

# CURIOSITY THRILLS

**CARPE DIEM SCHOOLHOUSE @ TOA PAYOH NURTURES THE JOY OF DISCOVERY BY TAPPING INTO CHILDREN'S INSTINCT TO ASK QUESTIONS.**

“Children’s instinct to explore drives their desire to explore the environment and find out more,” believes Ms Asyriawati Binte Mohd Hamzah, Head of Curriculum and Training, Carpe Diem Preschools. “It’s important to develop this curiosity as it helps them to continually grow, learn and question what is around them.”

At Carpe Diem Schoolhouse @ Toa Payoh, teachers capitalise on children’s natural dispositions to nurture their innate curiosity. Creative self-expression and peer collaboration in multi-sensory activities are encouraged at all levels. In doing so, children ask questions about what they see and make discoveries by having meaningful discussions with peers and teachers.

## WONDER AND EXPLORE

A key learning goal is to get children to show interest in the world around them. For example, on the ‘Animal Kingdom’ theme, the preschool’s early-years classes focus on getting infants and toddlers to engage in hands-on activities. A whole fish, which the little ones would have seen in the supermarket or eaten for their meals, is brought into the classroom. They can touch it; talk about its size,



Getting a close-up look at fish in the classroom



Playing with sensory bottles is one of the ways to nurture toddlers' innate curiosity

colour and shape; and ask questions such as “What do fish eat?” or “How do fish breathe?”.

Kindergarten children are exposed to more animals, including reptiles and amphibians. Frogs and lizards are some of the specimens made available in the classroom for observation and investigation. Children are guided to record and describe what they see, and apply process skills such as comparing and predicting to gain a deeper

“When walking past a construction site, Yok Kai asked many questions: ‘What are they building?’ ‘How is it done?’ ‘What machine is that?’ For me, it was an opportunity to introduce new words and values like showing appreciation to construction workers. It’s important to encourage children to learn what is happening around them.

**MS CHUA AI SAN**, mother of Yang Yok Kai, 6

understanding of the animal groups. Questions from the children, such as “What are the similarities or differences between these animals?”, can lead to meaningful classroom discussions. As a follow-up activity at home, parents and children also conduct research together and prepare reports on a specific animal for sharing in class.

## LEARN THROUGH EXPERIENCE

Ms Jannica Lavapie, a teacher at the preschool, shares another example of how the centre supports children’s discovery. During a lesson on fashion design, the five-year-olds conducted a tie-dye experiment. Through the process, they learnt about the science behind colour mixing, as well as why a white cotton T-shirt absorbs dye better than other fabrics.

Ms Lavapie adds, “Children are excited to gather information to find out how and why things work the way they do. I want to keep supporting this sense of wonder and curiosity. I try to introduce topics which I believe are different and would interest the children. It has challenged me to provide more experiential activities and let them reflect on those experiences.” ●



**MORE ON SPARK** Carpe Diem Schoolhouse @ Toa Payoh is a SPARK-certified centre, which means it has been recognised for its continued efforts in providing quality preschool education. See [www.ecda.gov.sg/SPARKinfo](http://www.ecda.gov.sg/SPARKinfo) for more information.