



NurtureStars @ SAFRA Mount Faber uses the SPARK framework to shape hands-on teaching and learning practices

A DECADE OF SPARK



PRESCHOOLS WITH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING PRACTICES RECEIVED THEIR CERTIFICATION AT THE ANNUAL SPARK PRESENTATION CEREMONY.

The Singapore Preschool Accreditation Framework (SPARK) Certificate Presentation Ceremony (Virtual) on 10 November 2021 recognised the achievements of 115 preschools which met the standards for certification between October 2020 and September 2021. Out of these, 26 were awarded the SPARK Certificate (Commendation).

The event also marked a special milestone for SPARK, which celebrated its tenth year. In its first year, only nine per cent of preschools achieved SPARK certification. A decade on, over 50 per cent of preschools are SPARK-certified, and the framework is upheld as an established benchmark for teaching and learning, administration and management processes.

HOW SPARK HAS EVOLVED

Speaking at the virtual ceremony, Ms Sun Xueling, Minister of State for Social and Family Development, said, "Beyond achieving certification, many preschools now regularly use SPARK to improve their practices."

She summed up how SPARK is continually reviewed to ensure the framework stays relevant. Some

enhancements made since its inception include:

- Expanding the Quality Rating Scale (QRS) to cover Early Years programmes for the 0–3 age group.
- Integrating QRS (0-3) with the QRS for the 4–6 age group, to provide a comprehensive view of quality early childhood (EC) programmes for the crucial first six years of a child's life.
- Allowing preschools with good SPARK assessment scores and



SPARK advocates child-centric experiences in preschools

“Parents look to SPARK as a mark of quality assurance when enrolling their children in centres.”

MS SUN XUELING,
Minister of State for Social and Family Development

sound teaching and learning processes to renew their SPARK Certificate for an additional three years, without having to undergo a full assessment.

A PRESCHOOL'S JOURNEY

Ms Sun noted that as the sector matures, EC professionals will be the ones driving and developing quality improvements in their respective centres as well as for the sector. She shared the example of one preschool that received the SPARK Certificate (Commendation). At NurtureStars @ SAFRA Mount Faber, the curriculum is geared towards developing positive learning dispositions in children.

Senior Principal Ms Eunice Tang explains, "Preschools must take charge of their own quality improvement journey as this will increase positive learning outcomes for children. We used the Nurturing Early Learners (NEL) Framework as a guide and SPARK as an assessment tool to improve our teaching and learning practices. Our curriculum leverages hands-on activities and experiential learning, such as getting children to explore different kinds of fruits using their senses, to introduce them to the world around us. We ask children open-ended questions to develop their curiosity, creative thinking and reasoning skills. We also engage parents through home learning activities and projects."

Parents have seen how these improvements benefited their children and fostered their love of learning. For example, Ms Tang shares one parent's feedback that, through the teachers' use of open-ended questions and positive reinforcement, her child has grown into "a confident, independent boy" who is able to "think out of the box".

For the complete list of awardees, visit sparkceremony2021.sg (available till April 2022) or scan this QR code.

