

LET'S TALK

Julia Gabriel
EDUCATION



INSIDE

JULIA GABRIEL CENTRE

Let's Share... A Story

JULIA GABRIEL CENTRE

Alphabet Zoo Club

CHILTERN HOUSE PRESCHOOL

Mentoring the Mentors

DRAMATICALLY
DIFFERENT...

JULIA GABRIEL EDUCATION CENTRES

Julia Gabriel Centre Forum

583 Orchard Road, #04-00 Forum, Singapore 238884
T +65 6733 4322 F +65 6733 2334

Julia Gabriel Centre Tampines

4 Tampines Central 5, #05-03 Tampines Mall, Singapore 529510
T +65 6444 6735 | F +65 6444 6706

Chengzhu Mandarin Centre

35 Rochester Drive, #03-01 Rochester Mall, Singapore 138639
T +65 6737 5348 F +65 6737 2136

Chiltern House Forum

583 Orchard Road, #04-01 Forum, Singapore 238884
T +65 6737 1966 F +65 6735 8410

Chiltern House Thomson

510 Thomson Road, #04-01A SLF Building, Singapore 298135
T +65 6299 5161 F +65 6291 6651

Chiltern House East Coast

902 East Coast Parkway, Block C, #02-17/18, Singapore 449874
T +65 6345 9912 F +65 6345 1871

Chiltern House Turf Club Road

232 Turf Club Road, Singapore 287982
T +65 6468 8566 F +65 467 5214

Chiltern House Mountbatten

231 Mountbatten Road, Block A, #01-00, Singapore 397999
T +65 6242 8368 F +65 6242 9165

ONLINE

www.juliagabriel.com
www.chengzhu.edu.sg
www.chilternhouse.com.sg



ON THE COVER



Julia Gabriel Education (JGE) students stand out! Whether part of Julia Gabriel Centre, Chiltern House Preschool or Chengzhu Mandarin Centre, they exude a sense of wonder and love of learning that is characteristic of everyone with the JGE DNA! Our students are inspired by teachers they build strong bonds with; lively and loving individuals who smile, laugh, sing and dance a lot!

The JGC educator is passionate about children and lifelong learning. No matter how qualified they are when they come to us, our educators continue learning through the Julia Gabriel School of Education (JGSOE), many of them working their way through Trinity College London (TCL) exams to diploma level. Our children also have the opportunity to obtain TCL certificates, starting with the Young Performers Certificate for kindergarten children at Chiltern House and Julia Gabriel Centre, through a series of TCL Speech Communication Arts awards for children in Primary 1 and above.

The JGSOE runs a range of speech and drama and early childhood education courses for adults such as the Julia Gabriel Foundation Teaching Certificate (Speech and Drama), now available in Mandarin as well as in English. These courses introduce adult students to our unique learning methodology, EduDrama®: its components, how to use it and its benefits.

If you're interested to learn more about our JGSOE courses, drop us a line to adulteducation@juliagabriel.com or call +65 6496 9405.

4

Julia Gabriel Centre
Let's Share... A Story

7

Chiltern House Preschool
Mentoring the Mentors

6

Julia Gabriel Centre
Alphabet Zoo Club

8

Dramatically Different

JULIA GABRIEL EDUCATION RECOMMENDS....

In case you missed the interview with our Group Managing Director Fiona Walker in *Straits Times Business* (17th February 2016) in which she talks about how to retain good staff and keeping the team happy, go to the link below to read it. Following publication, the article prompted quite a number of requests about how to join our organization!

"We don't view our people in terms of job descriptions or job titles. Each individual is seen as an evolving human being, and we cater to that." - Fiona Walker

<http://www.straitstimes.com/business/companies-markets/happy-family-the-way-to-keep-staff>



...

