

# LET'S Talk

Julia Gabriel  
EDUCATION

ISSUE 3, 2022



IN CONVERSATION WITH  
ASHWINI SUBRAMANIAM

## JULIA GABRIEL CENTRE

NEW: Week Day PlayClub Programme

## CHILTERN HOUSE PRESCHOOL

Kindness Week,  
as part of Term 3's Mindful Weeks  
campaign

Ashwini, one of our longest serving staff here, first joined the Julia Gabriel family nine years ago in January 2013. She began her journey with us as an Assistant Teacher for Julia Gabriel Centre programmes before transitioning to Chiltern House as a lead teacher. Having also obtained her Julia Gabriel Foundation Teaching Certificate in Speech and Drama from the Julia Gabriel School of Education, she has taught in Julia Gabriel Centre's Speech and Drama programmes, and is at present the Readers and Writers specialist teacher. She also serves as the Assistant Head of Centre, and the Lead Teacher for Kindergarten One.



Now pursuing her Master of Early Childhood Education, we ask her for her thoughts about the challenges of the English language and the learning opportunities that shine through in the Readers and Writers programme.

## In conversation with Ashwini Subramaniam

Assistant Head of Bangsar Centre  
Readers and Writers Specialist

### 1. What are some of the common challenges that children would face when it comes to learning how to read and write in English at the different ages?

There are a few common challenges that children would typically face when learning the intricacies of the English language. For example, when it comes to reading, quite often children struggle with the aspects of sound recognition, sound blending, and even when it comes to recognising alphabets.

When it comes to writing, the early struggles could involve a lack of awareness in proper pencil grip. One may not pay much attention to the importance of a child's pencil grip, but holding it wrong can cause unnecessary strain on the hand muscles and ligaments and will ultimately affect the quality of the child's handwriting, and causes fatigue which would lead to the child ultimately giving up after just a short while of trying. And parents would mistakenly identify it as the child being uninterested in writing

when in fact, it could be a pencil grip issue.

On top of these challenges, we are currently in a unique scenario after having gradually transitioned into a form of new normalcy post-pandemic, and because of that, we are beginning to see the effects from the lack of social engagements and stimulating age-appropriate resources during the time when the children were predominantly closed off from the rest of the world and how it is effecting their development as a whole, including their language development. Recovery is very possible, as exhibited in the students from our Chiltern House Preschool, and even those in the Readers and Writers class. All they need is strong support from home and their teachers to rebuild that confidence in themselves again.

### 2. Can you share with us some success stories? How has the Readers and Writers programme helped your children in their English proficiency?

Back when physical classes weren't yet available and we were running our Readers and Writers e-Camp for our Primary 1 and 2 students, there was a student who had first started out with me who was having challenges with both her spoken and written English. She was very diligent with her classes albeit it being virtual, and basically stood by and attended three e-Camps with us. By the end of the third camp, her mother shared that she has improved so much, and that her school teacher mentioned that she could read much better than she did before! My heart swelled, knowing just how much she has improved, how her perseverance paid off because she was open and willing to learn with us.

Another success story is happening as we speak. In Chiltern House where I'm also the Kindergarten 1 class teacher, I have a student whom I see on every Saturday for the Readers and Writers class as well. He is a fluent English language speaker but lacked confidence in his reading. And so his parents decided to let him try out Readers and Writers to help him



gain more exposure with his English reading and writing. So far he's been with us for a little more than one term now and I am extremely happy and proud to witness the improvements in his reading and blending of words. His confidence also shines through now whenever he reads a new book that we introduce in class! Even with the different text types we do in class, it doesn't faze him anymore which is amazing for me, as his teacher, and it's because of these success stories that we keep doing what we do and at the same time, enjoying every bit of it.

### 3. As the specialist teacher for the programme, what do you think makes Julia Gabriel Centre's Readers and Writers programme unique?

In Readers and Writers, the students are introduced to a variety of themes through a specially selected reading scheme of fiction and non-fiction books from the KeyLinks series.

Every three weeks, we will introduce a new book in our lessons and we will go through new words together before moving on to the comprehension. With new concepts like long vowels, digraphs, trigraphs, and verbs being introduced to the children methodically, learning becomes more systematic and easy-to-follow for the children.

What's more, with our signature drama element being infused in class to enhance their visualisation of stories to help with the planning, drafting and writing they will be doing, the children stay highly engaged and interested in class.

I truly believe these elements of the class, when combined with the continued partnership of the parents at home, would greatly benefit the children when it comes to fostering a love of reading and writing in their journey to master the English language.



### 4. How can parents help support their children's language development at home?

For a start, parents can try putting together a small reading corner at home for your children. They should comprise age-appropriate books, so if you need book recommendations from us, we are very happy to help! Now with a cosy corner for reading, establish or set aside some time in a day to read with your child. It really does not have to be an entire book, even a several pages a day works wonders. Encourage your child to choose his/her book of choice, let him/her take the lead so even if it means picking that same book for days in a row, it's good to know that children find comfort in familiarity. And it helps with word recognition so pointing to the text as you read is important. Treat this routine as a precious parent-child bonding time, and we can assure you it won't be long before your child grows to love reading because it's his/her favourite time spent with mommy or daddy.

Learning to read and write is definitely a process, so let's lay the foundation right, and enjoy the journey!

LEARN MORE about Julia Gabriel Centre's Readers and Writers' "Let's Read and Write" for Kindergarten 1 & 2 (ages 5 - 6 years) on every Saturday, 11:00am - 12:30pm at our Bangsar centre. Trial classes are available.

