

## Annex A: Recap of Key Moves to Transform the Early Childhood Sector

Since 2012, the Government has undertaken several key moves to give every child a good start in life and support families with young children. The key moves are summarised in the following table, with updates indicated in **bold**:

<b>Quality</b>	<p><i>Uplifting Early Childhood Standards</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The Early Childhood Development Centres Act took effect from Jan 2019, bringing childcare centres and kindergartens under the same regulatory framework to ensure more consistent and higher quality standards across the preschool sector.</li><li>• The Singapore Preschool Accreditation Framework (SPARK) has been continuously enhanced to better provide quality assurance for preschools since its introduction in 2011. For example, the Quality Rating Scale (QRS) for ages 0 to 6 was introduced in Jan 2020. This is an expansion from the initial QRS for ages 4 to 6. Today, around 50% of preschools are SPARK-certified.</li></ul> <p><i>Enhanced Early Childhood Resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• MOE has developed Nurturing Early Learners (NEL) curriculum resources since 2012 to help early childhood educators create quality learning experiences for children aged 4 to 6; MOE Kindergartens were introduced in 2014 to catalyse quality improvements in the sector.</li><li>• More Anchor Operator (AOP) preschools are offering Malay and Tamil Language education in preschools, with enhanced training and support for Mother Tongue Language teaching.</li></ul> <p><i>Strengthening Early Childhood Professional Growth and Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• ECDA launched a National Campaign for the Early Childhood sector in 2018 to foster greater respect and recognition of the early childhood profession.</li><li>• The National Institute of Early Childhood Development (NIEC) was set up to oversee training and professional development for the sector, and welcomed its first batch of educator trainees in 2019.</li><li>• Training Awards, a Career Conversion Programme for Preschool Educators, Early Years and Infant Educators, and Professional Development Programmes have been rolled out to attract and develop early childhood educators.</li></ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Skills Framework for the Early Childhood sector was introduced in 2016 to provide greater clarity on the career pathways and opportunities for early childhood professionals. <b>ECDA launched the refreshed EC Skills Framework in 2021.</b></li> <li>• ECDA will roll out <b>Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Roadmap</b> progressively from 2022, starting with the roadmaps for seven early childhood job roles and six focus areas, as well as for nine early intervention job roles. The CPD roadmap lays out competencies that educators may wish to prioritise at different stages of their career and the professional development opportunities to develop those skillsets.</li> </ul>
<b>Accessibility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Around 200,000 full-day pre-school places</b> are available today. This is more than double the 90,000 full-day pre-school places in 2012.</li> <li>• ECDA will develop <b>about 10,000 more places by 2023</b> to meet the growing demand for preschool.</li> <li>• Large standalone childcare centres have been developed in estates with demand for preschool.</li> <li>• AOPs are setting up Early Years Centres for tie-up with nearby MOE Kindergartens in estates with demand for preschool.</li> <li>• More affordable and customised Early Intervention (EI) programmes were introduced in 2019, and EI programmes are progressively being expanded to more preschools. <b>A new Inclusive Support Programme pilot was launched and is being rolled out in 7 preschools progressively from October 2021 to June 2022.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Affordability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional Subsidy for childcare services was introduced in 2013. The monthly household income ceiling was raised from \$7,500 to \$12,000 in 2020, along with an increase in the subsidy amount for each eligible tier.</li> <li>• Kindergarten Fee Assistance Scheme (KiFAS) was enhanced in 2015. This was enhanced again in 2020, with the monthly household income ceiling raised from \$6,000 to \$12,000, along with an increase in the subsidy amount.</li> <li>• With the enhancements to the Additional Subsidy and KiFAS in 2020, <b>around 92,000 children now receive means-tested preschool subsidies, up from around 48,000 children in 2019.</b></li> <li>• Subsidy support under the Special Approval Framework was enhanced in Apr 2019 for non-working mothers looking for a job or who are full-time caregivers to their younger children.</li> </ul>

