



Preschoolers Jolyn Wong and Lee Boon Wee (right), both six, are "hygiene ambassadors" at Learning Vision @ Cecil, the first preschool to receive its Singapore's OK label yesterday. Their duties include maintaining a toilet hygiene checklist. ST PHOTO: MUGILAN RAJASEGERAN

Preschools striving for Singapore's OK label

BY ANG YIYING

SOME preschools are taking extra measures to keep their premises hygienic so as to keep their children healthy.

A first batch of 27 preschools have attained the "Singapore's OK" status - a voluntary programme where recipients maintain high standards of hygiene.

Another 91 preschools have promised to come on board.

The campaign was revived last month, soon after the spread of the Influenza A (H1N1) flu virus first started.

Initially, it began with hawkers centres, markets, food stalls and public toilets. As of Monday, 10,800 such places have been awarded the Singapore's OK label.

With the preschool sector, the National Environment Agency (NEA) will assess those that want to participate on certain criteria. Some go beyond the basic levels of hygiene, such as having a programme to teach children good toilet and personal hygiene practices.

NEA will do a re-assessment a year later, but the ministries that license or register these pre-schools will conduct routine checks to ensure standards are kept.

Of the 1,255 preschools here, 500 kindergartens are registered with the Ministry of Education and 755 childcare centres are licensed by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS).

Learning Vision @ Cecil in Aviva Build-

ing was the first preschool to receive its Singapore's OK decal yesterday.

At the event, Minister of State for Community Development, Youth and Sports Yu-Foo Yee Shoon said preschools already have in place measures to keep hand, foot and mouth disease (HFMD) at bay, and many of these measures - such as temperature-taking - also apply to dealing with H1N1.

Other measures that Learning Vision centres are taking during this period include distributing personal thermometers to the children, making parents declare their travel history and limiting parents from going into centres.

Other childcare centres also said they had followed advisories from the MCYS, like getting staff and children's families to complete travel declaration forms.

Parents said knowing that their child's preschool had obtained the Singapore's OK status gave them peace of mind, especially because of the H1N1 flu.

Administrative assistant Suzy Nelly Yusoff, 33, whose 20-month-old son attends a Learning Vision childcare centre, said: "I feel much more relieved."