2ND HENRY DAVID HOCHSTADT EARLY CHILDHOOD SYMPOSIUM

Keynote Address One

Building Responsive Partnerships to Support Early Years Transitions

By Associate Professor Sally Peters

Synopsis

Transitions are an important part of every ongoing educational journey. In recent years there has been much attention focused on 'successful' transitions and supporting learning as children move within and between education settings. This presentation shares the findings from a number of recent research projects which have explored possible strategies and practices to enhance the transition experiences of children and families. Respectful, reciprocal relationships are frequently found to be central to successful transitions. This includes children's relationships with friends, peers and teachers, as well as the nature of the relationships between the adults involved in the transition, most notably the family, school teachers and early childhood teachers. Particular attention will be paid to building responsive partnerships across the borders and liminal spaces that a transition may represent. It looks at understanding the contexts, cultures and histories of those in a partnership as a starting place to build bridges and connections to support transitions. Some of the challenges in this approach will be addressed. The findings draw on New Zealand and other international research and offer ideas for discussion in the Singapore context.

Associate Professor Sally Peters

Head of School
Te Oranga School of Human Development & Movement Studies
Faculty of Education
The University of Waikato
New Zealand

Sally Peters is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Education, University of Waikato. Currently she is Head of School, Te Oranga School of Human Development and Counselling and one of the Associate Directors of the university's Early Years Research Centre. Sally has a background in early childhood education and a particular interest in children's development from 0–8 years. Sally has over 20 years of experience as a researcher and has led or co-led a number of research projects exploring aspects of transition experiences. Exploring partnerships to support transition experiences has been a feature of a number of these projects. From 2013-2016 Sally led the New Zealand team in a five-country, four-year Marie Curie International Research Staff Exchange Scheme (IRSES) project focused on

Pedagogies of Educational Transitions (POET), providing international insights into transitions. Her research interests also include understanding more about young children's thinking, working theories and social development. Many of her projects have involved working in partnership with teachers and looking at ways to enhance and support learning over time. Recently she was part of the writing team for the update of the New Zealand early childhood curriculum *Te Whāriki,* with particular responsibility for the work on pathways to school.

Keynote Address Two

What's Your Story? Using Stories for Meaning Making in Children's Transition to School

By Dr Hanin Hussain and Dr Mercy Jesuvadian

Synopsis:

In our presentation, we will share with you a story of our group's project to develop the transition booklet which is intended as a guide for parents and teachers in preschools and schools. In our story, we provide glimpses of the project's origins, its development, its intentions and some of the key ideas we advocate for. We invite you to consider using stories as a meaning-making tool when you engage with children, teachers and parents to support children's transition to school. You may wish to reflect on how the six key ideas from the booklet are used in your home or educational setting, and to frame your stories as stories of navigating transitions, embracing transitions and empowering all stakeholders in children's transition to Primary 1.

Dr Hanin Binte Hussain

Lecturer

Early Childhood and Special Needs Education AG

National Institute of Education

Hanin has been a primary school teacher as well as an early childhood teacher, having teaching experiences in both Singapore and New Zealand. Currently a lecturer at NIE, she seeks to underpin the various aspects of her teaching with an intention to foster both learning experiences and outcomes with her students in ways that are meaningful and transformative for everyone. Hanin was one of the developers of the booklet *Supporting transitions to Primary 1: A guide for teachers and parents*. She strongly believes that adults can play a big role in engaging with children to provide meaningful transition experiences for them. Some of her areas of research interests include: curriculum (especially emergent curriculum, curriculum design, curriculum development), physically active play or early childhood

physical education, complexity thinking and complex systems in education and emergent methodologies in research

Dr Mercy Karuniah Jesuvadian
Lecturer
Early Childhood and Special Needs Education AG
National Institute of Education

Mercy has over 16 years experience in training and teaching. She has taught in both secondary and tertiary educational institutions in Singapore. She holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Education (1998,NIE). She graduated with a Masters in English Studies from the National University of Singapore (2002) and a Masters in Early Childhood Education from the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Singapore (2007). She earned her Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in Early Childhood Education from NIE, NTU in 2016. She is currently a Lecturer in the Early Childhood and Special Needs Department at the NIE. Her research interests include early child development, family studies, parent-school collaborations; teacher professionalism in EC and research methodologies. She especially seeks to foreground the voices of young children in research concerning them.

