

# First Flight

What does a child really need to be prepared for Primary 1 (P1)? Supporting children’s transition from pre-school to primary school requires shared responsibility between all key stakeholders, including parents, pre-school educators and primary school educators.

In this issue of First Flight, we share how the MOE Kindergarten (MK) curriculum has been intentionally designed for children’s holistic development and to support their transition from pre-school to P1. We speak to an experienced primary school educator to get insights into what children can expect when they start primary school. Read to also discover tips on how parents can support their child through this significant journey!

Warm wishes,  
The MOE Kindergarten Team



## LEARNING AT MOE KINDERGARTEN

The MK curriculum has been intentionally designed to focus on children’s **holistic development** and to **lay a foundation for lifelong learning**. While having a good foundation in literacy and numeracy is crucial for future learning, social and emotional skills, positive attitude towards learning and executive function skills are equally important, if not more important, in helping children navigate new environments confidently and positively.



Developing children’s **social and emotional skills** helps them learn how to communicate, build relationships and respect others. It also provides opportunities for children to develop self-awareness and learn how to manage their own emotions and actions. Such skills help children take turns, make new friends, talk about their feelings and manage their behaviours appropriately, hence, preparing them for learning in primary school.



A **positive attitude towards learning** is important to help children adjust to the new practices and routines in primary school and to overcome new challenges they may face. Since there is no way to prepare children for every situation they may encounter, it is important for them to have positive learning dispositions such as perseverance, so they will keep trying and not give up easily even when faced with new situations and challenges.



**Executive function skills** support children’s learning and development, and are linked to success in school and life. These core skills are needed for everyday activities such as staying focused on tasks, remembering and following instructions, and juggling multiple tasks successfully, which help children to participate actively in school.

Let’s see how our MKs nurture these non-academic skills through their programmes and learning activities!

## MOE KINDERGARTEN @ GREENDALE

At MK@Greendale, the K1 and K2 children engage in experiential learning daily. This includes activities such as role-playing, gross motor play, games and problem-solving. The skills learnt through these activities help children to navigate new environments, build lasting relationships and enable them to succeed in school and in life.



The children took turns to find a pair of cards with matching shapes. Through this simple game, they not only developed the numeracy skill of matching but also improved their memory and turn-taking skills.



The children worked together with their friends to create an obstacle course during a self-directed gross motor play activity. They developed social and emotional skills and flexible thinking as they communicated with one another, worked together, and negotiated different ways of setting up the obstacle course.



As the children built their “Dream Neighbourhood”, they discussed what they thought should be included in the project. As they discussed, they learnt how to listen, appreciate, and respect the perspectives of their peers to further develop their ideas for the project.



While taking part in a role play at the “Pizza Shop”, the children learnt to resolve complex situations they faced in their imaginary roles. For example, they had to think flexibly to manage multiple orders during their role play.

## MOE KINDERGARTEN @ WEST VIEW

At MK@West View, the explicit teaching of values such as "Care" and "Respect" starts in K1 and continues in K2 through meaningful experiences created for the children. This helps them to develop a positive attitude towards the people and environment around them. When children transit to primary school, these values support them in building strong relationships with others.



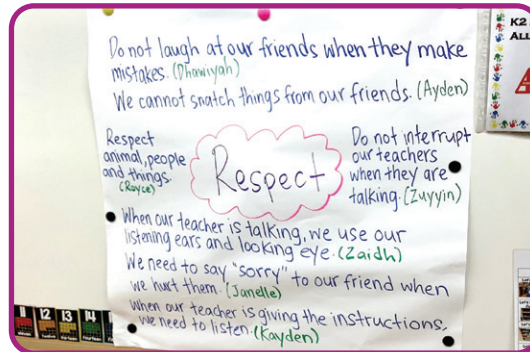
Teachers used scenario cards which depicted common situations children might experience to discuss the meaning of showing care and respect to others.



Children recorded ways they could show respect to people, things or the environment around them. Through this, teachers were able to know what children have learnt.

