

NurtureSG

ACTION PLAN REPORT

Building Strong Minds

Strong Bodies

Strong Hearts





CONTENTS

▶ **Foreword**

▶ **Chapter 1 – Painting the Landscape**

- Challenges we face
- Health of our children and youth
- Health trends and statistics
- Findings from NurtureSG public consultation

▶ **Chapter 2 – NurtureSG Action Plan**

- Strategic map
- Key recommendations

▶ **Chapter 3 – Conclusion**

- A brighter future for our children and youth
- Acknowledgements

FOREWORD – Fostering Healthy Habits From Young

Children are our future. We need to invest in the health of our children and teach them to lead healthy lifestyles. This will give them a strong foundation for an active and successful life.

MOH and MOE have been consistently promoting health among school children throughout the years. However, there is a need to deepen our efforts among school-going children to combat unhealthy trends such as obesity. More importantly, we also need to expand our efforts beyond schools to pre-school children, as well as to youths and young adults.

NurtureSG is a national effort which seeks to foster healthier habits from young. To succeed, we need the active participation of everyone, including families, communities and schools. We hope this Action Plan Report will help to raise awareness of the importance and benefits of inculcating healthier habits from young to lay the foundation for a fit and healthy nation.



Lam Pin Min
Senior Minister
of State for Health
Co-chair of the
NurtureSG Taskforce



Janil Puthucheary
Senior Minister
of State for Education
Co-chair of the
NurtureSG Taskforce



CHAPTER 1

Painting the Landscape

Our children and youth are the future of Singapore. Good health is the best foundation for the overall development of our children and youth.



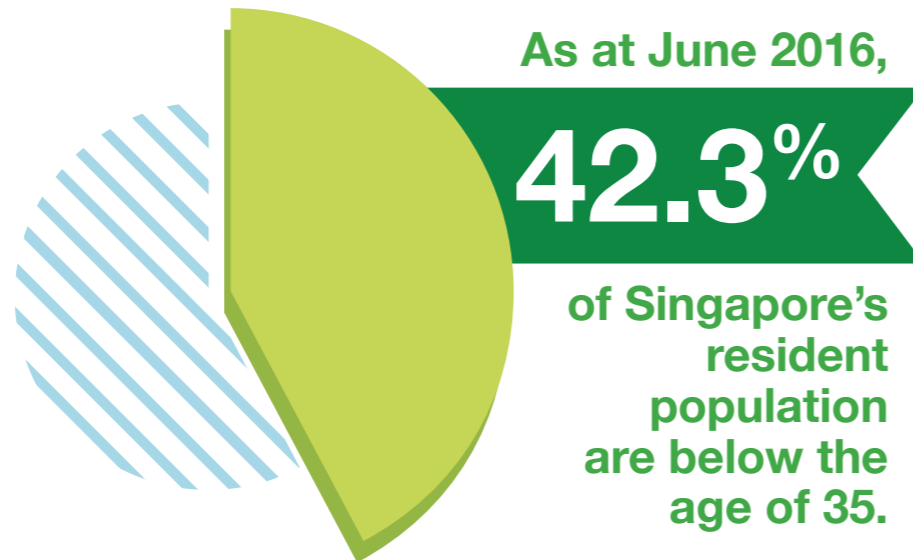
Challenges We Face



A sizable proportion of our population are young:

With increasing affluence and improving health standards, Singaporeans are living longer. However, a modern, sedentary lifestyle also increases our risk of non-communicable diseases such as:

- ▶ Stroke
- ▶ High blood pressure
- ▶ Diabetes
- ▶ Cancer



Hence, it is important that we make the effort to spend as many years of our lives in good health as we can. There is strong evidence that adopting and maintaining healthy lifestyle habits from young will reap health benefits presently and later in life. Hence, it is crucial that we focus health promotion efforts on our children and youth to lay the best foundation for their overall development, both physically and mentally.

Health of our Children and Youth

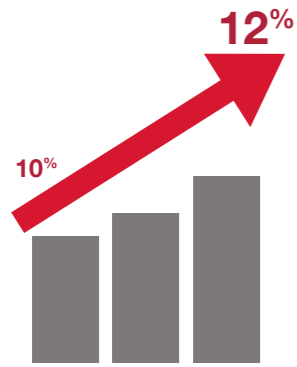
Having **healthy eating habits, regular exercise**, being **mentally resilient** and having **adequate and good quality sleep** are some of the most important factors in shaping good health for our children and youth. Taking good care of their eyes and oral health are also important in their growth and development.

The environment in which we live in plays a vital role in promoting and sustaining good health. Many Singaporeans have gone through our education system, making **schools** and other educational institutions key touch points for outreach and public education efforts. The **community** where children and youth spend large amounts of their time outside of school, also plays a major role in creating a conducive environment for them to participate in more health promotion activities. Most importantly, **families and homes** are crucial in building strong foundations for healthy and productive Singaporeans. Parents are role models in inculcating healthy habits among children and youth.



Health Trends and Statistics

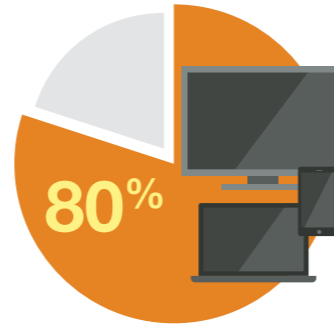
In recent years, emerging health-related societal trends such as greater availability of high calorie food and sweetened drinks, lack of physical activity, greater usage of digital devices, and living in an increasingly competitive and stressful environment, have led to worrying health issues among our young.



