

The magazine for early childhood practitioners and parents

Beansstalk

Apr-Jun 2015

CULTIVATING CREATIVITY

THE IMPORTANCE OF
INNOVATION IN
THE CLASSROOM



SLEEPING WITH THE PENGUINS

The Jurong Bird Park's many
innovative learning experiences

LEARNING
THROUGH THE ARTS
with the Artist-in-
School Scheme

THE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION SCENE

New initiatives that invest in the foundation years of our children

IN THIS ISSUE

Every Big Dream Begins with A Small Step



Dr Lee and Ms Koh Li-Na (ACE/ECDA) in front of the mascots who symbolise the important role EC educators play in helping every child feel loved, and motivated to learn and explore.

I imagine...I wonder...I think...” These simple yet powerful words can help ignite creativity in our children. Creativity makes

life interesting and fulfilling. Encouraging new ideas and new ways of doing things, using open-ended questioning techniques and considering possibilities are some ways to nurture creativity in young children.

In this issue, be inspired by the interesting mix of innovative ideas and activities you can do with your child. How a child learns and develops is also linked to the quality of parent-child relationships. Read the “Thrive” segment to find out how

you can build strong and nurturing relationships with your children.

If you have any creative ideas and activities, we would love to hear from you. We will feature these contributions and other feedback on *Beanstalk* in our new “Mailbag” segment.

To celebrate SG50, Mr Heng Swee Keat, Minister for Education will launch our President’s Challenge “Start Small Dream Big” Project on 1 April 2015, in collaboration with Science Centre Singapore. The Early Childhood (EC) fraternity is raring to do their part, by encouraging children to contribute to the community, in small but meaningful ways. For young children, knowing that they too can make a difference to the lives of others is empowering. It helps develop a sense of responsibility, compassion and empathy.

The project will culminate in ECDA’s 3rd annual Early Childhood Conference — “Start Small Dream Big: Reaching for the Stars”. The Conference will be held on 25 and 26 September (Fri and Sat) at the Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre. It is also an opportunity to celebrate the outstanding contributions of EC professionals through the “ECDA Awards for Excellence in Early Childhood Development”.

If you know of any exemplary EC professionals, leaders or

centres, please send in your nominations now! Check out www.growatbeanstalk.sg for more information on the awards.

In the coming months, ECDA will be progressively rolling out new initiatives to develop the sector and its professionals. The new Partner Operator scheme will complement the Anchor Operator scheme to support a larger segment of the early childhood sector, the Early Childhood Capability Grant will support operators in delivering enhanced internships to full-time EC students, and professionals can look forward to details of the structured Professional Development Programme in the later part of this year. Read about these initiatives under the “In the News” segment.

Every big dream begins with a small step. And that first small step starts with each one of us reaching out to help every young child realise his or her full potential and be the best they can be.

As Harriet Tubman, a humanist in the 19th century once said, “Every great dream begins with a dreamer. Always remember, you have within you the strength, the patience, and the passion to reach for the stars to change the world.”



DR LEE TUNG JEAN
CEO
Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA)



ON THE COVER

From left: Johan Tang, Vera Tan, Noraini Bte Mansoor, Amal Khan Bte Mohd Nassir Khan, Lucas Sim, Annarella Isae, Elsie Chua

Art Direction Don Lee & Carol Chan
Photography Ealbert Ho
Styling Sharon Tan,
assisted by Wai Ting Lim
Grooming Manisa Tan & Anna Lim



EDITORIAL PANEL
Angela Anthony
Anthea Lin
Daphne Lim

EDITORIAL CONSULTANT

MEDIA CORP

Senior Editor Agatha Koh Brazil
Senior Writers Fairiza Mansor, Wanda Tan
Art Director Don Lee
Designer Carol Chan
Senior Business Relationship Manager Michele Kho
Assistant Business Relationship Manager Felicia Norfor
Contributors Elisabeth Lee, Ashutosh Ravikrishnan, Ealbert Ho, Hong Chee Yan, Tan Kay Hian

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A Culture of Creativity

Educators and parents discuss the importance of innovation in the classroom to foster imagination, curiosity and creativity in young minds.

What does the word 'innovation' mean to you?

Noraini: Innovation means re-invention. To be innovative is to look beyond what we are already doing, identify great ideas and eventually put these ideas into practice.

Elsie: Innovation means thinking out of the box, being as creative as possible and doing something different.

Parents, do you think it is important for centres to be innovative in their curriculum and teaching practices? Why?

Christine: It is definitely important. A child goes to his or her pre-school centre every weekday. If a centre is innovative in its lessons and teaching methods, it provides



From left to right: Lucas Sim, Vera Tan, Johan Tang, Annarella Tsae and Amal Khan Bte Mohd Nassir Khan.



Annarella and Amal with dollhouses that light up, crafted by their peers as part of The Electric Corner project.

.....
INNOVATION MEANS RE-INVENTION. TO BE INNOVATIVE IS TO LOOK BEYOND WHAT WE ARE ALREADY DOING, IDENTIFY GREAT IDEAS AND EVENTUALLY PUT THESE IDEAS INTO PRACTICE.

//Noraini Mansoor

children are encouraged to be inquisitive and adventurous. Offering many opportunities to think critically and act responsibly will enable children to thrive in challenging situations as they develop.

Elsie: By constantly innovating, we can offer something fresh to the children, so classroom time is always invigorating. At the same time, innovation also encourages educators like me to be creative and resourceful. We need to use existing materials in different ways and refresh the children's classroom experience. This engages them more effectively.

Let's talk about The Electric Corner project. How did it enhance the learning and development of the children from your centre?

Noraini: The Electric Corner provided the children with opportunities to explore and investigate in a safe environment, facilitated closely by educators. In one session, when we experimented with batteries, the children used their senses to

an avenue for the child to explore and discover something new on a daily basis. A pre-school centre should help to nurture a child's curiosity and excitement for learning, not stifle it.

Edwin: Children get bored easily, so it's not easy to teach them what we grown-ups perceive as "simple things". Teaching in a creative and innovative way will help enhance their learning. But more importantly, [doing so] helps children enjoy the learning process. Through innovative activities, songs, and stories for example, children can retain information better. Lucas remembers interesting activities that he did in school and he shares these with us at home.

Educators, how does innovation enhance the quality of your teaching and subsequently the children's learning?

Noraini: It is in their early years that children have the greatest capacity and appetite to learn. Taking an innovative approach to teaching can help to create an environment where



THE ELECTRIC CORNER

The Electric Corner introduces the concept of electricity to pre-schoolers, and shows the young ones just how important it is in their daily lives. Through creative lesson plans crafted by participating centres, pre-schoolers are encouraged to stay curious, explore and discover why and how things work through safe hands-on experiments. The Electric Corner was introduced by the Early Childhood Development Agency as an Innovation Guidance Project (IGP), in partnership with Science Centre Singapore. Living Sanctuary Kindergarten and Nobleland Arts N Learning Place were two of the nine centres that took part in the IGP in 2014.



On Amal: Dress Gingersnaps, Sandals Monsoon Children On Annarella: Dress Joules by Not Too Big, Shoes Monsoon Children On Lucas: Checked shirt Not Too Big, Pants Not Too Big, Shoes Not Too Big On Vera: Top Joules by Not Too Big, Jacket Monsoon Children, Skirt Gingersnaps, Pumps Monsoon Children On Johan: Long sleeve top Not Too Big, Pants Gingersnaps, Shoes Not Too Big Toys The Learning Store Styling Sharon Tan assisted by Wai Ting Lim Hair & makeup Mantisa Tan & Anna Lim

compare and contrast the different types of batteries — they observed the varied shapes, sizes and weight.

Upon closer inspection, they even noticed the different voltage each battery carried, and explored what this meant by connecting the batteries to a simple electrical circuit. When a bulb blew, the children learnt that different types of appliances require different power and voltages. Anything less and the appliance will not function; too much and it might catch a spark. The children learnt something

different about electricity each time through the hands-on activities.

