

**win!**

STORYBOOKS BY  
WILDLIFE RESERVES  
SINGAPORE

# THRIVE



## Take Flight

How Jurong Bird Park's child-friendly features boost learning



## Let's Toast To Mum

Whip up a special breakfast treat for Mother's Day



## Fold On

Make dad a cool origami shirt for Father's Day



**DO YOU REMEMBER?**  
Design your own memory game

# Beanstalk

APR-JUN  
2019

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## HAND IN HAND

How educators, parents and community partners can work together

**5 THINGS PARENTS**  
Want Teachers to Know



# STRONGER TOGETHER: PARTNERSHIPS MATTER

**A** strong and positive partnership between preschool teachers and parents supports their children's healthy development and psychological wellbeing. According to research, our children feel more secure and experience a greater sense of competence and self-worth, when parents and educators are able to work together.

To forge closer partnerships, I encourage parents and educators to regularly communicate with one another, and be prepared to share your views and aspirations. At the same time, be open to different perspectives, practical realities and, most importantly, have mutual respect. As we do so, I believe parents and educators will be able to make even better parenting and pedagogical decisions to support our children's development.

Collaborative partnerships with community agencies also matter. Both the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and ECDA are working with KKH Women's and Children's Hospital and the National University Hospital (NUH), as well as other agencies to better support children with developmental needs through customised programmes in preschools. Together with the Health Promotion Board (HPB), ECDA is undertaking a holistic occupational health assessment to create more

conducive workplaces to boost the work productivity and wellbeing of our early childhood educators.

Our annual Early Childhood Conference "Beyond the Classroom: Take Learning Outdoors" will be held on 13 and 14 September 2019 at Suntec Convention and Exhibition Centre. Given the positive impact that outdoor learning has on our children's holistic development, we welcome educators, parents and children to visit us and learn more about the benefits of the outdoors and to pick up tips and ideas on outdoor learning.

Early childhood development goes beyond educating our children. It is also about enriching their learning experience through close partnerships between the home, preschool and community. To enable these partnerships to flourish often requires effort, patience and a big heart — working with others is not always easy. But the payoffs in terms of shaping our children's lives and values are worth it!

As Helen Keller once remarked, "Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much." Let us work together for our children.



*Eugene*

**MR EUGENE LEONG**  
Chief Executive Officer  
Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA)



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### ON THE COVER

From left Hadijah Abu Bakar, Ang Jun Rong, Yusuf bin Mohd Zulfadhli, Amir Hamzah bin Adi Omar, Sally Ho, Brian Yeo, Muhd Reyhan bin Muhd Ayub, Haseenah Ismail  
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# STRONGER Together

**EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS AND PARENTS DISCUSS THE IMPORTANCE OF BUILDING POSITIVE AND MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE PARTNERSHIPS TO HELP CHILDREN MAXIMISE THEIR POTENTIAL.**



**P**arents and preschools have a shared goal and responsibility — they want children to learn important life skills, to succeed at what they do, and to be safe and happy. Educators cannot achieve these on their own. They need families to be actively involved and work together to achieve these outcomes for children.

Trust between parents and teachers is key to building and strengthening home-preschool relationships. Open and respectful communication increases trust, and this makes all the difference in shaping children's learning and development.

How can we forge strong partnerships among home, preschool and the community? What can we do to improve our communication skills? *Beanstalk* sounds out educators and parents on their views as well as strategies for forming and shaping these vital relationships.

“Children do best when they are nurtured within a tightly woven web of love. It does take a whole community to raise a child.”

**MS HADIJAH ABU BAKAR, 48**  
Centre Leader, Kampung Siglap Mosque Kindergarten



**MAIN PHOTO** On Brian: Shirt and jeans Marks & Spencer, Sneakers Model's own. On Melody: Blouse set Gingersnaps, Sneakers KidStyle, On Jun Rong: T-shirt H&M, Pants Gingersnaps, Backpack & Sneakers KidSport, Hat Stylist's own. On Amir: Safari shirt & hat Stylist's own. On Yusaf: T-shirt, cardigan & pants H&M, Backpack & sneakers KidSport Hat Stylist's own. On Muhd Reyhan: Windbreaker UNIQLO Shorts Gingersnaps Hat, Backpack & shoes KidSport On Sally: Blouse H&M, Pants Esprit Shoes Marks & Spencer.

**WHY ARE PARTNERSHIPS AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATORS AND PARENTS SO IMPORTANT?**

**Hadijah Abu Bakar:** We believe children do best when they are nurtured within a tightly woven web of love. It does take a whole community to raise a child. Both home and the preschool are very significant parts of that community, if not more.

**Sally Ho:** It is important for these relationships to start on the right foot, where both parties are respectful and amicable. When children observe the positive interaction between their parents and teachers, it strengthens their sense of security and self-confidence.

**Haseenah Ismail:** The role of parents must complement the teachers' role. The more we work together, the better we can strengthen the home-preschool links. Exchanging information and suggestions can help both parents and teachers learn from each other to better understand the children's needs, interests and even weaknesses. We can then discuss strategies that parents and teachers can use at home and at preschool.

**Brian Yeo:** I find that a good relationship with the teachers allows my wife and I to better communicate our child's needs and allows teachers to freely talk to us about our child. It is a two-way open communication.



**MS SALLY HO, 50+**  
Teacher/Infant Educator, Genius Hive Pre-School

“A good relationship with the teachers allows my wife and I to better communicate our child's needs.”



**MR BRIAN YEO, 37**  
Engineer, Father of Melody Yeo, 15 months



**A TOAST TO TEAMWORK**

Studies show that collaboration drives workplace performance:

**64%**

of research participants are engaged at their task longer

**5x**

the performance rate among companies that promote collaboration compared to those that do not

First reported by Forbes in June 2017

**EDUCATORS, HOW DO YOU PERSONALLY BUILD PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS?**

**Sally:** We have been nurturing a culture of open and constructive communication at the centre over the years. Parents can easily talk to teachers or the management, either in-person or via WhatsApp. We also make it a practice to update parents regularly on the well-being of their children. It assures parents that their children are thriving in the centre.

**Hadijah:** It is really important to listen to parents and let them know their concerns are heard and will be acted on. This builds trust. Ultimately, in any situation that has to do with the child, parents want to be involved in the process and be a part of the solution. Other ways to involve parents include inviting them to be part of our centre's charity drives or projects. When parents work alongside teachers, they are able to bond and build trust. More importantly, we want parents to feel empowered and that they can make a difference in their children's lives.

**Keen to engage parents more effectively?**

**SIGN UP FOR THESE CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSES AT ONE@ECDA.**

- Empowering Preschool Educators with Effective Communication Skills
- Family Teacher Communication and Collaboration



PAGE 4 On Sally: Knit top Marks & Spencer; On Brian: Shirt & T-shirt Marks & Spencer, Pants: Model's own. On Melody: Romper Gingersnaps, Shoes KidStyle.  
PAGE 5 On Yusuf: Denim Jacket KidStyle, T-shirt & pants H&M. On Amir: Shirt & T-shirt Marks & Spencer.

**PARENTS, HOW DID YOUR CHILD'S TEACHERS ESTABLISH A GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH YOU?**

**Haseenah:** I receive detailed and constructive feedback from the teacher regularly about my child's development. She also shares with me on how he is coping in class. From this, I know that the teacher is as vested in my child as I am. It feels good. It assures me that the teacher is committed and dedicated in caring for my child and providing a conducive learning environment.

**Brian:** Communication is critical. When our child, Melody, started walking, we informed the teachers so they were aware of her desire to explore her new ability. The teachers created opportunities for Melody to practise her new ability, until she was stable enough to walk on her own. Knowing that we are on the same page as Melody's teachers on her development has helped to build trust.

**WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU FACE WHEN ESTABLISHING THE PARENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIP?**

**Hadijah:** Sometimes we have situations where parents may disagree with us about their child's behaviour. They take the teacher's feedback as criticism and the teacher gets affected. I encourage teachers facing such issues to come to me. We will discuss possibilities and come up with ways to communicate with the parents in a tactful and respectful manner. I also advise teachers to listen to the parents' point of

“As a tennis coach, I got my grandchildren into the sport when they were young. Besides building up their motor skills and hand-eye coordination, tennis allows me to be very present in their lives as one of the adults they can look to for support and guidance. The time they spend outdoors being active and having fun, complements what they experience in preschool and what their parents teach them at home.”

**MR AMIR HAMZAH ADI OMAR, 62**  
Tennis Coach, Grandfather of Yusuf Mohd Zulfadhli, 5

**BOTH SIDES NOW**

Ms Christine Soo, ECDA Fellow and Senior Lecturer at the National Institute of Early Childhood Development (NIEC at the SEED Campus), offers insights into how educators can partner parents to support children's holistic development.



“Underpinning effective family engagement are mutual trust, respect and shared responsibility for the care and education of the children,” says Ms Soo. “When educators attest to this, families feel supported and empowered. They are motivated to be more involved and participatory in experiences that matter to their children.”

**How Teachers Can Involve Parents**

- 1 Identify parents' interests to involve them as resource persons.** Draw on their expertise in art, cooking, storytelling, or planning and organising preschool and community events.
- 2 Share fun ideas on curriculum-related activities, decisions and planning.** Create take-home kits or readers for the parents to support children's learning in areas such as numeracy or literacy, or even to work on a project together.
- 3 Develop a preschool-to-home and home-to-preschool communications strategy.** In addition to using letters, e-platforms or face-to-face conversations to share about children's development and progress, find out how parents prefer to communicate. Factor in how parents can be encouraged to share about their children. This will serve as an invaluable guide for educators in their efforts to improve communication.
- 4 Identify community resources and services to strengthen learning experiences.** Look for appropriate events or programmes that children and their families can participate in or tap on.
- 5 Develop parent leaders and representatives.** Identify parents who can be groomed to lead the Parent Support Group or represent parents in the Planning Committee for preschool activities.



view and try to understand where they are coming from. Whatever solution we come up with to tackle the problem, I believe that it is important to involve parents in the process. There will be challenges in any adult relationships but we must have patience, understanding and respect.

**Brian:** As parents, we have to be mindful that even though teachers are doing their best to meet our expectations, the centre has its own operational and professional considerations. We do need to be more flexible and be open to alternative solutions or suggestions. I also find it helpful when teachers take our comments as feedback, rather than 'just another complaint'. I would say the same goes for parents.

**EDUCATORS, BESIDES COLLABORATING CLOSELY WITH PARENTS, HOW DO YOU INVOLVE OTHER COMMUNITY PARTNERS?**

**Hadijah:** Community collaborations are very much part our curriculum. We organise professional learning journeys for our educators so that they can plan a more integrated learning experience for children. As part of the Children's Day celebrations last year, our children sold their crafts to raise funds for those in need. The children also delivered food items to orphanages and homes for the elderly. These experiences help to enrich

their learning experiences, understand issues in the wider community, and instill good values in their foundation years.

**Sally:** Our centre also taps into resources in our neighbourhood. We brought children to nearby hawker centres to build on our discussions on food in class. The teachers also communicated with the stallholders beforehand to ensure the children's experiences were authentic and purposeful. Such meaningful partnerships within our community give our teachers more flexibility and creativity in planning activities that enable children to be fully immersed in their learning.

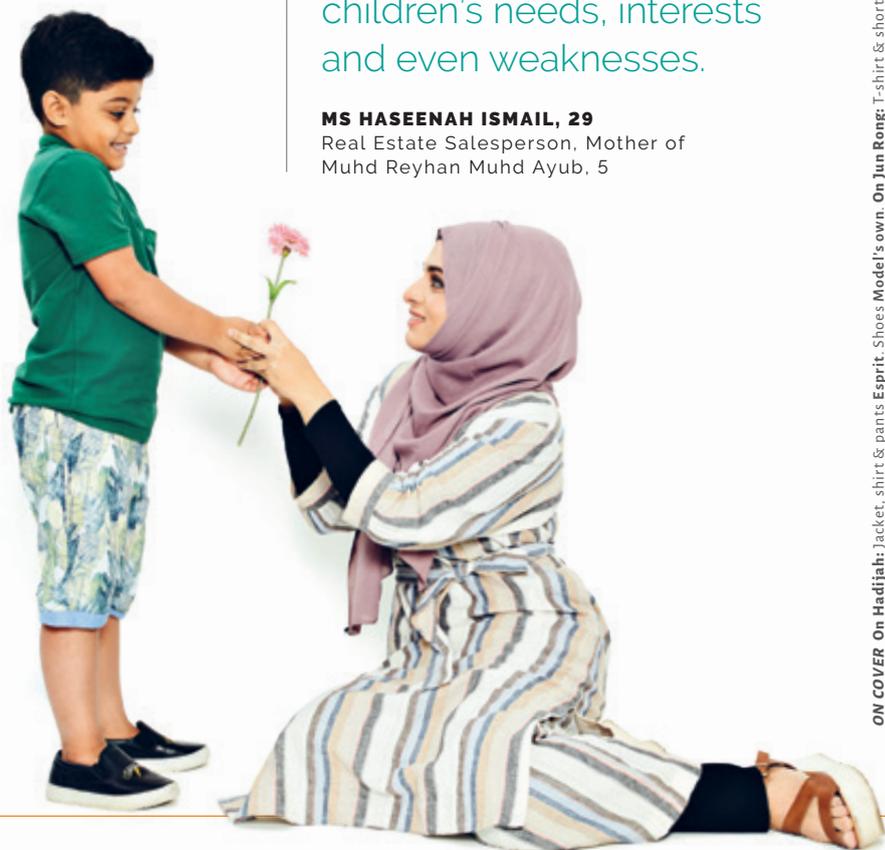
“The more parents and teachers work together, the better we can strengthen the home-preschool links. Exchanging information and suggestions can help both parties better understand the children's needs, interests and even weaknesses.

**MS HASEENAH ISMAIL, 29**  
Real Estate Salesperson, Mother of Muhd Reyhan Muhd Ayub, 5



**LET'S CELEBRATE CHILDREN**

Children's Day is commemorated on various dates in different countries. The United Nations Universal Children's Day was established in 1954 and celebrated annually on 20 November to promote improvement of children's welfare. In Singapore, we celebrate this day on the first Friday in the month of October.



ON COVER: On Hadijah: Jacket, shirt & pants: Esprit; Shoes: Model's own. On Jun Bong: T-shirt & shorts: H&M; Hat & sneakers: KidsSport. On Yusuf: Shirt & shorts: H&M; Sneakers: KidsSport; Hat & socks: Stylist's own. On Amir: Polo shirt & shirt: tied around waist: Marks & Spencer. On Sally: Shirt: Esprit. On Bryan: Safari shirt and hat: Stylist's own. On Muhd Reyhan: Shirt & T-shirt: Gingersnaps. On Haseenah: Blouse: H&M. PAGE 6: On Muhd Reyhan: Polo shirt & shorts: Gingersnaps; Shoes: Model's own. On Haseenah: Dress: Esprit; Shoes: Model's own.



**TECH TALK**

**NIEC LECTURER DR RAUDHAH YAHYA DISCUSSES THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN HOME-PRESCHOOL COMMUNICATION.**

**V**irtual relationships should not replace in-person relationships. However, technology can be used to complement and enhance them.

The quality of the virtual relationship is usually dependent on the face-to-face communication the two parties already have. It is important to build rapport by initiating the relationship in person and subsequently in situations such as parent-teacher conferences.

If used constructively, technology can enhance home-school communication and bridge communication gaps. It can:

- **Minimise accessibility issues.** This is especially important for parents who are not able to take calls during work hours.
- **Enable parents to visualise clearly.** When a child's daily activity is captured in photos and shared with parents, it is more meaningful to the parents. The parents can also use it as a

conversation-starter to talk to their child about his day.

