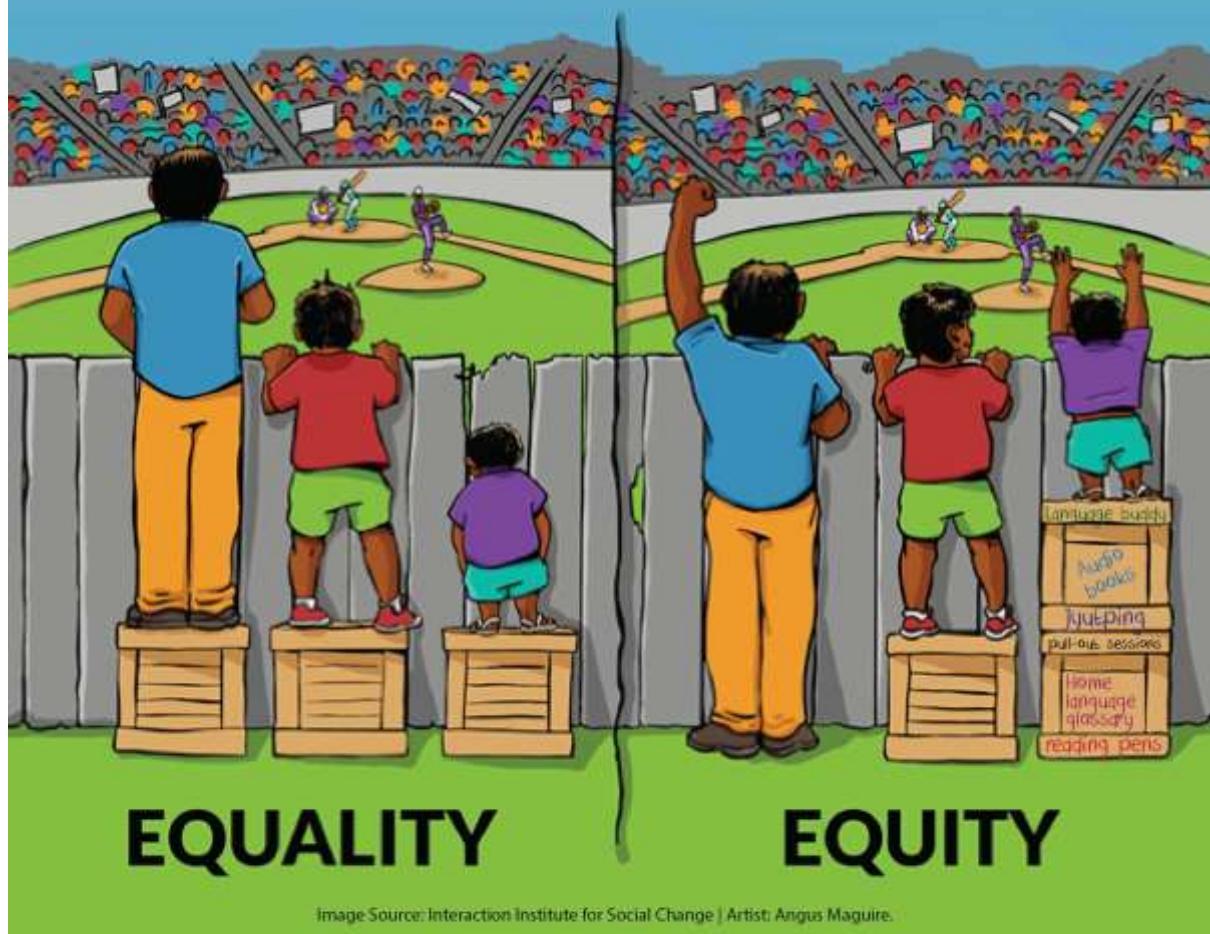


Securing a Good Start for Students of Chinese as an Additional Language (CAL) in Kindergarten



Presented by



Funded by



PETER BENNETT
FOUNDATION



Contents

Acronyms Used.....	3
Foreword.....	5
Introduction & Research Rationale.....	7
Background and Current Landscape	9
A plea for new language	15
Methodology	17
Report Findings.....	23
THE NCS GRANT.....	23
Segregation	25
Language Skills and Attainment	28
The Transition to Primary School	33
Challenges.....	35
Resources.....	35
Extra Chinese tuition.....	40
External support programmes	41
Teachers	41
Parents.....	44
Attitudes and Expectations.....	46
Which resources and interventions would be most beneficial?	47
Observations	50
Recommendations	63
Appendix 1	68
Appendix 2.....	69

Acronyms Used

CAL	Chinese as an Additional Language
CMI	Chinese Medium of Instruction
EDB	Education Bureau
EM	Ethnic Minority
EMI	English Medium of Instruction
FQKES	Free Quality Kindergarten Education Scheme
JP	Jyutping
MTA	Multicultural Teaching Assistant
NCS	Non-Chinese Speaking
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
PEVS	Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme
TZF	The Zubin Foundation

The report title: **‘Securing a Good Start for CAL students at kindergarten’** is shortened to **‘Securing a Good Start’** for use in the main body of this report.