Elsie: Through the project, the children were exposed to the components that made up an electric circuit as well as different types of plugs. It was a treat for the children as most parents would rather they stay away, out of concern that electricity can be dangerous. We took this opportunity to teach the children the safety precautions to be observed when handling electrical appliances.

Elsie Chua

56, PRINCIPAL,
LIVING SANCTUARY
KINDERGARTEN

Christine Tang

41, TEACHER AND
PARENT TO JOHAN TANG,
5 (LIVING SANCTUARY
KINDERGARTEN)

Parents, you were also involved in The Electric Corner project. What did you do together with your child?

Edwin: It was a year-long project not just about electricity but also about caring for the environment.

The centre gave each child a simple electrical circuit and with that, parent and child had to create a toy using recycled materials. My son Lucas and I decided to make an electric car. We looked for instructions on YouTube and built the toy car together. It was a good opportunity for me to get involved in his learning and to bond with him at the same time.

Christine: Johan's father worked with him on the electricity kit he brought back, and they had a lot of fun tinkering with it together. I'm pleasantly surprised that pre-schoolers are learning about the science behind electricity. In my time, this topic was touched on only when I was in upper primary. Kids are so lucky these days to be given all these opportunities to discover the world.

An electrical board made by educators of Living Sanctuary Kindergarten to encourage hands-on learning in children.

Electricity can be dangerous. How then can we observe

ELECTRICAL SAFETY?



Here are some plugs and sockets which you will see all around you:

2-pin Plug Adapter

socket

2-pin plug

3-pin plug



Start small dream big

In conjunction with Singapore's 50th birthday, ECDA has invited all kindergartens and child care centres to participate in the President's Challenge "Start Small Dream Big" (SSDB) project. To be launched on 1 April 2015, the project aims to encourage children to give back to their communities. Early Childhood professionals are encouraged to incorporate innovative practices when involving the young in community services.

Principal of Nobleland Arts N Learning Place Ms Chua Shian Luan is happy to get the children in her centre involved in the SSDB project. "Participating in this project allows us to ignite a child's ability to love, share and contribute to those in need," says Ms Chua. "Children, even as young as five, have the capacity to be contributing members of society. We educators should nurture this spirit of giving back."

Innovation is crucial when planning programmes for the SSDB project, says Principal of Living Sanctuary Kindergarten Ms Elsie Chua. "To enable all pre-schoolers at the centre to take part in the project, the educators have to brainstorm for programmes that are age-appropriate. As a result, we will organise different activities for different groups of children," says Ms Chua. Children in K1, for example, will invite their grandparents to the centre for an aerobics session, which child and grandparent will participate in together. Meanwhile, the K2 children will put up a musical performance each Wednesday for the elderly who are invited for a free weekly meal at the adjoining Brethren Church.

For more information on SSDB, visit the events and media gallery section (Partnerships) at www.growatbeanstalk.sg.

Ms Chua Shian Luan, 44, Principal of Nobleland Arts N Learning Place

Edwin Sim

37, LAWYER AND PARENT TO LUCAS SIM, 5 (NOBLELAND ARTS N LEARNING PLACE)

Why is it important to support children to become critical and creative thinkers?

Christine: Grown-ups can't be around to facilitate at all times. Training children to take their inquiring mind further, by asking why and how certain things happen, and what else they can do will serve them well later in life. They will then be more likely to excel.

Edwin: I agree, especially these days when children are expected to be independent thinkers. More so than being smart, I think it's important for children to develop good values. Therefore, critical thinking is to be encouraged so that children can distinguish right from wrong on their own. As Christine has said, mummy and daddy cannot be around all the time to supervise. For example, children should know why it's important to be polite to others and respect their elders instead of just following instructions to do so. ♥

On Mr Sim: Knit pullover: Uniqlo, Shirt: Model's own, Pants: Topman



Investing in the Foundation Years of Our Children

Targeted Approach



Keep pre-school services affordable

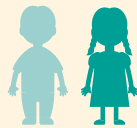


Raise the quality of care and education in pre-school centres



Improve career and professional development opportunities for EC teachers

Progress in the Provision of Early Childhood Services



Childcare for 1 in 2 Children

by 2017, up from 1 in 3 in 2013

31,000



children benefitting from enhanced subsidies

10,000



children benefitting from enhanced KIFAS

360 

certified pre-schools



New Commendation Category to recognise strong teaching and learning practices



More Opportunities

for career and professional development for aspiring and in-service EC professionals

ACCESSIBILITY

AFFORDABILITY

QUALITY

Development of New Early Childhood Development Centres Act (ECDCA)

KEY FEATURES

To raise overall sector quality

Aim



Harmonise the regulation of child care centres & kindergartens



Registration of all EC professionals



Enhancements to ECDA's regulatory powers to better uphold standards



Further Consultation on changes before introducing the new ECDCA later in 2015

FOR PARENTS
Greater assurance of quality in ECDA-licensed pre-schools

FOR OPERATORS
Clear and consistent requirements across the EC sector



Introduction of 3 New Schemes

NEW PARTNER OPERATOR (POP)

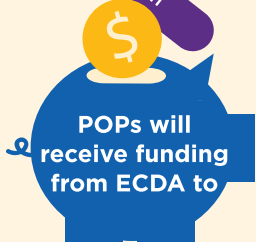
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (PDP)

EARLY CHILDHOOD CAPABILITY GRANT (ECCG)

for Enhanced Internship Host Operators

To improve quality & affordability of child care services

Aim



POPs will receive funding from ECDA to

Keep fees affordable

- Reduce current fees
- Fee cap of \$800
- Keep future fee increases affordable

Invest in improving centre quality

with attainment of the SPARK certification and strengthening HQ capabilities

Enhance continuing professional development & career progression opportunities for EC professionals

for EC professionals



POP to complement existing Anchor Operator (AOP) scheme



of pre-school children to benefit from enhanced government support for more affordable and quality pre-schools by 2020

To improve attraction and retention of teachers in EC sector to meet manpower needs

Aim



For EC professionals

With about 3 years of experience

Identified by employers

for potential to take on larger job roles



Structured three-year upgrading programme



Deepen EC professionals' skills

to take on larger responsibilities



Provide opportunities

to further develop and progress



Range of support includes



NEW CERTIFIABLE COURSES



CASH INCENTIVES at key milestones

To support operators in delivering enhanced internships for full-time Early Childhood Care & Education students in ITE & Polytechnics

Aim



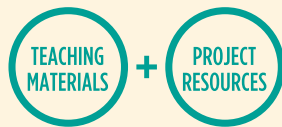
COMPONENTS OF THE GRANT

to help build capabilities in operators to deliver meaningful and realistic internships for trainee students



\$1,700 per trainee

for operators to recognise mentors or hire relief staff to cover mentors' duties



\$200 per trainee

for students to be well-equipped to deliver lessons and complete major projects as part of course



50% of minimum stipend co-funded by ECDA

Funding amounts to \$300 for ITE and \$350 for Polytechnic students per month

The enhanced internship and the ECCG to be implemented progressively from Sept 2015

EARLY CHILDHOOD (EC) professionals make significant contributions to the nation. They nurture Singapore's future generations in the early years of their lives. They build a strong foundation for children to develop and reach their full potential. They provide learning and developmental opportunities in their daily interactions with young children. The efforts put in by the educators in many little ways on a day-to-day basis make a big difference to the life of a child.

