

Going to mainstream school is encouraging to children with special educational needs (SEN) and their parents. However, under the current educational system, even ordinary students are overloaded with homework and examinations, not to mention those with learning difficulties. Some schools also lack the resources needed for integrated education. To address this situation, Heep Hong Society pioneered after-school support programmes to provide homework tutoring, professional training and social communication training for SEN children to help them adapt to the mainstream education environment.

After-school Support Boosts Academic and Social Performance

According to the Education Bureau, there are around 37,000 SEN students studying at public primary and secondary schools in 2014/15. In general, SEN children encounter difficulties in areas such as maintaining attention, information processing, comprehension and emotional management. Meanwhile, teachers may not have sufficient training to give SEN children the support they need. As time goes by, SEN children may find the lessons boring or feel frustrated. This can go deeper into losing self-confidence or eliciting emotional problems, which affects their social life, perpetuating a vicious circle. Without early intervention, the consequences can be severe.

Early Intervention Breaks Vicious Circle

In this school year, the Society launched two new programmes to provide academic support as well as communication and emotional management training for SEN school children. They are namely the 'After School Tutoring Support for Students

with SEN in Mainstream Schools' Programme sponsored by the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged and the 'Holistic Support for Primary/Secondary ASD Students and Their Family Members' Programme sponsored by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust. Both of them aim to give children the care, recognition and appreciation they deserve, and help parents relieve stress.

Homework Tutoring Sparks Learning Interest

The after-school support groups run four to five days a week with teaching strategies and methods tailored for SEN children. The aim is to help them catch up with school work and ignite their interest in learning. At the start of every session, the students practise the 'Five Steps of Concentration' and 'Eyes, Ears, Hands, Mouth, Heart' exercises to sharpen their focus. An array of methods such as multi-sensory learning are used to help the students integrate sight, hearing, speaking and writing for identifying Chinese characters.

Multi-sensory Learning

The tutors use different colours as visual cues to help students identify different radicals of the Chinese characters.



The tutors also teach students learning skills so that they will benefit in the long run. For example, the students learn how to deduce the meaning of difficult words and the passage from the radicals of the characters and the context. With these skills, they will be able to read with confidence even when they encounter new words.



In a small group, the tutor can attend to individual needs and foster mutual trust.

Group Activities Strengthen Social and Emotional Management Skills

Children with SEN like autism spectrum disorder and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder are weaker in social communication and emotional management. They may disrupt the class and experience difficulties in getting along with others. 30 minutes of social time is built in every session for the students to learn how to take turns, respect others and express emotions properly, and to build friendship with each other. After gaining these social experiences, they will be more ready to engage in school life.



Learning how to interact with peers is vital for the growth of children.

Equipping Parents with Professional Knowledge

Talks and workshops are held regularly to help parents acquire knowledge and skills of parenting and home training. In individual consultation sessions, the professionals explain to parents their children's performance and follow up on their progress. Some training sessions are conducted in parent-child groups for parents to learn first-hand their children's needs and the training strategies, while enjoying family time.

Hear from Our Parents

Mrs Lam: Hin-hin used to repulse reading or dictation. He only wanted to play and would not do homework without our supervision. He was reluctant to join the tutoring programme at first. But now, he always asks us to take him to class and finishes his homework every day. In two months' time, his dictation marks have risen to 80-90. We are very pleased to see his improvement. It also gives him a confidence boost.

Hin-hin, Primary 2, propensity for dyslexia, joined after-school tutoring programme since September 2015



Heep Hong Shares Experience at the launch of On-site Pre-school Rehab Services



To help special needs children receive timely intervention, the Social Welfare Department allocated over \$420 million from the Lotteries Fund to carry out the 'Pilot Scheme on On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services' (the Pilot Scheme). From November 2015 to January 2016, the scheme gradually provides more than 2,900 training places for children at over 450 preschools — almost half of the kindergartens and kindergartens-cum-child care centres in Hong Kong. At the launch of the Pilot Scheme officiated by the Chief Secretary for Administration Mrs Carrie Lam on 14th November at the Central Government Offices, Ms Nancy Tsang, Director of Heep Hong Society and Dr Lam Shui-fong, Associate Professor of the Department of Psychology of the University of Hong Kong, presented the service model and effectiveness of the Society's 'Early Intervention and Integrated Support for Kindergarten Students with Special Educational Needs' project (the Project). Government officials of the Labour and Welfare Bureau, Education Bureau, Department of Health and Social Welfare Department were among the 500 attendants.

