Current Status and Development in Protecting and Promoting Child Health and Welfare in Singapore:

**Focus on First Three Years**
Singapore River 1957
SINGAPORE: Demographic Statistics

A growing nation

1960
Pop: 1.6m
- Citizens
- Permanent Residents
- Non-Residents

1970
Pop: 2.07m
- Proportion of citizens and permanent residents to foreign non-residents: 73%
- Residents aged 60 and older: 27%
- Median age of resident population: 18.8

1990
Pop: 3.05m
- Citizens
- Permanent Residents
- Non-Residents

2005
Pop: 4.3m
- Proportion of citizens and permanent residents to foreign non-residents: 73%
- Residents aged 60 and older: 27%
- Median age of resident population: 35.9

SOURCE: Department of Statistics and various other government publications (except where noted)

**Except for 2005 figures, data from Migration and Social Diversity by Prof Brenda Yeoh, National University of Singapore department of geography**
**Greying nation**

**Age group (Years)**
- **80 and above**
- 70-74
- 60-64
- 50-54
- 40-44
- 30-34
- 20-24
- 10-14
- 0-4

**Persons (’000)**
- **Males**
- **Females**

**Post-war baby-boomers get older**

**Youth base narrows as fertility rate declines**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>1970</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-14 years</td>
<td>68.1%</td>
<td>36.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-64 years</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>51.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65 years and above</td>
<td>5.9%</td>
<td>12.1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**More women now**

Sex ratio (males per 1,000 females)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,027</td>
<td>976</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Infant Mortality Rate 
Singapore 1957-1998*

Socio-Economic Developments

Improved Standards of Perinatal Care
SINGAPORE - MORTALITY RATE: UNDER-5 (PER 1,000)

Under-5 mortality: Estimated trend and MDG goal
Singapore, 1980-2004

Neonatal Screening Programmes in Singapore

- 1965
  Glucose-6-phosphate Dehydrogenase screening
- 1990
  Congenital hypothyroidism screening
- 2000
  Universal newborn hearing screening
- 2005
  Neonatal metabolic screening by Tandem Mass Spectrometry
### Percentage (%) of Children Aged 2 Years Immunized Against:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tuberculosis</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diphtheria</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poliomyelitis</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hepatitis B</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Measles</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Percentage (%) of Primary One & Equivalent Age Groups Immunized Against:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Disease</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Measles, Mumps, Rubella</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Breastfeed
Because it is perfect

Bestowed by mother nature
From the beginning of mankind
Nourishing ALL civilisations
Sustaining countless generations
Absolutely essential
Perfect and complete...
Nothing is comparable

Breastfeed
Because it is perfect

To find out more about breastfeeding your newborn, please log on to www.abas.org.sg.

Credits: The Pond Photography for the images, The Breastfeeding Mothers Support Group, Singapore

To find out more about breastfeeding your newborn, please log on to www.abas.org.sg.
To ensure that the Sale and Distribution of Infant formulas be carried out in such a way as to avoid competing with breast milk.

*SIFECS*
Healthy Start Programme for High-Risk Families
Touch Therapy Extended to the Community
FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS
Irreducible Perinatal Mortality & Minimum Morbidity?

• Prenatal diagnosis and management of congenital anomalies.
• Prevention of premature births.
• National ethical guidelines on care of high-risk infants: the extremely premature, severely malformed, irreversibly damaged.
• Better antenatal and intrapartum fetal monitoring.
• Prevention and early diagnosis and treatment of infections.
• Better pre-conception and antenatal care: e.g., Immunisation, better nutrition, encouragement of foetal growth, avoidance of alcohol, cigarette smoking & drugs, healthy lifestyle, family planning.
• Advances in developmental biology of newborn diseases.
CHANGING HEALTHCARE NEEDS of CHILDREN
THE “NEW MORBIDITY”

Chronic Medical Illnesses
Disabilities
Learning Problems
Behavioural Disturbances and Disorders
Injuries and Neglect
Sequelae associated with “Unhealthy life-Styles”
Social and Emotional Problems

These problems are not new and are inter-related. They are just becoming proportionately more significant and more prevalent in our society.
Correct developmental dysfunctions;

Minimise the impact of a child’s disability or of prevailing risk factors;

Strengthen families;

Establish foundations for subsequent development.