EDITORIAL

This April, the world over recognised the 400-year death anniversary of the great English playwright, William Shakespeare. What a wordsmith! And though we do not include Shakespeare's works in many of our programmes (not until higher level Trinity London College grade exams that is) like Shakespeare, we love words! We love bringing them to life in our Speech and Drama and Readers and Writers programmes, and at our Picnic of Words and Performance Storytelling events. We use words descriptively when we enjoy art and craft with our youngest learners in PlayNest and PlayClub. We use words rhythmically when we sing songs and make music in Chinese Cultural Arts at Chengzhu Mandarin Centre. We use words persuasively when we present arguments in debate. We use words in so many ways across all our programmes as a means to build language skills and confidence, to communicate, to nurture, to encourage, and to express ideas creatively and imaginatively. We use words in drama, and it's drama that lies at the heart of all our programmes and our unique teaching methodology, EduDrama®, here at Julia Gabriel Education.

Research has shown that engagement in the arts, like drama, helps students master academic subjects at school, including maths, social sciences and languages. Involvement in the arts helps to improve achievement in other areas of life too. It is well documented that students involved in some form of arts study (drama, dance or music for example) watch less TV, get bored less quickly, demonstrate higher levels of empathy, are more interested in their community, demonstrate higher levels of social competency and interpersonal skills, feel more motivated to learn and enjoy school more, than students who experience limited or no arts disciplines.

Nowadays, we see so many children, and the adults looking after them glued to a screen, not making eye contact, not engaged in conversation, not enjoying each other's company. Now, more than ever before, children will benefit from being in classes that encourage them to explore language, solve problems and discuss emotions. What's more, children gain so much by being engaged and actively involved in two-way communication.

For many of us, our goal is to expose our children to the best. At Julia Gabriel Education, we expose our students to Shakespeare, because he's the best craftsman the English language has ever known. If your children are too young for the works of Shakespeare, then expose them to good children's books, poems, prose, all of which can be found in our BookRooms.

Work with us to build a love of language in your children, so they, like Shakespeare, will never be at a loss for words!

Fiona

Fiona Walker, Group Managing Director, Julia Gabriel Education

HOLIDAY PROGRAMMES

6th to 10th June



English: Specially designed holiday adventures take children from 6 months to 12 years old on a fun-packed week of exploration, discovery, creativity and learning. At the end of five days they won't want the journey to end!

Mandarin: Through a series of colourful, imaginative and age-appropriate activities, children from 6 months to 9 years old increase their ability to speak Mandarin, as well as to read and write expressively and creatively with ease.

For holiday programmes at Julia Gabriel Centre Forum and Tampines Mall visit www.juliagabriel.com or call +65 6733 4322.

For holiday programmes at Chengzhu Mandarin Centre visit www.chengzhu.net or call +65 6737 5348

OPEN HOUSE

Chiltern House Preschool

Meet our staff and find out more about our curriculum during our island-wide Open House.

Wednesday 25th May 9.30 am to 4.30 pm.

Visit www.chilternhouse.com.sg or call + 65 6346 6130 for more details.

PICNIC OF WORDS CHILDREN'S EDITION

Julia Gabriel Centre

Children take to the stage to share original stories, poems and factual writing. Join us and let the students engage you with their creativity and imaginations!

Date: Saturday 14th May
Time: 5.30 pm
Location: Julia Gabriel Centre Tampines Mall

"All blame is a waste of time. No matter how much fault you find with another, and regardless of how much you blame him, it will not change you."