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Launching of the Pilot Scheme on
On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services



The Project adopts a pioneering dual model which combines school-based support and centre training to serve the needs of SEN children best. It was carried out in September 2014 with two aims: first, to provide comprehensive support for kindergartens; and second, to develop an evidence-based, effective and applicable model for the government and sector to take reference. The Society welcomed the government's new initiative and formed four teams of professionals to join the Pilot Scheme. Together with the Project, the Society supports 500 students at nearly 60 kindergartens.

HKU Study Finds Heep Hong Pilot Kindergarten Support Project Effective

The Society announced the findings of the effectiveness study of the 'Early Intervention and Integrated Support for Kindergarten Students with Special Educational Needs' project (the Project) on 24 October 2015. It was followed by a talk on 'Children with a Propensity for Dyslexia: Identification and Support' attended by over 330 professionals, preschool educators and parents.



Sponsored by the Lee Hysan Foundation, the two-year project adopted a dual model, which combines school-based support and centre training, to support 60 SEN children at 10 kindergartens starting from the school year of 2014/15.

The research conducted by Dr Lam Shui-fong of the University of Hong Kong and her team showed that, after one year of training, the 60 students improved in multiple areas of competences; and the 142 teachers at the kindergarten felt a boost in self-efficacy. Principals, teachers and parents found the Project helpful. During the programme, Ms Nancy Tsang and Dr Lam presented the research report to Ms Cecilia Ho, President of the Lee Hysan Foundation.

First Local Parenting Programme Reduces Parenting Stress

The Society's Academy for Professional Education and Development (APED) held the seminar on '20 Parenting Strategies' and announced the findings of the effectiveness study of the 'Happy Parenting' programme on 7 November 2015. Over 300 parents and professionals attended.

Jointly developed by the Society, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the University of Hong Kong, 'Happy Parenting' is the first evidence-based, comprehensive parenting programme tailored for local parents of SEN children.

At the seminar, Dr Sandra Tsang Kit-man of the Department of Social Work and Social Administration of the University of Hong Kong introduced the programme concept, while Professor Cynthia Leung Man of the Department of Applied Social Sciences of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University announced the findings. The results showed that the programme significantly alleviated the participants' parenting stress and their children's behavioural problems. This improved parenting efficacy and parent-child relationship.





Jockey Club STAR Resource Centre Now in Full Service



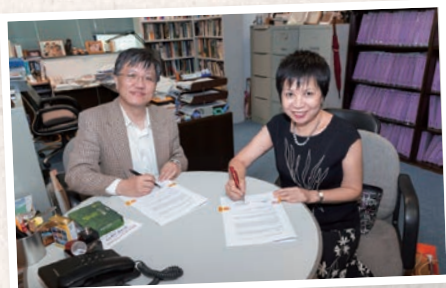
Heep Hong Society opened its sixth Parents Resource Centre — Jockey Club STAR Resource Centre in Oi Man Estate, Homantin. It provides one-stop services to individuals with autism spectrum disorder, including individual and group training for preschool children, homework tutoring and secondary school adaptation programmes for school children, and career counseling and vocational training for youth and adults.

The new centre is designed with a theme of stars, which carries two meanings. Autistic children are often called the 'children of stars' - the stars which sparkle alone at the edge of the sky in darkness. 'STAR' also represents the core service values: Support, Training, Acceptance, Respect. It is the Society's vision to help them shine like stars and live a colourful life.



Collaborates with Open University to Offer Full-time Programme

Heep Hong Society collaborated with the Open University of Hong Kong on the provision of a top-up degree programme - Bachelor of Education with Honours in Early Childhood Education: Leadership and Special Educational Needs. First offered in September 2015, this face-to-face programme equips students with professional knowledge and skills in teaching children with special needs through theoretical learning and practical training.



Director Speaks at Corporate Governance Seminar

The Society upholds good corporate governance and regularly reviews the organisational structure, transparency and integrity, fulfilling its responsibility to the stakeholders. Ms Nancy Tsang, Director of the Society, was invited to speak at 'Serving Together with Integrity and Heart – Seminar on NGOs' Governance' to share experience with the sector.



READ & WRITE Project Concludes with Huge Success

Sponsored by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust and implemented by the University of Hong Kong, the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Society, the nine-year project 'READ & WRITE: A Jockey Club Learning Support Network' successfully concluded. Mr Leong Cheung, Charities and Community Executive Director of the Hong Kong Jockey Club and Mrs Michelle Wong, Deputy Secretary for Education attended the celebration of achievements event in July 2015. Later, Mrs Wong visited one of the kindergartens which received support from the Society and promised to study the possibility of implementing the project across the kindergartens in Hong Kong. Over the years, the Society's team of professionals have helped over 2,300 potentially dyslexic children and published dozens of teaching packages.





