

Commission on Children convenes second meeting

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, chaired the second meeting of the Commission on Children (Commission) today (October 30).

The Commission agreed to establish four Working Groups to render full support for the Commission to take forward its committed work programmes. Apart from the agreement at the first meeting of the Commission to establish two Working Groups to focus on research, public engagement, public education and publicity, the Commission agreed to establish two additional Working Groups, one on children with special needs and the other on children protection.

"The two additional Working Groups will respectively help review services and support for children with special needs and on children protection, as well as identify areas for improvement and recommend measures to bridge any service gaps on relevant support services. With the establishment of the four Working Groups, this would facilitate Members' more in-depth discussions on particular issues and formulation of practical proposals for the Commission's consideration. It would provide an effective mechanism for the Commission to address a host of priority issues for the early benefits of children," Mr Cheung said.

Meanwhile, the meeting noted the measures related to school education, parent education and home-school co-operation regarding play time for children. These measures include emphasising "child-centredness" as the core value of the curriculum, and adopting the approach of "learning through play" as a learning and teaching strategy at the kindergarten stage. For the stage of primary schools, schools and parents are encouraged to leave suitable room and time for students/children to decide on their schedule for the development of multiple talents. There is also active promotion of parent education and home-school co-operation to enable parents to better understand the characteristics of children's growth and learning and to give their children appropriate care and support.

The meeting also noted the efforts made by the Government in providing diversified, innovative and interesting outdoor play areas for children to have fun and enjoyment, develop their mind and body, and enhance their interaction with others. Major examples include ushering in new design concepts and bringing local community involvement in the design process, and organising creative and diversified activities in parks including collaboration with non-governmental organisations to enhance the play experience of children.

The meeting also noted the support measures in the education of children of ethnic minorities, in particular in supporting schools and non-Chinese

speaking (NCS) students to learn the Chinese language systematically, as well as providing multiple pathways for NCS students. These measures include continuing to implement and refine the Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework (Learning Framework); continuing to commission tertiary institutions to provide school-based professional support service for schools admitting NCS students to enhance teachers' professional capability; adapting the school-based curriculum, learning and teaching strategies and assessments with reference to the Learning Framework; and providing additional resources to assist schools in stepping up support for NCS students.