

THRIVE



Window To The World

How to make the most of your museum visit



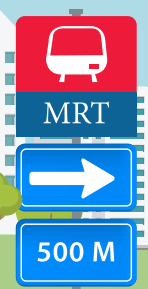
Rice And Shine

Make a wholesome and yummy Malay dessert



Say Cheese!

Share favourite snaps of your teacher in handmade frames



ON THE HUNT
Adventure
in the
neighbourhood

Beanstalk

JUL-SEP
2021

DISCOVERY OF THE WORLD

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Cue in to children's curiosity
to help them connect to
the world they live in

5
WAYS TO MARK
NATIONAL DAY
together with
the family



DISCOVERY MATTERS!



their eyes to the world of plants and insects. Such explorations enable children to learn about the world around them, including our history and culture.

Despite the COVID-19 situation, I'm glad that we saw more than 71,000 children from over 1,050 preschools participating in the 'Start Small Dream Big' movement this year. With the theme 'Stay Connected, Make A Difference', the seventh edition of the movement inspires children to find creative ways to maintain social connections with the community while doing good. These connections strengthen the social fabric of Singapore and cultivate our children's discovery of the community around them.

Our early childhood educators play a key role in shaping our children's development. During the pandemic, despite many challenges, our educators continue to keep our children curious and learning through their ingenuity, perseverance and hard work.

As motivational writer William Arthur Ward aptly put it, "Curiosity is the wick in the candle of learning." I'd like to take this opportunity to thank our educators for their dedication and wish them a happy Teachers' Day! And a happy Teachers' Day too, to all parents, our children's first teachers.

“Why is it like this? Why is it not like this? Why ...?” I'm sure many parents and educators find this a familiar refrain among young children. While these questions can sometimes verge on being exasperating, it is vital that we do not discourage our children from expressing their curiosity as this is how they discover the world around them. They learn by interacting with different people, and by observing different things and events happening in their day-to-day lives. Research tells us that curiosity stimulates learning, motivation and memory, among others.

Sparking the curiosity of young children can take place anytime, anywhere. For instance, shining a torch in the room can give many hours of wonder and fun, as children learn about light and shadows. A trip to the hawker centre helps children discover our rich food heritage, while a walk in the community garden opens

MS JAMIE ANG
Chief Executive Officer
Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA)



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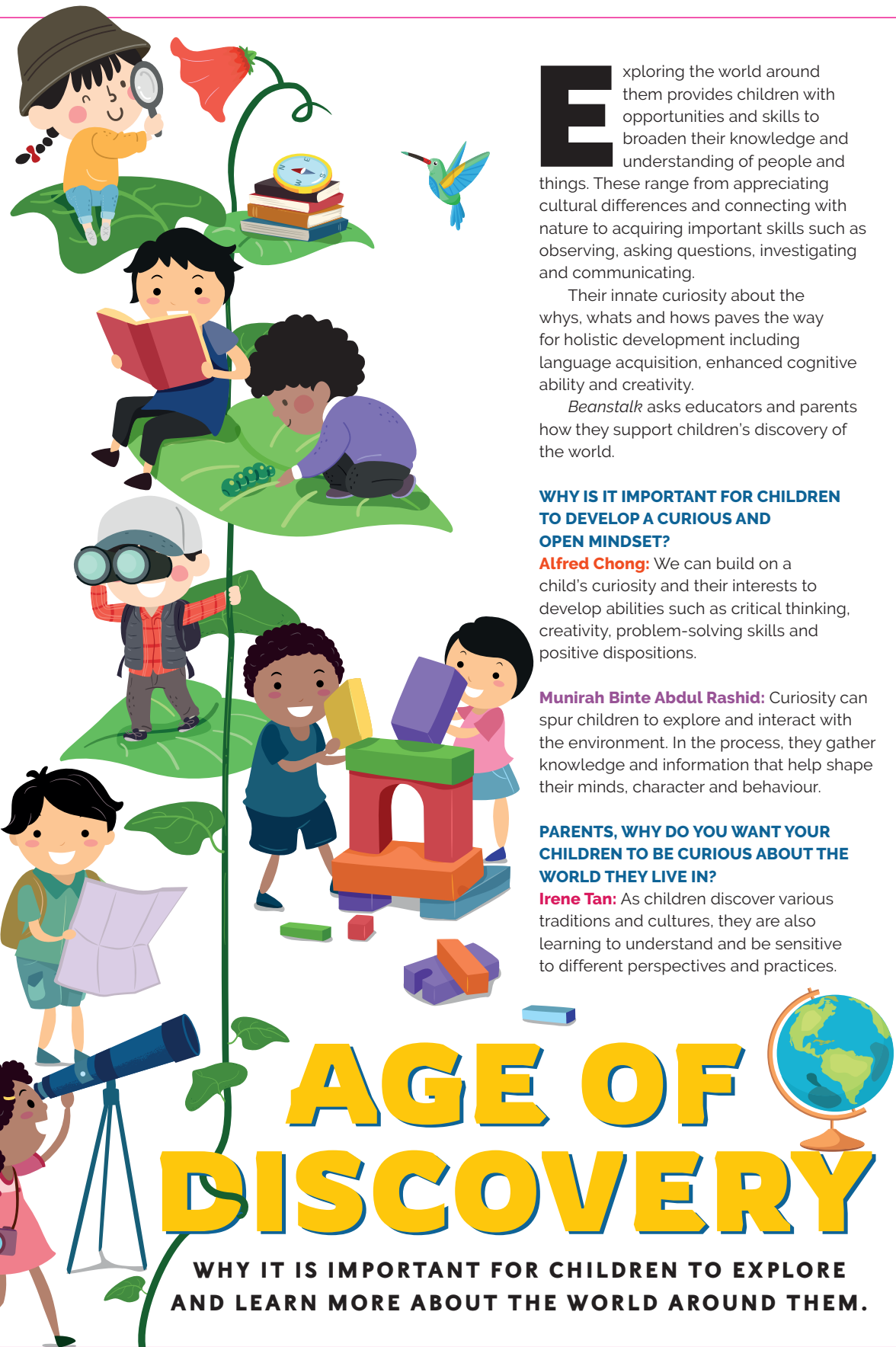
ON THE COVER

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Beanstalk clinched the APEX 2019 Award of Excellence in the One of a Kind Publication (Education & Training) Category!

Some photos in this issue were taken before the Circuit Breaker period, and feature children/adults without masks on.



Exploring the world around them provides children with opportunities and skills to broaden their knowledge and understanding of people and things. These range from appreciating cultural differences and connecting with nature to acquiring important skills such as observing, asking questions, investigating and communicating.

Their innate curiosity about the whys, whats and hows paves the way for holistic development including language acquisition, enhanced cognitive ability and creativity.

Beanstalk asks educators and parents how they support children's discovery of the world.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN TO DEVELOP A CURIOUS AND OPEN MINDSET?

Alfred Chong: We can build on a child's curiosity and their interests to develop abilities such as critical thinking, creativity, problem-solving skills and positive dispositions.

Munirah Binte Abdul Rashid: Curiosity can spur children to explore and interact with the environment. In the process, they gather knowledge and information that help shape their minds, character and behaviour.

PARENTS, WHY DO YOU WANT YOUR CHILDREN TO BE CURIOUS ABOUT THE WORLD THEY LIVE IN?

Irene Tan: As children discover various traditions and cultures, they are also learning to understand and be sensitive to different perspectives and practices.

AGE OF DISCOVERY

WHY IT IS IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN TO EXPLORE AND LEARN MORE ABOUT THE WORLD AROUND THEM.

I believe it is important for my children to embrace diversity, and to recognise and respect people whose lives are different from their own.

Soumik Chakraborty: How children react in a certain situation comes from being aware of what's going on in the world. My son asks many questions when we watch news about the COVID-19 pandemic. He is now more mindful of safe management measures, such as washing his hands and wearing a mask, even if we are not present to remind him.

