

**Press Release**  
**29-6-2008**

## **Inadequate government support may lead outbreak of family problems** **Survey findings on “Potential Crisis in Family with Young Children”**

In recent years, the number of domestic violence, family tragedy and child neglect cases are increasing; the Council of Non-profit Making Organizations for Pre-primary Education (CNOPE) and the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS) had jointly conducted a survey on **Potential Crisis in Family with Young Children** from December 2007 to January 2008. The survey aims at identifying problems faced by family with young children and exploring the needs of school social work service in Pre-primary Schools. It is hoped that the findings could raise the governmental and public's concerns on the potential crisis in family with young children and justify the need of more professional support for these families to prevent the happenings of family tragedy.

### **Survey Result and Findings**

100 Pre-primary Schools with 730 professional child care workers and 10247 Pre-primary Schools students are involved in this survey. Among the 10247 students, 18% (1865 children's families) has a variety of potential family problems, which are the immediate causes to family crisis. Among these 1865 children families, there are 24% (440 children) of the families suspected to have emotional disturbance/ behavior problem; 30% (567 children) suspected to have development delay/ short attention span, 17% (323 parents) suspected to have emotional disturbance/ mental problem; 36% (675 parents) have difficulties in parenting their young children.

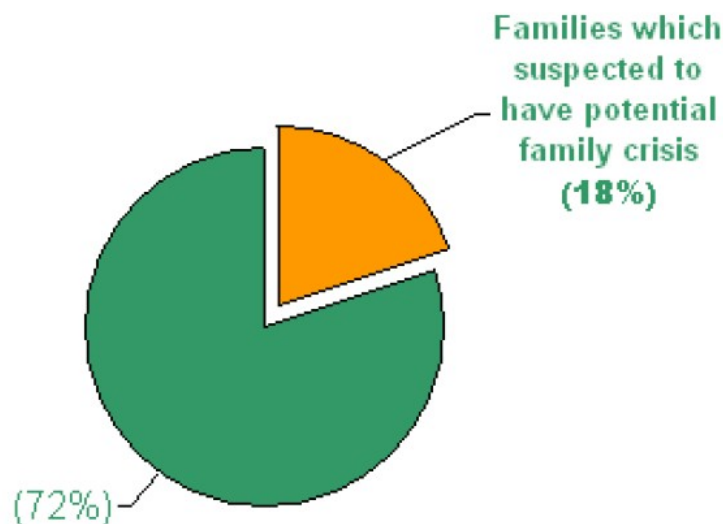
From this survey, we found that every five families, there is one with potential family crisis, which included parenting difficulties, job-related problems, financial problems, emotional problems and strained relationship with family members. In coping with these stresses, they tended to seek help from Principals, teachers and other parents in Pre-primary Schools, rather than receive help from outside organizations. Pre-primary Schools' Principals and teachers, though may know which family is having crisis, due to insufficient counseling knowledge and heavy education workload, were not able to provide early intervention and comprehensive counseling services to the family in crisis. In contrast, the result of improvement in adaptation of family stresses was encouraging in those schools that were having stationing school social work service.

### **Recommendation**

Since Pre-primary Schools are the most direct social system that Pre-primary children and parents

attached to, family crisis may be eliminated if a supporting network can be built in the Pre-primary School Setting. Even though Maternal and Child Health Centres and Integrated Family Services are providing similar services, Pre-primary School Setting is no doubt a more direct and easy-to-be-reached platform for those families in emergent crisis.

