

First Flight

At MOE Kindergarten, we believe that children need many opportunities over time and in different settings to develop learning dispositions. In this issue, we have invited a Mother Tongue Language Lead Teacher to share with us her beliefs about the importance of nurturing positive learning dispositions in children. Read on to find out how children demonstrate positive dispositions in their everyday learning, as well as tips on how to create a conducive home environment where lifelong learning can be nurtured!

Warm wishes,
The MOE Kindergarten Team

UNPACKING LEARNING DISPOSITIONS

Learning dispositions are positive behaviours and attitudes that help lay a strong foundation for children to become lifelong learners who find joy in learning. Here are some taglines/phrases our teachers have used (and you can use them too!) to encourage children to actively practise and demonstrate the learning dispositions.

 <p>Perseverance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep trying and don't give up • Encourage each other • Celebrate every effort 	 <p>Reflectiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think back on what you did • Learn from it • Do it better 	 <p>Appreciation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect everyone • Value what others say • Learn from all 	 <p>Inventiveness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be flexible in thinking • Look at it in another way • Try something new 	 <p>Sense of Wonder and Curiosity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observe the world • Ask questions • Find out more 	 <p>Engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen attentively • Be involved • Enjoy learning
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Photos by MOE Kindergarten @ Kranji

LEARNING AT MOE KINDERGARTEN

At MOE Kindergarten, the different learning dispositions are inculcated through a range of indoor and outdoor activities such as storytelling, singing, hands-on projects and routines for children.

INVENTIVE LEARNERS ENGAGED IN OUTDOOR PLAY

MOE Kindergarten @ Huamin

Outdoor play time provides opportunities for children to explore, discover and learn about their immediate surroundings and the world around them. Kindergarten 1 (K1) children from MOE Kindergarten @ Huamin were introduced to the outdoor play activity where there were different types of lines created by the teachers as well as lines that demarcated the area for other purposes such as fire drills. The teachers encouraged the children to come up with their own games using the lines that they see on the ground, and make up their own rules.

One such inventive game was called 'Land, Sea and Air' by the K1 children. The K1 children imagined the straight lines to be the land; zig-zag lines to be the waves at sea; and the curved lines to be the clouds in the sky. The children decided that the teacher would call out the names of different animals that can be found on land, in the sea or in the sky. When the teacher called out an animal's name, the children would guess where the animal can be found and quickly move to the right set of lines. As they moved, they would mimic the action of the animal.

With their knowledge about the different animals, the children used their imagination to come up with a new game using the lines on the ground. In the process, the children not only demonstrated inventiveness, they learnt to listen and appreciate the different ideas suggested by their peers.



As the teacher called out the name of the animal from the different land, sea and sky groups, the children would go to the lines representing each group and perform the action of the identified animal.



Chickens always walk on land like this! We can walk to the straight line while pretending to be chickens.

QUEST TO CARE FOR OUR FRIENDS IN THE SEA MOE Kindergarten @ First Toa Payoh

The Kindergarten 2 (K2) children embarked on a learning experience that enhanced their sense of wonder and curiosity and encouraged them to be inventive.

The journey started with a learning activity from the HI-Light programme about how sea creatures were affected by human behaviour and actions. The learning activity sparked the children's sense of wonder and curiosity and they posed many questions such as:

“How do we protect the sea animals?”
“How are we going to save our ocean from pollution?”
“What can we do to get rid of the trash?”



The children wondered if the cardboard inserts and plastic cups with holes could trap the trash that floated into the bin.



Oh no, looks like cardboard is not the best idea!

The teacher observed that the children were very curious to find out more about how they could protect the sea animals. One child asked, “Can we make a bin to collect trash in the ocean?” The class liked his idea and to build on their sense of wonder and curiosity, the teacher provided the time and space to let children create the bin that they named ‘Sea Bin’.

During the creation of ‘Sea Bin’, the children demonstrated inventiveness as they explored and experimented to discover more about how to save the sea animals.

Based on the different books and internet content that children read and viewed, the children selected the materials that they would like to experiment with to see which would be the best material to make ‘Sea Bin’ float. The teacher made available the actual materials (e.g. objects made of plastic, cardboard and silicon), for them to manipulate and test out which would be most suitable.

