

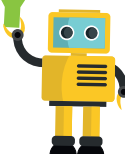


Children get hands-on computer experience at ChildFirst @ Tampines

“ In preschool, Blyss learned to use Internet search engines to look up animal photos. She then used the same search engines to find images of words on my mobile device. This helped hone her English literacy skills.

MS WONG YIJUN, mother of Blyss Chen, 5

APP-SOLUTELY ESSENTIAL



NURTURING DIGITAL LITERACY THROUGH HANDS-ON LESSONS WITH COMPUTERS, ROBOTS AND APPS.

“**D**igital literacy is an essential skill for children to navigate a society where technology has permeated almost every aspect of our lives,” says Ms Lean Wei Lin, a teacher at ChildFirst @ Tampines. Technology is in fact part of the centre’s curriculum.

CRACKING THE CODE

Technology classes are held weekly across nursery and kindergarten levels. Children learn about using computers, apps and digital tools, coding and programming robots, and media production. The curriculum is curated to ensure that it is developmentally appropriate for the different age groups.

Children at the N2 level are concrete thinkers who are not yet able to grasp abstract concepts, so the centre engages them actively through their senses. Instead of screens, teachers use songs, games and outdoor walks to introduce the concepts of up, down, left and right. These directional movements lay the foundation for coding.

As children progress to K1, they learn to use a tablet to code and control a more sophisticated robot. They also begin to format email messages, use search engines and presentation apps, and host virtual meetings. Working together in small groups creates opportunities to develop social-emotional skills such as sharing and taking turns.

“The use of technology does not replace traditional forms of learning to read or write. Integrating digital and traditional literacies can create

meaningful learning experiences,” Ms Lean adds. For instance, the K2 class uses an animation app to create stories and produces print advertisements on a computer. This helps develop their language skills as well.

SOCIAL SECURITY

To address parents’ concerns that exposure to technology may make children socially awkward, the centre emphasises peer learning and group work during technology lessons.

Ms Lean elaborates, “For every new concept introduced, children are encouraged to explore it independently first before collaborating with others on a project that sums up their learning. This ensures each child understands the concept and has opportunities to develop social skills and relationships.” ●

DO

TOP TECH TIPS

DON'T

- ✓ **DO** choose apps that are age-appropriate and stimulate children’s thinking, creativity and problem-solving abilities.
- ✓ **DO** ask questions when children are engaging with tech toys or apps. Make a connection between what is happening on screen and real-life situations.
- ✓ **DO** be patient. Some concepts may be overwhelming for children.

- ✗ **DON'T** use technology as an electronic babysitter in the classroom or at home.
- ✗ **DON'T** be fearful of technology. Learn alongside the children.

Scan for more tips from Ms Lean on embracing digital skills in the classroom.

go.gov.sg/bedigitalready-educators



MORE SPARK! SPARK-certified centres, such as ChildFirst @ Tampines, are recognised for their continued efforts in providing quality preschool education. See www.ecda.gov.sg/SPARKinfo for more information on the SPARK framework.

