Enabling Skills and Competencies Framework (Caregivers)

Skills to guide caregivers in providing holistic support and care for their loved one

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ENABLING ACADEMY
by SG Enable

ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Term
CF	Competency Framework
EMP	Enabling Masterplan
FGD	Focus Group Discussions
PWDs	Persons with Disabilities
SEN	Special Education Needs
SFw	Skills Framework
SP	Disability Sector Professionals
SSAs	Social Service Agencies
SSG	SkillsFuture Singapore
TSC	Technical Skills Competency
WHO	World Health Organisation

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Introduction and Background of the Enabling Skills and Competencies Framework (Caregivers)

1.1 | Introduction and Background

Providing care for persons with disabilities can be **complex and challenging for caregivers**, who require extensive knowledge and skills to provide care for their loved one and look after their self-care to prevent burnout and maintain their well-being.

Navigating through the list of assistance and support can add to the difficulties of caregivers. Balancing the needs of a loved one with managing their own lives, caregivers **navigate a role filled with complex emotions**.

Often, caregivers prioritise their loved one's needs over their own, which can lead to burnout and long-term emotional strain.

The Enabling Masterplan (EMP) 2030 is a national roadmap that aims to fully integrate persons with disabilities into society. One of its proposed enablers of success is **providing support to persons with disabilities and their caregivers and families.**

The EMP2030 recommends **enhancing respite options and caregiver support for individuals with disabilities in the community.** It emphasises supporting caregivers in future planning and providing a range of support services across different life stages.

In line with the above objectives, the Enabling Skills and Competencies Framework (Caregivers) **equips loved one and caregivers with necessary competencies and resources for high-quality care.** Our Enabling Skills and Competencies Framework (Caregivers) was developed through extensive research and consultation with experts in the field of disability care, the competencies highlighted in this framework cover **communication, navigating transition stages, personal care, and social support and more.**

We hope this framework serves as a valuable resource, supporting family members and caregivers in their crucial role of caring for their loved one with disabilities.

1.2 | Aims and Audience

The following provides a summary of the intended audience for our Enabling Skills and Competencies Framework (Caregivers) and how individuals can utilise it.

Caregivers include, but are not limited to:

- **Families**
- **Friends**
- **Helpers**

- To **identify and enhance their skill sets and capabilities** to deliver better care and support to persons with disabilities in a holistic manner

- To Improve the quality of care provided to their loved one by addressing areas where caregivers might **need additional training or support**

Training Partners

- To provide guidance for the **design and development of curriculum** for disability training programmes to suit the needs of caregivers when providing care and support to their loved one

Structure of the Enabling Skills
and Competencies Framework
(Caregivers)

2.1 | Development of the Framework

The Enabling Skills and Competencies Framework (Caregivers) comprises **24 competency areas** organised under **5 distinct domains**. These domains represent various categories and encompass a range of skills necessary for caregivers to be aware of the skills required to provide better care and support to their loved one.

As a reference, we considered the SG Enable Caregivers Learning Roadmap and Enabling Skills and Competencies Framework (Persons with Disabilities) when developing competencies for caregivers. Additionally, desktop research was conducted to ensure comprehensive coverage of caregivers competencies.

Stakeholders consulted:

| Persons with Disabilities | Caregivers | Disability Sector Professionals | Social Service Agencies | Ministries | Employers | Institutes of Higher Learning | Training Providers |

We involved 450 stakeholders from government agencies, social service agencies, SPED schools, institutes of higher learning, persons with disabilities, caregivers, employers and disability sector professionals to develop the framework.

The engagement process involved the conduct of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and 1-to-1 interviews, these took place either via an in-person or virtual setting.

We hope that through this framework, caregivers can be supported and be part of a more inclusive, skilled, and resilient community, ultimately contributing to a more equitable society in Singapore.

