or when we are teaching children and working with various stakeholders, including parents, child therapists and other teachers.”

Some children may require more individualised support than their peers. Mdm Alisa recommended the following ways to facilitate learning opportunities for every child, notwithstanding their learning abilities:

1. IDENTIFY THE CHILD’S NEEDS to tailor your teaching style accordingly, be it to demonstrate, model, guide or let the child learn independently. For example, if a child is struggling to write his own name, the teacher can demonstrate and verbalise the strokes of each letter as the child writes. Afterwards, encourage him to practise writing his name as often as possible. Use different mediums such as crayons or markers.



2. ADOPT DIFFERENT PROMPTING STYLES according to the child’s strengths and weaknesses. These may be through images, verbal cues or physical gestures. For example, if a child does not seem to respond to verbal instruction, you can gently guide the child physically by holding his hand.



3. SCAFFOLD YOUR TEACHING STYLE OR INSTRUCTIONS to facilitate the child’s transition from assisted support to independent learning. You would need to closely observe and assess the stage or phase of development of the child to know when to increase the level of challenge for each activity.



For Vice Principal of Faith Kindergarten, Mrs Pauline Chia, the biggest takeaway from the workshop was that educators need not create multiple lesson plans for different children. She says, “The workshop debunked this misconception that many of us have. What we would need to do is to differentiate our teaching or instructions to respond appropriately to the different needs of children. Be flexible and customise our support. For example, give some children more time than others to complete the same set of tasks.”

SHAPING OUR TOMORROW

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE ECC 2018.

At the conference, Minister for Social and Family Development Desmond Lee spoke about key developments in the EC sector plus new initiatives to raise the profile of early childhood educators and enhance training and support for Mother Tongue Language (MTL) teaching in preschools.

1 Increase affordable and quality early childhood services

- ▶ Over 10,000 new preschool places were opened in the past year. These include:
 - 50 more centres in HDB developments and increased capacities of an average of 200 children per centre
 - Large Child Care Centres; centres in workplaces, commercial developments and near transport nodes; and Early Years Centres in partnership with MOE Kindergartens
- ▶ 40,000 new full-day preschool places by 2023



2 Uplift the early childhood profession

- ▶ Launch of a 3-year national campaign with the tagline 'Shape Our Tomorrow' to raise public awareness and understanding of the early childhood profession
- ▶ Increased investment in professional training and support for educators
 - More than 50% of the expected graduates next year are ECDA Training Award recipients
 - 45% more educators and teachers on the Professional Development Programme (PDP) in 2018
 - National Institute of Early Childhood Development (NIEC) will have its first batch of students in 2019



3 Strengthen Mother Tongue Language (MTL) teaching capabilities

- ▶ Launch of Certificate in Preschool Mother Tongue Language Teaching (see box below) to equip teachers with language-specific pedagogical skills and creative strategies to nurture an interest in mother tongue learning in children
- ▶ More resources in Chinese, Malay and Tamil Language to support quality MTL teaching for N1 and N2 children



The life skills and values imparted by early childhood educators have life-long impact. They shape the future of our families, communities and nation.

Minister Desmond Lee speaking at the ECC 2018



QUICK FACTS

ABOUT THE CERTIFICATE IN PRESCHOOL MTL TEACHING COURSE:

- ▶ Delivered in a **part-time format** to cater to in-service teachers
- ▶ Available in **Malay Language** and **Tamil Language** in 2019, for a start
- ▶ A **training bonus of \$2,000** will be provided to those who are deployed to teach MTL and successfully complete the certificate course over the next two years
- ▶ Upon taking up this certificate course, educators can subsequently sign up for the **Professional Development Programme (PDP)** for Teachers or Educators, and the course can count towards fulfilling part of the PDP training hours' requirement



CHECK IT OUT

Missed the campaign's TV commercial? Watch it via this link: <https://youtu.be/bkzA66heXp8>



SPARK-LING PROGRESS

NEARLY HALF OF ALL PRESCHOOLS IN SINGAPORE HAVE ACHIEVED SPARK CERTIFICATION.

One of the highlights of ECDA's Early Childhood Conference 2018 on 6 October (Saturday) was the Singapore Preschool Accreditation Framework (SPARK) Certificate Presentation Ceremony. A total of 152 centres received their SPARK certification from Ms Low Yen Ling, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Education. This brings the overall number of SPARK-certified preschools from 770 in 2017 to 880, representing almost half of the early childhood sector.

"We have come a long way since the introduction of SPARK in 2011," said Ms Low when congratulating the newly-certified preschools. "Being a SPARK-certified centre is not only about having good quality programmes, but also about putting in place structures and processes to enhance teaching and learning, and to provide quality preschool experience for our children."

During the event, Ms Low highlighted two ways in which SPARK supports centres in their continuous quality improvement journey.

Benefits of Developmental Visits

Rolled out in 2017 to replace re-certification assessments, the mid-term developmental visits have been warmly received by preschool operators as these interim checks remove the pressure from assessments. Developmental Visit officers will offer targeted guidance and coaching, specific to the centres' strengths and areas for improvement.

"I would like to encourage all centres to tap on these Developmental Visits to learn how to effectively implement positive changes for your centres," said Ms Low. "We hope that these Developmental Visits can help more centres to achieve SPARK Commendation, to achieve better outcomes for our children."

Enhanced Support for the Early Years

The Quality Rating Scale (QRS) will be expanded to cover the evaluation of preschool education programmes for children aged zero to three years, thus spanning the entire spectrum of child development up to six years old.

Developed by ECDA in collaboration with sector partners, the new 0-3 section places the focus on approaches to care and learning through play. To be launched in phases, it will be made available for centres to use for self-appraisal from 2019, and for assessment from 2020. ECDA will provide training and support for preschools to use the 0-3 section starting this November.