– Wayne Dyer

LET'S SHARE... A STORY

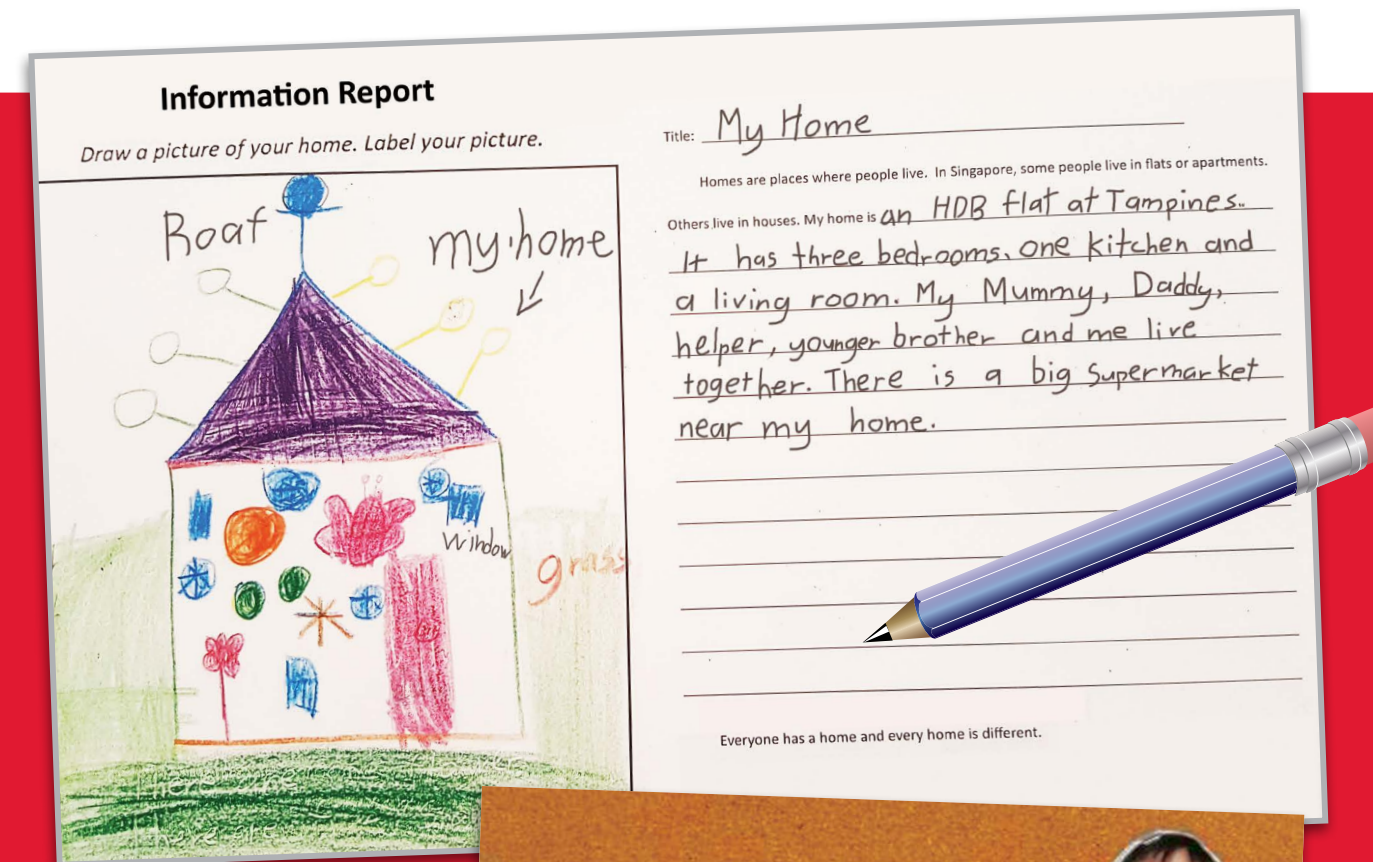
JULIA GABRIEL CENTRE

When our students express their thoughts and ideas in writing, our educators accept whatever they choose to share, however they choose to share it! We make it a point not to correct spelling by writing over a child's work with coloured pen as this merely serves to diminish their self-esteem or disrupt their creative flow as they are writing. But what if a child spells a word incorrectly or makes a grammar mistake? How do we ensure their literacy skills are heading in the right direction?

We do this in several ways: firstly, by praising and encouraging every effort; and secondly, by role modelling best language and literacy practices in our studio. At primary level, our educators do take a more critical view of work by identifying errors relating to a particular skill the class has been working on or according to the student's ability. However, children are encouraged to check their own work and self-correct. The teacher will also give a written comment to the child, celebrating successes and areas of improvement.