For the purposes of this report ‘Chinese’ refers to verbal Cantonese, standard written Chinese and traditional characters.

About The Zubin Foundation

The Zubin Foundation is a leading social policy think tank and charity in Hong Kong, named after Zubin Mahtani Gidumal.

Our mission is to shed light on enduring barriers to fairness and opportunity. We engage with stakeholders to shape effective solutions – both through policy recommendations and direct empowerment projects. Our work is centred around a spirit of collaboration and a rigorous commitment to positive, lasting outcomes.

As a registered charity in Hong Kong (IR 91/12344), we rely on donations from individuals, corporations and foundations to fund our work.

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Finally, we recognize Shalini Mahtani’s vision in the initiation of this project and are grateful to Programme Director Sandy Chan for overseeing every aspect of this report’s production.

Disclaimer

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Foreword by The Zubin Foundation



All children deserve an opportunity to make their dreams come true. And yet, with so many ethnic minority children who enter kindergarten each year, their fate is sealed by age 6, by the time they enter primary school. If they have a solid foundation in Chinese, they will be more likely to enter a Chinese medium of instruction (CMI) primary school. And if they stay in the CMI school, they are more likely to have access to the world of career opportunities available to them later in life- which mostly require very strong spoken Cantonese as well as the ability to read and write Chinese.

In order to give every child the opportunity to fulfil their dreams, to be a firefighter, or engineer, teacher or actor, ethnic minorities must be taught Cantonese at kindergarten. And we must do whatever it takes to make this happen. But what does it take to teach Cantonese in kindergarten to children who are learning Chinese as an additional language (CAL)?

This research explores this question through in-depth interviews with school principals in kindergartens in geographical districts that have the highest percentages of ethnic minorities. In this report, we share what kindergarten principals have told us about their challenges teaching CAL children and the unintended consequences of admitting such children in their schools. We explore what would help schools teach Chinese to CAL students better and be more inclusive.

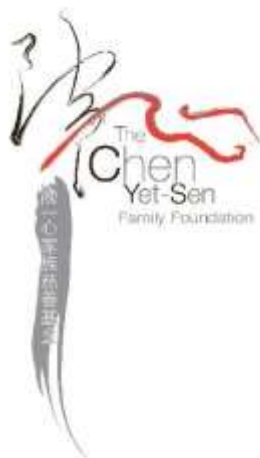
Essentially what is needed is leadership and the will to change two things. One is the prevalent attitudes of the majority population towards ethnic minorities- namely parents and teachers. Two, is to introduce actual materials that will make teaching CAL at kindergarten a discipline in and of itself. Teachers should be empowered with materials and training to do this.

What is unique about this research is that the research team as well as the researchers were made up of mostly ethnic minorities and CAL learners. We have looked at this problem with our lens, that we feel reflects more clearly possible and realistic solutions.

Many thanks to both the Hong Kong SARG Government through the SIE Fund, the Peter Bennett Foundation and the Chen Yet Sun Foundation for sponsoring this research to understand the root of the problem. Thank you too to the wonderful team at The Zubin Foundation, in particular Maggie Holmes who was the primary researcher and the author of this report.

We look forward to working with the many stakeholders involved to improve the lives and opportunities for our 3 year old kindergarten children- so that they can have the same opportunities later in life as everyone else.

Foreword by Sponsors



This important work is supported by the Chen Yet Sen Family Foundation, Peter Bennett Foundation and the Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund (SIE Fund) of the Government of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, which work together as part of the Collective Impact Hong Kong to seek and promote innovative contributions to early childhood education and care. It is proposed and undertaken by the Zubin Foundation which is a leader in investigating ways to provide better access to the Hong Kong education system for children with Chinese as an additional language (CAL).

It is vital to reach children in the early “golden” period of life when they have a chance to accumulate sufficient Chinese language skills to integrate fully into the Chinese language school system. All the evidence shows that if this opportunity is missed, it is very unlikely that children will catch up later, with potentially severe detrimental effects on life and work chances and social integration.

One important piece of this puzzle is to develop a coherent and appropriate kindergarten system integrated with the entry requirements of primary schools and geared to including ALL children. This report highlights improvements that should be made, following a detailed survey of kindergartens currently serving children with CAL. The aim is that the benefits of the Hong Kong education system should not be effectively barred to children who, through no fault of their own, have not had sufficient or appropriate exposure to Chinese language.

