



中華人民共和國香港特別行政區政府總部教育局
Education Bureau

Government Secretariat, The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
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4 May 2016

Miss Polly YEUNG
Clerk to Panel
Legislative Council Panel on Education
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Miss Yeung

Panel on Education

Follow-up to meeting on 1 February 2016

I refer to your letter dated 2 February 2016. Information regarding kindergarten education is provided at **Annex** as requested.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'C S Woo'.

(C S Woo)

for Secretary for Education

Encl.

Panel on Education**Follow-up to the meeting on 1 February 2016
Item III - Policy on kindergarten education**

- 1. Information on the waiting time for pre-school children with suspected developmental disorders to receive assessment services provided by the Department of Health/Hospital Authority.**

Hospital Authority (“HA”)¹

The multi-disciplinary professional teams of the HA comprising healthcare practitioners in various disciplines, including doctors (child and adolescent psychiatrists and paediatricians), clinical psychologists, nurses, speech therapists, occupational therapists and medical social workers, provide early identification, assessment and treatment services for children and adolescents in need (including those with special educational needs). The professional teams of the HA provide appropriate treatment and training, including in-patient, out-patient, day rehabilitation training and community support services to children and adolescents in need according to the severity of their clinical conditions, with a view to enhancing their speech and communication, sociability, emotion management, problem solving, learning and life skills. Appropriate support and training are also provided to the parents and caregivers in order to enhance their understanding on the condition and treatment needs of these children and adolescents in need. In addition, HA’s professional teams maintain close liaison with relevant organisations, such as schools and early training centres, to provide appropriate referrals and support according to the developmental needs of the children.

The HA has put in place an established triage system for new cases at the child and adolescent psychiatric specialist out-patient (“SOP”) clinics to ensure that patients with urgent healthcare needs are given medical attention within a reasonable time. New cases received at the psychiatric SOP clinics will be triaged into priority 1 (urgent), priority 2 (semi-urgent) and routine (stable) cases according to their severity and urgency to ensure that more urgent and severe cases are followed up promptly.

¹ The services and figures refer to those for children and adolescents for the Hospital Authority and children under age of 12 for the Department of Health. There is no breakdown for pre-school children as both of them do not keep track of the information by age group.

The HA seeks to keep the median waiting time for first appointment at the psychiatric SOP clinics for priority 1 and priority 2 cases within two and eight weeks respectively. This performance pledge has been fulfilled. The waiting time for new cases in non-urgent and stable condition is relatively longer as more patients are under this category. In 2014-15, the median waiting time for new cases in stable condition at the child and adolescent psychiatric SOP clinics was 56 weeks. If a patient's mental condition changes before the scheduled appointment, he or she may request the psychiatric SOP clinic concerned for re-assessment to determine whether his/her original appointment should be advanced. Patients whose condition drastically deteriorates or who require urgent medical attention may consider seeking medical treatment from the accident and emergency department, and the HA will provide appropriate support according to the needs of the children and adolescents.

In view of the increasing demand for child and adolescent psychiatric services, HA has strengthened its child and adolescent psychiatric teams in the Kowloon West Cluster and the New Territories East Cluster in 2014-15 and in the Kowloon East Cluster in 2015-16 respectively. An additional doctor, two psychiatric nurses (including one advanced psychiatric nurse and one registered psychiatric nurse), one occupational therapist and one clinical psychologist were recruited for each cluster to enhance the child and adolescent psychiatric services and support for children and adolescents in need (including those with special educational needs).

Department of Health¹

The Child Assessment Service ("CAS") provides comprehensive assessment and diagnosis for children under 12 years of age who are suspected to have developmental problems. After assessment, follow-up plans will be formulated according to the individual needs of children concerned. Children will be referred to other appropriate service providers for training and education support. While children await rehabilitation services, CAS will provide interim support to parents, such as seminars, workshops and practical training etc., with a view to enhancing parents' understanding of their children and community resources so that the parents could provide home-based training to facilitate the development and growth of the children.

Between 2011 and 2014, nearly all new cases were seen within three weeks after registration. Assessments for over 80% of newly registered cases were completed within six months. CAS has adopted a triage system to ensure that children with urgent and more serious conditions

are accorded with higher priority in assessment with a view to enhancing service efficiency. The actual waiting time depends on the complexity and conditions of individual cases.

In view that the demand for services provided by CAS has surged continuously, the Government has allocated funding for 2015-16 and onwards for the conversion of 10 non-civil-service contract posts to civil service posts in order to strengthen the manpower support and enhance the service capacity to meet the rising number of referred cases. The 10 civil service posts include 4 Medical & Health Officers, 4 Clinical Psychologists and 2 Speech Therapists. To fulfill the performance pledge of providing assessment and professional diagnosis within six months, the Government will allocate funding for 2016-17 and onwards for the Department of Health to set up an additional Child Assessment Centre.

2. Information on the annual intake of -

- (a) full-time first-year-first-degree bachelor programmes in early childhood education ("ECE");**
- (b) part-time bachelor degree programmes in ECE; and**
- (c) other postgraduate programmes leading to equivalent ECE qualification.**

The respective number of intakes of bachelor degree and postgraduate diploma on teacher training programmes in ECE, including both University Grants Committee-funded and self-financing programmes, offered by teacher training institutions in the 2015/16 school year is tabulated below:

ECE Teacher Training Programme	No. of Intakes	
	Bachelor Degree	Postgraduate Diploma
Pre-service ^{Note (1)}	263	34 ^{Note (2)}
In-service ^{Note (1)}	556	182 ^{Note (2)}

Note:

- (1) Pre-service programmes may be delivered in full-time and/or part-time whereas in-service ones are usually in part-time mode. We do not have a breakdown of number of intakes by the delivery mode of full-time or part-time.
- (2) In general, students of postgraduate diploma on teacher training programmes in ECE are holders of non-ECE and/or non-local Bachelor's degrees.

- 3. The estimated range of rental subsidy for eligible kindergartens on top of the "basic half-day unit subsidy" upon the implementation of free kindergarten education in the 2017-2018 school year.**

For the free quality kindergarten education policy to be implemented in the 2017/18 school year, EDB is formulating the implementation details in consultation with various stakeholders. Details will be released in the third quarter of 2016. Estimated funding for individual measures such as rental subsidy under the new policy is not yet available at this stage.