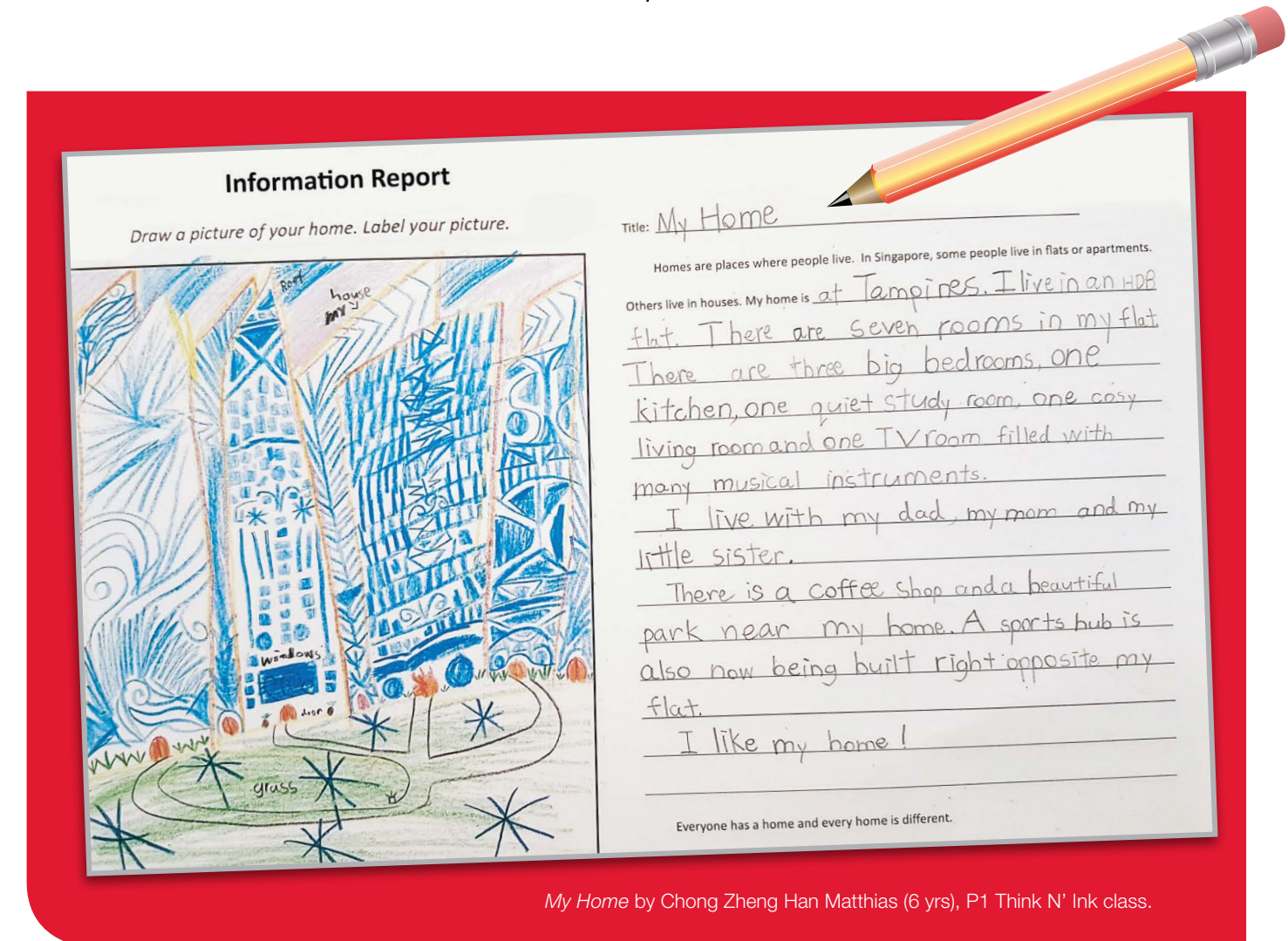
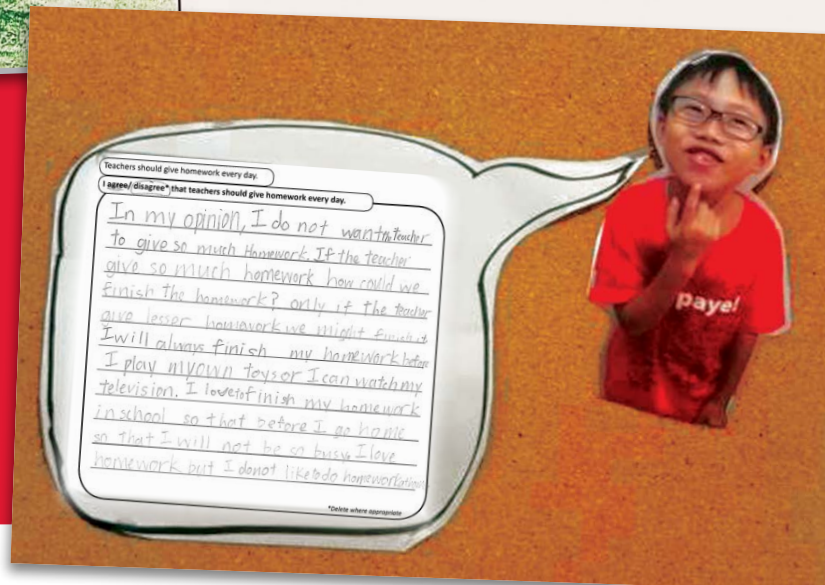
When a student experiences acquiring a skill through repetition and reinforcement in the most stimulating and joyful way possible, eventually they imbibe that skill naturally. That's why we always maintain that the process is more important than the result!