The importance of EC educators and their work with young children was highlighted in ECDA's Chief Executive Officer Dr Lee Tung Jean's 'First Day of School' message to pre-schools earlier this year: "The First Day of

school is a big step forward for a pre-school child. It is a launch pad for him to discover himself, the world around him and be part of the larger community... And as educators, you are privileged to be there with the children for this momentous day. This is not just another work day. It is a significant "worth" day — for the children and for all early childhood educators. We can make this moment special — helping every child feel loved and motivated to learn and explore." To acknowledge and affirm the important role of EC



Teaching is not just a job but a vocation, a calling to make a positive difference to children's lives.



educators, a series of five posters was also sent to all pre-schools. The posters contain inspiring quotes for teachers, highlighting the meaningful and worthy work that they do on a daily basis.

Pebble Place Development Centre is one of many pre-schools that have prominently displayed these posters. "We received the posters in the mail and thought that the words are very impactful and relevant to EC practitioners," says centre supervisor Ms Zita Tan. "That's why we've put the posters up on the wall, as a visible reminder to teachers."

But that's not all the centre is doing to motivate educators. According to Ms Tan, Pebble Place has adopted the quotes on the posters as a common goal or philosophy in its day-to-day dealings with children. "We [also] plan to use these quotes as the theme for our next teachers' training programme," she says.

Of course, being a good EC educator goes beyond hard work. 'Heart work' is also required — teaching is not just a job but a vocation, a calling to make a positive difference to children's lives.

Ms Chewy Teng, supervisor of Pu Ti Child Care Centre, is deeply appreciative of the teachers at her centre. "During weekly staff meetings, I make it a point to praise those teachers who have received good feedback from parents or who have 'gone the extra mile' in their work with children," she says. "Through open discussions, we support and provide constructive input to each other in everything we do." ❤️

Finding Worth In The Workplace

'Workplace to Worthplace' — a reminder that working in the Early Childhood Sector can be a meaningful and fulfilling experience.



WANT MORE W2W EXAMPLES?

To find out how other pre-schools have transformed their workplace into a happy, healthy and fulfilling 'worthplace', visit www.growatbeanstalk.sg. Be a part of this W2W movement, send in inspiring stories and photographs from your own pre-school to partnerships@ecda.gov.sg.

All things N-AISS

ec

LANDSCAPE



The Artist-in-School Scheme — a joint initiative between ECDA and the National Arts Council — aims to improve the quality of early childhood arts education.

WHAT IS ONE way to unlock our creativity? The answer is simple — engage in artistic pursuits. To encourage such endeavours in the early childhood sector, ECDA collaborated with the National Arts Council last year on a pilot initiative called the Artist-in-School Scheme (AISS). The objective was for educators to enhance their arts-based knowledge and skills, and also promote the concept of learning through the arts.

Five pre-schools participated in the AISS, each of which spent several months co-developing and co-teaching lessons on a particular art form with a specialist arts educator. Among the centres involved, Soka Kindergarten partnered Kavanagh Dance, a dance school for children. Together, they designed a creative dance programme for about 60 K2 children, with Soka's educators taking on the role of Project Lead Educators.

For its part, Kavanagh Dance wanted educators as well as children to enjoy and understand the importance of dance. "Our objective was to impart technical dance skills and a love of dance to educators, so that they could [do likewise] for children," says its founder, Mrs Ruby Kavanagh, 50. "Children would in turn gain body and spatial awareness as well as a positive sense of self."

Two workshops for educators were conducted by Mrs Kavanagh and senior dance instructors. The educators were taught warm-up exercises and dance techniques. This was followed by a series of 10 weekly children's sessions at the pre-school.

Under the programme, each

of the three lead educators choreographed a 'demi-character dance' — in which dance movements are used to tell a story. Each lead educator then taught the dance to a separate group of children, who then performed it in front of the entire class during the final lesson.

Ms Huixian Tang, 23, one of the lead educators, choreographed a dance about treasure-hunting pirates set to music from the musical *Wicked*.

"After a few practices, I realised that I could tap into their imagination and allow them to think in the shoes of their characters. The children felt more excited and were able to portray the expressions effectively," said Ms Tang.

This excitement was echoed by the K2 children. One child, Danielle Ng, said, "I enjoyed creating our demi-character dance so much! I also loved to watch my other friends perform their[s]." Kaylyn Thjin, another child said, "Listening to the music is very important. We need to dance to the music. There are different dance steps to follow."

The lead educators also passed on teaching strategies they had learned to their colleagues, such as giving positive feedback to children and choosing age-appropriate music. "[The AISS] has helped me make dance lessons more interesting and has aided me in managing the class," says Ms Tang.

"Empowering educators with arts-based knowledge will give them more confidence and tools to conduct classes," said Mrs Kavanagh on the merits of the AISS. ♥

In the movement, 'Marches and Skips', the children marched and skipped according to the beat of the music. They also looked at their movements in the mirror.



MORE ARTS, PLEASE!

The AISS has been expanded this year to another six pre-schools. The programmes — some of which began in March 2015 — cover a wider range of art forms including 3D animation, storytelling, Chinese percussion and creative movement.

Apr-Jun 9



FOR PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATORS seeking opportunities to explore new teaching strategies, ECDA's Practitioner Inquiry (PI) initiative is a great starting point.

Under PI, practitioners identify a classroom-based topic and conduct an inquiry into it. They plan, implement and evaluate action strategies for that topic over three to six months. The end goal is to better engage children in their learning through enhanced teaching practices. To support participants, ECDA offers a Practitioner Inquiry in Early Childhood Education (PIECE) workshop and funding of up to \$1,000.

Ms Samsiah Binte Misnam, an educator for two to three year-olds at Agape Little Uni @ One-North until December 2014 and now a K2 English Teacher at Agape Little Uni @ Choa Chu Kang — recalls her participation in the PI last September. “[Through ‘Positive Movement’], we wanted the [N1] children [at the centre]

to be intrinsically motivated to demonstrate positive behaviours to everyone around them,” says Ms Samsiah.

She credits two books, *Fill A Bucket* and *Have You Filled A Bucket Today?*, as the inspiration for her project. These are message-driven picture books about the importance of filling up one’s own and other people’s invisible buckets with kind words and deeds. “Bucket-filling and [conversely] bucket-dipping are effective metaphors for understanding the effects of our actions and words on the well-being of others,” says Ms Samsiah.

Throughout the inquiry, N1 children were urged to fill their personal ‘buckets’ — represented by charts to be populated by stickers — with positive words and actions. For every kind thing said or done, each child was awarded an individual star, with another star contributed to a group jar. Parents were also

BECOME AN INQUIRING PROFESSIONAL

PI is open to all ECDA-certified teachers and educators at ECDA-registered/licensed pre-schools. To apply for PI or sign up for the PIECE workshop, visit the TEACHERS' gallery section (Professional Development) at www.growatbeanstalk.sg.



involved to further encourage these positive behaviours in their children. Each family was given a home toolkit which included a ‘bucket’ for each family member and a journal for parents to post photographs of their children doing good deeds at home.

“Every day, a scheduled time was allocated [during which] children set daily goals and [talked about] the positive things they did at home and at the centre,” says Ms Samsiah. These ran the gamut from calling someone “awesome” or “terrific” to giving someone a hug or going grocery-shopping together.

The children also showed a marked improvement in their behaviour at home. Ms Charlotte Goh and her husband Hannes Hentze noticed that their son Jonas was more willing to share his toys with others. “We explained [to Jonas] about how our actions affect each other [and] taught him that he could make choices to change from a bucket-dipper to a bucket-filler,” says Ms Goh. “When ‘Mum’ or ‘Dad’ did bucket-dipping things, we also apologised.”

As a result of the project’s success, Ms Samsiah is effusive about PI. “The PI is a good platform for teachers to better their teaching practices. I would encourage them to carry out [their own] PI projects!” ♥

THROUGH ‘POSITIVE MOVEMENT’, WE WANTED THE CHILDREN TO BE INTRINSICALLY MOTIVATED TO DEMONSTRATE POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS TO EVERYONE AROUND THEM.