Heep Hong Companion

While corporate sponsorship contributes to the proceeds of the Society, the contributions and support from our monthly donors are equally important for the development of non-subservent projects. As the Monthly Donation Programme (MDP) celebrates its 10th year, we talk to Ms Yuen, who has supported the Society for seven consecutive years, and Senior Fundraiser Jason to get to know more about giving to the Society.

Monthly Donor Ms Yuen: Every Child is Precious

H: Heep Hong Society Y: Ms Yuen

H: Why did you choose to support the Society with monthly donations?

Y: In 2008, I was walking around Mei Foo when one of your fundraisers introduced your services, mission and vision to me. He was very enthusiastic and patient, so I was interested to know more. After his detailed explanation, I reckoned that Heep Hong was very down-to-earth with the donations well spent. I also wanted to support children with special needs. So I joined the monthly donation programme.

H: You came to our centre's Christmas party in 2012. How did you find the experience?

A: It was wonderful! My husband and I attended the Christmas party at Wan Tsui Centre and played with the children. We had little chance to interact with special needs children before, but we found them adorable. I remember the little girl in my group. She was very lovely. Some kids were very energetic, but they were also cute, direct and innocent. After this experience, I understand that we need double the amount of love and patience to take care of children with special needs. I look forward to joining similar activities again.

H: What drives you to keep giving to Heep Hong?

A: Heep Hong has a very positive image. I receive its newsletters and communications regularly. The photos of smiling children brighten up my day. I understand how important it is for a non-profit organisation to receive regular donations so that it can garner more resources to help the needy children. Heep Hong has all along primarily focused on preschool rehabilitation, and maintained a high standard and diversity in its services. I am very glad to continuously support the Society.



Ms Yuen has been an MDP donor since 2008.

Fundraiser Jason: Rejection Makes Me More Determined

H: Heep Hong Society J: Jason

H: What difficulties do you often encounter in the streets?

J: Hongkongers are in general very giving. It is only the fast-paced lifestyle that makes it hard for them to stop and listen to us. Some have little understanding of monthly donations and may question us. Some are parents of preschool children waiting for rehabilitation services. They unfortunately feel very stressed and would vent their frustration on us. We understand how they feel, so we try to calm them down and explain the situation first, and then introduce Heep Hong's services to them.

H: Can you share with us some memorable experiences?

J: Sure. It was a hot summer day. There was a gentleman who just signed up to be a monthly donor. He bought us some water, gave me a pat on the back and said 'keep up'. I was touched and it has become a motivation for me to keep on helping children with special needs. Of course, there were some less encouraging moments, too. I have had passers-by swearing at me or questioning the effectiveness of our services. I always listen to them with patience and try to explain our services and missions, hoping that they will come to understand how we help children with special needs and their families.

H: How do you persevere in the face of difficulties?

J: Keep being optimistic. It is hard to go on if one doesn't have a sense of mission, passion and perseverance. We work as a team and support each other. We feel that we can overcome any obstacles. If a passer-by is willing to listen, we are very delighted to tell them about Heep Hong's works for special needs children. So, next time you see our team in the streets, give us a smile, or better still, sign up as a regular donor!



Senior Fundraiser Jason has been increasingly passionate about his work.

The proceeds from MDP are used for funding non-subservent services and projects, including the operation of Parents Resource Centres. The MDP team introduces the Society's services across Hong Kong and encourages the public to become our regular donors with the vision of helping more children with special needs and their families.

Online donations: www.heephong.org/donation





'Shine Like A Star' Charity Dinner Benefits 700 Children



The 'Shine Like A Star' Charity Dinner was successfully held on 19 October 2015 at Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong and raised over HK\$4.2 million for the Children Training Fund. The proceeds will benefit 700 children who are on the waiting list for government subvented preschool rehabilitation services.



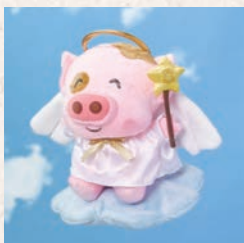
Dr Ko Wing Man, Secretary for Food & Health, posed with Heep Hong children.



Dr Ko Wing Man, Secretary for Food & Health and Mrs Cherry Tse, Permanent Secretary for Food and Health (Food), joined 400 guests at the dinner. They all dressed to the theme of 'Shine Like A Star' in glitter. While indulging in the gourmet delicacies, the night was made more memorable with performances by the children from Heep Hong and Asia's top artist Richie Jen. Our heartfelt thanks go to Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong corporate partners, sponsors, donors and supporters of the event.