Gradual increase in proportion of **overweight** and **severely overweight** children and youth (Primary 1 to Pre-University) from 10% in 2010 to 12%¹ in 2016.



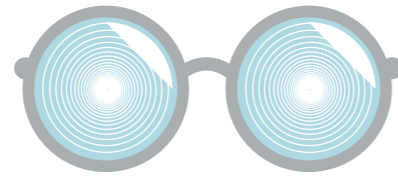
9 in 10 mainstream² school or ITE³ students, and **8 in 10** polytechnic⁴ students have **insufficient physical activity**⁵.



Over 80% of students spent more than 2 hours per day on entertainment **screen time** per weekday⁶.



On average, mainstream school students **sleep** around **7 hours** per weekday⁷



2 in 3 Primary 6 students have myopia⁸



1 in 2 Primary 1 students have **dental caries** on baby teeth⁹

In view of these health trends, there is a need for more effective strategies to protect and ensure the health and well-being of our children and youth.

¹ Based on the local BMI-for-age norms

² Health Promotion Board's Student Health Survey (SHS) 2012

³ Health Promotion Board's Student Health Survey (SHS) 2013

⁴ Health Promotion Board's Student Health Survey (SHS) 2014

⁵ Health Promotion Board. Insufficient physical activity refers to those who did not meet guidelines for sufficient physical activity i.e. at least 60mins of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity per day (activity that increases your heart rate and makes you get out of breath some of the time)

⁶ Health Promotion Board's Student Health Survey (SHS) 2012

⁷ Health Promotion Board's Student Health Survey (SHS) 2012

⁸ Health Promotion Board

⁹ Health Promotion Board

NurtureSG Public Consultation



Between April and June 2016, a NurtureSG public consultation was conducted to seek views and feedback on five areas of concern pre-identified based on existing trends.

The five areas are:



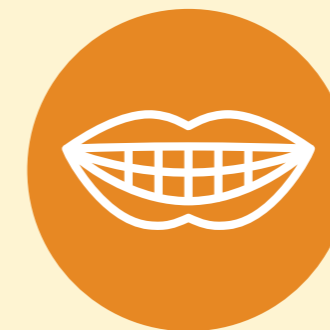
Physical Activity



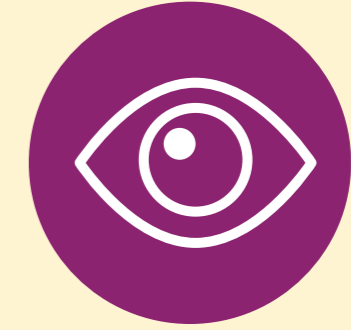
Nutrition



Mental Well-being



Oral Health



Myopia

Participants were also consulted on potential ideas and initiatives to address gaps and challenges, to build a strong foundation for better health among our children and youth.

Snapshot



Public consultation conducted by the NurtureSG Taskforce from April to June 2016.

More than **900** Singaporeans were consulted



Online Consultations

66 Focus Group Discussions



Face-to-face Surveys



Facebook Chat

Who did we consult?

- ▶ The Focus Group Discussion participants included parents/caregivers, teachers, students, social workers, counsellors, pre-school operators and educators.
- ▶ We also reached out to different communities through Family Service Centres, Chinese Development Assistance Council (CDAC), Yayasan Mendaki and Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA), and other platforms that tapped on MOE's and HPB's networks.

Key Findings

Nutrition and **physical activity** were surfaced as important focus areas to both parents and students, from the public consultation. Specifically, older students from Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs) such as polytechnics and ITEs felt that there was a lack of opportunities for physical activity as well as accessibility to affordable and healthier food options.



Mental well-being was also raised as an important area of concern. Participants acknowledged that a key contributing factor to stress in our youths arises from high expectations. Others attributed poor mental well-being to social factors such as poor family relationships, lack of parental involvement, financial problems and excessive time spent on digital devices. University students generally felt that there was lack of support in institutions for students who need help but may not know how or where to seek help.

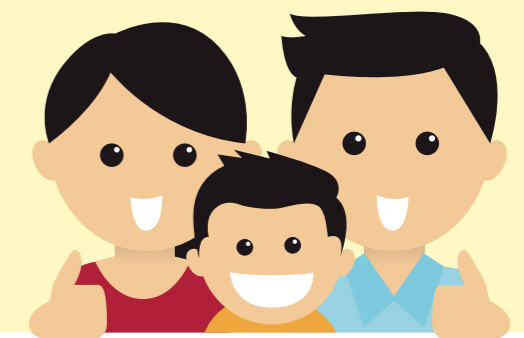
Lack of sleep amongst our children and youth was an issue highlighted during the public consultation. Generally, students felt that the use of digital devices, social media, online gaming, school workload, as well as high expectations, may contribute to their lack of sleep.



Oral health and **myopia** were health issues raised by parents and caregivers of young children. They felt that eye and dental health screening should be conducted for pre-schoolers, similar to the current practice in primary schools.

Parent engagement and role-modelling was a recurring theme throughout the public consultation and featured in most, if not all of the areas discussed.

