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MEDIA RELEASE

PILOT PROGRAMME TO BRING NEW LEARNING APPROACH TO PRESCHOOLS

1. The Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA), in collaboration with Temasek Foundation Cares, will pilot an initiative in selected preschools, which will see teachers being trained to apply teaching and learning strategies under the Abecedarian Approach (AA) in the classroom. The three-year pilot, named the "Temasek Foundation Cares – ABCD (Abecedarian Based Child Development) Kids Programme", aims to better support the early development of infants and toddlers from low-income families in these preschools. This will contribute to the holistic development of children in their early years, forming a strong foundation for a good start in life.

2. AA is an evidence-based approach that emphasises language development and high quality adult-child interactions to stimulate child development and growth. Research studies conducted on AA have shown that such interactions with a child's teacher and parents have enabled children from lower-income backgrounds to improve their cognitive and socio-emotional development, and catch up with their peers.

3. Temasek Foundation Cares has committed a total of $1.6million to fund the pilot programme over three years. Under the pilot, ECDA will provide training and coaching to teachers from the participating preschools to equip them with the knowledge and skills to implement AA in their classrooms. ECDA will assign AA Mentors to guide teachers and model the delivery of AA strategies in the preschools.

Through facilitated parent engagement sessions organised by the preschools, parents will also be taught strategies that they can apply at home to reinforce their children's learning.

4. 16 preschools under NTUC My First Skool, PCF Sparkletots, Persatuan Pemudi Islam Singapura (PPIS), and Presbyterian Community Services will be selected for the TF Cares – ABCD Kids Programme. ECDA will work with the four preschool operators to train 60 teachers and identify about 100 children across the 16 preschools to participate in the pilot. If the outcomes of the pilot are positive, the programme may be rolled out in more preschools in future. Nonetheless, the impact of the pilot is expected to go beyond those who have been identified for additional support within the three years, as teachers trained in AA may also apply the approach in their daily interactions with other children in the classroom.

5. Associate Professor Muhammad Faishal Ibrahim, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Social and Family Development visited a PCF Sparkletots preschool[1] that has been selected to pilot the AA, and where three teachers have been trained. He said, "This pilot programme supports the government's continued efforts to invest in quality, accessible, and affordable preschool education. In particular, AA provides preschool teachers additional evidence-based tools to enhance their classroom practices, and further support the development of children from lower-income backgrounds. With the support and partnership of preschool operators, community partners, teachers, and parents, we can and will continue to do more to give our children the best possible start in life."

6. Recognising that the strategies can help build up the capabilities of his teachers, Mr Victor Bay, Chief Executive Officer of PCF said, "We are excited to be part of this pilot because we believe in the importance of high-quality teacher-child interactions. The teachers who have attended the Abecedarian Approach training have gained knowledge and skills to grow professionally and this will enhance their interactions with our children. At PCF Sparkletots, we place great emphasis on the professional

[1] The preschool is located at Blk 172 Kebun Baru.

development of our staff. We look forward to a positive outcome from the pilot, so that more Early Years teachers can be trained in the Abecedarian Approach."

7. Mr Richard Magnus, Chairman of Temasek Foundation Cares, said, "Children have a natural curiosity to explore, discover and learn. Through intentional and meaningful interactions with adults, this programme will help children to expand their cognitive, language and emotional abilities. Their parents will learn to reinforce the lessons and learnings. This is a critical developmental pilot which we hope will be scaled up."

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