

LIKELY ASKED QUESTIONS ON THE REFRESHED SKILLS FRAMEWORK

1. About Skills Framework

1.1 What is the Skills Framework for Early Childhood for and why is there a need to refresh the existing Skills Framework?

The Skills Framework (SFw) is a SkillsFuture initiative developed for the Singapore workforce to promote skills mastery and lifelong learning.

Since the launch of the Skills Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (SFw ECCE) in 2016, there have been many developments in the sector. The purpose of the refresh is to ensure the continued relevance of the SFw for the present and future needs of the early childhood sector, and provide a common reference on job roles and skills and competencies for individuals, employers, and training providers in the early childhood sector.

With the inclusion of new career tracks, job roles and Technical Skills and Competencies (TSCs), the refreshed SFw is now known as Skills Framework for Early Childhood (SFw EC).

The refreshed SFw includes information on emerging trends, in-demand skills, and desired attributes of Early Childhood (EC) educators and Early Intervention (EI) educators. EC and EI educators can refer to the SFw to **plan for their skills upgrading and career development**. Operators can use the framework to **plan for their talent management and training/development strategies**. Training providers can also progressively **refresh their training programmes** to align to the skills and competencies identified in the SFw. The refreshed SFw EC will be available on the SSG website at www.skillsfuture.gov.sg/skills-framework/earlychildhood.

1.2 How was the refreshed Skills Framework for Early Childhood developed?

ECDA, in collaboration with SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG), preschool representatives and stakeholders, reviewed the SFw ECCE that was introduced in 2016. ECDA and SSG engaged over 300 participants to identify and map emerging critical skills and needs of the jobs in the identified functional areas during the development of the refreshed SFw EC.

1.3 What are the key changes in the refreshed Skills Framework for Early Childhood?

The Infant and Early Years Educator career tracks have been expanded to reflect the potential progression and development pathways available for educators teaching children in the younger age groups (i.e. 2 months to 4 years old).

The Leadership career track has also been expanded and senior educators can aspire towards new job roles such as the Lead Early Years Educator, Deputy Centre Leader, and Curriculum/Pedagogy Specialist.

ECDA also included new career tracks for Learning Support Educators (LSEds) and EI educators in the refreshed SFw EC. These additions seek to encourage greater porosity between EC and EI educators as part of our ongoing effort to advance inclusion in preschools.

In addition, in response to stakeholders' feedback during the SFw validation sessions, ECDA will standardize the nomenclature for "Educarers" (currently referring to those teaching children up to nursery level) and "Teachers" (currently referring to those teaching kindergarten levels) in preschools to "Educators" (e.g., Early Year Educators, Preschool Educators) going forward. This reflects the equal importance of all early childhood educators, across the different age groups under their care. ECDA will work with operators to operationalize the changes by 1H2022.

2. Career Map and Related Skills and Competencies

2.1 **There is an Early Intervention (EI) career track in the Skills Framework for Social Service (SFw SS). How is this different from the Early Intervention track in the refreshed Skills Framework for Early Childhood? How will this change affect the Technical Skills and Competencies (TSCs) of EI educators?**

To signal the move to promote inclusion in preschools and enhance porosity of the EC and EI job roles, the EI track in the SFw SS is included in the SFw EC. The EI track continues to be reflected in the SFw for SS. The job roles and occupational titles remain the same.

In addition, selected TSCs of EI educators had been updated to better reflect their current job functions and reap synergies with the EC framework.

2.2 **How were the job roles within Learning Support track developed given that this is an entirely new track?**

LSEds provide support to children who require low level of support in the preschool setting. For instance, under the Developmental Support – Learning Support (DS-LS) programme, there are currently 130 LSEds, employed by Early Childhood Development Centres (ECDCs) and therapy teams who provide the DS-LS programme.

In creating the Learning Support track, ECDA reviewed the existing LSEd job roles and worked closely with the DS-LS providers and members of the SkillsFuture Tripartite Taskforce (STT) to ensure that the LSEd track caters to the present and future needs of the DS-LS providers as well as the career aspirations of the LSEds. For example, the LSEd track comprises a direct

practice and a management track to reflect the potential career pathways for LSEds as they progress towards leadership roles.

2.3 Are there pre-requisite training programmes required for educators to progress in the respective tracks?

To join the preschool sector, you will need certain entry qualifications depending on the job role you intend to assume. These entry qualifications are indicated in the career map.

