

For discussion on
2 July 2021

Legislative Council Panel on Education

Promoting Home-school Co-operation and Parent Education

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the strategies adopted for promoting home-school co-operation and parent education by the Education Bureau (EDB) and the latest progress of work.

Background

2. Parents are key stakeholders in the school education process, playing crucial roles in supporting students' learning as well as fostering their positive values and whole-person development. Therefore, the EDB has all along been supporting home-school co-operation, forging home-school partnership and promoting parent education through kindergartens (KGs) as well as primary and secondary schools (including special schools). According to the recommendation by the Education Commission (EC) in its Report No.5, we set up the Committee on Home-School Co-operation (CHSC) in 1993, as an advisory body to promote home-school co-operation, and advise the EDB and other government departments and non-government organisations on ways to promote parental involvement in the education process.

3. The Chief Executive announced in the 2017 Policy Address the establishment of several task forces to carry out in-depth reviews on eight key areas of education, including home-school co-operation and parent education. The review on this area aimed to avoid excessive competition so that children would grow up healthily and happily. In December 2017, the EC set up the Task Force on Home-School Cooperation and Parent Education (Task Force) to review the existing approach of promotion of home-school cooperation and parent education, and to formulate directions, strategies and measures for facilitating home-school co-operation and parent education. The Task Force released its report in April 2019¹. The EDB has fully accepted the recommendations of the Task Force (see **Annex 1** for details) and relevant measures are being taken forward and implemented progressively.

¹ The report of the Task Force is available at the EC's website:
https://www.e-c.edu.hk/en/publications_and_related_documents/education_reports.html

Latest Progress

Home-school Co-operation

4. With the support of the CHSC, the EDB actively encourages schools to set up Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs). Currently, all Government and aided schools as well as nearly one third of KGs have set up PTAs. To encourage PTAs of schools to organise more school-based home-school co-operation activities, apart from applying for Subsidy for PTA, PTAs of schools can also apply for Subsidy for Home-School Co-operation Activities to organise two home-school co-operation activities at most, and Subsidy for Joint Home-School Co-operation Project to conduct one joint home-school co-operation project with other school(s) or PTA(s) every year. Starting from the 2019/20 school year, the EDB has doubled the ceilings² of these two subsidies for PTAs of schools to organise more home-school co-operation and parent education activities.

5. The CHSC organises various activities on home-school co-operation and parent education every year, including parent-child talks, workshops, competition series, annual symposiums, etc. Among them, “Parents-Also-Appreciate-Teachers Drive” particularly encourages parents to cultivate in their children a sense of gratitude towards teachers. In the 2020/21 school year, the CHSC organises parent talks covering various themes, including “Learning Needs of Children at Kindergarten Level”, “Healthy Development of Children and Parent-child Communication”, “Together for a Fun Internet World” and “How to Enhance Communication Skills between Children and Parents Through Psychology”, etc. Moreover, regarding the mental and psychological well-being of students, the CHSC, together with Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations (FPTAs) and regional associations of school heads, would continue to organise talks for parents to provide them with relevant information for identifying and supporting students with emotional and stress problems, and promote positive parenting to enhance children’s resilience against adversity.

Parent Education

6. With reference to the recommendation of the Task Force, the EDB adopts a “parent-based” approach in promoting parent education. Schools are the most direct and effective platform. Therefore, we adopt the approach regarding “schools as a primary platform and the community as a complementary” in promoting home-school co-operation and parent education.

² The ceilings of Subsidy for Home-School Co-operation Activities and Subsidy for Joint Home-School Co-operation Project have been increased from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and \$10,000 to \$20,000 respectively.

7. At the school level, the EDB subsidises PTAs of schools to organise home-school co-operation activities and parent education courses. In the 2020/21 school year, we have commissioned a post-secondary institution to provide 12-hour short training courses for teachers at kindergarten, primary and secondary levels to sharpen their skills in mediating and communicating with parents, with a view to enhancing their capabilities to promote home-school co-operation and parent education. At the community level, FPTAs have been established in the 18 districts. The EDB has provided resources to FPTAs to support them to arrange diversified “community-based” parent education courses and activities. We will commission non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to arrange free talks or workshops in different regions so as to expand the coverage of community-based parent education and cater for the diverse needs of parents.

Enhancing Parental Involvement in Early Childhood Education

8. During the kindergarten stage, parents generally show more enthusiasm to learn about and engage in parent education activities provided by KGs. To encourage more KGs to set up PTAs, starting from the 2019/20 school year, the EDB has increased the amount of Set Up Grant and Annual Grant for PTAs of KGs³, and helped School Sponsoring Bodies and KGs better understand the procedures and matters pertaining to the establishment of PTAs through conducting visits and producing related video clips and resources. Also, the CHSC organises sharing sessions with a view to enabling KG teachers and parents to understand the rationales and daily operation of PTAs, and to provide support to principals, teachers and parents from KGs without a PTA or with a newly established PTA.