Advisory Council on the Disabled 1988
Important Components of a Comprehensive Child Development Programme:

- Medical Care
- Social and Community Support
- Education
Developmental Screening

Medical Professionals in Primary Care, Pre-school teachers. Parents/Caregivers

Developmental Assessment

Multi-disciplinary, comprehensive, hospital-based diagnostic evaluation

Individualized Management and Educational Plan

Early Intervention Programmes for Infants and Children (EIPIC)

Community-based Intervention Centres of Child Development Units of KKH and NUH, EIPIC Centres under VWOs, Integrated Child Care Programmes (ICCP), Therapy-Outreach Programmes (eg, Mission I’mPossible Project KKH, PCF, Lien Foundation)

Education Placement

Special Education

10-12% vs 20%

Mainstream Education

88-90% vs 80%

Social and Community Support, Educational Support Programs (“a la carte” menu and multiple peaks of excellence approach).
Primary Health Services
# Patterns of Developmental Problems in Preschoolers 2004-2010

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Developmental Problems</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autism spectrum disorders</td>
<td>508 (29%)</td>
<td>361 (27%)</td>
<td>461 (28%)</td>
<td>432 (26%)</td>
<td>517 (26%)</td>
<td>493 (24%)</td>
<td>528 (21%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech and Language delays and disorders</td>
<td>417 (24%)</td>
<td>376 (28%)</td>
<td>485 (29%)</td>
<td>490 (29%)</td>
<td>625 (31%)</td>
<td>664 (32%)</td>
<td>926 (37%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global developmental delay</td>
<td>289 (17%)</td>
<td>198 (16%)</td>
<td>230 (14%)</td>
<td>249 (15%)</td>
<td>251 (13%)</td>
<td>232 (11%)</td>
<td>298 (12%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning problems and disabilities</td>
<td>126 (7%)</td>
<td>131 (10%)</td>
<td>152 (9%)</td>
<td>124 (7%)</td>
<td>148 (7%)</td>
<td>218 (10%)</td>
<td>204 (8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavioural problems and disorders</td>
<td>106 (6%)</td>
<td>108 (8%)</td>
<td>136 (8%)</td>
<td>162 (10%)</td>
<td>161 (8%)</td>
<td>221 (11%)</td>
<td>255 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADHD</td>
<td>103 (6%)</td>
<td>56 (4%)</td>
<td>72 (5%)</td>
<td>73 (4%)</td>
<td>118 (6%)</td>
<td>65 (3%)</td>
<td>66 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment-Related delay</td>
<td>74 (4%)</td>
<td>32 (2.5%)</td>
<td>26 (1.6%)</td>
<td>85 (5%)</td>
<td>96 (5%)</td>
<td>112 (6%)</td>
<td>141 (5.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motor developmental delay</td>
<td>45 (3%)</td>
<td>36 (2.8%)</td>
<td>56 (4%)</td>
<td>48 (3%)</td>
<td>68 (3%)</td>
<td>47 (2%)</td>
<td>57 (2.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cerebral palsy</td>
<td>34 (2%)</td>
<td>17 (1.3%)</td>
<td>10 (0.8%)</td>
<td>3 (0.2%)</td>
<td>6 (0.4%)</td>
<td>6 (0.2%)</td>
<td>13 (0.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syndromic disorders</td>
<td>29 (1.5%)</td>
<td>17 (1.3%)</td>
<td>8 (0.5%)</td>
<td>6 (0.5%)</td>
<td>5 (0.3%)</td>
<td>14 (0.5%)</td>
<td>7 (0.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impairment special senses</td>
<td>9 (0.5%)</td>
<td>1 (0.1%)</td>
<td>1 (0.1%)</td>
<td>4 (0.3%)</td>
<td>5 (0.3%)</td>
<td>11 (0.3%)</td>
<td>7 (0.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>1740</td>
<td>1333</td>
<td>1637</td>
<td>1676</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2083</td>
<td>2502</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Changing Emphasis in the Approach to Early Interventions

