

Summary

Teo-Zuzarte & Lye (2020)'s *A Philosophy on Child Development from Birth-to-Three* delineates NTUC First Campus (NFC)'s philosophy on Child Development for the age group of birth to three and proposes a framework for raising a Happy Child. The article also outlines the current Singaporean context which frames NFC's stance on early childhood education and development for this particular age group.

The organisation recognises that early childhood education and development does not exist in isolation and is influenced by various conditions such as socio-cultural influences on parenting, changing family profiles and household arrangements, shifting demands for childcare and kindergarten services, and the expansion of national policies to support early childhood development. These factors present the current needs of today's families and their young children with regards to alternative care arrangements as well as rising demands in the type of early education and care services preferred. The article also emphasises NFC's commitment in working with parents in their parenting journey and in providing quality care and educational services for their children, especially for birth to three.

In understanding these needs, NFC has constructed a framework that aligns with its vision of raising a Happy Child from infancy. This encompasses the intent behind this framework ('why'), the approaches that should be adopted ('how'), and the outcomes of a Happy Child ('what'). The organisation's vision of a Happy Child is an "I-can-do-it!" empathetic individual who perseveres in the face of adversity, is sociable among people, can manage emotions, cope with stress, and solve problems." This ultimately depicts that a happy child is a successful child. Research shows that a happy child is more likely to experience a better quality of life through adulthood. NFC takes this further, believing that happiness among children starts early in life.

There are three foundational approaches proposed in raising a Happy Child: (1) addressing development during a child's first three years, otherwise known as the critical 'magic window'; (2) early language development; and (3) secure attachment and positive relationships. More importantly, parents have an underpinning role in these approaches through establishing a stable, positive parent-child relationship, creating positive environments at home, and choosing service providers that can offer the appropriate environments promoting the development of a Happy Child.

The framework therefore seeks to develop outcomes of a Happy Child, primarily in the form of character skills, cognitive skills and socio-emotional skills. Through this, NFC advocates the belief that “A Happy Child is a Successful Child” to parents, policymakers, preschools, and society-at-large.

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