In addition to developing these competencies, we also acknowledge that caregivers need a diverse skill set to navigate the different transition stages of their loved one. Recognising the distinct demands of each stage allows caregivers to equip themselves better in addressing the diverse needs of care recipients, ultimately fostering a more fulfilling caregiving experience overall. Here is an overview of the competencies required at each transition stage defined in the SG Enable Caregivers Learning Roadmap:

Domain	Competency	Upon Diagnosis	Young Children (0-6 Years)	Children & Teens (7-18 Years)	Adults (18 Years and above)	For All Stages
Identifying and Understanding Disability	1. Identifying Developmental Delay or Disability	√				
Identifying and Understanding Disability	2. Understanding Disability	√				
Managing Your Caregiving Role	3. Accepting & Understanding the Role of a Caregiver	√				
Managing Your Caregiving Role	4. Prioritising Self-Care					√
Managing Your Caregiving Role	5. Strengthening Family Relationships					√

Note: The Enabling Skills and Competencies Framework (Caregivers) is aligned with the Caregiver Learning Roadmap developed by SG Enable.

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Domain	Competency	Upon Diagnosis	Young Children (0-6 Years)	Children & Teens (7-18 Years)	Adults (18 Years and above)	For All Stages
Planning for Care	6. Adapting Home Environment					√
	7. Setting Goals with your Loved One					√
	8. Developing a Care Plan	√				
	9. Understanding the Legal Provisions for Persons with disabilities					√
	10. Developing a Future Care Plan				√	
	11. Partnering Allied Health Professionals in the Therapy Journey					√

Note: The Enabling Skills and Competencies Framework (Caregivers) is aligned with the Caregiver Learning Roadmap developed by SG Enable.

2.2 | Structure of the SG Enable Caregivers Learning Roadmap (3/4)

In addition to developing these competencies, we also acknowledge that caregivers need a diverse skill set to navigate the different transition stages of their loved one. Recognising the distinct demands of each stage allows caregivers to equip themselves better in addressing the diverse needs of care recipients, ultimately fostering a more fulfilling caregiving experience overall. Here is an overview of the competencies required at each transition stage defined in the SG Enable Caregivers Learning Roadmap:

Domain	Competency	Upon Diagnosis	Young Children (0-6 Years)	Children & Teens (7-18 Years)	Adults (18 Years and above)	For All Stages
Providing Care	12. Supporting Your Loved One's Mental Wellbeing					√
	13. Understanding Tips on Parenting		√	√	√	√
	14. Interacting with Persons with disabilities					√
	15. Promoting Positive Behaviour					√
	16. Building Functional Skills		√	√	√	
	17. Assisting with Activities of Daily Living					√
	18. Building Social Skills		√	√	√	
	19. Building Relationships and Sexuality Education			√	√	

Note: The Enabling Skills and Competencies Framework (Caregivers) is aligned with the Caregiver Learning Roadmap developed by SG Enable.

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Domain	Competency	Upon Diagnosis	Young Children (0-6 Years)	Children & Teens (7-18 Years)	Adults (18 Years and above)	For All Stages
Providing Care	20. Applying Basic Nursing Care					√
	21. Enhancing Health and Wellbeing					√
Supporting your Loved One through Transitions	22. Navigating the Educational Landscape		√	√		
	23. Navigating Post-School Pathways			√	√	
	24. Preparing Loved One for National Service			√	√	

Note: The Enabling Skills and Competencies Framework (Caregivers) is aligned with the Caregiver Learning Roadmap developed by SG Enable.

2.3 | How to Read the Enabling Skills and Competencies Framework (Caregivers)

The subsequent caregivers' domains and competencies provide a concise and easily accessible overview, detailing the elaboration of each sub-competency for quick reference and comprehension. When combined with **Section 2.2 "Structure of the SG Enable Caregiver Learning Roadmap"**, it creates a comprehensive mapping of relevant competencies corresponding to various transition life stages, thus offering a holistic understanding of caregivers' roles and responsibilities.

Domain	Competency	Sub-Competency
Identifying and Understanding Disability	1. Identifying Developmental Delay or Disability	**Developmental milestones in children** a. Understand developmental milestones at different ages to identify potential areas of concern b. Monitor, record and share on your child's development (e.g. attend developmental screenings) **Sustaining through difficult periods** a. Seek emotional support from support groups, experienced caregivers, family and friends b. Learn about the support your loved one needs **Importance of early identification and early intervention** a. Understand the importance of early detection of developmental delay or disability and benefits of early intervention b. Engage professionals and find out about resources to better support your loved one's development
	2. Understanding Disability	**Overview of disability profiles** a. Understand the characteristics of the disability and the impact on your loved one b. Know how to communicate with the doctor to understand the disability and your next steps **Interventions for loved ones** a. Identify intervention programmes and/or assistive technology that can help your loved one b. Evaluate and select suitable intervention(s) for your loved one (e.g. treatment options, costs, side effects and implications) **Providing care to loved ones** a. Learn tips on how to provide care specific to the disability type of your loved one b. Know the social service agencies that can provide support to your loved one

Competencies Descriptions
It's important to note that usage and adoption may differ depending on the unique circumstances of individuals with disabilities in each setting.