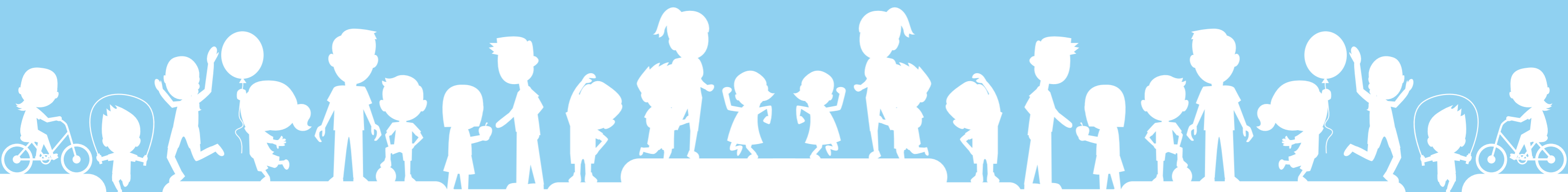
Participants acknowledged that parents play a critical role in inculcating healthier habits in children and youth. Participants who were parents felt that they would be in a better position to educate their young if they were better informed and equipped to do so. Many participants also acknowledged that they could be more involved in the health and well-being of their child.



CHAPTER 2

NurtureSG Action Plan

We will succeed only if everyone (parents, caregivers, schools, community) plays an active role in fostering healthy living in our young's daily activities.



Nurturing Healthy Behaviours in Our Young



3 important and relevant focus areas were identified from the public consultations:

- Physical Activity & Nutrition
- Mental Well-being
- Sleep Health

We also recognised that the success of NurtureSG recommendations are dependent on 2 key enablers:

Parent Engagement:

Raise awareness and strengthen parents' capabilities to motivate and serve as good role models of healthy living for their children.

Fostering Active & Healthy Living:

Having pre-schools, mainstream schools/pre-universities and IHLs integrate health promotion into the daily activities of our young.

We also adopted a 4 "E" approach to provide a strategic framework for NurtureSG initiatives and programmes in addressing salient child health issues, and promote healthy living in our young:



NurtureSG – This is what a Healthy Week in a Child's Life could look like

MON

TUE

WED

THUR

FRI

SAT

SUN

- Eat a healthy breakfast
- Choose healthier meals in school that are prepared with healthier ingredients such as lower saturated fat cooking oils and wholegrains
- Drink water instead of sweetened beverages
- Take part in physical activities and sports
- Turn to friends for social support, or speak to trusted adults like teachers when faced with problems

- Participate in fun outdoor play and sports at playgrounds, parks and recreation centres
- Take part in the National Steps Challenge
- Eat a healthy lunch that has less food which is high in sugar, fat and salt

- Do housework together as a family
- Eat a dinner with healthier ingredients, and lots of fruits and vegetables

- Play board games together, share about activities which happened in the day
- Wind down, get into bed early for adequate sleep

