

**To promote excellence in preschool special education, the Ministry of Education has established a lecturer talent pool to enhance professionalism of preschool educators**

(Photo/Huang Yuan-ting , Division of Preschool Education)



In order to promote excellence in preschool special education, the K-12 Education Administration (K12EA) of the Ministry of Education (MOE) provided training for 49 Core Curriculum lecturers and set up a talent pool for trained educators over the summer vacation. In addition, the ministry held four courses that focused on the core curriculum in the northern, central, and southern parts of Taiwan for 320 preschool educators. In October, MOE also conducted advanced courses to continue to empower teachers in their pedagogical journey. Under this initiative, K12EA looks forward to working with local governments to implement measures such as diagnostic and placement tests, inter-disciplinary collaboration and consultation, and integrated education, so as to provide children with special needs better environments to learn and grow in special education classrooms.

MOE has introduced a Special Education Enhancement Program that will be implemented from 2019 to 2023. The program's objective is to enable children with mental and physical disabilities to receive special education and other support services catered to their needs at an early age. Other than continuing to give out various preschool education scholarships under this program, in 2020, K12EA also aims to promote joint efforts in teaching and counseling under the umbrella of integrated education between preschool and special education teachers. On July 27th and 28th, K12EA organized a basic lecturer training course on preschool special education knowledge and core curriculum for 49 academic experts, scholars, and teachers working in the field of preschool education. A list of professional lecturers was also collated as part of the effort to build a talent pool, which local governments can tap on when they need to conduct relevant courses in the future.

K12EA conducted 4 training sessions over the course of about a month, in New Taipei City, Taoyuan City, Taichung City, and Tainan City, from August 4th to August 27th. These core courses for preschool educators working in kindergartens titled "Adapting Curriculum Teaching and Teamwork" were conducted jointly by college professors and kindergarten educators. 320 kindergarten teachers attended the courses, which covered both theory and practice and focused on professional dialogue and the exchange of experience. An advanced course was offered in October this year, in which real case studies from various schools were shared and discussed in-depth to strengthen the professional knowledge of the participants.

K12EA also urges county and city governments to engage trainers from the talent pool should they require programs on the core curriculum of Taiwan's preschool special education, such as diagnostics and placement of preschool children, inter-disciplinary collaboration and consultation, resource integration, and other matters related to integrated education. These programs could empower kindergarten teachers, allow for better implementation of diagnostics and placement of these children, promote professional collaborative efforts, and also improve the teaching and learning environment of preschool children requiring special education.

K12EA has shared that the Ministry of Education has disbursed funds to the governments of various counties and cities to help them organize teacher training programs so as to elevate the professional competencies of kindergarten teachers. K12EA will organize three categories of courses, namely "Adapting Integrated Education Curriculum Teaching and Teamwork", "Psychological-Assessment Teacher Training," and "Professional Empowerment of Preschool Educators". It is MOE's hope that the various county and city governments can finetune their respective programs according to local needs, so that the core ideals of integrated education can come together meaningfully with local resources. To encourage teachers at the frontline to continue to strive for excellence, the ministry will also increase funding from 2020 onwards to kindergarten teachers to help them build professional communities that will allow teachers and other special educators to conduct professional dialogues and create even friendlier integrated education environments, so that children with special needs can learn and grow with joy.