HEI PARENT GUIDE

GROWING TOGETHER

A little guide for new parents



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The Early Years Matter

Young children are learning all the time. A walk outside, helping prepare dinner, building a tower or listening to the same bedtime story again may look simple, but each experience can support development.

At HEI, we look at the whole child – social, emotional, physical, cognitive and intellectual development with wellbeing as the foundation for learning.

A simple shift
Instead of asking only, "What did my child learn today?" also ask, "How did my child feel today?"

- Give your child time to explore and ask questions.
- Offer small choices and chances to solve problems.
- Include them in everyday family life.
- Notice effort, curiosity and kindness not only outcomes.

A Little HEI Reminder

Slow down enough to notice what your child is noticing. Sometimes the best learning begins with: "I wonder..."



Childhood should not be rushed. The early years are a time to play, explore, build relationships, develop confidence and discover the world.



WELL-BEING COMES FIRST

Children learn best when they feel safe, secure and cared for.



Wellbeing is more than being happy. It includes a child's emotional security, physical health, relationships, opportunities to move, rest, play and feel that they belong.

REST – Time to sleep and slow down

MOVE – Time to use the whole body

CONNECT – Time with trusted people

PLAY – Time to choose and explore

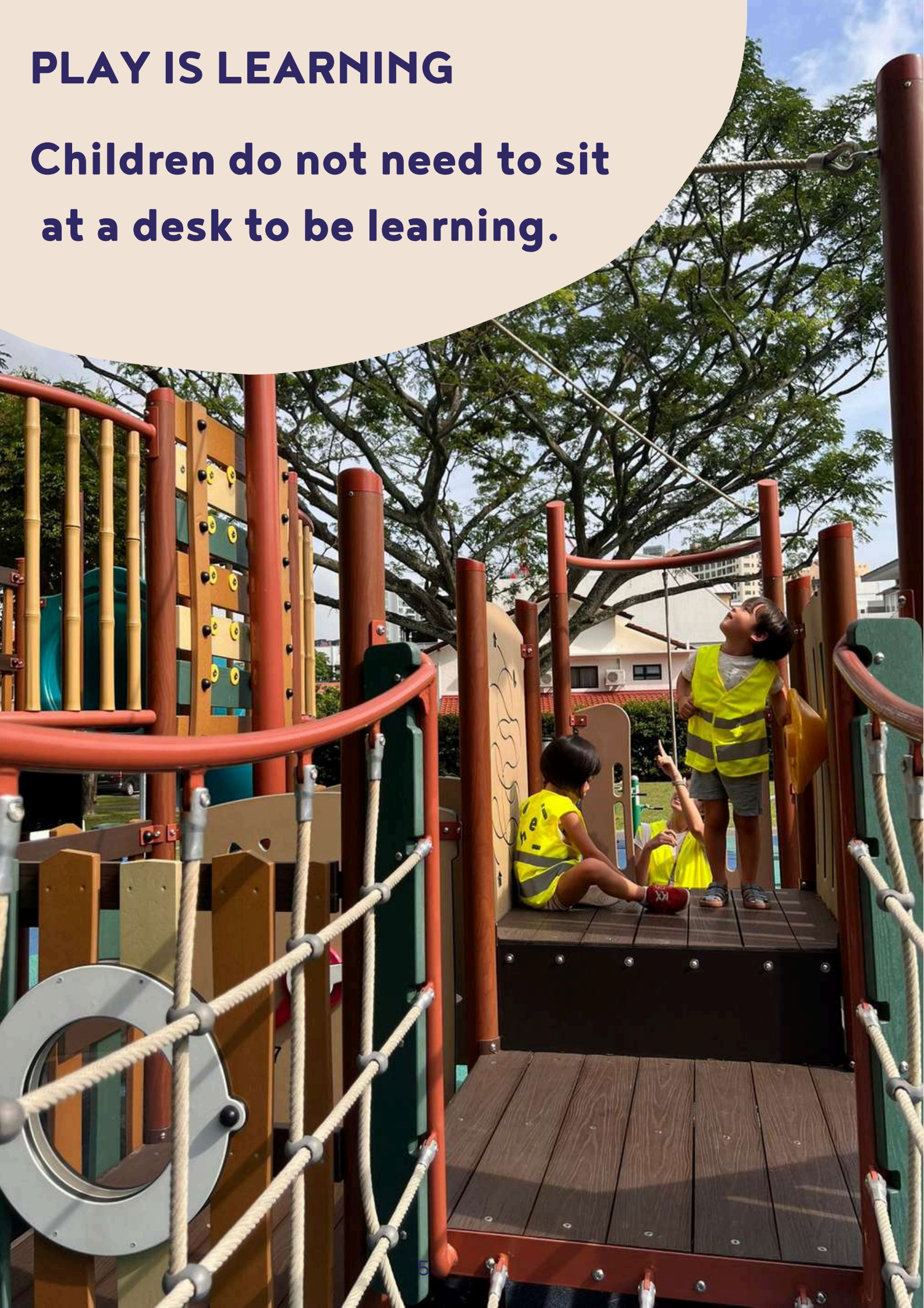
JOY – Something that simply feels good

Try this tonight
At bedtime, ask yourself: Did my child have enough rest, movement, connection, play and joy today?