The enhancement of the QRS has been welcomed by many centre leaders including Ms Gayathri, Principal of Learning Vision @ Alpha. She explained that the 0-3 section will give "greater direction and focus" to educators in improving current practices for younger children. It will also help guide centre leaders like herself to "set benchmarks for quality assurance of the programmes for children aged zero to three years".

WHERE TO FIND SPARK-CERTIFIED CENTRES

As a quality assurance framework, SPARK can help parents make informed choices when selecting preschools for their children. A full list of SPARK-certified centres is available at www.ecda.gov.sg/SPARKInfo/Pages/Home.aspx.



CELEBRATING EXCELLENCE & INNOVATION

OUTSTANDING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS AND PRESCHOOLS WERE HONOURED AT THE ECDA AWARDS 2018.



At the presentation of the ECDA Awards for Excellence in Early Childhood Development this year, 18 dedicated and exemplary early childhood educators and preschools received the prestigious awards from the Minister for Social and Family Development, Mr Desmond Lee.

The 'Promising Award', which was introduced last year to motivate educators with strong potential for professional excellence in the early stage of their early childhood career, saw six winners — double that of 2017's number.

Three 'Outstanding Award' winners were recognised for excellence in their curriculum and pedagogical practices, learning environments, professional development, as well as partnerships with families and the community. It was a heartwarming moment when families, friends, colleagues and preschoolers surprised the winners on stage. Their support and guidance have made a positive difference for these winners, shaping their journey as early childhood professionals.

The ECDA Awards also honoured nine preschools for their innovative teaching and learning practices. ♥

CONGRATULATIONS!

The winners of the ECDA Awards 2018.

PROMISING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCARER AWARD

- ▶ Lai Mei Sum
NTUC First Campus' My First Skool at Blk 219 Serangoon
- ▶ Nur Erdina Bte Rahmat
The Little Skool-House International (At-Kent-Vale)
- ▶ Raihana Binte Suhai
NTUC First Campus' My First Skool at Blk 312C Sumang Link

PROMISING EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER AWARD

- ▶ Yuannita Tovanna
NTUC First Campus' My First Skool at Blk 166 Punggol Central

PROMISING EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADER AWARD

- ▶ Sabrina Chew Li Ping
PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Bishan North Blk 409 (CC)
- ▶ Phyllicia Chew Poh Ching
NTUC First Campus' My First Skool at Blk 229 Ang Mo Kio

OUTSTANDING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCARER AWARD

- ▶ Aishah Sirajuddin
The Caterpillar's Cove Child Development and Study Centre @ Jurong East

OUTSTANDING EARLY CHILDHOOD TEACHER AWARD

- ▶ Tay Shu Ling Eunice
NTUC First Campus' My First Skool at Blk 803 Tampines

OUTSTANDING EARLY CHILDHOOD LEADER AWARD

- ▶ Panmeline Wong
MOE Kindergarten @ Punggol View

OUTSTANDING CENTRE FOR TEACHING & LEARNING AWARD

- ▶ PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Pioneer Blk 661B (CC)

EARLY CHILDHOOD INNOVATION AWARD (DISTINCTION)

- ▶ Kinderland Preschool Ministry of Education
Project: *STREAM Through Discoveries*
- ▶ PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Chua Chu Kang Blk 10
Project: *Harvesting Rain*

EARLY CHILDHOOD INNOVATION AWARD (MERIT)

- ▶ MOE Kindergarten @ Farrer Park
Project: *Children's Wonder Playland*

EARLY CHILDHOOD INNOVATION AWARD (COMMENDATION)

- ▶ NTUC First Campus' My First Skool at Blk 18A Holland Drive
Project: *Project Social Good Made Easy*
- ▶ NTUC First Campus' My First Skool at Blk 212 Choa Chu Kang
Project: *How can we ease the primary school transition for K2 children?*
- ▶ NTUC First Campus' My First Skool at Blk 518 Jurong West
Project: *How can we facilitate purposeful play for children at the Dramatic Learning Centre?*
- ▶ PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Cheng San-Seletar Blk 533 (KN)
Project: *Buzz off!*
- ▶ PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Tampines West Blk 140
Project: *Dream Plate*

Visit bit.ly/ECDA_awards to find out more about the winners.

EMPOWERING CHILDREN TO LEARN

WINNER OF THE 2018 ECDA OUTSTANDING EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCARER AWARD, MS AISHAH SIRAJUDDIN FROM THE CATERPILLAR'S COVE CHILD DEVELOPMENT AND STUDY CENTRE @ JURONG EAST, UNDERSCORES THE IMPORTANCE OF CONFIDENT AND COMPETENT CHILDREN.

Ms Aishah Sirajuddin, 28, finds that children even as young as three, are capable of taking an active part in their own learning, if they feel respected and heard. "Children need to be given choices and know that their decisions are important," she says.



Ms Aishah lets children work with real tools under supervision during their woodworking session

Listen to The Child's Opinion

In her classroom, making decisions about learning begins the moment the children arrive at the centre.

Aishah explains, "I want them to feel good about themselves and let them know that their decisions are important. This is why we have children vote for a book they would like to read each day. Teachers should co-share decision-making, as children's voices are equally important."

Trust The Child to Make Good Decisions

Aishah also believes that we need to see children as capable and competent individuals, who are able to approach complex activities appropriately and thoughtfully.

In their woodworking sessions, children work with real tools under supervision. "In spite of their age, they are able to assess risks and make good decisions," she recounts. "For example, they are able to look at pictures of themselves in action and reflect, 'Oh dear, I cannot put my hand there when my friend is hammering'."

Such teaching experiences give Aishah the confidence that children can be empowered to take charge of their own learning.

