

CE visits nursery school providing pre-school rehabilitation services (with photos/video)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, visited a nursery school providing pre-school rehabilitation services in Causeway Bay this afternoon (September 17).

Accompanied by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, and the Director of Social Welfare, Ms Carol Yip, Mrs Lam was briefed by the school principal on its day child care and education services. The school offers six training and care service places for children with special needs under the Integrated Programme in Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centre, while 11 pupils are receiving On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services (OPRS) in the school. The school also provides extended hours service and occasional child care service for parents in need.

Mrs Lam toured the integrated education classroom and saw how children with special needs receive training under OPRS. She also met tutors and parents of children with special needs to learn more about the effectiveness of the service.

"I proposed in the 2017 Policy Address to regularise OPRS in the 2018/19 school year and increase the number of service places from 3 000 to 7 000 incrementally. The pledge will be realised next month, enabling more pre-school children with special needs to receive necessary training early in their prime learning period," Mrs Lam said.

With the increase in the number of places to 7 000 for OPRS next month, the number of non-governmental organisations operating the service will be increased from 18 to 21 while the number of kindergartens and kindergarten-cum-child care centres providing OPRS will be raised from 709 to 852, covering more than 80 per cent of kindergartens and kindergarten-cum-child care centres in Hong Kong. The Government will continue to review the demand for pre-school rehabilitation services as well as the manpower supply of relevant allied health professionals to achieve the policy objective of "zero waiting time".

There is a dire need for children in pre-primary education who have special needs, such as those with autism, hyperactivity disorder, language disorder or dyslexia, to be provided with pre-school rehabilitation services as early as possible. In late 2015, the Government launched the Pilot Scheme on OPRS, under which multi-disciplinary teams visit schools to provide services for children with special needs. These teams comprise occupational therapists, physiotherapists, speech therapists, psychologists, social workers and special child care workers.

"Children are our future. The Government will continue to allocate substantial resources and roll out measures to create the best environment conducive to the growth of children," Mrs Lam said.