➤ **Reduce language barriers.** This is useful for parents who are not fluent in the English language. They can use Google Translate or have a third-party application interpret the text or voice message for them.

Using text messaging or social media to communicate will depend on the comfort level of parents and educators with the technology. One should be mindful that the lack of intonation and non-verbal cues leaves room for potential misunderstandings. To avoid this, teachers should make an effort to understand the children's cultural backgrounds since cultural nuances among families may differ, hence affecting communication.

While technology can be used as a tool to facilitate communication, nothing will beat interacting in person. ●



**Dr Raudhah Yahya**

Lecturer, National Institute of Early Childhood Development (NIEC)

Dr Yahya's teaching experiences in Singapore, Canada and Oman involve engaging learners with diverse needs and abilities. Her research interests include play pedagogy, home-school discourses, children's thinking, teachers' beliefs and practices, and inclusive practices in school. She has a doctorate in Early Childhood Education from the University of Sheffield, United Kingdom.

**TIPS FOR OFFLINE AND ONLINE COMMUNICATION**

**FOR TEACHERS:**

1. State clear expectations and communicate the anticipated response time to parents.
2. Communicate sensitive issues in person and present observational evidence, where appropriate.
3. Offer alternatives for parents who are not comfortable with technological modes of communication.
4. Start with empathy and respond only when one is calm. If necessary, seek advice from the centre principal, colleagues or management before responding.



**FOR PARENTS:**

1. Communicate in a respectful manner to teachers. Use polite intonation and phrases such as 'May I ask if ...'. Avoid using exclamation marks in emails and text as this can be easily misunderstood.
2. For matters that require clarification from teachers, make an appointment to meet in person.
3. Remain calm and clarify to understand the centre's or teacher's perspective.
4. Avoid sharing issues and concerns on social media as it may complicate the matter.



# A GOOD START FOR EVERY CHILD

MORE PRESCHOOLS, FINANCIAL SUPPORT AND PROGRAMMES TO BETTER SUPPORT CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATORS.

## MORE PRESCHOOL PLACES

**30,000** more full-day places to be added over the next five years.



**200,000** full-day places for preschoolers by 2023.

## ENHANCED PRESCHOOL AFFORDABILITY

- More subsidies to non-working mothers who are looking for work, or unable to work due to care-giving commitments.



- Provide parents with greater certainty on the subsidy amounts they will receive, by verifying the working status of mothers and household income at longer, fixed-point intervals, instead of annually.



- Streamline subsidy and financial assistance applications into one application form, to make the process faster and more convenient.

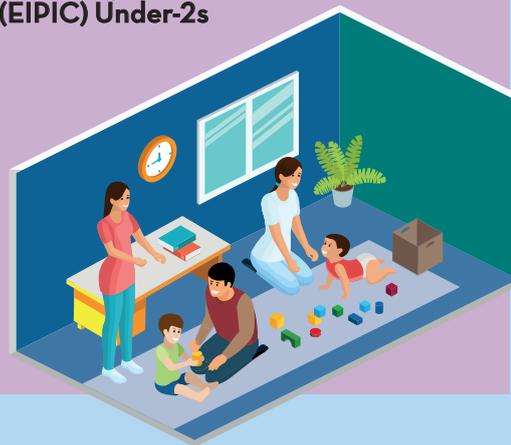


## MORE SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WITH DEVELOPMENTAL NEEDS

Two new enhanced Early Intervention (EI) programmes will be rolled out in phases by the 21 EI centres from July 2019.

### 1 Early Intervention Programmes for Infants and Children (EIPIC) Under-2s

- Serves children below 2 years old.
- Trains parents on intervention strategies to apply in their child's daily life.



### 2 Development Support Plus (DS-Plus)

- Caters to children who have made progress under EIPIC with mild-moderate developmental needs, and can now proceed to receive intervention in their preschools.
- Deploys EI professionals to co-teach the child in class alongside preschool teachers.



- Early intervention services made more affordable**  
From 1 April 2019, fees for EI services will be reduced by an average of **30% to 70%** for children who are Singapore Citizens.

#### Example A

Four-member family with a combined household income of

**\$4,000**



Current subsidies:	Enhanced subsidies:	Reduced by
<b>\$120</b>	<b>\$10</b>	<b>↓ 92%</b>
per month	per month	

#### Example B

Four-member family with a combined household income of

**\$8,000**



Current subsidies:	Enhanced subsidies:	Reduced by
<b>\$410</b>	<b>\$130</b>	<b>↓ 68%</b>
per month	per month	

#### Example C

Four-member family with a combined household income of

**\$16,000**



Current subsidies:	Enhanced subsidies:	Reduced by
<b>\$770</b>	<b>\$330</b>	<b>↓ 57%</b>
per month	per month	

“For young children with developmental needs, early intervention (EI) is valuable, and helps them achieve their fullest potential.”

**ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR MUHAMMAD FAISHAL IBRAHIM**  
Senior Parliamentary Secretary  
For Social And Family Development

## FOR EDUCATORS

### MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR TRAINING & CAREER PROGRESSION

- Aspiring early childhood educators and post-secondary students can enrol in **early childhood courses** offered by the National Institute of Early Childhood Development (NIEC) and other private training agencies.
- Mid-career entrants and existing educators who want to upgrade themselves can sign up for the **Professional Conversion Programme** and the **Place-and-Train Scheme**.



### HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY & BETTER WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

- Centralised services and technology solutions** will help free up educators' time from administrative work, such as attendance-taking and child documentation.



- A **new online IT platform called CMS** will simplify administrative processes for preschools.



- Occupational Health and Safety Assessments** will be conducted by ECDA and Health Promotion Board (HPB) to help preschools be more conducive workplaces.





To strengthen home-school partnerships, the centre gets parents involved in preschool activities such as making Chinese New Year decorations, digging a vegetable patch, and cooking Indian delicacies



## TEAM PLAYERS

**SUNFLOWER PRESCHOOL @ FRANKEL SHARES HOW THEY HELP PARENTS APPRECIATE THE IMPORTANCE OF HOME-CENTRE PARTNERSHIPS.**

**W**hen children first enter preschool, they, as well as their parents, may feel anxious as they navigate new experiences in an unfamiliar environment.

At Sunflower Preschool @ Frankel Pte Ltd, frequent communication (via Facebook, newsletters and so on) on how their child is settling down goes a long way in putting parents at ease. "Parents seek honesty, transparency, constant reassurance and sincerity," says Centre Leader Ms Zoe Toh.

### BUILD TRUST, KEEP AN OPEN MIND

"Establishing trust is a gradual process," says teacher Ms Charissa Poon. "Regular communication on a child's progress during drop-off and pick-up shows parents that you are constantly observing and care for their child."

"It is also crucial to demonstrate openness to ideas, feedback and perspectives when it comes to devising a plan to support a child's

learning," she adds, as respecting each other's viewpoints reinforces the home-centre relationship.

Establishing good communication and building trust allow parents and teachers to recognise shared responsibilities and exchange information to work towards the common goal of providing quality preschool experiences for the child.

### ENGAGE FAMILIES IN PRESCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Home-centre partnerships are further strengthened when parents get involved in preschool programmes.

The centre has organised baking sessions where parent volunteers teach children simple baking skills. Parents have also been invited to talk about their occupations in conjunction with the theme 'My Community Helpers'. Actively participating in a child's learning creates opportunities for skills and knowledge to be transferred from home to preschool and vice versa.

"We recognise the importance parents play in encouraging and developing curiosity and critical thinking in their children. When parents become involved, a child develops a more positive attitude towards school and learning," says Ms Toh.

Parents with heavy work commitments may find it challenging to volunteer their time in preschool or even get hands-on with their child's learning. In such cases, says Ms Toh, grandparents or other family members can step in to help busy parents. For instance, the centre assigns termly home activities where children, together with family members can create crafts based on themes. When grandparents get involved in their grandchildren's learning, it chalks up memorable bonding time in the process. ●

### TIPS FOR PARENTS

How to better support your child's learning.