TEACHERS, WHAT DOES THE DISCOVERY OF THE WORLD CURRICULUM LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?

Alfred: We usually begin with exploring the basic concepts of a theme with the children. They then embark on collaborative investigation, while the teacher guides them in making their own decisions and proposing solutions. For instance, under the theme of 'Our World', children learn about famous works of architecture, such as the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco. They then brainstorm and test various materials to build a miniature model of the bridge.

Munirah: We explore topics like rainforests, the Olympics and the Seven Wonders of the World through activities such as craftwork, educational videos, online research and journal writing. We create opportunities for group work as peer learning enhances learning. For example, the children engage in discussions and collaborate with their peers to create infographics and graphs related to the topic.

HOW DOES ENCOURAGING AN INQUISITIVE MIND BENEFIT A CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT?

Alfred: It drives the thinking process, and promotes questioning and the urge to seek answers. Inquisitive children tend to raise 'why' questions, challenge ideas, and suggest alternatives or solutions to an idea or issue. Correspondingly, teachers play a vital role in facilitating these behaviours through hands-on activities, projects and simple experiments.



Spark children's curiosity about their world with simple activities demonstrated by Principal Alfred Chong and his teachers at Wat Patthar Educare Centre. Check these out at go.gov.sg/activitiesdemo or scan this QR code:



Munirah: An inquisitive mindset promotes critical thinking. For instance, during arts and crafts, curiosity spurs our children to explore and discover the different effects of paint, glitter, cotton buds and beads. Intentional facilitation in day-to-day activities, like encouraging children to ask questions and express themselves, also lays the foundation for active and confident learners and enhances communication skills.

WHAT ARE SOME PROCESS SKILLS THAT ENABLE CHILDREN TO GATHER AND INTERPRET INFORMATION?

Alfred: The abilities to observe details, identify similarities and differences, think critically, make inferences and predict outcomes are examples of process skills. Another example is the ability to apply past knowledge and experiences to new situations. We can encourage children to think critically about their daily encounters and experiences by asking questions such as "Why do you think it happened?" and "What makes you say that?". This will help them to develop as reflective and thinking individuals.

Munirah: Observation and communication are some examples of process skills. As children's awareness grows, they notice and talk about the characteristics and attributes of things in their environment. They also observe the people they interact with and their behaviours. Engaging children in discussions will help them better process their thoughts and ideas.

HOW CAN EDUCATORS FACILITATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROCESS SKILLS?

Alfred: Our teachers design learning activities that promote active participation. These include multi-

“ We adults tend to underestimate our children's ability to be agents in their own learning and development.”



MR ALFRED CHONG, 36
Principal, Wat Patthar Educare Centre

sensorial exploration, teamwork with peers, investigations within and beyond the classroom, and applying learnt knowledge and skills. For instance, exploring the theme of 'Plants & Food' involves several weeks of reading up on the topic, outdoor interactions with nature, planting, culinary sessions and so on. A visit to a community garden provides real-world context. The children acquire new knowledge as expert gardeners share about their tools and the seeds of edible plants. We then introduce the concept of sustainability through a sustainable garden art-and-craft competition.

Munirah: For a zoology lesson, we researched about the different animals, watched video clips, and looked at animal figurines and books. We encouraged children to ask questions about the animals and to look out for such animals in their environment. This helps hone their observation and communication skills. Process skills can be adapted for children of different ages. For younger children, the focus is more on observing and discussing attributes such as colours, shapes and sizes of different animals. For older children, when we talk about flightless birds versus birds that can fly, they learn to classify and compare attributes that are similar or different, do simple investigations and look for solutions.

PARENTS, HOW DO YOU SUPPORT YOUR CHILDREN'S CURIOSITY WHEN THEY SHOW AN INTEREST IN SOMETHING?

Irene: When we are not able to answer Taneesh's questions, we look for answers together in books, on the Internet or through simple experiments. We realise that he learns better with a hands-on approach.

“ I like going to the park with my teachers and friends to learn about the different plants and animals.

TANEESH CHOUDHURY, 4
Wat Patthar Educare Centre



CELEBRATING SG WOMEN

We can raise children's awareness to events that are happening around them. In Singapore, 2021 has been dedicated as the year to celebrate women's achievements and support their progress in bettering our society. Talk to children about how the women in their lives have contributed at home, in preschool and at work. Share and view posts on social media with the hashtag #CelebratingSGWomen.



Soumik: Aarush shares the same interests as me in outer space and cars. We watch and discuss documentaries on space. I bring him to the car workshop where he can observe mechanics at work. I also involve him when I cook by giving him simple tasks and acknowledge his contributions.

TEACHERS, ANY TIPS FOR PARENTS TO BETTER SUPPORT CHILDREN'S DISCOVERY OF THE WORLD?

Alfred: Go beyond a child's immediate context and raise his/her awareness of current affairs in the community or what is happening in the wider world. There may be events that might interest your child. Provide children with time and space to explore and express themselves. Ask open-ended questions such as "Why do you think that..." to extend discussions and thinking. Align what is discussed at home with themes taught in preschool, and participate in preschool or community events. Initiatives such as the 'Keep Clean, Singapore' movement are meaningful and relevant, and motivate children to show interest in their world.

“ As children discover various traditions and cultures, they are also learning to understand and be sensitive to different perspectives and practices.

MDM IRENE TAN, 39
Homemaker, mother of Taneesh Choudhury



“ An inquisitive mindset promotes critical thinking.

MS MUNIRAH BINTE ABDUL RASHID, 36
Senior Teacher, Josiah Montessori Kindergarten (Tampines)

Munirah: Take children for walks and have conversations with them while getting them to observe the things around them. Inculcate a love for reading, as books are a gateway to the world. Have a mix of fiction and non-fiction books.

WHAT ARE SOME PITFALLS THAT COULD STIFLE A CHILD'S CURIOSITY?

Alfred: We adults tend to underestimate our children's ability to be agents in their own learning and development. When adults take the "do what I tell you" approach, learning becomes directed by the adult and that stifles the child's progress. We need to view children's curiosity and interests as entry points for us to engage them further.

Munirah: Too much screen time takes away the opportunity for children to engage with the environment around them. Being overly protective is another pitfall. While done out of love, not allowing children some freedom to explore may rob them of the opportunity to gain knowledge and learning in their areas of interest. Always look out for the child's safety, but don't be too quick to jump in to prevent your child from trying and taking calculated risks.



WE ARE THE WORLD

Dr Hanin Hussain, Senior Lecturer, Psychology and Child & Human Development, National Institute of Education, shares some tips to support children's discovery of the world and their place in it.

Discovery of the world is about giving children opportunities to interact with the people, places, things, activities and ideas in their lives, create meaningful relationships with these aspects of their world, and contribute to these in their own way. When these experiences become part of everyday life, children will continue to be naturally curious about the world and how things work.

- **PLAY TOGETHER AS A FAMILY** Family experiences serve as foundations for developing social interactions and relationships outside the home, and for playing with others in preschool and in the neighbourhood. Let children take the lead in the play. Immerse yourself in the children's make-believe world.
- **EXTEND AND DEEPEN CHILDREN'S UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD IN PRESCHOOL** Teachers can extend children's emerging understanding of the world of relationships through dramatic play, where they can build on their experiences at home or in preschool.
- **EXPAND THEIR WORLD BY EXPLORING NEW EXPERIENCES TOGETHER** Raise children's awareness about the environment by bringing their attention to how rubbish and food waste are generated and managed, at home and in preschool. When visiting supermarkets and food courts, provide opportunities for children to talk about how they can contribute to less waste. This can be further extended to experiences and ideas around sustainability, such as the 6Rs (Refuse, Reduce, Reuse, Repair, Repurpose, Recycle).

“ My teacher showed us books and videos on the Seven Wonders of the World. I have learnt the names and special places of different countries.

