


<p><b>Challenges</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In working towards a common belief and vision for the child to anchor the role and practices of parents, educators and government.</li> <li>2. More conscious effort needed to support and meet the diverse needs of all children and families while strengthening a sense of belonging for all, through a) supporting and strengthening parenting roles and family-child relationships; b) inclusion in schools; and c) affordability of child care</li> <li>3. ECD staff recruitment, retention and professional practice.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Singapore Country Profile: Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)</b></p>
 <p>Source: Preschool Market/2017/Hong Sze Siang</p>	<p><b>General information about ECCD in Singapore<sup>i ii iii</sup></b></p> <p>Singapore has strong positive indicators on ECCD outcomes globally. Among young children, immunization is universal with extremely few malnutrition rates and under-5 mortality. A recent framework to inculcate healthy lifestyles for children and youth was initiated that strengthened the emphasis on physical activity and nutrition.</p> <p>Emphasis on early education is high with nearly universal participation rates. Since the early 2000s, the nation has been progressively investing in the professional development of early childhood professionals and the development of programmes serving children in child care centres and kindergartens.</p> <p>In 2013, requirements for early childhood educator qualifications have been increased in the effort to enhance quality. Similarly, an accreditation framework was established in 2011 focusing on providing quality preschool education.</p>
<p><b>Priorities</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Investing in early childhood education so that every child in Singapore starts well.</li> <li>2. To enhance health outcomes for children and youth.</li> <li>3. Building a more inclusive society.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Key policy</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <a href="#">Early Childhood Development Centres Act</a></li> <li>2. <a href="#">Children and Young Persons Act</a></li> <li>3. <a href="#">4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child periodic reports (Singapore submissions)</a></li> </ol> <p><b>Ministry in charge</b></p>

The Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) in Singapore serves as the ECCD regulatory and developmental authority, overseeing key aspects of children's development below the age of 7, across kindergartens and childcare centers.

Other ministries implementing ECCD include: Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social and Family Development, Early Child Development Agency, and Ministry of Health.

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**Key data: A life cycle approach for ECCD**

**Demographics**

Indicator	Data	Source (year)
Total population (thousands)	5,607.28	World Bank Open Data (2016 <sup>iv</sup> )
Rural population (%)	0	UNICEF SWOC (2016 <sup>v</sup> )
Under-5 population (thousands)	265	UNICEF SWOC (2016)
Population below the global poverty line of US \$ 1.90/day (%)	N/A	N/A
Population growth rate (annual %)	2.4	UNICEF SWOC (2016)
Total fertility rate (births per women)	1.2	UNICEF SWOC (2016)

**Prenatal**

Indicator	Data	Source (year)
Annual number of births (thousands)	50	UNICEF SWOC (2016)
Birth registration (%)	N/A	N/A
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	N/A	N/A

**Birth to 5 years**

Indicator	Data	Source (year)
Infant mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	2	UNICEF SWOC (2016)
Exclusive breastfeeding under-6 months (%)	N/A	N/A
Under-5 stunting prevalence (moderate and severe) (%)	4	UNICEF SWOC (2016)

**Noteworthy practices<sup>vi</sup>**

- [Kidstart programme](#)**  
 (Led by Early Childhood Development Agency or ECDA)  
*Noteworthy aspects:* A program to enable children from low-income families to have a good start in life.  
*Achievements:* Since July 2016, the three-year pilot has been actively implemented with an expectation to benefit around 1,000 children residing in low-income households in the three pilot regions.
- [FLAiR programme](#)**  
 (By Association for Early Childhood Educators or AECES)  
*Noteworthy aspects:* The Focused Language Assistance in Reading (FLAiR) program in collaboration with the Ministry of Education provides focused language assistance to kindergarten children.  
*Achievements:* Program will lay a strong oral-aural foundation in the English language for children so that they will be ready to develop early reading skills.
- [Project Hand in Hand](#)**  
 (Collaboration between AECES and Temasek Foundation Cares)  
*Noteworthy practices:* This community-based project aims to engage volunteers, including active seniors as mentors, to walk the child to and from preschool regularly or when due to various challenging family circumstances are not able to attend preschool regularly.

