

CAREERS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION – PUNGGOL SPECIAL

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Ms Lui is training the next generation of early childhood education to help children become confident learners.  
PHOTO: TED CHEN

Climbing up the ranks MY World Preschool deputy principal Annette Lui is rising to challenges that come her way

BY NIVANI ELANGO VAN

When Ms Annette Lui first joined the early childhood industry in 2013 as an apprentice, her main responsibilities included assisting the main teacher in the classroom. Today, the 28-year-old is the deputy principal at MY World Preschool, just one year after being vice-principal. Ms Lui credits her rapid rise to a leadership position to her principal Ms Kar Hwee's mentoring. She explains: "I built my confidence with support from her. I've gained a good understanding of leadership expectations and slowly extended my leadership role."

**Mum's the word**  
She chose this career because it dovetailed with her desire to learn how to be a better mum to her son, now aged seven. She has two other children, aged five and three.

She explains: "I wanted to better understand how children develop mentally, and how to educate them." Becoming a mother at the relatively young age of 21 in 2012, she made sure, with the support of her husband, that she could strike a balance between work, family and personal interests, such as going on road trips and hikes, and socialising with friends. Ms Lui was also able to juggle growing a family with her own education. She trained in early childhood care and education in Teaching at the Asian International College for one and a half years until May 2015, when she was expecting her second child. While pregnant with her third child, she proceeded to obtain a specialist diploma in early childhood education — Leadership at early childhood professionals training centre the SEED Institute, finishing in November 2016.

**Looking ahead**  
Her typical workday involves collaborating with her team on tasks such as planning meaningful activities for the children, and discussing ideas for classroom environment set-ups. As deputy principal, Ms Lui is nurturing the next generation of early childhood educators. She puts her training to good use by empowering her educators with ample space to move around the classroom, developing activities to help children grow in confidence and perform better. And as she enters her sixth year of service, Ms Lui attributes her rewarding career to having a good relationship with her colleagues, work-life balance and a positive mental attitude. She adds: "I foresee a future full of possibilities and excitement. I am eager to see what I can achieve as deputy principal at MY World Preschool."

Sparking joy

For preschool teacher Mdm Mas Idah, each workday is a chance to feel inspired and fulfilled

BY MICHELLE BONG

She's been in service at PCF Sparkletots @ Punggol North Blk 174D for 15 years — and counting. She is a versatile teacher who double-hats to teach the Malay Language and English Language classes. And she has taught children from Nursery 2 till Kindergarten 2 levels. Yet for Mdm Mas Idah, each day at the preschool is no less fun and enriching. The 44-year old, who has received the Outstanding Mother Tongue Language Teacher Award 2018 in the merit category so far, says keeping things fresh is a matter of perspective.

**How do you find joy at work on a daily basis?**  
"Many little things make me smile; for example, when the children respond to me with enthusiasm. Class dynamics are never the same; kids will say anything under the sun! As educators, we develop these responses into topics of discussion and learning opportunities. There are times when I get hugs from the children or they will ask me how I am. These actions warm my heart, especially when I am exhausted."

**What enhances communication, culture and connection?**  
"Lessons that are as fun and engaging as possible! I firmly believe in providing authentic experiences for the children, while being mindful of their diverse learning levels and potential."



I prepare task cards and activities catering to different abilities, allowing children to develop at their own pace."

**How is learning reinforced beyond the classroom?**  
"I plan activities, sourcing for field trip venues or suggesting relevant outdoor activities that match well with the themes taught in school. For example, to teach the kids about insects, I arranged for a trip to the Butterfly Park and Insect Kingdom in Sentosa. Despite logistical challenges such as manpower resources and the children's safety, such trips are a great opportunity to experience learning outside the classroom."

**What's your secret to loving what you do?**  
"By seeing each day as a chance to further a learning journey that never stops. I have the support of my principal and colleagues, who share best practices. We always strive to give the best to the children, and we have ample opportunities to attend courses and workshops to upgrade our skills and teaching methods."

Mdm Mas Idah enjoying time with her young charges, helping them learn and grow through an activity.  
PHOTO: TED CHEN

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