AARUSH SOUMIK CHAKRABORTY, 6
Josiah Montessori Kindergarten (Tampines)

“ How children react in a certain situation comes from being aware of what's going on in the world.

MR SOUMIK CHAKRABORTY, 40
Digital Marketing Entrepreneur, father of Aarush Soumik Chakraborty





NATURAL PROCESS

ECDA FELLOW STELLA PEREIRA SHARES HOW EDUCATORS CAN HELP CHILDREN DEVELOP PROCESS SKILLS TO HELP THEM DISCOVER THE WORLD AROUND THEM.

Process skills can be introduced naturally through regular preschool activities, observes Ms Stella Pereira. "In one classroom, a teacher had placed a transparent container with some leaves in it in a sunny corner of the classroom. The leaves had mysterious dots on them. The children were curious and excited, and wondered what the dots were. When they realised these were butterfly eggs, they were eager to get to preschool each morning, hoping to see a butterfly emerge. The teacher encouraged the children to observe the changes, make inferences, ask questions, predict what would happen next, record their observations, and discuss with their peers," she notes.

While developing their language and cognitive skills, the children were also picking up values. Adds Ms Pereira, "Once the butterfly emerged from the chrysalis, the children observed as it shook its wet wings dry and rested awhile. They then decided to release the butterfly back into nature and watched with pride as it made some tentative movements before fluttering away. This shows how children can also learn to be sensitive towards nature."

Sparking curiosity in children begins with the adults around them. Educators and parents should themselves be more curious and aware of their environments. With greater awareness of their surroundings and the opportunities these present, coupled with knowledge of how to develop process skills, educators and parents will be better able to spark curiosity in children.

HOW CAN WE DEVELOP STRONG PROCESS SKILLS?

Here are some ways to do so:

> OBSERVING

Ask children to say or write down what they see, for instance, the size and physical characteristics of the caterpillar as it eats and grows each day.

> QUESTIONING

Ask questions or rephrase queries posed by the children, and investigate the answers. For example, the question "How does a caterpillar turn into a butterfly?" can be used to jumpstart a discussion. This can lead to researching information on the Internet, or a trip to the library to borrow related books.

> PREDICTING

Get children to make predictions by asking questions such as, "What happens inside the chrysalis to make the caterpillar turn into a butterfly?" or "What do you think will happen next?"

> EXPERIMENTING AND INVESTIGATING

Provide opportunities for children to conduct simple investigations and experiments. For instance, set up an experiment to see what caterpillars like to eat or how beans grow.

> RECORDING

Children can record their learning in a journal, chart, graph, or any preferred format such as a drawing or painting.

> INTERPRETING

Guide children to look for similarities, differences or patterns, recall prior knowledge or experience, and draw conclusions.

> COMMUNICATING

Children can communicate their findings and compare results by representing their ideas through art, graphs or Show & Tell sessions.



MS STELLA PEREIRA

ECDA Fellow and Cluster Director, The Little Skool-House International

Ms Pereira believes in curating memorable learning experiences for children, collaborating with parents and the community, and advocating for the early childhood community.



Games such as matching words with picture cards make language learning fun

THROUGH THE LANGUAGE LENS

HOW MOTHER TONGUE LANGUAGES HELP CHILDREN DISCOVER AND STAY CONNECTED TO THEIR ROOTS.

Nurturing a love for one's mother tongue benefits children in many ways. It helps them connect with their cultural identity, heritage and the wider community across the world. Three preschool mother tongue language (MTL) teachers share how they inspire a love and appreciation for language in children.

MAKING LANGUAGE FUN

Chinese language teacher Mdm Zhang Xuan Hong from St. James' Church Kindergarten (Harding) uses teaching aids including hand puppets and games such as matching words with picture cards, to make language learning an enjoyable experience. "Learning becomes more engaging and meaningful when it is through play," says Mdm Zhang.

Nursery rhymes are easy to understand and simple in structure. "Singing and performing in Chinese not only help children gain confidence in using the language but also serve as a form of cultural

education," she adds. "When you use a language, you interact with the culture."



Learning to play the kompang, a traditional Malay instrument

INTEGRATING LEARNING

Mdm Siti Raudhah Binte Haji Halimi, a senior Malay language teacher at MOE Kindergarten @ Horizon, often uses Malay folklore in her storytelling sessions, which bring together language, culture and values. For example, from the tales of Sang Kancil, children can learn about resourcefulness and ingenuity.

Songs, games, dances and food are also used to enrich the MTL experience for children. For instance, after reading a story about the martial art form *silat*, the children played the *kompang*, a traditional Malay musical instrument, and practised



LET'S TALK! Educators and parents keen to know more about sparking children's interest in learning MTL can look forward to the digital Mother Tongue Languages Symposium 2021 on 28 August. Among the highlights are a panel discussion, sharing sessions, exhibits and an Online Quest for 4- to 9-year-olds. Find out more at www.mtls.edu.sg.

TIPS FOR PARENTS

Three ways to help children strengthen their mother tongue.

- **Speak the language at home.** Allocate a day or specific timing where everyone should use only the MTL with one another.
- **Borrow library books and watch online videos.** These help with grammar and pronunciation. Do ensure the materials are appropriate and seek advice from your child's teachers, if necessary.
- **Create a print-rich environment.** Attach labels in your MTL to furniture and other objects at home to expand your child's vocabulary.

basic movements from the book. "It is important to provide an authentic learning experience for children to connect more effectively with the language," says Mdm Siti Raudhah.

APPRECIATING OTHER CULTURES

Tamil language teacher Mrs Jeya Rubi Caroline from PCF Sparkletots @ Sengkang East Blk 187B observes that children enjoy activities with singing, drawing, role-play and puppets. Hence, her lessons tap into the rich source of Tamil poems, songs, stories and dramas. Children also try the various rituals and customs associated with festivals such as Pongal, a harvest festival, and wear traditional outfits on special occasions.

"By learning about their cultural and language background, children will feel pride. It can also inspire interest in the cultures and languages of their friends and neighbours. This lays the foundation for mutual respect and racial harmony," she says.



Children practising a traditional Pongal folk dance

TO TEACHERS, WITH LOVE

PARENTS CONVEY THEIR HEARTFELT APPRECIATION TO THE SPECIAL TEACHERS IN THEIR CHILDREN'S LIVES.



Jade's painting



Vice Principal Tina Soon and Principal Sitti Aisyah Binte Mohamed Hassan of Cambridge @ Artra Alexandra

Dear Principal Jean and educators,

All of you — Principal Jean, Angeline, Belinda, Teacher Ma and Teacher Wang — have been wonderful to our daughter since she joined the centre this year. From your regular check-ins on Ari's progress to the many photos you send us of her in class, you go above and beyond.

It is a delight to see our little bean grow and develop under your watchful eyes. One of our fondest memories was when Ari took her first steps, guided by her teacher, towards us when we picked her up from preschool one day. Such a head start would not have been possible without your team's dedication and professionalism.



Ari with one of her educators

MR MICK TAN and MS ALTRICIA YAM, parents of Ari Tan, 10 months, who attends The Little Champions

When Jade Eng, 5, moved to a new preschool earlier this year, her parents were at first uncertain if she could adjust. However, they were reassured once they saw how much Jade looked forward to going to preschool.

"Ms Sitti Aisyah Binte Mohamed Hassan, the principal, personally helped Jade in her art lessons, especially for the more difficult parts," says her mother, Ms Edna Kheng.

Ms Kheng also gives a shout-out to Jade's class teacher, Vice Principal Ms Tina Soon. "She engages the kids so well that Jade is able to concentrate during her lessons. Jade was proud to be appointed as a book leader to oversee book returns for the class. It's an awesome way to instil leadership and responsibility!"

Dear Teachers,

Nithilla loves going to preschool and loves her teachers, especially Teacher Virgie. She says her teachers are very nice and fun. They teach her things beyond the classroom, such as planting and outdoor activities which she truly enjoys. A happy relationship enables her to learn better and build a positive learning disposition.

