

[SLW visits After School Care Programme for Pre-primary Children service centre \(with photos\)](#)

The Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, visited Sweet Heart After School Care Centre for Pre-primary Children in Sham Shui Po this afternoon (September 14) to take a closer look at its re-engineered service, which commenced operation in mid-August.

Accompanied by the Chairman of People Service Centre (the operator of the centre), Mr Ng Hang-sau, Dr Law first toured the facilities and observed the activities provided by the centre, and exchanged views with the staff and parents. He was briefed on the different enrolment demands for the morning, afternoon and evening sessions, and noted that over half of the children enrolled in the centre received full-fee waiving, thereby relieving the burden of needy families with financial hardship.

The centre was formerly the Parents' Mutual Help Child Care Centre (MHCCC). Such MHCCCs are operated by non-governmental organisations on a self-financing basis to provide a flexible form of child care service for children under 3 years old. To strengthen child care services, the Government announced in the 2018 Policy Address a range of initiatives. These included accepting the recommendation of the report of the Consultancy Study on the Long-term Development of Child Care Services to re-engineer MHCCCs in phases to cope with the community's child care needs and optimise the use of public resources. A feasibility study on the provision of after-school care service for children aged 3 to 6 in suitable welfare facilities was completed in April 2020. A total of 19 MHCCCs are now being re-engineered in phases from 2021-22 to provide after-school care service for pre-primary children aged 3 to under 6 through additional provision of social workers and supporting staff. As of August 2021, four MHCCCs have been re-engineered.

Dr Law said, "The current-term Government is committed to promoting pro-child and pro-family policies and an array of measures have been implemented to strengthen child care service. These include enhancing the long-term planning of child care centres (CCCs), improving the manning ratio, increasing the level of subsidy for CCC service, providing child care training for grandparents, and increasing the service places of aided standalone CCCs, occasional child care service and extended hours service. In addition, a number of enhancement measures have been introduced to the Fee-waiving Subsidy Scheme under the After School Care Programme, with a view to better supporting low-income and needy families."