3

Domains and Competencies

3.1 | Domain 1:Identifying And Understanding Disability

Domain	Competency	Sub-Competency (Click on the link in the competency column for more details and resources on these sub-competencies)
Identifying and Understanding Disability	**1. Identifying Developmental Delay or Disability**	**Developmental milestones in children** a. Understand developmental milestones at different ages to identify potential areas of concern b. Monitor, record and share on your child's development (e.g. attend developmental screenings)
		Sustaining through difficult periods a. Seek emotional support from support groups, experienced caregivers, family and friends b. Learn about the support your loved one's needs
		Importance of early identification and early intervention a. Understand the importance of early detection of developmental delay or disability and benefits of early intervention b. Engage professionals and find out about resources to better support your loved one's development
	2. Understanding Disability	**Overview of disability profiles** a. Understand the characteristics of the disability and the impact on your loved one b. Know how to communicate with the doctor to understand the disability and your next steps
		Interventions for loved one a. Identify intervention programmes and/or assistive technology that can help your loved one b. Evaluate and select suitable intervention(s) for your loved one (e.g. treatment options, costs, side effects and implications)
		Providing care to loved one a. Learn tips on how to provide care specific to the disability type of your loved one b. Know the social service agencies that can provide support to your loved one

Domain	Competency	Sub-Competency
Managing Your Caregiving Role	**3. Accepting & Understanding the Role of a Caregiver**	**Understand the stages of grief upon the diagnosis** a. Understand the stages of grief (e.g. 5 stages of grief) b. Acknowledge and address the negative emotions
		Seeking professional help a. Identify the signs and symptoms of depression (e.g. feelings of sadness, frustration, changes in sleeping patterns and/or appetites) b. Understand when to seek professional help
		Preparing to be a caregiver a. Learn the different ways you can equip yourself as a caregiver and relevant resources available b. Start future care planning early (e.g. writing a will, opening a trust)
		Becoming a part of a support network a. Understand the importance of having a support network b. Consider finding a suitable support network or forming your own network of support
	4. Priortising Self-Care	**Prioritising self-care** a. Understand the importance of self-care b. Understand the signs of burnout and chronic stress (e.g. physical, mental and/or emotional exhaustion, empathic distress)
		Practising self-care a. Arrange for alternative care (e.g. professional home-care services, community-based facilities) b. Practise and apply self-care strategies (e.g. be kind to yourself)
		Avenues to seek help a. Consider the resource and support available and when to reach out for help

Domain	Competency	Sub-Competency
Managing Your Caregiving Role	**5. Strengthening Family Relationships**	**Benefits of building strong family bonds** a. Understand the importance and benefits of having strong family bonds
		Strengthen family relationships a. Engage in building strong family relationships (including sibling and spousal relationships) b. Share caregiving responsibilities with one's spouse (e.g. physical and mental loads)
		Managing difficult conversations with family members a. Know how to approach difficult topics with family members and manage these conversations with sensitivity
		Avenues to seek help a. Understand the resource and support services available to reach out for help (e.g. social service agencies, family service centres)