Workshop A
Transition from Home to Preschool and Preschool to Primary School

A1 - Strengthening Home-School Partnerships: Developing Life Skills for Primary Education and Beyond

By Ms Cheryl Ng and Ms Ng Mei Ling

Synopsis

A positive preschool experience develops a positive mindset about school. It begins with children having a sense of belonging seeing themselves as purposeful individuals. Developing resilience in young children requires positive, trusting and loving relationships to be established in the children's life. The alignment of practices in school and at home helps children develop a concrete understanding for their boundaries and purpose in life. With a growth mindset, children learn to accept mistakes in a positive and encouraging environment. They learn to think openly and are aware of how to improve themselves.

Cheryl Ng

Senior Principal
Paper Scissors Stone Montessori Kindergarten

Cheryl Ng believes that the foundation of holistic development of children at preschool years begins with strong home-school partnership. As Senior Principal of Paper Scissors Stone Montessori Kindergarten, Ms Cheryl Ng has supported parents and teachers as an advocate, in understanding the needs of each child at various stages of their learning and development through their preschool years. She has been in the Early Childhood field for 15 years starting as a preschool teacher to running and supporting two branches of the kindergarten to date. Apart from working with children, she has trained and nurtured teachers into confident individuals who are capable of supporting children's learning and development in a positive learning environment.

Ng Mei Ling

Principal
Paper Scissors Stone Montessori Kindergarten (Simei)

Ng Mei Ling began her career in Early Childhood Education in 2008. She is currently the principal of Paper Scissors Stone Montessori Kindergarten (Simei). She has been a practitioner working with various age groups of children ranging from the Nursery One to Kindergarten Two, in a vertical grouping Montessori environment. She has incorporated various hands-on projects to support Kindergarten Two students in transiting to Primary School smoothly. Her field of interests includes engaging children to spark their imagination through project approach. She strongly believes that children can reach their fullest potential at their own comfortable pace, leading to self-respect, security, and creativity.

A2 -Building Bridges: Easing the Transition to Primary School

By Ms Noorsiah Allaudeen and Ms Toh Fang Ling

Synopsis

Children have to go through many levels in their educational journey and each time a child crosses a milestone from one stage to the next, a transition occurs. The transition that occurs from the early childhood phase to that of primary education can be deemed to be one of the most significant that each child has to take in the education continuum. Unfortunately this transition has been known to be even traumatic for some children and in turn a cause for concern for many parents which often prompts them to seek strategies to best prepare their child. As such the importance of a successful transition to school cannot be overemphasised. The shift to primary school not only involves the child, but requires the whole family to make adjustments and adapt to change. The acknowledgement of the importance of transition from early childhood to primary education is essential for successful transition.

Noorsiah Allaudeen
Head of Curriculum
G8 Education Singapore Pte Ltd

Noorsiah Allaudeen graduated with a Bachelor of Arts Degree (English Language & History) from the National University of Singapore. She completed her Specialist Diploma in Early Childhood Education (Teaching & Leadership). In her stint in the United States, she gained further overseas field experience by exploring early childhood programmes in Austin, Texas including Master Early Childhood classes at the University of Texas (Austin). Noorsiah completed her Master in Education (Early Childhood) with the National Institute of Education & Nanyang Technological University. As Head of Curriculum at G8 Education Singapore, she supervises and manages curriculum design and development, operations systems, people development and management of a group of childcare centres. She reviews and develops the curriculum for three brands, provides consultancy and guidance on improving curriculum and operational standards. She also assists to manage acquisition projects. Noorsiah mentors and trains teachers; as well as recommends early intervention where necessary through her continued investigations in early childhood and recent trends.

Toh Fang Ling
Senior Educator,
Cherie Hearts DiscoveryLand Pte Ltd
Subsidiary of G8 Education Singapore

Toh Fang Ling has seven years of teaching experience in the early childhood industry. Seeing children as active learners who can take charge of their own learning, she believes that it is important for children to enjoy the process of learning. Ms Toh also sees the importance for educators to continuously keep up with current issues and trends. Having embarked on the Practitioner Inquiry project since 2015, she hopes to better equip parents with Child Development knowledge, better prepare parents and child for Primary School experience and improve children's learning. Ms Toh has recently completed her Master in Education (Early Childhood) at the National Institute of Education. She also holds a Bachelor of Early Childhood Education, Higher Certificate in Infant Care, as well as an Advanced Diploma in Kindergarten Education – Teaching.

