

ePIC Bulletin



JUNE 2017



EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAMME FOR INFANT & CHILDREN

Autism Awareness Project 2.0



Puan Rose Aniza & Danish

Menteri Besar Selangor (Pemerbadanan) telah menjalinkan kerjasama dengan badan NGO The Children Project dalam penganjuran program "Autism Awareness Project 2.0" pada 29 April 2017 di Mini Auditorium Institut Darul Ehsan.

Selain itu, program tersebut juga merupakan jalinan kerjasama Persatuan Taska Negeri Selangor (PTNS) dan Scientists for Society. Antara panel pakar yang diketengahkan adalah Dr Nazri Bajuri (DPhil Mekanobiologi Oxford UK), Dr Azam Yunus (PhD Psikologi Klinikal London UK) dan Puan Rose Aniza (Pengasas Danish Choice, ibu kepada anak autism).

Program yang bertemakan "Kesedaran Autisme - Mengapa Ianya Penting, dan Bagaimana Sains Boleh Membantu?" bermula jam 9 pagi sehingga 5 petang dan dihadiri oleh lebih kurang 80 penyertaan daripada kalangan ibu bapa, pendidik serta pelajar.

Didalam ucapan perasmian beliau, Puan

Zannifa Azura, Ketua Pegawai Kewangan MBI telah menyatakan bahawa penglibatan MBI merupakan komitmen terhadap agenda pendidikan terutamanya di dalam Early Intervention Programme (EIP).

"Kami melihat ini sebagai usaha pembangunan komuniti yang mempunyai kesan jangka masa panjang. Ini kerana setiap perkembangan di dalam usaha melahirkan masyarakat yang prihatin bermula daripada kita sendiri,"

Antara pengisian program adalah:

Puan Rose Aniza – "Danish Haeqal: Satu Kisah Kejayaan"

Dr Nazri Bajuri – "Pengaktifan Sensori: Satu Pengenalan Kepada Neuro Physiology"

Dr Azam Yunus – "Autisme, Penjelasan Dari-pada Sudut Sains"

Bengkel Intervensi Awal Kanak-Kanak



Para ibu-bapa sedang tekun mendengar ceramah daripada pensyarah.



Dr. Catur Setio Wargo

(Pensyarah Pendidikan Awal Kanak-Kanak)

Satu bengkel sehari telah diadakan pada 20 Mei 2017 anjuran bersama MBI, Majlis Perbandaran Subang Jaya ("MPSJ"), PTNS dan Kid Campus Sdn Bhd yang bertempat di De Palma Inn, Shah Alam.

Program yang bertemakan "Intervensi Awal dan Menangani Tingkahlaku Kanak-kanak", ini merupakan satu bengkel yang berkesinambungan dengan Bengkel Smart Parenting 2017 dan telah disertai oleh 90 orang para ibu bapa dan pendidik.

Tiga orang panel jemputan telah menyentuh perkara utama tersebut berasaskan perspektif pakar iaitu:

- **Hajah Mahanom Basri** (Pakar Industri Kanak-kanak) - Bagaimana Pendidik Membuat Intervensi Awal Kandungan ibu dan Kesan Kepada Janin.
- **Dr Catur Setio Wargo** (Pensyarah Pendidikan Awal Kanak-Kanak) - Kepelbagaian Keistimewaan Kanak-Kanak dan Cara Mendidik.
- **Prof. Madya Dr. Gunasegaren Karuppattan** (Pensyarah Pendidikan Khas Kanak-kanak)



Autism Café Project

Giving Autistic Youths a Chance in Life

A delegation from MBI visited the Autism Café at iM4U Sentral at the end of April, a unique café which is fast becoming the talk of the town not because of what they serve, but because of the ones doing the serving

As we make our way into a quaint-looking café inside the premises of iM4U Sentral in Puchong, none of us thought anything of the restaurant other than the fact it looked pretty much like any other restaurants around the area.

Inside, three people were tidying up, preparing food and washing the dishes. One man, noticeably older than the other two, greeted us with a hearty "Hello!"

Mohd Adli Yahya, 52, was the owner of the café and founder of the Autism Café Project which he started back in 2015 operating at a corner lot house in USJ Subang together with Persatuan Orang-Orang Kurang Upaya. He has since moved to iM4U Sentral in Puchong, operating a proper café serving breakfast dishes, coffee, tea and pastries.