PLAY IS LEARNING

Children do not need to sit at a desk to be learning.



- Through play, children practise language, creativity, problem-solving, social skills, emotional regulation, movement and early mathematical and scientific thinking.
- Protect time for free play as well as guided activities.
- Let your child choose what to play and how the story develops.
- Add language and ideas without taking over.
- Use ordinary moments – dressing, walking, cooking and tidying – as learning opportunities.

Try this

If your child is building with blocks, resist saying "Build a house." Try: "Tell me about what you're making." Follow their idea and wonder together.



BIG FEELINGS NEED CONNECTION

Emotional regulation grows through relationships, practice and time.



- Young children can experience emotions very intensely. They are not born knowing how to regulate those feelings. Calm, responsive adults help children gradually recognise, name and manage emotions.
- Stay calm – children take cues from the adults around them.
- Stay close and let them know they are safe.
- Name the feeling: “You look really disappointed.”
- Wait until the emotion has passed before trying to reason or problem-solve.
- Talk later about what happened and what might help next time.

Remember

All emotions are acceptable. Children gradually learn how to express those emotions safely and appropriately



SEE THE CHILD IN FRONT OF YOU

Every child has a unique temperament, pace and set of strengths.



Some children jump into new situations; others prefer to observe first. Some are highly active, while others are sensitive to noise, touch or change. Rather than trying to change a child's temperament, we can understand it and adjust our support.

Ask a better question
Instead of: "Why won't my child behave like the others?" try: "What is my child communicating, and what support might they need?"

Independence also grows through small everyday opportunities. Give enough help for your child to succeed and enough space for them to try.

- Put toys away.
- Choose between two appropriate outfits.
- Help set the table or sort laundry.
- Water plants or carry safe, light items.
- Take part in simple food preparation.

ROUTINES CREATE SECURITY

Predictability helps young children understand what comes next.



Young children live in a world where adults make many decisions. A predictable daily rhythm gives them a sense of safety and control, supports transitions and gradually builds independence.

Think rhythm, not rigidity

Wake → Breakfast → Play → Lunch → Rest → Play → Dinner → Bath → Story → Bed

- Give a warning before transitions: “In five minutes, we’ll put the toys away.”
- Use simple pictures or a visual schedule when helpful.
- Keep core routines consistent while allowing flexibility when family life requires it.
- Make expectations clear, positive and realistic for your child’s age.

Positive wording

Instead of “Don’t run,” try “Please walk inside.” Instead of “Behave,” say exactly what you want your child to do.



HOME + SCHOOL: GROWING TOGETHER

Children benefit when parents and educators work as partners.



- Parents know their child deeply. Educators bring knowledge of child development and pedagogy. When these perspectives come together, children receive more consistent and meaningful support.
- Share your child's interests, strengths, routines and worries.
- Tell educators about recent changes that may affect your child.
- Ask what your child is enjoying, learning and finding difficult.
- Agree on simple strategies that can be reinforced both at home and at school.
- Celebrate progress together.

At HEI Schools Singapore,
Personalised development and strong family partnership are part of helping each child feel seen, supported and ready to participate.



THE POWER OF ORDINARY FAMILY MOMENTS

Connection is often built in the smallest parts of the day.



- Cooking together.
- Reading the same favourite story.
- Singing in the car.
- Talking during dinner.
- Helping with laundry.
- Cuddling after school.
- Playing on the floor.

Young children value your attention more than elaborate entertainment. Even ten or fifteen minutes of undistracted time can create a meaningful moment.

Be present

Put the phone away. Follow their play. Listen. Laugh.

Let your child know that being with them matters.



The HEI Family Challenge

Seven simple ways to bring the HEI philosophy home.

MONDAY	Wonder	Ask an open-ended question: “What do you think will happen?”
TUESDAY	Play	Let your child choose the game and lead you.
WEDNESDAY	Independence	Give your child one new age-appropriate responsibility.
THURSDAY	Feelings	Talk about one feeling you both experienced today.
FRIDAY	Move	Dance, walk, run or play actively together.
SATURDAY	Connect	Create a little screen-free family time.
SUNDAY	Reflect	Ask: “What made you happy this week?”

Your HEI parent reminder

Your child does not need every moment to be educational or every minute scheduled. They need opportunities to PLAY · MOVE · WONDER · CONNECT · TRY · FEEL · REST · BELONG.



CHILDHOOD IS NOT A RACE

Give children time to be children.



- Give them time to play.
- Time to wonder.
- Time to make mistakes.
- Time to develop independence.
- Time to feel big emotions.
- Time to rest.
- Time to belong.

The HEI way

When children experience wellbeing, strong relationships and joyful learning, we create a foundation that reaches far beyond the preschool years.



HAPPY CHILDREN LEARN.

CONNECTED CHILDREN GROW.

CONFIDENT CHILDREN EXPLORE THE WORLD.

Come experience HEI Schools Singapore
For children aged 18 months to 6 years. Book a school tour and discover a research-based, Finnish-inspired approach where wellbeing, play, inclusion and personalised development come together.
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