//Samsiah Binte Misnam

Inquisitive MINDS



As shown by Agape Little Uni @ One-North, adopting a culture of inquiry improves teaching practices while encouraging children’s holistic development.

Here’s how the concept of bucket-filling helped to inculcate the spirit of generosity in the N1 classroom.





Young student leaders from Anchor Green Primary School sharing with pre-school children the sustainable features at the Sengkang Floating Wetland.

Every DROP Counts

Singapore's national water agency, PUB, offers fun, interesting and innovative ways to teach pre-schoolers about the importance of water.



Improving Water Quality

Many ABC Waters sites have raingardens, or landscaped gardens with different soil layers and selected plants which filter rainwater runoff and improve water quality. Pre-schoolers can learn how the process works through the 'Raingarden Workshop' at the NEWater Visitor Centre. Interested pre-schools can contact Ms Tan to sign up.

According to Ms Tan, the benefits of the innovative hands-on workshop are twofold. "First, pre-schoolers will hone their motor skills as they create their own mini raingardens. [Second,] they will have a first-hand experience of how polluted water is cleansed by raingardens." ♥



An Outdoor Classroom Like No Other

PUB's Active, Beautiful, Clean Waters (ABC Waters) Learning Trails programme is a series of place-based learning trails designed to give students an awareness of and appreciation for Singapore's water management and water spaces. Located across Singapore at ABC Waters sites — community spaces made up of picturesque waterways and green parks — the trails provide a first-hand opportunity to learn about water and its importance to the climate system, society and the environment.

The ABC Waters Learning Trails programme is initiated by PUB in collaboration with community partners. For example, the Learning Trail@Sengkang Floating Wetland for pre-school children was designed by PUB and Anchor Green Primary School. It even includes a do-it-yourself (DIY) resource kit for pre-schools. "We provide activity booklets for children and a trainer's guide for teachers to conduct the learning trail," says Ms April Tan, a Community Relations Executive at PUB. "Children will see [amazing]

biodiversity, smell pandan leaves, touch wetland plants, enjoy the sounds of nature and learn simple ways to save water."

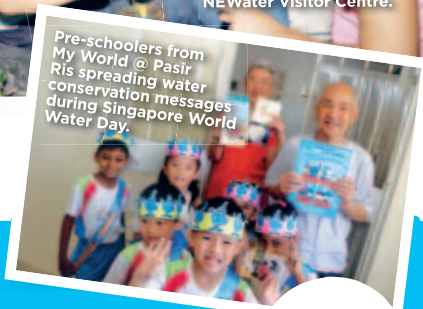
Pre-schools can also organise field trips to other ABC Waters sites albeit without a DIY resource kit. For example, last year, K1 and K2 children from Kinderland@MOE toured Marina Reservoir, facilitated by students from Methodist Girls' School (Secondary). "The children viewed the exhibits at Marina Barrage to learn about Singapore's sustainable water supply and identified bad water habits, using PUB's Water Wally Activity Booklet," says Principal Ms Pramadevi. "[Back at the kindergarten,] the children created 'Save Water' posters and we decorated the toilet with these drawings to reinforce the message."

Interested centres can write to Ms Tan at april_tan@pub.gov.sg for free copies of the DIY resource kit, and the *Water Wally Activity Booklet*.



Children using various substrates to make mini-raingardens at the NEWater Visitor Centre.

Pre-schoolers from My World @ Pasir Ris spreading water conservation messages during Singapore World Water Day.



SUPPORT THE WATER CAUSE!

PUB organises the Singapore World Water Day (SWWD) each year in March in conjunction with the United Nations-designated 'World Day for Water'. This occasion is usually marked by mass activities, river clean-ups and other communal activities at water spaces island-wide. This year, PUB has launched a Water Conservation Storybook! Pre-schools can order copies by emailing to pub_fow@pub.gov.sg. Visit www.singaporeworldwaterday.com for more information.





Rock-a-bye Babies

Infants derive great benefit from music — as the Music Babies programme at PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Jurong Spring (Blk 553) proves.

MELODIC TUNES AND gleeful baby gurgles can be heard coming from the infant care room of PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Jurong Spring (Blk 553) each weekday. These sounds are exactly what Madam Noorhayati Zahari, the centre's principal, was hoping to hear when she introduced the Music Babies programme in August 2013.

Having started off as an Innovation Grant project with funding from the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA), the innovative programme has since become a mainstay in the centre's curriculum. Music is incorporated in the daily routine and playtime activities of the infants.

"Besides merely providing care for the infants, I would like to create a lively and engaging environment that helps babies grow and learn," says Mdm Noorhayati. The educators, for instance, have created music activities such as singing to the babies while feeding, bathing, changing their diapers or getting them to nap. The educators have also conducted interactive one-on-one or group activities

involving the use of props such as drums, rattles and even an inflated parachute.

The centre's educators have undergone a music training programme to help develop the infants' attentive listening, absorption and comprehension skills. "It's amazing to see a child as young as twelve months follow simple sign language which we used in the songs. Not only are the infants able to practise their motor skills, movement and balance, they are also picking up words through music and songs," says educator Mdm Halimah Sulaiman.



The Music Babies programme has had a positive impact on the centre: "Our educators take on a more active role now as they observe what works and what doesn't when they carry out the programme. [The centre is] able to carve [out] a more effective programme that can further

In floor play, this mum role-models by singing and hitting the drum while her child copies what she is doing.

stimulate and improve an infant's motor coordination and ability to communicate," says Mdm Noorhayati. "In doing so, the educators see their role as EC professionals. They are not just nannies."

The programme has received positive feedback from parents who participated in a special music workshop with their infants in late 2013. Mdm Kalsa d/o Kolankodu Ross Nair — whose son Aiden Rashad is now two — benefitted greatly from the session. "The music workshop helped set a strong foundation for my son's infant development," says the 37-year-old teacher. "My son moved and bobbed in rhythm whenever music came on. He learnt how to focus and even started to recognise simple words. Best of all, the Music Babies programme was a great bonding experience for my child and me." ♥

OUR EDUCARERS TAKE ON A MORE ACTIVE ROLE NOW AS THEY OBSERVE WHAT WORKS AND WHAT DOESN'T WHEN THEY CARRY OUT THE PROGRAMME.

//Mdm Noorhayati

DISCOVERY through touch

Parents were also encouraged to participate in the open-ended sensorial learning with the children.



Children are often told not to touch certain things, but a project launched at St James' Church Kindergarten encourages them to do just the opposite.

I T IS COMMON for adults to remind children not to touch certain things, out of concern that the young ones will get hurt. At St James' Church Kindergarten, however, children are invited to do just that — touch. The project 'Please do not touch!' even earned the ECDA Early Childhood Innovation Award (Distinction) in 2014 for the pre-school. Through the project, children aged two and three are encouraged to explore their surroundings using their sense of touch. Various objects made from different materials such as paper, fabric and plastic are arranged on the 'Wonder Plate' (a piece of circular white paper) placed on the floor. Then the exploration begins.

The children exploring a variety of materials on the Wonder Plate.

"Children are active learners and they learn best through rich sensorial experiences. Through this project, we hope to deepen their natural sense of wonder and curiosity of the world around them," says Principal of St James' Church Kindergarten (Leedon), Mrs Clara Yeong.

Parents are also invited to join their child for a session of exploration and a field trip to purchase materials of different textures for the 'Wonder Plate'. These sessions provide opportunities for parent-child bonding and parental involvement in the child's learning. "Most parents who participated were receptive to this project and how it has enabled an

open-ended sensorial learning experience. They observed that when a child is free to discover, he or she becomes a more effective learner," says Mrs Yeong.

For the final part of the project, the children create pieces of artwork with their peers, using materials collected from home or purchased on the field trip. This fosters creativity and the spirit of teamwork. The artworks are then displayed in an exhibition within the pre-school. Children from other levels, parents and members

CHILDREN ARE ACTIVE LEARNERS AND THEY LEARN BEST THROUGH RICH SENSORIAL EXPERIENCES.

