

**SPEECH BY MR LEE KUAN YEW AT THE TANJONG PAGAR-TIONG BAHRU
48TH NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATION DINNER AT TANJONG PAGAR
COMMUNITY CLUB ON FRIDAY, 16 AUGUST 2013**

I am happy to join all of you this evening for the Tanjong Pagar-Tiong Bahru 48th National Day Dinner in the newly upgraded Tanjong Pagar CC.

Education is the most important factor for our next generation's success. In Singapore, our bilingualism policy, makes learning difficult unless you start learning both languages, i.e. English and the Mother Tongue, from an early age - the earlier the better.

Psychologists in America have found out that you can teach a 2 or 3 year old child multiple languages and it will not confuse him or her, because after a while, the child will sort out that different words go with these different languages with different grammar and syntax.

So my advice to English-educated parents who speak English to their children at home, send your son or daughter to a pre-school that is strong in Chinese as early as possible and vice versa if you are Chinese-speaking at home, send your child to a pre-school that is strong in English. They will sort it out for themselves when they come to the age of 6 or 7. But the key is to start them off early.

Many people think that it will confuse their children. American social scientists have proven that the more languages you teach the child early, the better the chances for the child mastering the languages that you have been teaching him, although for the first 1 or 2 years, they will not be able to make out the grammar and the syntax. But by the age of 6 or 7 they know what goes with what language and what the grammar is.

I am also happy to announce this evening, the establishment of a new PCF pre-school in Tanjong Pagar called Hampton@Tanjong Pagar, similar to the successful Hampton@Bishan pre-school set up by Wong Kan Seng in his

constituency in 2009. This will allow parents in Tanjong Pagar to send their children to a pre-school that will give the children a strong foundation in both English as well as Chinese. Hampton@Tanjong Pagar will provide high quality early childhood programmes at affordable prices to young families living in the Tanjong Pagar–Tiong Bahru constituency. The pre-school will be managed by EtonHouse under the PCF umbrella. It will offer a holistic and integrated curriculum, an innovative second language programme in Mandarin, and a learning environment that caters to all domains of child development.



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