Her teachers are very responsive and always help me very promptly when I have any queries or concerns. I get quite worried with the smallest things, so it's very reassuring when the teachers call me the same day to clarify my doubts and they even follow up with me over time. Overall, a very happy Mummy and daughter here!



Teacher Virgie Ross Tasico

MS NAZEERA PARVEEN BTE MOHD TAJUDIN, mother of Nithilla Malini D/O Logaras, 5, who attends Skool4Kidz Preschool @ Yishun Oleander Breeze

Dear Teacher Yi Ru and Teacher Vanisha,

We were initially worried about how Aadhav would cope when he joined the preschool last year, as he wasn't able to speak at that time. Through your hard work, calming influence and positive attitude, his speech and behaviour improved significantly. You were also present whenever we needed motivation or guidance on how to support him at home.

Although he is now in a new class, he still looks out for his two favourite teachers. We are happy to see the connection he has formed with you, and grateful for the difference you have made in his academic and holistic education.

MR HUKENDRAN ARUMUGAM and MS SASIREKHA NEDUJCHELYN, parents of Aadhav Hukendran, 4, who attends AWWA Early Intervention Centre @ Fernvale



Aadhav's painting

Teacher Yoh Yi Ru

Teacher Vanisha Mathyanan

Dear Teacher Halimah,

Having a caring and loving teacher like you has eased our daughter's learning journey in preschool. She has been a good role model to her younger siblings. You always update us on Armel's performance promptly. In addition, you often share your expertise and encourage us parents to teach and make learning fun for her at home.

Thank you for preparing Armel for a better future. I am amazed by how much she has learnt under your care. I can see her growing into a mature and independent individual, both academically and socially.



Armel's picture

MDM AMALINA AHMAD TAIB, mother of Armel Raissa Bte Rozaimi, 5, who attends Iyad Perdaus Child Development (Choa Chu Kang)



Teacher Halimah Bte Supaat

"I tear up every time I think of the effort Ms Sonia Kaman and Ms Cao Nian put in for my son, Kaleb Tan," says Ms Tiffany Ang.

Their relationship with Kaleb, 4, grew closer when they became his class teachers in 2020. "Like me, Cao laoshi was worried about Kaleb being a picky eater. She often shared her observations on his food likes and dislikes, and suggested simple, healthy recipes to entice him to eat at home," says Ms Ang.

She credits Ms Sonia with helping Kaleb achieve many milestones such as learning to follow instructions, wearing a mask properly and managing his emotions. "Kaleb used to cringe and cry because he didn't like the sensation of paint on his hands during painting," says Ms Ang. "But Ms Sonia never gave up. Then one day, she sent a video of Kaleb making a caterpillar hand painting. It was a proud moment for all of us!"



Teachers Sonia Kaman and Cao Nian from Maple Bear (Midview City)

Kaleb engrossed in his artwork



IN GOOD SENSE

EDUCARER KE CAIYUN DESIGNS SENSORY PLAY ACTIVITIES TO ENCOURAGE INFANTS AND TODDLERS TO EXPLORE AND DISCOVER.

Early brain development has a lasting impact on a child's ability to learn and succeed in school and in life. Research tells us that rich sensorial experiences contribute significantly to healthy brain development for young children. This is why Mdm Ke Caiyun, 49, a senior Chinese language infant educator at PCF Sparkletots @ Radin Mas Blk 18, creates plenty of sensory play experiences for children under her care to explore the environment around them.

"Opportunities for infants and toddlers to engage their sense of sight, touch, smell and hearing help develop hand-eye coordination and motor skills, and enhance muscle development," explains Mdm Ke, a 2020 ECDA Outstanding Early Childhood Educator award winner. "These also help stimulate the brain and contribute to language and cognitive development, and lay the foundation for the future."

HANDS-ON PLAY

Mdm Ke often makes her own teaching aids which the toddlers are encouraged to freely explore. For example, Mdm Ke, who used to be

a seamstress before becoming an educator, sewed a hen that 'lays' an egg whenever a toddler turns the attached cardboard carton. This game stimulates curiosity (about where eggs come from), builds hand-eye coordination and motor skills, and teaches them about cause and effect.

For outdoor exploration, the toddlers were guided to plant potatoes and peanuts in flowerpots they had made from recycled containers. When a curious child pulled out a plant, Mdm Ke encouraged the class to observe what happened to the leaves of the uprooted plant. "Expose young children early to nature. By showing them how to care for plants, we



help them to become socially responsible," she adds.

RELATABLE LESSONS

Regular communication with parents during drop-offs and pick-ups, as well as through phone calls and the centre's Parent Engagement Portal, enables Mdm Ke to tailor activities for the infants and toddlers. "Learning about a child's experiences at home allows me to better understand his needs and interests. This guides me in planning meaningful activities," she says.

One mother, who shared that her child loved playing with their three puppies at home, inspired Mdm Ke to turn the child's interest into teachable moments. She sewed a dog puppet and created a storybook in Mandarin about a dog and its bone. Interacting with the puppet encouraged the children's social-emotional development, while the book extended their knowledge about dogs and their habits.

She encourages parents to allow their children to explore their environment. "Hands-on activities allow the child to accumulate experiences that enhance their holistic development," says Mdm Ke. ●

EXPRESS YOURSELF

Tips to promote your child's language development at home.

- 1. Use proper grammar and speak in full sentences to your child.** For instance, you can say "Do you want to eat?" instead of "Want eat?".
- 2. Set up a doodle wall by sticking large pieces of paper on the wall.** Let your child draw on them and use these drawings to make up stories.
- 3. Make educational toys with child-safe, recycled materials.** For example, build a car out of cartons and arrange different objects on the floor as landmarks. Name the object as the child travels to each item.



For more about Outstanding Educator Mdm Ke Caiyun, watch her video at fb.watch/2mKS6yA05J or scan this QR code.



CURIOSITY THRILLS

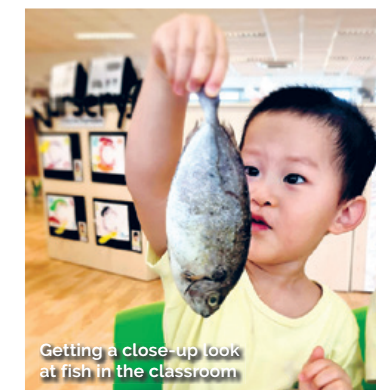
CARPE DIEM SCHOOLHOUSE @ TOA PAYOH NURTURES THE JOY OF DISCOVERY BY TAPPING INTO CHILDREN'S INSTINCT TO ASK QUESTIONS.

"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,



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 for more information.

THE POWER OF CONNECTIONS

USING DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY TO CREATE A CULTURE OF CARE, KINDNESS AND ACCEPTANCE.



Min Masagos Zulkifli (in blue shirt) at the launch of SSDB 2021

Another year and another 'Start Small Dream Big' (SSDB) record is broken. More than 71,000 children from 1,050 preschools are taking part in this year's SSDB movement. This is more than half of all preschools in Singapore, and the highest number to date.

Minister for Social and Family Development Mr Masagos Zulkifli launched SSDB 2021 on 22 April at PCS Grow & Glow Childcare (Yishun). Fittingly, the theme this time is 'Stay Connected, Make A Difference'. Over a six-month period, participating centres will implement community service projects while keeping to the safe management measures to combat COVID-19.

In the lead-up to this year's SSDB, more than 1,000 centre leaders and teachers 'Zoom-ed in' on 26 February to attend the SSDB 2021 Virtual Connect Session — the first-ever virtual SSDB briefing. Among the speakers was Mrs Ang-Oh Chui Hwa, ECDA Fellow and Principal of Far Eastern Kindergarten. She talked

about the importance of service learning for character education in young children.

