

## Public and Private Collaboration and Three Wins for Kindergartens, Parents, and Children: Two hundred Kindergartens have joined the first wave and 20,000 families are benefited

(Courtesy of Guo, Zhi-Ying at the Division of Junior High, Elementary School and Preschool  
Education)



The Ministry of Education announced on September 17, 2018 that as of September 15, 2018, a total of 200 quasi-kindergartens (about 26.4%) from each county and city have submitted their application to the Ministry of Education for review. The number of beneficiaries will reach nearly 21,000, and over 20,000 families will be benefited, which will alleviate the burden of childcare substantively. The list of candidates for review is available on the Early Childhood Educare website (<https://www.ece.moe.edu.tw/>). In addition, there are still 27 private kindergartens that have filed online applications and submitted hard copies to the local government for review. After signing of the agreement and completion of the reporting procedures, the new candidates for review will be announced gradually.

In order to encourage kindergartens to apply for this program as soon as possible, and to allow parents to know as early as possible whether the kindergartens that their children attend are in the quasi-public kindergarten program, for those private kindergartens that have applied prior to September 15, 2018 and are already approved as quasi-public kindergartens, the government subsidies for parents' payments are retroactive to August 1, 2018. Meanwhile, the kindergartens can apply for a subsidy of NT\$100,000 to NT\$200,000 based on the size of each kindergarten, for enhancement or improvement of relevant kindergarten facilities and equipment.

Some parents mention that the kindergartens that their children attend have the willingness to join the program, but they did not apply during the promotion period, and that they hope the promotion period can be extended. Since a two-month buffer period for the zero-to-two-year-old has already been in place, and in order to the parents' concern and relieve their burden, the Ministry of Education has decided to extend the promotion period by 15 days. For private kindergartens that apply before September 30, 2018 and sign the agreement to become quasi-public kindergartens before October 15, 2018, the tuition subsidies are retroactive to August 1, 2018, and the kindergartens can apply for local government subsidies to enhance or improve their relevant kindergarten facilities and equipment. The Ministry of Education has called on private kindergartens who are willing to participate in this program to seize on the window of opportunity. As for the applicants who submit the application after October 1, 2018, the government subsidies for parents' payments will be based on the date when the application is filed, and no subsidies will be offered to the kindergartens.

The Ministry of Education said that the low birth rate issue is a national security issue, and that it is imperative to implement relevant strategies concurrently to address the childcare dilemma for parents; therefore, the "National Project for Low Birth Rate Countermeasures (2018-2022)" advocates "the comprehensive care for the zero-to-five-year-old" in order to respect for the

education choices for parents. This has been done through launching a two-pronged approach based on the two main ideas of "expanding affordable educare services" and "reducing parents' burden."

Although the government continues increasing the supply of public services, however, it is still unable to meet parents' expectations quickly. In addition, there are many private kindergartens that are recognized for their high quality educare services. If public-private partnerships can be established, they will accelerate the provision of high-quality and affordable educare services.

Therefore, the quasi-public mechanism is put forward and six requirements, such as "the scope of cooperative fees" and "teachers' and educarers' salaries," among others, are established.

Although the requirements are not strict, they still can safeguard the quality of education. As for the private kindergartens that choose to join the quasi-public program, the application shall be filed based on the pricing conditions in April this year for the academic year of 2018. The government will also fully respect the kindergartens' established business model, curriculum, and teaching orientation. For kindergartens that charge lower enrollment fees and pay their teachers below NT\$29,000 per month, the Ministry of Education will provide salary adjustment for their teachers. The government's tuition subsidies for parents will also be quickly calculated through the information system to reduce the administrative workload and accelerate fund allocation. Each county and city can allocate the funds to all the kindergartens within two months from the start of the school (initial and mid-term installments).

The Ministry of Education emphasizes that the promotion and implementation of the quasi-public policy requires concerted efforts from all sides. Many of the private kindergartens that have been approved in each county and city are large in scale and enjoy a good reputation; therefore, the public and the private sectors can really achieve the goal of "high-quality and affordable childcare." in the field of educare jointly, while creating a all-win situation for

kindergartens, teachers, educarers, and parents. To assure the private kindergartens that have not yet joined the program, the Ministry of Education made a promotional video clip, in which quasi-public kindergartens' heads, teachers, educarers, and parents are talking about what they know about the quasi-public policy. In addition, to enable the public to know more about the countermeasures for low child birth rate, two animation clips for dummies are also produced to briefly explain the two-pronged promotional strategies, i.e. "expanding the affordable educare services" and "reducing parents' burden." Both the clips have been uploaded to the Youtube channel of the Ministry of Education "The Quasi-Public Policy That I Know" (link: <https://youtu.be/az8QDTxrPRg>) and National Low Birth Rate Countermeasures for Dummies– Education and Childcare of the Two-to-Five-Year-Old [For Parents] (link: <https://youtu.be/SK7qIcSmcHs>; another window will be opened). In addition, the quasi-public kindergarten banners and propaganda leaflets provided by the Ministry of Education have been sent out to the kindergartens; the banners will be hung at the kindergartens. If there are any relevant questions, please call the consulting hotline at (02) 2256-5366 or (02) 2256-5379 from eight a.m. to five p.m. from Monday through Friday.