



# Nurturing Early Learners

A CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR KINDERGARTENS IN SINGAPORE  
A Guide for Parents

# A Strong Start for Every Child

## A Word to Parents

Parents know that the early years are important in building a strong foundation for life-long learning. As parents, you understand your child most intimately and therefore play an important part in providing a home environment that will support the learning and development of your child. Your role in the holistic development of your child continues when he attends pre-school. It is therefore helpful for you to know the principles which guide the learning experiences that are planned for your child by his pre-school and his teachers.

In order for you to work with the pre-school and your child's teachers, we have published "*Nurturing Early Learners – A Curriculum Framework for Kindergartens in Singapore: A Guide for Parents*". The Guide for Parents is based on "*Nurturing Early Learners – A Curriculum Framework for Kindergartens (Revised 2012)*" which is developed by the Ministry of Education. This guide highlights what the kindergarten curriculum framework says about how children learn and develop and what children should be able to do at the end of their kindergarten education.

We hope this guide will be a useful reference as you partner with your child's pre-school and teachers to nurture your child's love for learning, help him develop positive attitudes towards learning and instil greater confidence as he moves from the home to a pre-school setting.

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The content of "*Nurturing Early Learners – A Curriculum Framework for Kindergartens in Singapore: A Guide for Parents*" can also be accessed at the following website:  
[www.moe.gov.sg/education/preschool/](http://www.moe.gov.sg/education/preschool/)

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# Nurturing Early Learners



Quality pre-school education lays a strong foundation for life-long learning and has short and long term benefits for children. To nurture children as life-long learners, we need to build their self-confidence, encourage them to explore the world around them and teach them how to regulate their behaviour and emotions, express themselves and get along with others.

**"To be future-ready, our young need to be able to think critically, assess options and make sound decisions. They should have a desire to learn, explore and be prepared to think out of the box."**

*Nurturing our Young for the Future,  
Competencies for the 21st Century, MOE, 2010*





## DESIRED OUTCOMES OF EDUCATION

MOE's Desired Outcomes of Education reflect what the Singapore education system aspires to develop in every child:

- A **confident person** who has a strong sense of right and wrong, is adaptable and resilient, knows himself, is discerning in judgement, thinks independently and critically, and communicates effectively.
- A **self-directed learner** who takes responsibility for his own learning, who questions, reflects and perseveres in the pursuit of learning.
- An **active contributor** who is able to work effectively in teams, exercises initiative, takes calculated risks, is innovative and strives for excellence.
- A **concerned citizen** who is rooted in Singapore, has a strong civic consciousness, is informed, and takes an active role in bettering the lives of others around him.

## KEY STAGE OUTCOMES OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION

The Desired Outcomes of Education are translated into a set of developmental outcomes for each key stage of Singapore's education system. At the pre-school level, the holistic development of children is most important. The key stage outcomes of pre-school education emphasise the need for children to build up confidence and social skills and be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and dispositions for life-long learning.

At the end of their pre-school education, children should:

