

Who is Here for Me: Substitute Child Care in Singapore

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Abstract

To describe the current status of substitute care services for young children in Singapore, this article highlights the country's overall structure of the existing alternate care service system, cultural and societal perspectives about early childhood care and education, and unique features of the service delivery system. Challenges to enhance the

the majority of children below the age of seven attend some kind of preschool facility. Presently, in Singapore, a range of early childhood care and education programmes and services to support young children are underway. They are infant care services which cater to children aged two months to 18 months. They centres provide full day and half-day care programme for infants and toddlers. More formal preschool education in Singapore, which was established in the 1960s, ranges from full- and half-day childcare centres to two- to four-hour kindergarten programs for children aged between 18 months to six years. In general, preschool education in Singapore provides for children ages three to six up to four years of preschool which are commonly are known as nursery 1 (N1), nursery 2 (N1), kindergarten 1 (K1) and kindergarten 2 (K2), respectively. Children who are under 3 are in pre-nursery classes. The minimum staff to child ratio is 1:8 for children 18-30 months old, 1:12 for 30 months to 3 years, 1:15 for 3-4 years, and 1:25 for 4-7 years. The first year of formal schooling is called Primary One and begins in the January of the year they turn seven. Academic achievement is highly valued in Singapore, and the typical school-going child is tested regularly with examinations when he or she starts school.

Presently, in Singapore, there are many advocacy groups to reach out to young children whose parents are not able to look after them at home. Currently there is a range of services available.

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from them. Use of special schools in Singapore as a resource is valuable and constructive as teachers can learn strategies of intervention and accommodations in teaching children with special needs.

Whatever alternate child care is chosen, it is impossible to pay anyone enough to get her to do what parents will do for free out of love and commitment. It is too much to ask of anyone other than the child's own parents to give him a healthy self-image, a moral standard and a zest for life. While child care service can be arranged or purchased, parenting cannot be delegated.

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