

Speech by the Hon'ble Minister of Education,  
Enche Hussein Onn, on the official opening of  
the Course for Special Kindergarten Personnel  
at the Training College, Bukit Nanas, at  
10.00 a.m. on Saturday, 12th February, 1972

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1. It gives me great pleasure to officially open this "Course for Special Kindergarten Personnel". As we all know, the public and the Ministry of Education have been greatly concerned with regard to the large number of so-called kindergartens which have been springing up all over the country. While some are undoubtedly well-run and conform to the accepted standards and qualifications, there are, unfortunately, a large number which are sub-standard or established with purely profit-making motive. You will agree with me that in such a case, the public must be protected. Further, such so-called kindergartens can do irreparable harm to our children.

2. The Ministry of Education, therefore, has taken the first step to equip itself with the necessary legal powers to control and supervise the establishment

and running of this type of institution. The current session of Parliament has approved the amendments to The Education Act, 1961, to provide the necessary legal powers. Rules will be made by the Ministry of Education from time to time to give effect to them.

3. Throughout the world, there is a growing awareness of the importance of the early years of childhood. There is no doubt that all children between the ages of four and six benefit enormously in every respect from contact with other people, both children and adults. They need wider and more challenging opportunities than those available within their family circle. They need enriched play facilities under the guidance of an adult with special knowledge, skill and training.

4. Thus, it is the considered view of the Ministry of Education that our country's educational system should also take into account Early Childhood Education,

and not only concentrate and start with primary education and continue to secondary and higher education.

5. The Ministry of Education, therefore, has given a lot of preliminary thoughts to this matter. It has prepared a broad outline of a five year plan for the development of kindergartens.

(i) Starting from last year (1971), a working committee was set up, discussions were held and planning made. Guide notes were also prepared.

(ii) This year (1972), among other things, the Ministry is conducting high-level courses to train kindergarten specialists in order to establish a nucleus of specialists for the Ministry, State Education Departments, State Kindergarten Centres and Teacher Training Centres. This course is one of them.

(iii) In 1973, the plan will be further developed as follows:

- (a) Establishment of a central administrative machinery.
- (b) Establishment of a supervisor's unit at state level.
- (c) Establishment of kindergarten centres at regional/state levels.
- (d) Conducting of kindergarten teachers training courses.


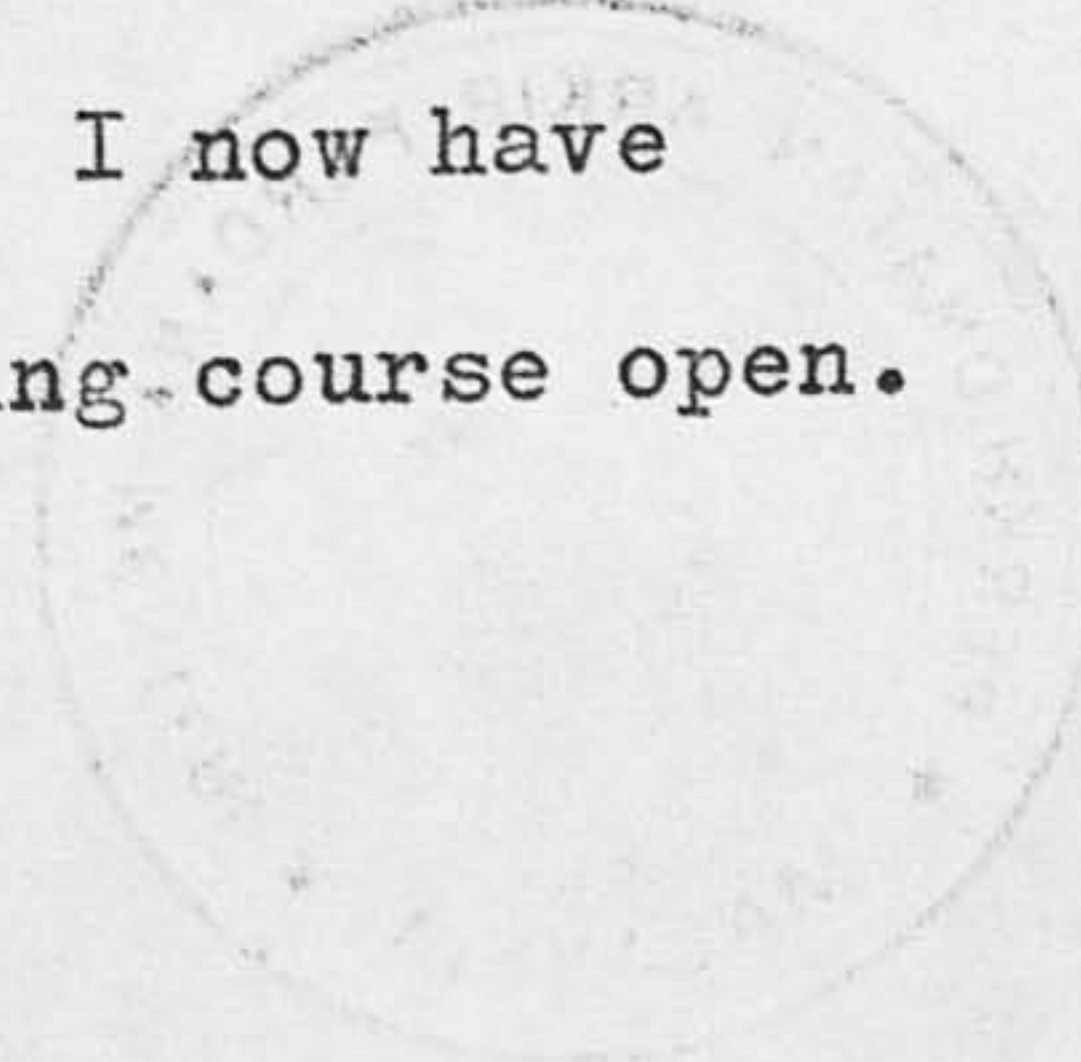
(iv) The years 1974, 1975 and 1976 will be devoted to the consolidation and expansion of the kindergarten system.

6. It is important to set standards for kindergartens as regards buildings, playgrounds, furniture, equipment, qualification of teachers, daily programmes etc. These will be provided for by rules from time to time.

7. To get started, we must have a sufficient number of personnel qualified in kindergarten work. They will form the nucleus. Hence this course which is of one year's duration. There are thirty trainees, four of whom are from Primary Teachers Training Colleges and twenty-six are primary school teachers. As all the Ministry's teachers training institutions are at present fully used, the Convent has very kindly allowed us to use its training establishment for a year. I wish to express my thanks to the Mother Provincial and the Convent Board for their kind gesture and co-operation. I understand that the Anglo-Malaysian Educational Collaboration 1972/1976 has agreed to include in its proposal a grant of \$50,000.00, to be made available by April this year, for reference books, films, journals and equipment for this course. Meanwhile, the British Council has kindly offered to loan books and other reading materials for this course. To the British

Council and the authorities of the Anglo-Malaysian Educational Collaboration, I wish to express my thanks. The presence of Mrs. Barbara Breakell in the country is very timely. Her assistance and contribution in this highly specialised field will certainly influence kindergarten work and training and will further forge the links of friendship between the people of this country and the people of Britain.

8. Lastly, may I say a few words to the trainees. I am sure you all realise the importance of the course which you are now attending. No doubt it will be an intensive one. Nevertheless, it will be challenging and satisfying. Good luck to you all. I now have great pleasure in declaring this training course open.



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