

PKR: GST forcing parents to skimp on children's milk

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Low-income parents are putting their children's nutritional needs in jeopardy to keep within budget following the goods and services tax (GST), a PKR assemblyperson said.

Batu Tiga assemblyperson Rodziah Ismail said some of her constituents claim they are feeding their children watered-down condensed milk instead of children's milk formula because formula is too expensive after the six percent GST.

"A child needs to drink milk until he is six years old to boost his development. If GST is levied on milk, the child will not get the sufficient protein and calcium.

"In my area, some people told me they have been forced to feed their children condensed milk to keep within budget. They have no other choice because of the tax," she said.

Milk formula for children up to 36 months is GST-exempt, but milk formula for older children are not.

Rodziah told reporters at the launch of PKR's 'Don't Tax Our Children' campaign, to urge the government to zero-rate goods and services needed by children.

Launching the campaign, PKR director of strategy Sim Tze Tzin said this includes the cost of doctor's consultation and vitamins which are now levied the GST, adding to the burden of young families.

"We are proposing that four categories of items be exempted - doctor's consultations, medications and vitamins, hygiene products, and basic needs for children aged below five including milk formula.

"This can be done. We shouldn't be taxing our children," he told reporters at the PKR headquarters in Petaling Jaya, today.

He estimates that parents pay an average RM120 per month in GST per child.

He added that Deputy Finance Minister Ahmad Maslan's (right) claim that goods will be cheaper after GST does not apply for children's needs like disposable diapers.

"It's not true that prices have gone down. I don't see it go down. He said 486 goods are cheaper after GST, but what are these 486 goods? Show us the evidence," he said.