

**Permata Needs Additional Allocation For Expansion – Rosmah  
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POKOK SENNA, July 28 (Bernama) -- The Permata Negara Programme needs additional allocation to set up more early childhood education-cum-daycare centres in places that need them, especially in the rural areas.

Chairman of the Permata Negara Coordination Working Committee, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, said the setting up of such centres in the rural areas was to enable children, especially those aged under four, go through a sound, systematic and scientific learning process.

"I really hope the government can increase the allocation for the Permata programme as there is a demand for such centres from many parents. However, at the moment, each centre can only accommodate about 50 children," she said after visiting the Pokok Sena parliamentary constituency's Anak Permata Negara centre in Desa Keda, Batu 13, here, today.

Rosmah said Kedah so far had two such centres, 41 Kemas nurseries, three Unity nurseries and one childcare centre at the workplace which were using the Permata Negara Programme's syllabus.

"I am satisfied with the progress of the Pokok Sena Permata centre and I have spoken and explained to the children's parents on the programme," said the prime minister's wife.

She said another Permata children's centre would be set up in Kedah - in Guar Chempedak, Yan - which was expected to start operating in 2012.

This would be among 28 Anak Permata Negara centres set up under the Tenth Malaysia Plan, she added.

On the availability of teaching staff for the centres, Rosmah said there had been no problem so far as they received many applications, especially from fresh graduates specialising in Early Childhood Education at the diploma and degree level.

She said those selected would undergo a special course before starting on their teaching job at the centres.

Earlier, in her speech, Rosmah said the Permata Negara Programme had no political objective whatsoever but to ensure a bright future for the children by giving them a good start in education.

"Anybody can register with Permata Negara, regardless of their political belief, religion and race because we are educating children so that they will have good character and able to interact well.

"Don't be angry if the government gives a bit more (to Permata Negara) as it is for the good of the people, especially children," she said.

-- BERNAMA