

READY FOR THE FUTURE

A LOOK AT HOW THE EARLY CHILDHOOD (EC) SECTORS ARE SCALING NEW HEIGHTS OF EXCELLENCE.



The children of today are the leaders of tomorrow — and as Prime Minister Mr Lee Hsien Loong pointed out in his 2017 National Day Rally, more must be done to give these young ones a good start in their early years. “At an early age, there are specific windows in a child’s development... you must catch that window or you miss it,” he said, before announcing plans to uplift the EC sector.

JOINING HANDS FOR SYNERGY

Partnerships are key to driving excellence in the EC sector. The Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) has forged partnerships across the people,



public and private sectors in Singapore to transform the sector. For instance, ECDA works closely with agencies such as the Housing and Development Board (HDB) and the National Parks Board (NParks) in the location of child care centres. It also engages key operators to uplift quality of pre-schools, as well as training institutes to upskill EC educators. These partnerships further the goal of enabling every child in Singapore to have easy access to quality and affordable EC services, as well as provide more meaningful and fulfilling careers for EC educators.

RAISING PROFESSIONALISM AND EXCELLENCE

Building a strong pool of dedicated EC professionals is important, noted Minister for Social and Family Development Mr Desmond Lee at the ECDA Scholarships and Awards Presentations Ceremony 2017 (read about the ceremony on Page 7). A new National Institute of Early Childhood Development (NIEC), under the ambit of the Ministry of Education (MOE), is a critical step in this effort. It aims to strengthen the EC fraternity through training, giving aspiring educators a strong start in their careers and more professional development opportunities for in-service educators.

NIEC will have the scale to develop curricula with different specialisations, among them music, art, mother tongue and special education. “Within a larger fraternity,

DID YOU KNOW?

As an EC educator, you can chart and track your professional development and sign up for various training courses via **ONE@ECDA**. As an Operator, you, too, can, submit online applications for teacher registration and nominate staff for training courses.



the faculty will have more opportunities for professional development and progression,” said Prime Minister Mr Lee Hsien Loong at last year’s National Day Rally, where he announced the opening of NIEC. The institute will take its first batch of students in 2019.

A CALL TO JOIN THE EC FRATERNITY

Educators, educarers and centre leaders are the heart of quality pre-school education. Join the EC fraternity and make a difference in the lives of those who matter — the children. With continuous strengthening of the EC sector, EC professionals can look forward to:

- Diverse job opportunities
- More senior specialist or leadership positions
- Competitive salaries, matched to competency and responsibilities

As an EC professional, you can avail yourself of the wide repertoire of programmes to support your journey to deepen your knowledge, understanding and skills. These comprise Professional Development Programmes, Continuing Professional Development courses and Scholarships & Training Awards, including the SkillsFuture Awards — Advanced Diploma in Early Childhood Leadership (ADECL) for centre leadership, and Advanced Diploma in Early Childhood Teaching & Learning (ADECT) for teaching leadership. ❤️



We are doing three things to build up pre-schools and give young children a good start: More places for zero to four, better quality for five to six, and raising the standing of teachers and carers. These changes will benefit all pre-school kids.

Prime Minister Mr Lee Hsien Loong at the 2017 National Day Rally

A SECTOR IN TRANSFORMATION

Collectively, the EC sector has been progressing since 2012. Several schemes and initiatives have been put in place to make pre-school services:

MORE ACCESSIBLE

- ▶ The number of full-day pre-school places have increased by more than **50,000** since 2012. Over **40,000** places will be added by 2023. Early Year Centres (EYCs) for children aged 2 months to 4 years will also be established to meet the needs of working parents with younger children. Many of these will be sited at new HDB residential developments, bringing quality EC services closer to young families.
- ▶ In tandem with this, and to provide a smooth service continuum for parents and children, MOE will establish **50** kindergartens by 2023 — improving access to high-quality and affordable pre-school places.

MORE AFFORDABLE

- ▶ Means-tested subsidies for child care and kindergarten have been enhanced, benefiting some **45,000** lower- and middle-income families. The Anchor Operator (AOP) and Partner Operator (POP) schemes have also stabilised fees, with the median fees of child care falling for the first time in more than a decade.

OF HIGHER QUALITY:

- ▶ The **Early Years Development Framework** and **Nurturing Early Learners** curriculum resources create quality learning experiences for children, while the **Singapore Preschool Accreditation Framework (SPARK)** gives parents an objective measure of pre-school quality. In 2017, Parliament passed the **Early Childhood Development Centres Act** and **Early Childhood Manpower Plan 2016** to raise baseline standards across child care centres and kindergartens.