- From Aug 2020, families under HDB's Public Rental Scheme and MSF's ComCare schemes are automatically eligible for maximum preschool subsidies, regardless of the mother's working status. Lower-income families pay \$3 per month for full-day childcare and \$1 per month for half-day kindergarten at Anchor Operator preschools.
- The Child Development Account (CDA), which can be used to pay for preschool expenses, was enhanced in 2016 with the introduction of the CDA First Step grant, which does not require parents' co-savings.
- The AOP scheme was started in 2009 to increase access to affordable quality early childhood services. AOPs are subject to monthly fee caps for preschool services. They are required to invest in improving quality for all centres through SPARK certification, as well as headquarter capabilities. They must support continuing professional development and career progression opportunities for early childhood educators.
- The Partner Operator (POP) scheme started in 2016, resulting in a fall in median childcare fees in the sector, which have stabilised at that level since then. The POP scheme was expanded in Jan 2021 through the appointment of more operators and further lowering of fee caps.
- The Government will continue to enhance the accessibility of affordable, quality preschools. By around 2025, 80% of preschoolers will have a place in government-supported preschools, up from **over 60% today**.
- As the capacity of government-supported preschools grows over the medium term, fee caps at government-supported preschools will be lowered so that working families with a child in full-day childcare will pay around the equivalent of primary school fees plus after-school student care fees, which is about \$300 per month, before means-tested preschool subsidies.
- KidSTART was piloted in 2016 to provide upstream, holistic support to children aged 0 to 6 from low-income families, and is in progress to benefit 5,000 children by 2023. **KidSTART will be progressively expanded nationwide thereafter.**
- EI subsidies were enhanced in 2019 and income criteria were broadened, to allow more families to qualify for means-tested subsidies and make EI services more affordable for families of children with developmental needs. After subsidies, fees for Singapore Citizen children range from \$5 to \$430 per month.

## **Annex B: Leadership Development Framework**

### **Overview**

1. Developed with both current and future leaders in mind, the **Early Childhood (EC) Leadership Development Framework (LDF)** aims to guide leaders to attain progressively and strengthen holistically the required leadership competencies.
2. The LDF captures both the desired **attributes** and **competencies** required for leadership roles and support leaders' professional development through a **leadership training roadmap**. It will focus on Centre Leaders as a start, before expanding progressively to other leadership roles.

### **Desired Attributes of EC Leaders**

3. The following three desired attributes provide a common understanding and reference of what an EC Leader should aspire to be. An EC leader is someone who:
  - a. **Is a PEOPLE DEVELOPER:**
    - Has a growth mindset and shows genuine care for the personal and professional development of both fellow educators and co-workers
    - Encourages active growth among educators and the fraternity by promoting collaboration and sharing of good practices
  - b. **Leads with VISION:**
    - Is mission-driven, forward-looking, and capable of anticipating both opportunities and challenges
    - Sets clear directions, communicates goals and inspires others to forge ahead together
  - c. **Champions INNOVATION:**
    - Purposefully explores new ideas and solutions that can improve the centre
    - Encourages and empowers others to also do likewise
    - Leads change management

### **Leadership Competencies**

4. Besides the desired attributes, EC Leaders need to be proficient in various competencies to enable them to fulfil their responsibilities effectively. These competencies are articulated in the refreshed EC Skills Framework, and can be broadly categorised into three clusters:
  - a. **Core Leadership** – competencies that are foundational and cross-cutting
  - b. **Curricular and Pedagogical Leadership** – competencies related to leading educators in quality curriculum design, instruction approaches and practices, and children engagement and interactions
  - c. **Strategic and Administrative Leadership** – competencies related to setting goals for centre, leading people and managing resources to ensure smooth operations, continuous people development and centre growth

5. The LDF also captures the **interdependence of the three clusters of competencies required of EC leaders** and the role of the EC leader in engaging and balancing the needs of **internal and external stakeholders**.

### Leadership Development Framework



### ***Leadership Training Roadmap***

6. ECDA will be developing a **leadership training roadmap** to guide potential and existing EC leaders in acquiring the LDF competencies progressively and holistically, through **continuing professional development (CPD) courses and milestone programmes**, such as the Advanced Diploma in Early Childhood Leadership (ADECL). ADECL will also be enhanced to better prepare early childhood educators for centre leader roles. This leadership training roadmap will complement the CPD roadmap for all educators that ECDA will be rolling out in 2022.

7. Educators can refer to the CPD Roadmap to identify the courses and programmes available for educators, and the leadership training roadmap for milestone programmes and CPD courses for leaders. Similarly, existing leaders can use the LDF, CPD and leadership training roadmaps to guide them in deepening their own competencies or groom potential leaders in their centres. More information on the training roadmap will be made available on ECDA website when ready.

## **Annex C: Early Childhood Learning Communities (ECLC)**

### ***Overview***

1. The Early Childhood Learning Communities (ECLC) complement formal early childhood training with the objectives of (a) advancing senior and lead preschool educators' learning of pedagogical practices and knowledge in key domain areas, (b) fostering peer sharing in the sector and (c) nurturing outstanding educators into future curricular and pedagogical leaders. ECLC is an initiative "for educators, by educators" in which peer sharing is a key component of participants' development and learning. From April 2022, ECLC will be launched in four domain areas, and will engage and nurture Curriculum and Pedagogy Specialists, Lead Preschool Educators and Lead Early Years Educators, who are passionate and skilled at direct teaching practice.