As they were testing out which material would make ‘Sea Bin’ float best, some children observed the huge net covering the sand pit. Similar to how the net kept debris from falling into the sand pit, these children suggested that a net could be placed in ‘Sea Bin’ to prevent the trash from leaving the bin. The rest of the children loved the idea and also built on it by suggesting that the net should also have holes of the right size so that it can drain out the sea water but trap the trash.



Yay! It floats and the cup did not topple!

This child-led project had empowered the children to problem-solve and to take ownership of their learning, and in the process nurtured their sense of wonder and curiosity, inventiveness, and to care for the environment.

SNAPSHOTS



At MOE Kindergarten, we believe that every moment is a teachable moment. Read on to find out how the teachers at our centres that opened in 2020 nurture learning dispositions in K1 children through a variety of fun and interactive learning activities across the MOE Kindergarten curriculum!



ENGAGED OBSERVERS - MOE Kindergarten @ Valour

When learning about the topic of ‘Animals as Pets’, the K1 children from MOE Kindergarten @ Valour were excited to observe and discover how animals move when the teacher brought in a terrapin from home. The teacher and the children discussed how everyone should get a turn to observe the terrapin up-close. Opportunity should be given to every child to use the magnifying glass to observe the patterns and lines found on the terrapin shell and body, and to discuss how the terrapin moved. This increased the interest of the entire class, with everyone being involved in the activity. At the end of the observation, everyone (even the quieter ones) had something to share about the physical characteristics of a terrapin, and what made it a suitable pet.

PERSEVERING LEARNERS - MOE Kindergarten @ North Vista

“How do shoelaces work? How do they help us in our daily lives?” These were the questions posed by the teachers from MOE Kindergarten @ North Vista when the K1 children explored the theme ‘How Do Things Work?’. In the learning centre, different kinds of shoelaces were provided for the children to explore and practise the skill of tying. It aimed to enhance children’s eye-hand coordination and fine motor skills. It was also an activity that required the children’s effort to complete. As some children encountered challenges tying the laces, they were encouraged to keep working at it and not give up even though it was hard. The teachers nurtured the learning disposition of perseverance by encouraging and guiding the children. Some of the children even suggested and shared ways to tie the shoelaces with their peers. As the children continued to practise the skill, they made progress and were proud of their accomplishment.



THE FACES OF MOE KINDERGARTEN

At MOE Kindergarten, our educators play a pivotal role in creating a learning environment that both models and encourages children to put positive learning dispositions into practice. In this issue of First Flight, Ms Reka Sherlin John, Lead Teacher (Tamil Language) of MOE Kindergarten @ Kranji shares with us how she nurtures learning dispositions in children through Mother Tongue Language (MTL) classes.



MS REKA SHERLIN JOHN
Lead Teacher (Tamil Language)
MOE Kindergarten @ Kranji

Q1: Why is it important to nurture learning dispositions in children during MTL classes?

Learning MTL can be challenging for children who have had little to no previous exposure to the language. Thus, we need to encourage children through positive reinforcement so that they **persevere** in participating in various activities. We would also need to nurture the learning disposition of engagement in young children so that they will be motivated to use the Tamil Language in class and beyond such as at home and during their daily routines.

I think the learning disposition of **reflectiveness** is key to helping children be effective learners. Children who can think back on what they have learnt and consider ways to do it better have a much easier time learning their MTL.

Q2: How do you create a supportive classroom culture to nurture learning dispositions in children?

One thing that helps children to persevere in learning is to create a supportive classroom culture that affirms every child. As many children may be shy or embarrassed to speak in a language that they are unfamiliar with, creating a supportive culture encourages them to speak up. They also learn to encourage their friends to speak up and together, they overcome the initial difficulty of picking up the language.

Also, it is important to nurture children’s **engagement** in learning the Tamil Language. I do this through coming up with fun and engaging activities using songs, stories and games. These strategies motivate children to speak and use the language with their friends as they realise how fun and engaging it is to communicate in Tamil Language!

Q3: You mentioned how it’s important to keep children engaged in learning the Tamil Language. How do you keep them engaged and curious about the Tamil Language?

