

OVERVIEW

This handbook is developed for all those involved in the care, education and development of young children in child care centres. It highlights good practices in areas such as physical environment, safety/health/hygiene/nutrition, programme and curriculum, development of child care practitioners, and the administration and management of child care centres.

The handbook reflects current understandings, values, and goals at the time of its publication. This knowledge base is derived from reviewing the literature as well as review by many experienced, knowledgeable early childhood educators. As in any profession, such bases for the guiding principles and practices are expected to be dynamic and changing in response to new knowledge in the field. Given this expectation of change, MCYS will review this handbook periodically to ensure its currency and relevance.

Throughout the handbook, you can feast your eyes on illustrations and photographs selected from a range of contributions by our local child care centres with commendably good practices. Valuable feedback from readers through future exchanges would be incorporated into the revised edition of this handbook.

Early childhood educators play a pivotal role in scaffolding a child's early learning and development in a child care or pre-school setting. The challenge for early childhood educators is to remain life long learners in this growing and changing profession. We hope that this handbook provides insights on good practices that can be incorporated as part of your day-to-day programme in nurturing the young children under your care.

FOREWORD

Quality care is of vital importance to the growth and development of young children who spend a substantial portion of their early years in centre-based care. The increasing trend in young children attending child care centres warrants the need to ensure that provision of child care services meets at least the minimum standards of care and development.

As the child care industry grew over the years, MCYS, through its licensing, monitors and regulates all child care centres through the Child Care Centres Act (Cap 37A) and the Child Care Centres Regulations.

In a move towards improving the standards and quality of child care provisions in Singapore, MCYS designed and implemented a Licensing Instrument in 2001. This is to account for a holistic and comprehensive profile of a child care centre in its various aspects of child care provisions and compliance with licensing requirements.

Beyond maintaining standards required for licensing, this handbook aims to further raise the standards of quality care and serve as a guide for child care centres to move towards best practices.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend our appreciation to the early childhood professionals, representatives of child care centres and overseas professionals for their valuable inputs and feedback.

We hope that this handbook would pave the path for our journey together towards best practices and accreditation of child care centres.



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