- 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





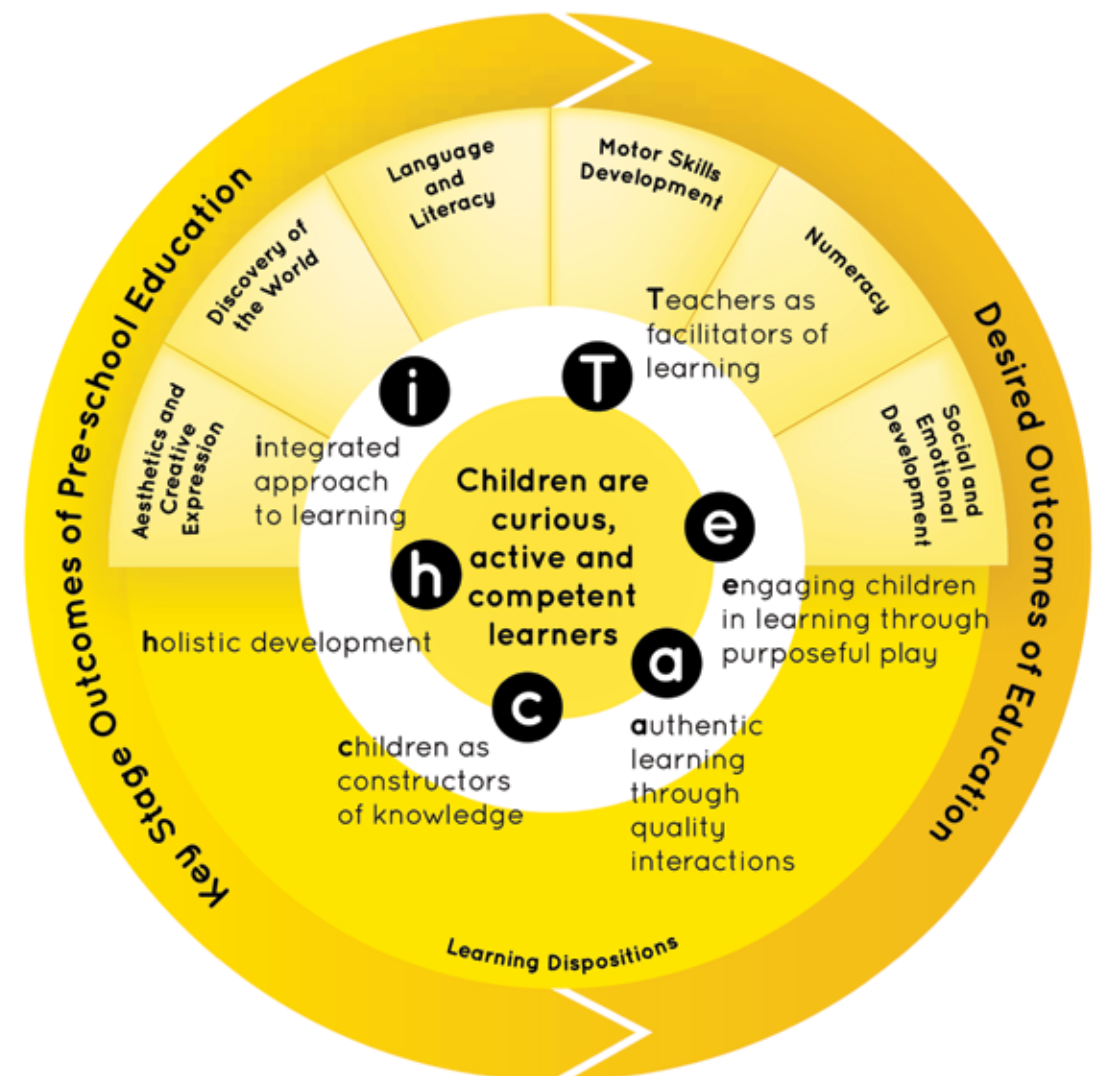
## THE KINDERGARTEN CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK

Your child's true potential can only be fully realised when every aspect of his or her development is recognised and valued.

At the centre of the curriculum framework is the child and the belief that children are curious, active and competent learners. Based on this belief, the framework advocates principles that guide teaching and learning in a quality kindergarten curriculum. Children are nurtured holistically through various learning areas and their positive learning dispositions are also cultivated through teacher-facilitated learning experiences.

The framework is not intended to provide strict rules about what must be taught. Rather, the framework provides guidelines for a holistic pre-school education while giving educators the discretion to customise their curriculum according to the interests, needs and abilities of the children.

## Overview of the Kindergarten Curriculum Framework



## Learning Areas

The following are the six learning areas outlined in the framework, through which children acquire knowledge, skills and learning dispositions:

- Aesthetics and Creative Expression
- Discovery of the World
- Language and Literacy
- Motor Skills Development
- Numeracy
- Social and Emotional Development



## Learning Dispositions

Learning dispositions are positive behaviours and attitudes towards learning. They are important for children in their journey as life-long learners and they support children's learning and development in the various learning areas. There are six learning dispositions (PRAISE) that pre-schools will seek to develop in every child:

### Perseverance

Children with perseverance keep working at a task to complete it. They do not give up even though they find it challenging.