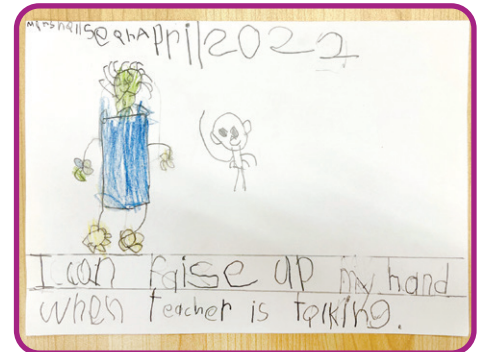


The children applied their learning of values through role playing different scenarios such as showing respect for people. This enabled them to learn important social and emotional skills such as how to control their emotions and behave appropriately when faced with different situations.



As the K2 children discussed the meaning of "Respect", they shared what they viewed as appropriate and respectful behaviours.

Such discussions would help children develop social awareness and understand how to manage their behaviour. This would be helpful when they transit to P1, where they would need to interact with peers and teachers in a larger classroom setting.



The K2 children wrote down their reflections from the discussion. Such reflections and awareness of appropriate behaviours to have in different situations would help children as they transit to P1.

## SNAPSHOTS



The MK curriculum includes a 5-week experiential programme enriched with activities for K2 children to find out more about life in primary school in Term 4. As part of the programme, children will find out about what they can expect in primary school, how to adapt to changes and manage their emotions. They will explore the primary school environment/classrooms, learn how to buy things from the canteen and have a sense of the sequence of activities in a typical school day.

## MOE KINDERGARTEN @ SENGKANG GREEN

Despite the pandemic, in Term 4 last year, MK@Sengkang Green provided various meaningful activities to prepare the K2 children for the changes that they would experience in P1. Teachers in MK@Sengkang Green also engaged in professional exchange with lower primary teachers from Sengkang Green Primary School to establish shared understanding about the learning and development of the children so that there may be better continuity of children's experiences between pre-school and primary school.



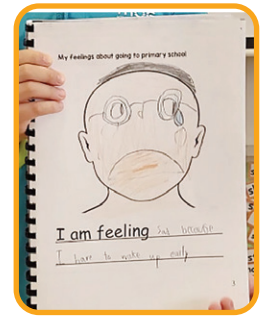
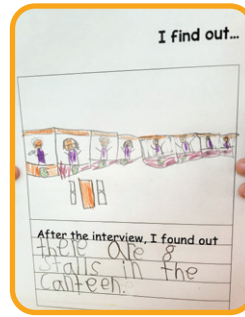
The children had the opportunity to use the classrooms at Sengkang Green Primary School for Big Book reading and activities such as responding to the Big Book through drawing or writing. Through this, the children could compare their experiences in the MK and primary school classrooms.



The children were curious about what they would experience and learn in primary school. They had a chance to 'interview' some primary school teachers by asking questions on things they were curious about, such as, 'What time do we have to be in school?', 'What will we be learning in primary school?'.



Exploring the primary school library allowed the children to find out how they could borrow books in P1. The librarian also shared with them the importance of being responsible library users and to return the books once they have finished reading them.



The children also had an opportunity to bring their own money and learn how to buy food at the canteen. They greeted the stallholders, took turns to make their requests politely and pay for the food they ordered, as well as cleaned up after their meal.

The children reflected on what they had learnt after the experiences in the primary school and wrote how they felt in their reflection booklet.



## THE FACES OF MOE KINDERGARTEN

We speak to Ms Angela Chow, an experienced educator who has taught in primary school for 17 years to find out what children can expect in P1. Ms Chow is currently attached to MK@Springdale as a teacher to better understand what and how children learn in the pre-school years so that she can better support children's transition from pre-school to primary school.



Ms Angela Chow

### As an experienced primary school teacher, what are your expectations of children at the start of P1?

In addition to literacy and numeracy readiness, I believe that equal emphasis should be placed on the child's holistic development. Children would need to have a positive attitude towards learning to help them become better learners in primary school.

After teaching in the MK for the past 1.5 years, I learnt that every child develops and learns at his/her own pace. This means that some children may take longer than others to reach certain learning milestones. For example, some children may need more time to master their penmanship skills as their hand skeletal structure and fine motor skills may take longer to develop. It is important as an educator to be mindful of this and to provide differentiated support according to the needs of the children.

