

First Flight

Every aspect of a child’s development should be recognised and valued in order to maximise his or her potential. Developing children’s social and emotional skills helps them to develop a positive self-concept, builds their confidence and has a positive impact on their physical and mental health. It also improves their readiness to learn and sets a strong foundation for lifelong learning. Read on to find out how we enhance the social and emotional development of our children at MOE Kindergarten. We also share some tips on how you can build your child’s social and emotional strength.

Warm wishes,
The MOE Kindergarten Team

LEARNING AT MOE KINDERGARTEN Social and Emotional Development

Children need to learn how to identify and manage their feelings, thoughts and behaviours. When children are able to adjust their behaviour in socially acceptable ways, they build stronger interpersonal relationships that will have a positive impact on their learning and daily activities and on longer-term life outcomes.

At MOE Kindergarten (MK), we plan and create learning experiences to develop children’s social and emotional skills. Our MK curriculum provides ample opportunities for children to grow in the following five areas:

<p>Self-Awareness Children will develop an awareness of personal identity.</p>	<p>Self-Management Children will manage their own emotions and behaviours.</p>	<p>Social Awareness Children will show respect for others.</p>	<p>Relationship Management Children will interact and build relationships with others.</p>	<p>Responsible Decision Making Children will take responsibility for their own actions.</p>
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Let’s look at how our MKs develop children’s social and emotional skills!

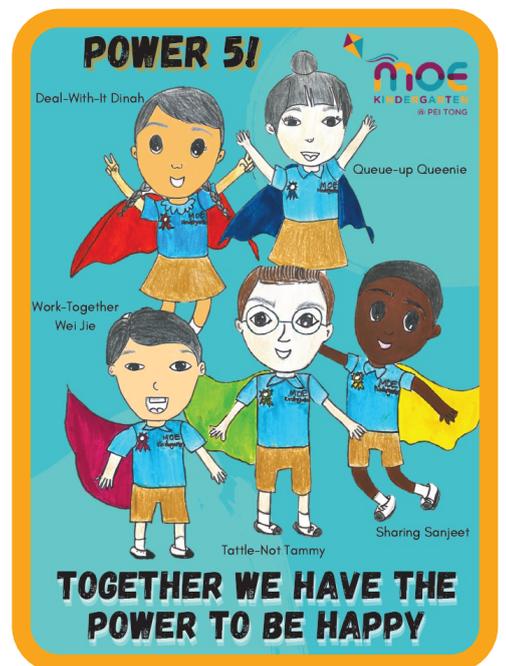
Power Characters MOE KINDERGARTEN @ PEI TONG

A team of teachers at MOE Kindergarten @ Pei Tong embarked on a project to improve the K2 children’s ability to use appropriate ways to communicate and resolve conflicts independently through the use of stories with ‘Power Characters’.

They created five ‘Power Characters’ - ‘Queue-up Queenie’, ‘Sharing Sanjeet’, ‘Work-together Wei Jia’, ‘Tattle-not-Tammy’ and ‘Deal-with-it Dinah’. These characters were featured in relatable stories set in the MK and faced conflicts familiar to the children, which they resolved through communication.

The stories were told once a week during snack or transition time. After each story-telling session, the children had opportunities to reflect on the conflict in the story. This provided learning points which the teachers would bring up whenever similar conflicts arose in class. The children would also often remind one another about the values portrayed by these characters and how they solved problems amicably.

Through these planned experiences, the children learnt strategies to manage their emotions and behaviours. They became more aware of how and when to apply them. This also helped them to build stronger relationships with their peers and manage conflicts independently.



Teachers created posters on the ‘Power Characters’, which were prominently displayed as reminders for the children to practise the values associated with them.

Collaborative art experiences through chalk play MOE KINDERGARTEN @ NORTH VISTA

The outdoor space at MOE Kindergarten @ North Vista was transformed into an art space where children explored different elements of art (i.e. shapes, lines and colours) using chalk. The teachers carefully planned experiences for social and emotional development by providing the children with opportunities for individual reflection and group collaboration. As the children drew independently, they expressed their thoughts and ideas through chalk drawing. The process developed their confidence in expressing themselves spontaneously and the children felt more competent in what they were able to do.