- Shifting of decision-making power on caring for the child from being professional-centred to family-centred care.
- Shifting of interventions from diagnosis-based to that based on the developmental needs of the individual child.
- Shifting of the emphasis of intervention from disability to functional and developmental performance, participation and quality of life.
- Shifting of the settings in the delivery of services and care to the least restrictive, more natural and more inclusive environment: childcare centres, pre-schools and schools, homes, and the community.
Continuum of educational services for students with disabilities

- **Homebound or hospital**: Student receives special education and related services at home or in a hospital program.
- **Residential school**: Student receives special education and related services from specially trained staff in a residential facility in which children receive care or services 24 hours a day.
- **Separate school**: Student receives special education and related services under the direction of a specially trained staff in a specially designed facility (day program).
- **Separate classroom**: Student attends a special class for most or all of the school day and receives special education and related services under the direction of a special education teacher.
- **Resource room**: Student is in the regular classroom for the majority of the school day but goes to the special education resource room for specialized instruction for part of each school day.
- **Regular classroom with supplementary instruction and services**: Student receives a prescribed program under the direction of the regular classroom teacher and also receives instruction and related services within the regular classroom from the special educator and/or a paraeducator.
- **Regular classroom with consultation**: Student receives a prescribed program under the direction of the regular classroom teacher, who is supported by ongoing consultation from the special educator(s).
- **Regular classroom**: Student receives a prescribed program under the direction of the regular classroom teacher.
Margaret Drive Special School was set up in August 1987 in response to the need for a special school for children with multiple disabilities. In July 1998, the staff and pupils moved into the new purpose-built building at the same site. The new two-storey school building is equipped with modern features and specialized facilities to cater to the diverse range of disabilities.

A new beginning for disabled children

Rainbow Centre takes care of 730 physically and mentally disabled kids.

By Melanie Tan

Nori, 16, from Nori's Amala Centre, has been attending Rainbow Centre for six months. She is a happy child and loves to learn. She can now walk and talk and is able to express herself quite well. She is able to dress herself and help with some household chores. She is also able to feed herself and can drink water from a glass. She is now able to play with other children and is becoming more sociable.

Nori's mother, Ms. Amala, is very happy with the progress her daughter has made at Rainbow Centre. She says, "I am very grateful to the staff at Rainbow Centre for their hard work and dedication. My daughter's progress is evident, and I am confident that she will continue to improve with time."

Rainbow Centre is committed to providing quality education and care to children with special needs. The centre offers a range of programs and services to support children and their families. They are always looking for ways to improve their services and provide the best possible care for their students. If you would like more information about Rainbow Centre or its programs, please feel free to contact them.

Head Office
Rainbow Centre
501 Margaret Drive, Singapore 149306
Tel: 475 2072 Fax: 473 9739

We are supported by
PROGRAMME FOR CHILDREN WITH MULTIPLE HANDICAPS (PCMH)

- Preparing a salad
- Participating in story-time
- Enjoying playground time
- Hydrotherapy

Structured Teaching for Exceptional Pupils (STEP)

- Concentrating on cutting and pasting during art and craft time
- Selecting and paying for purchases at the supermarket
Physiotherapist, U Chit Khaing in session with a child from PCMH

Speech-Language Therapist, Leah Ann Smith, working on oral motor function with a child from PCMH.

Occupational Therapist, Ashley Jayapaul, working on vestibular activity on a swing with a child from PCMH.

Music Therapist, Audrey Ruyters-Lim, encouraging a child from PCMH to play on the drum.

A group of children from EIPIC improvising for their peers.

Psychologist, Faridah Ali Chang, working with a child from STEP on scheduling.

Psychologist, Susanna Tan-Pang, conducting an assessment.

Social worker, Foo Soo Jen, meeting with a family.

A group parent training session in progress.
Children playing together in Integrated Childcare Program
Pilot programme to aid preschoolers with developmental needs sees success

Therapy Outreach Programme

SINGAPORE: A pilot programme that seeks to help preschoolers with developmental needs overcome their learning gaps has seen success, spelling new hope for this group of children.

Mission I’mPossible is a first-of-its-kind programme that takes a community-based and family-focused approach to better prepare such children for mainstream schools.

