


# The Future of Early Childhood Education

The future is impossible to predict. The only thing we can guarantee is that change will most certainly take place.

In fact, looking at how the early childhood educational landscape has changed in the last decade alone, we can expect that the changes taking place in the next few decades will be exponential and significant.

What can we expect? How can we cope? How will this impact our teachers and our children? These are important questions that we need to ask ourselves if we hope to prepare the sector to embrace the changes and be ready to tackle them.



*"Equipping our children with technological literacy will prepare them for life in a knowledge-based economy."*

One of the key and most visible changes is the introduction of technology in classrooms. Teachers are now expected to **harness technology** and revolutionise the way students learn. With powerful resources available, they can engage children in more innovative ways, deepen their understanding of various topics, expand their creativity and help them find solutions to problems.

For example, children who are not keen on reading books may become interested when they are provided the opportunity to research or obtain information from digital sources. The same goes for children who have trouble with mathematical concepts – exploring the right software or 'app' to guide them will go a long way in supporting their learning.



The fact is, our 21st century children find technology very exciting. Equipping them with **technological literacy** will prepare them for life in a knowledge-based economy. When used appropriately, technology and interactive media indeed have tremendous potential to nurture early learning and development.



**imagine  
the future  
for us**





# Envisioning the Future Classroom

In the early childhood setting, toys and other educational tools are evolving. We will see more 3-dimensional technology-enabled toys in classrooms, which allow children to interact actively with, and even do their own programming on.



Just take a look at the Learning Pod featured at 'The Future Of Us' exhibition! Exciting elements of the future are infused into playing and learning. A teaching assistant robot presents new possibilities of advanced robotics technology, which add to the magic of learning and play. Imagine how thrilled our children would be, having such an assistant in the classroom!

The future classroom will also include forms of media other than books and printed resources. Computers and tablets will become ubiquitous for learning. With dynamic information readily available at children's fingertips, the challenge for them is to sieve through the vast amount of information and discern what is true, reliable and relevant to them.

**Media literacy** is a skill that can be taught from young. After all, children are being exposed to new media at much younger ages, with easy access to smartphones and touch screen pads. Media literacy is about guiding children through their natural disposition of curiosity and inquiry, and fostering critical thinking about the messages or information they receive. This also raises the issue of **cyber awareness**, and teaching children how to use the internet and social media safely and responsibly.



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## The Children Are Our Future

Why would we still need schools and teachers in the future, if technology is so advanced?

*"The key to the future of Singapore's early childhood education landscape lies in the hands of our teachers."*

School is where children **build character, learn values, and acquire social skills**. As children are becoming more influenced by the media, there will be an even greater need for schools to inculcate good values and facilitate social and emotional development. These help lay a firm foundation for success in life.

The key to the future of Singapore's early childhood education landscape lies in the hands of our teachers. Teachers are our children's educational guides, facilitators and assessors. With teachers who are forward-thinking, well-trained and knowledgeable in **future-learning skills** and adept at applying technology for the best possible outcome, our children and our society will be in good hands.



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