

# **Brief on Training Subsidy Programme for Children on the Waiting List of Subvented Pre-school Rehabilitation Services**

## Background and Objective

The assistance programme of the 'Training Subsidy for Children who were on the Waiting List of Subvented Pre-school Rehabilitation Services' (TSP) was launched by the Community Care Fund in December 2011 with a view to enabling children from low-income families in need of rehabilitation services to acquire self-financing services run by Recognised Service Providers (RSPs) to facilitate their learning and development while waiting for subvented pre-school rehabilitation services. In view of the positive evaluation outcome, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) has regularised TSP from October 2014 so that children with special needs could continue to benefit from the programme. To further enhance the support for children on the waiting list for Special Child Care Centres (SCCC) [including Residential Special Child Care Centre (RSCCC)] service, these children can receive non-means-tested training subsidy with effect from 1 October 2017.

## Target Beneficiaries

A beneficiary shall meet ALL of the following criteria:

- a) The applicant child must be under the age of six years and is on the waiting list for subvented pre-school rehabilitation service under Central Referral System for Rehabilitation Services;
- b) The applicant child is not receiving any subvented pre-school rehabilitation services, including services of the 'On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services' transitional service or 'Early Education and Training Centre' transitional service; and
- c) The monthly household income does not exceed 75% of the Median Monthly Domestic Household Income (MMDHI) applicable to the applicant's household size at the time of application. *[This criteria only applies to those on the waiting list of the Early Education and Training Centre (EETC)/Integrated Programme for Disabled Children in Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centre (IP) or On-site Pre-school Rehabilitation Services (OPRS)]*

## Levels of Subsidy and Services

There will be two subsidy levels for beneficiaries having different levels of disabilities:

a) Maximum subsidy level of \$3,415 per month for each beneficiary applying for EETC/IP/OPRS. The subsidy has already covered the following service components:

i. **four sessions** of individual or group training/therapy services in **three hours** per month provided by special child care worker(s), clinical/educational psychologist(s), \*occupational therapist(s), \*physiotherapist(s) or \*speech therapist(s) (including parallel groups with participation of parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s) at the same time); and

ii. **six hours** of individual assessment and/or family support services provided by special child care worker(s), clinical/educational psychologist(s), occupational therapist(s), physiotherapist(s), speech therapist(s) or registered social worker(s) **in a year**.

*\* The training is mainly delivered by special child care worker. Therapist session may be arranged in accordance with the training needs of the beneficiary.*

b) Maximum subsidy level of \$6,640 per month for each beneficiary applying for SCCC (including RSCCC) service. The subsidy has already covered the following service components:

i. **six sessions** of individual or group training/therapy services in **six hours** per month provided by special child care worker(s), clinical/educational psychologist(s), occupational therapist(s), physiotherapist(s) or speech therapist(s) (including parallel groups with participation of parent(s)/guardian(s)/carer(s) at the same time) with at least **18 hours of therapeutic/training sessions** from occupational therapist(s), physiotherapist(s) or speech therapist(s) **every six months**; and

ii. **six hours** of individual assessment and/or family support services provided by special child care worker(s), clinical/educational psychologist(s), occupational therapist(s), physiotherapist(s), speech therapist(s) or registered social worker(s) **in a year**.

The type of services an eligible child receives will be arranged according to the assessment proposed by the RSP with the consent of his/her parent/guardian.

### Payment of Subsidy for Services

The training subsidy will not be released to the parent(s)/guardian(s) directly, but to the RSPs. Any unused subsidy cannot be carried forward but the RSP has to arrange compensatory session(s) not later than six months from the date of leave/absence/lateness or before the child's discharge from the Training Subsidy Programme, whichever is the earlier. In case a

beneficiary is absent without leave application, no compensatory session will be arranged. For beneficiaries who had been absent without leave application for three consecutive sessions or when the compensatory sessions were accumulated to over six sessions, their eligibility for subsidy will be suspended.