Under-5 mortality rate (deaths per 1,000 live births)	3	UNICEF SWOC (2016)
DTP3 national immunization coverage (%)	97	UNICEF SWOC (2016)
Violent discipline (Children aged 1-14 exposed to violent disciplinary methods during the last month) (%)	N/A	N/A

#### School readiness

Indicator	Data	Source (year)
Early Childhood Development Index or ECDI (%)	N/A	N/A
Father's support for learning (%)	N/A	N/A
Availability of children's books (%)	N/A	N/A
Gross enrollment ratio or GER in pre-primary (%)	N/A	N/A
Gender parity index of GER; F/M (%)	N/A	N/A
Children entering Grade 1 with ECD experience (%)	N/A	N/A
Gender parity index of children with ECD experience; F/M (%)	N/A	N/A
Grade 1 repetition rate (%)	0.10	UIS (2008)

*Achievements:* Pre-schoolers from disadvantaged families increase their attendance and benefit from preschool education while their families receive financial help for their education and health-related needs.

#### 4. [Safe and Strong Families pilot project](#)

(Launched by the Ministry of Social and Family Development or MSF)

*Noteworthy aspects:* This is an intensive support program which aims to strengthen family-based care and community support for vulnerable children to keep them together with their families.

*Achievements:* Children benefit from family preservation and reunification services to enable them to remain or return to their families. Families will also benefit from counseling and coaching on parenting skills.

#### Testimonies

*"That is also why the Government is investing heavily in young children. We have doubled our annual spending on preschools in the last five years. In 2012, we have spent S\$360 million. In 2017, this year we are spending S\$840 million. So it is actually more than double. And in the next five years, we will double spending again. So by 2022, five years from now, we will be spending S\$1,700 million. It is a heavy investment but worthwhile and necessary."* -- [Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, 2017](#)

*"As part of the Government's commitment to give every child a good start and to make Singapore a great place for families, we have undertaken various efforts to raise the affordability, accessibility and quality of our early childhood sector. In support of this, the Early Childhood Development Agency, ECDA, was established in 2013 to regulate and develop the sector...The Early Childhood Development Centres Bill seeks exactly to be that strong and reliable base for the sector - to consistently provide good quality programmes that give our young parents a peace of mind when it comes to the safety, well-being and development of their children. In short, this Bill will ensure higher and more consistent quality standards across the early childhood sector."* -- [Tan Chuan-Jin, Minister of Social and Family Development, 2017](#)

#### Commented [PC1]:

Full text below. Not for inclusion given space limitation.

.....You will notice that the Bill focuses on early childhood development - we emphasise holistic care and education as integral to our children's growth....As announced by the NurtureSG Taskforce last week, ECDA will specify more detailed nutritional requirements to ensure that children receive nutritious, balanced and varied meals. This includes not allowing centres to serve sugary drinks and deep-fried food, and catering for the regular provision of fruits and calcium-rich food. The physical activities time for full-day programmes will also be increased to an hour daily, up from half-hour today, and half-hour of which has to be conducted outdoors

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<sup>i</sup> ARNEC. [Asia Pacific Regional ECD data portal: Enabling environments.](#)

<sup>ii</sup> UNESCO. (2017). [ECCE country profiles.](#)

<sup>iii</sup> UNESCO. (2016). [New Horizons: A review of early childhood care and education in Asia and the Pacific](#)

<sup>iv</sup> World Bank Group. (2016). [World Bank Open Data.](#) (Accessed 17 January 2018)

<sup>v</sup> UNICEF. (2016). [The State of the World's Children 2017 Statistical Table.](#)

<sup>vi</sup> SEAMEO INNOTECH. [Regional consultation forum on early learning frameworks, policies and programmes: A completion report](#)