

WOMEN'S COMMISSION
Work of the Education Department on Parent Education

INTRODUCTION

This paper informs Members of the measures initiated by the Education Department in supporting parent education and invite Members' views on them.

BACKGROUND

2. As parents are the first teachers of children, parent-school cooperation is essential to bring out the best in our youngsters. In this connection, measures have been initiated to support parent education and to encourage parents to participate in educational affairs. With the support of the Education and Manpower Bureau, the Director of Education put forward a funding proposal for \$50 million to implement various initiatives on parent education, which was approved by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council on 8 June 2001.

3. A Parent Education Implementation Team was formed in the Education Department in September 2001, under the direction of the Steering Committee on Parent Education¹, to implement the Parent Education Initiatives.

“PARENT EDUCATION INITIATIVES”

4. The objectives of the Parent Education Initiatives are:-
- (a) to raise parents' awareness of their roles as their children's first teachers, and to understand the extent of their influence on their children;

¹ The Steering Committee on Parent Education was set up in end 2000 and chaired by the Director of Education, with members from Social Welfare Department, Home Affairs Department, Education and Manpower Bureau, Department of Health and representatives from NGOs. The main task is to formulate directives on and oversee implementation of programmes of parent education.

- (b) to equip parents with the knowledge and skills in relationship building, communication and management of behaviour problems, so they could promote their children's whole-person development at various stages;
- (c) to provide support to parents with special needs; and
- (d) to promote and to implement parent education.

Details of the programmes and services included are set out in ensuing paragraphs.

Parent Education Training Materials

5. The Education Department will develop a series of parent education training materials for parents with children of different age groups (pre-school, primary school, adolescents) to equip parents with the knowledge and skills in promoting their children's physical, cognitive, and psychological development, including relationship building skills, communication skills, coping skills and behaviour management skills. The first drafts of these materials will be released in April 2002, August 2002 and April 2003 respectively. Another three series of parent education training materials for parents of children and adolescents with emotional and/or behaviour problems and special education needs will also be developed and they will be released in 2002 and 2003.

6. In addition, the Department will produce self-learning packages and a series of parent education pamphlets on child development, parent-child relationship, learning and behaviour problems. These parent education materials will be delivered through schools, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), student health centres and maternal and child health centres. Part of the materials will be delivered through the Internet and radio stations.

Parent Education Activities

7. Schools, parent-teacher associations, employers and NGOs are encouraged to apply for parent education programme grants to organise parent education activities. Applications can be submitted throughout the year and

results are announced quarterly. Activities in the following areas would be considered:-

- (a) School based – this refers to programmes organised in schools and they are targeted at parents of students of those schools. Applications for activities under this area that have been approved include activities such as seminars, talks, workshops, and outdoor activities on various themes related to parent education.
- (b) Workplace based – the Parent Education Implementation Team will collaborate with various NGOs to deliver parent education programmes for employees in the workplace. Activities are usually in the format of talks on various topics related to parent education.
- (c) Home place based - the Parent Education Implementation Team will collaborate with various NGOs to deliver parent education programmes to residents in various housing estates. Activities are usually in the format of talks on various topics related to parent education.
- (d) District based – provision of parent education programmes to parents in various districts. Activities may include talks, seminars, carnivals and mass activities, etc.
- (e) Territory-wide parent education programmes – provision of parent education programmes throughout the territory by using the mass media. Two television series are being produced.
- (f) Outreach programmes – NGOs undertaking these activities would proactively reach out to parents who may be hard to reach or parents with special needs (e.g. single parents) and provide them with support on parent education.

Training of Parent Educators

8. Training courses for parent educators and potential parent educators would be provided to equip them with the knowledge and skills in

parent education. The potential target participants may include student guidance officers/teachers, parent-teacher association representatives, supervisors of nurseries and kindergartens, nurses, teachers, and social workers. Training course contents may include topics like child development, theoretical approaches to parent education, cultural issues, group skills, demonstration and presentation skills and evaluation skills.

Promotion of Parent Education

9. In order to promote parent education, the Steering Committee on Parent Education has designed a two-year publicity plan making use of the mass media (such as radio, television, newspaper, Internet, etc.) and organising mass activities. The publicity plan includes:-

- (a) assigning the first Sunday of April as a special day to encourage parents and children to express their appreciation for one another;
- (b) setting up a Radio Parenting College in collaboration with radio station(s) to deliver information on parent education;
- (c) delivering parent education programmes, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Edcity, via the Internet. A website would be launched with a parents' forum, interactive parent education archive and parent education programmes.

EVALUATION AND MONITORING

10. The Steering Committee on Parent Education is responsible for the evaluation and monitoring of the Parent Education Initiatives. The parent education training materials will be subject to pilot, formative, process and outcome evaluation. All funded parent education activities will also be evaluated using standard forms to measure parent satisfaction and the data will be analysed to produce a systematic database on the effectiveness of parent education.

RELEVANCE TO WOMEN

11. Parenting is considered to be the responsibility of both fathers and mothers and as such, the programmes and services are basically relevant to

women who are mothers already or women who may/intend to become mothers. The Parent Education Initiative aims to offer parent education programmes in a variety of formats (e.g. workplace based, home place based, internet, radio) so women can choose a format appropriate to their own needs.

12. There are also outreach programmes for parents with special needs and these services are relevant to certain groups of women such as single mothers etc.

13. Through public education and parent education programmes, we aim to raise the awareness of men in their roles as parents, so that they would take a more active role in parenting. In turn, women will get more support from their spouses/partners in their parenting work.

ADVICE SOUGHT

14. Members are invited to:-

- (a) note the programmes and services carried out by the Education Department under the auspices of “Parent Education Initiatives” (paragraphs 5 – 10); and
- (b) consider and comment on the above programmes and services from the women’s perspective.

Education Department
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