Encourage One-To-One Interaction

This is especially crucial in the first few years of life. Says Aishah, "These serve-and-return interactions foster a deep and meaningful relationship between the adult and child. Educators can make use of little pockets of time to deepen the emotional connections with different children. The children have taught me about how important it is for me to be in the present and focus on the 'now', to observe and listen in order to truly understand each one of them."

It is a privilege to work with very young children. It is our responsibility to make the best and most positive impact on their lives.

Ms Aishah Sirajuddin

Partner The Parents

Helping children learn goes beyond what happens in the classroom. "I involve parents as much as possible in the curriculum. I strongly believe that their children's learning is a shared responsibility. It is also important to understand that every family is different. We need to acknowledge these differences positively," she says.

Get Fresh Perspectives from Others

Aishah enjoys having formal and informal chats regularly with her colleagues about the curriculum and the children. She elaborates, "My colleagues often help me strike a balance and keep my thinking in perspective. It has helped me make more informed decisions. As a result, my relationships with both the children and families have improved significantly. I have learned to take feedback constructively, and use it to further my growth as an educator." ♥



Ms Aishah Sirajuddin believes that teachers should co-share decision-making with children.

See a short video of her at https://youtu.be/-C_Cyv8ZJS4



Children collaborating to create and construct models and prototypes

SCIENCE IS FUN!

I drew a picture of a water wheel. I then made a model using plastic spoons, chopsticks, strings, and construction and manipulative toys. My favourite part was trying to count the number of spins it made. Although it was difficult to count and I got wet, it was exciting to see the water make the wheel turn.

Ong Yun Chong, 6



STREAMING AHEAD

CHILDREN AT KINDERLAND PRESCHOOL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
BUILD CREATIVITY AND CONFIDENCE ALONGSIDE SCIENTIFIC LEARNING.

With their natural curiosity, children are little scientists at heart. At Kinderland Preschool Ministry of Education, children are engaged in experiential learning using the STREAM methodology on science-based projects. The term is an extension of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) and includes Reading, wRiting and the Arts.

The Making of a STREAM Project

The STREAM projects had children learn about sound production, attributes of materials, and simple machines by building kinetic structures which include a Tubulum, a Pendulum Art Machine and a Wishing Well. Through the projects, the children underwent an entire process ranging from conceptualising and planning, making predictions, generating explanations, creating models or prototypes to constructing and assembling the final products.

According to Principal Ms Pramadevi, "STREAM focuses on developing the children holistically. The teachers encourage children to ask questions, investigate, hypothesise and test these out. The children had several discussions and bounced ideas off their teachers and peers. They were better able to communicate and express themselves, listen to different perspectives and ideas, negotiate

and collaborate. The outdoor kinetic structures are now utilised to enrich the children's play experiences."

Learning to Solve Problems Independently

Teacher Connie Pang observed that children working on STREAM projects were able to devise solutions to challenges: "As they may not be able to predict the items and materials that they may be working with, they learned to be flexible and make adjustments to their plans, where necessary.

"For instance, when presented with a rusty, recycled wheel, the children realised that they had to remove the rust first before they could use the wheel. This spurred them to want to discover how best to remove the rust. Together with the teachers, they researched on ways in which they could do this," she says. She also observed that the children became more confident and independent as the projects progressed. It brought out the leadership qualities in some children, who volunteered to take charge of certain tasks.

The teachers also encourage parents to help with some tasks such as sawing and drilling, and contributing recycled materials. Having parents involved in STREAM projects helped them get up to speed and take an active interest in their children's learning (see box for more tips). ♥



LEARNING CONTINUES AT HOME

CONNIE'S TIPS ON HOW PARENTS CAN MOTIVATE AND SUSTAIN THEIR CHILDREN'S INTEREST.

- **USE VARIOUS INFORMATION SOURCES** such as resource books and the internet to deepen children's understanding of the concepts learned in preschool.
- **BUILD VARIATIONS OR MINIATURE MODELS** of projects that your child has created in preschool. Discuss the process.
- **ENGAGE CHILDREN IN HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES** such as playing with dough, construction toys and magnets, cooking, water play and shadow play. These experiences are gateways to learning about basic science concepts.

EVERY DROP COUNTS

CHILDREN AT PCF SPARKLETOTS PRESCHOOL @ CHUA CHU KANG BLK 10
BECOME BETTER ADVOCATES FOR WATER CONSERVATION.



Children use the collected rainwater to clean the centre and water plants, learning about water conservation in the process



For their respective projects, Kinderland Preschool Ministry of Education and PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Chua Chu Kang Blk 10 were conferred the 2018 ECDA Innovation Award (Distinction). Visit bit.ly/ECDA-Awards-2018-Innovation-Awards for this year's winners showcase.

Instead of telling children about our finite water resources and the importance of conserving water, it makes a deeper impact when they are involved in the process and see tangible results for themselves. This was the centre's thinking behind the "Harvesting Rain" project by PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Chua Chu Kang Blk 10.

"Our goal was to raise awareness of issues that affect the environment and inculcate a sense of responsibility in the children," says teacher Nur Amirah Bte Roslee. "Our children need to know that they can do their part. We want our children to walk the talk so that they can be advocates for water conservation."

From Doing To Learning

As part of the project, the centre installed a water tank to collect rainwater. The children were taught how to measure and record the amount of water collected. They learnt about water consumption by undertaking various tasks. They used the water to flush toilets, and clean furniture and toys during the termly spring cleaning with parent volunteers, and watered plants that they had potted themselves.

The teachers also discussed relevant newspaper articles with children and they visited the NEWater plant as part of their learning journey. Through these

My child learned that rainwater can be used for many purposes. I see him practicing water conservation at home. This project has taught the children that it is important to recycle and reuse. It has pushed them to think creatively and to find ways to reuse things rather than to throw them away.

