

## **Notes of the Second Meeting of the Commission on Children**

**Date : 30 October 2018**  
**Time : 3:00 p.m.**  
**Venue : Training cum Lecture Room, 5/F, West Wing,  
Central Government Offices**

### **Present**

#### **Chairperson**

Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung	Chief Secretary for Administration (CS)
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#### **Vice-chairperson**

Dr Law Chi-kwong	Secretary for Labour and Welfare (SLW)
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#### **Ex-officio Members**

Dr Christine Choi	Acting Secretary for Education (Ag SED)
Mr Andy Chan	Under Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (for Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs)
Dr Chui Tak-yi	Under Secretary for Food and Health (for Secretary for Food and Health)
Mr Jack Chan	Under Secretary for Home Affairs (for Secretary for Home Affairs)
Dr Constance Chan	Director of Health (D of H)
Ms Pang Kit-ling	Assistant Director (Family & Child Welfare) (for Director of Social Welfare)

Mr Howard Yam

Assistant Director (3)  
(for Director of Home Affairs)  
Chairperson of Women's  
Commission

Ms Chan Yuen-han

**Non-official Members**

Mr Peter Au Yeung Wai-hong  
Miss Bakar Fariha Salma Deiya  
Miss Cheng Hui-kiu  
Ms Janus Cheng  
Mr Chow Wai-chung  
Ms Kathy Chung Lai-kam  
Mr Dennis Ho Chi-kuen  
Dr Patrick Ip  
Dr Sanly Kam Shau-wan  
Mr Edwin Lee  
Mrs Priscilla Lui Tsang Sun-kai  
Ms Shalini Mahtani  
Mr Kenny Ng Kwan-lim  
Dr Halina Poon Suk-han  
Ms Susan So Suk-yin  
Ms Michelle Tam Chi-yun  
Dr Sandra Tsang Kit-man  
Mr Gary Wong Chi-him  
Dr Lilian Wong Hiu-lei  
Ms Kathy Wong Kin-ho  
Dr Wong Kwai-yau

**Secretary**

Ms Vivian Ko

Principal Assistant Secretary for  
Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 1

**In attendance**

**Chief Secretary for Administration's Private Office**

Ms Candy Lau

Administrative Assistant to Chief  
Secretary for Administration

Ms Kathy Siu

Political Assistant to Chief  
Secretary for Administration

## **Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB)**

Ms Chang King-yiu	Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Miss Leonia Tai	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1
Mr Eugene Wan	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 1A
Mr Joseph Yu	Chief Executive Officer (Commission on Children)

## **Department of Health (DH)**

Dr Thomas Chung	Consultant Community Medicine (Student Health Service)
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## **Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD)**

Mrs Doris Fok [For item 4 only]	Assistant Director (Leisure Services)1 (AD(LS)1)
Ms Pat Wong [For item 4 only]	Senior Leisure Manager (Land-based Venues)

## **Member absent with apologies**

Prof Daniel Shek Tan-lei	Chairperson of Family Council
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## **Item 1: Confirmation of the Notes of the First Meeting held on 28 June 2018**

Members noted the proposed revisions made by some Members to paragraphs 6 and 10 of the draft notes of the first meeting held on 28 June 2018. CS and Members confirmed the revised notes without further amendment.

## **Item 2: Matters arising**

2. CS advised that the structure of Working Groups would be discussed under agenda item 3 “Establishment of Working Groups under

the Commission on Children”.

3. In response to a Member’s enquiry on the progress of the Consultancy Study on the Long-term Development of Child Care Services (the Study) and her request to include her additional comments on the Study (which were sent to the Secretariat after the meeting) as post-meeting notes of the first meeting, CS said that the Consultant had taken into account the views of the Commission on Children (the Commission) and those collected through different channels in finalising the report which was expected to be completed by end-November 2018. The Consultant would brief the Commission and other relevant committees on the findings of the final report.

**Item 3: Establishment of Working Groups under the Commission on Children**  
**[Paper No. 04/2018]**

4. CS advised that, apart from the agreement at the first meeting to establish two Working Groups to focus on research, public engagement, public education and publicity, to take forward the many important tasks committed by the Commission, two additional Working Groups would be set up, with one focusing on children with special needs and the other on children protection. The two working groups together would seek to “accommodate” the major issues proposed by Members at the first meeting and subsequent to the meeting.

