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## Father at 18, now a graduate with first-class honours

Ke Zhiteng, 25, had to balance studies and work in the day, and taking care of his newborn baby at night.

Mr Ke met his wife when they were in polytechnic.

PHOTO: SHIN MIN DAILY NEWS

One afternoon in 2018, 18-year-old Ke Zhiteng (transliterated) and his then girlfriend, both polytechnic students, found out that they were about to become parents.

Mr Ke told Shin Min Daily News that he was initially uncertain about whether he was ready to start a family. While his parents were angry at first, they ultimately supported the couple. "We knew that we did not have enough financial resources, so we are really grateful for their full help and support."

This year, Mr Ke graduated from Nanyang Technological University (NTU) with first-class honours. Now a procurement executive, he has two children aged six and three with his wife.

### **Balancing work and studies**

Mr Ke took on a part-time job as a waiter while a polytechnic student, and learnt day trading in university to supplement the family income and spend more time with his child.

He did not do well academically as a polytechnic student. It wasn't until his wife became pregnant that he studied hard in hopes of providing his child with a better upbringing.

Mr Ke ultimately obtained a cumulative grade point average (cGPA) of 3.55 and successfully entered the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering in NTU.

He told the Chinese daily that although he walked an unconventional path, he did not receive judgment from his classmates and colleagues. "Having a group of open-minded friends really gave me a lot of encouragement."

Not everything was smooth sailing - his wife dropped out of school due to her pregnancy, and later attended a private school to obtain her degree. "She was initially very worried about what others would think, especially since we married young."

"I spent a lot of time comforting her and assuring her that I would take good care of her and support her in her further studies," he added.

Mr Ke said: "I made my experience public not to encourage everyone to get married and have children early, but to say that having children has greatly inspired me to grow, and given me the motivation to strive to work hard."

By [Seah Jun De](#) Journalist