

## **EDB to provide subsidy to kindergartens to support students' learning at home**

The Education Bureau (EDB) issued a circular memorandum today (December 23) to all kindergartens (KGs), kindergarten-cum-child care centres and schools with kindergarten classes joining the kindergarten education scheme (collectively referred to as "Scheme-KGs" hereafter), announcing details of two schemes to subsidise KGs to support their students' learning at home. The estimated total funding will be about \$86 million.

The Secretary for Education, Mr Kevin Yeung, said, "Due to the impact of COVID-19, KGs have to suspend face-to-face classes and adopt diversified modes to help children learn at home, so as to achieve the goal of 'Suspending Classes without Suspending Learning'. We are thankful to all members of the KG sector for their continuous contribution and care on children during this period so as to sustain their learning and support their healthy growth."

"Since it is not desirable for young children to use electronic screen for a long period of time, e-learning is not suitable for KG students. In principle, real-time online teaching is also not supported at KG level. KGs may encourage children to read at home, and design learning activities which suit the abilities and interests of children. KGs may also provide guidelines and learning materials to parents according to their needs, so as to sustain children's learning interest, facilitate them to continue to develop life skills and acquire knowledge, as well as instilling positive values."

Mr Yeung added, "Under the 'new normal' in education, all KGs have been accumulating experiences in conducting home learning activities and it is the time to further promote the relevant culture. The EDB has decided to provide a one-off subsidy to support KGs to implement two home learning schemes, namely the Gift Book Scheme and Do It Yourself (DIY) Handicraft and Home Learning Package Scheme (Learning Package Scheme). The two schemes aim to cultivate children's reading interest and promote reading culture, as well as encourage creativity of KGs to design interesting home learning activities that meet children's interests, abilities and learning needs."

The EDB will provide a grant through the Gift Book Scheme for KGs to purchase a printed book for each student in each of the 2020/21 and 2021/22 school year so as to cultivate their reading interests. The grant of the Gift Book Scheme will be calculated in accordance with the number of eligible students in a school, and the amount allocated will be \$100 per student per school year. No application is required. KGs should use the grant to purchase books for each student and implement different measures to encourage children's reading at home, parent-child reading or book sharing with peers.

Meanwhile, all Scheme-KGs are eligible to apply for the grant of Learning Package Scheme, which is capped at \$50,000 or \$80,000, depending on the size of the KG. KGs are encouraged to design simple, relaxing and interesting learning tasks or parent-child activities and use the grant to prepare materials and guidelines for facilitating students to make DIY handicraft, or produce home-learning packages for students. School sponsoring bodies/operators can also play a coordinating role to assist their KGs to design activities and develop materials collaboratively to leverage the synergy.

The grant for Gift Book Scheme will be disbursed in January 2021 the earliest, while the one-off grant for Learning Package Scheme will be disbursed in March 2021 the earliest.

Mr Yeung hoped that KGs would make good use of the two additional grants to enhance kindergarten education services by strengthening the support on students' learning at home and promoting home-school co-operation as well as parent-child relationship.