Enhancing the Quality of Early Childhood Curriculum in Singapore

14th Meeting of the OECD Network on Early Childhood Education and Care
“Curriculum and Child Development”

10 December 2013
Wellington, New Zealand
Overview of Singapore’s ECEC Landscape

- Comprises kindergartens and child care centres overseen by the Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Kindergartens</th>
<th>Child Care Centres</th>
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<tr>
<td>Provide kindergarten education programme for children aged 4 to 6 ranging from Nursery to Kindergarten 2 classes</td>
<td>Provide child care services &amp; education programmes for children aged 18 months to 6</td>
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<td>Run 2 sessions a day</td>
<td>May offer full-day, half-day and flexible programmes to cater to the different working schedules of parents</td>
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<td>3 to 4 hours per session</td>
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<td>5 days a week</td>
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Approach to Early Childhood Education

• Quality ECE is accessible to all children:
  – Setting broad and clear guidelines for a baseline of quality programme and curriculum
  – Facilitating a variety of ECEC models and approaches for diversity and choice

• Focuses on 3 key levers of quality:
  – Teacher quality
  – Programme and curriculum quality
  – Centre quality
Enhancing Programme and Curriculum Quality

- **Early Years Development Framework (EYDF)**
  - Published in 2011
  - Standards & outcomes for quality care & learning practices for children aged 3 & below

- **Nurturing Early Learners – A Curriculum Framework for Kindergartens in Singapore (NEL Framework)**
  - Refreshed in 2012
  - Guidelines for designing & implementing quality education for children aged 4 to 6
Overview of the EYDF

ENVISIONING QUALITY FOR EARLY YEARS

Children being Secure, Confident, Safe and Healthy
Children being Involved, Engaged and Enquiring
Centre, Families and the Community Connecting and Relating

PILLARS AND GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The Developing Child
Developing secure attachments and confidence in children with nurturing adults

The Intentional Programme
Generating culturally and developmentally appropriate opportunities for children’s holistic development and learning in a safe and healthy environment

The Professional Educarer
Committing to professional standards and ethics in working with children, families and educarers’ own professional development

The Involved Family
Involving families as partners in the care, development and education of children

The Engaged Community
Engaging the community as support and resources for home and centre
EYDF Training Materials

- Trainer’s Manual
- Learner’s Guide
- EYDF Collaterals
Overview of NEL Framework

- Guided by our belief about children as learners
- Sets outcomes for pre-school education
- Lays foundation for desired outcomes of education
- Defines learning goals for 6 learning areas
- Sets guiding principles for teaching & learning
Overview of Education Outcomes

Key Stage Outcomes of Education

- Primary Education
- Secondary Education
- Post – Secondary Education

Desired Outcomes of Education

- Confident Person
- Self-directed Learner
- Active Contributor
- Concerned Citizen

Towards Primary/Secondary Education

Pre-school Education

Learning Goals
- In the following learning areas
  - Aesthetics & Creative Expression
  - Discovery of the World
  - Language & Literacy
  - Motor Skills Development
  - Numeracy
  - Social & Emotional Development

Learning Dispositions
- Perseverance
- Reflectiveness
- Appreciation
- Inventiveness
- Sense of Wonder & Curiosity
- Engagement

Key Stage Outcomes of Pre-school Education

- Know what is right and what is wrong
- Be willing to share and take turns with others
- Be able to relate to others
- Be curious and able to explore
- Be able to listen and speak with understanding
- Be comfortable and happy with themselves
- Have developed physical co-ordination, healthy habits, participate in and enjoy a variety of arts experiences
- Love their families, friends, teachers and school

Pre-school Education

Towards Primary/Secondary Education
Nurturing Early Learners (NEL): A Curriculum for Kindergartens in Singapore

- Comprehensive tool kit to guide quality teaching & learning
- Comprises 3 parts:
  a) NEL Framework
  b) NEL Educators’ Guide
  c) NEL Teaching & Learning Resources
- Complemented by resources to support teaching & learning of Mother Tongue Languages
Key Challenges & Moving Ahead

• Supporting and monitoring effective interpretation and implementation of curriculum and practices
  – providing guiding resources and training
  – working closely with ECDA

• Evaluating effectiveness of curriculum and practices in achieving learning goals and raising quality
  – promoting centre-based observation and documentation of children’s learning
  – encouraging self-monitoring and external evaluation of centre quality
Visit the following websites for more information and online version of the NEL Curriculum Framework & Educators’ Guide:
http://www.moe.gov.sg/education/preschool
http://www.ecda.gov.sg

THANK YOU