



For Immediate Release

Back to School with Dad encourages fathers to be more involved in their children's schooling journey

Singapore, 28 December 2021 – Fathers from over 120 pre-schools, primary and secondary schools as well as institutes of higher learning will be participating in the Back to School with Dad initiative for the next academic year in 2022. Among these, fathers from 93 schools are taking part in Back to School with Dad for the first time.

Organised by Centre for Fathering, MUMs for Life and DADs for Life, in partnership with Families for Life and in support of the Made For Families initiative, Back to School with Dad aims to encourage fathers to play a more active role in their children's schooling journey.

Through the initiative, which began in 2006, fathers are encouraged to take time out from work to accompany their children to school in the first two days of the new school year and send them notes of encouragement so as to ease them in. The dates for Back to School with Dad 2022 are 4 and 5 January 2022.

In previous years, hard copy Back to School with Dad cards were disseminated to the schools for fathers to pen notes for their children. Due to COVID-19 restrictions affecting logistics of cards distribution, this year's Back to School with Dad has gone virtual! Fathers (and mothers) can download the card templates from the Back to School with Dad web page and personalise a note of encouragement to be printed out and placed into lunchboxes or school bags so that their children can be pleasantly surprised during recess or sent to their children's mobile phones for the older children.

"Research* shows that when fathers are engaged in children's education, their children perform better academically and are better able to adapt to their schooling journey emotionally and socially. They are also less likely to drop out and exhibit undesirable behaviour in school. Helping my children get ready for the new school year – from purchasing shoes to getting hairs cuts – and sending them to school regularly, is my way of forming precious memories with them in their growing up years," said Mr Bryan Tan, CEO, Centre for Fathering, MUMs for Life and

DADs for Life. “We hope that many more fathers and schools will appreciate the importance of a father’s involvement in his child’s schooling journey and pledge their support towards the Back to School with Dad initiative.”

“Showing love and commitment to our family are the values that Families for Life holds dear. Being personally involved in our child’s key milestones is very important so we hope more fathers will commit their time to accompany their children to school on their first day. This intimate time together will be a precious memory that both father and child will remember fondly for many years to come”, shared Families for Life Council Chairman, Mr Ishak Ismail. As a Champion of MSF’s Alliance for Action Focal Area 1, Mr Ishak Ismail also supports parents in their journey by strengthening engagement and awareness of parenting programmes, resources and support groups in the community, as that would build stronger family relationships, for life.

Dr Mohamad Maliki Bin Osman, Second Minister for Education, said, “Parenting has changed through the years in several ways, and the role of fathers in the family is becoming more important, especially throughout their schooling years. Gone are the days where fathers are regarded as feared disciplinarians in the family. Today’s fathers must connect emotionally with their children and provide unconditional love to their children.

It is heartening to see fathers today, more actively involved in their children’s lives. This contributes to the child’s emotional health, overall wellness, social development and self-respect. As fathers, we play a unique role in our child’s life and make a significant difference in shaping their self-esteem, character and values.

As a father myself, I try to have regular and open communication with my children to understand them and let them know that I am always there for them. Being present during their key milestones like sports day or drama performance is critical as it tells our children that they are important that we will set aside time for them.”

Dr Maliki added, “Through the Back to School with Dad initiative, we hope to remind fathers to be more involved in their children’s schooling journey. Especially, on a day to day basis. Support your child’s schooling journey by helping them prepare for school, sending them to school when school re-opens and being involved in the school by volunteering in DADs for Life Father Groups. This promotes stronger father-child bonding. It also strengthens the relationship with the school, increasing the child’s confidence attending school.

I look forward to seeing more fathers be involved in their children’s journey and make time to send their children to school and to write notes of encouragement to them on a regular basis and not just only on the first few days of school. Be inspired to make your father-child interaction more achievable, enjoyable and celebrated in the community.”

Fathers prepare children for school

Mr Joshua Wee, a father of four children aged 6 to 14 who works in human resource, said that it is important for him to be involved in his children’s schooling journey as that makes memories father and child can look back together in future. He said, “I hope that my involvement in their current schooling journey will lead them to be as involved in their own children’s journey in the future. Watching my children grow up, developing their own character and finding their own way is so fascinating. Parenting is a journey made so much more enjoyable if we are involved.”

For his youngest child who is going to primary one in 2022, Mr Wee will prepare him with “dry runs” at the coffeeshop buying his own food and teach him how to count his pocket money.

Senior engineer Mr Tun Tun plays an active role in guiding his daughter, who is heading to secondary one in 2022, on her education pathways. Recently, he discussed secondary school options with her after the release of the PSLE results to better understand her preferences. He said, “Everybody needs someone who can guide them to improve their lives and careers, and this person can be the father or the mother. The father or mother is the most important person to their children and is the first role model for them.”

For more information about Back to School with Dad and to download the card templates, go to www.fathers.com.sg/btsd.

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About Centre for Fathering, DADs for Life and MUMs for Life

Centre for Fathering (CFF) is a non-profit organisation founded in 2000 to promote active and involved fathering and address issues caused by fatherlessness in Singapore. The organisation aims to turn the hearts of children towards their fathers by empowering more fathers to be better role models and an enduring inspiration to their children.

Since 2015, CFF has been the driving force behind Singapore’s nation-wide fathering movement - DADs for Life which seeks to inspire and mobilise fathers to become more involved with and a good influence to their children... for life. Under the DADs for Life umbrella are initiatives such as Back to School with Dad, Eat With Your Family Day and Celebrating Fathers – to encourage fathers to spend time with their families and create a culture that promotes active fathering.

MUMs for Life celebrates a mum’s unique identity as a woman and her irreplaceable roles as a daughter, wife and mother. When Mums are confident in their unique identity and multiple roles, they can better nurture our children and support DADs in building a stronger family in an increasingly complex world.

About Families for Life

FFL’s vision is to inculcate a “Families for Life” mindset and value among Singaporeans, by building strong and resilient families, as that makes for stronger communities and better individual well-being.

A people-sector Council comprising 14 volunteers from the people and private sectors, the FFL Council is chaired by Mr Ishak Ismail, Regional Director (Asia) of BAE Systems Hägglunds AB. The FFL Movement rallies like-minded individuals, families and organisations to strengthen family bonds through national celebrations and online campaigns.

Visit <https://familiesforlife.sg> for tips, resources and interesting activities you can enjoy with your family.

About MSF's Alliance for Action

Led by Minister of State for Social and Family Development, Sun Xueling, Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) has launched the Alliance for Action (AfA) to strengthen marriages and family relationships in August 2021. We work with community partners on positive campaigns and narratives to create action and collectively develop initiatives to nurture strong and resilient marriages and families. We invite like-minded individuals and organisations to join the AfA to support our efforts to strengthen marriages and family relationships. Those who wish to be involved can email MSF_AFA@msf.gov.sg.

CFF is Made For Families

CFF is proud to be part of the ecosystem supporting families in Singapore, and identify ourselves as an organisation that is Made For Families. Made For Families represents the different ways – big and small – in which Singapore supports families. Companies, organisations and community groups can adopt the brand mark to identify themselves as promoting the value of family in our society. Together, we can build a society that is Made For Families, by laying a foundation of support, from family-friendly spaces and workplaces, products and services, and family-bonding activities. Visit go.gov.sg/MadeForFamilies for more information.

*Information extracted from <https://www.fatherhood.gov/for-dads/father-involvement-education>, <http://www.fatherhoodinstitute.org/2013/fatherhood-institute-research-summary-fathers-and-their-childrens-education/>