

# First Flight

Welcome to the first issue of **First Flight**, the MOE Kindergarten newsletter for families. The theme of this issue is 'On To A Strong Start!' which is the MOE Kindergartens' tagline. This theme underlines our belief that MOE Kindergartens will set children on to a strong start in life. As we welcome our second cohort of children this year, let us celebrate their development in the past year, and take a peek at behind-the-scene going-ons before the first day of school.

Warm wishes,  
The MOE Kindergarten team

## LEARNING AT MOE KINDERGARTEN

**Are kindergarten children too young to do a project? We don't think so. Children are curious, active, competent, and capable of learning almost anything, given the right opportunities and guidance. To spark their minds, our teachers skilfully facilitate and extend the children's learning experience. At the MOE Kindergartens, the Weeks of Wonder (WoW) project is something the children look forward to each term. Read on to find out what some of the children did for their projects in 2014.**

### Spiders Alive!

#### MOE Kindergarten @ Farrer Park

The children learnt about spiders and insects as part of the curriculum. One day, while they were at the playground, one child spotted a spider on the wall and remarked, "Can spiders bite us and eat us?"

This question piqued the interest of his classmates, who started asking more questions of their own:

"What do spiders eat?"

"How do spiders make their webs?"

"Is a spider's web sticky?"

"How do spiders grow?"

These interactions formed the basis of the WoW Project. Over a period of two-and-a-half weeks, the children initiated various activities to satiate their curiosity. They sought the answers to their questions through books, close observations of real spiders, and interviews with parents and Teacher Jannah, Head of the Science Department at Farrer Park Primary School.

They explored creating models of different types of webs, and used these to share what they had learnt with their peers.

Their handiwork were showcased at an exhibition where they proudly shared what they had learnt with family members, children from a neighbouring pre-school centre and Primary 1 pupils from Farrer Park Primary School.



The children sharing about spider webs with their families during the exhibition



The children creating spider webs with different materials and shapes



Jerica and Vianka looking for spiders and their webs in the school's garden



Presenting one of the webs to children from a neighbouring pre-school centre

"I was delighted at the good ideas the children came up with. They thought of games that could be played using the spider webs they created, enabling other children and their families to have fun while learning about spiders. This experience has allowed the children to direct their own learning, and built their confidence in expressing themselves as they shared their work with others."

- Teacher Surya Tewi





# Colourful Plants

## MOE Kindergarten @ Punggol View

As part of the **HI-Light Programme**, the children went on a field trip to Gardens By The Bay to learn more about plants. The colourful plants they saw during the trip caught their interest. They wanted to know why different plants had different colours. With the help of their teacher, they gathered information from the Internet, interviewed parents and visited a supermarket. Through these activities, they learnt more about the uses of colourful plants, in particular how these colours are used in food colouring. In a fun activity to apply what they had learnt, the children extracted colours from Pandan leaves and dragon fruit to make cookies and jelly.



The children learning how colours are useful to plants

**“Plants are green because they have chlorophyll!”**  
 – Elkan

**What is the Weeks of Wonder project?**

Based on a topic of their interest, the children set out to ask questions, find the answers and present what they've learnt. Through the projects, children learn to make decisions, in cooperation with their peers and in consultation with their teachers. They also experience the joy of self-motivated learning through exploration, self-direction and problem solving, which builds their confidence and strengthens their dispositions towards learning. Of the four WoW projects carried out in a year, two are conducted in English and two in the children's mother tongue languages, so that they are immersed in both languages.

**“Colourful flowers attract bees!”**  
 – Mea



The children having fun extracting colours from pandan leaves and dragon fruits



Tucking in to jelly made with colouring from dragon fruit!

**What is the HI-Light Programme about?**

The HI-Light Programme focuses on nurturing children holistically in six learning areas: Aesthetics and Creative Expression, Discovery of the World, Language and Literacy, Motor Skills Development, Numeracy, and Social and Emotional Development. Children do not compartmentalise their learning according to subjects, so we adopt an integrated approach to help children make meaningful connections across different learning areas.



# SNAPSHOTS

Have you ever wondered how our MOE Kindergarten Centre Heads and teachers spend their year-end holidays? Besides taking time to recharge during the 2014 November-December school break, they were hard at work preparing the centres for the new year, organising Orientation and attending training workshops! We are grateful to volunteers from neighbouring schools who joined us to set up the centres during their school vacation!