// Clara Yeong

of the community are invited to visit the exhibition.

"The collaborative artworks [produced] are beyond

the children's developmental milestones... [Children] within this age group are often recognised as individuals who are not able to work together yet. It's really quite amazing to witness [this teamwork]!" Mrs Yeong says.

The project was enriching and fulfilling for the educators as well. "We educators have learnt not to limit children's abilities and natural sense of wonder and curiosity. Instead, we should give children the time and space to explore.

Only through such explorations can we discover their potential and maximise their learning." ♥



ST JAMES' CHURCH KINDERGARTEN



Ms Valery Toh chatting with one of her students.

Sand Art for Innovative Teaching & Learning

PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Teck Ghee Block 466 (KN), a SPARK-certified centre continues to improve and raise quality.

'Funsanimation' - where children create sand art - enhances their confidence and self-expression.

SINCE RECEIVING THE Singapore Pre-School Accreditation Framework (SPARK) certification in 2011, PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Teck Ghee Block 466 (KN) has continued to raise the standards of its teaching practices. The kindergarten was SPARK re-certified in 2014, and attained the SPARK Certification (Commendation).

And sand has a lot to do with it! Last year, the Teck Ghee pre-school introduced a novel sand-animation programme called 'Funsanimation!'. During the programme, children spend 40 minutes each week in the centre's sand activity room and using trays or a light box, create sand art with their fingers.

Ms Valery Toh, 35, the centre's Principal, explains, "For Nursery children, simple tasks such as drawing letters on the sand

I WILL BRING UP STRATEGIES THAT WORK OR DO NOT WORK DURING OUR MONTHLY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT MEETINGS.

//Valery Toh

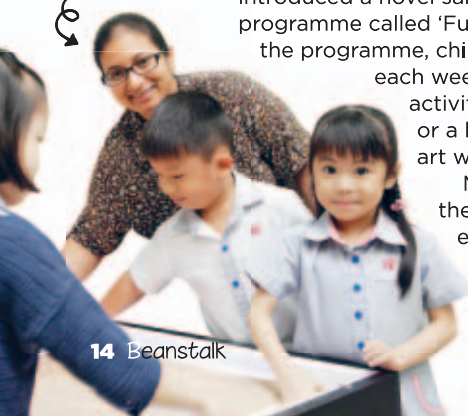
help improve their literacy and motor skills. For K1 children, as the focus is on creativity and social interaction, they draw freely and learn to respect each other's work. For K2 children, they recreate themes taught in class by drawing storyboards with pictures and words."

Ms Toh, who has been Principal since 2009, leads the centre's quest for quality improvement through the use of SPARK. She views teachers as collaborators and co-creators. "Every day, teachers write self-evaluations as they review their daily experiences with children. I will read their self-evaluations and bring up strategies that work or do not work during our monthly professional development meetings," she says. Ms Toh also holds individual discussions with teachers to find out their learning needs, and encourages them to try new and interesting teaching methods.

Ms Toh mooted the idea of 'Funsanimation!' in 2013 when she saw the beautiful sand art created by students at Teck Ghee Primary School. Wanting to do a similar project, she applied for an ECDA Innovation Grant. In January 2014, shortly before the project kicked off, her teachers were trained on different finger-drawing techniques.

One year on, 'Funsanimation!' is now an integral part of the pre-school's curriculum. "Even when teachers allow children to draw as they wish, they can — through effective questioning techniques — facilitate children's learning to think about their work on a deeper level," says Ms Toh. Indeed, this project won the centre an ECDA Early Childhood Innovation Award (Merit) in 2014.

So what do accolades like this award and the SPARK certification mean to Ms Toh and her team of teachers? "These achievements have boosted our morale and motivated us to always look for new ways to make learning fun and meaningful for children," she says. "The key is to be receptive to new ideas and imagine how these can be adapted to suit pre-schoolers." ♥



THESE PRE-SCHOOLERS NOT only play and learn together, they also read to each other — thanks to their centre’s Super Readers, Super Heroes bilingual reading programme. The 130 children who attend Kiddiewinkie Schoolhouse @ Grandstand have grown to love the written word through the centre’s holistic approach to reading, which has also recently earned it a Reading Innovation Award from the National Library Board (NLB).

The inaugural award — in the Distinction category — was also presented to nine other pre-school centres. According to Ms Nelly Fredolin, a librarian at the NLB and the award’s project manager, the award “recognises pre-school centres that have developed innovative reading programmes to promote the joy of reading among their children”. A panel of judges conducted visits to the pre-schools and evaluated the reading programmes for creativity, content and collaborative efforts.

Reading and more...

“[At Kiddiewinkie Schoolhouse @ Grandstand], reading sessions are made both fun and meaningful,” says Ms Pooja Vishindas, the centre’s principal. Key to the

programme’s success is the centre’s belief that reading should be made a part of life. Children read both English and Chinese titles during assemblies and in-between lessons, and they are also encouraged to read aloud to one another.

Also noteworthy is the centre’s emphasis on interactive learning. Children are involved in regular show-and-tell sessions where they present the books they have recently read, and share their thoughts on them. In other sessions, they are given props and act out stories with one another. “[Besides engaging children], a well-prepared and aesthetically pleasing environment helps to nurture avid readers. Books are present in both the classrooms and a dedicated reading alley — language and literacy are therefore woven into the ‘DNA’ of our children,” says Ms Pooja.

Through its Meet-the-Author sessions where they invite award-winning authors such as Sarah Mounsey, children are exposed to the creative process of writing.



And the winners are...

The NLB Reading Innovation Award is an initiative under the NLB’s Early Read Programme. These 10 pre-school centres achieved the Distinction Award (in no order of merit):

- * Clementi Woods Kindergarten LLP
- * Far Eastern Kindergarten
- * Kiddiewinkie Schoolhouse @ Grandstand
- * Modern Montessori International Canberra
- * Pat’s Schoolhouse, Ridgewood Centre
- * PCF Pasir Ris West Blk 517
- * PCF Punggol South Blk 277B
- * PCF Sparkletots Kebun Baru
- * PCF Yew Tee Blk 690C-690D Preschool
- * Ramakrishna Mission Sarada Kindergarten

10 other pre-school centres were also presented awards of commendation.

“Book Week” is also held yearly, where children and teachers dress up as their favourite book characters and showcase a chosen story.



Nurturing Bookworms



RAISING SUPER READERS

Parents, you can read and share books with your child even from early infancy! “It teaches your child to recognise the letters, sounds and rhythm of languages and helps your child build a strong foundation for language learning”, shares Ms Fredolin.

One size does not fit all

As Ms Pooja says, “Our programme is designed to help even struggling readers achieve success.” A child’s reading proficiency and confidence are monitored at both school and home.

“Every Friday, the children pick a book they’d like to read and bring it home. Parents are asked to read the book with their child... they can then track their child’s progress,” says Ms Pooja. The centre’s success is evident in its children, many of whom are ardent readers. “I like how there are many books in my classroom for me to look for all kinds of information,” says Natalie Chung, a K2 child at the centre. ♥

How one pre-school promotes the love of books among its students and won a Reading Innovation Award from the National Library Board.

Q&A

Enhancing mathematical thinking and instilling curiosity in Science.



How can I help my child develop mathematical concepts in his or her early years?

Peggy Zee: When children are given materials, opportunities and time, they can acquire mathematical concepts, ranging from one-to-one correspondence, number relationships, volume, to even geometry and algebra. Here are fun and experiential ways to enhance your child's mathematical thinking and reasoning.

➤ At snack time, ask your child how many biscuits she wants and she might say 'Five'. Put some biscuits into her bowl. Ask her to check if she has been given five biscuits. Allow her the opportunity to figure out for herself if she has been given the right number of biscuits.