Island Shangri-La Holds McDull Twinkle Twinkle Little Pig Charity Sale



Island Shangri-La, Hong Kong, organised the charity sale of 'McDull Twinkle Twinkle Little Pig' Plush Hand Warmer. Taking adorableness to new heights, McDull transforms into an angel with a sparkling wand. Hidden inside the cloud

where McDull stands is a star-shaped microwavable hand warmer, which is also a glow-in-the-dark Christmas tree ornament. Proceeds from the charity sale will go to the Society to help more children receive timely training.

The Langham Hong Kong Decorates Upcycled Christmas Tree with Heep Hong Children

The Langham Hong Kong invited the children of Cheung Sha Wan Centre to take part in an upcycling event. They made Christmas ornaments with recycled coffee capsules with the hotel volunteers and put them on a Christmas tree made of cork in that fun and meaningful afternoon. The Christmas tree was on display at the hotel during the holiday season.



Samsung Solve For Tomorrow Helping SEN Children with Technology

Samsung Electronics H.K. Co., Ltd (Samsung) has been supporting Heep Hong Society since 2012 and donated many tablet computers to facilitate children's training and learning at the centres. Meanwhile, the Society has been actively developing apps for training SEN children to communicate and overcome learning difficulties.

Samsung organised the Solve For Tomorrow 2015 competition and invited university students to develop apps for SEN children. As one of the strategic partners, the Society co-organised an educational talk and a visit to Chan Chung Hon Centre for the students to gain a deeper understanding of SEN children's difficulties and their daily training routines. Samsung also invited YouTuber Miss Hunny and the students to Tung Chung Centre, who conducted a magic workshop for the children. Everyone had a great time.

Mr Lawrence Chow, Chief Marketing Officer of Samsung, said, 'We believe innovative technology can bring positive changes to society and build a better future. For example, the Solve for Tomorrow competition provides solutions to social problems. This year, our theme is "Boundless Love With Intelligence". We hope this will benefit SEN children.'



University students tried out the apps developed by the Society.



Magician Miss Hunny taught the children fun magic tricks.

Celebrity Sammy Leung, ambassador of the competition, has appealed to the public to support the Society through one-click donations. Solve for Tomorrow 2015 successfully completed last December. Samsung donated 115 tablets, amounting to HK\$300,000, to the Society to provide SEN children with better training facilities. The winning apps —GalaxyMaze, ColourMonster and 眼明手快—will be available on Samsung Galaxy Apps Store for free download.

Special thanks go to the following donors for making donations of HK\$10,000 or above to the Society between April and September 2015:

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鄭淑萍女士
龍宣勾

* In alphabetical order



Common Parenting Pitfalls and Coping Strategies

Specialists have pointed out the close ties between parenting skills and child development. Some parents are helpless at their children's problematic behaviour. They end up spoiling or punishing the children too hard, which puts a strain on their relationship. Below, we are going to introduce some common parenting pitfalls and the corresponding coping strategies to help parents 'prevent' and 'rectify' their children's behaviour, which will significantly reduce stress.

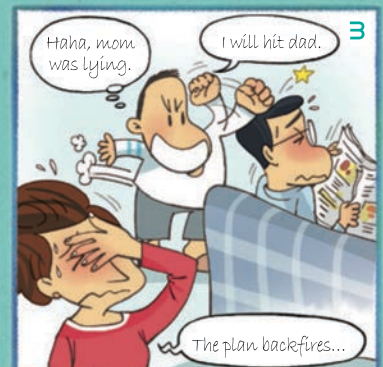
Pitfall 1: Double standard



Parenting strategy:

Parents and family members should be consistent in dealing with their children's behavioural problems even in different situations and at different time.

Pitfall 2: Inappropriate use of punishment



Parenting strategy:

When children consistently experience consequences in response to their misbehaviors, their behavioral problems will be alleviated.

1. Parents withhold intervention and let children experience the natural consequences of their misbehaviors.
2. Parents can suspend their children from pleasure activities in response to their misbehaviors.
3. Children are to take up their own responsibilities and apply remedial measures that are related to their misbehaviors.
4. In times of temper tantrums, timeout is applied so that children can calm down and learn how to regulate their emotions and behave properly.



Happy Parenting

'Happy Parenting' is a comprehensive parenting course developed by the Society in collaboration with the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and the University of Hong Kong. It is also the first evidence-based, local parenting course tailor-made for parents of children with special needs. Participants will learn 10 common parenting pitfalls and master the 20 coping strategies through role play and home practice. The Society's Academy for Professional Education and Development (APED) will hold regular 'Happy Parenting' courses in 2016.

