

In Person with NTUC First Campus' ECDA Fellow – Sylvia

Meet newly appointed Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) Fellow Sylvia Yeo, Cluster Quality Manager of My First Skool (MFS).

Sylvia was one of three experienced early childhood leaders from NTUC First Campus newly appointed to join the ECDA Fellows fraternity earlier this year. They join two others from NTUC First Campus who were re-appointed following their first term from 2015 to 2018.

The ECDA Fellows programme is an initiative started in 2015 to recognise senior early childhood leaders who display exemplary leadership and expertise, and for ECDA to collaborate with them to drive quality improvements in the sector.

We managed to hear from Sylvia in the midst of her busy schedule to learn more about her work, hobbies, personal convictions and what drives her in balancing her regular work and ECDA Fellow responsibilities.

Q: Tell us more about yourself.

Sylvia: I have been in the early childhood education sector for 16 years. I joined My First Skool in 2013 as a Principal at the Parkway Parade centre. Following that, I moved over to Punggol to set up the MFS centre at Waterway Point in January 2016. I did my Master of Education in Early Childhood Education at the University of South Australia, and am a mother of two primary school children, a boy and a girl.

Q: How does a typical work day look like for you?

Sylvia: I cover a broad range of things on a daily basis. On a usual day, I provide guidance and support to the curriculum and centre management teams, as well as centre pilot projects and initiatives. I will also check in with the teachers and centre assistants to make sure they are doing ok and to see if they need any help. On top of that, I handle enquiries and feedback from parents, as well as work with the Quality Assurance (QA) team in validating the MFS centres.

Q: In your own words, can you share with us what it means to be an ECDA Fellow?

Sylvia: Being an ECDA Fellow is about uplifting and contributing to the early childhood sector in Singapore. This can be done through developing effective sector leaders. As an effective leader brings out the strength of the team, by building the centre leader's capacity and leadership skills, we resultantly be able to make a difference in the growth and development of the children.

Being an ECDA Fellow also enables me to further another important area that I would like to advocate: the professional development of the teachers. It is important to build the teachers' capacities through identifying their individual development plans and the provision of continuous learning and training for them.

I hope to share my experience and guide centre leaders to uplift the quality of centres through deepening the knowledge and skills of the teachers. This can result in a strong centre-wide professional community and programme coherence. I believe that there is an immense potential for us to grow and contribute as leaders.

Q: What is your career progression like in the organisation all the way to being appointed as an ECDA Fellow?

Sylvia: I am thankful to NTUC First Campus for the opportunities given to me over the years, the organisation has definitely helped me learn a lot and grow professionally. Some of the memorable ones include setting up a centre with a childcare capacity of over 300, participating in many pilot projects and learning how to do QCCR validation. Recently, taking on my new role as cluster quality manager has also opened new doors.

Q: What are some things you enjoy doing outside of work?

Sylvia: Exercising is a must for me as it is my outlet to de-stress. I try to clock three to four sessions of exercise per week. I also like catching up with friends over coffee and meals or travelling together. Every year, I make it a point to take two breaks to travel overseas with my family, exploring new places and getting recharged. We enjoy hiking and skiing as a family.

Q: Share with us an interesting fact that people do not know about you, if any.

Sylvia: I enjoy spending time alone in cafés, reading my books over a cup of coffee.