



For Immediate Release

Fathers Encouraged to Support Children in Transiting to New School Year

Singapore, 2 January 2024 – Dads from 130 pre-schools, primary and secondary schools, and institutes of higher learning joined the “Back to School with Dad” initiative, with 49 schools including three private organisations taking part for the first time.

Launched in 2006, the upcoming Back to School with Dad is themed “First Days of School”. The beginning of a new school year is time of transition and children may experience anxiety over the changes that come with joining new classes or schools and making new friends. However, children who have the support of their fathers and families during this transition are more likely to have a positive school experience.

Back to School with Dad, scheduled for 2 and 3 January 2024, encourages fathers to set aside time at the beginning of the school year to send their children to school as well as leave them notes of encouragement. Through these acts of support, fathers demonstrate care and concern for their children and show they are walking with them in their academic journey. This sets a positive tone for the school year by instilling confidence and resilience in their children to overcome challenges.

Mr. Xander Ong, CEO, Centre for Fathering said, "As a father, sending your children to school shows your children that you are interested in their academic journey and that you value the relationships they forge, and the things they learn. The days prior to and after school reopens is a pivotal window to create stronger bonds and lasting memories with our children. Together, let's make it a priority to be with our children on their physical and emotional journey to and at school, especially during first few weeks of the school year and as often as possible during the rest of the year."

"The start of a new academic year marks a key milestone in a child's developmental journey. We hope that more fathers will accompany their children on their first day of school. It is a simple and meaningful way for fathers to demonstrate their love and commitment to their child. This special moment will become a fond memory cherished by both father and child for many years to come. This will also demonstrate equal partnership between husband and wife in parenting and caring for our children," Families for Life Council Chairman, Mr. Ishak Ismail shared.

Back to School with Dad cards

For the academic year 2024, fathers (and mothers) can easily access and download Back to School with Dad cards from the Back to School with Dad webpage. This accessibility encourages parents to share the card templates within their communities. In addition, we have introduced an Instagram filter to enhance the memorability of the back-to-school experience via the following link https://bit.ly/BacktoSchoolwithDad2024_DADsforLife thus allowing parents to share these precious moments on Instagram.

With these downloadable templates, parents have the flexibility to personalise notes of encouragement. These can either be printed and tucked into lunchboxes or school bags, bringing pleasant surprises to their children during recess. For older children, parents can also send these personalised notes directly to their mobile phones. To further support parents in this initiative, a Back to School with Dad toolkit is provided, offering ideas on how to prepare their children for the upcoming school year.

In the years before COVID-19, only hard copy Back to School with Dad cards were disseminated to schools for fathers to pen notes for their children. Due to COVID-19 restrictions affecting logistics of cards distribution, Back to School with Dad 2022 went virtual.

Since 2023, hard copy Back to School with Dad cards were also provided to schools upon request. For the 2024 academic year, 28 schools have requested for hard copies Back to School with Dad cards which were distributed out to parents at school events such as Primary 1 orientation. In addition, 28 schools will also be receiving Back to School Photo Frame boards which will be used to inspire dads to capture memories of this important milestone through photos while motivating them to be more involved in their children's academic journey.

About Back to School with Dad

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.

Underpinned by evidence of the importance a father's role in his children's academic journey, Centre for Fathering mooted the initiative in 2006 to encourage fathers to take time out from work to accompany their children to school at the start of the school year and send them notes of encouragement to ease them in.

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

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

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

Media Contact

Charlene Teo

Contact: (65) 8600 6700

Email: charmlteo@fathers.com.sg

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 for 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.

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. Go to www.fathers.com.sg for more information.

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. Launched in 2020, Made For Families represents the different ways – big and small – that Singapore as a community supports families. An initiative by the National Population and Talent Division (NPTD) in the Strategy Group, Prime Minister's Office, Made For Families aims to assure families in Singapore of support from the government and society at large. It invites more employers, as well as corporate and community partners to adopt the brand mark, and contribute collectively to building a conducive environment that supports families in Singapore. Together, we can build a Singapore that is Made For Families. Visit www.madeforfamilies.gov.sg for more information.

About Families for Life Council

The Families for Life (FFL) Council was established by the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) in 2014 and aims to build strong and resilient families. It is led by the FFL Council, and rallies like-minded individuals, families and organisations to strengthen family bonds through events, campaigns, and marriage and parenting programmes.

FFL's signature initiatives are:

- National Family Week – a pinnacle celebration of the importance of families held every first week of June, with family bonding activities throughout Singapore.
- FFL at Community – localised initiatives that will be rolled out in each of the 24 towns to strengthen family relationships. These include marriage preparation and mentoring, parenting and grandparenting programmes, and parent peer support groups.
- Family Values and engagement – promote the four family values of love, care and concern, commitment, respect to children and their families through the FFL mascot, Becky Bunny, and age-appropriate resources such as songs, stories and games.

Visit www.familiesforlife.sg for tips, resources and interesting family activities as well as a wide range of meaningful volunteering opportunities.

