

MARKING MILESTONES

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE MOMENTS OF LIFE (FAMILIES) APP — A ONE-STOP DIGITAL PLATFORM FOR PARENTS.

WHAT IS IT? Launched on 29 June 2018, the Moments of Life (Families) app provides useful services and information to help ease the transition to parenthood and support your child's development on a single digital platform.

WHO IS IT FOR? New parents and those with children aged 6 and below.

WHY USE IT? Here are some nifty tasks you can do via the app.



1 REGISTER THE BIRTH OF YOUR CHILD

Parents who deliver their child in a public hospital can register the birth via the Moments of Life (Families) app. Simply log in with your SingPass and most of your personal information will be pre-filled. It saves you the hassle of bringing multiple physical documents to collect your child's birth certificate.

2 APPLY FOR THE BABY BONUS

Parents who have not registered for Baby Bonus will be prompted automatically to apply for Baby Bonus (see box below). This means you won't need to submit another application separately.



3 CHECK YOUR CHILD'S IMMUNISATION AND MEDICAL RECORDS

With the app, parents can easily keep track of the vaccinations their child needs. The app also enables parents to manage their child's upcoming medical appointments and gives them an overview of his health.

4 FIND A PRESCHOOL

The app comes loaded with a list of preschools, searchable by location. The vacancies available, as well as the enrolment fees, are also shown. Parents can use the app to indicate interest in sending their child to a particular preschool, who will contact them directly for further discussion.



5 GET ADVICE ON PARENTING

The app offers a wealth of information under Baby Bonus Parenting Resources on topics relating to parenthood. These include parenting articles, videos, tips and guides, all customised to the local context. Parents can also view upcoming events that are aligned with their personal interests.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Moments of Life (Families) app is the culmination of 12 months of on-the-ground surveys, interviews, prototyping and beta-testing conducted with citizens.

IT'S A BONUS!

If your child is eligible for Baby Bonus, you can receive a cash gift, and open a Child Development Account (CDA) — a special savings account which can be used for your child's educational and healthcare expenses. Visit www.babybonus.msf.gov.sg to find out more.



Your child needs to be vaccinated according to the Singapore National Childhood Immunisation Schedule to be protected against vaccine-preventable diseases. Read more about immunisations at <https://www.nir.hpb.gov.sg/nirp/eservices/immunisationSchedule>

UNDER ONE UMBRELLA

THE NEW NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT IS TRANSFORMING THE EC TRAINING LANDSCAPE.



Mrs Loke-Yeo Teck Yong
Director, NIEC

The latest development in the early childhood (EC) sector is the establishment of the National Institute of Early Childhood Development (NIEC), a landmark move to uplift the quality of teaching and to strengthen the national EC ecosystem.

NIEC is set up by the Ministry of Education (MOE) and affiliated to the National Institute of Education (NIE). It is now the key training provider for the sector, with over 4,000 students enrolled in its suite of early childhood courses.

1 NIEC, 4 CAMPUSES

NIEC brings together the EC training capabilities and expertise at four campuses – Institute of Technical Education, Ngee Ann Polytechnic, Temasek Polytechnic and NTUC's SEED Institute.

Under the NIEC umbrella, these four campuses will offer a range of EC courses. These will comprise Certificate and Diploma courses for post-secondary students and mid-career switchers interested in joining the preschool sector, as well as in-service upgrading and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for existing educators.

On NIEC's vision and mission, its Director Mrs Loke-Yeo Teck Yong says, "NIEC has

a national mandate to provide unified foundational training for all EC educators, and to drive the systematic professional development of in-service EC educators. Parents can look forward to a more consistent level of professionalism by EC educators to nurture and care for our children."

The establishment of NIEC has been embraced by the EC fraternity. "With the formation of NIEC, the quality of training and CPD is standardised nationwide. As a centre leader, I can be assured that the teachers hired are well-qualified," says Ms Wan Hill Kuan, Principal of YWCA Bedok Child Development Centre.

“Parents can look forward to a more consistent level of professionalism by EC educators to nurture and care for our children.”