Enjoy these samples of student's work from our **Readers and Writers** programmes:



My Home by Chin Jun Yi (6yrs), Sarah Diab's P1 Think N' Ink class (above)

I disagree that teachers should give homework every day! by Lim Xuan Kai Jaysen (then 6 yrs), Sarah Diab's P1 Readers and Writers class (right)



My Home by Chong Zheng Han Matthias (6 yrs), P1 Think N' Ink class.

Stories Alive!

Julia Gabriel Centre Tampines Mall was filled to the brim and buzzing with excitement on 27th February during an interactive storytelling session with our educators William and Farhan. Following an overwhelming response to the event, we created an additional storytelling session in order to accommodate everyone who signed up for a spot! We didn't want anyone to miss out on all the fun and laughter. William and Farhan led a sing-along and shared one of our favourite tales, *Abiyoyo* by Pete Seeger, in their own inimitable style! Children and parents of all ages were engaged for the hour-long session as they interacted enthusiastically with the talented duo. Thank you to everyone who attended and to William and Farhan for filling the centre with joy, laughter and music.



JULIA GABRIEL CENTRE

ALPHABET ZOO CLUB: Nurturing happy and confident little learners



After listening to parents who expressed a desire for their toddlers to have more opportunities to interact with peers independently before starting school, in February we launched a new programme, the Alphabet Zoo Club.

The Alphabet Zoo Club is a pre nursery programme for children aged 18 months to 2½ years. Children attend for just one and a half hours, twice a week, providing them with the ideal stepping stone between an adult accompanied programme and more formal school. Little ones begin their independent literacy journey by enhancing motor skills and communication skills as they build an enjoyment of learning through every exciting activity. Educators use our Julia Gabriel Creations Alphabet Zoo books, puppets and CDs within the curriculum, ensuring that children are exposed to letters and sounds in the most creative and fun way.

Sarah Diab, Head of Readers and Writers, says of the children currently attending the programme: *"These brave young ones displayed a budding confidence as they experienced being in a class for the first time without their parents. We are proud of each and every one of them. They have settled well into class and have shown lots of interest in the activities. It's so heartening to see their eyes light up when they catch sight of paint during a craft activity or their energetic dancing feet during music and movement."*

Separation anxiety is a common occurrence when children first start any kind of independent programme or formal school - and it's not just the children who often feel anxious! For most of the toddlers attending the Alphabet Zoo Club, this is the very first time they find themselves spending time apart from their parents. Programme educator Samantha Hutton, herself a mum of four, is especially sensitive to that. As well as delivering the curriculum, a large part of her role is to provide a warm and nurturing environment for the children, ensuring 90 minutes of fun-filled interactive learning for every child. As they go on to bid a confident goodbye to mummies and daddies at the door, everyone feels the joy of knowing that the next stage of independent learning will be a whole lot easier!

