

IMPROVING ACCESS TO AFFORDABLE QUALITY PRESCHOOLS FOR ALL

ENHANCED SUPPORT FOR PRESCHOOL OPERATORS AND FAMILIES

Greater Access to Affordable, Quality Preschools



Increase in full-day preschool places:

Around **180,000** currently → Over **200,000** by 2023

Larger share of government-supported preschool places, where fees are capped:

Just over **50%** currently → **80%** by around 2025

By around 2025, expenses at government-supported preschools lowered to:

\$300 per month for a child in full-day childcare

After means-tested subsidies, families will pay less.

Monthly household income ceiling for Additional Subsidy raised:

From **\$7,500** previously → To **\$12,000** from Jan 2020

Subsidies have also been increased across all eligible income tiers.



ENHANCEMENT OF PARTNER OPERATOR SCHEME

From January 2021, ECDA will appoint more Partner Operator (POP) childcare centres, which will have to meet lower monthly fee caps for infant care and childcare.

Example:

A working family with child attending a POP centre, and with monthly income of

\$3,000

2019	2020	From Jan 2021
Paid no more than	Lowered to no more than	Will be lowered to no more than
\$156	↓\$89	↓\$46
per month for full-day childcare at a POP centre	per month with enhanced subsidies	per month with the reduced fee cap



“The Government is committed to giving every child a good start in life, regardless of their background.”

SENIOR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY (EDUCATION AND SOCIAL AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT) ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR MUHAMMAD FAISHAL IBRAHIM
Ministry of Social and Family Development
Committee of Supply Debates 2020

More Support For Low-Income Families



MAXIMUM SUBSIDIES FOR LOW-INCOME FAMILIES

WHO BENEFITS?

- All children from low-income families living in flats under HDB's Public Rental Scheme, or receiving ComCare Short-to-Medium-Term or Long-Term Assistance.

HOW?

- These families will automatically qualify for maximum preschool subsidies with effect from August 2020 upon Special Approval application.
- Subsidies will remain unchanged till next point of assessment to give families more certainty.
- Start-Up Grants will be facilitated to help eligible families defray the initial costs of enrolment (e.g. uniforms and deposit).

EXTENSION OF PRESCHOOL OPPORTUNITY FUND

WHO BENEFITS?

- About 2,700 children from low-income families per year over the next 3 years.



HOW?

- ECDA will extend the Preschool Opportunity Fund to enable children from low-income families enrolled in non-Anchor Operator preschools to access development activities at their preschools (e.g. excursions).
- Children from low-income families in Anchor Operator preschools will be supported by their preschools, which are required to set aside funds for this purpose.

EXPANSION OF KIDSTART

WHO BENEFITS?

- 5,000 more children over the next 3 years (up from 1,000 children currently).
- Families with monthly household income of \$2,500 and below (up from the previous ceiling of \$1,900).



HOW?

- ECDA works with community partners (e.g. Social Service Offices, Family Service Centres and hospitals) to build an ecosystem of support around the child.
- The 'Growing Together with KidSTART' initiative encourages individuals and corporates to do their part by volunteering their services or making a donation.

Support For Preschools and Educators

SUPPORT FOR PRESCHOOLS

- Extension of Support Schemes**
ECDA will increase the funding amounts of the Support Schemes to help eligible non-government supported preschool operators defray their costs (e.g. infrastructure development, rental and investments to improve quality).
- Industry Digital Plan**
ECDA and IMDA will launch the IDP later this year, to help all preschools adopt digital solutions to boost productivity.



SUPPORT FOR EDUCATORS

- Teachers' Day Off**
Mandatory closure for all preschools on Teachers' Day starting this year, to show our recognition of and appreciation for educators.



GOING ABOVE AND BEYOND

THE ECDA FELLOWS PROGRAMME HAS CREATED OPPORTUNITIES FOR PINNACLE LEADERS TO DEEPEN THEIR EXPERTISE AND DRIVE SECTOR-LEVEL IMPROVEMENTS.

Since her appointment as an ECDA Fellow in 2018, Ms Zaiton Bte Mohd Ali now has an enabling platform to broaden and deepen her knowledge in early childhood (EC), and advance her professional interest in specific areas. "I want to make an impact beyond my centre and organisation. The ECDA Fellows programme provides me with opportunities to engage and connect with other leaders and educators in the EC fraternity," says the Executive Principal of Iyad Perdaus Child Development, who has 14 years of EC experience under her belt.

PROFESSIONAL MINDFULNESS

ECDA Fellows go through the Early Childhood Pinnacle Leaders (ECPL) programme in their first year of appointment. They are equipped to take on sector-level roles and responsibilities in three key areas: Professional Development, Curriculum Leadership and Sector Partnership.

For Ms Zaiton, the ECPL programme has given her opportunities to look deeper into some of the issues faced by educators, such as the tendency for leaders to focus on competency gaps and operational deficits more than acknowledging and affirming teachers' contributions,

strengthening their abilities and building quality relationships.

Applying what she had learned, she reviewed the existing mentoring framework in the three Iyad Perdaus centres and then trained her centre leaders to adopt a strength-based approach to foster positive leader-teacher relationships. "It is vital for leaders to take into account the social-emotional needs of educators as this does have an effect on the quality of teaching, and ultimately on children's outcomes. To achieve this, they need to be reflective leaders," Ms Zaiton highlights.



Ms Zaiton with other ECDA Fellows during an ECDA Fellows study trip to Australia

MULTIPLIER EFFECT

Ms Zaiton went a step further to share the good practices at the sector level. In collaboration with another ECDA Fellow Ms Ong Siew Teng, they initiated an Inquiry-Based Action Plan (IBAP) project to guide and mentor other centre leaders to

adopt the strength-based approach in their centres. To date, they have trained 35 centre leaders. "The pre- and post-evaluation data show improvement, and leaders are now more conscious of the approach they employ to engage and enhance their relationships with the teachers," she is heartened to note. "I am proud to be part of this dynamic fraternity. It has allowed me to strengthen my professional network and develop closer ties, while sharing my passion with other centre leaders and the EC fraternity."

Serving the sector as an ECDA Fellow, and centres under the Partner Operator (POP) scheme as an Executive Principal, would not be possible without her employer's strong support. The Executive Director of Perdaus, Mr Asmin Buang, appreciates the knowledge and specialised skills that Ms Zaiton has brought to the organisation as a result of being an ECDA Fellow. "Zaiton has made an impact on the organisation and staff development. Her confidence and professionalism have cascaded down to her peers and teachers through the mentoring process. This has created a more nurturing environment for the children," he notes. ●



Ms Zaiton engaging with participants at the IBAP Project Showcase 2019



LEVEL UP!

Calling for experienced and passionate EC leaders who would like to make a difference to the dynamic sector! The ECDA Fellows programme provides opportunities for exemplary leaders to grow professionally, drive quality improvement of the sector, and inspire current and future EC educators. Application for the ECDA Fellows programme will begin in July 2020. For more details, visit www.ecda.gov.sg/Pages/ECDA-Fellows.aspx.