9. In addition, the EDB has rolled out a parent education framework at kindergarten stage⁴ in the 2018/19 school year. KGs are encouraged to draw reference from this framework in organising school-based or joint school parent education programmes. As for the territory-wide level, starting from the 2018/19 school year, the EDB has commissioned tertiary institutions to organise different parent education talks to enhance parents’ understanding of learning through play, the learning characteristics and learner diversity of

³ Starting from the 2019/20 school year, the amount of Set Up Grant each KG can apply for has been doubled from \$5,000 to \$10,000. Also, the amount of the Annual Grant provided to KGs is a double of that provided to primary and secondary schools and it is annually adjusted in accordance with the Composite Consumer Price Index.

⁴ The Parent Education Framework at Kindergarten Stage focuses on “Roles of parents with children of kindergarten age”, covering three major domains: “Learn more about quality kindergarten education”, “Understand children’s growth” and “Respect children’s uniqueness”. There are eight themes under the domains to meet the concerns and needs of parents, including “Curriculum promoting children’s balanced development”, “Home-school co-operation”, “Interface between kindergarten and primary education”, “Choose a quality kindergarten”, “Children’s developmental and learning characteristics – Learning through play”, “Success is not determined at the scratch line”, “Learner diversity of children” and “Do not compare children with each other”.

children at KG stage, and to promote the positive parenting skills that help children grow up healthily and happily.

Providing Useful Information to parents

10. The CHSC has a webpage to disseminate up-to-date school information, such as Primary and Secondary School Profiles, information on parent education and home-school co-operation activities, for parents' and schools' reference. In addition, the EDB set up a one-stop parent education website "Smart Parent Net" (<https://www.parent.edu.hk/>) in 2018 to disseminate important information on supporting physical and psychological development of students, which includes parent-child relationship, parenting skills, and emotional management of parents, etc. A designated page "Parent Education Activity Information Hub" was set up on the website in June 2021 to provide various kinds of information on parent education courses and activities organised by different Government bureaux and departments as well as post-secondary institutions in Hong Kong.

Positive Parent Campaign

11. The EDB has launched the territory-wide Positive Parent Campaign (the Campaign) to promote parent education through extensive and diversified channels, with a view to fostering positive thinking among parents to help children grow up happily. At the school level, with the support of the CHSC and regional school heads associations, the EDB has organised a number of competitions and activities. These activities have been well-received by the schools, students and parents. Among them, we organised a "Mascot Design Competition" between June and August 2020, and announced in November 2020 that "Mommy Light" and "Daddy Light" were selected to serve as the ambassadors of the Campaign, and with two new family members joining them very recently. More details are available at **Annex 2**. We have also distributed promotion items, carrying the images of the mascots and winning entries of the slogan competition previously organised by the EDB, to forge better understanding of parents, students and teachers on positive parent education.

12. At the community level, the EDB has been broadcasting a set of three Announcements in the Public Interests on television and radio starting from September 2020 (see **Annex 3** for details), and also using a variety of promotion channels to promote the importance of happy and healthy development of children. We are planning to launch outreaching promotional activities through diversified means so as to reach out to parents of different backgrounds in the community and spread the messages of the Campaign. Furthermore, with the provision of the Home-School Co-operation Grants, FPTAs from 16 districts for the first time co-organise a drama titled "Positive Parent Education Drama" (正向家長教育舞台劇) to be held in July 2021.

Supporting Parents with Diverse Needs

13. As recommended by the Task Force, the EDB will commission post-secondary institutions to develop a curriculum framework on parent education by phase for parents of students of KGs, primary schools and secondary schools. The framework is planned to be launched progressively starting from the third quarter of 2021. The curriculum framework will be a common basis for systematic provision of all parent education courses, including those territory-wide, community-based, school-based and e-learning parent education courses for working parents, aiming to provide parents at different stages with courses to achieve different objectives. We will also commission post-secondary institutions and NGOs to organise relevant courses and activities in accordance with the curriculum framework to cater for parents with different needs and backgrounds.