Students from Pei Hwa Secondary School helping to unpack resources at MOE Kindergarten @ Sengkang Green



Students from Dunman Secondary decorating the classroom for the new Kindergarten One children at MOE Kindergarten @ Tampines



Kindergarten children meeting one another for the first time during MOE Kindergarten @ Farrer Park's Orientation Day



Our Centre Heads and teachers attending workshops by MOE curriculum specialists to prepare them for the next term



The teachers trying out an outdoor activity during the holiday training workshop before it is implemented for the children

# THE FACES OF MOE KINDERGARTEN

The setting up of the MOE Kindergartens is a significant achievement for MOE and a valuable learning experience for everyone involved. Let's hear from the man who has been driving the MOE Kindergartens with the support of staff from MOE Headquarters and the kindergartens.



**Mr Liu Earnler**  
 Deputy Director, Pre-school Education, Ministry of Education

**Q: If you could describe the experience of setting up the MOE Kindergartens with one word, what would it be, and why?**

**A:** The word would be 'meaningful'. I've always enjoyed leadership because it gives me the opportunity to help people lead meaningful lives. As we worked at the many aspects such as renovation, procurement and teacher training, my fundamental priority was to ensure that everyone was taken care of, and that they saw how their efforts contributed to the larger picture.

**Q: Why is the MOE Kindergarten such a significant milestone for MOE and the sector?**

**A:** There are three reasons that the MOE Kindergartens are a milestone in Singapore's history.

The MOE Kindergartens are the only government-run pre-school centres as all other centres are run privately.

Second, the MOE Kindergartens are piloting teaching and learning resources, which will be shared with the pre-school sector so that all centres in Singapore will have access to high quality resources for a holistic kindergarten education.

Lastly, the MOE Kindergartens will work with other operators to distil good practices, and these will also be shared with the sector.

The MOE Kindergartens are meant to uplift the quality of the pre-school sector in Singapore and thus play a much bigger role than just providing quality education for their own children.

These efforts by the MOE Kindergartens will complement the work that the Early Childhood Development Agency is spearheading.



**August 2013**  
 We conducted roadshows and outreach events to introduce the MOE Kindergartens to families living in the area.

Continued on the next page >



**Q: What was your most memorable moment in the setting up of the MOE Kindergartens?**

**A:** It would have to be just after the first semester in 2014. My colleagues and I were bringing some visitors around the MOE Kindergarten @ Farrer Park and we were able to see the children's work from their Weeks of Wonder project, and enjoy a physical exercise routine that the children created, complete with colourful 'barbells' made from recycled mineral water bottles. It dawned on me that all this was the fruition of the hard work by my colleagues and the teachers. We had started from almost nothing and were able to come to this stage in just one short year – it was a truly amazing and humbling experience.

**Q: What would you like to say to families of the children enrolled in the MOE Kindergartens?**

**A:** Firstly, thanks for your faith in the MOE Kindergartens! Secondly, do continue to partner with us in

supporting your child's growth and learning so that they will be well prepared for future learning. Thirdly, do tell your friends about us so that more children can enjoy A Strong Start at the MOE Kindergartens!



**January 2014**

A historic moment:  
The first day of  
school for the  
MOE Kindergartens!

**September 2014**

Children at MOE  
Kindergarten @ Tampines  
exploring the community  
garden with Teacher Grace  
during an outdoor activity

## SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD

With a new year comes many new experiences, such as making new friends or attending a new school. Here are some tips to help your child get ready and excited for what's to come:

**1. Help children understand when the new experience/event will occur**

– Mark the upcoming event on the calendar and hold a countdown. This gives children a better sense of how and when the experience/event will occur, and allows them to practise numeracy skills by taking part in the countdown.



**2. Set clear expectations** – New experiences often come with new rules and expectations. Be sure to set these rules and expectations in advance. Prepare children by reading books on or role-playing about the new experiences. Write rules down and review them.

**3. Engage your child in the preparation** – Children will have more ownership in the new experience if they can be part of it. For example, if you are preparing your child for a new school next year, let him/her choose the type of school bag he/she would like to carry to school. If your child is participating in a play date with other children for the first time, let your child choose the toys he/she would like to share. These opportunities also help develop children's decision-making and independence.

**4. Build on existing skills and familiar experiences** – When children relate past situations or expectations to new ones, they will be able to build on existing knowledge. For example, if you are going to an amusement park you may tell your child the rules are similar to being at a mall. There will be many people, they have to stay with an adult, and there will be times when they have to wait in line. This allows children to draw on their past experiences.

**5. Reinforce appropriate behavior** – Consistent and immediate reinforcement of appropriate behaviour gives children a clear understanding of what they are doing correctly. For example, say "Ella, I like the way you just thanked Aunt Becky for your birthday gift."



Do you have any comments on our newsletter or the MOE Kindergartens? Is there a teacher you would like to thank or a story to share? Tell us at [moe\\_kn@moe.gov.sg](mailto:moe_kn@moe.gov.sg)!

For more information on the 10 MOE Kindergartens and their locations, visit:

[www.moekindergarten.edu.sg](http://www.moekindergarten.edu.sg)

