



Free bilingual reading for every K1 and K2 child from 2027

Description

Every K1 and K2 child in Singapore will get a bilingual reading programme at no cost from 2027, after the [Lee Kuan Yew Fund for Bilingualism](#) expanded three existing programmes to all MOE kindergartens and childcare centres.

The fund's announcement on 27 October takes Thumbs Up Little Junior, Cilik Cerdik and Balar Murasu from 43,000 children to 72,000. The three programmes cover English and Mother Tongue reading for Chinese, Malay and Tamil families respectively, and they move from a pilot group of centres to the full system in one step.

What changes for parents

Nothing to sign up for and nothing to pay. The programmes run inside the kindergarten or childcare day, so children whose parents both work do not need a weekend class or a tuition slot to get them.

The materials come with a set of picture books and songs built around everyday Singapore life rather than textbook drills, which is the part the fund has been testing since the programmes started.

Two new apps for parents

The fund is also launching parent apps for Malay and Tamil, matching the Chinese one already in use. The apps carry the same stories and songs children hear in class, so a parent who does not read the language fluently can follow along and read with the child at home.

That matters for families where the working language at home is English. A parent who cannot read a Tamil or Malay storybook confidently will not start one, and an app with audio removes that barrier.

Why bilingualism gets this much money

The fund was set up in 2011 with a S\$50 million capital sum from the government, and its remit is to support the learning of Mother Tongue languages and English in the early years. It gives out grants for community programmes, publishes books and runs the reading programmes now going system-wide.

The expansion lands in a system where Mother Tongue take-up at the secondary level has been falling. Getting children comfortable with a language before Primary 1, when the syllabus turns formal, is the part of the pipeline the fund can actually influence.

What to look out for

MOE will tell parents which programme their child's centre uses when the school year starts in January. Children moving into K1 in 2027 are the first full cohort.

Parents who want to know what the programmes look like now can find samples on the fund's website, which carries the songs and story extracts from all three titles.

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