

Title: Continuity of Care: Primary Caregiving in Singapore

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Summary

Ebbeck et al.'s (2022) paper, "Continuity of Care: Primary Caregiving in Singapore", investigates parents' satisfaction and understanding of the primary caregiving system in selected infant care settings in Singapore. This unique system supports continuity of care in early childhood education by assigning a primary caregiver to three to four infants, who forms an attachment with the children and communicates regularly with the family. This study contributes to the research gap on early childhood settings in Singapore where the primary caregiving system is relatively novel compared to the Western context.

This study addresses two research questions: (1) the satisfaction of parents with the primary caregiving system and (2) their understanding of it. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods of inquiry, an 11-item questionnaire was created and administered to a sample of 134 participants. The participants were parents of children aged 3 to 11 months from 20 infant care centres in Singapore. Centres were selected such that every geographical region of Singapore was represented, and 15% of the infants were from low socio-economic backgrounds to ensure representation across all economic status.

Regarding the first research question, parents rated their satisfaction with the primary caregiving system on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = very dissatisfied, 4 = very satisfied). Results indicated that 49% of parents were satisfied, while 51% were very satisfied. Additionally, parents were asked about their preference for the same caregiver every day. 75% preferred this arrangement, while 22% did not, and 3% had no preference.

To address the second research question, parents responded to two open-ended survey questions. They elaborated on their preferences for the same caregiver and provided feedback on their experiences with the primary caregiving system. Most parents



demonstrated an understanding of the key principles, with the top three themes being meeting the child's needs (29%), supporting safe and secure relationships (19%), and improving home-centre communication (11%). 10% expressed confidence and appreciation for the system. However, 26% expressed concerns about the system's potential hindrance to their infants' social development and relationship building with other caregivers, citing reasons such as the need to avoid over-reliance and promote adaptability to different teaching and caregiving methods.

Overall, the study's findings were positive, indicating high levels of parental satisfaction and understanding of the primary caregiving system. These findings are crucial as parental satisfaction is linked to their involvement in their children's education and school choice, fostering a tripartite relationship between child, parent, and teacher in the early childhood education context. However, it is important to address misconceptions, such as the belief that the primary caregiving system involves exclusive, one-teacher arrangements. In reality, the primary caregiver is supported by other staff members, and all staff members are responsible for the infants' overall well-being. Parents should therefore feel reassured that the system does not hinder infants' social development or capacity to build relationships.

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