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Title: Eden School to add on to offerings for children with autism

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By *Jeremy Koh*

First, there was Pathlight School.

Now, there's Eden School.

And together, they will deliver a full spectrum of education offerings from mainstream education to vocational training to students with autism.

A Service Level Agreement was signed last year to formalise the shared services model that both schools have embarked on.

Pathlight offers a blend of mainstream academic courses leading to PSLE or GCE 'N' and 'O' levels.

Eden, which was previously known as Singapore Autism School, will provide an alternative education system for students with autism.

It'll cater to those who require more time in building foundational skills as well as those who are assessed to be more suitable for a vocational route.

And along with the name change, the curriculum has also been revamped.

Instead of just covering general functional skills, the curriculum now includes critical focus areas such as work habits, self management and social and functional communication skills.

Students in Eden who are later assessed to be ready to cope with a mainstream offering will be considered for a lateral transfer to Pathlight.

Similarly, students in Pathlight who can cope better in a vocational route will be considered for admission to Eden.

Member of Parliament Denise Phua is the School Supervisor on the Eden and Pathlight school boards.

"With Pathlight School and Eden School so tightly bonded now, providing a full spectrum of services, we're just delighted that there's a very solid offering for children with autism, whether they're mild, moderate, severe, or able or not able to access mainstream academics, there's a full spectrum for them."

Pathlight will move to its new premises in Ang Mo Kio Ave 10 this July, while Eden's new purpose built school building in Bukit Batok will be ready by the middle of next year.

About 24,000 Singaporeans are estimated to have an autism spectrum disorder, though with varying degrees of severity.

Experts say that once diagnosed early, effective intervention and education can make a huge difference in the development of children with autism.

In Singapore, the third school focusing primarily on students with autism is the St. Andrew's Autism Centre.

But thirteen other special schools also offer classes for students with autism.