### What do you think children really need to be ready for primary school?

These are what I believe children really need to be ready for P1:

- **Curiosity** - When children are curious, they would be eager to know more and this in turn generates their motivation to learn regardless of the subject matter - eventually, developing them into self-directed learners.
- **Expressiveness** - Having the ability to express their thoughts and ideas clearly will help children to communicate and build relationships with others. This also raises their confidence and self-esteem.
- **Self-control** - Being focused and attentive during lessons can be challenging for many children. With practice, self-control helps the children manage and regulate their behaviour, avoid distraction and stay engaged.
- **Flexible thinking** - When given a task, children must be open to different ways of doing things in response to changing circumstances.
- **Appreciation** - Children need to be open to accepting different opinions and ideas and to show respect for others regardless of their background/cultures.

### Drawing from your experiences as an MK educator and primary school teacher, do you think the MK curriculum adequately prepares children for their transition to primary school and future learning?

The Starlight Literacy Programme in the MK lays the foundation for the STELLAR (Strategies for English Language Learning and Reading) Programme in primary school. In both programmes, there is explicit and systematic teaching of the English Language through the Shared Book Approach which encourages children to participate actively and acquire skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing. Children will acquire basic knowledge on letters of the alphabet and their corresponding sounds, including recognising some simple words that would help them in reading and spelling in primary school.

For Numeracy, the MK curriculum focuses on laying the foundation for future learning in Mathematics through helping children acquire important skills and concepts such as counting objects accurately, comparing quantities of objects and understanding part-whole relationships. Using the Concrete, Pictorial and Abstract approach in the MK, the teaching methodology is very much in line with what is used in the primary school Mathematics curriculum. Additionally, the small group activities developed to cater to the different learning needs of the children allow the MK teachers to monitor and reinforce numeracy concepts and skills taught in the class.

The MK curriculum also supports the children in other learning areas which will be built on in the primary school. This includes Aesthetics and Creative Expression, Discovery of the World, and Motor Skills Development. Besides these learning areas, the MK curriculum also seeks to nurture children's social and emotional development, and positive learning dispositions such as perseverance, reflectiveness, appreciation, inventiveness, sense of wonder and curiosity, and engagement.

MK children will find transition to primary school much easier since the MK curriculum offers various programmes and routines that develop them holistically and equip them with essential skills that would support their transition to primary school.

# SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD

Ms Angela Chow also shares her tips on how parents can help to prepare their child for P1:

1. **Set routines and establish a schedule** for children to get sufficient rest and sleep. As the primary school hours are earlier and longer, getting enough sleep and rest is important.
2. **Model how children can express their emotions and use words to label their feelings**, like “excited”, “happy”, “scared”, “angry”, “anxious”. For instance, on a bad day, parents can share how they feel so that their children know that they are not alone in experiencing negative feelings. Some emotions might be especially hard to articulate in words, so parents can try other ways to get children to express their emotions (e.g., through art, drawing).
3. **Develop children’s self-control** by providing them with **ample opportunities to play with other children**. For example, when playing games with others, children learn to take turns and control their emotions and behaviour when things do not go their way or when they lose a game.
4. Instead of placing too much emphasis on academic preparation, consider **enriching children’s learning experiences** by encouraging them to **explore and ask questions**. Academic over-preparation in the pre-school years takes away the joy of learning and may adversely affect children’s curiosity, interest to learn, and ability to focus and participate actively in class.
5. **Inculcate children’s attitude towards learning**. Parents can serve as role models and help their children understand the importance of having positive learning dispositions. For example, to develop perseverance in children, parents could model how they would keep trying even when the going gets tough. They can also challenge children to try different things beyond their comfort zone and provide support only when necessary. Although it might be difficult, parents should refrain from jumping in too quickly to help when children struggle.
6. Instil a **growth mindset** in children so that they have the desire to learn and improve continuously. Parents could make it a point to celebrate the efforts, and not just the achievements.



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



For more tips to help your child adjust to P1, you may check out the following:

- MOE’s Instagram account for parents @parentingwith.moesg
- <https://www.moe.gov.sg/-/media/files/parent-kit/parent-kit---starting-your-primary-1-journey.pdf>



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