"Service learning is character in action. Children get to apply the values they are learning in daily life. By helping the less privileged, the child learns to look beyond himself and becomes more aware of the community's needs," says Mrs Ang-Oh. "The true mark of



Min Masagos joining in an artwork activity at the SSDB 2021 launch party

volunteerism and character is when the child is motivated to right what is wrong, without expecting anything in return."

Three preschools share more about their SSDB 2021 projects, and how they are using digital technology to connect with vulnerable groups in the community.

1 EVERYONE DESERVES RESPECT

PCS Grow & Glow Childcare (Yishun) is holding a virtual carnival to raise funds for Dorcas Home Care Service's 'Meals on Wheels' programme, which distributes free daily meals to frail and homebound elderly. The elderly will also receive gift packs made by the children and their families that contain essential items, along with pre-recorded video greetings from the children. The centre will also carry out a series of Zoom sessions with youths with special needs at Grace Orchard School, including a virtual art workshop where the artworks of the youths will be included in the centre's fundraising carnival.

K1 teacher Ms Xia Wei Mei notes that it is an opportunity to instil values in young children. "Children will learn to appreciate differences, and that everybody should be respected and is deserving of love," she says. Her colleague Ms Selda Johanna Ortegero adds, "They will learn that patience and empathy are key to connecting with others, and that little acts of kindness can go a long way."

2 BEING DIFFERENT IS OK

Spring Brainy Kidz @ Ubi is working with several organisations that engage the disabled community. Activities planned include writing letters to, and becoming penpals with, persons with intellectual disabilities supported by TOUCH Community Services; holding Zoom chats with students from the Down Syndrome Association (Singapore); and organising virtual Zumba sessions with seniors at ECON Nursing Home @ Chai Chee. "Through these activities, children will get to know the beneficiary groups on a more personal level and understand the challenges they face," says teacher Ms Mardiah Abdat. Funds raised through the online sale of plant pots decorated by the children will also go to the three organisations.



Spreading the message of embracing differences through SSDB

“It's okay to be big or small. It's okay to have no hair or no teeth. Being different is okay. We don't want people to laugh at others.”

DARIUS GOH, 6



Children encouraged to be themselves and create their own unique poses



Children excited to embark on their SSDB project

3 BEING INCLUSIVE MATTERS

Sunflower Preschool @ Frankel is collaborating with the National Library Board (NLB) on a project that employs the Japanese theatre art form, *kamishibai*. NLB will develop a meaningful story about inclusivity and the children will narrate it through *kamishibai* storytelling, using puppets made with their parents. The children will give virtual *kamishibai* performances for the special needs students of Metta School, as well as an elderly care association. The handmade puppets will also be given to Metta School. "Our goal is to provide a purposeful platform for social



A teacher sharing a story of inclusivity through kamishibai

involvement and awareness about the inclusive community," says teacher Ms Joville Blanza Sarmiento. "In addition, children can improve their literacy skills by sharing their reading and storytelling experiences with others."

“I learnt to tell a story about accepting differences through *kamishibai*. I feel good when people are happy.”

MAYA TAYLOR TORRENS, 6

THE MORE, THE MERRIER

A total of 25 community partners have come on board SSDB this year. New partners include the Singapore Discovery Centre and the Singapore Food Agency, who join long-time supporters such as the Agency for Integrated Care, Community Chest, Singapore Kindness Movement, Preschool Market, National Parks Board and Wildlife Reserves Singapore. For more info on the preschools' SSDB projects and community partners, visit www.startsmalldreambig.sg.



Tending to the community garden instilled a sense of responsibility in children

HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

GETTING CLOSER TO NATURE EXPANDS THE LEARNING HORIZONS OF BUDDING URBAN GARDENERS.

Gardening is an activity ripe with opportunities to nurture values and spark children's curiosity in the environment. At Agape Little Uni. @ Clementi, the community garden serves as an outdoor extension of the classroom, offering authentic and experiential learning for children, says Vice Principal Ms Louise Filardo.

To complement the curriculum on plants, animals and the natural environment, the preschool embarked on a 'Garden Beautification and Sustainability' project with the support of ECDA's Innovation Grant. Says Ms Louise, "We hoped to plant seeds of love for the environment in children and promote awareness of their role in caring for it while developing their observation and communication skills."

CONNECTING THE DOTS

Daily visits to the garden offered many opportunities to develop process skills such as observing, classifying, recording, experimenting and communicating. Mentor

Teacher Ms Nooraini Binte Mahmud elaborates, "The children drew and compared the physical characteristics of different plants, such as their heights, textures and shapes. This helped them understand that while plants may look similar from afar, they are different. They also realised how easily they could miss an insect on a leaf if they didn't look closely, so they were careful to avoid washing off tiny caterpillars or chrysalises during watering."

When the project ended, the centre sustained children's interest and learning by setting up a butterfly nursery to teach children about life cycles. Caterpillars and butterfly eggs from the lime plant in the community garden were transferred to the nursery to protect them from birds and heavy rain, and returned to the garden when they turned into butterflies.

SEEING THE BROADER PICTURE

Tending to the community garden helped children to be aware of the interdependence between plants

LESSONS FROM NATURE

How we can use nature to promote children's discovery of the world.



- > **Garden with children.** As you and the children dig up soil, sweep leaves and water the plants, engage in casual conversations on gardening. This will foster a sense of wonder and reinforce a positive attitude towards the environment.
- > **Use recycled materials to encourage conservation.** Invite children to think of ways to transform found or discarded items into something useful. For example, an old wooden pallet or bicycle can be repurposed as a plant holder, or food scraps can be composted.
- > **Encourage them to record what they see.** Drawing and writing about their observations help children to pay attention to details (e.g. the different shapes of leaves) and hone their observation skills.

and other living things, such as leaves providing food for caterpillars. Daily routines, which included watering the plants and sweeping up leaves, contributed towards instilling a sense of responsibility.

The children were also exposed to concepts such as conservation and sustainability, which were reinforced through several activities. Children and their parents were supplied with pots, plants, pebbles, soil and other materials to make their own 'Garden in a Pot' mini-ecosystem. Using what they learned about light and solar power, the K2 classes made decorative solar-powered jars.

The project has even sparked a keen interest in nature for former students like Eva Ha, 8, and her father, who continue to be active volunteers in the community garden. Mr Ha Yew Mun says, "Eva learned about plants, insects and the responsibility of taking care of a garden. Now we are growing plants from seeds and cuttings at home."

HAPPY WONDERERS

DISCOVERY CENTRES ALLOW CHILDREN TO ACT ON THEIR NATURAL POWERS OF OBSERVATION AND CURIOSITY.



Children using the scientific method and a mirror to explore the concept of distance

One of the key questions that Children's Cove @ Orange Grove asked itself was how to make science more fun and meaningful for young children. The preschool reviewed its processes and observed that children simply went through the motions and did not show curiosity. "The experiments were more teacher-directed, so children's inputs were limited. It is important for children to engage in science-related activities at a young age. It helps them develop a range of skills such as communicating, reasoning and analysing," explains teacher Ms Bahareh Afkhami Naeini.

The centre embarked on a Practitioner Inquiry project to explore strategies that would trigger child-initiated experiments and strengthen their inquisitiveness. Two discovery centres — indoors and outdoors — were set up and stocked

with a variety of science tools such as mirrors, binoculars, microscopes, magnets, pulley systems, as well as recycled loose parts contributed by the teachers and parents. The objective was to let children explore freely with the equipment and materials, guided by teachers using the six steps of the scientific method to provoke their thinking.

THINK OUT LOUD

Teachers modelled visible thinking during each step by posing questions such as "What do you see?", "How do you know?", "What are you curious about?" and "When do you think changes will occur?". This helped children think through and verbalise their thought processes, for instance, when they used mirrors to explore the concept of distance.

