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MEDIA RELEASE

Families remain strong and resilient in Singapore

The Ministry of Social and Family Development has released its inaugural Family Trends Report. It is an update on key statistical family trends in Singapore and our progress in creating a Singapore Made for Families.

Marriage and Family Formation

2 There were slightly fewer marriages in 2023, 3.7% lower than the record high of marriages registered in 2022. Based on a 5-year moving average which helps to smooth out year-on-year fluctuations and provide a clearer direction of the trend, we observed that the moving average trend for marriages is stable overall.

3 Among ever-married resident females aged 40 to 49 years, those with two children continued to form the largest group at 44.0% in 2023.

4 More fathers are involved in caring for their children, as take-up rates of Government-Paid Paternity Leave increased from 47% for children born in 2016 to 53% for children born in 2021.

5 More employers and co-workers are also offering flexibility to help working parents balance their childcare needs with their career aspirations. The number of employees who have access to flexible work arrangements that they required increased over the past ten years, from 65.9% in 2014 to 84.1% in 2022.

Early Childhood

6 For families with young children, access to affordable and quality preschools has been expanded to provide every child with a good start in life. To cater to growing demand, the number of full-day infant care places nearly tripled, and the number of full-day childcare places more than doubled over the past ten years. More children are enrolled in preschools, with the cohort enrolment rate (CER) of children aged 3 to 4 years increasing from 75% in 2013 to 90% in 2023. The CER of children aged 5 to 6 years also remained high at 95% in 2023.

7 The Government has ensured that preschool remains affordable by providing subsidies to parents of Singapore Citizen children, and imposing fee caps at Government-supported Anchor Operator (AOP) and Partner Operator (POP) preschools. As a result, median full-day fees and out-of-pocket expenses for infant care and childcare have declined. For Singapore Citizen children, the industry median infant care fee decreased from \$1,275 in 2019 to \$1,235 in 2023, and the industry median childcare fee decreased from \$800 in 2019 to \$720 in 2023. A median-income household¹ with a child attending full-day infant care in an AOP centre would spend 5.9% of their household income on preschool in 2023, compared to 7.5% in 2019. Similarly, a median-income household with a child attending full-day childcare in an AOP centre would spend 3.1% of their household income on preschool in 2023, compared to 4.6% in 2019.

8 For young children with developmental needs, the number of referrals for medium to high levels of early intervention support has increased due to greater parental awareness and earlier detection through hospitals' child development programmes. The total number of children served in Early Intervention (EI) programmes more than doubled, from 3,824 in 2015 to 9,850 in 2023.

Family Ties, Resilience, and Marriage Stability

9 Most Singaporeans feel that their families are strong and resilient. Based on a survey conducted by MSF on families in 2023, 85.9% of families reported moderate to high² family resilience scores, and 25.1% of all families reported high family resilience scores. The majority of survey respondents also reported having a close-knit family and maintained close ties with family members outside of their immediate family. Families who are resilient are better able to overcome challenges.

10 Families remain the first line of support for the majority of seniors. 82.5% of survey respondents aged 65 years and above reported that they would turn to their families for help when they need physical support such as caregiving or assistance with running errands. Majority of respondents aged 15 to 64 years (93.1%) agreed that it is their responsibility to take care of their parents.

11 Marriage stability has increased in more recent marriage cohorts. Marriage cohorts from 2006 have seen lower dissolution rates, compared to the 2005 cohort.

¹ Income of the "median-income household" is derived based on ranking citizen households with at least one child aged 0-6, by their monthly household income from work, excluding employer CPF contributions.

² Under Walsh's Family Resilience Framework, family resilience is defined as the capacity of the family to recover from adversity, by emerging stronger and more resourceful, to manage stressful events and forge transformative personal and relational growth. Families with moderate-high resilience scored 3 and above (out of 5) on the Walsh Family Resilience Questionnaire.