The MBI delegation's visit to the café was about getting to know the café and how it operated, but nothing prepared us for what was on sight.

Adli was quick to introduce us to two of the workers that day, Muhammad Luqman Shariff, 18, and Adam Lee Wei Meng, 23. We were told that the café operated on the basis of cooperation and therefore Adli pairs low and high functioning autistics together.

Adam was the chirpier of the two youths, welcoming the MBI delegation with a bright smile while at the same time prepar-

ing the breakfast menu. Luqman, on the other hand, looked visibly absentminded while his hands continued to wash the dishes. Adli revealed to us that Luqman is his son and very much the inspiration for the Autism Café Project.



Adam

En. Mohd Adli, Owner

Luqman

"I was the Executive Director of Standard Chartered Foundation in my previous life, before I left the corporate world to venture into this project,"

"I left at the end of 2015 to start this on my own because I needed to know that my son can sustain a life when I am no longer there to care for him" he said.

While he explained to us the restaurant's concept,

Adam was already busy preparing our meals; some of us ordered roti jala with kari ayam, while others went with the all-time favorite, nasi lemak.

"In the end, these autistic youths will be on their own, and I want to prepare them for life ahead, that is why I started this café," he continued.

Adli went on to explain that his life prior to the project was focused primarily on his job and his attitude then was very much different from his care-free, high spirited persona which was evident the moment we walked into the café.

"When people started telling me about Luqman and how he had signs of autism, I could not accept it. I went to meet more than ten experts on child development because I was in denial,"

"I think it is normal for parents to react that way, and I really tried looking everywhere for help,"

After some time, according to Adli, he came to accept that Luqman was autistic and was determined to bring him up as normal as possible.

"It was really difficult, because Luqman will throw a fit or become hyper sensitive on things which seemed normal to others like sounds and touch,"

"It was a real challenge, and at times I felt like I really needed to be on my own, to find myself," he added.

Quitting his job to run the Autistic Café Project was done out of sheer dedication to his son, as well as faith, and he has not regretted it.

"I am a much calmer person now, much happier. You won't see me like this before," he quipped.

Now he has big aspirations for the Autistic Café Project, with plans to open up branches in different areas.

"I see this current restaurant as a training ground for autistic youths, and I would like to open proper restaurants at other places with higher traffic. Ideally there will be two commercial restaurants, and one training café," he explained.

"We have parents of autistic youths come to us saying they would like us to help their child, and we are happy to help, but not all parents are willing to let their child go and I totally understand their concerns,"

"But we definitely encourage parents to get involved, help out around the kitchen and supervise their children while they do work.

In the end, however, our aim is for the youths to be independent," he added.

As we finished our delicious breakfast, Adam was already on hand to pick up our dirty dishes and send it to Luqman's area, the kitchen sink.

Speaking to Adam, one would not be at fault to think that he is just a normal 20-year old working at a normal restaurant.

Adam goes to work here 2-3 times a week by taking the LRT. From there he will walk to the café and begin work. According to him, this is not his first time working, but it is his first time working at a restaurant.

"Working here is good," he said whilst giving us the thumbs up.

Adli explained that Adam is one of six workers employed at the café who work alternate days.

Apparently, the MBI delegation was witnessing one of the café's busiest day with customers streaming in and out.

"Most of our customers are the people who work here, but we also get some visitors from outside. It does seem that you guys are bringing us good fortune, today is extra busy!" Adli said enthusiastically.

However, Luqman and Adam did not seem daunted by the task and were able to go about their work with great ease. Orders were taken and meals were handed out at a standard pace.

Luqman at times needed to be told to focus on his dishes, but according to Adli, his son has improved tremendously since working at the café.

"Previously I would not have dreamt of seeing Luqman complete a single task, but now he is washing the dishes and cleaning the counter, I am a very happy father," he said.



Adam preparing our order

"With an autistic child, you really learn to appreciate every little things that they do, and especially the minor achievements,"

"One of the best moments for me was when I told him that I love him, he replied saying 'I love you too'. That was a moment that I will cherish forever," Adli said, whilst trying to hold back his tears.

The visit to the Autistic Café Project was truly enlightening for most of us, and it certainly shed new light on our perspective with regard to autistic children.



Goodies and merchandise at The Autism Cafe.

What the autistic youths were able to do, running a fully functioning café, gave us tremendous hope of their potential.