Progression along the respective tracks is generally dependant on the competencies required for the specific roles, though there may be some roles which require additional training due to the difference in job functions or competencies required, e.g. in order to become a Centre Leader, one has to complete the Advanced Diploma in Early Childhood Leadership (ADECL). Such requirements can also be found in the career map.

2.4 The Pinnacle Leader job role has been removed from the career map and is replaced by Sectoral Lead. What is Sectoral Lead? Why the change in the job title?

Sectoral Leads are pinnacle leaders who contribute their skills and expertise at the sectoral level and work with operators and ECDA to uplift the standards of the profession. He/she is an advocate of the mission, vision and values of Early Childhood or Early Intervention services. He/she drives pedagogical excellence, provides mentoring and fosters strategic partnerships within the fraternity and the wider community.

The Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and ECDA appoint these pinnacle leaders as Social Service Fellows or ECDA Fellows on a termly basis. The Renaming of “Pinnacle Leader” to “Sectoral Lead” is to better reflect the nature of such appointments and to include both ECDA Fellows and Social Service Fellows.

2.5 With the different tracks and job roles, how are the salaries in the Skills Framework determined? Are employers required to abide by the salary ranges in the Skills Framework?

The indicative gross monthly salaries indicated on the wage information page were based on a survey commissioned by ECDA and carried out by Korn Ferry in 2019. The indicative salaries are intended to help individuals who may be interested in joining the early childhood sector to make informed decisions about their career choices. Employers can continue to set the salaries for the different job roles based on the needs of their organisations.

2.6 How will the refreshed Skills Framework for Early Childhood affect salaries of EC educators in the sector?

ECDA is introducing the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Roadmap, which will provide more structured guidance to educators on developing the skills and competencies needed for their job roles. Hence, we expect salary for our EC educators to grow in tandem with the deeper skills and larger job roles that they will take on as they progress in the early childhood sector.

Operators with LSEds and EI educators should continue to reference the salary guidelines established by the National Council of Social Service (NCSS).

2.7 What are the new documents within the refreshed Skills Framework for Early Childhood?

Under the refreshed SFw EC, we have revised the career map and the Skills Maps. The Skills Maps provide the job descriptions, critical work functions and key tasks of the respective job roles.

Technical Skills and Competencies (TSCs) and the Critical Core Skills (CCS) are also new additions to the SFw EC. TSCs refer to the knowledge, skills and abilities one needs to perform the various tasks required of that job role. In the refreshed framework, there a total of 37 TSCs which are tagged across 27 job roles. CCS are common, transferable skills that can be applied across sectors. CCS enable individuals to be employable and employed as well as to enable the acquisition of TSCs which they need to perform in the job roles that they serve in, to adapt to changes and seize career development opportunities to facilitate their career mobility. The top 5 CCS have been identified for each job role in the SFw EC.

2.8 Do all Technical Skills and Competencies (TSCs) apply to all job roles?

No, different job roles will require different combinations of TSCs. Centres may refer to the SFw EC guidebook for the specific TSCs required for each job role.

2.9 How can centres and educators use the refreshed Skills Framework for Early Childhood?

Under the new construct, the refreshed SFw aims to leverage the existing skills standards to create a common skills language for individuals, employers and training providers. This further helps to facilitate skills recognition, guide the career planning of educators and support the design of training programmes.

The SFw EC can help to facilitate the following 5 Human Resource areas:

1. Recruitment and Selection
2. Onboarding
3. Performance Management
4. Learning and Development
5. Career Management

ECDA will be appointing a training provider to develop workshops to guide HQ staff, centre leaders and educators on the use of the SFw EC. More information will be provided in early 2022.

2.10 There are a few new job roles in the refreshed Skills Framework for Early Childhood. Are preschools expected to have all the job roles as articulated in the refreshed framework?

Preschools can use the SFw EC as a reference to consider whether the job roles are relevant to the needs of the organisation. For example, a larger preschool centre may find it useful to have a Deputy Centre Leader to support the Centre Leader in the administration of the preschool, whereas a smaller preschool centre may not require a Deputy Centre Leader position.

2.11 For Centre Leaders, one of the critical work functions includes managing the budget for day-to-day operations in the centre. Are Centre Leaders responsible for the business aspects of centre operations?