Ms Lydia Hakim, parent of Nursery 2
Student Asher Tan Jia Le

immersive experiences and, more importantly, being part of the solution to save water, the children were better able to grasp and communicate the key concepts of water conservation. They also became more conscious of how they used water daily such as for tooth-brushing and bathing.

Bringing The Lessons Home

Back at home, the parents worked with their children to design posters on how to conserve water for display

at the water tank area. These posters were also made into flyers and cards for children to distribute at the neighbourhood marketplace and coffee shops.

Parent volunteers joined them as guides, and the children were able to confidently explain their mission to the community. By getting involved in these activities, parents were better able to support and strengthen their children's learning in preschool. They learnt how to engage children more meaningfully through authentic and hands-on learning experiences.

Deepening The Project's Impact

The water tank has now become the centre's main source of water. Aside from cleaning and watering plants, the centre uses the rainwater collected for art & craft and science activities. Cleaners from the town council also use it to mop floors. The vendor who cleans the centre's fans even uses the rainwater to do so.

With the successful outcomes of the "Harvesting Rain" project, the centre plans to keep the programme going and share the benefits of this project with other centres. ♥

ECDA INNOVATION PROJECTS GRANT
All ECDA-registered preschools can apply for the Innovation Projects Grant which offers funding support to equip educators with the skills and knowledge to carry out innovative activities with the children. For more information, visit www.ecda.gov.sg/Educators/Pages/ECDA-Innovation-Projects-Grant.aspx.

NURTURING INTERACTIONS

THE ABECEDARIAN APPROACH GIVES CHILDREN A STRONG FOUNDATION FOR A LIFETIME OF LEARNING.



“A good experience in early learning is the basis for a lifetime of learning,” says Dr Joseph Sparling, the American professor who developed the Abecedarian Approach with Professor Craig Ramey.

The Abecedarian Approach is not a curriculum but rather, an interaction strategy that focuses on language and high quality adult-child interactions, which Dr Sparling terms the “active ingredients of any effective early educational programme”.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Dr Sparling explains the four elements of the Abecedarian Approach and how we can apply them in our daily interactions with children.

► **Language Priority** emphasises the central role that language plays in every interaction with your child. It is the ground from which the other elements of the Abecedarian Approach grow. Every interaction is an opportunity for talking, listening and learning language. For example, sing a song to your baby and make

sure he is looking at your lips while you sing.

► **Enriched Caregiving** is to consciously bring in positive emotions and educational content to the daily routines of care. The routines can range from the time your child starts the day until he goes to bed — it includes feeding, bathing, diapering, dressing and playing. Caring and learning are inter-woven. When your child is getting dressed, name the items you are helping him put on (shirt, shorts, socks) and describe your actions, e.g. “I am buttoning your shirt now”.

► **Conversational Reading** involves having conversations while reading a book with an individual child or a pair of children. The communication goes back-and-forth. For a younger child, you can name the pictures and describe them. For an older child, you can extend his responses by asking questions such as “Why do you think that...?” or “How does it make you feel?”. Encourage your

child to also describe what is happening in the picture.

► **LearningGames®** comprise 200 experiences or learning games played between an adult and one or two children (see box below). The sustained, fun and interactive play between adult and child contains important educational content and also supports other aspects such as his socio-emotional, cognitive and physical development. The experiences range from describing a baby’s actions while she reaches for a toy, to planting seeds and talking about the changes as they grow.

Because of its flexible nature, the Abecedarian Approach can complement existing curricula or stand on its own. The Abecedarian Approach can help refocus caregivers and parents back to the most important component of care: high-quality interactions between adult and child that are individualised, intentional and frequent.

Dr Joseph Sparling



Dr Joseph Sparling co-developed the Abecedarian Approach



STRENGTHENING FOUNDATIONS

Research shows that the Abecedarian Approach can give children, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, a significant boost to their cognitive and socio-emotional growth which can improve child outcomes and have long-lasting developmental returns.

“It is important to start young because there is greater opportunity

and flexibility in brain development in the first three years of life than at any other time,” says Dr Sparling. “Positive brain development is based on the positive and responsive experiences that we provide for the child.” This approach works best when early childhood professionals work alongside parents, supporting each other to build a strong and lasting foundation for the child in their early years. ♥

PLAYFUL INTERACTIONS IN PLAY

The Abecedarian Approach has been implemented in selected preschools to contribute to the holistic development of children in their early years, forming a strong foundation for a good start in life.

ECDA Consultant Puspavalli Namasivayam, who trains educators in the Abecedarian Approach, shares her insights on the Abecedarian Approach.



- It provides personalised and individualised interactions with each child. The intensive, one-to-one interactions through daily routines and the selected activities, cater to the child’s learning and developmental needs, and strengthen adult-child bonding.
- It increases the frequency of rich language interactions. This sustains the back and forth conversations between adult and child, and builds on his growing language and communication skills as well as vocabulary.
- The elements in the approach can be used in any conversations or situations where children are cared for, be it at home, preschool, play or outings.

ABECEDARIAN APPROACH IN PRACTICE

AN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL AND A PARENT FROM PCF SPARKLETOTS PRESCHOOL @ JURONG SPRING BLK 553 SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH THE ABECEDARIAN APPROACH (AA).

Since adopting the Abecedarian Approach, we observe that the children have become more confident in their speech and it has increased their vocabulary. It is satisfying to see the children being able to express themselves. The strategies in the Abecedarian Approach provide teachers with a framework to have meaningful engagement with children. Professionally, it has improved their pedagogical practices.