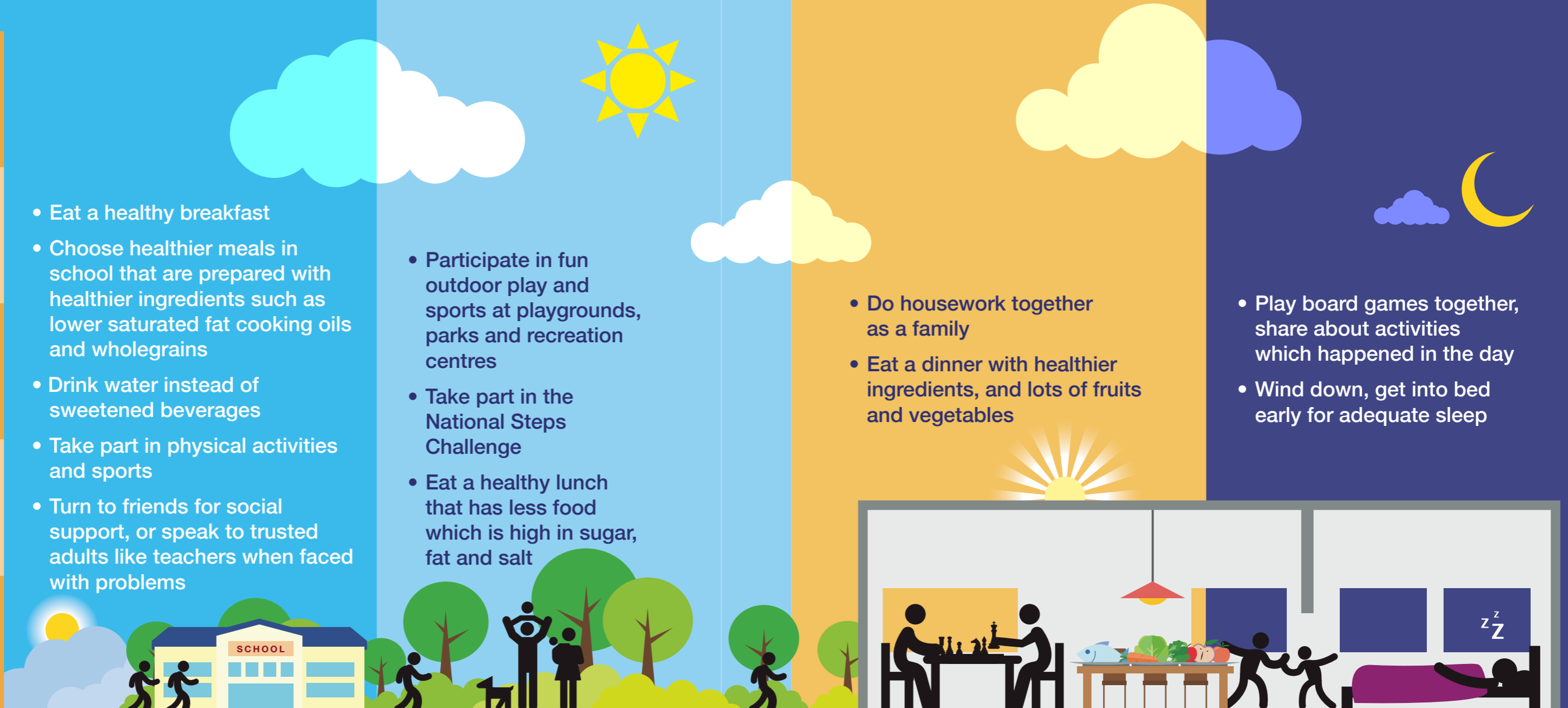


- Eat a healthy breakfast
- Spend time with the family

- Walk or jog in the park
- Join the activities at Sundays at The Park
- Go for a healthy meal or picnic

- Participate in fun, outdoor play and sports at playgrounds, parks and recreation centres
- Eat a healthy and balanced dinner
- Take a walk with your family after dinner

- Have a good night's rest




Key Recommendations

In line with our NurtureSG strategic map, the **9 recommendations** in the **3 focus areas** build on what we have been doing to improve various aspects of child and youth health, such as physical activity and nutrition, mental well-being and sleep health.



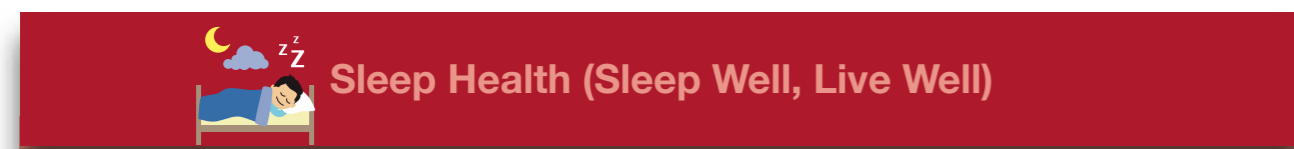
Physical Activity & Nutrition (Active & Healthy Living)

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| <p>Increase opportunities for physical activities in pre-schools, mainstream schools and IHLs, to make healthy living more accessible for students</p> | <p>Encourage families to have Active & Healthy Weekends through our schools and community</p> | <p>Leverage technology to generate students' interest in physical activity</p> | <p>Provide healthier food options in all schools and IHLs, to support our vision of "Healthy Meals for Every Child"</p> |
|--|---|--|---|



Mental Well-being (Strengthening Supportive Networks and Resilience)

| | | | |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p>Strengthen peer support efforts</p> | <p>Build social emotional competencies in our young</p> | <p>Build capacity of service providers to evaluate mental health related programmes for our young</p> | <p>Setting up of an inter-agency research workgroup for youth suicides</p> |
|--|---|---|--|