As Selangor envisions a caring smart state that is dynamic and inclusive, these youths should also be given the opportunity to contribute to the society which they will eventually rely on to sustain a normal life. Ultimately, it is about giving these youths the confidence, and especially the chance, to be part of us.



Apart from being a platform for young adults with autism to earn a living, the café also sells merchandise like t-shirts and goodies like kuih. They also do catering services. The cafe is located at iM4U Sentral, Jalan TPP 1/7, Taman Perindustrian Puchong, Puchong, Selangor. For details, call Mohd Adli at 012-349 0813 or email : mohdadliy@gmail.com



Laporan Aktiviti

Smart Parenting Workshop merupakan satu program separuh hari yang dianjurkan oleh MBI bersama Perbadanan Perpustakaan Awam Selangor (PPAS), Persatuan Taska Negeri Selangor (PTNS), Pusat Perubatan Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (PPUKM) dan Urbane Ethos Consultancy.

Pada bulan April-May, dua sesi telah diadakan iaitu pada 16 April 2017 dan 14 Mei 2017.

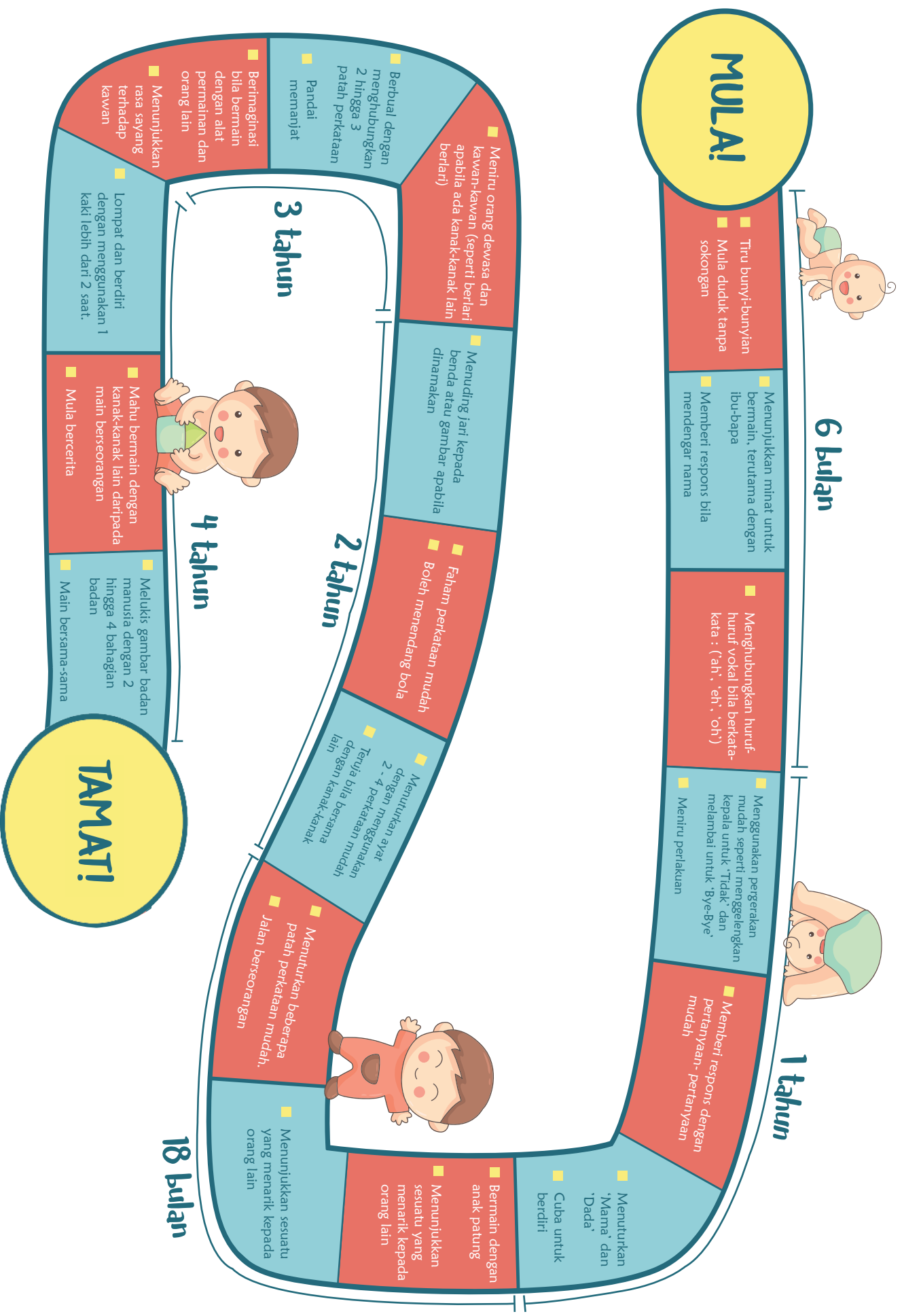
Smart Parenting @ EIP 3.0 telah diadakan di Perpustakaan Raja Tun Uda, Shah Alam dan dihadiri oleh 100 orang peserta.