5. The following suggestions were made by individual Members –

- (a) The Commission should reconsider a working group to start preparing for the setting up of a statutory Commission.
- (b) The four working groups should start operation at the same time. Adequate resources should be provided to the Commission Secretariat.
- (c) Regarding the Working Group on Research and Public Engagement, as research and public engagement involved work of different nature, consideration should be given to putting public engagement under the Working Group on Promotion of Children’s Rights and Development, Education and Publicity instead.
- (d) There was an urgent need for the Working Group on Children

Protection to start operation early in view of the many tragic cases involving child abuse. Consideration should be given to discussing the need for a mechanism to review individual child fatality cases by the Commission or the Working Group on Children Protection.

- (e) While accepting the four Working Groups as set out in paper no. 4/2018, consideration should be given to incorporating “children participation” into the scope of the Working Group on Promotion of Children’s Rights and Development, Education and Publicity.
- (f) As regards the report to the United Nations on the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) expected in 2019, consideration should be given to consulting the Commission in the process of the Government’s preparation of the report.
- (g) Members should be given advance information on the priority list of discussion items for future Commission meetings. Consideration should also be given to compiling a report on the progress made by the Commission at the end of Members’ term of service.

6. In response, CS said that –

- (a) The Government had no plan and would not commit to establishing a statutory Commission. This was clearly stated by the Chief Executive (CE) during the Preparatory Committee stage. The Commission would take a pragmatic and realistic approach by focusing its efforts on addressing the many priority issues entrusted to it by the CE’s Preparatory Committee for the Establishment of a Commission on Children. The setting up of a statutory Commission would take years given the prolonged law drafting and legislative process, which would lead to delay in achieving early benefits for children. The Commission should take time to build up operational experience in the first instance and consider the matter in future.
- (b) Additional resources would be allocated to the Commission from 2019-20 onwards to strengthen Secretariat support for the Commission in performing its comprehensive objectives and functions. Details would be announced in the 2019 Budget.

- (c) Having regard to the complexity and development of various issues to be discussed and the manpower capacity of the Commission Secretariat, the Working Group on Children with Special Needs and the Working Group on Children Protection would be established in the first quarter and second quarter of 2019 respectively. The relative priority of issues to be covered by these two Working Groups would be considered by the Commission at the next meeting.
- (d) As regards the preparation of the report on UNCRC, the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau would seek Members' views on its framework in due course.
- (e) The Government might consider preparing a consolidated report on the work of the Commission by the end of its current term of service.

7. Regarding the operation of the four Working Groups, PSLW said that –

- (a) In view of the urgent tasks that the Working Group on Research and Public Engagement and the Working Group on Promotion of Children's Rights and Development, Education and Publicity were committed to, and the time that it would take to complete these tasks, it was essential to establish these two Working Groups as soon as possible within 2018 so as to achieve early deliverables.
- (b) For the Working Group on Research and Public Engagement, it would kick-start and oversee two important studies on developing a central databank on children and children-related indices respectively. When conducting these studies, there would be a need for extensive public engagement with the various stakeholder sectors, hence the need to put "research" and "public engagement" under the same Working Group.

8. After deliberation, Members agreed on the establishment of the four Working Groups under the Commission and their terms of reference as set out in paper no. 4/2018, with the addition of "children participation" to the ambit of the Working Group on Promotion of Children's Rights and Development, Education and Publicity, as the Working Group was to promote the importance of children's interests through ensuring children participation as well.

**Item 4a: Play time for Children**  
**[Paper No. 05/2018]**

9. Ms Kathy Wong declared interest for this item as her organisation had initiated a Seed School Training Programme and was collaborating with the Education University of Hong Kong and kindergartens to develop a model for free play provision in pre-school sector.

10. CS invited Ag SED to brief Members on the measures regarding play time for children related to school education, parent education and home-school cooperation.

11. Members' views / suggestions were summarised as follows –

- (a) On parent education, it was important to enhance their understanding of children's development, instead of focusing on excessive homework and drilling. Another problem was that the working parents did not have time to play with their children. The Education Bureau (EDB) could also provide practical tips to parents on how to play with children.
- (b) At the kindergarten stage, there was a suggestion to make the toys and picture books reflective of different communities to encourage more inclusiveness of the ethnic minorities (EM) by the whole community. At the primary school stage, it should limit the hours of homework to let EM children have more time to improve their standard of Chinese. When educating EM parents about playing with children, cultural issues that the parents could relate to should be taken into account. Education could also be provided to EM older siblings to teach them on how to play with their younger siblings.
- (c) The Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide suggested that half-day and full-day kindergartens should arrange no less than 30 and 50 minutes every day respectively for children to participate in free play. There was a suggestion that an outcome assessment should be conducted in three years' time to assess the compliance with these targets. It was considered not easy for kindergartens to achieve these targets in view of the following reasons -
  - (i) There was not adequate school time for half-day kindergartens to arrange a session on free play; and