### ***Programme Structure***

2. ECLC participants will hold a two-year membership as core members. They will be expected to commit a minimum of 24 hours and 40 hours in their first and second year of ECLC respectively, to attend their learning community sessions and ECDA-customised professional development programmes and perform sector-level contributions. This includes co-leading Communities of Practices (CoPs) with fellow core members to share pedagogical knowledge and best practices pertaining to their domain area with other educators in the sector to improve teaching and learning quality. By 2024, up to 300 educators are expected to benefit from these CoPs led by core members.

### ***Domain Areas and Resource Persons***

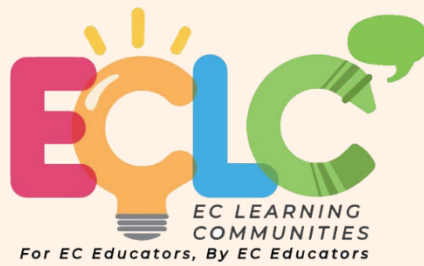
3. ECDA will administer the ECLC programme in partnership with agencies such as NIEC and MOE. We will start off with four learning communities in 2022, focusing on the domains of (a) Early Years Competencies, (b) Outdoor Learning, (c) Social and Emotional Development, and (d) Language and Literacy. Each learning community will comprise up to 20 core members known as Pedagogists And Specialists in TEaching and Learning (PASTE<sub>L</sub>s). It will be supported by a Resource Person (RP) who is appointed by ECDA for his/her expertise and experience in the domain area.

### ***Support from ECDA***

4. ECDA will support PASTE<sub>L</sub>s through fully funded professional development programmes such as professional dialogue(s) with local or overseas domain experts and a \$1,500 professional development grant in their second year. They will also be supported by an experienced RP appointed by ECDA, who will lead and facilitate each learning community and provide guidance and professional advice to them throughout their two-year membership. A manpower relief fund of \$800 per PASTE<sub>L</sub> will be provided to their employers annually<sup>1</sup> to support manpower relief efforts when the core member is away from the centre for ECLC commitments.

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<sup>1</sup> The manpower relief fund is capped at \$800 per core member annually. The total amount receivable by employer is dependent on the number of core members from their organisation.



The Early Childhood Learning Community (ECLC) programme aims to foster peer sharing & learning of pedagogical knowledge and practices among outstanding educators in the following domain areas



Early Years Competencies



Outdoor Learning



Social & Emotional Development



Language & Literacy

#### Come and join us if you...

- Meet the relevant competencies and skills required for 'Senior Infant Educator', 'Senior Early Years Educator', 'Senior Preschool Educator' and above
- Possess a valid Letter of Notification issued by ECDA
- Have experiences and passion in one of the above domain areas

#### You will be supported by...

- An experienced Resource Person who will lead each domain area's Learning Community
- A PD Grant of \$1500 per ECLC Core Member for self-selected courses/resources relevant to pedagogical leadership
- A Manpower Relief Fund of \$800 per ECLC Core Member payable to employer annually

#### Over the next 2 years as a Core Member, you can look forward to...

- Induction Programme
- Regular participation in the Learning Community with other like-minded educators
- Opportunities to lead a Community of Practice (CoP) for other educators
- Professional dialogue with local/overseas domain experts
- Professional exchange among Core Members
- Other PD opportunities fully funded by ECDA



## **Annex D: Early Years Development Framework**

### ***Overview***

1. To guide preschools in planning their programmes and curriculum, ECDA and MOE have introduced two national curriculum frameworks – the Early Years Development Framework (EYDF) for children aged 3 years and below and Nurturing Early Learners (NEL) framework for children aged 4 to 6. These curriculum frameworks and accompanying resources help educators support child development and create quality learning experiences for children.
2. The Early Years Development Framework (EYDF) was introduced in 2011 to enhance the quality of centre-based childcare and to build a strong foundation for the holistic development of young children aged 3 years and below. The EYDF sets the standard for quality care and learning practices that are specific to the developmental needs of younger children in centre-based care. It describes desired outcomes, key principles and suggested practices for young children's holistic development and learning. The EYDF provides educators with broad guidelines to plan and deliver culturally and developmentally appropriate experiences, strengthen home-centre partnerships, enhance professional development and foster community networking. Following its launch, training programmes and other complementary resources were also introduced between 2012 and 2017 to support educators in unpacking the principles to achieve the desired outcomes in the framework.

### ***Review of the EYDF***

3. ECDA is currently reviewing the EYDF to take into consideration recent research on the importance of early years development for ages 0-3 and current ground practices. ECDA will be appointing an advisory panel and a review committee, comprising key stakeholders such as early childhood experts, educators, and health care professionals, to ensure that the direction and content of the EYDF review is relevant to local early childhood educators.
4. The revised EYDF will have enhanced content to include the outcomes, key principles, and suggested practices for new areas such as the learning of Mother Tongue languages and inclusive practices. The revised EYDF will also provide more detailed guidance to support educators in creating learning experiences to develop important knowledge and skills in young children, such as socio-emotional and executive function skills.
5. The refreshed EYDF will be ready by end-2023. Training programmes and supplementary resources will be provided to support preschools in incorporating the changes into their programme.
6. ECDA will work with MOE to align the revised EYDF with the revised NEL Framework so as to provide coherent guidance to preschools and educators on curriculum development. These efforts will ensure continuity of high-quality care and development for children from infancy through their preschool years.