Manakala Smart Parenting @ EIP 4.0 telah dianjurkan di Bukit Beruntung Golf & Country Resort dengan menyasarkan penduduk sekitar Daerah Hulu Selangor.

Program ini juga telah menyaksikan penglibatan sukarelawan daripada Universiti Selangor (UNISEL), Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM), Universiti Malaya (UM) dan Management Science University (MSU).

Perkembangan Awal Anak Anda Adalah Satu Pengembangan!

Rekod pencapaian anak anda dan kongkikan bersama doktor anda pada setiap pemeriksaan



PROFILE

ENCIK ZAID MOHAMAD, CEO of Smart Parents Network

For this issue we profile Zaid Mohamad, CEO of Smart Parents Network and one of the expert speakers for our EIP Programme. Zaid is the bestselling author of Smart Parents, Brighter Kids and Smart Parents, Richer Kids. He also writes for weekly "Smart Parenting" column in The New Sunday Times and monthly "Work-Life Balance" column in The Star. In addition, he is also a Certified Parental Coach.

He holds an honors degree in Finance from the University of Bridgeport and graduated with Summa Cum Laude (the highest honor level) and initiated into Sigma Beta Delta society, and was even listed in "Who's Who in American Colleges & Universities" in 1996. Zaid strongly believes in the analogy that children are like the white canvas and the parents have the paint and the brush to create their masterpiece. Over the years, he and his wife have also developed their own parenting strategies called the Smart Parents' Strategies.

1. What is your view with regard to modern parenting? The involvement of gadgetry in parenting is rather prevalent, is it a good thing?

Modern parenting is associated with new challenges in borderless world as well in the digital front. Gadgets are not to be blamed but rather, how we assimilate gadgets in the family life. It begins with the parents, by being a good role model when it comes to using the gadgets. For example, gadgets must be put down a few times a day during family time and meal time. Make it a rule that no gadget is allowed on the dining table. Make that one to two hours as an "electronic free" time. Engage in "analog" sessions of bonding, discussing, teasing and laughing

I also propose for parents not to "give" the gadgets outright but rather just "loan" it to the kids. Make it like when we do hire purchase for our cars. We need to deliver our obligations (paying the loan every month) in exchange for the rights to use the car.

Similarly, our kids need to deliver their commitments (completing their work, helping around the house, showing good behaviours) in exchange for the rights to continue using the gadgets

2. It is normal for parents of children with learning disability or autism to be in denial, what is the best way to cope with such situation?

Denial is very normal for parents of special needs children. There are also who feel embarrassed or guilty for having such kids. Pressure from extended family and community can cause them to deny such conditions. Sometimes, it is not even denial but more of awareness. Once aware, most parents will not hesitate to seek help. This is when we can help such parents if they cannot help themselves. They need to be exposed to the facts that special needs are quite common these days and there is nothing to be ashamed of.

"Each child is also unique and we should never compare them with anyone. The most important thing they need is not money or expensive toys but simply lots of love and attention"



Make them aware that each child is unique with his or her own potential. Indeed, each child is a genius. However, parents need to help them unlock their potentials as early as possible.

If they have special conditions like autism, ADHD and SPD, there is no reason to give up because there are plenty of help available. Many have recovered and lead a normal lives, but first the parents must accept the fact and stop denying their children of their true potentials.

3. What is the most common advise you give to young parents?


Every child is a genius and no one should be left behind. But each child is also unique and we should never compare them with anyone. The most important thing they need is not money or expensive toys but simply lots of love and attention.

Family should always come first. They grow up so fast and we should not left them alone. Instead, we must strive to create as many priceless moments as possible.

At the end of the day, they will not remember what we buy or where we take them, but they will always cherish the loving and bonding moments that we have created together.

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