



# PROFESSIONAL EXCELLENCE

THE FIRST-EVER VIRTUAL ECDA AWARDS 2020 WAS NO LESS JUBILANT THAN PAST EDITIONS.

**T**he ECDA Awards for Excellence in Early Childhood Development 2020, a key event for the early childhood (EC) fraternity, went virtual on 28 November 2020. Themed ‘Unity in Purpose: Celebrating Our Early Childhood Professionals’, the ceremony honoured a total of 25 exemplary preschool educators and centres for their professional excellence in EC care and education.

Mr Masagos Zulkifli, Minister for Social and Family Development and Second Minister for Health, congratulated the Awards recipients at the start of the ceremony. “Winning the Awards is the beginning and not the end of your early childhood professional journey. I hope you will continue to deepen your expertise and find innovative ways to enrich our children’s learning experiences,” he said.

Those who tuned in to the ceremony also heard from two ECDA Awards judges: Dr Dora Chen, Associate Professor and Head, Early Childhood Education Programme, Singapore University of Social Sciences; and Ms Tham Foong Chue, Campus Head, School of Humanities & Social Sciences, National Institute

of Early Childhood Development (Ngee Ann Polytechnic). Both judges have served on the judging panel in the last couple of years.

Dr Chen noted that EC professionals now place greater emphasis on delivering a child-centric curriculum in their centres. She also found that teachers are more critically reflective of their teaching practices. Likewise, Ms Tham observed that teachers these days are more confident, which has a positive impact on children’s achievements, attitudes and social-emotional growth. Most of all, she was heartened by their passion and collective aspiration to further uplift the EC fraternity. ●



Janice Ong, the 2019 ECDA Outstanding Early Childhood Educator, in conversation with Minister Masagos Zulkifli during the ECDA Awards 2020 virtual ceremony.



Visit [www.ECDAawards2020.com](http://www.ECDAawards2020.com) for the full list of ECDA Awards 2020 winners.

## THE JUDGES WEIGH IN

WHAT QUALITIES DEFINE AN ECDA AWARD WINNER?

**Ms Tham Foong Chue:**

I once came across a meaningful quote: “A teacher who loves teaching teaches children to love learning.” Children can sense a teacher’s enthusiasm. They will be motivated to learn when they see that their teachers are happy interacting with them.



**Dr Dora Chen:**

Intrinsic motivation is important. Teachers should think critically about their practices and seek out professional development opportunities, so that they can give their best to children. Once they see children engaging with them on a deeper level, it will fuel their energy and passion to go on.



WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR THE EC FRATERNITY?

**Dr Chen:** Be open and flexible to new ideas. And be intentional in all this — do not lose sight of the children.

**Ms Tham:** The ECDA Awards is not the be-all and end-all, but rather a key milestone for you to develop and expand your competencies. Think about how you can contribute to your centre and the wider EC fraternity.