- **Work closely with teachers and the centre leaders on your child's learning needs. Discuss concerns and together, work on strategies to help your child in preschool and at home.**
- **Make time for your child and get involved in preschool activities. This can help you identify and push for the resources needed for your child to succeed.**



Sunflower Preschool @ Frankel Pte Ltd is a SPARK-certified private child care centre. For more on SPARK, visit [www.ecda.gov.sg/SPARKinfo](http://www.ecda.gov.sg/SPARKinfo).



The Learning Garden at MOE Kindergarten @ Punggol View lets children apply their knowledge and skills in a real-life setting

## VITAL LINK

**IN HER 25 YEARS AS AN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROFESSIONAL, PANMELINE WONG HAS MADE IT HER MISSION TO GROOM PURPOSE-DRIVEN EDUCATORS AND NURTURE FRUITFUL PARTNERSHIPS WITH PARENTS.**

**T**he Learning Garden at MOE Kindergarten @ Punggol View represents the centre's efforts to enhance children's learning by fostering collaboration between teachers, parents and community partners.

It was set up to give children opportunities to explore the outdoors, and learn to apply the knowledge and skills in a real-life context from landscaping and plant selections to maintenance, says Centre Head Ms Panmeline Wong, winner of the 2018 ECDA Outstanding Early Childhood Leader Award.

The process of constructing the garden itself has helped build a community spirit of sharing and learning, facilitating professional exchanges between teachers and parents. Teachers discuss the activities they are planning with parents and share their reflections on the children's learning experiences.

### CHILDREN'S LEARNING IS A SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

Parents are an important part of the preschool's resource development team. Ms Wong elaborates, "We involve and engage parents in activities such as small group storytelling, cooking demonstrations, show-and-tell, and creating learning resources together."

It is through such collaborative efforts that parents and teachers' approaches become more aligned as they work in tandem to better support children's learning, she explains.

### BUILDING PARENT-TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS

To cultivate strong relationships, the centre keeps parents updated on their children's progress. It does it through formal channels like newsletters and meetings at the end of each semester, and informal chats during daily arrival and dismissal times. "The more inclusive you are in keeping parents informed, the more they will feel like a part of the team," says Ms Wong.

For instance, termly Weeks of Wonder (WOW) projects offer opportunities for parents to be a part of the child's learning experience. Families can help their child research a given topic, work with the teacher to suggest a site for a field trip, volunteer to share their expertise with the class as a guest speaker, and so on. "Parental involvement helps instill in children a love for learning," she says.

### EMPOWERED TEACHERS ARE MOTIVATED TEACHERS

Inspiring and empowering her staff is also an area of focus for Ms Wong. "Purpose-driven educators find meaning in what they do and are motivated to try innovative ways of bringing out the best in children," she explains.

"I believe it is important to value everyone's strengths and to create opportunities for teachers to learn and lead in ways that deepen their expertise. It is important to make teachers feel their voice matters as it increases their confidence and motivation to learn." ●

## LESSONS FOR CENTRE LEADERS

How to inspire and nurture your teachers.

- **Build trust.** Adopt an open and sincere approach when you communicate with teachers. Be genuinely interested in their aspirations, families and the challenges they face in their lives.
- **Nurture aspirations.** Help teachers achieve their aspirations by tapping on training opportunities as well as matching assignments that will hone their skills.
- **Harness strengths.** Teachers come from all walks of life. Use their wealth of experience to imagine possibilities and opportunities to enhance the quality of curriculum for children, and your centre.



Meet Panmeline Wong at [youtu.be/sVHAD-krPag](https://youtu.be/sVHAD-krPag)



A grandparent volunteer sharing his memories of *kampong* life

## KAMPONG SPIRIT

ELFA TAMPINES ROPES IN FAMILY MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS TO IMPART VALUABLE LESSONS.

Children today know very little about *kampong* life, when the community spirit was alive and thriving. Teachers at ELFA Tampines decided to focus on this for their Innovation Grant Project, *My Kampong, My Playground*.

The centre invited parents to recreate a *kampong* house on stilts, together with the children. They used it to explore Singapore's past, heritage and values such as respect and tolerance that were part of *kampong* living. The project also provided the means to link the children's experiences to the



Drawing water from a well recreated as part of this project

NEL Framework. For instance, the children learnt about numeracy (playing hopscotch), literacy (tracing letters in the sand) and environmental concerns (saving trees), and much more. It made the experience fun, memorable and educational for the children.

### EXTENDED FAMILY SUPPORT

Family involvement is key. Parents contributed resources and materials for the learning corners and activities, and researched suitable fieldtrips.

Grandparents, too, had a part to play. Former *kampong* resident and grandparent volunteer Mr Yeo Eng Hua, 67, shared his experiences with his young audience, regaling them with tales of how he used to chase after chickens, draw water from the well, and play in the rain when he was living in a *kampong*.

For Mr Yeo, it was a great opportunity to revisit memories of *kampong* life and an opportunity to

share his past and impart values. He says, "It was a mix of different races and dialect groups; everyone knew each other and looked out for one another."

For the children, one of the most exciting highlights was learning about the traditional games of yesteryear such as *chaptah*, 'five stones' and marbles. "It was an opportunity to talk about teamwork, patience and tolerance," says Ms Rosie Koh, a teacher at the centre.



Children learnt traditional games such as 'five stones'

“Grandpa told us stories of the olden days in Singapore and taught us to play *kampong* games like *chaptah* and 'five stones' which I love to play with my friends.”

**CLARE CHAN**, 6, granddaughter of Mr Yeo Eng Hua

### BEYOND PRESCHOOL GROUNDS

As part of the *My Kampong, My Playground* project, the centre invited NParks to share about the importance of saving trees, and organised a field trip to the Asian Civilisations Museum to help children understand the origins of Singapore's multi-ethnic society and how the country has since evolved.

"There is value in working with other community partners. I strongly believe that the expertise of other professionals value-adds to the preschool curriculum and raises the quality of learning. This further enriched experiences for children as their learning became more integrated and holistic," observes Ms Koh. ●

## WORD GETS AROUND

WITH PARENTS AS PARTNERS, PAT'S SCHOOLHOUSE @ SEMBAWANG HAS SEEN IMPROVEMENTS IN THE READING AND WRITING ABILITIES OF THEIR K1 CLASSES.



Group reading and writing sessions help develop children's language and literacy skills in a fun way

Parent engagement has a positive impact on children's literacy skills. This was the finding from a Practitioner Inquiry (PI) project carried out by Pat's Schoolhouse @ Sembawang.

The centre conducted workshops for parents to build their awareness of the importance of home support, and provided them with practical strategies to further strengthen their children's language and literacy skills (see box).

Teachers saw an increase in the number of library card applications as the children were bringing their library books to preschool. They also showed more interest in the wide genre of books found in the class library.

### READING WIDELY, WRITING BETTER

"We found that children who receive strong learning support at home developed quickly in their word recognition skills," observes teacher Ms Kristina Cassandra Felix. "The difference was also evident in their reading and writing skills. They

learnt to apply inventive spelling (spelling words by sounding them). The children also demonstrated a wider vocabulary and this may also be attributed to their exposure to a range of books," she says.

### SUPPORT ON THE HOME FRONT

Mdm Tan Hui Sze found the workshop useful in taking the reading with her daughter Micaela Soh to another level. She says, "Techniques such as asking open-ended questions helped enhance her word-recognition skills and story comprehension. It has also made our reading time together fun and enjoyable!"

Mdm Tan believes that aligning the strategies used in preschool and at home strengthened her child's ability to learn. At preschool, Micaela and classmates participated in small group readings and writing exercises. At home, Mdm Tan ensured that she reinforced what was carried out in preschool. "If Micaela read an interesting story at school, she would tell the family about it. We encouraged her to share what the



Parents supported the school's literacy initiative by bringing their children to the library

## HOW TO DEVELOP A LOVE FOR READING

Practical tips for parents.