MRS LOKE-YEO TECK YONG

Director of the National Institute of Early Childhood Development



HIGH HOPES

NIEC is expected to:

- Centralise and drive policies and strategies on EC training offered at the four campuses.
- Develop and ensure high-quality curriculum design, academic governance and faculty development, as well as develop new courses to meet sector needs.
- Harness the expertise of EC faculty across the four campuses to enhance the training curriculum and course delivery.
- Connect with the EC fraternity to support their career progression with relevant courses.
- Leverage NIE's expertise to strengthen the nexus between research, training and practice for more impactful programmes and practices to support children's holistic development.

See www.niec.edu.sg for more information.



ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

WE TRAILED SHANE LIM TO FIND OUT WHAT A TYPICAL DAY IN THE LIFE OF A PRESCHOOL TEACHER IS LIKE.

After serving in his church's children's ministry, Mr Shane Lim, 27, found his calling in teaching young children. Shane says, "I can help lay the foundations for their development, shape perspectives and instil the importance of values and character when they are more curious and receptive in the early years." He has been a child care teacher at Little Mighty Me since June 2017, and is the only male educator out of 16 teaching staff.



8.30AM THE WARM-UP Shane reaches the centre as early as 7am to prepare for the children's arrival. Breakfast is served to those who are dropped off as early as 8am. After breakfast, he ushers the children to the music room where he conducts a creative movement activity involving songs, games or stretching exercises. This warms them up while they wait for all their classmates to show up. "Starting the day with physical exercise helps to improve their focus, concentration and alertness," he explains.



12.30PM WHAT'S FOR LUNCH? Shane's responsibilities also involves routine care such as getting the 13 children in his class ready for a balanced and nutritious meal. He encourages them to eat their greens and not to waste food. Mealtimes are an opportunity to build rapport with the children in these casual, one-to-one interactions. It is also a great time to develop communication skills, as conversations flow among the children.



2PM CATCH-UP TIME After lunch, it's naptime for the children. Shane and his colleagues use the quiet time to discuss classroom issues and challenges, and curriculum matters. "I bounce off ideas for classroom activities with the centre leader and my peers. I find peer-sharing sessions useful in reflecting and assessing curriculum ideas and teaching practices, and how the children are learning," elaborates Shane.

4PM OUTDOOR PLAY Outdoor play is important for children's brain and holistic development. Shane brings them to a nearby playground where the children are encouraged to engage in free play under his supervision, or participate in imaginative outdoor games like 'The Floor is Lava'. Shane also has planned specific objectives that he intends for the children to achieve through this enjoyable activity, such as picking up socio-emotional skills like learning to cooperate, negotiate and share.



BRIGHT PROSPECTS FOR EC EDUCATORS



In July 2018, Shane started his part-time programme for the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education with Management at the Singapore University of Social Sciences on the ECDA Scholarship. ECDA offers scholarships to outstanding and deserving early childhood educators, who wish to pursue a part-time Bachelor's or Master's degree in Early Childhood Care and Education.

For more information about ECDA Scholarships, go to www.ecda.gov.sg/Pages/ecda-scholarships-for-master-and-degree-programmes.aspx.

5PM SCHOOL'S OUT

Parents and caregivers start arriving. Shane makes sure he sends every child off safely. He uses the time to have a quick chat with parents about their children's day and their progress. Shane says, "These little pockets of time are important in strengthening home-school relationships and communication, which help reinforce the child's learning and development. For me, it is also important to build that trusting relationship with parents."



“Regular feedback regarding my children is useful as it allows me to closely monitor my children's development instead of waiting till the formal parent-teacher meeting. Teacher Shane also diligently sends out weekly lesson updates so that we can plan activities at home to extend their learning beyond the classroom. It is important for teachers and parents to work together in mutually supportive ways so that children receive consistent messages at home and in school.”

MDM SERENE LIM LI YUN, 30, mother to Stasia, 6, and Irwyn, 4, both attending Little Mighty Me Pte Ltd

