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Newspaper	NEW STRAITS TIMES
Date	20 JULY 2016

Najib: Quality early childhood care vital for nation-building

NS7-20/7/2016

PUTRAJAYA: Adopting quality early childhood care and education (ECCE) is the foundation of developing the nation and its people, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak yesterday.

“Children are our countries’ future. They are the most valuable resource of our nation.

“I believe that developing a nation and its people begins with early childhood education and development,” Najib said at the welcoming dinner of the Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education 2016.

He said early childhood care and education could harness an individual’s creativity, intelligence, emotional stability, confidence, leadership skills and talent.

“The provision of quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education has always been a priority for the Malaysian government.”

He said unique and dynamic

plans had brought together ministries, agencies and all levels of government, as well as the private sector and civil society, to reconstruct creativity and innovation-driven strategies in public and private organisations.

“These initiatives cover economic and social issues, including rural and urban development, safety and security, youth engagement, women empowerment, entrepreneurship and early childhood education.

“All these initiatives bear an impact on early childhood care and education.”

He urged delegates to foster ties and reinforce networks with early childhood care and education fraternities in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

“ECCE has brought us together, and by discussing best practices across regions, we hope to create a more supportive environment to strengthen the foundation of our children’s care and education.”

Najib expressed his appreciation to the commitment, contribution and support of the participants towards ECCE.

“I understand that you have had a very engaging ministerial roundtable discussion, and I believe that by the time this forum ends on Thursday (tomorrow), all delegates will have had a very positive and useful time and gained much from it.

“As Malaysia moves towards achieving its goal of becoming a high-income status nation by 2020, we look forward to ours being a truly advanced country, with a high level of public wellbeing, where people can enjoy peace, stability and prosperity.

“That is the future we want for our children.”

He said the forum would provide participating countries with useful input to further develop early childhood care and education in the region and beyond.