



## **Press Release**

### **Promoting play education in kindergartens and the community HKU Jockey Club “Play n Gain” Project Launch Ceremony**

The Launching Ceremony of the **Jockey Club “Play n Gain” Project** was held at Rayson Huang Theatre at the University of Hong Kong today (May 22). Mrs Ingrid YEUNG, JP, Permanent Secretary for Education, Education Bureau, HKSAR and Ms Winnie YING, Head of Charities (Grant Making - Youth, Education & Training, Poverty) of The Hong Kong Jockey Club were the Guests of Honour at the ceremony. Certificates of Appreciation were presented to principals, teachers and parents of 10 participating schools.

Play education is essential in building children’s social competence, particularly in the early years of education. It is also a policy objective of the Education Bureau to encourage more free play sessions in kindergartens.

The **Jockey Club “Play n Gain” Project** is a play education programme funded by The Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust and implemented by the Centre for Advancement in Inclusive and Special Education (CAISE) in the Faculty of Education of the University of Hong Kong (HKU).

Ms Winnie YING, Head of Charities (Grant Making - Youth, Education & Training, Poverty) of The Hong Kong Jockey Club said: “This Project has addressed the need of an inclusive society and is in line with the Club’s commitment in education projects which are aimed at addressing the diverse learning needs of students and enabling them to develop their strengths. The Club attaches great importance to the development of early childhood education. Since 2014, the Club’s total donation in early childhood education-related projects has exceeded HK\$530 million, which includes the Jockey Club ‘Playing with Learning’ Project, helping children’s fitness, cognition and social emotion development.”

The three-year Project is derived from a research-based social competence programme that has been used effectively for over 10 years. It aims to provide kindergarten teachers and parents of school children (K2 and K3) with professional training and practical skills on game education, so that games can be integrated into daily teaching and children can apply the social skills they learnt through play during free play time. When playing games, children take turns to become leaders, learn about caring and respect, and exercise their creativity to modify the games to make them more fun.

The Project started in September 2018 in six kindergartens with workshops held for teachers and parents. It will be further extended to cover more local kindergartens, and to family and community settings so as to develop a pool of parents, teachers and significant others to be change agents. It is expected that over 2,200 children from 14 kindergartens and their parents, teachers and principals, and another 8,000 adults and children in the community will benefit from the Project. Game resources packs will be developed for distribution at kindergartens. An online platform will also be established to share resources on “good games”, which should be fun and safe to play.

Dr Sylvia Liu, Project Director of the Jockey Club “Play n Gain” Project said: “Play is a happy language we use to communicate with children. It is a natural form of education. Play interactive games, enjoy social gains. This Project adopted the ‘Social Star Mirror Model’ (Liu, 2015) which served as the conceptual framework in improving children’s social emotional skills through playing interactive group games systematically. It starts at kindergartens where most children gather. It trains parents and teachers who have the greatest influence on children. This Project supports participating kindergartens to be ‘Seed Schools’, and the trained parents and teachers can keep the wheel of play education going across schools and

community. The Project also recruits university students as game assistants. They are ‘future parents’ who will help support game activities at schools and in the community. Moreover, the Project will also work with different organisations to promote game education to the wider community, and through that empowering the community to promote sustainability.

Parent participants who joined seminars and workshops under the Project have rated it positively. All are willing to recommend them to others and join similar programmes in future. Over 95% said the seminars could effectively increase their knowledge on the role and importance of play. Their attitudes towards play-based education have become more positive. Those who joined both seminar and workshop found greater improvement in knowledge, skills and attitude related to play. Parents in general think seminars and workshops are useful and practical. Some have already used, and some said they will use, the games learnt to increase their children’s social competence and improve parent-child relationship.

Dr Liu concluded: “We would work together to extend social-emotional learning from kindergartens to the community. This Project develops human resources for game training to achieve sustainability in the long run. Trained parents and teachers apply their play skills in daily life and in the community, to create play opportunities, environment and playmates for children. Play is a language, when play is everywhere, play then becomes a part of our daily lives. Children play happily, safely with respect, as well as enjoy social-emotional gains.”

To learn more about the **Jockey Club “Play n Gain” Project** and the upcoming game education activities and community class from June - August 2019 for parents and children, please visit [www.jcplayngain.edu.hku.hk](http://www.jcplayngain.edu.hku.hk) and Facebook (Play n Gain) or contact our Project Team (Tel: 4610 2400).

For media enquiries, please contact Ms Virginia Cheung, Administration Manager of **Jockey Club “Play n Gain” Project** (Tel: 3917 5828 / email: [vcvc@hku.hk](mailto:vcvc@hku.hk)).

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