Ms Suhartina Binte Buang, Centre Leader

The Abecedarian Approach has provided me with practical ways to interact, communicate and also compliment my child. When I want my child to be more cooperative, I sing or role play with her. I have learned to use warm, positive language when speaking to her. Our bond has become stronger. It reminds me, as a parent, to focus more on the child and the way we interact with her.

Ms Fauziah Binte Zubir, parent of toddler, Husniyah Aaisyah Binte Salfudin

Q&A

BUILDING STRONG BONDS AND CREATING HOLISTIC ENRICHING EXPERIENCES FOR YOUR CHILD.

For Parents



Q

How can I strengthen my relationship and build a strong bond with my baby?

A baby's brain development is affected by the quality of your relationship with him. Positive facial expressions, gestures and tone of voice will help you build strong connections with your baby. Responsive caregivers are more likely to raise children who are compassionate, happy and are able to do well at school and work. Here are a few tips to strengthen your relationship with your baby:

- ▶ **Respond to your baby's cues in a predictable way.** Babies learn to trust the adults in their environment when you respond in the same way to similar situations. Building trust is an important part of healthy development.
- ▶ **Acknowledge your baby's feelings and name them.** You can say 'You're sad that...' or 'You're scared of...'. He will learn that his feelings matter and are important.
- ▶ **Observe what your baby is interested in.** Notice how he reacts to different objects, people, sounds or music. You can say 'Oh, you're looking at the...'. You are effectively saying that you are interested in him.
- ▶ **Make daily routines fun and predictable.** Routines are a pattern of activities, not a schedule. Be responsive to your baby's needs in daily activities such as diapering and mealtimes. Use these routines to engage and communicate with your child.

Q

How can educators support young children's holistic development?

The goal of educators is to develop the 'whole child' and to provide enriching experiences and environments to enhance their learning, development and wellbeing. Here are some ways:

- ▶ **Allow children time to explore.** Children are naturally curious and they will ask questions as they explore. Facilitate their explorations through discussions. Give children time to also fully engage their **different senses in hands-on experiences.**
- ▶ **Be aware that each child develops at a different pace.** Provide small group or individualised learning to cater to the needs of different children. **Observe** and provide them with **additional support** or **timely intervention** where required.
- ▶ **Build relationships with parents.** Young children's behaviour and development are shaped by their experiences both at home and at preschool. Educators should **work closely with parents** to exchange information to **develop a more**

authentic profile of the child. Build on these profiles to provide more meaningful experiences to support children's holistic development.

- ▶ **Apply skills and knowledge in real-life situations** for their holistic development. Plan projects and events with children to bring in the different developmental aspects. For instance, the children can **work in teams** (social and emotional aspects) to **plan** (problem-solving and decision-making) a class party, **design** (creative and aesthetic) and **write** invitation cards (language and literacy) and **estimate** the amount of food needed (numeracy skills) etc. Development does not happen in silos. A single activity such as children working together can integrate multiple aspects of development and skills.

For EC Educators



ASK THE EXPERTS



MS ALICIA LIM is a former senior occupational therapist at the Child Development Unit, National University Hospital. She has a professional interest in supporting caregivers to enrich interactions with their children. Alicia is also trained in infant-parent mental health and the Touchpoints™ approach which includes preventative intervention for vulnerable families.

MS ONG SIEW TENG is the Executive Principal at PCF Sparkletots Preschool. She has been a leader in the EC sector for over 10 years. Siew Teng firmly believes that children learn best through meaningful and authentic interactions with people and the environment. She was appointed as an ECDA Fellow in April 2018 to train and mentor other early childhood professionals, and develop sector-wide resources.

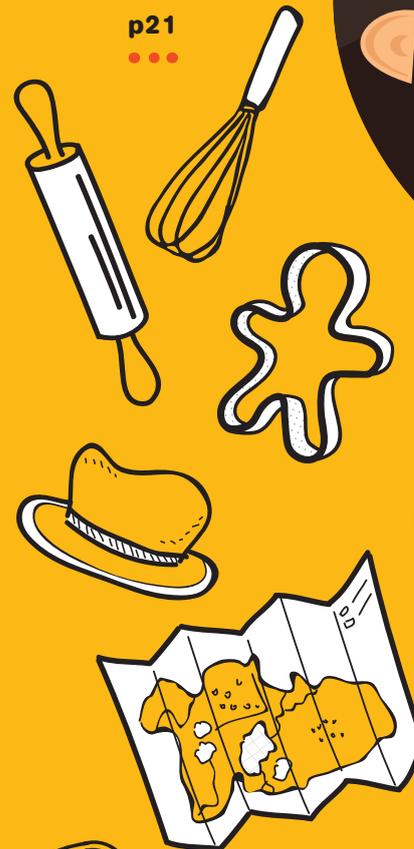
THRIVE

grow

Easy-peasy gingerbread cookies

p21

...



play

Get crafty on Halloween

p22

...



learn

A journey to discover our roots

p18

...



RISE AND SHINE!



Kids TALK

THE ARTFUL CONVERSATIONS RESOURCE KIT GIVES TEACHERS AND PARENTS A TOOL TO HAVE A FUN EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE WITH THEIR CHILDREN AT THE MUSEUM.



Engaging your child in conversation may be one of the best ways to boost his development. A US study recently published in the journal *Pediatrics* found that children whose parents chatted with them more fared better in language skills and cognitive abilities such as memory and reasoning.

ELOQUENT EXCHANGES

Rich and meaningful parent-child interactions are important for bonding as well as a child's holistic development. To help parents accomplish both, the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA), the National Library Board (NLB) and the Asian Civilisations Museum (ACM) have come together for the first time to produce a resource kit called **Artful Conversations: Stories from the Past**. It comprises a booklet and a set of eight story cards and activity templates. Over 3,600 kits have been distributed to all preschools in Singapore.