Domain	Competency	Sub-Competency
Planning for Care	**6. Adapting Home Environment**	**Adapting the home environment** a. Improve the accessibility and safety of your home for your loved one and facilitate your caregiving
	7. Setting Goals with your Loved One	**Understanding goal setting** a. Empower your loved one to co-develop goals or set their own goals where possible b. Use frameworks to set goals (e.g. SMART goals) c. Support your loved one to attain (e.g. identifying potential barriers or challenges to attaining the goal, and ways to overcome these challenges), monitor and review goals
		Setting the right goals a. Determine appropriate goals for your loved one (e.g. based on your loved one's developmental stage)
	8. Developing a Care Plan	**Care planning** a. Understand the benefits of care planning b. Learn about the possible components of a care plan for daily and short-term needs
		Financial and legal planning a. Develop a financial plan considering the future financial needs of your loved one (e.g. medical needs, interventions and services) b. Understand legal provisions to safeguard your loved one's legal rights (e.g. Mental Capacity Act)
	9. Understanding the Legal Provisions for Persons with disabilities	**Support for your loved one within the legal system** a. Understand legal provisions to safeguard your loved one's legal rights (e.g. Children & Young Persons Act (CYPA), Vulnerable Adults Act (VAA), Mental Capacity Act etc.) b. Learn about the legal aid and Appropriate Adult services available which you can refer to for access to legal assistance, when necessary

Domain	Competency	Sub-Competency
Planning for Care	**10. Developing a Future Care Plan**	**Future care planning** a. Understand the domains of future care planning: daily living, legal, financial and healthcare, living and care arrangements
		Legal considerations a. Understand the applicable laws (e.g. Children & Young Person Act, Vulnerable Adults Act and Mental Capacity Act) and ways to protect the interests of your loved one and plan for their future (e.g. appoint a Testamentary Guardian, apply deputyship, will etc.)
		Financial considerations a. Understand the relevant financial considerations in planning for and ensuring financial security (e.g. set up trust funds, special needs saving scheme)
		Other considerations a. Learn about Advanced Care Planning and the Advance Medical Directive
		Plan for transition of care and living arrangements a. Prepare your loved one for the eventual change in care arrangements (e.g. changes in flat ownership or the planning for alternative living arrangements such as adult disability homes) b. Learn how to address difficult topics such as on mortality
	11. Partnering Allied Health Professionals in the Therapy Journey	**Intervention and therapy** a. Learn the importance of appropriate therapy and intervention services and how working with allied health professionals can help your loved one
		Journey with your loved one through therapy a. Understand how to work collaboratively with professionals to customise and implement a care plan and intervention programme for your loved one (e.g. reinforce therapy techniques at home, monitor therapy progress)

Domain	Competency	Sub-Competency
Providing Care	**12. Supporting your Loved One's Mental Well-Being**	**Awareness of your attitude towards the disability** a. Build self-awareness of your attitude towards the disability to better support your loved one's psychological and emotional needs b. Learn about the social model of disability **Helping your loved one build self-esteem and a sense of belonging** a. Support your loved one in building self-esteem and a sense of belonging b. Learn to help your loved one cultivate a growth mindset **Helping your loved one build resilience** a. Understand how to support your loved one in building resilience to improve their ability to cope with challenges in their life **Identifying signs of mental health conditions in your loved one** a. Identify the signs of mental health conditions such as depression and anxiety disorder b. Understand when and where your loved one can seek support for their mental health concerns

Domain	Competency	Sub-Competency
Providing Care	**13. Understanding Tips on Parenting**	**Engaging your loved one in play** a. Adapt play activities for loved one according to their abilities (e.g. inclusive play) **Involving your loved one in everyday activities and chores** a. Equip your loved one with daily living skills (e.g. wearing shoes) to help them to become more independent b. Provide opportunities to carry out tasks and foster decision-making with minimal assistance **Overcoming bullying and discrimination** a. Educate loved one on bullying and discrimination b. Teach loved one strategies to stay safe (e.g. avoid isolated areas, walk away from bullies) and how to seek help c. Identify potential signs of your loved one being bullied and understand how you can respond **Cyber wellness** a. Educate your loved one on key issues such as addiction, scams and cyberbullying b. Adopt measures to keep your loved one safe on the internet, encourage loved one to share about their online activities **Supporting your loved one through adolescence** a. Understand loved one's needs in adolescence b. Learn tips to support them in their needs and goals (e.g. practise active listening and open communication; provide more handholding or provide greater autonomy where required) **Plan for transition** a. Explore post-school pathways for your loved one including suitable career options, sheltered workshops or Day Activity Centres

