Families and Family Service Centres

1 At the individual level, families are the primary source of emotional, social and financial support. The family is also important to society. For example, a family which nurtures and inculcates positive values in children can help them grow up to be responsible adults.

2 Issues

- 2.1 Families in Singapore may face one or more issues, sometimes at the same time. For example, a child or youth in a family may have issues with parenting styles or even inadequate care from parents. An adult may have to deal with work and family responsibilities including parenting and caring for elderly parents and in-laws, and marital difficulties or single parenthood, and financial difficulties.
- 2.2 Family issues may be compounded when families are re-constituted, become transnational (eg spouse works overseas), "sandwiched", or have family members who are born or become ill or disabled.
- 2.3 Some families may even face "intergenerational cycles" of problems including family violence, substance abuse, divorce and children's issues.
- 2.4 Selected statistical indicators

Old age support ratio: number has halved since 1970

	1970	2007
No. of persons aged 15-64 per elderly person aged 65	17.0	8.5
& over		

Divorces and annulments: number grew about four times between 1980 and 2007.

	1980	2007
Marriages	22,444	23,966
Divorces & annulments	1,721	7,226

Family violence: number of cases dealt by Subordinate Courts grew by about 17% between 2006 and 2007:

	2006	2007
Family violence	2,240	2,630

3 Services and solutions

- 3.1 There are about 40 family service centres (FSCs) in Singapore, including 2 agencies for single parents. FSCs help families through a range of services, from public education and awareness raising to direct services that may be preventive, remedial or developmental in nature.
- 3.2 FSCs aim to promote and improve the social well-being of individuals in the family, at every stage of life. Family services cater both to those leading fulfilling family lives but wish to find out more about strengthening family life, as well as those who are facing difficulties and need assistance on family matters.
- 3.3 There are three key family services:
 - a. Casework and counselling help families or individuals resolve their personal, social and emotional difficulties. Counselling services include marital counselling / premarital counselling, behavioural problems / child management, domestic violence, financial difficulties, and interpersonal relationships.
 - b. Preventive and developmental programmes complement remedial programmes to help specific target groups. Examples of such programmes are parenting workshops, support groups, children, youth and elderly programmes
 - c. *Information and referral service* links people in need with other community resources when an FSC is unable to service the client's needs.

4 Financials

- 4.1 Some FSCs operate independently, with separate financial statements. They may have one or more "branches", serving families in different locations. In terms of annual income, these FSCs range in size from several hundred thousand dollars to over a million dollars each. Financial surpluses, if any, are usually in the range of several hundred thousand dollars.
- 4.2 Some FSCS are part of larger "parent" organisations, with financial statements consolidated with those of the parent organisations. Many of these parent organisations are multimillion dollar operations in terms of income and expenditure.

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