

Fact Sheet

23 May 2017

PLAYMAKER PILOT PROGRAMME

Background

1. The importance of engaging and preparing young children to be ready for a world that is globally connected and technologically rich is receiving increased attention by the Early Childhood educators. Current knowledge of the use of technology for preschoolers mainly centres around the use of computers or tablets for e-books, educational software and learning games. In addition, there have been concerns that excessive screen time on computers and smart devices may affect the learning development of young children. The PlayMaker programme seeks to address some of these issues by introducing tech-enabled toys which will help acquaint young children with technology, and enable them to develop the skills needed in the digital future.

PlayMaker Objectives

2. As part of early learning, it is essential that children learn a wide spectrum of core skills such as communication, cognitive skills and creativity. With our Smart Nation initiative, technology will play an increasing role in the lives of our children. Through the use of tech enabled toys, PlayMaker seeks to inspire young children to play and make, sparking imagination and building creative confidence, as well as inculcate familiarity with the exploration of technology.

PlayMaker Starter Programme Rollout

3. The PlayMaker programme was rolled out to 160 preschool centres by 2016. The preschool centres were provided the PlayMaker Starter Kit, comprising:
 - A suite of technology-enabled toys specifically designed to meet the development needs of young children.

- Workshops for the Early Childhood educators. They learned about the pedagogy behind using the technology-enabled toys in their lessons and how to integrate the toys into their curriculum.
- Consultancy services by education technology companies. They provided pedagogical support and guide the teachers in the integration of PlayMaker in their lessons, as well as technical support on the toys.

Programme Benefits

4. These technology-enabled toys are beneficial to pre-schoolers in many ways. The toys can serve as tools for children to communicate and connect with others in a safe way. They also enable young children to learn by doing, giving them the chance to make their ideas physical and tangible while developing their cognitive and creative skills – all this without requiring screen time from PCs, tablets or smartphones.
5. Through the process of facilitated learning through play with the toys, children can develop skills such as logical thinking, reasoning, sequencing, estimation and inventive thinking. The toys also encourage small group collaboration which will develop social and communication skills.

International Recognition for PlayMaker


6. PlayMaker was awarded the Bronze medal at IMS Global's Annual Learning Impact Awards 2017, recognised for the use of tech toys in the early childhood sector to create a positive learning impact.
7. IMS Global's Annual Learning Impact Awards 2017, running for the 11th year, is conducted on a global scale to recognise the most outstanding and influential uses of technology to address the most significant challenges facing education.
8. Out of 38 innovative projects around the world, winners were selected by a panel of expert evaluators using a series of rubrics to evaluate eight dimensions for improving learning impact, including improving access, affordability, and quality of learning.
9. Past years' winners include Ministry of Education Singapore (2009), MOE South Korea (2013 & 2016), Exam Board MOE Netherlands (2016), overseas universities, and service providers such as IBM and Marshall Cavendish.

About Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA)

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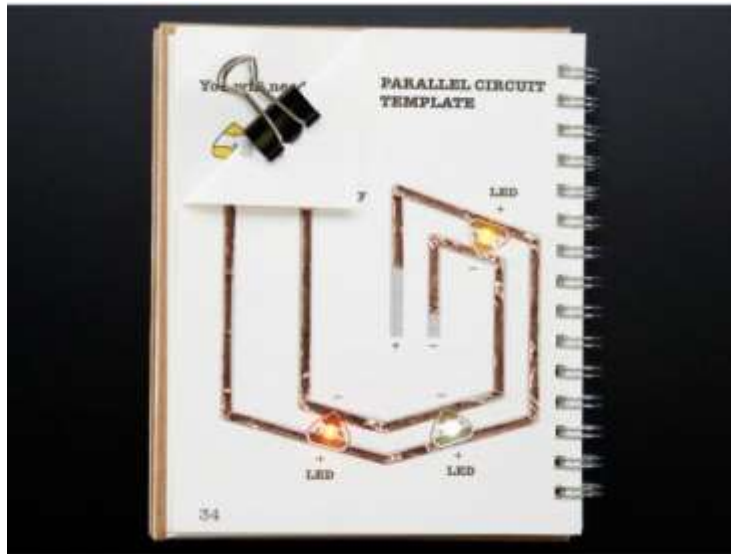
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EXAMPLES OF PLAYMAKER TECH-ENABLED TOYS

1. Circuit Stickers

Circuit Stickers are peel-and-stick electronics for crafting circuits. With LED stickers, young children can easily add lights to their art & craft projects using LED stickers. Sensor stickers, that senses light or sound, allow for interactive projects that respond to the environment.



2. Bee-Bot

Bee-Bot is a colourful, easy-to-operate and friendly little robot that is perfect for teaching young children sequencing, estimation, problem-solving and planning skills.



3. KIBO

KIBO is a robot kit specifically designed for young children aged 4-7 years old. It allows the child to create a sequence of instructions (a programme) using the wooden KIBO blocks, which they then scan the blocks with the KIBO body to tell the robot what to do.



4. LittleBits

LittleBits is a modular platform made up of color-coded electronic building blocks that makes creating simple electronic circuits easy. Using modules like DC motor, buzzer and light sensor, the children are able to create structures and models with craft materials. They learn concepts like electricity and sensors in a fun and engaging way.

