

KINDLE GARDEN UPDATE (2016)

FACT SHEET

1. What is Kindle Garden

The Lien Foundation partnered VWO AWWA and government agency SG Enable to start a purpose-built inclusive preschool called Kindle Garden, which began operations in January 2016. This is Singapore's first-ever inclusive preschool¹. It seeks to provide *all* children access to a values-based, inclusive and non-discriminatory learning environment. Such an approach aims to reduce barriers, embrace diversity and create a rich environment for enriched learning and growth, mutual respect and understanding to benefit all children and society.

The development of this preschool followed the successful 2009 pilot of the Foundation's [Mission: I'mPossible](#) to provide screening and intervention to children with mild special needs in mainstream preschools. Starting with 25 preschools, the project was adopted by the government, renamed the Development Support Programme, and scaled up to 400 preschools in 2015. Conceptualised on the back of this experience and success, Kindle Garden is a different model that targets the same goal of inclusive education.

Just as in the case of Mission: I'mPossible, the possibility of Kindle Garden's inclusive education model being expanded into other parts of Singapore offers strong potential for consideration. Its comparative benefits provide a serious option for review as the next five-year Enabling Masterplan is being formulated.

Today, an estimated 2,600 children with moderate and severe special needs receive intervention at EIPIC centres. About 1,800 or 70% of them do not attend preschool due to the severity of their needs and the lack of readiness of preschools. In many ways, these are children who have fallen through the cracks.

¹ UNESCO defines inclusive education as *"a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of all through increasing*

In its current configuration, Kindle Garden is able to provide effective intervention for the type of needs typically present in half of these 1800 children. Khloe, the child with Down’s Syndrome, is an example of a child who would otherwise not have a preschool to attend, only an EIPIC centre.

Going forward, Kindle Garden will evolve to also serve the remaining 50% of children. It aims to serve all children with special needs, even the most severe. This will require a model that the team is studying closely, one that involves additional early intervention teachers, nurses, social workers, psychologists and therapists. With this in mind, AWWA is also looking into developing an index to measure inclusion in Singapore’s early education.

2. About Kindle Garden

A	Who are involved	Catalysed & made possible by the Lien Foundation Concept development and operated by AWWA Key partner and landlord SG Enable Designed by Lekker Architects	
B	Total Size	Indoor space - 683 m ² Playground - 289 m ² Sensory Garden - 148 m ² <i>Size compared to HDB void deck preschool (Average size about 500 m²) - Approximately 2.2 times larger</i>	
C	Full Staff Strength: (Includes Teachers, Inclusion Support Facilitator)	18 Currently: - 4 non-teaching staff - 5 teachers (with 2 more coming on board in the next 2 months) - 2 Allied Health Professionals (Speech Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Psychologist, Physiotherapist, and Psychologist-cum-Learning Support Educator*) - 1 Early Intervention Teacher/Inclusion Support Facilitator <i>(* Employed on a part-time basis prior to achieving full enrolment, when the need arises)</i>	
D	Staff Training	In-house training and attachment at AWWA EIPIC centres which includes training on Personalised Curriculum, Index for Inclusion, and differentiating lesson plans and instructions.	
E	Teacher-child ratio <i>Class ratio may be adjusted based on needs of the children and operational efficiency</i>	Playgroup and Nursery 1 (18 months to 3 years)	3 teachers: 12 children
		Nursery 2 to Kindergarten 2 (3 to 6 years)	1 teacher: 10 children

F	Total Capacity* <i>* subject to change</i>	75 Currently oversubscribed with waiting list of 25 typically-developing children and 100 children with special needs
G	Places filled in 2016	55 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The remaining 20 vacancies are designated for K2 children. There are no K2 children on the wait-list, since K2 children typically finish their final year at their current preschool before entering Primary 1. This is the reason that Kindle Garden is over-subscribed with both a waiting list and vacancies. Such a scenario is typical of preschool operations. - 2016 K1s will move up to K2 in 2017, hence it will be full capacity next January. - 36 children in attendance (wef from 1 April 2016), with the rest of the students coming in batches. - Of the 55 children enrolled, 30% have mild to severe special needs such as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Down Syndrome and Global Developmental Delay (GDD)
H	Proportion of intake – typically developing children & children with special needs	70:30 Maximum of 30% children with special needs in each class.