The programme started its pilot run in July last year, with 22 PAP Community Foundation (PCF) centres in Pasir Ris-Punggol GRC.

To date, 980 pre-schoolers have been screened and 92 children have successfully completed the programme.

Under the programme, each child has a customised education plan (IEP) to help in learning.

The child receives general learning support, speech and occupational therapy.

More than 90 per cent of children who have undergone the programme have shown improvement.

70 per cent of the kindergarten teachers at the 22 PCF centres have also been trained to screen and detect students with developmental needs, and provide them with better support in class.

The pilot programme is a joint effort by the Lien Foundation, KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital’s Department of Child Development and PAP Community Foundation.

It’s hoped that the community-based model of care can now be further replicated. - CNA/jm
TOPPS - Strengthening collaboration and bridging the gap for mainstream school integration

Ms Sunita Suri, occupational therapist introduces TOPPS, a programme for pre-schoolers.

An expansion of SPD’s Paediatric Rehabilitation service provision, Therapy Outreach Programme for Pre-Schoolers (TOPPS, formerly known as PACES) is a community-based outreach programme providing early intervention support for children with special needs in mainstream pre-schools and childcare centres in Singapore.

knowledge and skills to support these children in school and at home.

The TOPPS intervention process for each child begins with an initial screening by the team, followed by classroom observation. If suitable, the child will be enrolled in the programme under which he will remain for a series of 10 sessions.
SCOPE is designed as an integration and inclusion programme to bridge the gap between Early Intervention and Mainstream Pre-School.
MISSION: I’MPOSSIBLE

MIP is spearheaded by the Lien Foundation, in close collaboration with KK Women's and Children's Hospital and PAP Community Foundation, to support preschoolers with developmental needs.
Many Helping Hands Approach

Partnership of all sectors of the Society with the Government

- Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports
- National Council of Social Service / Community Chest
- Community Development Councils
- Voluntary Welfare Organisations
- Philanthropic Organisations and Foundations
- Religious and Ethnic Community Organisations
- Financial Corporations and Consumer Groups
- Parents Support Groups and Others
SOCIAL and COMMUNITY SUPPORT

• Supplementary Services
  provide tangible financial & other material help to families in poverty, targeting specifically at children’s needs.

• Supportive Services
  social service provisions that strengthen the capacity of parents to fulfill their roles more effectively.

• Substitute Services
  alternative residential arrangements for children whose parents are not able to carry out their functions and the child must be removed from the home, e.g., Foster care, Residential care, Adoption…
Supplementary Services

Singapore enjoys a generally good standard of living.

However, there will always be some families who miss out on the benefits of prosperity and their children’s basic needs are not being met.

**Supplementary Services** provide tangible financial or other material help to families.
LAUNCH of COMMUNITY CARE FUND
$55m to be given out this year via ComCare

THE Government is giving up to $55 million to help the needy through the ComCare Fund.

This is 40 per cent more than what the Government had spent in FY2004.

Explaining the three fundamental principles behind Singapore’s social safety net, Acting Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sport Dr Vivian Balakrishnan said: “First, to foster self-reliance. Our social safety net must be like a trampoline ... It’s not meant to be a comfortable, luxury mattress for you to rest on for a long time.

“Second, the family, must remain our primary line of support. Including both financial and emotional support.”

He added that the many helping hands approach means the community is involved in helping out.

ComCare will help identify those in need.

ComCare Self Reliance will help those who face a sudden loss of income; ComCare Grow reaches out to needy children and ComCare En Able is for those who need long term help.

Dr Balakrishnan also said that with ComCare, the Government would streamline the 51 social assistance schemes and set up a database to track cases.

Responding to calls from Members of Parliament for more help, more flexibility and more coordination for the needy, he emphasised that it is not welfare, but assistance.

— Channel NewsAsia

FY 2005
Half of ComCare Fund to aid needy kids

Programmes for children from disadvantaged families will give them a leg-up: Yu-Foo Yee Shoon

BY THERESA TAN

NEARLY half the budget this year from a newly announced fund for needy Singaporeans will be used to help children from low-income families break out of the poverty trap.