Domain	Competency	Sub-Competency
Providing Care	**14. Interacting with Persons with disabilities**	**Interacting with persons with disabilities** a. Understand how to support loved one in social interactions b. Empower and encourage your loved one to express their own views, preferences and choices **Disability awareness** a. Communicate and educate others about your loved one's disability and be open to address misconceptions and different perspectives b. Support your loved one in requesting needed services and accommodations
	15. Promoting Positive Behaviour	**Understanding the behaviour** a. Understand the reasons and identify triggers for your loved one's challenging behaviours **Promoting positive behaviour** a. Learn to support your loved one in managing behaviour (e.g. pre-empt triggers, work with professionals and learn to support your loved one in managing their behaviours, apply and implement calming strategies) b. Understand the resources and support services available for your family
	16. Building Functional Skills	**Ways to build functional skills** a. Learn how to support your loved one in acquiring skills (e.g. getting around independently, using assistive technology, handling money and managing work remuneration) b. Work with allied professionals to support the development of customised strategies for your loved one to acquire functional skills and help them progress c. Use frameworks (e.g., Early Childhood Holistic outcomes (ECHO), Routine-based Model) to build your loved one's functional skills through everyday activities d. Create an environment that promotes independence and natural learning opportunities

Domain	Competency	Sub-Competency
Providing Care	**17. Assisting with Activities of Daily Living**	**Activities of daily living** a. Understand what Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) are (e.g. washing or bathing, dressing, feeding, toileting, transferring and mobility) and how to support your loved one
		Assisting with ADLs a. Understand and apply proper techniques when assisting with Activities of Daily Living (ADLs) b. Learn how to promote independence in ADLs (e.g. break down ADLs to smaller tasks that your loved one can do on their own, where possible) c. Utilise assistive technology to support you and your loved one in their ADLs
	18. Building Social Skills	**Importance of social skills** a. Understand the importance of social skills and self-advocacy for your loved one (e.g. conflict resolution skills, effective communication techniques, recognition of social cues)
		Supporting your loved one's development of social skills a. Understand your loved one's potential challenges in social interactions and how you can support them (e.g. using assistive technology, using social stories, creating opportunities for social interactions)

Domain	Competency	Sub-Competency
Providing Care	**19. Building Relationships and Sexuality Education**	**Sexuality and relationship education for your loved one** a. Engage loved one on topics related to sexuality and relationships early on, considering their physical and/or mental age (e.g. early childhood: human body parts, functions and gender differences, appropriate and inappropriate touch; adolescents: puberty, neurological/hormonal and physical changes to the body, sexual desires) **Helping your loved one build healthy interpersonal relationships** a. Educate your loved one on what a healthy relationship looks like (e.g. building trust and establishing mutual respect, setting and respecting personal boundaries of self and others, resolving conflicts and differences) b. Help your loved one understand what it means to be in an intimate relationship
	20. Applying Basic Nursing Care	**Basic nursing assistance** a. Support your loved one's nursing needs such as in medication management, first aid, tube feeding, use of medical devices and equipment (e.g. pulse oximeters, monitors, pumps, catheters) b. Recognise signs of pressure sores and infection and learn how to manage them c. Know and recognise a medical emergency situation (e.g. sudden severe pain, difficulty breathing, uncontrolled bleeding) and administer first aid while waiting for help (where necessary)

Domain	Competency	Sub-Competency
Providing Care	**21. Enhancing Health and Well-being**	**Maintaining a healthy diet** a. Understand the importance of a well-balanced and healthy diet, what it consists of and how your loved one's disability may affect their food preferences b. Work with professionals (e.g. dietician) to shape special dietary plans as well as learn about alternative food and strategies for your loved one
		Leading an active lifestyle a. Understand the benefits of an active lifestyle and the different inclusive sports and recreational activities suitable for your loved one b. Facilitate participation of your loved one in sports and recreation activities to promote your loved one's physical, mental and social well-being
		Having a healthy sleep schedule a. Understand the importance of sleep and implement a healthy sleep regime for your loved one b. Understand sleep challenges that individuals with disabilities may experience and possible tips to address them
		Attending health check-ups and medical appointments a. Empower your loved one to take the lead in their own health while providing support when required (e.g. scheduling and articulating concerns at appointments) b. Understand the importance of regular health screening and when to seek medical attention (e.g. if they feel unwell, changes in weight, appetite, behaviour, sleep)