### Application Status on Central Referral System for Rehabilitation Services

Children joining TSP will continue to remain on the waiting list of the CRSRehab-PS. When they are admitted to the service under CRSRehab-PS, they will no longer be eligible for subsidy under TSP. If the beneficiaries decide to decline the offer of placement under CRSRehab-PS, they may continue to receive subsidy under TSP until 1<sup>st</sup> September after they have attained the age of 6 or their admission to primary school, whichever is the earlier. **When they decline the offer of placement under CRSRehab-PS, their applications for subvented pre-school rehabilitation service will then be removed from the waiting list of CRSRehab-PS**, except for applicants of EETC transitional placement and/or OPRS transitional placement who may remain on the waiting list for SCCC (including RSCCC) service upon declining the offer for the above two services.

### Application Procedures

SWD will issue letters to parent(s)/guardian(s) of children on the waiting list for subvented pre-school rehabilitation services to invite their application for TSP. Applicants should submit the completed application form together with a copy of the following documents by post or by hand to Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services Branch of SWD:

- ◆ the child's birth certificate/identification document;
- ◆ identification document of the parent or guardian (not required to submit the document if the person concerned is a SWD social worker); and
- ◆ Annex of "Notification of Successful Application Certificate" issued by Social Welfare Department to Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Recipients (if applicable).

Parent(s)/guardian(s) have to choose three service units operated by RSPs in order of priority for the child concerned in the application. SWD will, as far as possible, arrange an RSP for an eligible child according to the preference of the parent(s)/guardian(s) taking into consideration the actual service quota available. The child should continue to receive services from the same service unit so as to receive progressive and continuous training under a stable learning environment. Under special circumstances, such as the child's change of residence,

necessitating a change of the RSP, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must apply to SWD via the existing RSP.

When no suitable vacancy providing comprehensive services at a higher subsidy level is available, children eligible for a higher level of subsidy may choose to receive services from an RSP providing services at a lower subsidy level but the maximum subsidy provided will be capped at the lower level. When a vacancy becomes available, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child concerned may opt to continue with the existing services or to transfer to another RSP offering services at a higher subsidy level for more comprehensive support.

Information provided by parents/guardians in the applications for their children must be true, correct and complete. In case of any change of the relevant information, they should report the change to SWD as soon as possible. If overpayment is certified by SWD, the parents/guardians concerned should refund the overpaid amount/pay the fees charged for the overused services.

### Means Test

For those families whose child is on the waiting list for EETC/IP/OPRS, means test will be conducted by SWD to assess the household income of the applicant to determine his/her eligibility. The monthly household income of the child's family should not exceed the income limit [i.e. 75% of the Median Monthly Domestic Household Income (MMDHI) applicable to the applicant's household size] at the time of application based on the General Household Survey published by the Census and Statistics Department. The latest MMDHI published in the Report on General Household Survey by Census & Statistics Department has been uploaded to the homepage of SWD.

The child's family includes father, mother, brother or sister living together with the child concerned in Hong Kong (including legally recognised adoptive parents/children and illegitimate children with proof of parentage).

The monthly household income refers to the average monthly income for the three months preceding the date of submission of application and includes (for income not paid on a monthly basis, e.g. double pay and bonus etc., it should be spread over the period concerned for calculation):

- a) Earnings from employment: salary, double pay/leave pay, job allowance, bonus/commission/tips, income from rendering services and profits from business, etc.

- b) Other income: contribution from children and relatives/friends, alimony, monthly pension/widow's and children's compensation, payout from the annuity scheme(s), profits from investment, interests from fixed deposits, stocks and shares, rental income, etc.

Income excludes employee's mandatory contribution to the Mandatory Provident Fund Scheme, financial assistance provided by the Government, charitable donations and financial assistance from assistance programmes of CCF.

### Vetting of Applications

In making application, the parent/guardian has to provide information on their family income in the application form but submission of relevant income proofs is not required. SWD will conduct random checks in the course of processing the application or after arranging relevant services, and the parent/guardian of the child concerned must provide detailed income information and any other relevant documents for verification.

### Enquiries

Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services Branch (LTTC Office)

Social Welfare Department

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Fax No.	:	3791 2140
Email	:	srm14@swd.gov.hk
Office Hours	:	Monday to Friday from 9 am to 5 pm (Lunch break from 1 pm to 2 pm)
SWD Website	:	<a href="http://www.swd.gov.hk">www.swd.gov.hk</a>