- **Read to your child daily.** It establishes a routine for reading and gives him a sense of continuity of his experiences at preschool.
- **Visit the library together.** Expose your child to a variety of books, both fiction and non-fiction. This will generate different types of conversations.
- **Get books related to your child's interest.** This nurtures his love for reading. At the same time, he can relate to the content and express his ideas easily.
- **Ask open-ended questions.** "Why do you think?" or "What makes you say that?" are some ways you can stimulate your child's curiosity, imaginative and critical thinking skills.

story was about or to even act it out. We hoped that this would help increase her confidence in speaking and her love for books," adds Mdm Tan.

Ms Felix notes that many parents have similar experiences with their children. "After starting this programme, parents shared that their children looked forward to reading stories with them. Better yet, we heard that the children were motivated to read independently at home." ●

### ECDA INNOVATION GRANT PROJECTS

All Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDC) may apply for funding support through the ECDA Innovation Grant. The aim is to encourage educators to explore innovative ideas and approaches to enhance learning experiences for children. For more information, visit [www.ecda.gov.sg/Educators/Pages/ECDA-Innovation-Projects-Grant.aspx](http://www.ecda.gov.sg/Educators/Pages/ECDA-Innovation-Projects-Grant.aspx)

# FROM “ME” TO “WE”

DEVELOPING QUALITY INTERACTIONS AND FORGING STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS AMONG CENTRE LEADERS, TEACHERS AND PARENTS.



ECDA Fellows from left: Ms Chua Lay Mui, Ms Zaiton Mohd Ali, Ms Seri Rahayu Binte Ariff and Ms Ong Siew Teng

Increasingly, the spotlight has been on the quality of relationships between educators and parents because research suggests that it is linked to educational outcomes for children.

It starts with good leadership practices, where centre leaders nurture high-quality interactions with their team of teachers, and encourage teachers to do the same with parents.

What do such quality relationships look like? How can centre leaders implement these in their own centres? *Beanstalk* spoke to ECDA Fellows Ms Chua Lay Mui and Ms Zaiton Mohd Ali, who shared some approaches from their respective Inquiry-Based Action Plan (IBAP) projects, the evidence-based practices to improve the quality of the sector.

## LEADING THROUGH TRUST

Centre leaders sometimes face challenges from their teachers as well as parents when there are changes or concerns in the centre. According to Ms Chua Lay Mui, Executive Principal of PCF

Sparkletots, conflict resolution may depend on the quality of relationships, which influence perceptions, attitudes and behaviours. It is thus important to build trust in these relationships.

“When leaders, teachers and parents have trust in one another, they feel safe to speak up. This results in higher engagement, better communication and deeper

understanding,” explains Ms Chua.

She offers these strategies to gain trust and support from teachers and parents, and resolve conflicts:

- **Be a good listener.** Ms Chua says, “Most of us listen not with the intent to understand, but with the intent to reply. We focus on getting our points across, and ignore what the other person is telling us. Be empathetic and ‘listen’ to see, hear and understand the other person’s perspectives.”
- **Be sincere and humble.** Put aside your pride or belief that you are right. Show a willingness to listen, continue to communicate, and respect differences in views.
- **Make deposits into “emotional bank accounts”.** Be genuine. Keep commitments. Show integrity and maintain confidentiality. Remember little things such as birthdays. Such acts build goodwill, trust and respect in the long run.



## SHOW & TELL

Ms Chua and Ms Zaiton were among the 22 ECDA Fellows who presented their respective IBAP projects at the Project Showcase for EC Leaders on 19 February 2019. Twelve IBAP projects were presented at the event, including these four new ones:

- **Building Leadership Capacity: Coffee, Tea or Conflicts**  
By Ms Chua Lay Mui, Ms Seri Rahayu Binte Ariff and Ms Ong Siew Teng
- **From What’s Wrong to What’s Strong: A Strength-based Approach towards Quality Relationships with Staff**  
By Ms Zaiton Mohd Ali and Ms Ong Siew Teng
- **Building Powerful Learning Communities within the Centre**  
By Ms Hephzi Tee, Ms Suhana Bte Salleh and Ms Sylvia Yeo
- **Quality Interactions: Guiding Educators to Connect with Children beyond Instruction**  
By Ms Melissa Goh-Karssen

Scan this QR code for quick access to the *Keep Calm and Lead On* e-newsletter series, which features past eight IBAP projects.



Ms Zaiton Mohd Ali stressed the importance of recognising teachers’ strengths at the Project Showcase event

“Centre leaders need to understand the dynamic personalities of their staff. Staff, too, need to understand how a leader works and his perspectives. When we align our visions and create a shared understanding, we can work together as a team.”

**MS ASLIZAWATI BINTE AMAN**, Principal of Redpony Centre Cashew, on her main takeaway from the Project Showcase event

## TAP ON STRENGTHS

It is human nature to focus on one’s weaknesses or shortcomings, and it is no different in the early childhood sector. For example, centre leaders typically focus on identifying teachers’ competency gaps during Learning Needs Analysis to determine their professional development needs. “We tend to overlook the teachers’ strengths, when in fact we should be celebrating them,” observes Ms Zaiton, Executive Principal of Iyad Perdaus Child Development.

A shift from deficit-based to strength-based thinking is necessary. “When centre leaders highlight the strengths of individual staff members and acknowledge what they are doing right, it increases motivation and strengthens their relationships. It can lead to better performance, higher job satisfaction and higher staff retention rates,” says Ms Zaiton.

She shares tips for creating this “enabling environment”:

- **Believe in yourself.** We come with different life experiences, traits, strengths and gifts. Believe that you can make a positive difference to the people and environment around you.
- **Remember that each individual is unique.** He or she could be creative, willing to take risks, helpful to colleagues, be goal-oriented, etc. Focus on what is working well and invest in creating a growth mindset.
- **Celebrate small successes.** Acknowledge and affirm strengths and contributions. Remember that a strength-based mindset and culture is built over time. ●



## WATCH IT!

Get inspiration and ideas from the second batch of ECDA Fellows in the latest *ECDA Fellows Talk Series*. Scan this QR code to watch the eight YouTube clips.

## CONFLICT RESOLUTION 101

Teacher-parent clashes can happen due to differences in personality, temperament, culture or lifestyle experiences. Parents and teachers have suggested a few tips to tackle difficult situations:

**Scenario 1: The teacher who gives negative feedback about your child**  
Start by saying, “I know you mean well and want the best for my child.” Ask questions to clarify. Focus on coming up with solutions on how your child can be supported both at home and preschool. Check in periodically with the teacher to exchange updates on child’s progress.

**Scenario 2: The teacher who is too rough or shouts at your child**  
Schedule a session with the teacher. Calmly describe what you have observed or heard, and share how it makes your child feel. Hear the teacher out. Explain that you are sharing the information to help meet your child’s needs. Continue to build rapport with regular chats.

**Scenario 3: The parent who tells you how to teach her child**  
Explain that the curriculum is designed based on how children grow and develop. Provide examples to show how it gives the child a firm foundation while allowing her to enjoy the learning process. Share her little successes. Work with the parent on how he can reinforce what is being carried out in preschool. Ask for input.

**Scenario 4: The parent who disagrees with how you discipline her child**  
Calmly clarify why and how specific behavioural management strategies are used. Explain that it is important for a child to receive consistent feedback and responses to his behaviour at home and in preschool. Share how the strategies have resulted in positive behavioural adjustments for the child. Involve the parents and ask them for suggestions.

## Q&A INTEGRATING THE ROLES OF PARENTS AND EDUCATORS IN CHILDREN'S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT.



### Q How can I contribute positively to my child's preschool experience?

Here are some strategies to get you started on a strong partnership to support your child's learning and development:

#### > Build trust and show mutual respect

Take time to meet with your child's preschool teacher. Build mutual trust and a respectful relationship, where both parties are comfortable to express their concerns, and are open to sharing their perspectives and receiving suggestions. Parents and teachers can learn from each other to provide the best support for children.

#### > Exchange information and communicate

Focus on the needs of your child. If your child has additional needs, share this with the teacher. This will help them work with you to develop an approach to support your child.