### Reflectiveness

Children with the ability to reflect can think about what they have done, seen, heard or felt in their daily experiences. They generate alternative ideas and gain new knowledge.

### Appreciation

Children with a sense of appreciation recognise that everyone has different and unique qualities. They listen to the views of others and show respect for them.



### Inventiveness

Children who are inventive are flexible in their thinking and can do things in different ways. They explore various ideas and possibilities and generate different solutions to challenges.

### Sense of wonder and curiosity

Children with a sense of wonder and curiosity are interested in the world around them. They confidently ask questions on why things happen and how things work. They like to explore and discover new things.

### Engagement

Children who are engaged are immersed in learning and enjoy what they do. They proactively seek new opportunities for learning.



# Who are Our Children?

***Our belief: Children are curious, active and competent learners***



We believe that children are curious, active and competent learners. Understanding who children are, what they are capable of and how they develop and learn, guides teachers in creating meaningful learning experiences.

### CHILDREN ARE CURIOUS LEARNERS

Children have an innate sense of curiosity that should be nurtured. They wonder, question, explore and seek to make sense and meaning of their world. By acting on their curiosity, they continue to discover and learn more.

*"I want my children to understand the world, but not just because the world is fascinating and the human mind is curious. ... An important part of that understanding is knowing who we are and what we can do."*

*~ Howard Gardner, 1999*



*"When we see a child playing with a flower, or in the dirt, or skipping or playing tag, we should remind ourselves that what we are looking at is the child-like result of a deep and irresistible urge to interact with and have knowledge of the world and everything in it."*

*~ Bob Hughes, 2001*

## CHILDREN ARE ACTIVE LEARNERS

Children learn by doing. Children are also more likely to understand and remember skills and concepts learnt through participation, exploration and experimentation involving real-life objects and experiences.

## CHILDREN ARE COMPETENT LEARNERS

Children's thinking and reasoning skills evolve over time as they build new knowledge upon their existing knowledge and experiences. Through this continual process of thought and reflection, children deepen their understanding of how the world works.



*"Children are born ready to learn ... They are wired from the beginning to learn, and they're wired to experience and to master the world around them."*

*~ Shonkoff, 2005*

# How do Children Learn?





## iTeach PRINCIPLES

There are six key principles that guide teachers in the planning, designing and implementation of meaningful and relevant learning experiences for children. These are known as the iTeach Principles:

- **i**ntegrated approach to learning
- **T**eachers as facilitators of learning
- **e**ngaging children in learning through purposeful play
- **a**uthentic learning through quality interactions
- **c**hildren as constructors of knowledge
- **h**olistic development

In iTeach, we believe that children:

- learn with support from teachers
- learn from an integrated and holistic curriculum
- are engaged as active learners through play and quality interactions





# What do Children Learn in Pre-school?

## LEARNING AREAS

A quality kindergarten curriculum should be designed for the holistic development of children. To achieve this, six learning areas have been identified:

- Aesthetics and Creative Expression
- Discovery of the World
- Language and Literacy
- Motor Skills Development
- Numeracy
- Social and Emotional Development

### Aesthetics and Creative Expression

Children enjoy creative expression and should be given opportunities to explore their environment and indulge in creative play and self-expression through art and music and movement.

### Discovery of the World

Children are naturally curious and their sense of wonder should be nurtured and sustained. They should be encouraged to observe, ask questions and make sense of the world around them.



### Language and Literacy

Language and Literacy is important in children's overall thought and learning development. Exposure to language-related activities such as role-playing, singing, rhyming and reading will develop their ability to listen with understanding and to communicate with others.

### Motor Skills Development

Children's gross and fine motor skills develop over time and influence their physical fitness, agility and coordination. Children should be given ample space and time for physical play to develop their sense of balance, physical co-ordination and spatial awareness.