14. To equip parents with knowledge and skills in supporting children with special educational needs (SEN), the EDB has issued and uploaded onto its website the “Guide for Parents on Whole School Approach to Integrated Education” and a series of leaflets about nurturing children with different types of SEN for parents’ reference. We also provide parents with information on supporting children with SEN and arrange workshops and seminars, etc., for parents, as appropriate. On home-school cooperation, the EDB requires schools to establish a systematic and regular communication mechanism to strengthen communication and co-operation with parents. Schools should let parents understand and support the schools’ support measures and listen to parents’ views to achieve better results. In addition, school-based educational psychologists and school-based speech therapists will collaborate with Special Educational Needs Coordinators, school social workers and teachers to enhance parents’ understanding of nurturing children with SEN through consultation and school-based training. For students with SEN having persistent and severe learning or adjustment difficulties, schools will invite their parents to attend case meetings to jointly formulate Individual Education Plans for the students so as to provide them with more effective support.

15. The EDB provides a series of parent education programmes for parents of non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students, so as to help them support their children’s learning, encourage their children to master the Chinese language, and enable them to have a more comprehensive understanding of the multiple pathways available to their children. In the 2020/21 school year, the EDB has commissioned an NGO and a post-secondary institution to provide diversified parent education programmes for NCS parents, including interactive talks, workshops, exhibitions, community visits, etc. to meet the different needs of NCS parents and enhance their level of participation in the activities.

Way Forward

16. We will continue to review and enhance relevant measures in promoting home-school co-operation and enhancing parent education. We hope that with the participation and collaboration of various stakeholders, we will be able to further strengthen home-school co-operation and promote parents' positive attitudes in nurturing their children so as to support students' healthy development and effective learning.

Education Bureau

June 2021

**Recommendations in the Report of the Task Force on
Home-School Co-operation and Parent Education**

Short-term measures

- (i) The EDB should provide more resources to increase the amount of Subsidy for Home-School Co-operation Activities for schools and PTAs.
- (ii) The EDB should increase the number of activities which FPTAs could apply for Subsidy for Home-School Co-operation Activities, and set up a new type of subsidy for FPTAs to organise joint-district parent education activities.
- (iii) The amount of Set-up Grant and Annual Grant for PTAs of KGs should be increased to encourage more KGs to set up a PTA;
- (iv) Publicity and education should be stepped up to help KGs and their school sponsoring bodies better understand the procedures and matters pertaining to the setting up of PTAs;
- (v) Tertiary institutions (TEIs) or NGOs should be commissioned by the EDB to develop a curriculum framework or a set of curriculum guidelines on parent education;
- (vi) Short training courses for teachers should be provided to enhance their skills in promoting home-school co-operation and parent education, as well as skills in relation to mediation and home-school communication;
- (vii) The EDB's parent education website "Smart Parent Net" should be developed to become a more popular parent education learning platform;
- (viii) A territory-wide "Positive Parent Campaign" should be launched and promoted through different platforms. The EDB should also produce videos and articles on the theme of "Positive Parent Campaign";
- (ix) The EDB should provide funding for KGs and public sector schools to implement school-based activities under "Positive Parent Campaign";

- (x) NGOs should be commissioned to conduct out-reaching promotion activities such as photo-taking, games and arts activities in places including public housing estates, shopping malls and markets so as to reach more parents of different backgrounds for promoting the “Positive Parent Campaign”;

