

**Measures undertaken by the Social Welfare Department to
Further Strengthen Family Education**

Purpose

This paper updates Members on the measures undertaken by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) to strengthen family education since the last meeting of the Family Council held on 23 September 2008.

Background

2. At the fourth meeting of the Family Council held on 23 September 2008, Members were informed of the measures undertaken by various government Bureaux and Departments, including SWD, on family education. At that meeting, Members suggested adopting a “life-course” approach to providing continuous family life education, with a focus on the different roles and responsibilities of family members at different stages of life. Members also suggested that consideration be given to further strengthening family education, as follows:

- (a) To provide pre-marriage and pre-natal courses to equip couples-to-be and parents-to-be to take up the husband/wife/parent role more readily;
- (b) To offer pre-retirement courses and courses on “grand-parenting” to the elderly and their family members to foster “inter-generational care” and “cross-generational harmony”; and
- (c) To provide family education for families with members who suffered from mental, emotional or abuse problem.

Latest Development

3. Taking into account the advice given by Members in paragraph 2 above, the SWD has undertaken the following measures:

- (a) In addition to the existing training package used by service units to organise programmes for couples-to-be to better prepare them for marriage, the Family Life Education Resource Centre (FLERC) of the SWD will develop a new resource package targetting adolescents to help them adopt a positive and responsive attitude towards courtship, intimate relationship and marriage. Furthermore, the Family Life Education Units (FLEUs) will strengthen collaboration with relevant parties, including hospitals and Maternal and Child Health Centres to offer targeted programmes for parents-to-be, in order to help them adjust to their new roles and assume new responsibilities as parents;
- (b) Existing service units, including Integrated Family Service Centres, Integrated Services Centres, FLEUs, District Elderly Community Centres and Neighbourhood Elderly Centres, will extend the parenting programmes to grandparents to equip them with “parenting skills” and enable them to better perform the “parental role” when taking care of their grandchildren. Besides, the themes of inter-generational care and cross-generation harmony will be included in further Opportunities for the Elderly Project (OEP)^(Note) so as to encourage the participating non-governmental organizations to echo these themes when organising programmes under the OEP; and
- (c) Regarding the plan to establish 16 district-based community support centres to provide one-stop services, including family education, for persons with disabilities (PWDs) and their families / carers reported at the last meeting, the SWD has conducted sharing sessions with these stakeholders, including relevant parents’ associations and self-help groups, to gather their views on how the service design of these support centres could best meet the needs of PWDs and their families / carers. The 16 support centres are scheduled for operation by January 2009.

^(Note) Through the OEP, the SWD has subsidised various social service agencies, district organisations, volunteer groups and educational agencies, etc., to carry out a wide range of programmes in order to promote a sense of worthiness among the elders and to promote a spirit of care for the elders in the community.

Advice Sought

4. Members are invited to note the progress on the measures undertaken by the SWD to further strengthen family education.

Social Welfare Department
November 2008