As the gap in abilities among children from different backgrounds opens up when they are young, it is important to move in early, Minister of State (Community Development, Youth and Sports) Yu-Foo Yee Shoon said.

Having programmes for young children from disadvantaged families will have the greatest impact, as it gives them a leg-up for their future.

That is why the ministry expects to spend $24 million from the ComCare Fund’s budget of up to $55 million a year on programmes under ComCare Grow this financial year, which starts next month.

ComCare Grow is the portion of the fund aimed at children from low-income families.

Its programmes give children access to schemes that will help in their development and enable them to cope with the demands of education from a young age.

Existing programmes such as the Kindergarten Financial Assistance Scheme, for families who have problems paying their children’s kindergarten fees, will come under ComCare Grow.

All such help schemes will be reviewed to ensure “the safety net for these children will be wide enough to catch them before they fall too far”, Mrs Yu-Foo said in Parliament yesterday.

New programmes may also be introduced, she added as she explained the workings of the various arms of the ComCare Fund. It is an initiative for needy families, children and the elderly announced by Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong in January.

Also on the ministry’s radar are children from “at-risk families” — usually poor families and those hit by problems such as marital conflicts.

They will need “more targeted assistance to ensure that they start off on the right footing”, she said.

She cited a ministry study which showed encouraging results from Healthy Start, a pilot programme for such families.

It ensures that affected children attend pre-school or have childcare. And it equips parents with skills to manage the family and children.

“Healthy Start really levels the playing field for children from low-income families and is a move in the right direction to help families break out of the poverty cycle,” said Madam Ng Bee Leng of Beyond Social Services, which is involved in the pilot programme.

The ministry aims to assist 1,200 children in the new financial year — up from the 350 children involved in the pilot programme.

Another arm of the ComCare Fund, ComCare SelfReliance, will focus on getting Singaporeans who need temporary assistance, such as the jobless, back on their feet.

As with ComCare Grow, existing schemes like the Work Assistance Programme, which help people deal with retrenchment and find work quickly, will be grouped under ComCare SelfReliance.

New programmes are being looked at, including how to help needy Singaporeans start informal “cottage” businesses.

Mrs Yu-Foo said the third component of ComCare, ComCare EnAble, will spotlight the needy elderly, as well as those who require long-term aid to integrate into society. These include the disabled and the destitute.

She also reassured MPs like Mr Sin Boon Ann (Tampines GRC) that while means-testing will be used for those seeking help, administrators will be flexible about those who do not meet the eligibility criteria.

“The community development councils will take into account all circumstances the needy family faces. This will ensure that no needy Singaporean or family will fall through the gaps,” she said.
Aid package to benefit 17,000 kids and families every year

Man who cycles to work to save and send kids to preschool one of those to get help

BY THERESA TAN

SIGNBOARD maker Abdul Razak Mohamed, 46, cycles 30 minutes to work every day just to save on bus fare. The $150 saved each month is enough to send his two daughters, aged five and four, to preschool.

Mr Abdul Razak earns about $1,000 a month and washes cars after work to make ends meet. He supports his wife, two children and his mother-in-law.

“I couldn’t believe that kindergarten fees are more expensive than primary or secondary schools,” he says. "But I’m very happy because my two girls can go to preschool now, and they will learn to be good citizens and be more disciplined.""
ComCare Fund spending to go up to $67m

More help for needy to cope with higher cost of living, enable kids to break out of poverty

By Yap Su-Yin

SPENDING from the ComCare Fund to help the low-income is set to rise from $43 million this year to $67 million in the next financial year (FY2007), starting in April.

The Government was also willing to top up these funds "on a selective basis", for some constituencies which had an increased number of old or needy people, he added.

More funds would also be allocated to the Kindergarten Financial Assistance Scheme (KIFAS).

The subsidy, which benefits 10,700 pupils, will be raised from 75 per cent of kindergarten fees to 90 per cent, bringing the average subsidy for each child to about $80 a month.

For many children going to a kindergarten,

[Image of children and woman]

FROM July, public assistance for the destitute will go up between $30 and $115 a month, depending on family size.

The new grant is to help them cope with the increase in the goods and services tax, said Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports Vivian Balakrishnan yesterday.

