

Taking Stock & Looking forward

AS ONE YEAR ends, another begins. Before 2015 progresses in earnest, let's take stock of key developments in the Early Childhood sector over the past year, and what is in store for parents, professionals and ECDA in this new year.

INCREASING ACCESSIBILITY

2014

70 new child care centres facilitated by ECDA since 2013. +7,000 additional places created for children across Singapore.

Anchor Operator Scheme

Enhanced scheme to increase the number of AOPs to 5 to provide parents with a variety of good-quality and affordable pre-school options.

AOP

Non-AOPs

New support schemes introduced to expand child care places in high-demand areas and at workplaces.

Online Registration Management System

launched to make the search for child care centres more convenient for parents and enrolment of new children easier for operators.



2015

More child care centres

By 2017, one in two children aged 18 months to 6 years will have a child care place.

Working with the sector

- ➔ To provide 20,000 additional child care places from 2013 to 2017.
- ➔ To increase the provision of services in estates with young families.

IMPROVING AFFORDABILITY

2014

\$360 million provided in subsidies to 79,000 children in infant and child care.

31,000 children supported through the enhanced infant and child care subsidies for lower- and middle-income families in 2014.

Pre-school Opportunity Fund

set up to support projects that promote the holistic development of children from less-advantaged or at-risk backgrounds.

2015

Enhanced Kindergarten Fee Assistance (KiFAS)

offered to families with gross household income of up to \$6,000, for children who attend kindergartens run by Anchor Operators or the Ministry of Education.



FORMING PARTNERSHIPS

Early Childhood Conference 2014
attended by over 1,300 participants.

2014

Early Childhood Parenting Study
FOCUS:
 → Parental knowledge and beliefs of early childhood development and learning.
 → Parental aspirations for their children.
 → Parenting practices.

2015

Additional online parenting resources
 → Contain developmentally-appropriate tips for parents.
 → Complement ECDA's existing suite of print, mobile and web-based resources.

Interactive workshops for parents
 → Work with community partners and support pre-schools in organising workshops for parents.
 → Platform for parents to exchange ideas, knowledge and skills with EC professionals.

RAISING QUALITY

2014

SPARK™
Streamlined the assessment process and enhanced outreach efforts.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) masterplan
 → Implemented to develop more structured career pathways.
 → Instituted support measures (e.g. building up a pool of relief teachers and providing additional CPD days).
 → Offered 9,000 CPD training places in 2014 to create more opportunities for upgrading for Early Childhood professionals.

Quality and innovation in teaching and pedagogy
Promoted through grants and guidance projects to centres.

ECDA Institute of Technical Education (ITE) Training Award
Offered to attract more students to join the EC sector.

Beantalk
Developed online resources on parenting.

2015

Modularised Polytechnic diploma courses
With modularised continuing education and training Polytechnic diploma courses to help in-service educators balance work with professional upgrading.

Structured competency-based career progression pathways
To create more opportunities for EC professionals to upgrade their skills.

Commendation category
To recognise SPARK-certified centres with strong teaching and learning practices for children's holistic development.

Enhanced Internships for full-time Polytechnic & ITE students
To strengthen pre-employment training.

ECDA Fellows
 → To appoint EC professionals who display exemplary leadership and expertise.
 → To serve as role models to uplift sector quality and create a fraternity of professionals.

Young & Charitable

As PMI has discovered, young children can be inspired and motivated to reach out to the less fortunate.

IT'S NEVER TOO EARLY for children to 'do good,'" says Dr Khoo Kim Choo, founder of the Preschool for Multiple Intelligences (PMI). And she doesn't just pay lip service to that idea, for in July 2014, she initiated a 'Children for Children' (CFC) project in partnership with Care Corner Singapore to instill the concept of altruism among the children.



auctioned off for \$6,000. The CFC project officially ended on 15 December after the final event — an online art auction comprising art created by the children. PMI is proud to announce that they have achieved their target of raising \$50,000 to contribute to Care Corner's Jubilee Fund.

Dr Khoo and the children from PMI presenting a pledge of \$50,000 to the chairman of Care Corner for the Children for Children project.

Care Corner is a voluntary welfare organisation that provides support services for low-income families. These services range from child care to elder care and include operation of family service centres. In conjunction with SG50, Care Corner is launching a Jubilee Programme to provide direct financial assistance and trained volunteer befrienders for needy families. PMI has pledged to contribute to Care Corner's Jubilee Fund by raising S\$50,000 for families with young children. Dr Khoo explains, "[The project] offers our children opportunities to learn that they can show 'Love and Compassion' — one of PMI's core values — in different ways."

NO CONTRIBUTION IS TOO LITTLE, AND IT'S GOOD FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS TO LEAD THE WAY AS ROLE MODELS
//Dr Khoo Kim Choo

Dr Khoo is bowled over by the enthusiasm of the children and parents for the project. The parents planned the carnival which was attended by children from Care Corner. The children were generous in donating books and toys for the carnival. "They were [also] good hosts [to the children from Care Corner], though some were a little shy. They also gave money from their own piggybanks after discussing the matter with their parents," reveals Dr Khoo.

K1 child Liam Farrer thoroughly enjoyed running the stalls at the carnival. He says, "I feel happy and good about it. I want to help them and share what we have." K2 child Kyra Wu shares the same sentiments: "Baking the cookies was fun. We can sell them and give the money to children in need."

As Dr Khoo puts it, "[No contribution is] too little, and it's good for teachers and parents to lead the way as role models."

The CFC project involved children, parents and teachers from both PMI branches, PMI@Newton and PMI@East. So far, they have organised a fundraising dinner/art auction at La Barca restaurant, a hosting session for Care Corner children at PMI@Newton, a children's carnival at PMI@East, a piggybank donation and a children's art sale at PMI's year-end party.

At the art auction, an art piece made up of tongue depressors decorated by the children and put together by a professional framer was

PMI children sorting out their contribution of toys & books before the children's carnival.