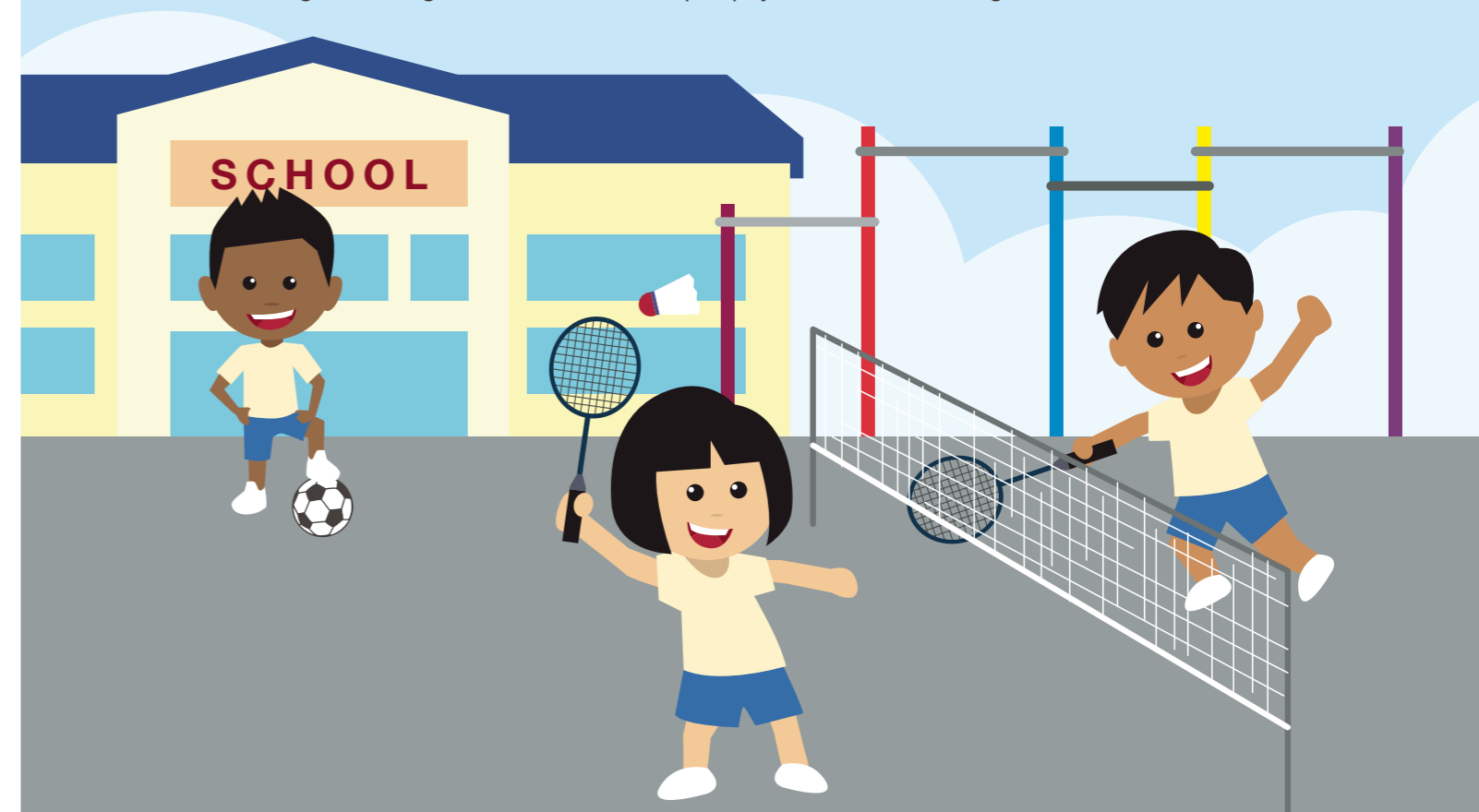
Sleep Health (Sleep Well, Live Well)

Promote good sleep habits

Physical Activity & Nutrition (Active & Healthy Living)

1. Increase opportunities for physical activities in pre-schools, mainstream schools and IHLs, to make healthy living more accessible for students

- Parents play an important role in helping their young children spend at least 2 - 3 hours everyday outdoors during daytime, to prevent the onset of myopia.
- The Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA) will increase the minimum daily time for physical activities for full-day pre-school programmes to an hour daily (up from the current half-hour), of which half-hour is to be conducted outdoors daily.
- HPB will provide pre-school teachers with educational resources for outdoor classroom lessons.
- There will be increased opportunities for unstructured play in mainstream schools beyond formal curriculum time.
 - School facilities and sports equipment will be made available to students during recess and/or after school.
 - ActiveSG is working with schools to engage children in sports and games during recess time.
- A new programme which focuses on fostering the adoption of healthy lifestyle habits for students who need more support will be implemented.
- The "train-the-trainer" pilot model will be adopted in IHLs to engage students as in-house instructors, and generate higher interest and take-up in physical activities through the influence of friends.





Children enjoying Active Family's Tag Rugby at Sentosa.

2. Encourage families to have Active & Healthy Weekends through our schools and community

- HPB and ActiveSG will initiate fun activities¹⁰ in parks, recreational centres and open spaces to encourage parent-child bonding through physical activity.
- Parent Support Groups or Alumni Groups, in collaboration with ActiveSG, are encouraged to organise activities in schools. This increases opportunities for physical activity and sports and also encourages parent-child bonding.
- ActiveSG Clubs and Academies offer additional opportunities for children to take part in sports and physical activity outside of school.
- ActiveSG Community Engagement programmes are organised at sports centres once every week to encourage parents to take part in physical activity with their children.



¹⁰ Fun activities such as experience fitness, family-themed activities and group aerobic exercises. Experience fitness include activities such as sports and games learn-to-play and tryout programmes (i.e. Tchoukball, Floorball, Archery Tag, Inline Skating, Tag Rugby, family frisbee, kite making and kite flying, treasure hunts and family trails @ the park). Group aerobics fitness exercises include activities such as Zumba Kids, kickboxing, KpopxFitness and mixed martial arts, cardio workouts, treasure hunts, family frisbee, family rollerblading and family trails @ the park and ActiveSG Sports Academy tryout programmes (i.e. basketball, football, tennis and athletics).

3. Leverage technology to generate students' interest in physical activity

- HPB will scale up the National Steps Challenge to reach out to more students, by encouraging participation through the provision of step trackers.
- HPB will leverage social media and intra-school competitions to generate interest in physical activity.



National
Steps[™]
Challenge



National Steps Challenge: Steps For Good in Institutes of Higher Learning



Students clocking their steps through a dance machine provided at the Steps For Good event in Temasek Polytechnic.