### Numeracy

Being numerate enables children to understand and apply mathematical concepts, skills and processes effectively. Thus, children will be able to make sense of their encounters with mathematics in their daily lives.

### Social and Emotional Development

Effective social and emotional development instils healthy self-esteem in children. Children are taught to manage their feelings, thoughts and behaviour which will allow them to form strong and meaningful relationships later in life.

## LEARNING GOALS

A set of learning goals for each learning area has been defined and these reflect widely-held expectations about what children should know and be able to do after completing their kindergarten education. Some children will have exceeded the expectations at the end of kindergarten, while others, depending on their developmental needs, will continue to work towards some of these goals.

Parents should not overemphasise specific learning areas. We should be careful not to focus purely on the academic performance of children at this crucial pre-school stage. Instead, we must develop in children the knowledge, skills and dispositions that will equip them for life-long learning. Indeed, we must remember that education is a life-long journey, not a short sprint.



Pre-school education focuses on the holistic development of the child. It involves nurturing children's curiosity, teaching them social skills so that they may work and play with their peers as well as building their self-esteem and confidence.

Children who are eager to learn are ready for the next stage of learning in primary school.



| Learning Area                      | Learning Goals<br>At the end of K2, children should be able to...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Aesthetics and Creative Expression | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enjoy art and music and movement activities</li><li>• Express ideas and feelings through art and music and movement</li><li>• Create art and music and movement using experimentation and imagination</li><li>• Share ideas and feelings about art and music and movement</li></ul> |
| Discovery of the World             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Show an interest in the world they live in</li><li>• Find out why things happen and how things work through simple investigations</li><li>• Develop a positive attitude towards the world around them</li></ul>                                                                     |

| Learning Area            | Learning Goals<br>At the end of K2, children should be able to...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Language and Literacy    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Listen for information and enjoyment</li><li>• Speak to convey meaning and communicate with others</li><li>• Read with understanding and for enjoyment</li><li>• Use drawing, mark making, symbols and writing with invented and conventional spelling to communicate ideas and information</li></ul>                   |
| Motor Skills Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enjoy through participation in a variety of physical activities</li><li>• Demonstrate control, coordination and balance in gross motor tasks</li><li>• Demonstrate control and coordination in fine motor tasks</li><li>• Develop healthy habits and safety awareness at home, in school and at public places</li></ul> |



| Learning Area                    | Learning Goals<br>At the end of K2, children should be able to...                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Numeracy                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Recognise and use simple relationships and patterns</li><li>• Use numbers in daily experiences</li><li>• Recognise and use basic shapes and simple spatial concepts in daily experiences</li></ul>                                                              |
| Social and Emotional Development | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop an awareness of personal identity</li><li>• Manage their own emotions and behaviours</li><li>• Show respect for diversity</li><li>• Communicate, interact and build relationships with others</li><li>• Take responsibility for their actions</li></ul> |



# How Can You Support Your Child?



As parents, you understand your child best and are ideally placed to share valuable information about your child’s interests, needs, daily experiences and progress with his teachers. Thus, expect teachers to tap on you as an important source of information.

You may receive periodic parent questionnaires and be required to attend parent-teacher meetings to help teachers create an enriching learning experience for your child.

In turn, teachers will regularly share your child’s progress with you to help you understand your child’s strengths, weaknesses and how you can complement their learning and development at home.

Parents and families can help children make connections between what goes on in pre-school and at home to enrich their learning experience beyond the classroom. You could:

- understand that your child is naturally curious and encourage your child to explore and ask questions
- take time to engage your child in play
- encourage your child to talk about his experiences, express his thoughts and feelings and explain how he solves problems and overcomes challenges

The parent-teacher partnership is an on-going, collaborative effort to ensure that your child receives a quality pre-school education in which his potential and talents are fully maximised.





Ministry of Education  
SINGAPORE

<http://www.moe.gov.sg/preschooleducation>