The change, the first in five years, will give an elderly person who lives alone $290, or $30 more - a 12 per cent increase.

A family with three school-going children will get $940 a month, up from $825.

Besides the dole, they also receive free medical care and financial help for their children's education.

The last time the scheme was changed was in 2002.

Dr Balakrishnan noted that the number of homes getting the grants monthly for their basic needs has remained around 3,000 for the past five years.

The number had prompted Mr Seah Kian Peng (Marine Parade GRC) to suggest the Government can afford to be more generous.

But Dr Balakrishnan called it a "very dangerous argument".

He said: "Yes, we can afford to be more generous. But the greatest danger there, is that you take away the incentive of the much larger number of Singaporeans who are working hard, albeit in low-paying jobs. So there will have to be a difference."
Needy children focus of $100m ComCare package

Bulk of money to be used to keep them in schools, among other things

THE lion’s share of a $100 million package to lend a helping hand to poor families will go to the children.

After the next two years, about $70 million will be spent on programmes to help parents of needy children and youths. The money will help keep 12,000 youngsters in schools and preschools each year, Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports Vivian Balakrishnan told Parliament yesterday.

The money will go to bigger subsidies for childcare fees as well as the initial cost of starting preschool for families whose household income is not more than $1500 a month.

Such families can have kindergarten fees subsidised by 75 per cent — up to $65 a month — from May 21.

Parents can now also apply for a grant of up to $200 per year for expenditure such as buying uniforms or textbooks.

The first two children from needy families will get more generous subsidies, capped at between $200 and $300, for childcare fees, under the Centre-based Financial Assistance for Childcare (CFAC). This helps enhance the Home Owners Plus Education programme, which promises assistance such as housing grants to low-income families as long as they keep families small.

More money will also go to boost a programme in schools to identify and work with students at risk of dropping out.

And $2 million has been set aside for an Opportunity Fund which helps groups to use to provide educational assistance to poor children.

While the emphasis on children underscores the Government’s hope in the future generation, helping poor parents afford childcare also helps them work, another objective of the schemes.

Said Dr Balakrishnan: “We want to foster self-reliance so that Singaporeans still feel the need to strive and work hard for a better life. Ultimately, each of us must take responsibility for our own lives.”

The programmes come under ComCare, an endowment fund now at $600 million. It aims to grow a seamless and coordinated assistance network for the needy. ComCare has helped more than 51,000 families to date, the minister reported.

The other $30 million in the package will go towards the ComCare Work Support programme, which helps the unemployed find jobs and supports them with assistance including grants and childcare subsidies.

Whether low-income or not, nuclear or extended, families were the cornerstone of the ministry’s budget.

Yesterday, Minister of State Yu Foo Yee Suhon also announced that a National Family Council would be formed to promote family policies and programmes.

MCYS also endorsed a proposal to introduce family passes for multi-tier families to enjoy leisure and sports facilities at concessional rates.

Dr Balakrishnan told the House his ministry would focus on the less well off, senior citizens, the disabled and on restoring public confidence in charities this year.

Yesterday, initiatives were also announced for senior citizens, youths, the disabled and Singapore’s sports sector.

At the close of nine days of debate, Parliament approved $36.6 billion of the Government’s expenditure estimates for the financial year 2006.

In closing the debate, Deputy Leader of the House Mah Bow Tan thanked all for a job well done.

He declared Parliament adjourned until April 3, “barring unforeseen circumstances”.

The Speaker of the House, Mr Abdullah Tarmugi, continued the reference to the impending General Election, adding: “I have it from extremely reliable sources that this may well be the last debate for this 10th Parliament.”

In fact, he said, “for some of us in this House, this could be the last debate for the rest of our lives, so we wish them well.”

7000万助儿童受教育

3000万助家长继续工作
Kicking off the fund-raising season with song and dance

Target of these charity events which span 4 months is to raise at least $8m for 49 charities

BY TRACY SUA

THE annual President's Challenge was launched by President S R Nathan at Raffles Hotel's Jubilee Hall last night.

The target this year, same as last year, is to raise at least $8 million.

The money will go to 49 charities, including the Community Chest.