National Steps Challenge: Rep with Steps in Mainstream schools



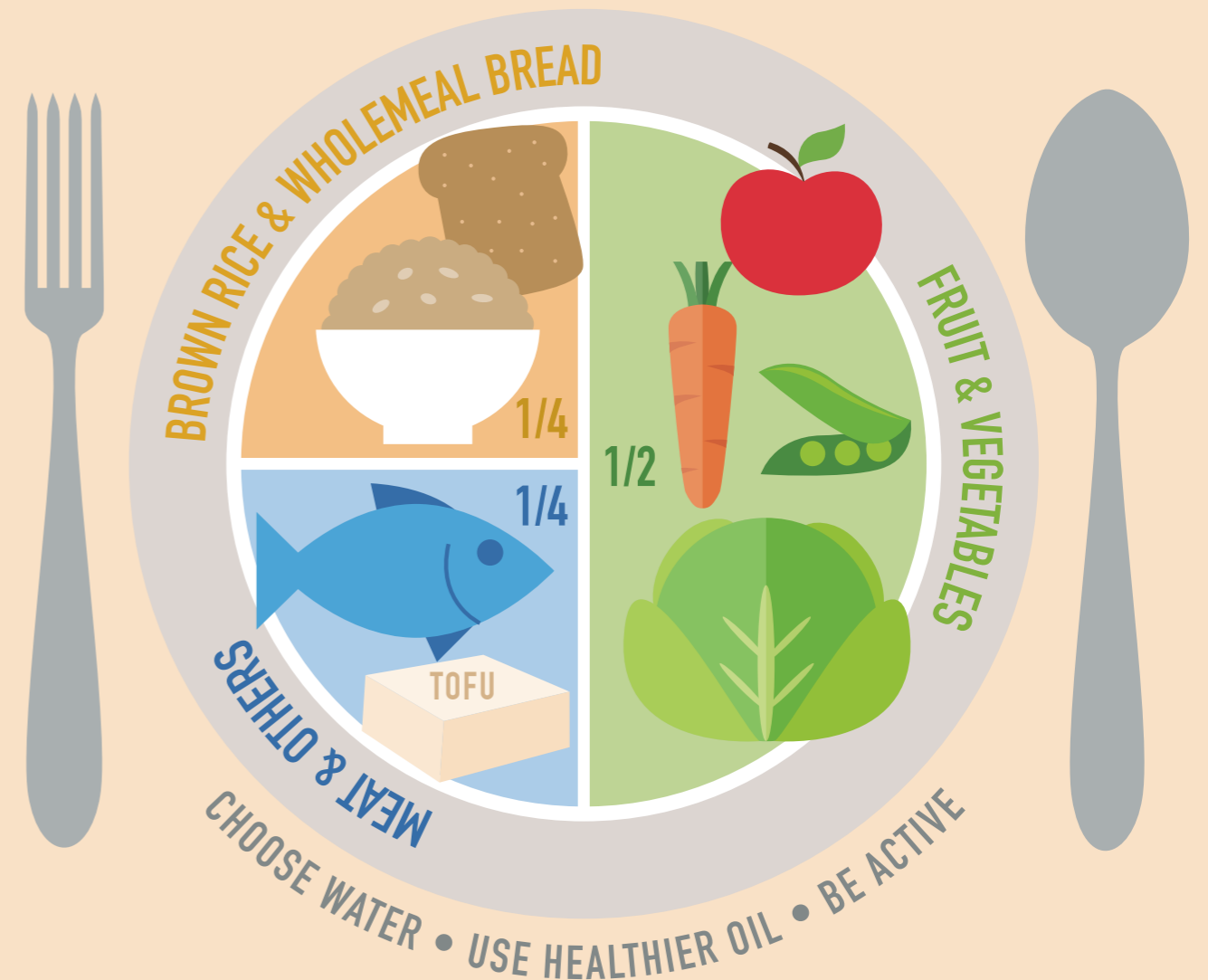
Roadshow staff explaining to students from Ngee Ann Secondary School on usage of the steps-tracker for Rep with Steps Challenge.



Students queuing to sign up for the Rep with Steps Challenge at Tampines Secondary School.

4. Provide healthier food options in all schools and IHLs, to support our vision of “Healthy Meals for Every Child”

- HPB’s healthier meals programmes will be implemented in all schools and IHLs, to increase accessibility of healthier food options.
- ECDA will enhance nutritional requirements in pre-schools to ensure that children receive nutritious, balanced and varied meals.
- From 2017, all mainstream schools would have started implementing the Healthy Meals in Schools Programme.
- Participation in the Healthier Dining Programme at IHLs will be expanded to provide greater access to healthier food options.
- As a supporting initiative, HPB’s oral health screening checks will be extended to 3 - 4 year old children in childcare centres in phases.



Healthy Meals in Pre-Schools Programme*



Following the healthy food guidelines under the Healthy Meals in Pre-Schools Programme, pre-school students at Kinderland Pre-school @ Ministry of Manpower have daily access to nutritious and balanced meals.

Healthy Meals in School Programme in Mainstream Schools



Students at Wellington Primary School giving a thumbs-up for their healthy set meals during Recess break.

Healthier Dining Programme in IHLs



Stall owner at Koufu in ITE College Central proudly displaying the "Healthier Options" decal at his store-front after successfully joining the Healthier Dining Programme.

*HMPP was previously known as the Healthy Meals at Childcare Centre Programme

Mental Well-being (Strengthening Supportive Networks and Resilience)

5. Strengthen peer support efforts

- MOE and HPB will strengthen peer support efforts in schools and IHLs respectively by providing resources and training for students.
- Students will be equipped with peer-helping skills, strategies and resources to look out for peers in distress and make timely referrals to adults or professionals for further support.
- IHLs will enhance their outreach to students through creating greater awareness of available resources and support structures.
- IHL staff and students will also be able to make use of established referral pathways to provide support for distressed students.



