

CHILD CARE PRACTITIONERS

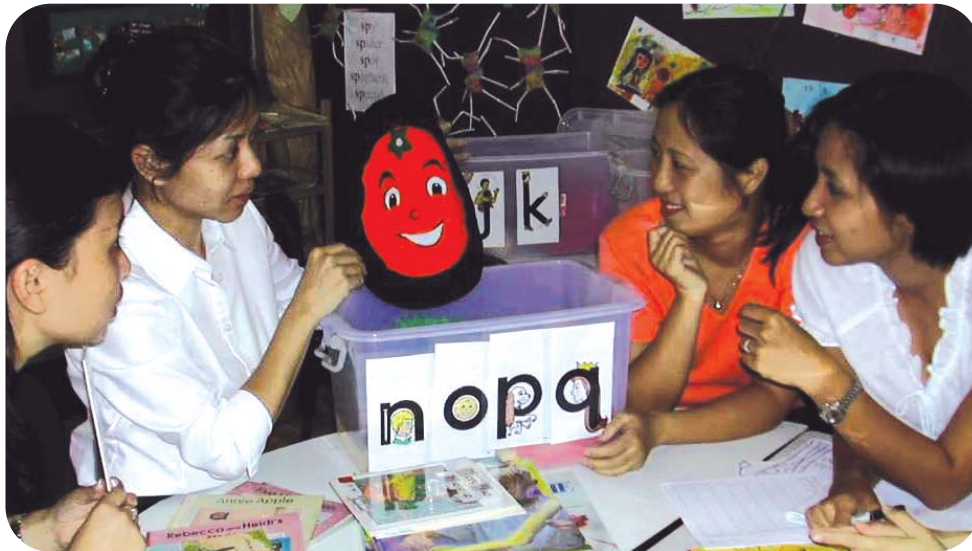
The staffing of a child care centre is crucial. Suitably qualified and trained child care programme staff determine the quality of a centre's programme.

Child care centres are required to meet the staffing requirements as stipulated by the Ministry and must have a sufficient number of staff with Early Childhood qualifications and experience.



The skills, knowledge and attitudes of the staff are important determinants of the quality of the centre's programme.

Supervisors



Professional Goals

- Maintain a commitment to professionalism by continually assessing one's own performance, learning about pre-school children and applying a professional code of ethics at all times
- Endeavour to update existing knowledge and skills in early childhood care and education by attending workshops and related courses, undertaking overseas study trips, and reading professional books and journals
- Develop relationships to enhance professional growth through active participation in associations such as the Association for Early Childhood Educators Singapore (AECES), National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), World Organisation for Early Childhood Education (OMEP) and Australian Early Childhood Association (AECA)
- Invite professionals from the early childhood field to talk about their research or specialty and to act as consultants to the programme
- Collaborate with professionals in the field of early childhood education to accomplish a common set of service goals for the child and his/her family
- Advocate quality early care and education for all children and families
- Ensure affirmative action for all children and families regardless of gender, marital status, physical and intellectual ability, race, nationality and socio-economic status
- Monitor and conduct assessments to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the programme
- Forge partnerships with the community through participating in the Family Life Ambassador (FLA) programme

Collaborating with Families and Communities

- Knowledge of community resources is cultivated. Collaborative efforts are undertaken with other community resources providing services to children and families (for example, the National Council for Social Service, National Library Board, Polyclinics and Family Service Centres)
- The support and advice of resource people are sought to help in developing teaching skills and knowledge
- New ideas on programme planning are shared/exchanged with other centres (for example, through staff exchange programmes or support groups)



Collaborating with families in community work (such as washing cars to raise funds for charity)

Staff Development

- New staff are inducted into the areas of teacher-child/-parent interaction, classroom management procedures and maintaining decorum at all times (for example, briefing foreign staff on local practices and cultures)
- Frequent observations are conducted and regular feedback given to staff in a helpful and supportive manner. Compliments are given for good and/or improved performance.
- Regular staff appraisal exercises are conducted with staff participating in self-evaluation as well. Results are shared with staff and changes are recommended and implemented.
- Each staff member's contribution is valued. Role models are identified and encouraged.
- Training needs are identified and staff sent for relevant and specialised training programmes to continually upgrade their skills (for example, training in special needs education)



- Staff are involved as partners in the centre's decision-making process
- Sources of stress are identified and support provided for staff to avoid "burnout"
- Regular in-service training is conducted with teachers sharing their ideas on instructional methods and teaching materials (e.g. senior staff can act as mentors and share their expertise)
- Teachers are encouraged to observe one another and collaborate on improving teaching practices
- Staff development activities are conducted and effective ideas for working with parents shared

Staff Interaction and Relationships



- A conducive and supportive environment enhances staff effectiveness
- Provision for flexible hours is considered to accommodate the needs of staff, such as family needs or study commitments
- Positive team spirit is promoted through staff retreats, healthy lifestyle activities, lunch or sourcing teaching resources



Teachers

Teachers play an important role in encouraging children to persist in their tasks, developing their thinking and problem-solving skills, and nurturing important life skills.



Professional Goals

- Display professional behaviour and a positive attitude
- Demonstrate a commitment to the professional code of ethics
- Develop and carry out a personalised professional development plan
- Enhance professional affiliation – for example, by joining a professional organisation, attending conferences/workshops, and subscribing to professional journals and newsletters
- Undertake continual education – plan ahead for further studies (i.e. obtaining a diploma or perhaps another degree) or attend on-going training and enrichment courses
- Engage in activities for professional growth – for example, by participating actively in staff meetings, in-service training sessions and other staff development activities; keeping an up-to-date file on curriculum activities; maintaining a comprehensive collection of resources for use by the centre and parents; and participating in research projects
- Support linguistic and cultural diversity through actions and attitudes

Working as Partners

- Teamwork is evident when staff work collaboratively and are encouraged to make suggestions for the betterment of the centre's programme
- Parents are enlisted as partners in their children's learning through regular communication, feedback and participation in the programme



Commitment

- Professional work attitudes include respect for one another, a sense of responsibility towards work and working cooperatively with colleagues
- Knowledge of current trends in early childhood education is cultivated
- Efforts are taken to ensure that cultural diversity is reflected in the programme
- Teaching practices and the behaviour of children are reflected upon regularly
- The pace and variety of activities are adjusted and more time provided for nurturing individual children

Licensees

- Regulations and licensing standards are complied with
- A professional code of ethics guides professional decisions
- Models of professional development are explored and opportunities to promote the professional growth of staff evaluated/assessed
- Family-friendly programmes are organised for staff (for example, helping staff manage both family and work commitments effectively)
- Staff are regularly provided with incentives and rewards commensurate with performance
- Effort is taken to ensure that the programme meets diverse needs and reflects inclusion of children, family, staff and community partners (for example, having a composite team of multi-racial staff)
- Opportunities are created for networking, such as sharing resources with other centres



Staff are sponsored for courses such as personal grooming, self-development, stress management, conflict handling and conferences/workshops.