"We developed the kit to be a starting point for quality parent-child interactions and conversations, which has been shown to boost the development of our children's emerging cognitive abilities," said Mr Sam Tan, Minister of State for Social and Family Development, who launched the kit at an Expert Series Seminar in July. "At the same time, it serves as a common platform that parents, teachers, and heritage experts can all refer to, allowing our children's learning

Launch of the 'Artful Conversations: Stories from the Past' resource kit



to be reinforced, and extending learning experiences from the home to the preschool and the museum."

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Heritage education is important from a young age, says Ms Asmah Alias, Deputy Director (Education & Community Outreach) of the National Heritage Board. "We want the young to develop a deeper appreciation of the many facets of Singapore's heritage and from there, build a stronger sense of national identity," she elaborates. "Museums play an important role as one of the first touch points of heritage education for children in their early years."

"Partnerships between museums and preschools are important. They create opportunities for educators and parents to work together to heighten the child's awareness of diverse cultures and our history,"



Using the resource kit for the first time at the Asian Civilisations Museum

says teacher Liu Qian Qian from YWCA Bedok Child Development Centre. The Artful Conversations kit has helped her to make the most out of the museum. This visit was one of the eight learning journeys organised as part of the ECDA Early Childhood Conference 2018. Educators learnt how to use the kit as part of their curriculum planning as well as how they can work with parents to support their children's learning at the museum.

"The kit's story cards are useful. The practical instructions such as 'Look', 'Think', 'Imagine' or 'Design' help guide children's observation of various artefacts in ACM," says Teacher Liu. She also added that the recommended books and suggested activities in the kit will help children appreciate the diverse and cultural lives of people. "It is important that children think about the perspectives of other people. It will help them develop their relational skills as they come to understand that people have their own ideas, thoughts and feelings."



WHAT PARENTS SAY

Blogger and mother of two, Rosalind Lee (@bbroyce.stagram), found that the kit offered hands-on learning opportunities – "I learned something new myself" – and made it easier to engage her son in meaningful conversations about their roots. "Instead of providing my son with the answers, having him talk to me about what he thinks allows him to exercise his problem-solving and critical-thinking skills."

Michelle Hon (@thechillmom) found the kit provided many talking points for her and her three children. "I learned how to talk to them on a deeper level about the exhibits," she says. "The activities have a huge impact on parent-child bonding. The children learn with us and hone their questioning techniques. It also encourages them to come to us when they have any questions." ♥



Educators learning how to best use the kit on their Learning Journey

Museum Day Out

NHB's Asmah Alias shares five tips on creating a meaningful museum experience for your children.

1. **Know your children's interests** and choose a museum that they would enjoy and be able to relate to.
2. **Cultivate a curious mind** with the "See-Think-Wonder" technique. This process helps children make careful observations and encourage curiosity and creativity.
3. **Think quality, not quantity.** Children have short attention spans and spending 30 minutes of quality time is more meaningful than going through 10 galleries for three hours. Identify three to five objects to focus on during the visit, which can spur more conversations.
4. **Observe how your child responds** to the artefacts and programmes. Build on these and extend the learning at home.
5. **Adapt the game 'Simon Says' with hand or body gestures to teach kids good museum visiting etiquette** – learning how to behave will help both you and your child relax and enjoy the experience.



DOWNLOAD THE FREE KIT AT http://bit.ly/ACSP18_2



MUSEUM HIGHLIGHTS

Asian Civilisations Museum
 24 Nov | ACM – Uniquely Asia
 29 Dec | ACM – Sawadee Pee Mai (Happy New Year!)
 Explore the wonders of Asian art and folklore with your family, and enjoy hands-on activities and interactive performances in the galleries every last Saturday of the month at the Asian Civilisations Museum!

National Museum of Singapore
 24 Nov | Family Fun – Memories in Frame
 15 Dec | Family Fun – Outdoor Adventure
 Enjoy Family Fun at the National Museum every last Saturday of the month! Take part in interactive tours, storytelling sessions, family workshops, drop-in craft activities, captivating performances and more.

Peranakan Museum
 4 Nov | Straits Family Sunday – Berkilau Kilau (So Shiny)
 Discover intricate Peranakan jewellery, design your own Peranakan-inspired brooch and complete the look by dressing up in a sarong kebaya!



Oct-Dec 19

LANGUAGE SKILLS & COGNITIVE ABILITIES



Win

Create Meaningful Museum Experiences For Your Child

NAME ONE PROGRAMME AT THE MUSEUM HAPPENING THIS SCHOOL HOLIDAYS AND TELL US HOW YOU CAN OPTIMISE THE VISIT FOR YOUR CHILD.

▶▶▶ **HOW TO WIN**

Submit your answer to beanstalk@mediacorp.com.sg with your name and contact details.

Closing date: **30 November 2018**

THE PRIZE

Artful Conversations: Stories from the Past resource kit X 5

Each kit comprises a booklet, a set of eight story cards and activity templates.



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.

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.



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

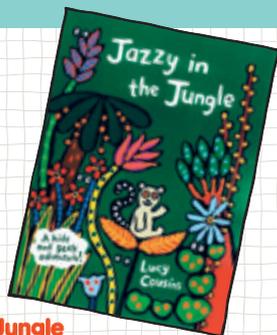


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Quest FOR KNOWLEDGE

LEARNING ABOUT THE WORLD FROM A CHILD'S PERSPECTIVE.



Nurturing Personal, Social And Emotional Development In Early Childhood: A Practical Guide To Understanding Brain Development And Young Children's Behaviour
By Debbie Garvey



Personal, social and emotional development are important building blocks in a child's success in life. Debbie Garvey gives a practical guide to understanding the little one's brain development and behaviour. This book is filled with reflective practice examples that open our eyes to the world from a child's perspective.