We very much hope that policy makers and education professionals will take this work to heart and integrate the lessons into future planning for a better society for all.

Introduction & Research Rationale

The first day of kindergarten is an important milestone for a young child and their family. It is the child's first introduction to formal schooling and marks the beginning of 15 years of free education.

The kindergarten years are also the golden period¹ for language acquisition and present an opportunity for children from non-Chinese speaking families to gain a good foundation in spoken and written Chinese. This may enable them to enter Chinese language mainstream schools at primary level.

Insufficient Chinese language ability is known to be a key factor in the poverty cycle experienced by many ethnic minority families, as generations of families struggle to learn both verbal Cantonese and written Chinese characters². Lack of proficiency in Chinese compromises academic performance and limits access to further education. Poor Chinese skills drastically reduce job choices and keep many ethnic minority people working in low-paid, unskilled jobs.

The Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report on Ethnic minorities 2016³, shows the poverty rate for ethnic minorities is increasing, with almost one in five people living below the poverty line⁴. The report cites lower language proficiency as being one of the factors that hinders their employability and integration. Learning Chinese, therefore, may be considered an economic imperative and necessary to reduce poverty among ethnic minority families.

For ethnic minority children, being educated in CMI schools provides immersion in the Chinese language and the real possibility of achieving high levels of proficiency in the core Chinese language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

Yet, research carried out by TZF⁵ across government/aided primary schools shows children from ethnic minority families are already behind in Chinese when they begin Primary One. Furthermore, upon graduation from secondary school, the Chinese language attainment level of many ethnic minority students from EMI government aided schools is only comparable to a Primary Two or Primary Three Chinese child at a CMI mainstream school⁶.

¹ <http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/curriculum-development/major-level-of-edu/preprimary/KGECEG-En-Draft-2017.pdf> Appendix 4. Page 130.

² <http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/2134112/hong-kongs-battle-over-language-ethnic-minority-children>

³ https://www.povertyrelief.gov.hk/pdf/Hong_Kong_Poverty_Situation_Report_on_Ethnic_Minorities_2016.pdf ES.41 xv1

⁴ <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/community/article/2132469/close-one-five-ethnic-minority-individuals-hong-kong-are>

⁵ https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/5242b7_389718f03a5d4d56b5f299ee24df12dc.pdf

⁶ <http://www.scmp.com/comment/letters/article/2081572/ethnic-minorities-hong-kong-worried-about-form-institutionalised>, <http://www.scmp.com/comment/letters/article/1874992/hong-kongs-ethnic-minorities-have-poor-chinese-language-skills-not>, <http://www.scmp.com/lifestyle/family-education/article/1556164/hong-kongs-ethnic-minority-students-lag-chinese-language>

The rationale for this research therefore came about because although there are interventions from NGO's and others for primary school CAL students, there seems to be almost none for aimed at kindergarten age children. Furthermore the experience of kindergarten school principals who have admitted CAL students is largely undocumented; their challenges and thoughts are unknown. Given that the kindergarten years are the best time for language acquisition this report seeks to find out what can be done at the pre-school stage to assist them to learn Cantonese more effectively.

Securing a Good Start For CAL students at kindergarten seeks to address this learning deficit by finding out more about the language learning situation at the very beginning of the child's educational journey. It examines the landscape of kindergarten education for ethnic minority children and considers the challenges faced by kindergarten educators.

The report examines what resources are needed to assist the kindergarten CAL student, what is currently available and perform a gap analysis to highlight areas of need. Research findings will be used to make suggestions to grant making institutions who wish to support ethnic minorities, reduce poverty and improve lives.

This report concludes by making recommendations for measures to be taken by stakeholders, with an aim to ensuring that all ethnic minority children in Hong Kong kindergartens secure the best possible start on their educational journey.

In 2015, The Zubin Foundation launched "The Status of Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong, 1997 to 2014"⁷; the first comprehensive overview of the lives of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. The report highlighted the extent of racial segregation in the education sector, beginning at kindergarten level and raised concern about low levels of Chinese language acquisition amongst ethnic minorities. Poor language skills were found to pose a barrier in multiple areas of life, including access to higher education, employment and healthcare.

Since the publication of "The Status of Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong, 1997 to 2014", the EDB has launched The Free Quality Kindergarten Education Scheme⁸, which ensures that all children, even those living in the poorest households, can benefit from a pre-school education.

With more ethnic minority children entering the school system at kindergarten level, TZF wanted to examine what resources are currently in place to help educators support EM students. The ultimate goal is to suggest practical resources, strategies and interventions that can support kindergarten teachers and improve learning outcomes for ethnic minority students.