➤ Introduce unusual shapes like different types of triangles and quadrilateral shapes. Geometry also relates to positioning and location. Use terms such as above, below, behind and between when your child is playing movement games that require her to place her soft toy or an object in a particular position.

for parents

- During water play time, ask her how many cups of water are needed to fill the large container. Let her predict, record her estimation and check it.
- Have a large variety of things to sort and classify, based on the rules your child has come up with or suggested by you. For instance, when she groups all the orange bear counters into a group (using colour as an attribute) and generalises it by sorting the other bear counters by colours, your child is using algebra.



What are some innovative strategies that educators can adopt to instil curiosity (or interest) in science among young children?

Dr Muhammad Nazir Amir:

One innovative strategy is to get children to design and make toys that work on scientific principles. This approach taps on their kinaesthetic learning styles and appeal factors that are in the activities to generate their interest in science.

As an example, besides presenting fairy tale stories and nursery rhymes to young children through visual and auditory modes (such as story books, picture cards and puppets), what could also be useful is for educators to come together to design and make toys that work on scientific principles. These can then be used as teaching aids in presenting these stories and nursery rhymes. Children can then

for professionals

ONE INNOVATIVE STRATEGY IS BY GETTING CHILDREN TO DESIGN AND MAKE TOYS THAT WORK ON SCIENTIFIC PRINCIPLES.

//Dr Muhammad Nazir Amir

be guided to make these toys as well. For example, arising from the story of Rapunzel, educators could first brainstorm on how they can demonstrate a way to lift the prince up to Rapunzel's room at the top of the tower — perhaps through a combination of bottle cap and string working together as a pulley system, among other ways.

Guiding children to design and make science-based toys in this manner provides a way for them to be inquisitive about the scientific principles operating the toy, while deepening their learning of the story. Children can also add colour and come up with variations of the toys shown to them. Pre-schools can have a pool of such self-made toys designed by educators and students, many of which can be easily made from recycled materials. ♥

Ask The Experts!



PEGGY ZEE is an Early Education Mathematics Specialist who has been developing curriculum and training teachers in early mathematics since 1983. For the past 30 years, she has been conducting workshops for parents and teachers in child care centres and kindergartens, various government and quasi-government bodies, multinational corporations and voluntary welfare organisations.



DR MUHAMMAD NAZIR AMIR, the Lead Teacher (Science) at Greenview Secondary School, received the President's Award for Teachers 2014 for using creative and innovative methods to teach science and design. He has shared instructional approaches developed through his action-research work in peer-reviewed international journals, book chapters and conferences so that the wider education community may benefit from his classroom research.

THRIVE

DEALING WITH THE PHYSICAL, LANGUAGE, COGNITIVE AND SOCIO-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR CHILD



LEARN

Sleeping with penguins, and more!



GROW

Spark your child's creativity

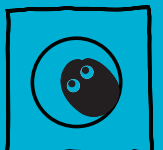


PLAY

Crafts to develop fine motor skills



watch it grow!





a Whole New WORLD

An excited kid imitating an eagle during a game of charades.



Find out about the many innovative learning experiences at Jurong Bird Park that will expand your child's horizons.

Feeding time for a 5-day old Greater Flamingo chick at the Breeding and Research Centre.

Jurong Bird Park, with its 5,000 birds across 400 species, has long been a popular destination for families and visitors alike, but did you know that this bird paradise also has many programmes specially designed for young children?

Programmes such as "Nesting Time" and "Eggs and Chicks" encourage the development of many skills including creative expression, language, literacy, numeracy and motor skills. In Nesting Time, children learn all about how birds such as ostriches, Bali mynahs and cassowaries (the third largest bird in the world) use materials to build nests, and how nests help incubate eggs and protect chicks. Kids get plenty of hands-on fun during this 45-minute programme, using dough to create their own eggs and nests.

In Eggs and Chicks, the park's resident bird 'nanny' teaches children

the life cycle of birds such as parrots and flamingos, and shows them how she takes care of the eggs and chicks at the Breeding and Research Centre. Even if the children are not signed up on a tour, they can still enjoy access to the incubation, nursery and weaning rooms where they can watch chicks grow strong after they hatch.

Ms May Lok, Director, Education, Wildlife Reserves Singapore (WRS) explains how the specially-designed educational programmes stimulate learning. "Children enjoy a close encounter with wildlife, which itself is a profound experience that provides the '5 Es' — Evoke, Emotions, Excite, Engage and Educate. The experience is immersive and sensorial, engaging all the five senses — sight, sound, touch, smell and even taste. While children have fun, they are also learning."

But the feather in Jurong Bird Park's cap is the exciting "Sleep with the Penguins" family camp, held twice a year during school holidays. Open to families with children as young as four, the camp features a sleepover — complete with tent



.....

MY FAVOURITE PART OF THE CAMP WAS WHEN WE GOT TO FEED PELICANS AND FLAMINGOS!

//Ming En

– that lets children get up close to the feathery creatures.

“Camping in Penguin Coast among the different species of penguins is a unique experience found nowhere else in the world,” says Ms Lok. “As a family camp, it provides great opportunities for parents to spend quality time with children and discover wildlife and nature together.”

IT director David Chang took part in the camp last year with his two children, Fiona, aged eight, and Jacob, four. “The best part of the camp was actually to pitch the tent together as a family and then sleep inside the tent together, right next to the penguins. It was definitely a great experience for both the adults

and kids,” he recalls. “The children also got to meet chatty lorries that feed on nectar in the world’s largest lory aviary. “It was an eye opener for my kids, especially the behind-the-scenes session at the Lory Loft where they were taught how to prepare the feed for the lorries. We even got to taste the lory feed!” shares Mr Chang.

Homemaker Ms Kelly Oh, who signed up for the camp



At the end of the songs and games programme, there’s a pinata session where children can gather treats.



with her five-year-old daughter Cheong Ming En also found the experience to be educational. “Towards the evening, the adult participants were all worn out but the kids were still energetic. Thankfully, the grown-ups got to have a break while the facilitators engaged the children in several group activities, such as sing-along sessions and games where the children had fun together,” she says.

“Many months have passed since the camp, but Ming En still talks about it with excitement. She remembers facts about the birds such as the snowy owl, their habits and what they feed on. I think it’s amazing!”

For details on the educational programmes, visit education.birdpark.com.sg. ♥

A *Beanstalk* exclusive:

Sleep with the Penguins family camp, customised just for you!

Pack your sleeping bags and get ready for a fun family sleepover with the very cool penguins at Jurong Bird Park. Held on the last weekend of June (27 and 28 June 2015), this camp is customised specially for *Beanstalk* readers with children aged between four and six. Packed with tonnes of exciting and educational programmes, the camp schedule includes behind-the-scenes feedings, as well as a penguin meet-and-greet session. Tents will be provided!

Beanstalk readers are eligible for a special

discounted rate of \$108 per adult (usual price \$120) and \$90 per child (usual price \$100). Prices do not include 7% GST. Camp fee includes admission, tram ride, all meals and tours.

📧 To register, first subscribe to the Grow@*Beanstalk* mailing list at www.growatbeanstalk.sg. Then drop an email to peiyong.ong@wrs.com.sg using your subscribed email address to request for registration details. Hurry, as places are limited to just 40 participants and are on a first-come-first-served basis!



Win A PENGUIN SLEEPOVER!

Top prize
1 x adult and child package to the exclusive customised Sleep with the Penguins Family Camp (held from 27 to 28 June, 2015).

Consolation prizes
3 packages (worth \$100 each) that include Jurong Bird Park admission tickets for 1 adult and 1 child, as well as Jurong Bird Park merchandise.

NAME A PROGRAMME AT JURONG BIRD PARK THAT YOUR CHILD CAN PARTICIPATE IN TO STAND A CHANCE TO WIN.

