

THE PRE-SCHOOL CONSULTANCY PROJECT

A simple ceremony to mark the launching of the National Institute of Education's Pre-School Consultancy project was held on 1 August 1991 in Lecture Theatre 1 of Bukit Timah Campus. The Guest-of-Honour for the occasion was Dr Tay Eng Soon, the Senior Minister of State for Education.

The project was inaugurated in response to the continuing national need for the training and upgrading of personnel for childcare centres and kindergartens (teaching assistants, kindergarten teachers and supervisors). This need has become more keenly felt owing to the growing demand from parents over the past ten years for a variety of pre-school places. As the Director of NIE, Professor Gloria Lim, put it in her address at the launching ceremony: "As teacher educators, the NIE recognises the importance and the benefits to children of well-conceived pre-school educational programmes. Pre-school settings, if they are to play their roles well, required trained personnel to run them."

The Pre-School Consultancy programme is only one of the ways in which NIE is helping to meet the demand for teachers in early childhood education. In its regular pre-service programmes for the training of primary school teachers, NIE also prepares selected students for the teaching of lower primary and preparatory year schoolchildren.

The Pre-School Consultancy programme itself aims at training some 1200 childcare personnel and kindergarten teachers over the next two years. Intermediate and advanced levels of training will be provided in part-time courses conducted in the evenings outside NIE's normal teaching schedule. Participants must have at least a year's teaching experience in a childcare centre or kindergarten.

The launching of the programme is seen as very timely as it comes when more emphasis is being placed on pre-school education. About 250 participants from the Ministry of Community Development's childcare centres, PAP Community Foundation kindergartens and private kindergartens have been admitted to the inaugural course.

Level 1 – Certificate in Pre-School Teaching

This 150 hour course with practicum aims to present practising and potential teachers with an overview of child development and early childhood learning techniques and advise them on the design, implementation and evaluation of curricula which are developmentally appropriate for pre-school children.

The course comprises the following 4 modules:

- Module 1 : Principles and Practice of Child Care and Child Development (30 hours)
- Module 2 : Managing the Learning Environment (30 hours)
- Module 3 : Integration of Curriculum Areas (80 hours)
- Module 4 : Professional Development of the Teacher of Young Children (10 hours)

Level 2 – Certificate in Pre-School Management Administration

This 90 hour course aims to prepare senior pre-school teachers, principals or supervisors with management and policy making skills which are required for the efficient and creative administration of Pre-School centres and their programmes.

The course comprises the following 3 modules:

- Module 5 : Supervision Training (30 hours)
- Module 6 : Administration and Management Skill (30 hours)
- Module 7 : Influences on Effective Programme Planning (30 hours)