

Abdullah: I was naughty once

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Correct children with love and care, parents urged

KEPALA BATAS: "I was a naughty boy."

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi made this confession to drive home the point that naughty children will grow up to be useful citizens if they are loved and cared for in their childhood.

"I happen to like naughty children as I was one myself.

"But let us correct them with love and care and not by yelling at them," he advised parents when opening the Permata National Childcare Centre at Taman Seri Menerong here yesterday.

The Prime Minister said parents should set a good example at home.

He said parents who often quarrelled and yelled at their children without good reason would leave a negative impact on young minds.

"Parents should not shout at their children for no reason.

"Young children are usually a little adventurous but we should not be a stumbling block in their formative years," he said.

"To me, being mischievous is a normal thing among the young."

Abdullah said it was vital to guide young minds in the right direction.

"Children aged between one and five undergo an important growth process.

"It is during this period that they develop their character and learn and absorb things fast," he said.

"I am confident the Permata project will add value to the existing pre-school teaching efforts," he said of the project, which is under the Prime Minister's Department.

Adapted from a curriculum used by the Pen Green Centre in Corby, Britain, it emphasises play activities, speech, exploration and creativity as the route to childcare.

Permata (which means "gem" in Malay) was introduced in March and offers an alternative approach in childcare and early childhood education for children below five years old.

Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, the working committee chairman of the *Every Child is a Gem of the Nation* project, said it has been allocated RM20mil under the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

There are also Permata centres in Putrajaya, Subang Jaya and Kuala Lumpur.

Rosmah, who is the wife of



Fun time: Abdullah, Rosmah and Najib posing with some of the children from the Permata National Childcare Centre in Kepala Batas yesterday.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, said another centre would be opened at Felda Chini in Pahang next month.

Abdullah, who is Umno president,

had a busy schedule here.

He opened the Umno Bertam branch meeting in the evening and met the party's Youth, Wanita and Puteri members at Menara

Umno in Jalan Macalister on the island.

He also chaired the Penang Umno liaison committee meeting at Menara Umno.