TOP TIPS: Help! My 3 year-old refuses to go to school!

Do you have a preschooler who was happily attending school but now stubbornly insists that they don't want to go - and you have no idea why? There may be any number of reasons for this and yet nothing specific at all!

Look back at what has been happening over the last few months. Has your child been sick? Has there been a change of routine at home or at school? Has one of your child's little friends left the school? Has your child recently become an older sibling or are you expecting a new baby? These are just a few reasons why young children suddenly become clingy, just when you thought they had stopped! There are so many changes that toddlers experience as they develop, in themselves and their environment, that at times it can be overwhelming. Your child will struggle to express how they feel because they do not fully comprehend what's going on themselves. They may simply want to be at home with mummy! Don't forget, a preschooler is still very little and growing in independence. If your child's teacher observes that they are perfectly happy during school time, despite their reluctance to attend, then try not to worry. Unless your little one becomes particularly upset at the prospect of going to school, then it is best to continue with the school routine as usual. This is very likely a phase and, as with all phases, it will pass. Naturally, it can be exasperating for you as you cope with the same scenario each time you attempt to get your child out the door, so here are a few strategies to help get you through:

- Reassure your child every day how much you love them and that even when they are not at school you are always thinking of them.
- Reassure your child that you will be there to collect them when school is finished. Try to make sure your child can see you when they come out of class. (If you are not able to collect your child yourself, make sure they know who will and that your surrogate is waiting on time.)
- Talk about the fun things your child can do at school with classmates and teachers that they may not be able to do at home.
- Give your child lots of positive encouragement - "I am so proud of you!"
- Ask your child what they would like to do after school or at the end of the week when they have attended school as usual. Set a goal for them so they feel rewarded and good about what they have achieved. For example, plan a visit to an attraction or a park which is special time with just mummy/daddy.
- How many days does your child attend school? If appropriate, you might consider cutting down on the number of days for a while, before building them up again gradually.

CHILTERN HOUSE PRESCHOOL

MENTORING THE MENTORS

Shanthi Rajasakaran, Head of Julia Gabriel School of Education, shares with Let's Talk about Chiltern House Preschool's Mentoring the Mentor programme. As the master mentor for all current mentor teachers, Shanthi's role involves carrying out the training, conducting on-the-job observations and being available to all trainee mentors as and when they need advice!



Mentor Teacher Sumiati (Chiltern House Thompson) working with two of her mentees on developing pre-writing and letter formation.

Research has repeatedly shown that the key to quality early childhood education is the presence of well-trained and well-supported teachers. Research has also shown that the quality of teachers is the most powerful school-related determinant of student success.

Mentoring is all about supporting and developing the teacher. When mentors are well-selected, well-trained and given the time to work intensively with new teachers, they not only help average teachers become good, but good teachers become great.

Great teachers result in quality education that makes a lasting difference for children, families and society as a whole.

The Chiltern House Preschool 'Mentoring the Mentor' training programme prepares senior teachers to become mentors to new teachers, in addition to supporting existing teachers who have progressed to teaching higher levels. It aims to build the capacity of senior teachers to lead teams, manage working relationships, motivate team members towards improving instructional practice and to provide an understanding of their role in nurturing a professional and collaborative culture in the centre. For the mentee, the programme helps promote personal and professional growth in a number of ways. They acquire new teaching skills, enhance their interpersonal and leadership skills, and benefit from one-on-one opportunities to

learn about and understand thoroughly the entire organisation. Additionally, they expand relationships within their profession and gain the opportunity to mentor others in the future.