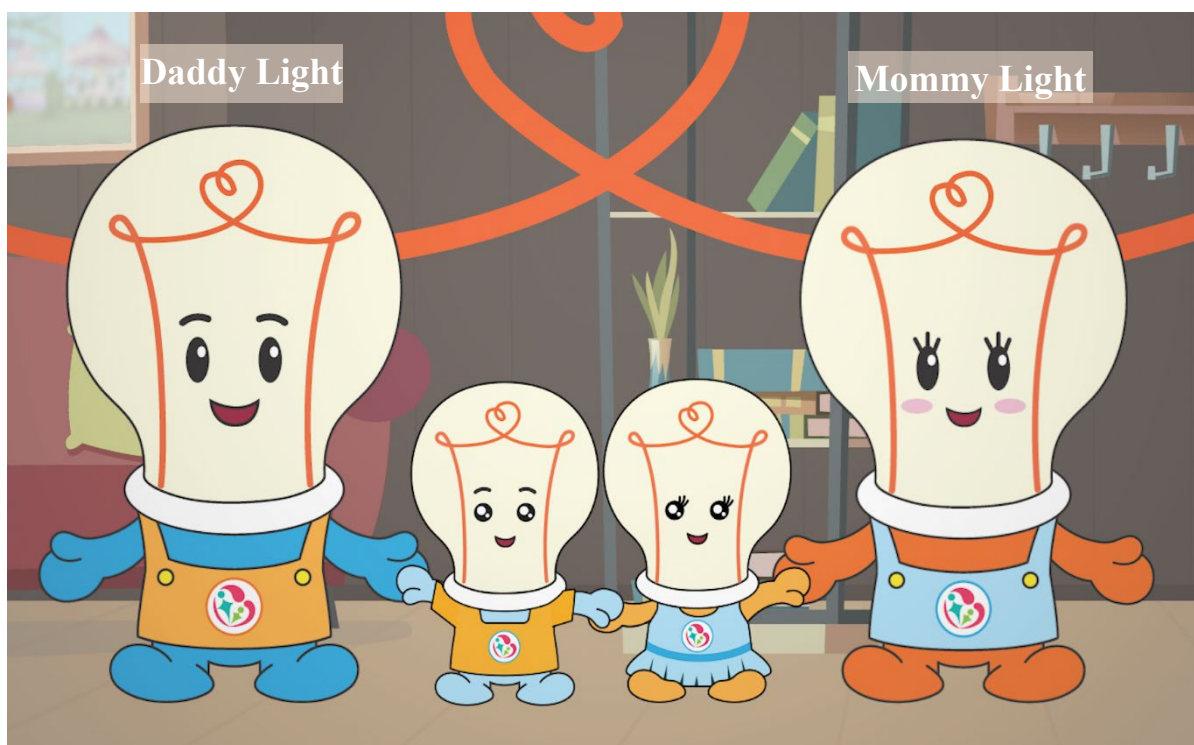
Medium-term measures

- (xi) TEIs or NGOs should be commissioned by the EDB to design and organise structured and evidence-based parent education courses in accordance with the curriculum framework or guidelines on parent education developed by the Government, whose targets include parents in general, grandparents, single parents, and parents of students with SEN, NCS, newly arrived and non-attendance students;
- (xii) TEIs should be encouraged or commissioned to conduct various researches on home-school co-operation and parent education;
- (xiii) NGOs should be commissioned to provide free parent talks or workshops on various topics regularly in different regions, whose targets include parents in general, grandparents, single parents, and parents of SEN, NCS, newly arrived and non-attendance students;
- (xiv) TEIs or NGOs should be commissioned to develop and provide e-learning parent education courses to enable self-learning through computers or mobile phones;

Long-term measures

- (xv) Parent education courses specifically developed for fathers, mothers, grandparents and single parents should be optimised with a view to covering members of different family status and meeting their needs in nurturing children;
- (xvi) TEIs or NGOs should be commissioned by the EDB to optimise tailor-made parent education for parents of SEN, NCS, newly arrived and non-attendance students, etc.
- (xvii) TEIs or NGOs should be commissioned by the EDB to design and provide workplace parent education courses specially for working parents; and
- (xviii) Companies should be encouraged to join workplace parent education courses through media such as Announcements of Public Interest. Opportunities to co-operate with other organisations which promote programmes on corporate social responsibility could also be explored.



Ambassadors of the Positive Parent Campaign



Introduction:

The EDB organised a mascot design competition between June and August 2020 to select the mascots for the Positive Parent Campaign for promoting positive parent education. “Mommy Light” and “Daddy Light” were selected as the ambassadors of the Campaign to promote positive parent education. These light bulbs give people the feeling of enthusiasm, optimism, warmth and happiness, and people will always remember their smiling faces. The light emitted by “Mommy Light” and “Daddy Light” represents the tender loving care and warmth from parents to children, brightening up their future and leading the children into a right path and a positive life. Very recently, two new members have joined the family. They will join hands with “Mommy Light” and “Daddy Light” to help promote the Positive Parent Campaign.

**Television Announcements in the Public Interests (API)
for the Positive Parent Campaign**

Key Message of the API	Link
<p>(1) The first video reveals the way parents and children should get along with one another in our daily life, showing that care, encouragement and acceptance are the crucial elements for building a positive family. Parents are reminded to guide their children positively, teach their children to show care to others, and give positive feedback to their good behaviours.</p>	<p>https://www.parent.edu.hk/en/article/API1</p> 
<p>(2) The second video explains that each child is unique in her/his character and abilities. Parents should let their children understand their uniqueness and help them develop their potentials. At the same time, it calls on parents' awareness to avoid setting "winning at the scratch line" as the goal and prevent the mindset of excessive competition from affecting the parent-child relationship, so that children can grow up healthily and happily.</p>	<p>https://www.parent.edu.hk/en/article/API2</p> 
<p>(3) The third video reminds parents that the pursuit of perfection in every matter will only impose invisible pressure on their children. It will also affect parent-child relationship. Parents should learn to relax and let go sometimes, allow their children to develop at their own pace, and accompany them to grow up happily.</p>	<p>https://www.parent.edu.hk/en/article/API3</p> 