Hani (left) and Daanya (right) worked collaboratively with each another to design and draw their pictures. Prior to the drawing, they discussed and decided on their assigned roles in the drawing process.

Group work afforded the children opportunities to discuss their ideas, negotiate their roles in the art making process and learn to work together to complete the drawing. Whenever there were disagreements, the teachers leveraged teachable moments to role-model and demonstrate conflict resolution language and strategies.

Through the activities, the children interacted with one another, took turns to share about their creations and those of their peers, and asked questions about their peers' works. These experiences helped to foster their relationship management skills.

When the space on the ground was filled up, instead of removing the art work of their friends, the children were encouraged to add their ideas into their peers' works. Through this, they learnt to respect what others had created, appreciate the ideas of their peers, and at the same time, to work harmoniously with one another.



Caleb was attracted to the ferris wheel drawn by another child. He looked at it, pondered for a while and decided to add colours to it. Upon completion, Caleb shared, "I like the Singapore Flyer and colour it blue so that it's nicer!"

SNAPSHOTS

Take a peek at how our MKs provided opportunities for children to develop social and emotional skills by planning meaningful learning experiences, designing authentic learning environments and modelling through appropriate behaviour and language.

Children at **MOE Kindergarten @ First Toa Payoh** played a game of 'Jellyfish Tag' after learning interesting information about jellyfish. In this game, the children paired up and pretended to be jellyfish trying to trap their other friends who were role-playing as fish. Each pair held onto a donut ring and devised plans together to prevent the fish from passing through.



"Teacher, it's so difficult because I am alone! They will catch me!"



"If we stand like this, nobody can get through!"

At the end of the game, the teacher played a video recording of the game to help the children think back on their play experience and share what they had done, seen, heard or felt during the game. The children observed how some of them were helping their friends to distract the 'jellyfish' so that they could pass through. They also talked about the challenges faced while working together, but when they succeeded, they were able to prevent more fish from passing through. This fun-filled activity allowed the children to learn to communicate and share ideas, as well as play harmoniously and cooperatively together.



Children learnt to respect the perspectives of others as they patiently listened to their friends.

To encourage children to take turns, instil a sense of appreciation for others' views and develop confidence in speaking in a large group, the teachers at **MOE Kindergarten @ Naval Base** enhanced the learning environment by using visual reminders in the classrooms.

The children were introduced to three items - a talking card, a tracking chart and a timer. To answer a question or share their ideas, the children had to raise their hands and be given access to the talking card first by the teacher. Their picture would then be put up on the tracking chart and they would have to wait until everyone in the class had had their turn before they had another turn. If anyone in the group interrupted without having the talking card, the group would not get a turn to share or contribute for the next five minutes. Each table had a timer to support the children in keeping track of time.



Ilhan held on to the talking card when it was his turn to share. Through the use of the visual cue card, Ilhan grew in confidence to speak up in class and develop a positive self-concept.

The talking card and tracking chart provided the visuals for children to regulate their behaviour and be more aware of others around them. They learnt to wait for their turn and to give their friends opportunities to share their ideas too. The teachers reminded the children to look at the tracking chart and encourage their friends who had not shared. Having group consequences also helped the children to understand the concept of working together as a group, and to take responsibility for their actions.

THE FACES OF MOE KINDERGARTEN

At MK, we strongly believe in fostering a culture of professional learning and excellence. Through Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), every teacher is given time and space to engage in professional learning and sharing to improve teaching and learning.

Members of a PLC at MOE Kindergarten @ Pei Tong share how children's social and emotional development is enhanced at the centre through their PLC project.



Lee Bee Lian



Malini Rajamohan



Ng Bee Ling



Nurul Nabila Aminuddin



Nurulhuda Ramliee



Praba Sundaarajoo



Soh Huijing Madeline

What is a Professional Learning Community?

A Professional Learning Community is composed of collaborative teams whose members work interdependently to achieve common goals linked to the purpose of learning for all.

Why did your team choose to focus on children's social and emotional development for your PLC project?

We believe that children need to build strong social and emotional skills from an early age. Research findings indicate that children who exhibit these skills at pre-school age are more motivated to learn. Social and emotional skills not only help children to develop self-confidence and build positive relationships, they also prepare children for transition to primary school and help them achieve their personal goals.

