

**Quality Early Childhood Education Is Malaysia's Priority - Najib  
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PUTRAJAYA, July 19 (Bernama) -- The provision of quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education has always been a priority for the Malaysian Government, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

He said he believes that developing a nation and its people begins with early childhood education and development.

"What could be more important than our children? They are our countries' future. They are the most valuable resource of our nations," he said in his speech for the Asia-Pacific Regional Policy Forum on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) 2016 welcoming dinner, here Tuesday.

Also present at the dinner were the Prime Minister's wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor and Education Minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid.

Najib said, as Malaysia is successfully moving towards achieving its goal of becoming a high income status nation by 2020, Malaysia looks forward to being a truly advanced country with a high level of public well-being, where people can enjoy peace, stability and prosperity.

"That is the future we want for our children," he further said.

In order to achieve this, Najib said, Malaysians have been applying innovative practices through principles such as the Blue Ocean Strategy of high impact, low cost and rapid execution.

"Our strategy formulation is driven by creativity and innovation - by reconstructing the conventional boundaries that have been in place in public and private organisations.

"Unique and dynamic plans have brought together ministries, agencies, and all levels of government, private sector and civil society," he added.

The Prime Minister said, these initiatives cover economic and social issues, including rural and urban development, safety and security, youth engagement, women's empowerment, entrepreneurship and - of course - early childhood.

A total of 1,000 participants from 39 Asia Pacific countries attended the three-day forum beginning today with an agenda to increase the stronghold of ECCE policy within the Asia Pacific region.

Themed 'The Transformative Power of Early Childhood: Innovations for Inclusivity and Quality' the forum is expected to announce the Putrajaya Declaration on Thursday.

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