

# PRESS RELEASE 1987

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SPEECH BY MR GOH CHOK TONG, FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND  
MINISTER FOR DEFENCE, AT THE OPENING OF PAP COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION EDUCATION CENTRE, TAMPINES BRANCH, AT BLOCK 261,  
TAMPINES ST 21, ON THURSDAY, 6 AUG 87, AT 10.30 AM

Singapore parents understand the importance of education. So, they give their children a headstart by sending them to kindergarten classes. Dr Tay Eng Soon tells me that practically all children joining our schools at Primary One (i.e. over 99 per cent) would have attended kindergarten classes.

This is possible only because of the classes run by the PAP. Our education centres serve over 46,000 pre-schoolers or about two-thirds of all kindergarten children. PAP Branches provide kindergarten services in all public housing estates. They charge low fees. This makes pre-school education available to a large part of our population. When I was young, I did not attend kindergarten classes. Kindergarten classes, then, if any, were only for the rich.

Generally, the service PAP kindergartens provide is satisfactory. But we should do more. We want to do more. Education is important to Singapore, to the parents, and their children. The PAP decided some months ago to upgrade the quality of its kindergarten service.

It set up a committee, chaired by Dr Arthur Beng, to look into how our kindergarten service could be improved.

The Committee recommended that these three areas of our kindergartens could be upgraded:

- a. The physical premises and facilities;
- b. The curriculum;
- c. Training and refresher courses for the teachers.

It also recommended that the kindergarten classes should be taken over by the PAP Community Foundation. Since it is a community service, the PAP Central Committee has accepted this recommendation. From now on, all its kindergarten classes will be run by the Community Foundation.

The first task of the Foundation here is to upgrade the physical facilities of the kindergarten classes. This requires funds. Fortunately, all our Branches over the past 20 years have saved up enough funds for us to do so. They are now putting their savings to upgrade their kindergartens for the benefit of the children.

The project to upgrade our kindergartens will take about two years. Tampines Education Centre is only the first. Today's opening of this kindergarten in Tampines New Town marks the beginning of this two-year upgrading programme.

This kindergarten is very modern and well-equipped. It has good facilities. It is an example of what the PAP Foundation would like to do for its other kindergartens as far as possible. At the end of two years all our kindergartens will be upgraded. Then, we will be able to offer a higher standard of kindergarten education to the children.

The upgrading and running of the kindergartens is the first major community service programme of the PAP Community Foundation. As the Foundation accumulates more funds and

resources from well-wishers, it will expand into other areas of community service.

I have pleasure now in declaring open this kindergarten.

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