How did your PLC project help to nurture social and emotional skills in children?

Research has shown that social stories are especially effective to help young children learn social skills. Based on this, we decided to use storytelling as a means to improving children's ability to use appropriate ways to resolve conflicts independently. In addition, we noticed that children showed an interest in the 'Soaper 5' characters and often referred to them as they followed the COVID-19 Safe Management Measures. Thus, we adopted a similar concept as the 'Soaper 5' characters and created five 'Power Characters', each specific character for a particular type of conflict. Our power characters were incorporated into our stories and they modelled the ways to communicate and resolve conflicts, thus encouraging children to emulate the positive behaviours.

After our implementation, we noticed that the children really liked the characters and could relate very well to them. Even in their conversations among themselves, we would often hear them discussing and using the values exemplified by the characters when conflicts arose.

How has the PLC benefitted teaching and learning in the classroom?

Children constantly use the power characters as a point of reference when they attempt to resolve conflicts on their own as they are highly motivated by the characters. Teachers, too, use the power characters as a point of reference when reminding children to resolve their own conflicts. As such, managing conflict resolutions has become easier for both teachers and children.

Through the process of research and trying out various strategies, we better understand our children and are also better equipped to use story-telling as a strategy to develop children's social and emotional skills. Engaging in annual PLC projects has helped us to be more responsive and reflective teachers, and we look forward to better meeting our children's interests and needs through subsequent projects.

Weeks of Wonder (WoW) projects are an integral part of the MK curriculum, where children take the lead in investigating a topic of their interest. Through WoW projects, children gain confidence in pursuing their ideas and persevere in finding out the answers to their questions.

The K1 children from **MOE Kindergarten @ Cedar** chose to learn more about hamsters for their WoW project. The children shared what they knew about hamsters and asked questions to find out more about hamsters. They then conducted research with their families in a take-home activity to answer the questions. Their findings were presented to the class, and they also interviewed one of the teachers who shared how she took care of her pet responsibly.



Teacher Ki shared how she took care of her pet hamster.

The teacher's hamster was brought into the class and placed under the care of the children for a few days. As the children took care of it, they also learnt about responsibility and care. Initially, the teachers modelled how to care for the hamster responsibly, such as showing them how to change the food, sand and water daily according to the duty chart. As the children gained familiarity in caring for the hamster, the teacher also affirmed the efforts of children who demonstrated responsibility by taking care of the hamster without being prompted. Over time, the children were able to apply the values of care and responsibility independently as they cared for the hamster.



The children carefully observed the hamster.



SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD

Families play the most important role in developing children's social and emotional skills. Try out the following tips to build your child's social and emotional strength!

1. Actively observe and identify your child's behaviours and emotions.
2. Connect with your child on an emotional level regularly. For example, make talking about feelings a natural part of family conversations and sharing.
3. Acknowledge and accept all of your child's emotions. Then, work through with them how they can better express their emotions.
4. Discuss how your child can cope with and manage their uncomfortable emotions (e.g., disappointment, anxiety, sadness). Some calming strategies include counting to 10 and taking deep breaths.
5. Role model how you express and manage your emotions towards your child in appropriate ways. For example, calmly admit you are upset and need a 10-minute time-out.
6. Encourage your child to persevere through challenges even though there may be uncomfortable feelings.
7. Help your child to understand that their behaviour can affect others, and role model how you can choose your actions by considering others.
8. Praise your child and provide positive reinforcement when they display good behaviour. For example, "I really like the way you're sharing your toys with your brother." By highlighting the action, children know what they are being praised for and would be motivated to repeat the same behaviour.
9. Manage your child's misbehaviour by finding out the underlying reasons and help your child to work around them. For example, a child may throw a tantrum about going to the park because her friend fell badly there and she is worried that it might happen to her. Addressing children's underlying emotions would help them better manage and regulate their behaviour.
10. Help your child acknowledge situations that they cannot change. Share with your child how you overcame challenges, as well as manage situations you were not able to change. Your experiences could inspire them!



Adapted from Ministry of Education
@parentingwith.moesg (Instagram)

