

Make creches mandatory

on 09 July 2012.

I REFER to "Creches need govt help" (Off the Cuff, July 3), the writer speaks of how only the prime minister has the political will to bring positive change to help creches.

Much has been said on helping workplace creches but nothing concrete has yet to materialise. There are only a few in-house creches available in Sarawak like that of Yayasan Sarawak and the State Library and many other workplaces would love to start one but are without funding to do so.

Incentives for initial set-ups for government agencies or tax deduction for big corporations would help make it possible.

I am involved in establishing a creche in University Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas) and know the difficulties involved. There's no budget from Unimas as their core business is higher education.

The Unimas kindergarten started a few years ago is run by Masnita, an association of female staff and wives of staff. It is run well but there is no room for expansion as the fees are kept low to help the staff.

When the present vice-chancellor was appointed, he decided to park the kindergarten under one of the faculties to help with the operating budget. However, since the faculty does not offer any programmes on education, the move is seen as a misfit.

The kindergarten has been under the faculty for four years now and has been given new equipment and a new location with two permanent employees.

However, due to the maid problem, the focus has shifted to having a creche instead of a kindergarten. A survey was done and since Unimas has many young women in its workforce, it found that a creche was necessary as the young mothers could leave their babies there and feed them during lunch hour.

I am pushing to accept special needs children in view of opening up an inclusive education for special children. A team of lecturers majoring in special education can use the creche as a platform to help the children of their colleagues and eventually the public.

Much is said and done but our biggest fear is hiring the right staff such as preschool teachers, child minders and cooks. But the university cannot do so as Public Service Department has no allocation for such grades in universities.

The government should help working mothers by giving them peace of mind by setting up more creches. With so many women in the workforce this should be a must in all agencies, government or private.

Source : [thesundaily](#)