

Save the Children Hong Kong Response to the Policy Address 2022

The Chief Executive delivered the policy address on 19th October. Save the Children Hong Kong welcomes the Government's introduction of measures to protect and improve children's well-being. Our response is outlined here, with some additional suggestions to ensure further the Government's laws, policies and practices of the Hong Kong government are fully compatible with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

Protect children from harm

We are pleased to see the Government set out the legislative timetable on mandatory reporting mechanism for child abuse cases in the first half of 2023, as well as committed to providing training for practitioners to facilitate their early identification and reporting of child abuse cases. Apart from these, the Government should also ensure that the existing human resources, investigation mechanism, foster care, and social services support can cope with the proposed legislative changes in mandatory reporting requirement.

Protecting children is the responsibility of all adults, and it should not focus solely on the professionals. We hope to see an all-rounded approach to better protect children from abuse and neglect through prohibiting corporal punishment in all settings, and speed up the legislative process of "failure to protect" law, child safeguarding mechanisms, parent education, and public education campaigns.

Protect Children's mental health

We welcome the measures from the Government to better identify students in needs through strengthening Student Mental Health Support Scheme and allocating resources to enhance community psychiatric services. To better address mental health issues, it is also essential for the Government to incorporate mental health education into the school curriculum. For example, accelerate schools' adoption of the Whole School Approach to promote mental health and make Social and Emotional Learning one of the core goals of education at all levels.

Empower children and youth with hope and opportunity

We acknowledge the commitments from the Government to alleviate poverty. The "Strive and Rise Programme" launched in September is an important step to lift underprivileged children out of intergenerational poverty. However, the Government should consider increasing the number of beneficiaries and expanding the target group to all children living in poverty to provide upward mobility opportunities, especially for underprivileged youth, empowering children and youth with skills, knowledge, and opportunities to participate for future success.

Please click [here](#) to view our full recommendations.