I think building on children’s **sense of wonder and curiosity** is important to help them learn the Tamil Language. Besides what they experience with me in class, I observe what they do in the kindergarten such as the topics they are interested in or learning in the HI-Light programme.

Sometimes children would come to me with that sparkle in their eyes, telling me about the animals that they have learnt in HI-Light. When I see that, I will think of ways to extend their interest in animals in my Tamil Language activities and that’s how I build on their sense of wonder and curiosity while learning the Tamil Language.

Q4: Lastly, what is one tip that you would like to share with parents?

Make an effort to speak to your children in MTL during **daily conversations** and integrate MTL in your daily lives. Allow your child to become immersed in learning MTL beyond the classroom, and help foster in them a positive attitude towards learning. Appreciate your child’s progress in language learning and build on their sense of wonder and curiosity.

INVENTIVE CREATORS - MOE Kindergarten @ Naval Base

Covid-19 has introduced new classroom practices such as no sharing of stationery due to the safe management measures put in place. To observe this safe measure, K1 children from MOE Kindergarten @ Naval Base came up with an innovative idea to create their own pencil holders! The children looked for suitable materials and decided on using milk cartons as a sturdy material to hold their stationery.



SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD

The Singapore Kindergarten Impact Project (SKIP) is Singapore's first large-scale longitudinal study that tracked the progress of more than 1,500 children from K1 to Primary 1. One of the key findings from the study highlights the importance of the home environment for children's learning and development in the area of numeracy and Mother Tongue Language.

At MOE Kindergarten, we recognise that parents play an important role in a child's learning and development. While academic skills are important, learning dispositions are key in helping your child have a positive attitude towards learning. With these learning dispositions, they will enjoy and look forward to learning.

Here are some tips to help you build a conducive home environment where lifelong learning can be nurtured:

1. PERSEVERANCE

Challenge your child.

Suggest an interesting challenge for your child to take up. They could make their own breakfast before going to school (e.g. spreading butter/jam on their toast and pouring milk into their cup) or complete word and jigsaw puzzles of different levels of difficulty.

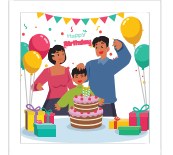
This nurtures perseverance as they keep trying despite experiencing failure or setbacks. When the task gets too easy, give them another challenge or even let them come up with a challenge for themselves!



2. REFLECTIVENESS

Capture and reflect on shared memories together.

Create a photo album of a family outing, experience or event (e.g. a birthday celebration), and spend some time with your child to view the photographs. Ask your child what they remembered about the event/experience and the people. Ask them how they felt at different points in time and what they would do differently the next time.



This nurtures reflectiveness in them as they look at the photographs which help them to recall and think back on what happened and how they felt about the event/experience. This also creates an opportunity to invite them to suggest other ways of celebrating the event or planning the outing/experience as you bond with your child and relive your family's happy memories together.

3. APPRECIATION

Help your child appreciate and respect differences.

Discuss with your child and family members what to have for breakfast/lunch/dinner for the week. Help your child understand that not all family members have the same likes and dislikes and that everyone's views matters.

This nurtures their appreciation for others as they learn to respect and value different ideas suggested by others which can enrich their experiences.



4. INVENTIVENESS

Encourage your child to think outside the box.

Have too many empty boxes lying around the home from all the online buying and shopping? Don't throw them all away! Get your child to suggest different ways to reuse the boxes and try their hand at reusing them.



This nurtures inventiveness in them as they look at things from a different perspective and develop flexibility in their thinking.

5. SENSE OF WONDER AND CURIOSITY

Share your thoughts and questions with your child.

On your next family walk in the neighbourhood or at a park, share with your child what you see and hear around you and what questions you have (e.g. "I wonder what this place was like before there were flats/there was this park. What do you think?").

This nurtures their sense of wonder and curiosity as they get excited by the observations that you made and the questions that you asked. This will encourage them to observe and develop an interest in the things around them.



6. ENGAGEMENT

Develop a daily schedule with your child.

You can try getting your child to plan their own schedule for the weekends as a start. The schedule could consist of routines such as brushing their teeth when they wake up, reading a book or playing a game for a set duration. Display their schedule and praise them when they show they are able to keep to their schedule with few or no reminders.



This engages children and helps them to focus and practise self-control as they follow an established schedule.