A3 – Transition Means Change

By Ms Shirley Tan

Synopsis

Transition means change. The effect of change in the early learning experiences has a definitive impact on how children will function as adults and consequently on how they affect society. Young children go through several transitions and the most significant is from home to preschools and preschools to primary schools. Although transition from preschool to primary school is less daunting than from home to preschool, nevertheless, its experience does have long term effect on learning. Successful transition entails meaningful conversations with teachers; orientating in the new environment through active learning and experience and strong family and school partnership. Very often parents and teachers alike pay more attention to the academic skills. However, teachers should help children to be prepared for the social and psychological difficulties that they may face when they move on. This sharing will highlight how Church of the Holy Trinity Kindergarten prepares these children to tackle their next phase of learning.

Shirley Tan
Principal
Church of the Holy Trinity Kindergarten

Shirley Tan, a passionate visionary, innovative trailblazer and transformational educator with 15 years of experience implementing effective programmes and inspiring change in early childhood education. She dedicated to using heart work and head work to develop sustainable curriculum while inspiring educators and children alike for love of lifelong learning. She presented in conferences, provided consultancy services and conducted training workshops.

A4 – We Love, We Can, We Learn

By Mdm Sharida Batcha Sahib, Mrs Jane Soon, Mrs Farzila Anuar, Mrs Daphne Ng

Synopsis

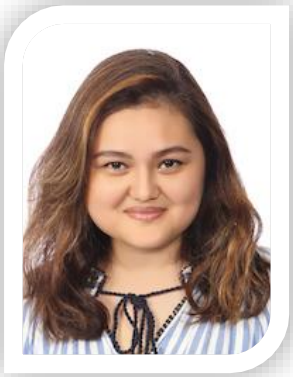
South View Primary School's Primary 1 Transition Programme "We Love, We Can, We Learn" believes that a quality transition-to-school programme supports children to develop a positive view of school. The 4-week programme focuses on bridging the differences between their experience at preschool and Primary 1 by addressing the children's social and emotional adjustment, knowledge, physical and life skills, to better support their overall development, and enable them to feel comfortable and familiar with the school environment and expectations.

Starting school is a community experience, South View formed strategic partnership with NIE, early childhood educators and our school teachers to develop a greater understanding of their transitional needs. We develop strong connections and partner parents to support their children to make school an exciting and engaging place.

Through South View's Primary 1 Transition Programme, our Primary 1 pupils will develop confidence, become competent learners and grow to love themselves, school and learning.

Sharida Batcha Sahib
Principal
South View Primary School

Jane Soon



Farzila Anuar

Daphne Ng

The presenters are made up of a School Leader, Year Head and Assistant Year Heads of South View Primary School's Student Development Team (SDT). They have an average of 15 years in the education service each. The team has been developing programmes that promote the development and well-being of all students including providing support and intervention for specific groups of students. Part of their work also looks at providing training for teachers in the area of student development.

The team developed the Primary 1 Transition Programme "We Love, We Can, We Learn" in 2015. The programme was awarded the 2015 MOE Innergy (Schools) Awards – Silver and have been shared are several local and international platforms.
Besides this programme, other transition programmes which the team have developed would be:

- Back to School Programme - A customised one-week package for first week of school to allow students time to transit as they move on to a new grade level (for all levels)
- Ready Sec Go! A month-long Primary 6 transition programme to prepare Primary 6 students for Secondary school

Workshop B
Transition of children with special needs from home to EIPIC/preschool and from EIPIC/preschool to primary/special school

B1 – Rainbow Centre Early Intervention Programme Transition to School – A Collaborative Approach

By Ms Suriana Bte Ahmad Sapari

Transitions mark the first step towards the unknown while synonymously initiating a 'good-bye' to familiarity. This can be a stressful process, though inevitable. Rainbow Centre Early Intervention Programme (RCEIP) believes that supporting children and their families through the transition process requires systematic, collaborative and organised planning. Families must be aware of the different placement opportunities for their child as well as how to help prepare their child for the transition. Ongoing engagement with the families through meetings, home visits and centre visits may be the starting place for them to become involved in the transition process. Systematic planning, families as partners, and child and professional preparedness are necessary for a solid foundation for success (Conn-Powers et al.,1990).

In RCEIP, transition may happen at different points in time. Besides transitions from our Early Intervention Programme to the next school placement at 6 years old, we also work with families and the children to transition from our centre to a mainstream preschool, and vice versa.

In this presentation, participants will develop an overall understanding of how RCEIP walks the transition journey with our families and their children.