## Annex E: KidSTART

### Overview

1. In 2016, KidSTART was piloted in 5 Social Service Office (SSO) regions<sup>2</sup> to provide upstream support for Singaporean children up to 6 years old from low-income families<sup>3</sup>. It guides parents to support their child's development, health and well-being. KidSTART has 3 programme components, and taps on multi-disciplinary support<sup>4</sup> to ensure holistic support for families:

Component	Age coverage	Support provided
Home Visitation Programme (HVP)	Antenatal stage to children aged 3 years old	Home Visitors conduct regular <b>home visits</b> from antenatal stage until the child is three years old to guide parents / caregivers with knowledge and practical skills to support their child's development, health and nutrition. Regular screening of the child's development and maternal well-being is also conducted to identify and address issues early. When appropriate, KidSTART also facilitates the child's enrolment into preschool.
KidSTART Groups (KSG)	Children aged 1 to 3 years old	KidSTART Group Facilitators guide parents/caregivers on how to engage their children meaningfully during weekly <b>supported playgroup sessions in the community</b> , so as to build child development skills and nurture their bond with their children. Parents are also provided with educational resources to reinforce their learning at home. When the child is ready for preschool, KidSTART will facilitate their enrolment into preschool.
Enhanced Support to Preschools (ESP)	Children aged 2 months to 6 years old	Child Enabling Executives (CEEs) are deployed to selected <b>preschools</b> to ensure KidSTART children receive holistic support to meet their child development and health needs. They work closely with teachers, parents and local community partners to engage parents on child development and health issues, address barriers related to poor preschool attendance and refer children to other support programmes where necessary.

<sup>2</sup> KidSTART was piloted in Kreta Ayer, Bukit Merah, Taman Jurong, Boon Lay and Geylang Serai SSO regions.

<sup>3</sup> This is defined as families earning Gross Household Income (GHHI) ≤ \$2,500 or Per Capita Income (PCI) ≤ \$650.

<sup>4</sup> This comprises specialists such as paediatricians, nurses, psychologists, occupational therapists and speech & language therapists, who advise KidSTART practitioners on children's health and development needs, and facilitate families' access to other intervention services if needed.

2. KidSTART has since expanded to serve 13 Social Service Office (SSO) regions<sup>5</sup>. To date, it has supported over 3,000 children and will progressively be scaled nationwide to all 24 SSO regions from 2023.

3. In Sep 2020, ECDA set up KidSTART Singapore Limited (KSL) in Sep 2020 to implement KidSTART, while ECDA continues to have policy oversight of the programme. KSL works closely with KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH), National University Hospital (NUH), Social Service Agencies (SSAs), selected preschool operators and the Association of Early Childhood Educators (Singapore) (AECES) to deliver KidSTART.

### ***Growing Together with KidSTART***

4. Even as the Government continues to enhance upstream support for low-income families, the community plays an important role in supporting those in need. The **Growing Together with KidSTART** initiative aims to invite corporates and individuals to partner KidSTART over a sustained period, through regular volunteering and/or contributions. Since the initiative was launched in 2019, interested corporates and individuals have stepped forward to contribute more than **\$4 million** in cash and donations of items including connectivity devices, books and toys. Monetary donations will go towards providing families with essential items such as milk and diapers, transport for children to attend preschool or KidSTART programmes, learning resources and Child Development Account (CDA) top-ups.

5. In 2021, Growing Together partners have supported KidSTART's efforts amidst the COVID-19 pandemic in the following ways:

- a. **SP Group** contributed books and toys for children and grocery vouchers and digital tools for families.
- b. **LEGO Group** sponsored LEGO sets as donations to all KidSTART children for their development.
- c. **Procter & Gamble** sponsored essential items such as diapers, thermometers and toothbrushes for pregnant and new mothers.
- d. **Kellogg**, sponsored weekly distributions of cereals to KidSTART-supported preschools across Ang Mo Kio and Yishun.

6. Since 2016, more than 1,000 individuals have stepped forward to volunteer with KidSTART. This includes corporate volunteers, tertiary students, working professionals and even parents who have graduated from KidSTART. Interested corporations and individuals can visit [www.kidstart.sg](http://www.kidstart.sg) to find out more.

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<sup>5</sup> From 2020 to 2021, KidSTART was expanded to Woodlands, Bedok, Ang Mo Kio, Sembawang, Yishun, Choa Chu Kang, Bukit Panjang and Bukit Batok SSO regions.