#### > Link home to preschool

Seek advice from your child's teacher on how to reinforce your child's experiences in preschool. Share your child's experiences at home with the teacher — what you and your child did, how the activity went and what your child said and felt. These conversations provide teachers with insights and deepen their understanding of your child.

#### > Show appreciation

Take time to appreciate and affirm the contributions of your child's teacher. It creates a positive atmosphere and strengthens the rapport between parents and teachers.

#### > Establish communication lines

Discuss a preferred approach for regular and ongoing communication such as having a 'best time' to meet or speak, or communicate in writing.

### Q What should we consider when building effective partnerships?

Here are some factors for educators to consider:

#### > The centre's vision, mission and core values

Look at how the aspect of home-preschool partnership is reflected in the statement. Work with parents on how to achieve the goals. Communicate these clearly to all parties involved in the children's development.

#### > Teacher-parent relationships

Continue to hone verbal and non-verbal communication skills to strengthen relationships with parents. It is important for teachers to learn how to listen attentively and communicate with parents, build trust with them and encourage their participation.

#### > Learning environment

Teachers and parents can work together to create an effective environment that includes opportunities for the children to play. Have conversations with parents on how they can play a part or the resources they can contribute.

#### > Children's developmental needs

Observe and document children's learning, development, strengths, and areas for growth. Invite parents to share their perspectives on the observations. Work together with parents to come up with shared solutions to support children at home.



**MS YEO CHOON LING** is a Learning Support Educator at the Child Development Unit, National University Hospital. She has 9 years of teaching experience working with children of different learning needs in both mainstream and special schools. Choon Ling believes in working closely with parents to enhance children's learning and development.



**SUHANA SALLEH** is a Cluster Quality Manager at NTUC First Campus and an ECDA Fellow who mentors EC professionals and develops sector-wide resources. As a leader, she believes that one needs to be positive, able to drive the team towards a shared vision and guide them to design and implement a holistic curriculum.

# THRIVE

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



learn



18 | Jurong Bird Park's child-friendly features

grow



21 | Whip up a special breakfast treat for Mother's Day

play



22 | Make dad a cool origami shirt for Father's Day



# NATURE'S CLASSROOMS

Why preschools are heading to where the wild things are and bringing lessons to life.

Collectively, our four wildlife parks — the Singapore Zoo, Night Safari, River Safari and Jurong Bird Park — are home to some 1,000 species of animals. They are great living classrooms for the little ones, enabling them to connect with nature. “We design our spaces to be dynamic, to cater to families with young children, with the intent of enhancing their learning about wildlife,” says Director of Education of Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS) Ms May Lok.

## DISCOVER THE WORLD OF BIRDS

Jurong Bird Park has a bird-themed playground called Birdz of Play. Its wet and dry play zones offer ample space to run around and explore the play equipment designed to help enhance and develop children’s motor skills.

Children visiting the Bird Discovery Centre will learn about inventions that are inspired by birds, the largest egg in the world, and how many chicken eggs it equals. On weekends, docent stations manned by volunteers, offer tactile and sensorial experiences to excite



An exhibit of bird eggs at the Bird Discovery Centre

children’s thinking and imaginations.

Additionally, the bird park’s events and programmes tie in with different themes, such as eggs, penguins and so on. “We make sure that the activities involve both parents and children,” says Ms Lok. “It’s important to get the parents on board so that the whole family can learn, do things together and bond.”

## RETURN TO NATURE

“Child-friendly spaces like Birdz of Play are important in this wired age, where children have more screen time than outdoor play,” says Ms Lok. “We want to provide an exciting avenue to pull them away from their screens — to be active, to connect with nature,” she explains. “Family bonding is also important. We want to give families a reason to come together.”

Besides designing family-oriented facilities and programmes, WRS has also rolled out educational projects in partnership with preschools, under the “Start Small Dream Big” initiative. “We work with preschools on issues such as deforestation, climate change, wildlife and sustainability. Such collaborations with preschools offer two-way benefits. Children have richer learning experiences and acquire new skills, while WRS gains little wildlife or conservation ambassadors,” says Ms Lok.



Learning about baby birds at the park's Breeding & Research Centre



Birdz of Play

## THREE TIPS FOR AN EDUCATIONAL VISIT

Ms May Lok of Wildlife Reserves Singapore has this advice for parents and educators to get the best out of a trip to the wildlife park.

→ **Pick a theme.** The parks are big, so focus on just one aspect or theme (e.g. flight, food, colours, habitats) to get the most of your day at the park. Visit the WRS website ahead of time to see what features of the park work best for you and your children. Email [toa.jbp@wrs.com.sg](mailto:toa.jbp@wrs.com.sg) for clarifications regarding your visit.

→ **Let the child lead the learning journey.** You are there to facilitate and get children to see, think and wonder. Encourage them to ask questions and to be as curious as possible. Give them time to think about what they see and let them draw their own conclusions.

→ **Encourage children to share their experience.** Give children, including the shy ones, an opportunity to speak up and talk about what they see. This builds confidence and courage. Some children may also find it easier to voice their thoughts and opinions in an environment outside the classroom.

## WILD ESCAPES

Check out some of the wildlife parks’ newest programmes for toddlers and preschoolers.

### FOR 2 TO 4 YEAR OLDS

#### ▶ Penguin Adventure | Jurong Bird Park

Watch how penguins walk and swim, then take part in a race to fetch their favourite foods.



#### ▶ Manatee & Me | River Safari

Explore fingerplay in the Amazon Flooded Forest and draw inspiration from the movements of the manatees for a singalong session.

#### ▶ Bunny & Friends | Singapore Zoo

Come up close to rabbits, guinea pigs, hedgehogs and goats, and learn how to handle and feed them.



### FOR 5 TO 6 YEAR OLDS

#### ▶ Let's Build a Nest! | Jurong Bird Park

Take on the challenge of building a nest with natural and artificial materials.



#### ▶ Otter Hunt | River Safari

Participate in a series of activities through story cards that aim to familiarise children with different emotions while learning about otters.

#### ▶ Fallabella & Friends | Singapore Zoo

Meet the world’s smallest horse, feed goats and learn how to care for rabbits.



#### ▶ Camps | Singapore Zoo and Jurong Bird Park

These experiential learning journeys offer immersive and hands-on activities. It is also an opportunity for children to socialise with peers at day or overnight camps. Itineraries can be customised.

Programme and admission fees apply. Registration is required to enjoy school rates. For enquiries and bookings, email [eduadmin.zoo@wrs.com.sg](mailto:eduadmin.zoo@wrs.com.sg). For Camp Bookings, email [campbookings@wrs.com.sg](mailto:campbookings@wrs.com.sg)

## LESSONS FROM RAISING RHINO



Last year, PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Braddell Heights Blk 417 partnered WRS on a “Start Small Dream Big” community project titled “Raising Rhino: Looking Through the Eyes of Oban”. Besides introducing children to wildlife conservation, the experience benefitted the children in other ways.



### EVOKED EMPATHY

The children went on a special learning journey at the Singapore Zoo to meet Oban, a young male white rhino who was born there. Seeing Oban made what they learned in class more real and relatable. They began

to see Oban as a friend, were concerned about what would happen to him, and even created a story and song about him.



### SHARPENED THINKING & COMMUNICATION SKILLS

WRS also arranged for a session where the children peppered the rhino-keeper and education officer with questions. They asked questions about conservation, extinction, what

would happen to Oban and his feelings, and more importantly what they could do to help.

“In preparing for the visit, the children and the teachers had several discussions. We encouraged children to ask questions and also guided them on how to ask these. These skills help build their confidence to express themselves and ask questions,” says teacher Kollene Rae Marcelo Lacambacal.



### CONSTRUCTED NEW KNOWLEDGE

Visiting the zoo and talking to the zoo staff created opportunities for children to research and find out more about the white rhinoceros.

“The learning process became more meaningful and engaging when they were challenged to observe, reflect and ask questions about its habitat, food and life cycle. By linking back to their prior knowledge about rhinos, they were able to construct new knowledge and enrich their learning,” says Ms Lacambacal.