- (ii) There were not sufficient play areas for children's learning through play and free exploration. There was not any reprovisioning policy for kindergartens to keep up with the new standards set by EDB.
- (d) Definition of "learning through play" should be clear. It was necessary to adopt a consistent standard in measuring whether schools had achieved EDB's targets. Regarding the support provided to teachers, EDB could consider giving demonstration and practical tips in addition to existing guidelines. Consideration should be given to provide play work training to teachers. The Government might consider reviewing the schedule of accommodation for play areas for schools.
- (e) The requirements of the curriculum had become more demanding over the years. Consideration could be given to alleviate the stress of children about completion of homework, say implementing a "no homework" day per week for schools.
- (f) The Government might consider enhancing public awareness on the importance of play through more interesting and innovative channels(e.g. identifying role models of "learning through play" for publicity on social media). The Department of Health (DH) might consider conveying the message of play to children when they attended DH's clinics for medical check-up.
- (g) Play was closely related to the physical and mental health of children. Play was an important element in therapy to alleviate the traumas of children. The quality and availability of play space and equipment are important for children living in children hospitals, care homes, etc.
- (h) Given the limited play space or choice of extra-curricular activities for grassroot children, the Government might consider providing recurrent subsidies to support their participation in extra-curricular activities.
- (i) The issue of play time could be included as one of the themes for the proposed Children Summit, if it was to be organised in future.

12. D of H shared with Members that DH had compiled a Report of Advisory Group on Health Effects of Use of Internet and Electronic Screen

Products (e-Report) to provide support to teachers and parents for addressing the concern of potential health risks related to the increasing use of Internet and electronic screen products by children and students. CS advised DH to provide the e-Report to Members for reference after the meeting.

13. At the invitation of CS, Ag SED made the following response -

- (a) The purpose of doing homework was to assess what students had learnt in school and to help them reinforce what was taught in class. EDB had been reiterating that the quality rather than the quantity of homework was more important. A set of guiding principles, measures and suggestions on quality homework design had been provided to schools for formulating and implementing school-based homework policy.
- (b) On learning through play for kindergarten students, EDB had provided specific suggestions in the new Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide, and a series of training had been conducted for kindergarten principals/teachers. Apart from the resources provided to schools and the play time for children, playmates were important to children.
- (c) Parent education had been promoted to enhance their understanding on children development and their awareness about the importance of play in kindergarten children's learning. It was hoped that parents would not neglect the importance of play and rest as a result of over-emphasising children's academic performance.
- (d) While play could address children's development and interest, it was not appropriate to quantify the effect of "learning through play" as kindergarten students' learning should be considered having regard to their overall development.
- (e) EDB would explore what could be done after taking into account Members' views raised at the meeting and brief the Commission later on this topic.

**Item 4b: Outdoor Play Areas for Young Children**  
**[Paper No. 06/2018]**

14. Ms Kathy Wong declared interest for this item as her organisation was collaborating with the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) on the “Community Build Playground” project as well as the “Universal Play” design and Tuen Mun Park Inclusive Playground Project.

15. In response to CS, USHA briefed Members on the background and efforts made by HAB and LCSD on enhancing outdoor play areas for young children. He added that HAB had consulted the LegCo Panel on Home Affairs in July this year on this subject and members’ feedback was very positive. He then invited AD(LS)1 of LCSD to brief Members with a powerpoint presentation.

16. Members’ views / suggestions were summarised as follows –

- (a) There was a lack of large-scale outdoor play areas in old districts such as Kwai Chung and Sham Shui Po. Priority could be given to improve, enhance and add creative elements to the existing facilities in the districts where many grassroots children lived. The design of the play areas could be more diversified and unique to different districts. Children’s participation on the design of play areas was important. The hygienic and safety conditions of these play areas should also be considered.
- (b) The efforts of Architectural Services Department (ArchSD) and LCSD in carrying out the pilot scheme of building an innovative inclusive playground in Tuen Mun Park were recognised by Members. ArchSD and LCSD could consolidate their experience of this pilot scheme for future reference in the design and enhancement of play areas.
- (c) As regards the consultancy study on the design of children play space which was being carried out by ArchSD, the Government might consider seeking Members’ views on the study.
- (d) Sufficient resources and manpower support should be provided to manage and maintain the innovative play areas in a good condition. It was suggested that the guidelines for management and maintenance should be suitably adjusted for these play areas. Following this pilot scheme, the Government might consider formulating a development strategy on children play areas in Hong Kong.