Helping children verbalise their thought processes made their

“ I love using science toys because they are fun. We did an experiment to find out if we could hear a balloon 'burp' when we mixed baking soda and vinegar. ”

THEODORE TAY, 6



An experiment to see how food colouring reacts in water

thinking visible. This helped them dig deeper when investigating a hypothesis. Ms Bahareh elaborates, "It requires children to think aloud, while the open-ended questions make them think beyond the first step of any experiment. This provides a clear picture of the child's level of understanding and enables teachers to clarify or encourage the child to elaborate, and extend their thinking."

FUEL SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING

Science experiment books and stories were introduced during morning circle time to spark greater interest in the tools at the discovery centres. The teachers also fixed a weekly schedule for science lessons as they found that consistency was key to children being more proactive in initiating experiments. Ms Bahareh recommends, "Let children spend at least 30 to 45 minutes twice a week at the discovery centres. Encourage them to take the lead and drive experiments to find out the answers to their questions."

6 STEPS OF THE SCIENTIFIC METHOD



How to apply the six steps.

1. **Make an observation:** Bring children's attention to their reflections in the mirror.
2. **Ask a question:** "If you're small in the mirror, how far are you?"
3. **Form a hypothesis:** Come up with theories whether their reflections can be seen depending on where they stand.
4. **Make a prediction:** Ask them to guess if they can see themselves in the mirror and whether their reflections would be the same size if they stand at different distances.
5. **Test the prediction:** Position them at different spots.
6. **Use results to make new predictions:** Conduct another experiment to find out if they can see what is on picture cards at different distances to the mirror.



Get a sneak peek of Agape Little Uni. @ Clementi's garden at go.gov.sg/gardentransformation, or scan this QR code. It might give you some ideas for your own garden makeover!



Q&A HOW TO CREATE A CONDUCTIVE SETTING FOR ENJOYABLE AND MEANINGFUL PLAY.



FOR PARENTS

Q How do I help my toddler who is reluctant to join in play activities with others?

Playing with peers promotes skills such as socialising, sharing, taking turns and resolving conflicts. However, many children are naturally hesitant in unfamiliar situations or around new people. Here are some strategies to help your toddler adapt:

- > **Actively practise with your child.** Take turns adding blocks to a tower and cue your child by saying "my turn" and "your turn". Use toys like teddy bears, action figures or dolls to ask for turns. Give specific praise such as "nice sharing".
- > **Discover the difference.** Some toddlers need more time and patience from adults to feel safe in unfamiliar situations. Look for behavioural patterns. Are some places more difficult to adjust to than others? Does your toddler have a tougher time with activities with more stimulation from sounds and lights? Exercise greater sensitivity to help your child in these environments.
- > **Acknowledge emotions.** Young children often do not have the words to express how they feel, and may act aggressively or have a tantrum. Acknowledge, validate and name your toddler's feelings.
- > **Plan playdates.** Start by inviting one or two friends home and keep the session short, under an hour. Gradually introduce playdates with new friends and in new environments, such as a park.

Q What are some considerations for setting up learning centres to encourage children to explore and discover?

Setting up learning centres in the classroom is a good way to pique children's curiosity. Learning centres enable children to make sense of the world around them through different types of play, including role-play and dramatisation. These opportunities help nurture a sense of wonder, engagement, appreciation and creativity.

1. **Provide meaningful pretend play.** Settings that relate to real life in the dramatic corner, such as a supermarket or clinic, let children act out roles. Support their play with questions like "What ingredients can we buy to replace the missing items in our shopping list?". Such play develops their problem-solving and social skills. Include non-fiction books related to the theme of the learning centre.
2. **Plan challenging tasks.** Extend children's learning by getting them to come up with questions and find out the answers. At the science corner, supply items such as magnifying glasses, measuring tapes and recording sheets to promote observation, prediction and experimentation.
3. **Provide ample space and props.** Make sure there is space for group play. Loose parts, manipulatives and photos of possible play ideas prompt children on what they can do and can evoke new ideas.
4. **Encourage peer interaction.** Plan open-ended tasks for pair or group play. For example, invite children to brainstorm how to build a tower that can support a small toy on top. Provide activity cards with similar problem-solving activities. Through discussions, they will learn to build on each other's ideas and think of ways to complete a task.

Observe children's responses to evaluate the effectiveness of the learning centre in achieving its objectives and desired outcomes. The information can be used to modify the resources and materials in the learning centre, and plan for extension activities to build on children's learning.



FOR EDUCATORS



HEPSI PRIYADHARSINI is a Senior Occupational Therapist at the Child Development Unit, Khoo Teck Puat – National University Children's Medical Institute, National University Hospital. An advocate for play for all children, she has 15 years' experience in the field of early intervention and special education, including play-based interventions.



ELSIE TAN-CHUA is the Principal of Living Sanctuary Kindergarten and an ECDA Fellow. She believes that all types of play promote exploration and thinking in children. She seeks to create a culture of innovation to help the early childhood sector grow.

THRIVE

TIPS AND IDEAS FOR THE PHYSICAL, LANGUAGE, COGNITIVE AND SOCIO-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF YOUR CHILD



Long before taxis, hand-pulled rickshaws were a popular mode of public transport in Singapore. They were banned in 1947 to protect the welfare of rickshaw pullers.

learn



18 How museums expand children's awareness of the world

grow



21 Celebrate Hari Raya Haji with homemade pulut hitam

play



22 Give teachers a photo frame made by yours truly



Hands-on experiences at the National Museum of Singapore help children gain an appreciation of their history and culture

DISCOVERY CHANNEL

Museums are avenues of learning where children acquire knowledge of their heritage and values, and of their place in the world.

Museums are full of exciting stories just waiting to be discovered. The National Museum of Singapore (NMS), for instance, houses a vast collection of objects and materials that weave together rich narratives about Singapore and its people. Told through artefacts that range from 3D animations of natural history drawings to toys from an earlier era, these stories shine the spotlight on our past, cultural heritage, values and belief systems, and have the ability to shape children's view of the world.

"Early exposure to museums nurtures children's budding curiosity. It helps them discover more about the world, and about themselves in relation to the world," says Ms Lock Hui Qi, Assistant Manager (Curatorial & Programmes) at NMS.

In particular, stories about our nation and the early settlers who built it – including how they overcame hardships – facilitate character-building and the formation of positive values and dispositions such as grit, perseverance and resilience. Taking this into account, ECDA partnered with the National Library Board (NLB) and NMS together with early childhood professionals and art and drama specialists to develop the new 'Creative Conversations: Shaping Our Future' resource kit for educators and parents.

CONNECTING PAST AND PRESENT

The resource kit adopts a storytelling approach to harness the richness of various places like NMS as educational spaces to support children's learning beyond the classroom. It contains hands-on and interactive activities and experiences to enrich children's appreciation and understanding of Singapore's history, heritage and culture while developing their language, cognitive and social-emotional skills. Children are encouraged to role-play and dramatise to enable them to walk in the characters'

shoes. This helps them develop a better understanding of the past and fosters values such as empathy and compassion. There are also activities and book recommendations with follow-up suggestions, such as planning a family outing to places of cultural interest like Chinatown, Kampong Glam and Little India.

Visits to the museum can also foster family bonds and inter-generational conversations. "The artefacts on display can spark meaningful conversations among family members and prompt them to share about their favourite objects and family stories," says Ms Lock.

Parents can readily use the kit while having a family day out at the museum. "Because the kit is fun, it holds children's interest as they learn about our values, culture and heritage," says Mr Kenny Teh, father of Elliot Teh, 5. "Even as Singapore progresses at a rapid pace, it is important not to forget our roots."

DESIGNED WITH KIDS IN MIND

Besides the kit, other NMS resources also present artefacts in formats familiar to young children. Examples include



The 'Creative Conversations' kit comes with fun stories and activity cards



'Get Curious! The Official Interactive Family Guide to the National Museum of Singapore', which introduces over 40 objects in the museum's permanent galleries; and the 'Early Learning Resources' set of booklets, which organises artefacts according to the alphabet, colours and numbers. Later this year, NMS will launch a second set of booklets based on the themes of shapes and opposites.