Domain	Competency	Sub-Competency
Supporting your Loved One through Transitions	**22. Navigating the Educational Landscape**	**Preschool** a. Assess the suitability of preschools for your loved one and get help if needed (e.g. from Early Childhood Development Agency (ECDA)) b. Understand the financial support and subsidies available for preschool fees **Compulsory education** a. Learn about the Compulsory Education Act **Mainstream education** a. Understand the available mainstream educational options (e.g. mainstream schools that support students with special needs with accessible services and facilities) b. Assess the suitability of your loved one for mainstream education based on their accessibility needs, cognitive and adaptive skills c. Engage the school to obtain greater personalisation of support or additional arrangements (e.g., co-developing a Learning Support Plan) d. Understand MOE's approval process to enrol your loved one into Foreign System Schools **Special education** a. Understand the differences between SPED (Special Education) schools in catering to different disabilities and in the different curricula offered b. Learn about what you can consider in selecting a SPED school c. Learn what to discuss with the school to understand how your loved one can be supported and obtain greater personalisation of support or additional arrangements **Vocational education** a. Explore vocational training opportunities in school which can help increase the employability of your loved one after completing their studies b. Explore other vocational training initiatives to help your loved one prepare for work (e.g. internships, mentorships, and vocational training provided by SSAs)

Domain	Competency	Sub-Competency
Supporting your Loved One through Transitions	**22. Navigating the Educational Landscape**	**Institute of higher learning** a. Understand the support available in Institutes of Higher Learning to your loved one (e.g. Special Education Needs (SEN) support office or the SEN Fund)
		Financial assistance for education a. Understand the financial assistance for education that is available for lower-income families
	23. Navigating Post-School Pathways	**Planning for open employment or supported employment** a. Introduce the concept of work and provide opportunities for your loved one to explore their interests and strengths from a young age b. Learn how you can support loved one in the job search process (e.g. helping with what your loved one needs to prepare for work, finding a suitable job and getting the support they need for the job)
		Other options beyond open or supported employment a. Understand alternative options to engage your loved one meaningfully (e.g. sheltered workshops, day activity centres, activity-based programmes, volunteering) and how you can support them

Domain	Competency	Sub-Competency
Supporting your Loved One through Transitions	**24. Preparing Loved One for National Service**	**Eligibility for national service** a. Understand the various eligibility outcomes for national service and options available for those who are unable to serve national service b. Understand the support available for national service exemptions (e.g. by Special Education (SPED) schools) **Preparing for your loved one's medical screening** a. Learn about how you can support your loved one to prepare for the medical screening process (e.g. prepare and bring the required documents or request approval to accompany your loved one to the screening) **Support available in national service** a. Understand the support available during National Service (e.g. counselling services)

4

Acknowledgements

5 | Acknowledgements

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Social Service Agencies and SPED Schools

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Down Syndrome Association (Singapore)

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Guide Dogs Singapore Ltd

HWA (Formerly Handicaps Welfare Association)

iC2 PrepHouse Limited

Lighthouse School

Metta Welfare Association

Metta School

MINDS

MINDS Fernvale Gardens School

MINDS Lee Kong Chian Gardens School

MINDS Towner Gardens School

MINDS Woodlands Gardens School

Muscular Dystrophy Association (Singapore)

Pathlight School

Presbyterian Community Services

Rainbow Centre, Singapore

Red Cross Day Activity Centre for the Disabled

Singapore Anglican Community Services

Singapore Association of the Visually Handicapped

Singapore Red Cross Society

SPD

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The Enabling Skills and Competencies Framework (Caregivers) was created with references to the following sources:

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5 | References (2/2)

The Enabling Skills and Competencies Framework (Caregivers) was created with references to the following sources:

No.	References
15	https://www.imda.gov.sg/for-community/digital-readiness/Digital-Skills-for-Adults-Seniors-and-Persons-with-Disabilities
16	https://www.aic.sg/
17	https://www.nichd.nih.gov/health/topics/puberty/conditioninfo/symptoms
18	Caregivers Offline Validation Comments
19	https://www.disabilitysupportguide.com.au/information/article/calming-strategies-to-manage-sensory-meltdowns
20	https://www.stanfordchildrens.org/en/topic/default?id=relationship-development-90-P01642
21	https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/machine.html
22	https://www.aic.sg/resources/Documents/Brochures/Mental%20Health/Caregiver%20Support%20Network%20Toolkit.pdf

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