

Tajuk : Proposal to introduce programme to raise English proficiency



Fatimah (centre) speaking to Rosey at the meeting. Also seen is Mohd Ibrahim.

Proposal to introduce programme to raise English proficiency

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KUCHING: The state Early Childhood Education Council (MPAKS), education stakeholders and implementing agencies have agreed to implement a programme known as 'Enhancing Basic English Proficiency Among Pre-schoolers in Sarawak'.

Currently in its proposal stage, the programme will be based on the 'Smart Phonics' method that has been proven effective by Unimas.

Welfare, Women and Family Development Minister Datuk Fatimah Abdullah, who is also MPAKS chairperson, will bring the proposal to the State Cabinet for endorsement once it is fully completed with all the necessary details.

"We hope to implement the programme throughout the state, as we are targeting basic English proficiency for 95 per cent of pre-schoolers in Sarawak.

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Datuk Fatimah Abdullah, Welfare, Women and Family Development minister

conference after chairing the MPAKS meeting with stakeholders and implementing agencies at her office yesterday.

Fatimah stressed that the programme would not replace the existing National Pre-school Standard Co-curriculum but will enhance the children's learning experience.

"We are laying the foundation for the pre-schoolers. We are not expecting them to know advanced English but what they should know as pre-schoolers (age five to six). It will be a fun learning experience. At most, it will be 20 minutes per session.

"This programme does not include private kindergartens as they have similar or better programmes for the children at that age," she noted.

Fatimah pointed out that in order to realise the government's agenda of making English a second official language of Sarawak, the

language proficiency of the people must be in place from young.

"If we have the right foundation from the early stage, Sarawakian pre-schoolers can master English better when they enter primary and secondary levels.

"That way, they will not face difficulties with English at a later stage in life," she said.

Fatimah added that the council would hold another meeting to fine-tune the details of the proposal, including teachers' training, scheduling, monitoring and others. It is hoped the programme would be implemented this year.

Among those present at the meeting were Early Childhood Education Assistant Minister Rosey Yunus, Unimas assistant vice chancellor Associate Professor Dr Mohd Ibrahim Safawi Mohd Zain, MPACS council members and representatives from various departments and agencies.