Please visit <https://www.ecda.gov.sg/growatbeanstalk/Pages/Survey.aspx?itemId=11> to submit your answer and enter the contest by 30 April 2015.

All contestants' entry information inclusive of any personal data will be privy to ECDA only and will be used solely for purpose of this contest such as communication on prize collection or redemption.



Let's INNOVATE

Encourage your child to do things in another way to spark his curiosity and creativity.



FOR 0-2 YEARS

EXPRESSING AND DEVELOPING CREATIVITY

Play "Follow me". Change the words of the song "Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush" to "This is the way I dance around". Encourage your child to suggest an action and replace the words accordingly. For instance, your child may say "tip toe", in which case you can start with "This is the way I tip-toe" and so on.

FOR 3-4 YEARS

GROWING AND DEVELOPING PHYSICALLY

Create your own obstacle course at home or at the void deck. Use small hoops, pillows, cushions and cardboard boxes to create an obstacle course for crawling, hopping and balancing. At the void deck, invite the neighbours' children to join in. Your child will have hours of fun going round the course. This also helps your child develop spatial awareness, gross motor skills and sense of balance.

FOR 5-6 YEARS

COMMUNICATION, LANGUAGE AND LITERACY

Play listening games with your child. Duplicate actions dictated by one another while sitting back-to-back. For example, you could each have a sheet of paper with a red circle drawn on it. Take turns to suggest ways to mark the paper, like drawing a blue line under the bottom of the circle, or drawing green squares in the middle of the circle. Have fun talking about how each of your drawings have turned out.



20 Beanstalk

For more ideas and parenting tips, go to www.growatbeanstalk.sg or download APParent in SG from the App Store and Google Play



SOMETHING DIFFERENT

Two books to help your child see things in a new light.

▶ HOW TO MAKE STUFF WITH DUCT TAPE

By Samantha Bell

Everyone knows what duct tape is and what it's used for, but do you know that there are many other uses for the sticky adhesive? Delve into this wondrous resource book as it guides you and your child through simple yet creative ways to make something entirely new and unexpected with duct tape.

Clear and straightforward instructions with an accompanying list of materials that you will need for each project make for a fuss-free and fun activity for you and your child. Apart from sparking creativity and innovation in your child, the projects are also a good encouragement to think out of the box by exploring new ways to use basic household items.

Contributed by Gary Soh, Associate Librarian, National Library Board



▶ GOING UP! : ELISHA OTIS'S TRIP TO THE TOP

By Monica Kulling

Press a button, select a floor, enjoy the ride and arrive at your destination. Living in a built-up urban city, we probably use elevators daily without thinking much about them. Kulling's beautifully-illustrated biography about the inventor of the modern elevator, Elisha Otis, brings us back into a world before tall buildings and elevators. Journey with Elisha as he grows from a young boy fascinated with pulleys to a father of two who invents something that changes the way buildings are constructed.

This book is ideal for young boys and girls. It is also a must-read for parents who would like to interest their children in the urban environment that we live in and often take for granted.

Contributed by James Tan, Associate Librarian, Public Libraries Singapore



grow

PROTEIN

Power

With these savoury cupcakes, eating veggies won't be a problem for your child.

READY IN
30
MINUTES

MAKES
12 REGULAR
CUPCAKES OR
24 MINI
CUPCAKES

WHAT YOU NEED

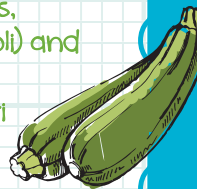
- 1¼ cups plain flour
- 1½ tsps baking powder
- 1 cup grated vegetables (carrots, zucchini, chopped spinach, etc)
- 1 cup grated cheddar cheese
- 50g cooked chicken meat, finely chopped
- 1 egg
- ¼ cup of milk
- 50g butter, melted
- Olive oil or butter to grease pan



OTHER INNOVATIVE IDEAS

👉 Dice up veggies (think mushroom, carrots, zucchini or broccoli) and add them to your favourite spaghetti bolognese recipe.

👉 Quiches are another great way to hide "icky" veggies - nutritious, yet tasty combos include sausage and broccoli, feta cheese and spinach, or roasted red peppers and caramelised onions.



Getting a child to eat the recommended five servings of fruit and vegetables every day can be challenging. Instead of battling over broccoli at mealtimes, sneak "unfavourite" foods into a familiar dish, such as these savoury cupcakes.

Packed with foods rich in protein, fibre, calcium and vitamins, these mini cupcakes are a great way to add more vegetables into your child's diet. Each mini cupcake is packed with 3g of protein and lots of calcium, iron, selenium and

phosphorus. A healthy toddler needs roughly 13g of protein a day. These cupcakes are one innovative way to meet your child's protein needs.

They take only 15 minutes to prepare and another 15 minutes to bake. Freeze the extras, and simply microwave on high for a minute to heat through when you need them.

Feel free to substitute vegetables. Any vegetable can be used - just grate or chop it up finely before adding it to the mix. Or swap the cooked chicken for slivers of smoked salmon. ♥

FOLLOW THESE STEPS:



3 Preheat oven to 180C.



2 Grease cupcake pan with olive oil or butter.

4 Add grated veggies, chicken meat and cheese. Toss well to mix.

5 In another bowl, whisk egg, milk and butter together.

6 Add wet ingredients to the dry ones, stir until just combined. Do not overmix or your cupcakes will be tough.



7 Spoon into cupcake pan.



3 Sift flour and baking powder into a large bowl.

8 Bake for 15 minutes (mini cupcakes) or 25 minutes (regular sized cupcakes) until golden brown. Insert a toothpick into one - if baked through, toothpick will come out clean.

Crafty CLOTHESPINS

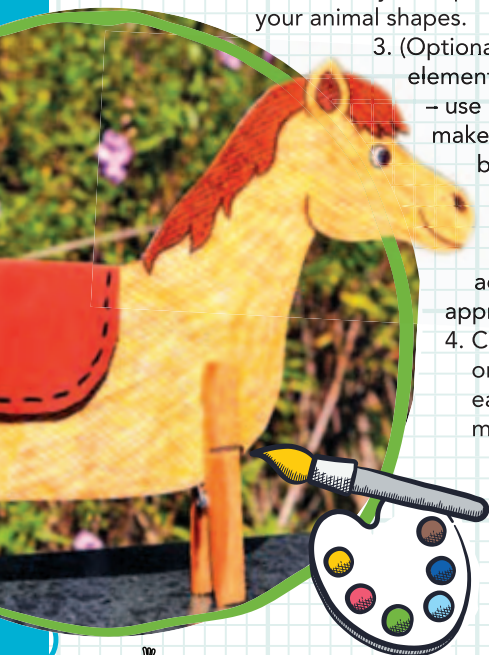
Manipulating the clothespins will help your child develop his fine motor skills.

➤ FARM ANIMALS

Moo! Cluck! Neigh! Your child will have fun learning about farmyard animals with this adorable farm animal craft that is so easy — even the most artistically-challenged parent can cope. If drawing farm animals isn't up your alley, just surf on over to www.firstpalette.com/tool_box/printables/Clothespinfarmanimals.html for templates you can print out. Or simply cut animal shapes out of your favourite old magazines.

Materials Study card paper, markers or crayons or paints, wiggly eyes (optional), additional decorations (optional), white glue

1. Cut animal shapes out of sturdy card paper, using either the printable template or your own drawings as a guide. Or glue on pictures of animals and cut around those.
2. Use marker, crayon or paint to colour in your animal shapes.
3. (Optional) Add unique elements to each animal — use cotton wool to make a fluffy sheep, or a bit of yarn to make a mane and tail for your horse, for example. Or add wiggly eyes as appropriate.
4. Clip clothespins onto the bottom of each animal shape to make legs.



Fun Fact

Do you know the life cycle of a frog?