"These resources can be integrated into the preschool curriculum to achieve age-appropriate learning outcomes, spark children's curiosity, and help them discover the history of Singapore in an accessible manner," says Ms Matilda Hong, Assistant Manager (Curatorial & Programmes) at NMS.

In addition, the museum runs children's programmes that offer greater engagement with the exhibits. A popular one is the 'Be A Young' workshop series, which is based on the permanent galleries and lets children take on different personas to experience Singapore in the past – an explorer, toymaker apprentice or tourist. NMS has also launched an online game version of the 'Be A Young Toymaker' workshop. This interactive game, which is hosted on TinyTap, allows children to explore old games and toys from the 1950s and 1960s.

Such programmes enable parents and educators to engage children in conversation, which in turn encourages two-way communication and hones their language development and critical thinking skills. "Through interactive, immersive exhibits, the museum provides a fun and safe environment for children to explore things they are unfamiliar with and develop new modes of learning and enquiry. These skills are foundational in getting them curious about the wider world they live in," says Ms Hong.

WHAT'S ON SHOW

Current and upcoming NMS exhibitions for the whole family.



Home, Truly: Growing Up with Singapore, 1950s to the Present

Till 29 Aug 2021

This exhibition showcases moments and experiences in Singapore's past and present that express our identity and collective memory. Collect the 'My Photo Scrapbook' guide at the gallery entrance, which lists 10 exhibition highlights to look out for.

Picturing the Pandemic: A Visual Record of COVID-19 in Singapore

Till 29 Aug 2021

Singapore's pandemic experience is presented through photographs, films, artefacts and stories. Use the 'Family Guide' to talk to children about the exhibits. It is a good way to engage them on contemporary issues related to Singapore.



Museum artefacts can spark children's budding curiosity

STRIKE UP A CREATIVE CONVERSATION

'Creative Conversations: Shaping Our Future' explores the lives of Singapore's early settlers, their trades and occupations, and their values and dispositions which were passed down through generations.

Dr Jacqueline Chung, ECDA Fellow and Academic Director of Anglican Preschool Services, notes that the activities in the kit focus on children's discovery of the world, a key learning area under the Nurturing Early Learners (NEL) Curriculum. "Through these activities, children develop skills such as observing, comparing, classifying, predicting and questioning. These skills support children's ability to communicate what they think and feel, and the way they make connections with the world around them," says Dr Chung.

She offers three tips on using the kit.

- > **Read stories in an expressive, animated manner.** "Adults who look and sound interested and enthusiastic have a powerful influence on children's responses."
- > **Resist talking too much.** "Encourage children to describe, compare and contrast items in the kit. Ask them what they find interesting and why. Conversations should be back-and-forth contributions between adult and child."
- > **Share your personal experiences relating to items in the kit.** "Children like to hear stories that involve people they know. Invite grandparents to also share their anecdotes, which make for wonderful bonding moments."



GET THE DIGITAL VERSION!

Download the 'Creative Conversations: Shaping Our Future' resource kit at go.gov.sg/shapingourfuture or scan this QR code.

Don't forget to use the hashtag **#StartCreativeConversations** when posting about it on social media!



win



→ Three lucky readers will each receive a 'Creative Conversations: Shaping Our Future' resource kit.

Simply answer this question:
Name one activity your child can do with the 'Creative Conversations: Shaping Our Future' resource kit.

Send your answer to beanstalk@mediacorp.com.sg with your name and contact details.
Closing date: **20 August 2021**



Worlds Apart

Teach children to appreciate different countries, cultures and people from all walks of life.

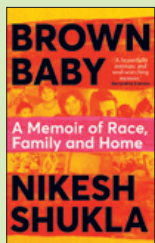


➤ Mark & Mary Explore Indonesia

By Ben Loh

Join Mark and Mary on a travelling edutainment experience as they tour the world. In this part of the *Around the World* series, Mark and Mary explore Indonesia and discover exciting places and national dishes. This is a great book to learn about the country's world heritage through beautiful illustrations.

Contributed by Khirti Belani, Associate Librarian, National Library Board



➤ Brown Baby: A Memoir of Race, Family and Home

By Nikesh Shukla

OverDrive link: nlb.overdrive.com/media/5352225

Funny yet heart-wrenching, Shukla's memoir is like a confidante to anxious parents raising children in an increasingly turbulent world. *Brown Baby* offers unapologetic advice on talking to children about diversity – be it gender, race or heritage – and preparing them for an uncertain and often hostile world, while showing that it is possible to believe in hope.

Contributed by Lisa Zuliana Binte Zulkifli, Associate Librarian, National Library Board

Events @ NLB



Check out these online Zoom programmes.



Toddler Songs and Rhymes

A fun-filled virtual session with music and lyrics suitable for children aged 1 to 3.



Food Allergy and Eczema

Join this webinar to discover new findings in food allergies and eczema in babies and young children.

Free admission. Registration is required. For more information on these and other programmes, visit go.gov.sg/nlb-golibrary. Online resources such as storytelling videos are also available at nlb.gov.sg/discoverreads/diy-resources.

Rice And Shine

Malay for "black sticky rice", *pulut hitam* is a local dessert that packs a healthy punch.

Pulut hitam

MAKES
4



Follow these steps

1. In a pot, add rice, water and pandan leaves. Cover with a lid and bring to boil.



2. Lower heat to simmer for 45–60 minutes, until the rice becomes soft but not mushy. Aim for a porridge-like consistency. Stir occasionally and add water if needed.



TIP! To reduce cooking time, soak rice beforehand for 4–5 hours or overnight.

3. Add sugar to the rice. Stir to combine well.



4. In another pot, mix salt with coconut milk and cook over low heat. Stir well and set aside.



5. Scoop rice into small bowls and drizzle coconut milk on top. It may also be chilled before serving.



Purple (G)rain

Black glutinous rice is **unprocessed** and has **more fibre and antioxidants** than white rice. Because the outermost layer of bran is intact, it takes longer to cook. If you prefer a **healthier pulut hitam**, reduce the amount of sugar and use low-fat milk instead of coconut milk.

→ WHAT YOU'LL NEED

- 150g black glutinous rice, washed several times and drained
- 5 cups water
- 4 pandan leaves, tied into a knot
- 100g palm sugar, finely chopped (or brown sugar)
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 cup coconut milk (light or reduced fat)



Black glutinous rice



Pandan leaves



Water



Palm sugar



Salt



Coconut milk

The Whole Truth

➤ **Fill at least a quarter** of your child's plate with wholegrains such as brown rice and wholemeal pasta. Like black glutinous rice, they contain fibre, antioxidants and phytochemicals that help reduce the risk of chronic diseases such as heart disease and diabetes, while assisting in weight management.

Find out more at www.healthhub.sg/live-healthy/183/whole_grains_wise_choice

FOR YOUR DAILY DOSE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD INSPIRATION...

Grow@Beanstalk is your one-stop early childhood (EC) resource portal for inspiring stories, useful tips and activity ideas, as well as the latest happenings from the EC sector.

grow@Beanstalk

Visit www.ecda.gov.sg/growatbeanstalk, or scan the QR code



It's not just work when you work with children. If you aspire to make a lifelong impact, join us as an Early Childhood Professional to shape the next generation.

SHAPE
OUR TOMORROW

Start a career in EC at www.ecda.gov.sg/ShapeOurTomorrow, or scan the QR code



'Like' our Facebook page to stay updated and informed on the EC sector. You can also engage in healthy discussions with fellow educators and parents.

Beanstalk

Connect with us at www.facebook.com/BeanstalkSingapore, or scan the QR code



Check out our Instagram page for exciting developments in the EC sector. Be inspired by what educators say about giving a good start to every child.