Suriana
Lead Teacher cum Programme Coordinator
Rainbow Centre

Suriana is currently a Lead Teacher cum Programme Coordinator in Rainbow Centre's Early Intervention Programme. Through 28 years of working closely with children with special needs and their families as an educator, she is acutely aware of the complexities faced by them in and out of school. Suriana loves learning and is always seeking new knowledge in the areas of teaching and learning especially in early intervention and special needs.
She is inspired by educators who dare to be different so that they can facilitate thinking, engage minds, encourage risks and cultivate dreams with their learners in the classroom.
She also enjoys sharing her journey and experience in the Special Education industry with new teachers and helping them grow professionally.

B2 - Ensuring Healthy Transition from Preschool to Primary School for Children with Additional Needs

By Dr Honey Ng

Synopsis
Kindle Garden started as a purpose-built inclusive preschool to create a value-based, inclusive and non-discriminatory learning environment for children. We undertook a descriptive study to look at children completing their journey at Kindle Garden, and provision for a healthy transition to their next school. For this purpose, children were asked to discuss their outlook about transition. From the discussion, their concerns were raised. To facilitate their transition, children are given opportunities to visit to a primary school, and opportunities to interact with primary school children in a fun-filled context, such as participation in sports events. These opportunities allow children to practice building positive relations. For parents, there were several touch points for them through the year to seek out case workers to discuss the child's future needs. Workshops were also provided for parents to gather information.

Dr Honey Ng
Asst Director
Inclusion and Disability Division,
AWWA Ltd.

Dr Honey Ng is psychologist by training. She is awarded Doctor of Philosophy with Distinction, Psychology and Bachelor of Arts with 1st class Honours in Psychology by the University of Western Australia. She started as a teacher in preschool before becoming a principal and later operation management of multiple kindergartens and childcares. Her roles included strategic business planning, and curricula input and implementation. She also provided regional support in training, for operation and programme implementation in

Singapore, China, Malaysia and Indonesian. Over the last few years, she was appointed Asst Professor for School of Psychology, University of Western Australia and spent 4 years teaching. And later, she was appointed Director, Offshore Program (Singapore) for University of Western Australia. She played key role in developing effective partnership between UWA and stakeholders. Currently, she is the Asst Director in Inclusion and Disability division of AWWA Ltd. Her current portfolios include overseeing Kindle Garden, the first Inclusive Preschool in Singapore, and AWWA's Development Support (DS) and Learning support (DS) program.

B3 - Providing a Safe and Continuous Journey for Children with Special Educational Needs in Transition

By Ms Tutek Amir and Mr Yow Jit Sin

Synopsis

Children with special educational needs (SEN) transitioning from early years settings to mainstream primary school in Singapore may face complex transition issues. For these children, navigating a new environment is often a daunting process because of their unique developmental challenges. They require the sensitive and strategic support from schools to help them succeed. This sharing presents the transition practices of two mainstream primary schools. Discover how they have leveraged on evidence-based practices and MOE transition processes to better serve children with SEN transition from Pre-school to Primary level. Both schools will share their similarities and unique practices in providing a safe environment for children with SEN to grow, learn and play together with their peers in a new environment. Ms Amir and Mr Yow will also highlight the importance of working in close partnership with key stakeholders, in particular, the parents. They will share how they have involved and empowered parents, and how this has been a critical factor in contributing to a smooth transition for children with SEN.

Tutek Amir

Allied Educator (Learning & Behavioural Support)

Tampines Primary School

Tutek Amir is currently working as an Allied Educator, Learning and Behavioural Support at Tampines Primary School (TPS). She worked hard to earn a Diploma and an Advanced Diploma in Special Education in 2009 and 2015 respectively from the National Institute of Education (NIE). It was during her stint at NIE that she experienced the true meaning of

inclusion; where everyone was accepted, respected and affirmed by the experts in education. This experience spurred her to adopt inclusive practices by putting herself in her pupils' shoes, inspiring other educators to believe and give hope to those with special needs. She credits the supportive eco-system of the school including committed school leaders, colleagues and parents in making TPS a place where pupils with special needs are recognised, integrated and cared for. Her dedication earned her the Leading Foundation Teacher Award (2015), MOE Service Excellence (2015) and Public Service 21 Star Award (2016).