6. Build social emotional competencies in our young

- HPB will train and equip pre-school teachers with the knowledge and skills to build social-emotional competencies in young children. This complements existing pre-school programmes, which cover holistic learning and development.

Mental Health Training for Pre-school Teachers



Health Promotion Board provides mental health training workshops for pre-school teachers to equip them with useful knowledge and skills to develop socio-emotional competencies in pre-school children.



7. Build capacity of service providers to evaluate mental health related programmes for our young

- Tote Board has set aside funding to develop upstream programmes to achieve better mental well-being and resilience in our young.
- Tote Board will also fund the Institute of Mental Health (IMH) to build capacity of service providers through trainings in programme evaluation and implementation research.



8. Setting up of an inter-agency research workgroup for youth suicides

- An inter-agency research workgroup chaired by Chairman, Medical Board, IMH, with representatives from various agencies¹¹, will be set up to study suicides, suicidal and self-harm behaviours in children and youths, up to 35 years of age.
- It will conduct a retrospective study to understand the existing landscape of available information, to identify the risk and protective factors of suicides and suicidal behaviours.

¹¹ The inter-agency research workgroup will comprise representatives from MCCY, MINDEF, MOE, MOH, MHA, MSF, HPB, HSA, IMH, NUH and the State Courts.



Sleep Health (Sleep Well, Live Well)

9. Promote good sleep habits

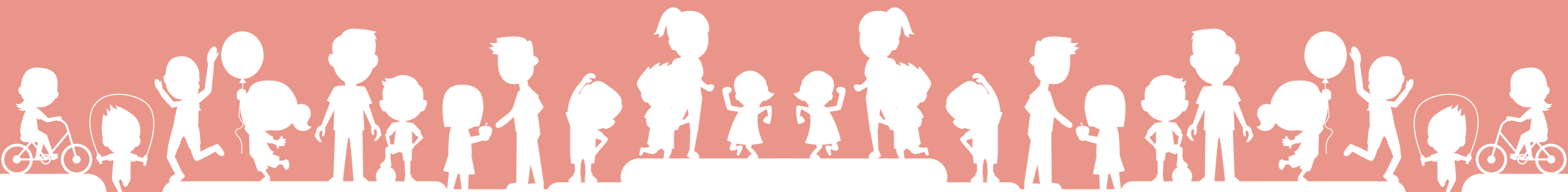
- HPB will raise public awareness on the importance and benefits of adequate and quality sleep, with sleep health recommendations.
- Public education efforts in schools and community will be intensified through the following ways:
 - Provide resources and collaterals to aid parents to help their children practise good sleep habits, such as in inculcating healthy sleep hygiene and establishing a regular and relaxing bedtime routine for their children.
 - Engage parent of pre-schoolers and primary school students through multiple online and media platforms.
 - Engage pre-schoolers and lower primary school students through roving interactive exhibits on sleep habits.
 - Educate youth on the impact of insufficient sleep and tips on good sleep habits.
 - Strengthen sleep health messages and good practice through MOE channels.



CHAPTER 3

Conclusion

We must sustain NurtureSG as an important national effort to invest in the future of our young generation, and to build a healthy nation.



Towards a Brighter Future for our Children & Youth

Our vision is for all Singaporeans to build strong minds, strong hearts and strong bodies.

NurtureSG strives to drive the development of more health promotion initiatives and programmes, which benefit our young's health and overall well-being. The recommendations are a significant first step towards better health outcomes for our children and youth.

With the support of parents, teachers, students and the community, we aim to sustain NurtureSG to build a healthy nation.



Acknowledgements

Our sincerest thanks to all our partners who have walked with us over the past year from the conceptualisation of NurtureSG, conduct of the public consultations as well as drafting of the Action Plan. All this would not have been possible if not for the time, effort and enthusiasm of our partners.

Last but not least, we would like to say a big "thank you" to all Singaporeans who have generously contributed their thoughts and feedback on how we can better the health of our young. Such conversations enable us to think and relook at how we can do things better to benefit our future generations.

Members of the NurtureSG Taskforce

| Organisation | Name | Appointment |
|---|-----------------------------|---|
| Co-Chairs | | |
| Ministry of Health | Dr Lam Pin Min | Senior Minister of State (Health) |
| Ministry of Education | Dr Janil Puthuchery | Senior Minister of State (Education) |
| Public Sector | | |
| Ministry of Health | Ms Teoh Zsin Woon | Deputy Secretary (Development) |
| Ministry of Education | Mr Wong Siew Hoong | Director-General of Education |
| Ministry of Social and Family Development | Dr Lee Tung Jean | Deputy Secretary |
| Sport Singapore | Mr Lim Teck Yin | Chief Executive Officer |
| Early Childhood Development Agency | Mr Eugene Leong | Chief Executive Officer |
| Health Promotion Board | Mr Zee Yoong Kang | Chief Executive Officer |
| Nanyang Polytechnic | Ms Jeanne Liew | Principal |
| Medical Professionals / Academics | | |
| KK Women's and Children's Hospital | Prof Kenneth Kwek | Chief Executive Officer* |
| Institute of Mental Health | Adj A/Prof Daniel Fung | Chairman Medical Board |
| National University of Singapore | Assoc Prof Wong Mee Lian | Assoc Prof (Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health) |
| National University of Singapore | Assoc Prof Paulin Straughan | Vice Dean^ (International Relations and Special Duties) |

*Prof Kenneth Kwek has since relinquished his role as Chief Executive Officer, KKH, and has taken on the role of Chief Executive Officer, Singapore General Hospital, with effect from 1 May 2017.