Jazzy In The Jungle
By Lucy Cousins



This is an interactive picture book about a baby lemur, Jazzy, and his mama playing hide-and-seek in the jungle. As mama swings from tree to tree searching for him, she bumps into various jungle animals but they all reply that Jazzy is "not here". Children will enjoy turning the richly illustrated and uniquely shaped flaps that represent the different places in the jungle to help Mama Jojo look for Jazzy. Along the way, they will also meet and learn the names of many jungle animals.



Contributed by *Huang Su San*, Librarian, National Library Board



Contributed by *Norah Ismail*, Librarian, National Library Board

Season AND SPICE

GET YOUR LITTLE ONE'S HELP TO MAKE THESE FESTIVE-READY COOKIES FOR THE HOLIDAYS!

GINGERBREAD MEN COOKIES

MAKES 12

FOLLOW THESE STEPS

- Cream butter and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in molasses, egg and water.
- In another bowl, whisk together remaining ingredients (minus frosting) and gradually beat into creamed mixture.
- Divide dough in half. Shape each into a disk; wrap in plastic. Refrigerate for about 30 minutes.
- Pre-heat oven to about 170°C. On a lightly floured surface, roll each portion of dough to 1/8 inch thickness. Cut with a floured gingerbread man cookie cutter. Place 2 inches apart on greased baking sheets.
- Bake until edges are firm, 8-10 minutes. Remove to wire racks to cool completely.
- Decorate with frosting and ribbon.

WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- ▶ 1/2 cup butter, softened
- ▶ 3/4 cup packed dark brown sugar
- ▶ 1/3 cup molasses
- ▶ 1 egg
- ▶ 2 tsp water
- ▶ 2 2/3 cups all-purpose flour
- ▶ 1 tsp baking soda
- ▶ 1/2 tsp salt
- ▶ 2 tsp ground ginger
- ▶ 1/2 tsp ground cinnamon
- ▶ 1/2 tsp ground nutmeg
- ▶ 1/2 tsp ground allspice
- ▶ Frosting
- ▶ Ribbon

A BETTER FROSTING

Frosting is typically made from sugar, milk and butter. Whip up a healthier frosting using reduced fat plain yogurt instead. This way, your child can benefit from the calcium content too! Visit www.healthhub.sg/live-healthy/216/calcium_greater_bone_strength for more details.



TIP: Swap butter with margarine, and the all-purpose flour with wholemeal flour.



GET Your FREAK ON

SET THE MOOD FOR HALLOWEEN WITH THIS SPOOKTACULAR BUT SIMPLE ART PROJECT!



HALLOWEEN PAPER CRAFT

This Halloween-themed paper project is quick and easy, and can be completed faster than you can say "Boo"!

WHAT YOU'LL NEED



CREEPLY CRAFTY

Have a frightfully fun time using this template to create other ghouls and monsters. Here are some creepy, creative ideas to get you started.



22 Beanstalk

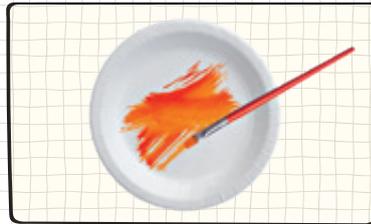


SNAP AND SHOW THEM OFF

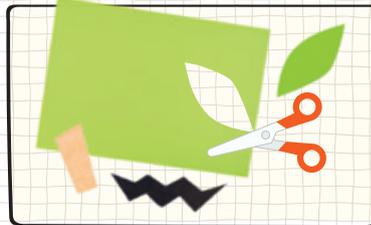
Hey parents, send a snapshot of your child with his/her Halloween craft to beanstalk@mediacorp.com.sg. Include your child's full name, age and your contact details. His/her craftwork could be featured in the next issue of Beanstalk!

FOLLOW THESE STEPS

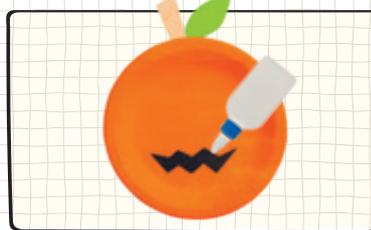
1 Paint a paper plate with orange acrylic paint.



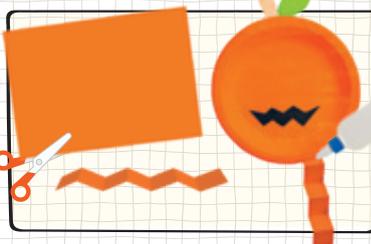
2 Cut out a stem, leaf and mouth out of construction papers of various colours.



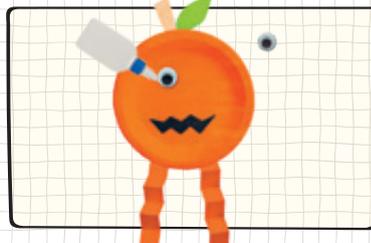
3 Glue the stem and leaf to the back of the plate and the mouth to the front.



4 Cut two strips of orange paper and fold accordion-style. Glue to the back of the plate.



5 Glue two googly eyes to the front of the plate. And there you have it – jack-o'-lantern! ♥



www.FACEBOOK.COM/BEANSTALKSINGAPORE

SCHOOL'S OUT, LET'S PLAY!

FIVE FUN WAYS TO KEEP YOUR CHILD HAPPILY OCCUPIED DURING THE YEAR-END HOLIDAYS.



Photo: Singapore Science Centre

1 Soaper Duper Fun

Have you ever wondered what you put on your body every time you step into the shower? Have Soaper Duper fun this holiday season and stimulate your child's senses in a journey full of scent, science and suds. Children get to fizz things up and make their own bath bomb and other shower products. For more information, visit www.science.edu.sg/visit-us/kidsstop-for-families/school-holiday-programmes.