Yow Jit Sin

Allied Educator (Learning & Behavioural Support)
Concord Primary School

Yow Jit Sin was working in the Biological Sciences Industry before making a switch to serving children with special needs in 2009. He holds a Diploma in Special Education from the National Institute of Education (NIE), Nanyang Technological University, Singapore and will be pursing his Masters in Special Education at NIE in August 2018. He was awarded the Leading Foundation Teacher Award in 2014. Mr Yow works in a mainstream primary school as an Allied Educator (Learning & Behavioural Support) in providing support to children with mild to moderate special educational needs (SEN). He believes the importance of carrying out transition support, as it will help to equip the teachers and parents in understanding the needs of the children with SEN better during this critical transition period. With the support, it will help the children with SEN to settle into the new environment well and at ease.

Keynote Symposium by Faculty Staff of the National Institute of Education

Transitioning from Preschool to Primary school: A Comparison of Children in "Shared" vs. "Non-shared" Environments

By Dr Ng Ee Lynn

Synopsis

Transitioning from preschool to primary school is an important developmental milestone for children. At the same time, it brings a unique set of challenges to children. One of the main challenges is learning to adapt to a formal and structured learning environment, as well as adapting to a new physical setting and new routines. As an initial attempt towards addressing these challenges, the Singapore government located most of the MOE kindergartens within the premises of primary schools. This partnership between kindergartens and primary schools provides a "shared" and consistent environment for children, which may help to mitigate some of the structural barriers to transitions. Drawing on data from the Singapore Kindergarten Impact Project, I will describe the outcomes of children who transition within a "shared" environment versus those who transition to a non-partner primary school. Findings will be discussed within the broader context of addressing transition challenges in early childhood.

Dr Ng Ee Lynn
Research Scientist
Office of Education Research (OER)
National Institute of Education

Dr. Ng Ee Lynn is a Research Scientist at the Centre for Research in Child Development in the National Institute of Education, Singapore. Ee Lynn obtained her PhD from Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. Her research interest is in the area of applied cognitive development, focusing on the interplay between cognitive and affective factors in child development and learning. She is currently involved in several research projects examining the developmental trajectories of children with poor self-regulation skills at entry to primary school, and the role of parental well-being and sensitivity to the development of children's early numeracy skills. She is also a co-Principal Investigator on the Singapore Kindergarten Impact Project (SKIP), the first large-scale study of early childhood education in Singapore. SKIP aims to examine how pedagogical experiences, together with home support and

children's cognitive capabilities, influence children's school readiness and performance in later schooling.

Thriving through Transitions: Collaborations and Continuity in Supporting the Young Child

By Dr Isabella Wong

Synopsis

Transitions to school is a period of change and adjustment and is generally associated with stress, excitement and enjoyment. While transitions can be viewed as exciting learning opportunities, there are risks for children who experience difficult and unsuccessful transitions. Given the abrupt change in environment, roles and relationships, children often experience significant challenges during the transition process; including behavioral, cognitive, social-emotional and physical concerns. It has been suggested that transition is successful when the child has achieved a sense of well-being or comfort and 'oneness' (Laevers etal, 1997; Educational Transitions and Change Research Group, 2100) with the new setting. This capacity of 'oneness', which is associated with a child's sense of identity, self-concept and belonging, is characterized by children feeling secure, relaxed, comfortable and having positive attitudes about school and learning (rather than anxious, lonely, confused or upset). During this presentation, we will review these variables of 'oneness' for successful adjustment and the challenges of maladjustment. Strategies for promoting 'oneness' and children's adjustment to school will also be addressed including the preparation of children for school, the involvement of parents in the transition, communication and collaboration between early childhood educators and schools, and transition program continuity.

Associate Professor Isabella Wong
Psychological Studies Academic Group
National Institute of Education

Dr Isabella Wong is an Associate Professor at Psychological Studies Academic Group, National Institute of Education. Dr Wong's main research and teaching interests are in psychosocial development, positive education, cognitive education and mediated learning practices with young people, the role of non-intellective factors in learning, child and adolescent psychopathology, psycho-educational assessment and interventions. Having taught in schools, she has long-standing commitment to work in teacher cognition, teacher effectiveness, and efficacy in teacher mentoring and instructional supervision practices. As

a researcher, Dr Wong has obtained several significant research grants in the values exceeding half a million. As a teacher, she has been acknowledged for excellence in teaching with a variety of commendations and awards. She has also published widely and served as a peer reviewer in the areas of her expertise. Dr Wong has extensive local and overseas experience in the design and development of affective education, teacher preparation and professional development programs and is a much sought-after public speaker. She has served on various curriculum and enhancement committees and has consulted with and provided training and preparation for education leaders, teacher educators, and organization leaders both locally and overseas.