Beanstalk

Follow us at [@beanstalksingapore](https://www.instagram.com/beanstalksingapore), or scan the QR code



play



Photo courtesy of letsdosomethingcrafty.com

→ WHAT YOU'LL NEED

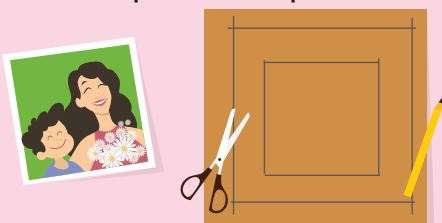


Say Cheese!

Make a special frame for your favourite photo or a drawing of you and your teacher.

Follow these steps

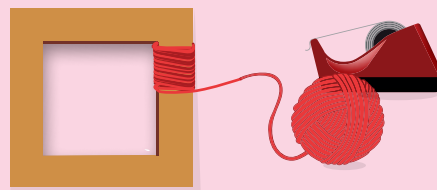
1. Using the photo as a guide, draw and cut* out the outline of the frame on the cardboard. Make sure to allow extra space around the photo.



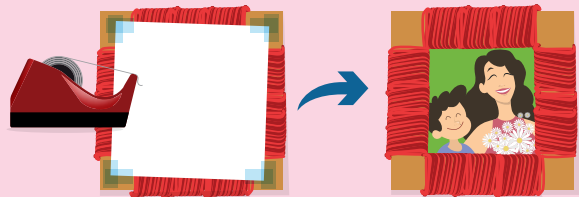
2. With the help of an adult, use a penknife* and a ruler to cut out the middle of the cardboard so that the photo can be seen.



3. Wind a long piece of yarn around each side of the frame. Secure the ends with tape at the back of the frame.



4. Stick the photo on the back of the frame with tape.



*Please ensure that there is adult supervision when using sharp objects such as penknives and scissors.



Snap & Show

Send a picture of your child's photo frame craft to beanstalk@mediacorp.com.sg or post it as a public post on your Facebook with the hashtag #BeanstalkCraft. Your child's masterpiece could be featured in the next issue of *Beanstalk!*

This craft is adapted from letsdosomethingcrafty.com.

FIVE WAYS TO APPRECIATE HOME, TRULY

AS SINGAPORE TURNS 56 THIS AUGUST, MARK THE OCCASION TOGETHER AS A FAMILY.



1 REVISIT OUR HISTORY THROUGH ART

Children's book author and illustrator Quek Hong Shin depicts a more nostalgic time in his drawings displayed at the Singapore Chinese Cultural Centre (singaporeccc.org.sg) until 31 August 2021. *Through the Eyes of a Child* captures *kampong* life, vignettes of old Chinatown residents going about their daily business, and places like Toa Payoh in the early days. Parents and grandparents can share their own childhood memories as they walk through the exhibition, and reflect on how Singapore has evolved over the decades.



2 WHIP UP A UNIQUELY SINGAPORE DISH

One of the tasks in the *MasterChef Singapore* cooking competition called for participants to create 'New Singaporean' dishes that showcase local produce and flavours. Challenge yourself and junior to do the same. This is a good opportunity to discuss your favourite local dishes and explore our melting pot of cultures. Then bring your child to the supermarket to shop for the ingredients and test out your newly-created recipe. You can also try out the recipe on page 21!

3 CREATE A TIME CAPSULE

Time capsules are a great way to record a time in history and help children understand the link between past and future. Ask each family member what comes to mind when they think about Singapore. Collect items that hold special meaning for each one, and put them into a box. These could be your wishes for the nation, drawings or photos taken at a favourite attraction, or newspaper cuttings, for example. Seal the capsule, and plan to open it next National Day or at some later point in the future.



4 HOST YOUR OWN GAME SHOW

Take a cue from the Channel 5 game show *We Are Singaporeans* which covers topics ranging from history to culture to trivia. Come up with your own Singapore-themed quiz using apps such as *Kahoot!* or *Quizizz*. You can play together as a family at home or engage in some friendly competition with relatives and friends via video on these game-based platforms. It is a fun way for children to learn about this place we call home. Get aunts, uncles or cousins to play the role of the celebrities to ask the questions and provide the clues.



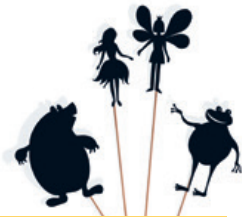
5 EXPLORE OUR ICONIC GREEN SPACES

Check out the guided walks on the National Parks Board website or use the information to plan your own ramble at one of our many parks. One of the latest is the newly-upgraded National Orchid Garden, where more than 1,000 orchid species and hybrids are on display, some of which are named after famous Singaporeans. Children get to experience nature up close and find out more about Singapore's journey as a garden city.

Do adhere to **Safe Management Measures** when you are outdoors or visiting places.

WE'VE GOT MAIL!

Parents share tips to help children explore and make sense of the world.



✉ Learning can take place anywhere and at any time, be it in the classroom, just a few steps beyond (like in the community garden) or miles away. All it takes is for the child and the adult, such as a parent or grandparent, to have the right attitude and mindset. Adults should ask the right questions to facilitate children's critical thinking and inquiry. This may require explicit, adult-directed instruction and task repetition at first. But over time, children will learn to ask critical questions that allow for the acquisition of knowledge and the understanding of concepts.



Teachable moments can happen anywhere and at any time

CLAIR CHUA, mother of a boy, aged 22 months



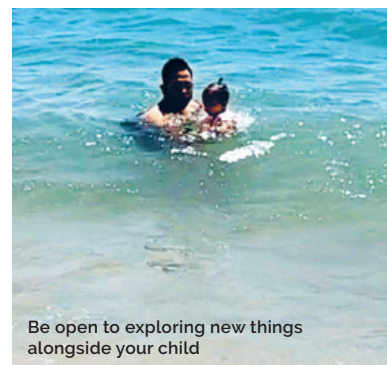
Being in nature exposes children to animals and plants

✉ We make it a point to bring our children to explore different places and embrace nature every weekend. They tell us what they observe, and we talk about our experiences before bedtime. Children are naturally curious, and we want them to remain inquisitive. They mingle with our neighbours of different races, which promotes their awareness and understanding of our multi-cultural society. For example, they learned from the Indian family living above us that it is a religious practice to ring a bell at 6pm every day.

DEBORAH TAN, mother of three, aged 2½, 1½ and 3 months

✉ To get our daughter to explore new things, we as parents need to be open to doing things that we ourselves may not have done when we were young. On windy days, we go kite-flying. Recently, we took her to the beach and played in the sea together. We give her a choice, such as whether to ride her scooter, wagon or balance bike. By allowing her to make her own decisions, she will feel empowered to explore and learn about the world around her.

NERWANY ROSLAN, mother of a girl, aged 19 months



Be open to exploring new things alongside your child

HELP CHILDREN EMBRACE DIFFERENCES

Parents, share with us examples of how you encourage your child to embrace differences through their interactions with others. Attach a photo with your anecdote and your submission may appear in the next issue of *Beanstalk!*

Send your story to beanstalk@mediacorp.com.sg with your name and contact details.

DIM THE LIGHTS

We showed you how to make a shadow puppet theatre in the Apr-Jun 2021 issue. We hope it made storytelling more fun!



TAN KAI JIE, 3



SANVI SHARATH, 5



ELIJAH AND NOAH WONG, 6 and 4

We have three **\$30 UNIQGIFT vouchers** to give away to the best letters!

fun times



ON THE HUNT

How many of these can you find in your neighbourhood?

- MRT station sign ✓
- Mimosa ✓
- Pigeon ✓
- Ice cream push cart ✓
- Police officer ✓
- Mailbox ✓
- Playground ✓
- Tea ✓
- Recycling bin ✓
- Public bus ✓
- Overhead bridge ✓
- Singapore flag ✓
- Hawker centre ✓
- Fire hydrant ✓

➔ Hey Parents!

Scavenger hunts offer many benefits! Through this activity, children are encouraged to explore their surroundings, and strengthen their language and communication skills while honing their observation skills. It is a good physical activity as children move from place to place.