The SFw EC lays out the full spectrum of work functions that a Centre Leader may be accountable for. However, the actual job scope and accountabilities of the Centre Leader in an organisation will depend on the nature and structure of the organisation. For example, centres which are supported by an HQ may not need to handle certain aspects of corporate functions such as finance and manpower planning, whereas centres that do not have an HQ may share such finance and manpower functions among the business owner/s and the centre leadership team.

3. Occupational Titles

3.1 What are Occupational Titles?

Occupational Titles are the job titles indicated in the career map. These are aligned to the 'Career Pathways in the Skills Framework for Early Childhood'. They describe the *current* competency level and job scope of the educator. For more information on Occupational Titles, please refer to the career map, TSCs and skills maps. The progression of occupational titles is featured in the career map while the skills, competencies and critical work functions of occupational titles can be found in the TSCs and skills map.

3.2 Are all the Occupational Titles in the career map found in ONE@ECDA?

Currently, only the Occupational Titles under the previous SFw are found in ONE@ECDA. ECDA will be enhancing the ONE@ECDA system to include the new and revised Occupational Titles found in refreshed SFw. The enhancement in the system will be completed by Q1 2022.

There is no need for preschools and educators to make any changes to the Occupational Titles in the ONE@ECDA arising from the refreshed SFw at this juncture. More details will be shared with the sector closer to the launch of the enhanced system and centres may log in to review their staff's Occupational Titles and make further changes if necessary.

3.3 What is the difference between the Occupational Title and Employment Title?

Employment Title (ET) refers to the generic role of the educator (e.g. Preschool Educator) and is based on his/her qualification and certification level. Occupational Title (OT) looks at the competencies and current job scope of the educator in his/her role (e.g. Beginning Preschool Educator, Lead Preschool Educator).

OTs are assigned by and can only be edited by HQ/Centres, while Employment Titles are based on legislative requirements and can only be assigned by ECDA to approved staff.

3.4 How do I determine the Occupational Title my educator should be tagged to?

There are 4 guiding considerations when tagging educators to their respective Occupational Titles:

- a) Certification Level: EY1/EY2/L1/L2
- b) Employment Title: Infant Educator/Early Years Educator/Preschool Educator/Principal/HQ/Cluster Role
- c) Deployment within Centre: Based on the teaching level (age group) assigned
- d) Competency Level: Based on the occupation description and skills for each job role (refer to the Skills Map in the Skills Framework for Early Childhood)

3.5 Which age group does the Early Years Educator cover?

The Early Years Educator can teach children aged 2 months to 4 years old, depending on their certification level. Early Years Educator who are certified at EY2 can teach children aged 2 months to 3 years old, whereas Early Years Educator who are L1 certified can teach children between 18 months and 4 years old. For L2 certified teachers, if they are teaching 18 months to 4 years old, they can be tagged to the Early Years Educator occupational title as well.

3.6 How do I update my educator's Occupational Title?

The updating of OT can only be done by the HQ/Centre. Due to introduction of new occupational titles in the refreshed SFw, the ONE@ECDA system will be enhanced with the new OT by Q1 2022. More details will be shared with the sector closer to the launch of the enhanced

system and centres may log in to review their staff's OT and make further changes if necessary.

3.7 When should I update my educator's Occupational Title?

Educators should be tagged to OT that best describe their *current* competency level and job scope. It is recommended to update your educator's OT if there are changes in job scope and/or deployment (e.g. taken on a larger job role from Preschool Educator to Senior Preschool Educator, move across track from Preschool Educator to Infant Educator)

3.8 Does my centre need to update the Occupational Title for non-programme staff (e.g. cooks and cleaners)?

OTs are only relevant for ECDA-certified programme staff, where each occupation has specific skills defined to ensure that all educators are equipped with the relevant knowledge and skills to work with young children and progress in the EC sector. Non-certified programme staff (i.e. Programme Helper) and non-programme staff (i.e. cook, cleaner, administrator and others) do not need to be assigned OT.

3.9 I did not update my educator's Occupational Title but I notice that he/she is tagged to an Occupational Title in ONE@ECDA. Why is that so?

For educators with existing ONE@ECDA accounts, their OTs would be migrated from their previous employment. Centres may edit the OT if it does not accurately reflect the educator's current job scope and competency level.