Preschool Children with Special Educational Needs Attending Both Preschools and EIPIC Programs: What Kinds of Support can Preschools Offer?

By A/P Kenneth Poon

Synopsis

The recent years has been marked with an increase in the awareness of special educational needs (SEN) among preschool children. Coupled with an increased drive to encourage the educational inclusion of children with SEN, educators in early childhood environments report increasing numbers of children with SEN in their classrooms. Many children with SEN attending the Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children (EIPIC) make the horizontal transition between EIPIC and preschool on a regular basis.

Who are these children with SEN who also attend EIPIC? What are their learning needs? How can professionals supporting them in preschool environments respond to their learning needs? Drawing from research from our research group in Singapore, this session seeks to address the question of what are the learning needs of preschool children with SEN as well as to explore evidence informed strategies for teachers to employ within classrooms.

Associate Professor Kenneth Poon

Associate Dean Research Quality
Office of Education Research (OER),
Early Childhood & Special Needs Education (ECSE) Academic Group

Associate Professor Kenneth Poon serves concurrently as Associate Dean (Research Quality) at the Office of Education Research, and as Interim Centre Co-Director at the Centre for Research in Child Development. Trained professionally as a clinical psychologist at the University of Queensland, Australia, he obtained a PhD in Education at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA with a specialization in early childhood intervention and autism spectrum disorders. An active researcher with a current grant portfolio about S$10

million that he manages as Lead/Principal Investigator, Dr Poon leads mainly in projects focusing on the developmental psychopathology of children with risk and those with neurodevelopmental disabilities.

Apart from the work on the Editorial Boards of peer reviewed journals including the International Journal of School and Educational Psychology, Infants and Young Children, and Communication Disorders Quarterly, Dr Poon also actively serves in the community. These include service on the Board of Governance of Rainbow Centre, Singapore (a charity serving children with neurodevelopmental disabilities running two early intervention centres and three special school campuses) and on multiple government panels tapping on his expertise in early intervention and neurodevelopmental disabilities. Additionally, he serves on the Board of the Academy of the International Society for the Scientific Study on Intellectual Disabilities.

Preschool Children with Special Needs Making the 'BIG' Leap to the 'BIG' School: What Can We Do?

By Dr Joanna Tay-Lim

Being hurtled into the 'BIG' school environment represents a 'BIG' leap for preschool children with special needs. The transition journey is not an easy journey for any child to navigate because of multifaceted adjustments he/she has to contend with. For children with special needs entering mainstream primary school, the adjustments could be more onerous because of their additional needs. These include not only coping with mainstream curriculum, but also with typically-developing peers who may or may not have the competencies to relate to children with special needs as well as mainstream teachers who may or may not have the requisite understanding of special needs, and hence lacking the ability and/or aptitude to set up inclusive practices. Children's development and well-being is at stake if they experience their new school lives with heightened stress and a deep sense of discord within them. So, what can practitioners do? This presentation will shed light on evidence-based transition practices which could support the transition of children with special needs in their journey towards primary mainstream education.

Dr Joanna Tay-Lim
Lecturer
Early Childhood and Special Needs Education
Academic Group
National Institute of Education

Dr Joanna Tay-Lim is a lecturer with the Early Childhood and Special Needs Education Academic Group of NIE. She conducts courses for pre-service and in-service early childhood

and primary school teachers in various NIE and professional development programs. Joanna has wide-ranging experience within the education sector. Prior to entering the early childhood field, she has taught in junior college and special needs settings. She has also been an early childhood educator in preschool settings and a teacher educator for early childhood courses before she assumed her present position. Her research interests are focused on young children's well-being, inclusive practices, school transitions, classroom management, and program quality.

Moderator

Dr Nirmala Karuppiah

Head
Early Childhood and Special Needs Education
Academic Group
National Institute of Education

Dr Karuppiah Nirmala (a.k.a. Nirmala Segaran) is currently the Head of the Early Childhood and Special Education Academic Group, NIE. She has served 30 years in the field of early childhood education, holding various positions including lecturer, practicum supervisor and researcher. She has also served in various governmental/non-governmental Committees related to early childhood education (ECE). Her areas of research interests include diversity, adult-child interactions and teaching-learning processes. She has conducted talks for parents and workshops for teachers as well as published books and CD-ROMs for teachers, parents and children. She has also presented at numerous local and international conferences, and published articles in local media and international journals. Her study and work experience span several countries including Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, India, Australia, the UK and the US.