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Close to 1,300 pre-schoolers from low-income families to receive additional support



To be eligible, children must be Singaporeans enrolled in pre-schools under seven selected operators. ST PHOTO: KELVIN CHNG



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PUBLISHED OCT 8, 2020, 3:00 PM SGT

SINGAPORE - From November onwards, about 1,300 pre-schoolers from low-income families will receive a \$250 top-up in their Child Development Account (CDA) through a partnership between the Ministry of Education (MOE), the EtonHouse Community Fund and the Community Foundation of Singapore.

In a media release on Thursday (Oct 8), the partners said that the Government will match these contributions dollar for dollar, up to each child's account contribution cap.

The top-ups will continue over the next two years, meaning that eligible children can receive up to \$500 a year, adding up to a total of \$1,500 in top-ups over the next three years.

To be eligible, children must be Singaporeans enrolled in pre-schools under seven selected operators, and their families must have a gross monthly household income of \$4,500 or less.

They must also be receiving the Government's Additional Subsidy for their pre-school fees as of July 2020.

The seven selected operators are: E-Bridge Pre-School, Iyad Perdaus Child Development, Kidz Meadow Childcare and Development Centre, PPIS Child Development Centre, Presbyterian Community Services, Super Talent Childcare, and YWCA Child Development Centre.

This initiative is facilitated by the Uplifting Pupils in Life and Inspiring Families Taskforce (Uplift), an inter-agency task force set up in 2018.

Second Minister for Education Maliki Osman, who is the chairman of Uplift, visited E-Bridge's Punggol Large Childcare Centre on Thursday to launch the programme.

At the event, he emphasised the importance of early childhood education in building the children's future.

"Pre-school plays a crucial role in laying the foundations for a child's overall development - building their confidence and social skills and encouraging them to be active and curious learners.

"I am hopeful that the CDA top-up programme will encourage more lower-income families to send their children to pre-school," said Dr Maliki, who is also Minister in the Prime Minister's Office and Second Minister for Foreign Affairs.

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The CDA is part of the Baby Bonus Scheme. It is a special savings account for eligible children who are Singapore citizens. It can be opened at DBS Bank, OCBC Bank or United Overseas Bank.

The money in the CDA can be used to offset child-raising expenses such as pre-school fees and medical bills at Baby Bonus Approved Institutions, including childcare centres, kindergartens, hospitals and clinics, as well as optical shops.

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