



HAPPY, HEALTHY TEACHERS, happy healthy children. As role models, educators should be motivated to take care of themselves. And this is something the Methodist Church of the Incarnation Kindergarten (MCI Kindergarten) takes to heart.

“A workplace that values staff well-being is a workplace with a workforce that is motivated and productive,” says Mrs Priscilla Low, 58, the kindergarten’s principal. “We believe that looking after the well-being of our staff pays off in more ways than one. In our kindergarten, we find that healthy and happy staff perform better at their jobs, take less medical leave and are more likely to remain longer with an organisation.”

In MCI Kindergarten’s case, being SPARK-certified has complemented its efforts in promoting staff well-being.

“Working towards SPARK certification has helped broaden our perspective,” says Mrs Low. “Promoting staff well-being at work should not be a one-man show at management level. Staff should also be empowered to take charge of their own wellness.”

Centres can help their staff to do so by gathering feedback and giving them opportunities to propose and implement ideas to improve their own well-being.

At SPARK-certified Methodist Church of the Incarnation Kindergarten, staff are empowered to take charge of their own wellness.



Mdm Linda Lim teaching children good food habits.

STAFF Matters



Mrs Priscilla Low (front row, second from left) with staff members of MCI Kindergarten.

The Singapore Pre-school Accreditation Framework, or SPARK, was introduced in 2011 and is an endorsement of the quality of a pre-school and its programmes. The Quality Rating Scale (QRS) is a key part of the framework and it provides quality benchmarks to guide pre-schools in their improvement efforts. It also provides practical indicators on what pre-schools can do to promote staff well-being. These include organising a variety of activities to promote a healthy lifestyle and obtaining feedback and suggestions from staff to improve their well-being.

Educator Madam Linda Lim says the centre, which is located at Teck Whye Lane, does a lot to ensure the well-being of herself and her colleagues. For example, staff lunches are prepared using less salt and oil. “We are encouraged to attend courses on stress, health and wellness management. There is constant awareness in our daily practice that we must act as role models to the children, and this motivates us to look after ourselves,” says Mdm Lim, 60.

After all, good health stems from healthy habits, and it is important to start young. “Good healthy habits acquired in the early years of a child’s life lays a foundation for lifelong well-being. Research has shown that health is a major factor contributing to a person’s learning capacity,” says Mrs Low. “We therefore put considerable effort into inculcating good health, safety and hygiene habits in the children.”

The centre does this by incorporating health topics such as myopia prevention and dental hygiene into the core curriculum, supplemented by teaching and learning resources from the Health Promotion Board (HPB). Lessons are also planned with health awareness as an objective. The children are taught that it is important to eat right. Sugary drinks and fast food are discouraged. Our young ones learn to make informed food choices by looking for food and drinks bearing the HPB’s Healthier Choice symbol. ♥



STAYING HEALTHY MENTALLY

At the Methodist Church of the Incarnation Kindergarten, children are taught that just like physical health, mental health is also important to their development. To build a positive mental outlook in the children, there is a classroom rule that they should only say positive things to each other. The centre also appoints children as health ambassadors to advocate healthy lifestyles, both mental and physical.