### CREATED FAMILY BONDING OPPORTUNITIES

Parents helped to collect recyclable items to make various crafts such as 3D rhinoceros figures for display at exhibitions in the centre and the 2018 ECDA Early Childhood Conference.

During the school holidays, the parents and children came back to the centre to work on these figures. At home, the parents carried out mock interviews to equip children with skills in their roles as little ambassadors during the exhibitions.

# win

## KAI KAI AND JIA JIA BOOKS BY WILDLIFE RESERVES SINGAPORE

Simply answer this question:

Name two features of Jurong Bird Park which have been designed especially for children.



Send your answer to [beanstalk@mediacorp.com.sg](mailto:beanstalk@mediacorp.com.sg) with your name and contact details.

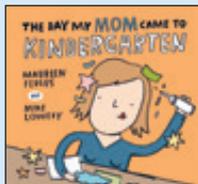
Closing date: **17 May 2019**

- ➔ One lucky reader will receive a set of three hardcover books from the series.
- ➔ Three readers will each receive *The River Adventure of Kia Kia and Jia Jia* storybook.



## Preschool Daze

Help your child get the best out of school with these good reads.

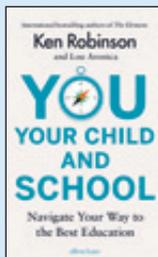


### > The Day My Mom Came to Kindergarten

By Maureen Fergus and Mike Lowery

Parents are usually the ones who reassure their child on the first day of kindergarten. But the roles are reversed when a girl invites her excited mum to her class and the latter breaks all the kindergarten rules. After much pacifying, mum finally gets the hang of school! This ebook helps children understand school rules without being too sententious.

Contributed by *Hussain bin Bachek, Senior Librarian, National Library Board*



### > You, Your Child, and School: Navigate Your Way to the Best Education

By Ken Robinson and Lou Aronica

Have you heard the saying, "It takes a village to raise a child"? This book highlights how parents can be more involved with school through volunteerism and building positive relationships with teachers. Parents can also strengthen this partnership by having daily conversations with children about their achievements and experiences in school.

Contributed by *Mardhiah Binte Mahamood, Associate Librarian, National Library Board*

## June Events



Check out these upcoming programmes at the libraries:



### Play@Library

Learn and make new friends through unstructured play at this programme featuring fun educational toys and books. Suitable for children aged 0 to 6 years old.



### PlayMaker@NLB

A series of parent-child workshops that introduce children aged 4 to 6 years old to foundational technology and engineering concepts through robotics.

For more information on the dates, timings, and venues, visit [www.nlb.gov.sg/golibrary](http://www.nlb.gov.sg/golibrary).

## 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](http://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](http://www.facebook.com/beanstalksingapore), or scan the QR code



# Let's Toast To Mum

Treat her to this simple yet yummy breakfast to start Mother's Day!

## Egg-In-A-Hole Toast

SERVES

1



### Fun With Shapes

Use different types of **COOKIE CUTTERS** to teach your child about the concept of **shapes and sizes**.

## Follow these steps



1. Cut the centre out of a slice of wholemeal bread with a cookie cutter.



2. Heat a skillet over medium-low heat and melt the butter or margarine. Then place the bread in the skillet and cook till it is lightly browned. Flip the bread and crack the egg into the hole.



3. Cook for 2 to 3 mins until the egg is set. Sprinkle with salt and pepper to taste.



4. Remove toast from skillet. Serve with salad mix and mum's favourite fruit on the side.

## ➔ WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 1 slice of wholemeal bread
- 1 tbsp butter or margarine
- 1 egg
- Salt and ground black pepper to taste
- Salad mix
- Fruits of your choice, on the side



## My Healthy Plate

Use this to plan a balanced meal without counting calories or reading long ingredient lists.

- ✓ Fill half your plate with **fruit and vegetables**.
- ✓ Fill a quarter of your plate with **wholegrains** (e.g. brown rice, wholemeal bread, rolled oats).
- ✓ Fill a quarter of your plate with **meat and others** (e.g. poultry, seafood, eggs, nuts, beans, tofu, dairy products).





**Traditionally Speaking**

The 18<sup>th</sup> century German educator Friedrich Froebel, inventor of the kindergarten, introduced paper folding in his curriculum to teach children the principles of geometry. Origami also helps develop fine motor skills and is a fun and creative outlet for children.

play

# FIVE THINGS PARENTS WANT TEACHERS TO KNOW

PARENTS SHARE THEIR THOUGHTS ON HOW TEACHERS CAN SUPPORT THEM.



**1 "TELL ME SOMETHING GOOD ABOUT MY CHILD."**

Feedback lets me know how my children are performing in preschool and interacting with their peers. Both positive and negative feedback are equally important for their development. But positive feedback allows me to build on their strengths and I can use it as a means to reinforce their positive behaviour at home.

*Norlizawati Aziz, Mother of children aged 6, 5 and 2, Mujahidin Mosque Kindergarten*

**3 "GET TO KNOW MY CHILD AND PLEASE SHARE THE INFORMATION WITH ME."**

When my child is in preschool, the main questions on my mind are: Is he happy? Is he well looked after? Is he behaving himself? I do appreciate it when teachers let me know if he's learning values that are important to me, such as respect, listening and focusing when his teacher is talking, and being considerate towards his peers.

*Anju Devi, Mother of Arjun Singh, 2½, Junior Champs @ Kovan*



**4 "I RESPECT, APPRECIATE AND SUPPORT YOU."**

To be a teacher at any level comes with its own set of challenges. But to me, being an early childhood educator or an infant educator tops it all. It's a job that requires immense dedication, tons of passion and patience. I see this daily in my child's class and I can't thank the teachers enough for nurturing him and being there for him.

*Pang Baohui, Mother to Isaac Goh, 1, Nissi Childcare @ Pasir Ris*



**2 "FAMILY TIME IS IMPORTANT."**

I believe in spending quality time with my child in the evenings. As a working parent, I don't have much time with my child before bedtime after we factor in dinner, her bath and a bit of playtime together. It is good that my child's preschool plans activities that we could do to strengthen the relationship with my child at home.

*Karen Chan, Mother of child aged 5, MY World @ Hougang*

**5 "WELCOME ME INTO YOUR CLASSROOM."**

I would be glad to help out at my child's preschool events. These give me the opportunity to see how she interacts with her teachers and friends. It is also an opportunity to bond with her and show her I care to make the effort. I feel that I am able to contribute by assisting teachers in small group activities or as a chaperone during school excursions.

*Fiona Teo, Mother to Natalie Yew, 5, Cedan Kindergarten*

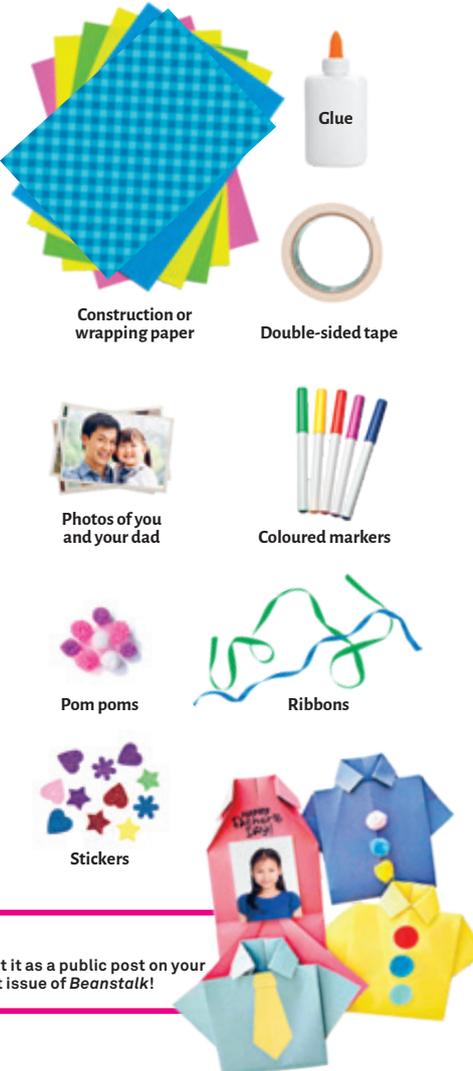
# Fold On

Instead of a plain old card, make this dapper origami shirt card for Father's Day!

