

NURTURING YOUNG MINDS: BUILDING STRONG FOUNDATIONS



Quality learning begins with educators. The Government is committed to supporting and developing our early childhood educators. Last year, we announced the establishment of the new National Institute for Early Childhood Development as the key training provider for the sector. This year, we launched a three-year national campaign to raise the profile of the sector and highlight the important role of our educators. We will provide enhanced training and resources to deepen the specialist expertise of our Mother Tongue Language teachers. We are also refining the SPARK Quality Rating Scale to include the 0 to 3 years to better support quality in the early years.

This year, some 39,000 children from 670 preschools took part in the 4th edition of 'Start Small Dream Big', a President's Challenge initiative. The children have collectively served more than 1.2 million hours on community service and raised over \$250,000 for various charity causes. We hope even more preschools, parents and partners will come together to support the children in their community efforts as we celebrate the 5th anniversary of 'Start Small Dream Big' next year.

Children thrive on warm and nurturing relationships. As the National Scientific Council on the Developing Children, Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, aptly pointed out: "Nurturing and stable relationships with caring adults are essential to healthy human development beginning from birth."

Quality relationships and learning experiences in early childhood have a deep and positive impact on a young child's brain and holistic development.

It is therefore timely that we have chosen "Nurturing Young Minds: Building Strong Foundations" as the theme for this year's Early Childhood Conference in October. We thank the 1,500 conference participants and over 10,000 exhibition visitors for making this event a huge success. We hope you have enjoyed the experience, and had opportunities to pick up practical tips and strategies for delivering quality learning experiences for our children.

At the conference, we gave out 18 ECDA Awards to outstanding and promising educators and preschools for their professional excellence and exemplary contributions to early childhood care and education. We also renewed the call for more trained educators to join and stay in the sector, as it continues to expand to meet increasing demand for preschool services.

Eugene

MR EUGENE LEONG

Chief Executive Officer
Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA)



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