

LEARN TO PLAY, PLAY TO LEARN

The new year is a time when we come together to celebrate the past year and look forward to what the future will bring.

For the early childhood sector, 2019 will usher in more opportunities for professional development and growth. Our educators will be supported with more training opportunities and resources to advance their professional knowledge and teaching practices, so as to further enhance our children's holistic development, learning and wellbeing.

This year, the National Institute of Early Childhood (NIEC) will welcome its inaugural batch of students. NIEC will uplift the quality of pre-employment training and continuing professional development for the early childhood sector by offering certificate, diploma and specialised post-diploma courses.

In addition, our educators can continue to upgrade their skills through the Professional Development Programmes, SkillsFuture Study Award for the Early Childhood Sector and the ECDA Scholarships and Training Awards. Malay and Tamil Language teachers can further hone their teaching capabilities when the Certificate in Preschool Mother Tongue Language Teaching Course is launched this year.

One of the key roles of early childhood educators is to facilitate the learning and development of our children through play. Research supports the importance of play and its links to their healthy brain and

holistic development. That is why we have focused on the topic of play in this issue of *Beanstalk*.

Play is something children do best. They are naturally curious, have untold creativity, are less inhibited and possess a great capacity for fun. Play experiences enable children to learn about themselves and the world around them. As they do so, they process information, acquire concepts and skills in language, literacy and numeracy, as well as foster their socio-emotional development and skills.

While 'free' play has its place and merits, early childhood educators are trained to facilitate 'purposeful' play to guide our children to pursue new levels of thinking and creativity. This is more challenging than it sounds, and requires the educator to have keen observation skills, a personal love for learning and pedagogical experience.

Children learn through play and their brains are wired to do this. As Diane Ackerman, an American poet, essayist and naturalist puts it, "Play is our brain's favourite way of learning." Let's work together to create opportunities for our children to be engaged in fun, exciting and enjoyable play experiences.

On this note, we wish all our early childhood educators, parents and partners a happy and memorable 2019.



MR EUGENE LEONG

Chief Executive Officer
Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA)



10



12



13



14



18



02

CONTENTS

FOCUS

02 Taking Play Seriously

Why, what and how play can be an influential tool in children's holistic development

EC LANDSCAPE

08 Marking Milestones

All about the Moments of Life (Families) app

09 Under One Umbrella

The new NIEC is set to transform the early childhood training landscape

10 All In A Day's Work

A day in the life of a preschool teacher

MY TEACHER, MY SCHOOL

12 More Than Fun & Games

Grace Child Development Centre is serious about enriching the quality of play

13 Observe & Learn

How teacher Eunice Tay designs effective learning environments

14 Own This Space

Children at PCF Sparkletots Preschool @ Pioneer Blk 661B co-create their learning spaces

INNOVATION & RESEARCH

15 Play Your Part

Playtime at Jurong Christian Church Kindergarten enhances children's curiosity

ASK THE EXPERTS

16 Q&A

Creating quality play for children

THRIVE

18 The World's A Child's Stage

How dramatic play can boost children's socio-emotional, language and thinking skills

21 Huff & Puff

A healthier Lunar New Year snack

22 Neat Feat

Get organised for school with this DIY holder

WELLNESS

23 Five Things Teachers Want

Parents To Know
Educators debunk myths

MAILBAG

24 We've Got Mail!

Parents share how they use spaces to support their children's development

FUNTIMES

25 Love is All Around

Send these hearts to your Valentine



EDITORIAL PANEL
Angela Anthony
Jennifer Law

Beanstalk is a quarterly publication by the **Early Childhood Development Agency** and is published by Mediacorp Pte Ltd. Copyright is held by the publishers. All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part is prohibited.

Printed by KHL Printing Co Pte Ltd.

EDITORIAL CONSULTANT



Senior Editor Ronald Rajan
Assistant Editor Fairiza Mansor
Contributing Editor Joyce Lim
Senior Writer Wanda Tan
Senior Art Director Don Lee
Art Director Samuel Ng
Senior Business Relationship Manager Michele Kho
Contributors Aik Chen, Ealbert Ho, Kelvin Chia, Pamela Quek, Elisabeth Lee



ON THE COVER

From left Alex Ong, Janessa Ong, Adam Harith, Genelle Lim, Ghayathri Rajandeeran, Adam Harith, Garius Lim

Art Direction Samuel Ng

Photography Kelvin Chia

Styling Jessica Khor assisted by Dolphine Chan
Grooming Jane Lau & Adeline Siow