^ Assoc Prof Paulin Straughan has since relinquished her role as Vice Dean (International Relations and Special Duties), National University of Singapore, and has taken on the role of Dean of Students, Singapore Management University with effect from 1 July 2017.

NurtureSG Terms of Reference

- Undertake a stock-take of the health promotion and disease prevention landscape for children and youth in Singapore.
- Develop appropriate strategies and approaches by collaborating with community and grassroots organisations, non-governmental organisations focusing on children and family well-being, healthcare providers and relevant government agencies.
- Formulate an action plan to promote a healthy lifestyle and prevent diseases in children and youth in Singapore, especially vulnerable groups.

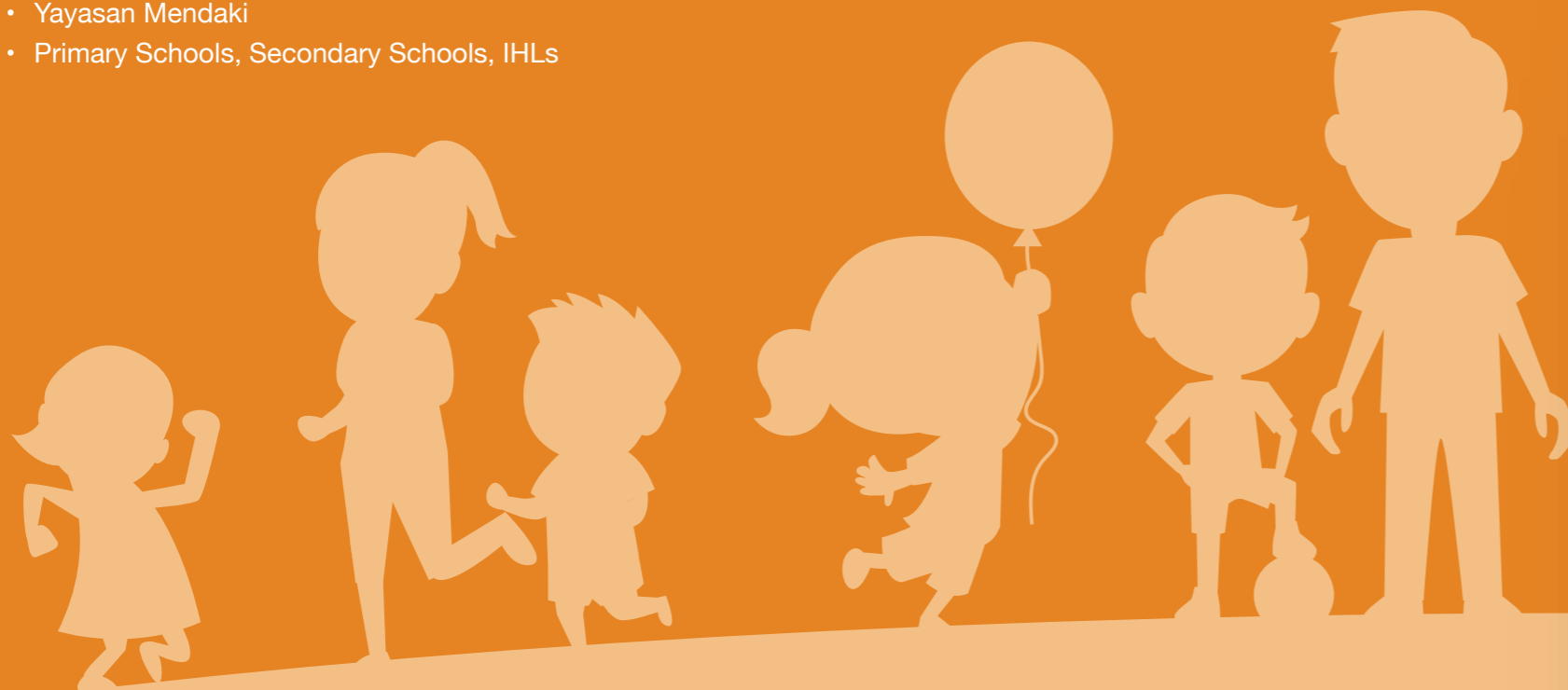


Agencies/Ministries

- Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA)
- Health Promotion Board (HPB)
- Institute of Mental Health (IMH)
- Ministry of Education (MOE)
- Ministry of Health (MOH)
- Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF)
- Nanyang Polytechnic (NYP)
- People's Association (PA)
- Sport Singapore
- Tote Board

Partners

- Anchorvale CC
- Chua Chu Kang CC
- Chinese Development Assistance Council (CDAC)
- EA Research and Counselling (EARC)
- KK Women's and Children's Hospital (KKH)
- National University of Singapore (NUS)
- REACH Singapore
- SCAPE
- Singapore Indian Development Association (SINDA)
- Yayasan Mendaki
- Primary Schools, Secondary Schools, IHLs





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