As children explore the materials, they will expand their vocabulary (e.g. slippery, smooth). Soap-making also develops their scientific skills as they explore, hypothesise, experiment and discover.



Photo: www.cheelemonkhe.com

2 Hang From A Chandelier

If you're flying off on a family trip this holiday, be sure to arrive early at Changi Airport Terminal 4. Check out the Chandelier, a five storey-high playground of climbing nets and fireman poles. Located at the terminal's departure lounge, it admits up to 50 people at a time and is open around the clock.

Climbing hones spatial and directional awareness. It also strengthens physical skills such as balance, agility and eye, hand and foot coordination.

3 Discover The World Through Stamps

Stamps are a visual way to expand your child's mind. Make a beeline for the Singapore Philatelic Museum's current exhibitions revolving around man's best friend, the origins of the popular storybook *The Little Prince* and award-winning illustrated envelopes. Help your little one to write a postcard about his favourite exhibit and mail it to your home address or to a friend. The postcard will make a great keepsake of your visit! Entry is free for Singaporeans and PRs. Visit www.spm.org.sg for exhibition details.

Writing helps your child to recognise letters, and strengthens eye-hand coordination. Recalling events and experiences also stimulate the part of the brain that organises ideas and retains information.



5 Bonding Under The Stars

Camping is a chance for families to enjoy bonding time surrounded by nature, without the distractions of technology. There are three approved camping sites at East Coast Park, Pasir Ris Park and West Coast Park. Find out more at www.nparks.gov.sg/activities/fun-and-recreation/camping.

Camping helps children to develop skills such as teamwork (e.g. cooking a meal) and problem-solving (e.g. pitching a tent). It is a great opportunity to connect, communicate and spend quality time with each other. ♥

4 Visit A Farm

You can still find farms in urbanised Singapore! Visit Hay Dairies and observe the goats during the daily morning milking sessions. Explore the farm for free. At Jurong Frog Farm, sign up for the Gabbe Family Tour (\$12 per person) where you can feed the American bull frogs and have your photo taken with them. Visit www.jurongfrogfarm.com.sg and www.haydairies.com.sg for more details.

Farms offer a rich variety of sensorial experiences and are a great language and vocabulary booster for young children. Encourage your child to describe what he sees, the colours, textures and sizes.



Photo: Hay Dairies

WE'VE GOT MAIL! 😊

PARENTS SHARE THEIR STRATEGIES FOR STRENGTHENING THEIR CHILD'S PHYSICAL, COGNITIVE, SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

 My husband and I bring our daughter outdoors every weekend. We plan a variety of activities — kite flying, sand playing at the beach, tandem cycling, or just taking mini walks around our neighbourhood. From these experiences, she learns how to interact with other toddlers. She waits her turn at the playground, saying "thank you" or "sorry" and shares toys during playdates. We have also noticed that she is more curious and observant on our walks. Exposing children to the outdoors and a range of experiences can richly benefit their holistic development, especially in terms of soft skills and values.



Learning social cues and honing observational skills through outdoor play

Adilah Mohd, mother of a daughter, aged 2



Sensory play helps to enhance baby's motor skills and brain development

 Nurturing my child since young is important to lay the foundation for a disciplined and sociable person in future. I try and provide different sensorial play experiences for her to explore and have fun. I know that these will develop her motor skills and also her thinking. She has opportunities to interact with materials such as blocks, books and music instruments and mixes with other playmates from different backgrounds. These opportunities will gradually help develop her language, communication and social skills.

Ling Wei, mother of a daughter, aged 9 months

 My two girls love to do art. I always make it a point to discuss their art pieces with them. They will talk about it and explain what it means for them. I find the time spent meaningful as I get invaluable insights into the girls' thinking and their language abilities through their verbal explanations. I believe that art helps develop them emotionally, builds their self-confidence and strengthens their language skills. The picture (on the left) is Ashlyn's depiction of our home, with the different colour segments representing the bedrooms, living room and kitchen.

Gan Hui Ching, mother of two daughters, aged 5 and 3



Expressing themselves through doodles and drawings

GIVE THEM A HAND

We showed you how to make hand puppets to tell stories in the Jul-Sep 2018 issue. Take a look at what these little artists have crafted!



Jolene Bong, 5

Anuradha Karthik, 3

Tew Heng Wei, 2

See Khai Keat, 3

Arisa Tihani Binti Shah Indra, 3

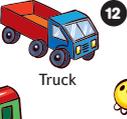
Photos courtesy of Adilah Mohd, Ling Wei and Gan Hui Ching

CAN YOU SPOT THEM?

SPY WITH YOUR LITTLE EYES AND CIRCLE THESE 15 OBJECTS IN THE TOY FACTORY BELOW. LOOK CAREFULLY!



FIND THESE OBJECTS:

- | | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|--|--|--|
| 1  | 2  | 3  | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  |
| Hot air balloon | Gift | Spinning top | Doll's house | Ship | Dart board | Doll |
| 8  | 9  | 10  | 11  | 12  | 13  | 14  |
| Rabbit | Rocking horse | Blocks | Train | Truck | Dinosaur | Drum |
| | | | | | 15  | |
| | | | | | Stacking rings | |

ANSWERS:



 **HEY PARENTS!** Puzzles such as this are a good way to sharpen children's observation skills. It trains them to focus and screen out irrelevant information in a clutter of images, improves their attention span and develops their visual memory. You can also use the opportunity to expand their vocabulary by teaching them the names of the objects in the picture.

ENRICHING SPACES FOR CHILDREN

Parents, share with us how you have used spaces in your home or in your neighbourhood to support your children's learning and 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.