- (e) There were surveys/studies which showed that the physical health and psychosocial well-being of children could be improved with adequate and high-quality outdoor play areas.
  - (f) The Government might consider how to mobilise and encourage the public to use these innovative and inclusive play areas.
17. In response, CS advised that -
- (a) LCSD should consider enhancing publicity to promote these innovative and inclusive play areas;
  - (b) LCSD should arrange a visit for Members to Tuen Mun Park and some other play facilities; and
  - (c) ArchSD should brief Members on the report of consultancy study on the design of children play space at the next meeting.

**Item 5: Education for Children of Ethnic Minorities**  
**[Paper No. 07/2018]**

18. CS invited Ag SED to brief Members on the measures implemented by EDB for supporting schools and non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students in learning Chinese systematically and the related progress as well as the multiple pathways for NCS students. The Policy Address leaflet on “Strengthening Support for Ethnic Minorities” was distributed at the meeting.

19. Members’ views / suggestions were summarised as follows –
- (a) There was a lack of romanisation for NCS students to learn Cantonese. It was considered that the use of Cantonese romanisation could greatly assist NCS students in learning Chinese.
  - (b) On developing the programme of teaching Chinese to NCS students, it was beneficial to have non-Chinese speakers as members of the development team because they could understand better the learning difficulties faced by these students.
  - (c) While the principals of mainstream schools were open-minded to admitting NCS students, some Chinese parents were quite

unwilling for the schools to admit these students.

- (d) For the severely disabled NCS children or NCS children with special educational needs, there should be a proper assessment on their special educational needs before referring them to the special schools.
- (e) As the Government was promoting the learning of Putonghua in schools, there were quite a lot of discussion among the NCS students that learning Cantonese might lead to a waste of their time.
- (f) Even though some NCS teachers and teaching assistants had a good mastery of Cantonese and English, it was not easy for them to be employed by the mainstream schools.
- (g) The issue of absenteeism was common among NCS students. Their parents might need to be educated on the importance of going to school.
- (h) Teachers' training should be strengthened in the area of inclusive learning and cultural sensitivity of different EM communities. There was a diploma programme in the Education University of Hong Kong about supporting learning and teaching for NCS children. The Government might consider enhancing the support of translation and simultaneous interpretation services to help parents of NCS students.
- (i) For those NCS students who obtained internationally recognised alternative Chinese Language qualifications such as the General Certificate of Secondary Education for which the requirement on Chinese proficiency was generally lower, there was a concern that their proficiency in Chinese could not meet the standard required for further studies and career pursuits.
- (j) To improve NCS students' proficiency in Chinese, the standard of the Chinese Language for NCS students should be compatible with that of other students as far as possible. Tertiary institutions should be very transparent on their entry requirements in respect of Chinese language proficiency so that NCS students could see how they could meet the requirement. For admission to universities, consideration might be given to waive the Chinese Language requirement for NCS students.

- (k) It was a positive development that EDB would offer a five-tiered subsidy to kindergartens under the kindergarten education scheme according to the number of NCS students admitted. However, there was a concern on whether the “Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework” (“Learning Framework”) was recognised by universities and employers.
  - (l) It was not easy for schools admitting a very small number of NCS students and to provide appropriate support to these students.
  - (m) For NCS students with special educational needs, a major obstacle was the medium of instruction of special schools.
20. In response, Ag SED gave the following response –
- (a) While there was not a standard for Cantonese pinyin in Hong Kong, the use of romanisation to learn Chinese would increase the burden of NCS students.
  - (b) With reference to the Learning Framework, teachers could set progressive learning targets, learning progress and expected learning outcomes for their NCS students to learn Chinese progressively in a “small-step” approach and to help NCS students’ transition to the mainstream curriculum.
  - (c) NCS students also enjoyed equal opportunities for access to post-secondary education. The Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS) accepted alternative Chinese Language qualifications for NCS students to meet the entrance requirement in respect of the Chinese Language subject.
  - (d) Applied Learning Chinese (for NCS students) had been introduced at the senior secondary levels to provide NCS students with an additional channel to obtain an alternative Chinese Language qualification to prepare them for further studies and career pursuits.
  - (e) EDB would keep in view those schools admitting a very small number of NCS students. There was also a trend of increasing number of schools admitting NCS students as compared with the situation in the past years.

- (f) EDB would follow up on how to enhance the support for NCS students with severely disability or special educational needs.

**Item 6: Any Other Business**

- 21. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:15 p.m..

**Commission on Children Secretariat  
November 2018**