We journey with every family across different life stages and uplift them through circumstances

12 As families journey through life, we have strengthened our support for families across different life stages:

- a. The Journey with You (JoY) marriage mentoring initiative was expanded to more than 160 trained mentors to provide couples with valuable advice and resources as they navigate married life. For families who have made the difficult decision to divorce, MSF has extended the Mandatory Co-Parenting Programme (CPP) to divorcing couples with children under 21 years old to support them in making informed decisions that prioritise the well-being of their children.
- b. Most new 3-room and larger Built-To-Order flats are set aside for first-timer families. HDB also introduced the First-Timer (Parents & Married Couples) applicant category to help married couples and parents with young children secure a flat faster. Eligible families who are awaiting flat completion can rent from HDB under the Parenthood Provisional Housing Scheme (PPHS), or tap on the one-year PPHS (Open Market) Voucher scheme.
- c. Preschools will continue to be made more affordable, as we lower the full-day childcare fee caps for Singapore Citizen children at AOP and POP preschools. By 2026, dual-income families with a child in AOP full-day childcare will pay around the equivalent of primary school and student care fees, before means-tested subsidies. We have strengthened support for children with developmental needs, by expanding the capacity of early intervention centres and appointing new private providers for the Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children-P (EIPIC-P). Early intervention services are made more affordable by lowering out-of-pocket expenses and extending transport subsidies. A three-year infant childminding pilot will be launched to grow childminding services to be an affordable, safe, and reliable caregiving option.
- d. The upcoming Tripartite Guidelines on Flexible Work Arrangement Requests will cultivate a norm where employees feel that it is acceptable to request for and use flexible work arrangements, while acknowledging that employers continue to have the prerogative to decide on work arrangements.
- e. In 2023, MOH, MND and MOT launched Age Well SG as the national programme to support seniors, including caregivers, to age actively, stay socially connected and be cared for within their communities.

14 Minister Masagos Zulkifli, Minister for Social and Family Development and Second Minister for Health and Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs, said, “The Singapore Made For Families 2025 plan which we laid out in 2022, captures our shared commitment across the whole-of-society to create a Singapore that values and supports the well-being of families. As we strengthen the ecosystem of support around our families, it is important to better understand the state of families in Singapore. This allows all of us to see where we have done well, and where we can improve to build on our progress.”

15 The Family Trends report can be found on the MSF website at: <https://go.gov.sg/familytrends2024>. The progress update on the ‘A Singapore Made For Families 2025’ plan can be found in Annex A.

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**ISSUED BY
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL AND FAMILY DEVELOPMENT**

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For media enquiries, please contact:

Siti Amirah Amin
Communications and Engagement Division
DID: 6231 9408
Email: siti_amirah_amin@msf.gov.sg
Ministry of Social and Family Development

Chan Yee Chun
Communications and Engagement Division
HP: 9739 4215
Email: chan_yee_chun@msf.gov.sg
Ministry of Social and Family Development

ANNEX A: PROGRESS UPDATE ON ‘A SINGAPORE MADE FOR FAMILIES 2025’

Sub-Thrust	Progress updates
Journeying with families through life	
Embarking on a new chapter together	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End-to-end digitalisation of the marriage process from October 2023 • 606 marriages solemnized at Family Zone @ Gardens by the Bay as of May 2024 • Families for Life @ Community was expanded to 9 towns in 2023, and will be expanded to 24 towns by 2025, enabling couples and families to benefit from marriage and parenting programmes and events in the community, closer to home • Our Marriage Journey Quiz launched in December 2023 • 52 evidence-based relationship tips suitable for soon-to-wed, newlywed and married couples have been shared with community partners and made available online, with the remaining 52 tips slated for progressive release over the next year • Expansion of Journey With You marriage mentoring initiative to include community volunteers, with more than 160 mentors coming on board as of May 2024 • Since August 2022, at least 85% of 3-room Built-To-Order flats in non-mature estates, 95% of 4-room and larger Built-To-Order flats in non-mature estates, and 95% of 3-room and larger Built-To-Order flats in mature estates, have been set aside for first-timer families
Starting a family	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced marriage and parenthood package announced during Budget 2023 • For eligible children born on or after 14 February 2023: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased Baby Bonus Cash Gift by \$3,000 for all birth orders ○ Increased Child Development Account (CDA) First Step Grant by \$2,000 for all birth orders ○ Increased CDA co-matching caps by \$1,000 for children in the first and second birth orders • From 1 January 2024: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Doubled Government-Paid Paternity Leave from 2 weeks to 4 weeks on a voluntary basis ○ Doubled Unpaid Infant Care Leave from 6 days to 12 days per parent per year, in the child’s first 2 years
Raising happy healthy children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All four Family Nexus (FamNex) sites have begun operations since November 2023, offering both health and social programmes, services and resources in one location • Integrated mother-child services have been implemented in 19 polyclinics • Over 75% of preschools have adopted the ‘Family and Me’ preschool resource packages for K1 and K2 students as of May 2024. New ‘Family and Me’ preschool resource packages for N1 and N2 students will be released from end 2024 • Parenting for Wellness, a toolbox of bite-sized strategies to build strong parent-child relationships, boost their children’s mental and emotional wellbeing, and empower parents to parent effectively in a digital age, to be rolled out in phases from September 2024