The beneficiaries range from children, youth and family services such as Help Every Lone Parent Family Service Centre, services for the disabled such as Moral Home for Disabled and rehabilitation-related services such as the Yellow Ribbon Fund.

Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises, which helps to run the Yellow Ribbon Fund, is grateful for the help.

Its senior manager for community reintegration and partnerships, Mr Vincent Chan, who is also the fund's secretary, said the money could help a lot of former offenders and especially their families.

The charity events will run till Oct 7.

Kicking off the fund raising last night was the musical Hearts In Accord — Born To Sing, a rousing entertainer about trying to discover an underdog singer with a heart disease, performed by performers and students.

PHOTO: MUGILAN RAJASEGERAN

BORN TO SING: President Nathan with performer Jeremy Lim (in wheelchair), 16, who suffers from brittle bone disorder, and volunteers and students at the charity event yesterday.
Thank you for making it your business to care for children in need.

About this Initiative
The 1000 Enterprises for Children-in-Need initiative is a fund raising project that hopes to encourage small, medium and large companies to pledge their donation to the Society the next 3 years......

Who has Participated?
We are very thankful to all participants who have participated in our 1000 Enterprises for Children-In-Need Initiative. Find out more......

Join Us
We hope that you can join us to reach out to our 66,000 children in need by choosing to participate in this project divided into 3 categories......
BIG WALK for our CHILDREN
Assistance should go beyond specific items where we can calculate dollars and cents, to a sense of reassurance, concerns, and empathy, and a sense that we are in the same boat together, and we will take care of one another.

Prime Minister, Singapore
Supportive Services are social service provisions that strengthen the capacity of parents to fulfil their roles more effectively.

Many families, including the “normal” functioning families, require supports to enable the social functioning of adults in their parental roles. These include: affordable housing and healthcare services, job availability, training/retraining, family-friendly workplaces, affordable quality childcare facilities for working parents, and recreational facilities,
Infant Care in the Community

Three-week-old Sparkletots in Bedok, which cares for children such as Sarah Chua (above), with teacher Peggy Lim, will soon also take in 24 babies below 18 months.
Number of childcare centres in private estates set to rise
Early Opportunities To Learn
Pre-School Education: Giving Children a Head Start
Educating parents

NTUC Childcare Centres to offer talks, activities on parenting

Chen Siya
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NTUC Childcare Centres are not only in the business of educating kids, they are now making it their business to educate the parents too.

A pilot programme aimed at enhancing the quality of life for parents and their preschool children was launched at all 40 NTUC Childcare Centres islandwide yesterday.

Under the Parent Education in Pre-Schools (Peps) programme, every NTUC Childcare Centre has to offer 11 hours of centre-based parent education activities and conduct nine hours of parenting talks in their respective zones.

The Ministry for Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS) will earmark $50,000 to fund the programme, which aims to reach out to about 30 percent of parents whose children are enrolled in these pre-schools.

Consultants from RTRC Asia, the training and consultancy arm of NTUC Childcare Cooperative Limited, will conduct the parenting talks. Parents will learn parenting skills such as communication and child-guidance strategies to build a better relationship with their child.

Initiated by MCYS, the Peps programme was modelled after the successful implementation of the School Family Education programme in primary and secondary schools in 2002.

Chief executive officer of NTUC Childcare Adeline Sum said: “NTUC Childcare’s involvement in this project reflects our commitment to work with MCYS in our common goal to help parents better understand their children and how they can play pivotal roles in harnessing their children’s strengths and promoting family life.”

At the launch yesterday, the cooperative’s assistant general manager, Ms Ho Yin Fong, cited research that showed children of parents who are highly-involved in their development tend to achieve better grades and possess more positive attitudes in life.
Family Support and Counselling Service

Caregiver Support Service
Substitute Services provide alternative residential arrangements for children whose parents are not able to carry out their functions and the child must be removed from the home.

Foster family care
Residential care (Children’s Homes)
Adoption
不是亲生胜似亲生
保姆家庭为寄养儿童带来欢笑

因为喜爱小孩，詹福新（左二）和陈玉燕（左三）自2003年就申请成为“寄养计划”的保姆家庭。
Sickly Ah Boy is foster dad’s pride and joy

Service attendant and wife, who care for disabled kid, among foster parents honoured

Shull Sudderuddin

They received a long-service award from MCYS Minister Vivian Balakrishnan, the guest of honour.

