

**Government To Review Procedure To Expedite Registration Of Nurseries, Says Najib
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KUANTAN, Nov 3 (Bernama) -- The government is to facilitate and expedite the registration of nurseries without the need for the prior approval of technical agencies so long as they meet the minimum standard set by the Social Welfare Department, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today.

Najib, who is also minister of women, family and community development, said the review of the registration procedure was most necessary to ensure that more nurseries could be opened in the future.

"So long as a nursery meets the standard requirements, its registration can be approved so that it can start operating," he said at the launch of the Astro Kasih Knowledge Zone programme at the Sultanah Hajah Kalsom Children's Home in Penor, near here.

Nursery operators must now obtain the approval of the technical agencies, such as the local authority, health department and fire & rescue department before the nurseries can be registered by the social welfare department.

Najib said that under the new initiative, 372 new nurseries could be registered, bring their total number to 1,767.

"All these nurseries will benefit almost 53,000 children throughout the country who will receive quality and wholesome early childhood education and care," he said.

Also present at the event were Najib's wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor; Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob; Deputy Women, Family and Community Development Minister Senator Heng Seai Kie and Astro chairman Tun Zaki Tun Azmi.

Najib also said that the government allocated RM10 million for providers of early childhood education centres to open new nurseries of quality so that the other children were given the opportunity to develop just like the more fortunate.

"Through this initiative, the government expects to be able to help set up 1,000 new nurseries at the rate of RM10,000 per nursery to benefit almost 30,000 children beginning next year," he said.

He also said that under the Astro Kasih Knowledge Zone programme, Astro provided a Beyond decoder and its installation and a monthly subscription of a family package free of charge to all welfare homes registered with the social welfare department.

Astro would also set up a reading corner with reading material at 24 children's welfare centres throughout the country, he added.

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