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full-day childcare, full-day infant care and half-day kindergarten fee caps at Anchor Operators (AOPs) and Partner Operators (POPs) have been lowered from January 2023 • Full-day childcare fee caps at AOPs and POPs to be further lowered from January 2025, with a final fee cap reduction in 2026
Caring across generations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 800 grandparents have benefited from grandparenting programme since its launch in July 2022 • Launched pre-planning campaign in July 2023 to raise awareness and adoption of Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) and Advance Care Plan (ACP) • As of May 2024, about 216,000 LPAs have been made by Singapore citizens aged 50 and above, up from 7,000 as of May 2014. Of these, 35% were made online since the launch of Office of the Public Guardian Online (OPGO) system in Nov 2022 • Launched two-year pilot programme to expand scope of Household Services Scheme to include basic minding services for children and elderly in March 2023 • Enhancement of home-based respite services, with the launch of enhanced Home Personal Care at 11 sites in 2023 • Rolled out Home Caregiving Grant enhancement in March 2023, with more than 44,000 beneficiaries in 2023
Uplifting families facing challenges	
Supporting divorcing and divorced families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support groups for divorced/divorcing parents are offered at all FAM@FSCs • Extension of the Mandatory Co-Parenting Programme (CPP) to couples with minor children divorcing on the simplified divorce track, from 1 Jul 2024 • Development of a guide on child access guidelines across schools, which is targeted to be launched in third quarter of 2024
Strengthening support for family members with disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launched first Enabling Business Hub@Jurong in December 2023, to bring training and employment opportunities closer to persons with disabilities, including those with higher work support needs • Launched first Enabling Services Hub@Tampines (ESH) in August 2023 to bring community support services closer to the homes of persons with disabilities and their caregivers; SG Enable will launch two more Enabling Services Hubs (ESH) at Jurong West and Punggol in 2025 • The enhanced FutureReady online portal developed in collaboration with MINDS is launched in July 2024 to allow caregivers to plan for the future of their loved ones with disabilities
Strengthening support for foster families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More than 530 foster children and their foster families are benefitting from increased fostering allowance as of May 2024
Keeping families safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced the National Anti-Violence and Sexual Harassment Helpline (NAVH), to include an online text-based channel as an additional mode of reporting to make it easier for survivors and bystanders to report violence. • Passed the Family Violence Amendment Bill in Parliament in July 2023 to empower survivors to better protect themselves, strengthen the Government's ability to intervene in family violence cases, and empower the Courts to make additional rehabilitative orders. • Launched a 24-hour Domestic Violence Emergency Response Team (DVERT) in April 2023, where social service professionals respond

	jointly with the Police to provide more timely intervention for domestic violence cases with immediate safety concerns.
Building a city for families	
Creating enduring tributes to families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over 4,700 families engaged in meaningful family bonding picnics and events organised by Families for Life at Family Zone @ Gardens by the Bay since its launch in December 2022
Fostering a family-friendly culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tripartite Guidelines on Flexible Work Arrangement Requests was launched in April 2024, and will take effect from December 2024 Over 700,000 participants spent time bonding over a month-long celebration of family ties in the National Family Festival 2024, compared to 25,000 in 2022. More than 200 corporate and community partners have also participated actively in the event