# In the Cover

## 15 YEAR CLUB INDUCTEES



## Kuala Lumpur Centre's Vision Day 2022

Dressed to the nines for our Midsummer Night's themed Vision Day party this year, we brought the focus back to the Mindful Educator in our collective quest to be the most accomplished versions of ourselves channeling the values of our EduDrama philosophy. Our special guest for the evening was Fiona McDonald, the Head of Learning Support and Overseas Programme Quality, Julia Gabriel Education Singapore, with Kuala Lumpur's Centre Director, Paulee Wang.

We asked ourselves what success would mean to us, went to the polls and voted for our fellow educators in the inaugural **The Mindful Educator Award**, and celebrated our colleagues in the long service award as they join our hall of fame getting inducted into the 5, 10 and 15 Year Club.

**CONGRATULATIONS** to Shoby, our Head of Julia Gabriel Centre Programmes, and Head of Bangsar Centre; and Azhar from our School Support team for being the first members of our **15 Year Club!**





# Kindness Week

In Term 3, the children were engaged in a series of specially curated activities to educate and promote an important Mindfulness trait - being kind to ourselves and to others.

The children, from Pre-Nursery to Kindergarten Two, were guided to make mini chocolate treats that they would then gift to their community helpers,

Through these specially curated activities, and with our ongoing advocacy of the importance of being kind as part of our mindful practices in school, we believe that we can all do our parts to help make a difference in society today; that even a single random act of kindness can help make this world more beautiful than it was before. We would like to thank all parents - our partners in education - for your continuous support in our mindfulness initiatives throughout the year.

Term 3:

## Kindness Week

being kind to ourselves and to others

The **Chiltern House Mindful Weeks** programme that is launched in every school term is our way of introducing the children to the notion of being mindful and its significance to our daily lives. We recognize that in our fast-paced world, we often struggle to be focused and to stay present. It's now more important than ever for our children to learn to embrace positivity and to take care of one's wellbeing. As such, for the last couple of years, we have been working closely with our colleagues in Singapore on Mindful practices for a gradual and eventual assimilation of the programme into our curriculum - in support of positive education and mindfulness.





## PlayClub now on week days!

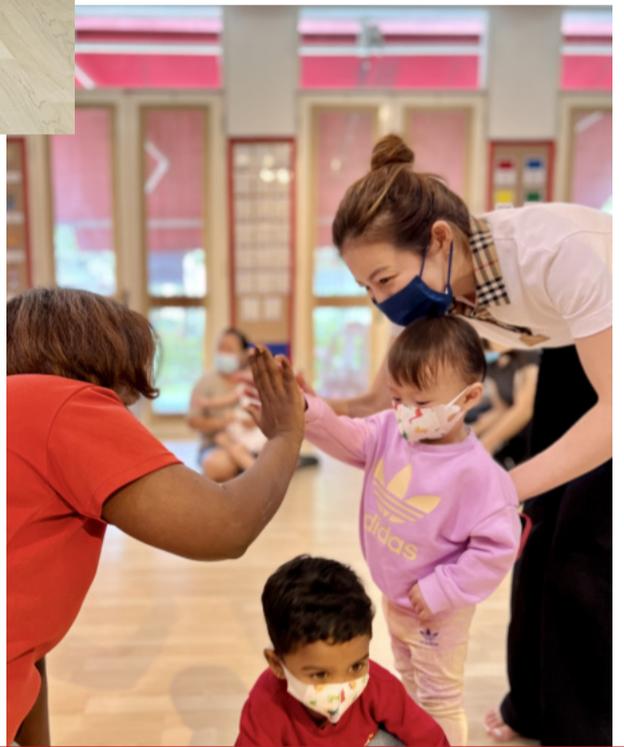
NOW AVAILABLE on week days! Experience our **Early Learning Programme, PlayClub** for toddlers between the ages **18 months - 3 years**, at our Bangsar centre in a selection of once, twice, or thrice-a-week classes!

Tuesdays - Mandarin PlayClub

Wednesdays - English PlayClub

Thursdays / Saturdays - Bilingual PlayClub

**Reach out to us via WhatsApp** at +6011 1068 8882 to schedule your trial class today.



Our speaker of the day, Fiona McDonald, who is the Head of Learning Support and Overseas Programme Quality, Julia Gabriel Education Singapore, was present to shed some light on **Supporting Your Child in a New World**, our first physical parenting workshop since pre-pandemic.

We would like to thank all parents who have taken the time out of their busy weekend schedule to gain some insight into supporting their children in this changing world, after two years of COVID-19 restrictions, schools transitioning online, social engagements on the back burner, and the prevalent work from home routine which was evidently blurring the line between family time at home, and working round the clock.

## Parenting Workshop: Supporting Your Child in a New World





## JG x IBU Family | IBU Family Bazaar

Back in September, we were thrilled to partner with the wonderful moms at IBU Family Resource Group, a non profit organisation that supports parents and families, as their Collection Partner for the IBU Family Bazaar charity event at The School @ Jaya One.

The outpour of support from our Chiltern House families was most overwhelming with generous contributions comprising preloved maternity and children items which include books, clothes and toys. The collected items were sold during the bazaar to benefit IBU in support of the running of their operations and in enhancing their community-driven efforts. Other beneficiaries include Toy Libraries Malaysia – an NGO that promotes play and ensures toys are accessible especially to underprivileged children all over the country, and Jumble Station – a community outreach initiative by the NGO Parents Without Borders to help raise funds for single parents.

Our team of specialist educators from Julia Gabriel Centre also participated as Activity Partner during the bazaar to perform our signature Silly Stupendous Spectacular Stories - engaging the young crowd by bringing to life, Eileen Browne's Handa's Surprise!

**Julia Gabriel Centre**

[www.juliagabriel.com.my](http://www.juliagabriel.com.my)

**Chiltern House Preschool**

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