**Follow these steps**

1. Fold the paper in half lengthwise to create a crease in the middle.
2. Open up. Fold each side of the paper in to meet the crease.
3. Turn the paper over and fold up the top no more than 2.5 cm.
4. Turn paper over again. Fold in the corners to meet the centre. This will create the "collar" of the shirt.
5. On the opposite end, fold both sides out at an angle. These will form the "sleeves".
6. Write your message on the inside and stick on your selected photo.
7. Fold up the bottom and tuck under the collar.
8. Decorate the shirt front with coloured markers, pom poms, ribbon or stickers.

**→ WHAT YOU'LL NEED**



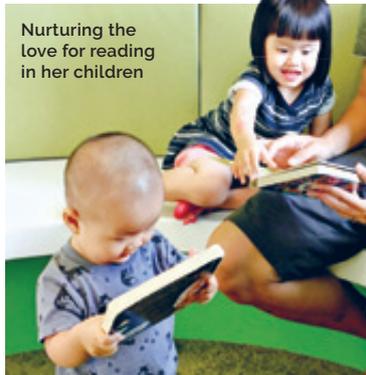
**Snap & Show**

Take a picture of your child's origami shirt card and email to [beanstalk@mediacorp.com.sg](mailto:beanstalk@mediacorp.com.sg) or post it as a public post on your Facebook with the hashtag #BeanstalkCraft. His or her masterpiece could be featured in the next issue of Beanstalk!

# WE'VE GOT MAIL!

Parents explain how they work together with their children's teachers to support their learning at home.

 I learned from my daughter's teacher that there's no need for didactic worksheets to drill preschoolers to memorise words. Inspiring an inner motivation to want to read and want to spell is more effective in nurturing strong readers. As such, I adopted the Language Experience Approach recommended by her teacher and was amazed to see that my daughter could connect words I taught her from storybooks with words in our environment, such as "food" in the food court and "stop" in the carpark. This learning only happens because of an excellent teacher who continually gives very useful feedback for me to reinforce at home.



Nurturing the love for reading in her children

**CHANG JIAPEI**, mother of three children, aged 4 and 3 years; and 3 months

 I pay attention to the activities centred around monthly themes at my son's preschool. For instance, on the theme about occupations, I read to him library books on different jobs to extend his learning at home. Through our nightly bedtime reading activity, and from conversations with his teachers, I learned of his interest to be a firefighter. As such, I signed him up for a firefighter-themed playgroup activity. My son enjoyed the session so much and he talked about his experience for days!

 With encouragement from my son's teacher to participate in a classroom sharing session, my son and I decided to talk about our pet bird. We had fun documenting our interactions with the bird at home and highlighting its interesting characteristics as part of the activity. My son was enthusiastic and excited, and overcame his shyness through the process. It was a great learning experience.

**YVONNE NG**, mother of two sons, aged 6 and 10



Classroom sharing session on their pet bird

**CHUA WEI WEI**, mother to a son, aged 2



Learning about firefighting beyond the preschool

## THAT'S SO NEAT!

We showed you how to make a stationery holder in the Jan-Mar 2019 issue and here's what some of you have created!



**ELLIOT LOW**, 4



**SOPHIE OON**, 3



**SOORYA SIVAKUMAR**, 6



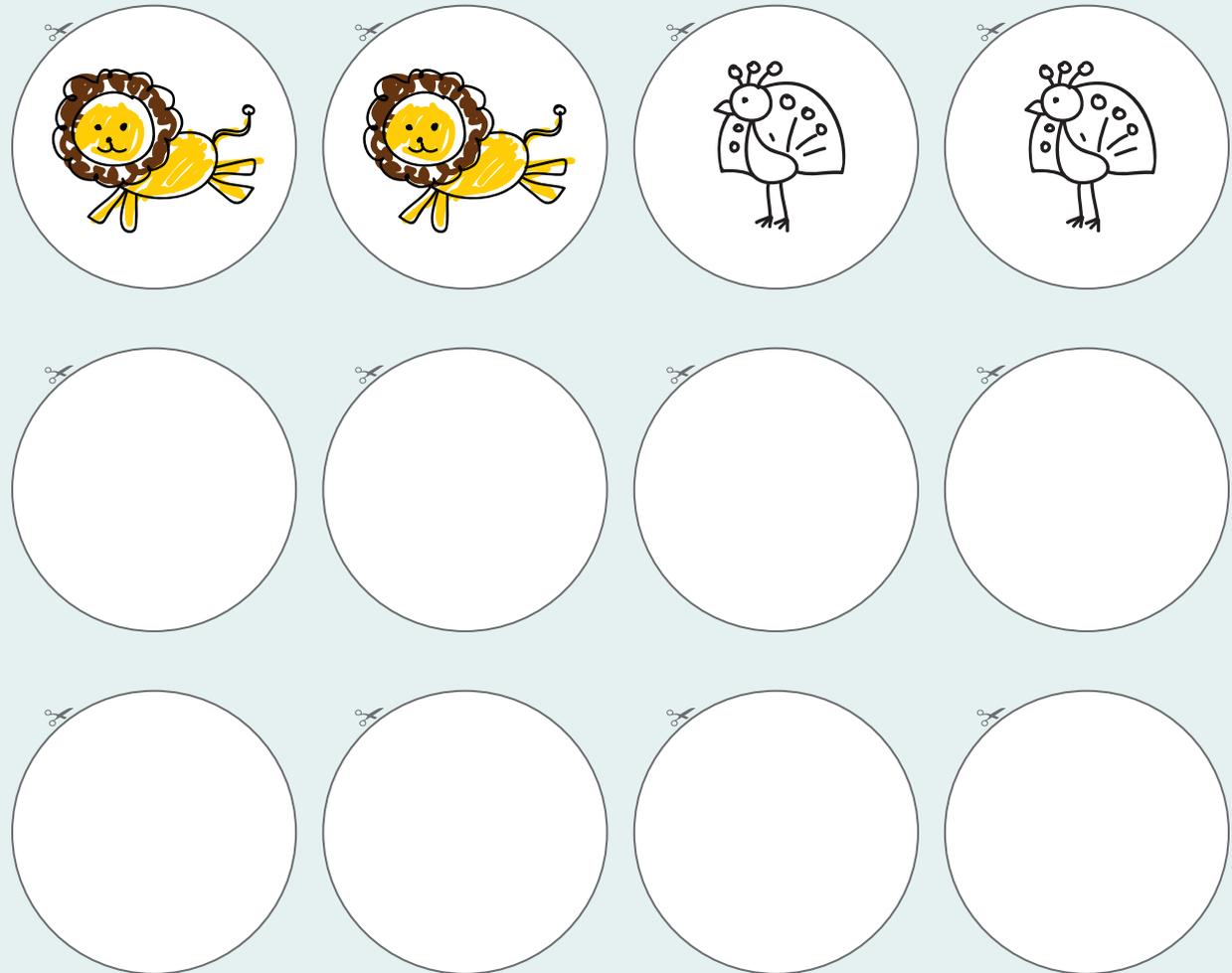
We have three **\$30 NTUC FairPrice vouchers to give away to the best letters!**



## DO YOU REMEMBER?

Create your own memory card game.

MEMORY GAME



**Step 1:** Draw two of the same pictures in the circles. Colour them in if you wish.

**Step 2:** Cut all the circles out and paste them on construction paper. Make sure the papers used are all identical.

**Step 3:** Turn them over, shuffle and play! Flip over two cards. Keep the set if you find a match. If there is no match, flip the cards back and the other player gets a turn.

### → Hey Parents!

This game will help sharpen your child's memory and recall skills, as well as cultivate patience. Drawing, colouring and cutting will also hone their fine motor skills. Remember to have fun!