The first time he held his foster child in his arms, Mr Tan Thian Huat, 61, saw a bundle of skin and bones which weighed less than a kilogram.

The tiny boy had severe asthma and fits and had been in and out of hospital frequently.

The couple fell in love with him anyway. Mr Tan’s wife, homemak-
er Tan Foong Yeew, 56, did have worries about the child’s survival but remembered what her husband had told her.

“He said: ‘We will take care of this little boy. We are going to do the best we can and love him,’” she recalled.

Now, almost six years later, their foster son, affectionately nick-
named Ah Boy, has filled out at 19.8kg.

Mr Tan also takes his foster son out in his pram for walks in the neighbourhood and to shopping centres.

Then the Tans speak to him or kiss his cheeks, he responds by turning his gaze on them. He also reacts to music, laughing joyously when it is played.

For the Tans, who have two daughters aged 27 and 25, looking after him is a 24-hour job. They hired a maid four years ago to help.

Ah Boy is fed milk and medicine via a tube every four hours. This year, he was admitted to hospital twice. Each time that happens, Mrs Tan sheds tears of worry.

As Ah Boy’s prognosis remains uncertain, the couple do not look to the future, choosing instead to live day to day.

Said Mrs Tan, stroking Ah Boy’s face and hair: “I just hope that, one day, he will be able to walk, talk and call us ‘Mummy’ and ‘Daddy’.”

That will make me very happy.”

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Would you consider bringing up a child that is not your own?

Send your views to
suntimes@sph.com.sg
HOME AWAY FROM HOME
RESPONDING TO THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PERSONS IN RESIDENTIAL CARE
Components of a Comprehensive Child Development Programme:

Medical Care

Social and Community Support

Education

Parents and Families
In Singapore:
The FAMILY is recognised as the building block of society & the most natural environment for nurturing the young.

Policies and Programmes are pro-family in order to preserve and strengthen the family unit.

Increasingly, many efforts are made to enable, support and empower the family not only to discharge its responsibilities to the young, but also to enjoy its role.
Heartfelt letters from Singapore grandparents addressed to their grandkids have been collated into four books by the National Library Board.

TIFFANY FUMIKO TAY finds out what compelled them to pen their thoughts.

pages 2 & 3

Grand gesture: Contributor Abdul Salim Basri and his wife Sarah Amir, both 59, surrounded by nine of their 12 grandchildren.
The Critical Role of the Parents
Long Journey for Parents of Children with Developmental Needs
The Many Roles of the Exceptional Parent

Caregiver
Provider
Teacher
Counsellor
Behaviour Management Specialist
Parent of Siblings without Disabilities
Marriage Partner
Information Specialist / Trainer for Significant Others
Advocate for School and Community Services
Parents often feel at a loss to manage the behaviour of their children with developmental needs. To help address this, Temasek Cares partnered with KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital to introduce IMPACTT (Involving and Motivating Parents and Caregivers Through Training), a programme that equips parents with the tools and skills to build better behaviour in their children with developmental needs.

The programme caters to parents of children who are receiving intervention at EIPIC (Early Intervention Programme for Infants and Children) centres. Parents and Caregivers undergo 6 sessions of training in Signposts, a programme designed by the Parenting Research Centre of Australia. Signposts helps the parents to work out the reasons for, and develop ways to manage their children’s challenging behaviour. This enables the parent to structure the child’s environment to bring out the best in him or her.
LEGAL FRAMEWORK and PROVISIONS

Children and Young Persons Act (CYPA) enacted 1949, Chapter 38
The Women’s Charter enacted 1961, Chapter 353
The Guardianship of Infants Act (GIA)
The Penal Code (sexual activity involving children), Chapter 224
The Adoption of Children Act
Kidnapping Act, Chapter 151
The Child Care Centre Act
Employment Act, Chapter 91
Compulsory Education Act 2000 Chapter 51
Inter-Ministerial, Multi-Agencies Integrated Manual for Management of Child Abuse in Singapore

United Nations Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights, Switzerland
Thank You