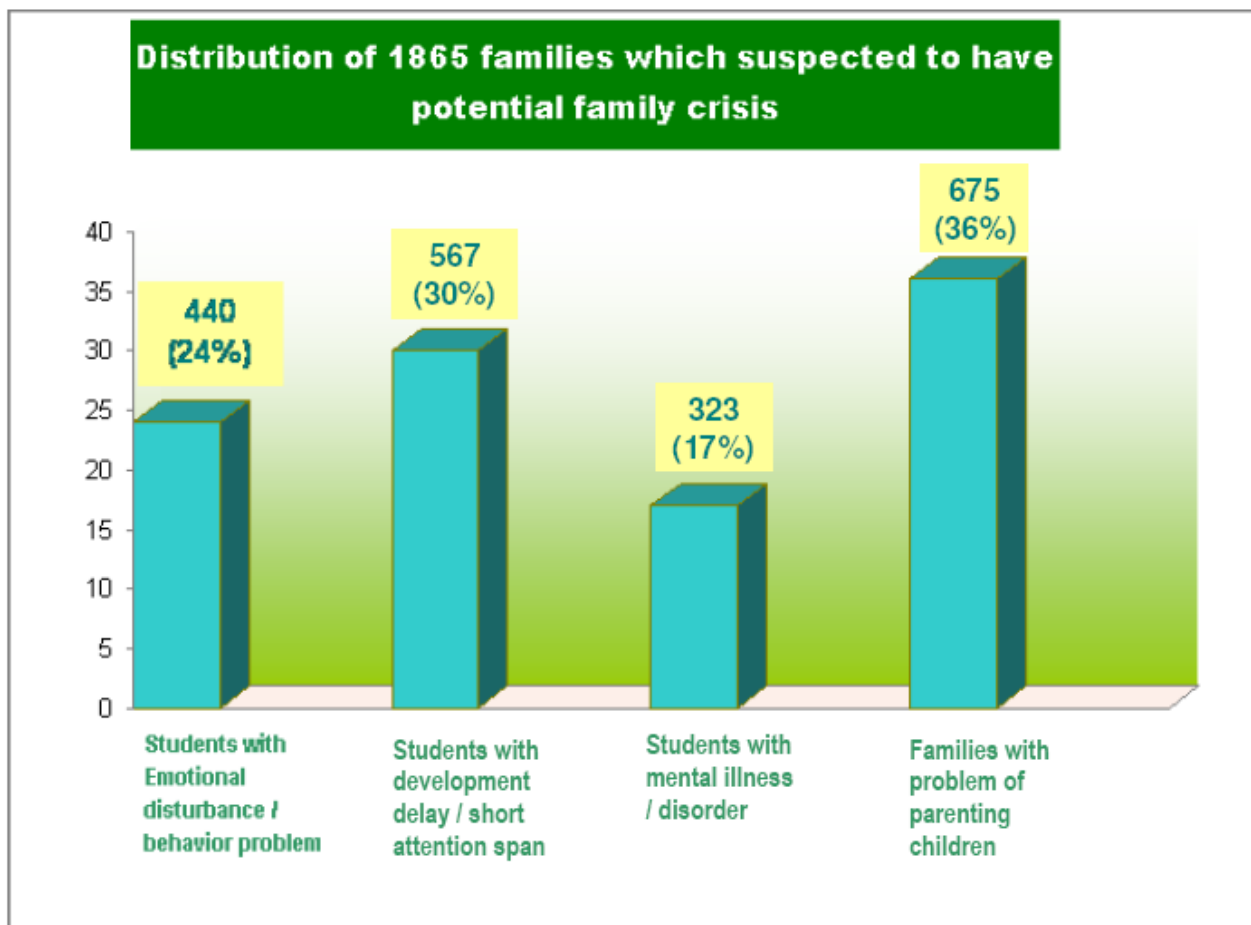
We highly recommend government to fully utilize the full day Pre-primary Schools as an early identification and intervention platform, to provide one stop and comprehensive counseling service to the families in crisis. Any delay in providing support to these families will only create more negative side effect and cost to the society, such as delinquency and child abuse problems. Providing support to family in crisis, preventing family tragedy, building a healthy and safe environment for our young children is definitely a prioritize concern for our society.



### Distribution of 1865 Families which Suspected to have Potential Family Crisis

	Types of Potential Family Crisis	Total number	Percentage
1	In the past 6 months, students suspected to have emotional disturbance/ behavior problem	440 students	24%
2	In the past 6 months, students suspected to have development delay/ short attention span (excluding the students in Inclusion Programme)	567 students	30%

3	In the past 6 months, students suspected to have emotional disturbance/ mental problem	323 parents	17%
4	In the past 6 months, families suspected to have difficulties in parenting their young children and need support and counseling	675 families	36%



### **CNOPE**

Established in 2003, Council of Non-profit Making Organizations for Pre-primary Education (CNOPE) is a council consists of more than 30 Non-profit Pre-primary educational organizations. It represents more than 300 kindergartens and nursery schools in Hong Kong. The mission of CNOPE is to serve the community with their hearts. It makes use of child care policy, family support and professional teaching to take care and provide well being of young children, parents and child care workers.

### **HKCSS**

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service is an umbrella organization of more than 300 Agency Members that are providing over 90% social welfare services. The Council, together with its

Agency Members, promotes the betterment of social welfare development in Hong Kong , facilitates cross-sectoral partnership, advocates equality, justice, social integration and a caring society, setting the local welfare sector as a model of excellence in the international community.

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