

CULTURAL CONNECTIONS

LEARNING TO APPRECIATE THE RICHNESS OF THE MOTHER TONGUE LANGUAGE.



Children learning Tamil through the art of Rangoli drawing at St. Francis of Assisi Kindergarten (Jurong West)

Having been a Tamil Language teacher for 13 years, Mrs Usharani Ramu understands the importance of Mother Tongue Languages (MTLs). "MTL classes are not just about learning the language," says the educator from St. Francis of Assisi Kindergarten (Jurong West). "It's a time for teachers to share the meaning of cultural festivals with children and introduce them to various aspects of their heritage." These include folklore, food and ethnic wear.

Learning about their culture and heritage in their Mother Tongue also strengthens a child's mastery of the language. "There are so many words that are unique to a specific race, culture or heritage that are simply

non-translatable," explains Ms Idayu Hussain, a Malay Language teacher at SGM Murni Childcare Development Centre. An example is 'jelak', a Malay word that describes the feeling when you've had too much to eat of a particularly rich food. Many of us are familiar with the sensation, but to describe it succinctly in an English word proves impossible.

Mastering MTLs has other benefits beyond heightening cultural awareness. As Ms Gao Rong Fang shares, it can also bring families closer and strengthen bonds. "A K1 student's grandmother expressed that her grandson could now communicate a lot better with her in his Mother Tongue," recalls the Mandarin teacher at MOE Kindergarten @ Dazhong.

An Experiential Platform

These real-life applications of MTLs will take centre stage at the upcoming MTL Symposium (MTLS) 2018, organised by Ministry of Education. The theme for this year, "Our Mother Tongues As Living Languages", reflects its focus on the relevance of MTLs to daily life. Participants can pick up useful tips on how to use MTL effectively through workshops and sharing sessions. Other highlights include exhibitions and performances, as well as an award ceremony to recognise outstanding preschool MTL educators.



Learning Chinese Language through the Shared Book Approach at MOE Kindergarten @ Dazhong

FOSTER YOUR CHILD'S MTL APPRECIATION



- ▶ **STRIKE A BALANCE** "Expose children to English and their MTL during daily interactions," suggests Ms Hussain.
- ▶ **EMBRACE TRADITION** "Play cultural games, attend plays and watch videos of MTL performances together," advises Mrs Ramu.
- ▶ **READ TOGETHER** "When parents and children read an MTL book together, they can have a discussion about the book. Ask questions like 'What do you see?' or 'What will happen next?' in your Mother Tongue," recommends Ms Gao.

SAVE THE DATE!

MTL SYMPOSIUM 2018
 18 August 2018 (Saturday)
 11am to 8pm
 Suntec Singapore Convention & Exhibition Centre Level 4, Halls 405 & 406



Learning the Malay language through cultural traditions at SGM Murni Childcare

Families can also rediscover the relevance and joy of using MTL. It is important to encourage parents to participate in the various programmes. Ms Hussain says, "I believe that when children see their parents' efforts and how involved they are, it will further spark their interest in the Mother Tongue Language." ♥

NURTURING YOUNG MINDS: BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT CAN HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON A CHILD'S BRAIN GROWTH AND HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT. FIND OUT HOW AT THE ECDA EARLY CHILDHOOD CONFERENCE 2018.

Now in its sixth year, the ECDA Early Childhood Conference to be held this October will focus on the theme of **"Nurturing Young Minds: Building Strong Foundations"**. The conference is an exploration of creating quality experiences that shape a child's brain and holistic development in a child's early years. There are more than 40 interactive workshops and eight exciting Learning Journeys lined up during the Conference. For the Learning Journeys, you get to visit the Artground, Asian Civilisations Museum, ECDA Fellows' Centres and more. Parents and children are also welcome to check out the child-centric exhibition. Enjoy the interactive performances and take part in fun activities that promote play, communication, relationship building and other aspects to support your children's brain development, learning and well-being.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



Dr Gigi Luk

Associate Professor
of Education,
Harvard Graduate
School of Education



Ms Goh Ai Yat

Consultant of SBF Group &
Visual Thinking Trainer



**Early Childhood
Conference 2018**

5 & 6 Oct 2018
(FRIDAY & SATURDAY)

**Suntec Singapore Convention
& Exhibition Centre**

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

ECDA AWARDS 2018 PRESENTATION CEREMONY

Join us on 5 October (Friday) as we honour the achievements of outstanding and promising EC Professionals committed to deliver high quality early childhood care and education, and centres that excel in teaching and learning, as well as innovative practices.

SPARK CERTIFICATE PRESENTATION CEREMONY

Come celebrate on 6 October (Saturday) with a special group of preschools that have achieved their SPARK Certification, which recognises their continued efforts in providing quality preschool education.

LEARNING JOURNEYS

Choose from eight exciting learning journeys to discover the learning possibilities beyond the preschool classrooms at the Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority of Singapore, Artground, Asian Civilisations Museum, Far Eastern Kindergarten, Gardens by the Bay, Health Promotion Board, Living Sanctuary Kindergarten and The Caterpillar's Cove Child Development and Study Centre.

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS

Dr Gigi Luk, Associate Professor of Education, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Dr Luk's area of interest includes connecting research and learning through the lens of cognitive neuroscience as well as how language experiences shape children's development and learning. Her research is highly relevant to brain and holistic development in the early years. EC professionals can learn how to enhance their existing pedagogical practices to develop children holistically.

Ms Goh Ai Yat, Consultant of SBF Group & Visual Thinking Trainer

A former senior banker, Ms Goh conducts programmes that promote an entrepreneurial mindset and agility in an ever-changing business environment. EC professionals will find visual thinking strategies a useful tool to facilitate and support children's learning. Strategies include helping children make sense of information through observations, making connections and synthesising them to make learning more effective and meaningful.