Parents go for tuition – to help their kids

At least 12 education centres offering 'boot camps' for parents; many see numbers rising

Calvin Yang

She listened eagerly and took notes furiously as the mathematics tutor explained important concepts and dished out examination tips.

But the student was not preparing to sit a major test at the end of the year. She was a mother of one, in a class of about 40 enthusiastic dads and mums.

Housewife Jessica Sim, 47, paid \$30 for a three-hour workshop on maths and English at Concept Math Education Centre last year, to understand what her 10-year-old daughter Yi Xuan goes through and how she can better coach her.

"We may get to the solution but the process may not be appropriate for her age," she said. "Learning from a professional helps in appreciating what my child goes through."

Yi Xuan, a Primary 4 pupil, said: "Now, my mum better understands the complex questions and works together with me to solve them."

These days, it is not just children who are going for tuition.

More parents are attending crash courses and intensive workshops to help their children with their studies. They receive exam tips, understand common mistakes made by pupils and learn concepts that are likely to come out in exams.

There are at least a dozen education centres offering such hothousing workshops for parents, up from just a handful three years ago.

Many have seen a jump in the number of parents going for such classes.

Genius Young Minds, which does primary school maths tuition, started offering tuition for parents of Primary 6 pupils each term from 2013.

It has since extended such classes to parents of Primary 1 to 6 pupils. Now, these classes are done every month, for $3^{1/2}$ hours per session.

Some 500 parents attended the classes last year, from about 300 in 2015. In 2013, only 25 signed up.

Grouped by their maths abilities, the parents are guided on how to apply the various maths concepts to different questions.

At the centre this year, classes will cost between \$257 and \$397 per month, depending on the primary school level. This is up from \$197 to \$257 monthly last year.

Madam Nurhidayah Mohamed Ismail, 32, founder of the centre in Tampines, said parents join such classes as they want to be involved in their kids' education.

Concept Math, which has two outlets in Novena and Bukit Timah, last year collaborated with another education centre to offer a one-off, three-hour workshop for parents, in which they were acquainted with the syllabus for English and maths and learnt key concepts.

All 60 slots for the workshop last May were taken up within a day.

Ms Janice Chuah, 44, its founder, intends to run more of such sessions this year. She is expecting about 240 parents to sign up.

"Basically, it is a boot camp for parents," the primary school maths tutor explained. Sessions will cost between \$30 and \$50, depending on the level of study.

Parents are also allowed to sit in at regular classes taught by Ms Chuah and learn together with their kids. She introduced this idea six years ago for her Primary 5 and 6 classes.

"Many diligently copy notes and ask questions," she said. "If parents know how to help with the sums, the child receives almost immediate help, instead of having to wait to ask the school teacher or tutors."

Marshall Cavendish Education (MCE) also offers parenting workshops. It started doing so for maths in 2015.

Ms Lee Fei Chen, head of publishing at Times Publishing, of which MCE is a subsidiary, said the workshops were well-received.

Since last year, the provider of educational solutions has introduced more workshops, and expanded to

helped her grasp the right concepts "It is common to hear parents exto assist him.

include English and science.

duct hands-on activities to help par-

Parents said such workshops

Madam Sandy Soh, 46, who is

self-employed, went for the Math

Masterclass at Genius Young Minds

last December. She is now more

confident in guiding her 11-year-old

son, explaining that the session

ents be effective coaches at home.

are," Ms Lee said.

have been useful.

changing their teaching experienc-Dr Timothy Chan, director of SIM es with their children and the diffi-Global Education's academic diviculties they encounter, and lamentsion, said the motives behind the paing how demanding the syllabuses rental involvement may lead to mixed results. The child may be-During the workshops, trainers come dependent on the parents address these concerns and conand develop the habit of turning to them for help, he added.

"It will not help the child excel on his or her own. In the long run, children will benefit more from parental support such as encouragement, reassurance and understanding, than getting the right answers with the help of parents."

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A composition writing workshop by Marshall Cavendish Education on Feb 4 saw a few parents participating. They learnt about the composition format, marking criteria and approach to teaching writing at home. ST PHOTO: LIM YAOHUI





