

# 'I'm not lazy, I just don't know where to start'



## GET EXPERTS' TIPS ON PSLE PREPARATION AT ST PARENTING FORUM

The popular ST Smart Parenting PSLE Prep Forum is back. If you want expert tips on helping your child in his or her PSLE journey, sign up for the two-hour event which takes place at SPH Media Auditorium on April 6 at 10am.

Hear from Mr Ong Kong Hong, the Ministry of Education's divisional director from Curriculum Planning and Development Division 1, who will share what you can do to better support your child for the PSLE journey and in secondary school.

ST senior education correspondent Sandra Davie will moderate the session.

Next, learn how you can help your child excel in PSLE mathematics from Dr Yeap Ban Har, a former NIE lecturer and maths textbook author.

Register for the event at [str.sg/psle2024](http://str.sg/psle2024) or scan the QR



code by March 31.

The fees are \$15 each for ST subscribers and \$35 for non-

subscribers. For inquiries, e-mail [stevents@sph.com.sg](mailto:stevents@sph.com.sg)

Running concurrently with the forum is a 75-minute English workshop for pupils, so reserve a seat for your Primary 6 child. They will learn to write impactful compositions using current affairs, with a focus on descriptive and narrative writing techniques.

The workshop, at \$40 a child, will be conducted by ST News-in-Education specialist Debra Ann Francisco, a former English and literature teacher.

## Finding out why kids are reluctant to hit the books is a start to helping them overcome the obstacles to revising their work



Elisa Chia  
Correspondent

Your children's weighted assessment results are back.

They could have done better, you tell them, had they not been lazy and revised their school work consistently.

You are not alone in grumbling about your kids' laziness when it comes to studying.

Some parents are also frustrated that their children are not ramping up revision in their Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) year.

These were common refrains that Dr Wong Hwei Ming heard from parents when she was a teacher at Singapore Chinese Girls' Primary School.

Dr Wong was also a part-time pro bono counsellor at a primary school for 18 years and an educational psychologist at the Ministry of Education.

She is now an assistant centre director and senior education research scientist at the Centre for Research in Pedagogy and Practice in National Institute of Education (NIE).

What she understands from some pupils is that they put off revision because they struggled to get started or felt unsure about what to practise at home.

Another former teacher, Dr Lee Ai Noi, who has more than 20 years of teaching experience at primary and secondary schools, adds: "There are no inherently 'lazy' kids."

Dr Lee, who is now a senior lecturer in Psychology and Child and Human Development at NIE, notes that some kids may lack the drive to study and become disengaged.

"But adults often label unmotivated kids as 'lazy', incorrectly implying a flaw in their character," she says.

Dr Yeap Ban Har, a former NIE lecturer in mathematics education for 11 years and maths textbook author, points out that it is about teaching children to be independent learners.

Kids who are used to having things planned for them lose their ability to take the initiative.

Do not make the parenting mistake of micromanaging them, adds

Dr Yeap, who will be speaking at the ST Smart Parenting PSLE Prep Forum on April 6.

He is now the director of curriculum and professional development at Pathlight School in Singapore as well as Anglo Singapore International School in Thailand.

It is also important for you to find out why your kids procrastinate or are reluctant to hit the books.

"Understanding why kids may appear 'lazy' is crucial to providing the appropriate guidance for them to excel," Dr Lee says.

Dr Wong adds: "Every child is unique, so it may take some trial and error for families to find the strategies that work best."

So, hear your kids out. Here are nine common gripes from children and how you can support them better - without nagging.

These strategies can be applied to upper-primary school pupils, although teens can also benefit from them.

[elisac@sph.com.sg](mailto:elisac@sph.com.sg)

Understanding why kids may appear "lazy" is crucial to providing the appropriate guidance for them to excel.

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**1 "Why revise? I know these topics already."** Make connections to your children's personal interests, Dr Wong suggests.

For instance, you can tell them: "You enjoy playing football and you practise to get better at it."

Explain to them that revisiting topics multiple times helps reinforce what they have learnt in class, Dr Lee adds. They will remember important concepts and are better prepared when assessments and exams roll around.

**2 "What's the point? I will never score AL3 or better."**

Some kids carry the burden of unrealistic expectations, whether self-imposed or from their parents. When they have low self-esteem and lack confidence in their abilities, they may give up on revising altogether.

Dr Lee suggests fostering a growth mindset in them. When children feel that the goal is unattainable, they can feel even more demoralised.

Set achievable targets and break them down further into manageable milestones.

"Provide constructive feedback and praise their effort, rather than focus on outcomes," she says.

Your affirmation can boost their morale, Dr Wong adds, and help them develop a positive attitude towards learning.

CONTINUED ON C2