



CLASSROOM FOR ALL



AWARD-WINNING LEARNING SUPPORT EDUCATOR

A. SUSILA WORKS CLOSELY WITH FELLOW EDUCATORS TO BUILD AN INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.

Every child develops at a different pace. While some can meet their developmental milestones, others require additional support to realise their full potential. That includes children with developmental issues requiring low levels of early intervention (EI) support in areas such as language, literacy or social skills.

It is this latter group of K1 and K2 preschoolers whom Ms A. Susila and her team of Learning Support Educators (LSEds) help at Presbyterian Community Services (PCS) Jurong West Centre. A Senior LSEd with over 30 years of experience in the early childhood sector, Ms Susila, together with the class teachers, identify children who need low levels of EI support and provide detailed screening of the children's needs. They also plan customised interventions to support their developmental needs, and work closely with families and other EI professionals such as therapists to implement them.

"In this environment, all the children learn, grow and socialise with one another. Children with additional needs can receive help as early as possible, while their

typically developing peers learn to understand and embrace differences," she explains.

CATERING TO INDIVIDUAL LEARNERS

At the centre, teachers plan and implement a differentiated curriculum where instructions and activities are modified to meet the needs of both typically and atypically developing children. For instance, complex tasks are broken down into manageable steps, and visual aids help guide behaviours and set expectations.

Intervention sessions may also vary. Under the Development Support–Learning Support (DS-LS) programme, small-group or one-on-one intervention sessions with the children are conducted. LSEds discuss with teachers on a suitable time to carry these out. "It is important to build good rapport with the child. Find a way to relate to them. Don't pressure the child to learn something faster than they are able to," says Ms Susila.

One of her LSEd mentees, Ms Gan Hui Ning, recalls observing Ms Susila conduct a one-on-one literacy intervention session, "The boy displayed inattentive behaviour in class. But Ms Susila weaved

RULES OF COMMUNICATION

Ms Susila's tips for talking to parents about their child with special needs.

- **Be tactful.** Start by saying something positive about their child. Be receptive and ask parents for their observations and input. Guide them in making informed decisions about their child.
- **Be informative.** Give advice on how parents can support their child. Direct them to relevant websites. Provide suitable reading materials and practical examples (e.g. Parent's Corner on the ECDA website).
- **Be encouraging.** Suggest ways to make learning at home fun for the whole family. They can make up stories, draw or play board games together. Invite parents to share their observations of their child with you.

in learning concepts (such as identifying initial letter sounds) with amusing animated actions, and cracked jokes to engage him while working through tasks. She praised his achievements, big or small. You could see the pride in his eyes when the session ended."

STRIKING A POSITIVE NOTE

Ms Susila stresses that family involvement is crucial, as is sensitivity to parents' feelings when discussing their child's learning and developmental needs. "A positive connection between parents and preschool influences the child's motivation, attitudes and achievements," she adds. ●

WATCH THIS!

Congrats to Ms A. Susila on winning the inaugural ECDA Outstanding Early Intervention Professional Award in 2021! Scan to see the work she does.



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