3. Kindle Garden Milestones

December 2014	Announcement of first local inclusive preschool in Singapore
November 2015	Registration for Kindle Garden opens
January 2016	Kindle Garden starts operations. To ease the children into the new environment, they are received into the preschool by batches
January 2017	With the 2016 K1 children moving up to K2, Kindle Garden will reach maximum capacity of 75

4. Cost

A	Lien Foundation funding	\$3.6 million
B	Cost of physical set-up of Kindle Garden	\$1.8 million
C	Fees per month* (Playgroup to K2) <i>* subject to change</i>	Full Day - \$980 + GST (Before government subsidies) Half Day - \$680 + GST (Before government subsidies)

5. EIPIC Centres in Singapore

A	No. of EIPIC Centres	17 ²
B	Est. number of EIPIC children	2,600 ³
C	Est. number of EIPIC children who also attend preschool	750 (almost 30% of the 2,600 children)
D	Norm cost of EIPIC programme	\$1,650 per month
E	EIPIC fees at AWWA ⁴ <i>Fees may differ at other centres</i>	Ranges \$2.00 - \$1,050 per month

6. ICCP Centres

The Integrated Child Care Programme (ICCP) is an inclusive programme offered at selected mainstream childcare centres for children with special needs aged 2 to 6 years old who have been diagnosed as having Mild to Moderate disability. ICCP centres provide full-day, half-day or flexi-care programmes, depending on and determined by the individual centres.

The Programme engages children with special needs in group activities with other children in the centre; caters to the child's learning needs by modifying the curriculum; develops an Individual Education Plan

² <https://www.sgenable.sg/uploads/EIPIC%20Service%20Matrix.pdf>

³ <http://app.msf.gov.sg/Press-Room/Early-intervention-services-for-children-with-speech-delay-autism-and-at-risk-of-moderate-to-severe-disabilities>

⁴ <https://www.sgenable.sg/pages/content.aspx?path=/for-children/early-intervention-programme-for-infants-children-eipic/>

for each child by working together with the parents and healthcare professionals; monitors the progress of each child on a regular basis; and conducts regular parent-teacher feedback sessions.

A	No. of ICCP Centres	14 from 5 organisations ⁵
B	Special Needs Capacity	Each centre could have up to 10 children with special needs enrolled. However, the centre's ICCP capacity depends on its resources, which support children with special needs already enrolled in the centre. ⁶
C	Special Education staff	At least one teacher at the centre would have received training in special needs to provide the extra guidance and help needed. However, such teachers are not professional Special Education teachers. No therapy is provided at ICCP centres.

7. Examples of inclusive preschools in other countries

Australia

The **Harbour Family and Children's Centre** (<http://gowrievictoria.org.au/childrensprogram/docklands>) in the Docklands of Victoria, Melbourne, is run by non-profit Gowrie Victoria⁷. The preschool is known for its integrated kindergarten programmes and close connections with the Docklands community. The unique design of the centre provides community building opportunities through an award-winning shared outdoor play space that boasts natural and sustainable features.

Recently, the Victorian state's Minister for Families and Children, Jenny Mikakos launched the Early Abilities Based Learning and Education Support (Early ABLES) assessment tool at the Harbour Child and Family Centre. This tool enables early childhood educators to develop specific learning programmes that build on the individual skills and abilities of children aged two to five with disabilities and developmental delays.

⁵ <https://www.sgenable.sg/uploads/ICCP%20Service%20Matrix.pdf>

⁶ <https://www.sgenable.sg/pages/content.aspx?path=/faq/services-for-children/integrated-child-care-programme-2/>

⁷ <http://gowrievictoria.org.au/aboutus>

In December 2015, the preschool received the 'Excellent' rating from the Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority (ACECQA), the highest level a service can achieve under the National Quality Framework (NQF).

Canada

The **Kinderplace Developmental Preschool** (<http://www.osns.org/#!kinderplace/c1chx>) in the Penticton, British Columbia, is run by non-profit OSNS Child & Youth Development Centre⁸.

Kinderplace provides an inclusive programme geared to the needs of the children within it. It is a carefully planned programme with a balance between individual developmental needs and the needs of the entire group. Children with varied ages and developmental levels are mixed together in each class group. It is a play-based learning environment that focuses on child development.

The early childhood educators at Kinderplace follow the child's lead depending on his/her interests, they extend his/her play when necessary, and provide more challenges once a skill has been mastered.

Kinderplace staff are knowledgeable and make referrals to therapy programmes when appropriate. They readily partner with parents, therapists, public health nurses, physicians, social workers and local school districts when necessary regarding the children attending Kinderplace. They believe in the importance of a safe, nurturing environment supervised by caring, qualified Early Childhood Educators, where children build trust, feel secure, and are able to develop to their fullest potential. The Kinderplace Developmental Preschool also believes in an open-door policy where parents are welcome to drop in and join the programme as well as share their talents and ideas.

⁸ <http://www.osns.org/#!about/c1x1t>

8. Inclusive Attitudes Survey

The Lien Foundation is inviting members of the public, especially parents of young children, to share their experiences, views and ideas about how to make Singapore a more inclusive society for children with special needs.

It is especially interested to examine the public's views on inclusive education and to hear from parents of children with special needs about the little-known challenges they face.

The survey, called the Inclusive Attitudes Survey, can be found at <http://bit.do/Inclusive> and is available till 14 April 2016. Conducted by research company Blackbox, it will take about 20 minutes to complete online and all responses will be anonymous. Results will be shared with the public in mid-2016.