Our mentoring programme follows a three-step process with a number of specific aims. The first year includes an introduction to mentoring, communication skills and classroom observation skills. The second year is all about being an effective mentor with a focus on how to develop the skills to offer feedback to mentee teachers. In addition, trainee mentors support the Head of Centre in carrying out classroom observations of teachers. The third year of training focusses on developing mentors to become teacher trainers, as they continue to support the Head of Centre with observations of teachers in class.

Aims:

- To have two mentor teachers in each Chiltern House centre, with one mentor teacher supporting the Nursery-level teachers and the other supporting the Kindergarten-level teachers. By training specialist mentors at each level, this helps to ensure consistency through all our Chiltern House practices.
- To increase the number of senior staff able to carry out classroom observations. This is pivotal to teacher development and an important tool in raising the standards of the centre.
- To groom the mentor teachers to be able to become teacher trainers and deliver the Chiltern House Introductory Training Programmes such as Set-Up and Routines, Safety and Transition, Displays, Interactive Learning and Play, etc.

In the next issue of *Let's Talk*, Shanthi will share with us what makes a good mentor.



Mentor Teacher Siti Mariam (Chiltern House Forum) discusses centre displays with one of her mentees.

DRAMATICALLY DIFFERENT...

CALL ME FIDI!



Throughout Julia Gabriel Education, everyone is on first name terms, even students with their teacher. In a country where calling your teacher Miss or Sir is the norm, why do we encourage children in our centres to use adults' given-name?

In order to engage children in activities, teachers must establish nurturing relationships with each individual in their care. The teacher / student relationship is one that can profoundly affect the child's healthy development in all areas of their life. Encouraging children to use our given-name is one way of doing this. We refer to each child in the classroom or drama studio using a child's name and we afford each child the respect to do the same in return.

Allowing students to call their teacher by their given-name diminishes that invisible, and unwanted, barrier that often exists between adult and child. There is no hierarchy. We are all equals. No one child is more special than another and no educator is more important than their students. The result is that children are more likely to feel accepted, listened to, included and at ease to express themselves openly and enthusiastically.

But my child will get confused, you may worry! What about when they attend formal school and have no choice about how they address their teacher? Referring to student Speech and Drama teachers who may also be teachers in Singapore schools, Julia Gabriel Education's Founder writes:

Some teachers are on given-name terms in the Speech and Drama room, and then revert to a title in the classroom. The children, they tell me, aren't in the least confused! Bear in mind that it isn't rude for a child to call an adult by their given name if they've been granted permission. Of course, children are so intuitive that they don't extend the same familiarity to others. They know who has invited them to use first names and who hasn't. (Julia Gabriel, p.23, Nurturing Relationships, EduDrama: A guide to Speech and Drama using the unique Julia Gabriel Education Teaching Methodology.

Let's Get Borrowing!



Have you visited our BookRoom in Julia Gabriel Centre in Forum? If not, take a peek inside this lovely space, stocked with 15,000 books for children up to 12 years old. (There are also books and resources for teens and our teachers!) The BookRoom's design was based on the book *I Love My Little Storybook* by Anita Jeram. It provides an enchanting and cosy environment for children to browse and explore books; a magical place just for them!

We encourage all our students to borrow books to take home, either to read alone or to enjoy reading with the family. Children attending independent programmes enter by themselves, while a



parent or caregiver whose child attends an Adult Accompanied Programme is welcome too, though we still encourage you to let your child make their own choice of book, even if it is the same book over and over again! Don't worry, they will find another favourite when they are ready!

Our BookRoom staff are there to point children in the right direction; their warm and nurturing approach ensures that every child feels safe, confident and at ease. If you have any queries about borrowing books, BookRoom Services and Resources Supervisor Subatra Devi (Suba) and her lovely team are there to help you!

What's your view? How do you feel about your child calling adults by their given-name? Do you feel it's ok in some circumstances, all, or perhaps none at all? Have you encountered any confusion in your child when addressing a particular adult or do you see their ability to switch, just as a child learns to code switch languages? We would love to hear from you. Write to gaynor@juliagabriel.com and please let us know if you are happy to have your views shared in the next issue of *Let's Talk*.