➤ Egg, Tadpole, Frog

➤ DRAGONFLIES

This clothespin creation features see-through wings, and makes an excellent tool to display your child's artwork. Clip to any surface, or glue a magnet to the back to make a charming fridge magnet. Or use the sparkly craft as a festive decoration for houseplants.

Materials Clear transparency film, markers, glitter or stickers for decorating, poster paints, white glue, wiggle eyes (optional)

1. Create your dragonfly's body by painting a wooden clothespin. Set it aside to dry.
2. Fold the transparency film in half, and trace out the shape of the dragonfly wing. Position it along the fold so that you have a symmetrical pair of wings when the film is unfolded. Cut the wings out.
3. Paint the wings lightly if you like, or leave them uncoloured and clear. Decorate the wings with markers, glitter or stickers.
4. Pinch the clothespin open, and gently glue the wings to inner surface of the clothespin. Don't forget to use the clothespin to pinch something (a scrap of paper, for example) to ensure that it does not get glued shut by mistake.
5. Finish by gluing the wiggle eyes on. Skip this step if you have a very young child who may choke on small items. ♥



LEARN more about Singapore's history

Include your children in the SG50 celebrations — register them for storytelling sessions at the National Museum of Singapore where storytellers will enthrall the little ones with tales about Singapore's past through dramatisation. Registration is free but must be made in advance at the museum. Each half-hour session is limited to 20 children from ages four to eight. Open until 25 July 2015. Do visit nationalmuseum.sg for more details.



VISIT the library

Check out what the National Library and its branches have to offer, and bond with your child through their various programmes. An example is the "Ready.. Get Set.. Read" and "Jiggle, Read & Rhyme" programmes. They incorporate various techniques such as storytelling, songs and rhymes as well as craftwork to encourage children to read for enjoyment. Some of these programmes are designed for toddlers aged one to three, while others are helpful in preparing your child for Primary One. To register, log on to nlb.gov.sg/golibrary. Most programmes are free.

on cleaning up afterwards? Sign up for parent-and-child workshops where you can make as much mess as you please in expressing your creativity! At the Peranakan Museum (peranakanmuseum.sg), you and your little one can indulge in arts and crafts based on the museum's collections, every second Sunday of each month. These sessions are free and included in the admission fee to the museum. Meanwhile, the ArtScience Museum (marinabaysands.com) conducts 'Family Fridays' where your child can explore shapes and patterns, using 2D and 3D puzzles. Free for up to two children with every standard adult ticket purchased.



Home For The Holidays

The long June break can be an enriching time for you and your child. Here are some ideas to consider.

DISCOVER our parks

Did you know there are more than 300 parks in Singapore? Here are two to check out. West Coast Park, situated by the sea, has seven types of play areas for children of different age groups — from toddlers to tweens. Pasir Ris Park boasts a Mangrove Boardwalk from where you can try to spot crabs, mudskippers and mud-lobsters as well as herons, kingfishers and water monitor-lizards. Visit nparks.gov.sg for more details.

CREATE a work of art

Work with your kids to create family art pieces that you can proudly display around your home. To make each session more fun, change the theme — from wildlife to outer space — or choose a different art medium perhaps (e.g. watercolour paints, crayons or cut-outs from recycled magazines). Not keen

EXPERIENCE farm life

Escape the hustle and bustle of urban life and let your child get close to nature. Not only will they discover rustic Singapore, they will also learn more about animals and the sources of food. There are many choices, including the Jurong Frog Farm, the Hay Dairies Goat Farm, the Live Turtle & Tortoise Museum and the Mainland Tropical Fish Farm. Most of these farms let your child get close to the animals. For example, at the petting corner of the Live Turtle & Tortoise Museum, your child can hold and touch some of the 800 turtles and tortoises spread over more than 50 species, and learn how to tell them apart! ♥



We've Got Mail!

Parents, Early Childhood Practitioners and Students on why they like *Beanstalk*.



➤ I especially like the suggestions for places to visit which helps me plan my thematic field trips. Some of the innovative ideas and best practices from other centres are remarkable.

from practitioners

Thanks to the team for packing the issues with varied articles, links, suggestions and thoughtfully organising them for both parents and educators.

Sujatha Pragasheeswaran

Class Teacher, Pre-nursery, NAFA Arts Kindergarten @ Derbyshire Road

➤ *Beanstalk* is an avenue where early childhood practitioners, parents, and even children get updates of what's happening in the Early Childhood sector. 'My Teacher My School' and 'Ask the Experts' are sections that speak to me the most. As an educator,

I need to learn and pick up pointers from those who have taken (and are still taking) the same paths as I. I get positive insights and encouragement reading what was shared, which is beneficial for my own teaching and learning experience.

Rodora Caimol Saria

English Teacher, Nursery, Pasir Panjang Hill Church Kindergarten

➤ It is a very effective and time-efficient way to read about current trends in the local Early Childhood landscape. *Beanstalk* is a testimony of Singapore's efforts to raise the standards of early education, and advocates the emphasis of learning beyond academia in the early years.

from EC students

Koo Yi Jie

Final Year Early Childhood Studies and Leadership undergraduate, Singapore Institute of Technology-Wheelock College



from parents

➤ The magazine has empowered us new generation parents by featuring the many personal experiences of other parents and teachers. It helps us enjoy our children more and raise happier, healthier, smarter kids. I also like the 'Play' page in the Thrive section. It offers me practical and fun activities which I can do with my kids, and

features events I can take my kids to. *Beanstalk* is a keepsake for parents to refer to again and again when the need arises.

Patricia Lua

Mother of two aged 7 and 9

➤ As a parent, I have many concerns about my child. These include not only his learning development but also his social development. *Beanstalk* is uniquely positioned in this regard, packaging articles on parenting concerns in a way that is readable and accessible to all parents.

Abdul Shariff Aboo Kassim

Father of two aged 1 and 3

Tell us more!
Take part in our survey at <https://www.ecda.gov.sg/growatbeanstalk/Pages/Survey.aspx?itemId=10>
The first 100 responses will receive an exclusive set of four brick highlighters!

Share an inspiring story

Tell us how your child's EC educator or fellow EC colleague displayed dedication and excellence in their role as an educator. Your story may be featured in a future issue of *Beanstalk*. Send your story to beanstalk@mediacorp.com.sg

We have three \$30 NTUC vouchers to give away and you may just win one!

At your Fingertips

Check out the resources available to parents and educators of young children!



ANSWERS 1. Tips 2. Calendar 3. Beanstalk 4. Monthly 5. Google Play

HERE FOR YOU
 Grow@Beanstalk Portal is chock-full of articles and practical tips for parents and educators to help their children develop holistically. An events calendar also ensures that there's never a dull weekend — visit www.growatbeanstalk.sg for more!
 With our mobile app, APParent in SG, you can look forward to a new parenting tip every week through a push notification. You can also enjoy the latest event listings and resources at your fingertips. APParent in SG is available in both the App Store and Google Play.

ACROSS

- With the APParent in SG mobile app, you can receive weekly parenting _____ through push notifications
- Need a place to take the kids this weekend? Check out the events _____ on the Grow@ Beanstalk Portal

DOWN

- This quarterly _____ magazine is full of useful resources for parents with young children, and early childhood educators (Hint: you're reading it right now)
- Keep up with Grow@ Beanstalk's latest updates with a _____ e-newsletter
- APParent in SG can be downloaded from both the app store and _____

A large word search puzzle grid integrated into the beanstalk illustration. The grid contains the following letters and numbers:

HOW CAN WE DO BETTER?
 Head to <https://www.ecda.gov.sg/growatbeanstalk/Pages/Survey.aspx?itemId=10> and fill out a short survey about our Grow@Beanstalk Portal and Beanstalk magazine. The first 100 responses will receive an exclusive set of four brick highlighters! Remember to include your contact details.



WINNING WAYS!

What one pre-school did to
clinch the ECDA Early Childhood
Innovation Award