⁷ https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/5242b7_ce8d089220ab43be9754bbbaed6b5365.pdf

⁸ <http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/free-quality-kg-edu/index.html>

Background and Current Landscape

The kindergarten sector

The kindergarten sector is thriving. EDB statistics for the year 2016/2017 show 1014 kindergarten schools operating in Hong Kong, demonstrating a steady annual increase over the past six years⁹.

Table 1. Number of kindergartens according to school year

School Year	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017
Total number of kindergartens	946	957	969	978	1000	1014

Kindergartens can be broadly separated into 'local' schools, which form part of a continuum of government subsidized education, and 'non-local' schools, which may use English as the medium of instruction and feed into the private and international schools.

Currently, the kindergarten sector in Hong Kong comprises 876 'local' kindergartens and 138 'non-local', giving a total of 1014 schools. Kindergartens provide services to children from three to six years olds, most operating on a half-day basis and with some schools offering full day classes.

The growth of schools in the kindergarten sector comes perhaps in response to HKSAR government initiatives to promote universal access to kindergartens. The Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS) starting from the school year 2007/2008 provided a direct subsidy to parents wishing to send their children to pre-school. The scheme was replaced in 2017/2018 by The Free Quality Kindergarten Education Scheme, which provides free kindergarten education for all students at scheme participating schools.

⁹ 2011 Hong Kong Yearbook p.150
<https://www.yearbook.gov.hk/2011/en/pdf/E07.pdf>

2012 Hong Kong Yearbook p.125
<https://www.yearbook.gov.hk/2012/en/pdf/E07.pdf>

2013 Hong Kong Yearbook p.126
<https://www.yearbook.gov.hk/2013/en/pdf/E07.pdf>

2014 Hong Kong Yearbook p.119
<https://www.yearbook.gov.hk/2014/en/pdf/E07.pdf>

2015/2016 & 2016/2017
<http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/about-edb/publications-stat/figures/kg.html>

These initiatives have led to a wider acceptance of pre-school education in the community and a resulting increase in the number of children entering pre-school over the past 5 years.

Table 2. Number of students in kindergartens and kindergarten & child care centres according to school year¹⁰

School Year	2011/2012	2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017
Total Number of students	157,433	164,800	169,800	176,400	185,398	184,032

The number of NCS students attending pre-school has also increased over the past three years. The EDB graph below shows that in 2016/2017, 12,240 NCS children were attending pre-primary education – this represents 6.5% of the total pre-school population¹¹. **This figure includes children of Chinese ethnicity who do not speak Chinese at home.**

Table 3. The number of NCS children studying in kindergarten 2012 to 2017

Number of NCS students in Kindergartens from 2012/2013 to 2016/2017 school years

2012/2013	2013/2014	2014/2015	2015/2016	2016/2017
12,324	12,029	11,933	11,982	12,240

While there is no official data to show the number of kindergartens that admit EM children, EDB has released statistics for the number of kindergartens admitting NCS students¹². These show that for the year 2016-2017, 579 kindergartens have some NCS students, while 435 have none at all. (The total number of kindergartens for 2016/2017 is 1014, i.e. nearly 43% of kindergartens have not admitted any NCS students.)

¹⁰ *ibid.*,

¹¹ Info from government Estimates of Expenditure. Annex B. page 97

<http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/about-edb/press/legco/others/17-18-EDB-2-e1.pdf>

¹² Annex E. Page 375

<http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/about-edb/press/legco/others/17-18-EDB-2-e1.pdf>

Kindergarten support for ethnic minority students

The HKSAR Government has stated its commitment to the principle of early integration of NCS students into the community, including facilitating their adaptation to the local education system¹³. EDB encourages parents to place their children in kindergarten as early as possible.

“The earlier non-Chinese speaking children start to learn Chinese, the quicker they can adapt to the local curriculum and integrate into the local community.”

Kindergarten Education Curriculum Guide.
The Curriculum Development Council.
Page 40¹⁴

With increasing numbers of ethnic minority children entering Hong Kong kindergartens, there are signs that the HKSAR Government, educational institutions and community organisations are beginning to take measures to support the specific needs of this demographic.

In the **Chief Executive’s 2017 Policy address**¹⁵, the Chief Executive Mrs Carrie Lam stated the government’s commitment to enhancing teacher training skills for teaching Chinese to non-Chinese speaking students and the continued evaluation of existing measures to help non-Chinese speaking students learn Chinese as a second language.

The Free Quality Kindergarten Education Scheme

The **Free Quality Kindergarten Education Scheme** (FQKES) was implemented by EDB from the 2017/2018 school year, with 748 schools signing up for the scheme. The FQKES replaces the Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme, which was rolled out in 2007/2008. The FQKES extends the provision of free education in Hong Kong from 12 years to 15 years and makes early childhood education a possibility for the poorest of families. This is of particular importance to children from non-Chinese speaking backgrounds, as attending a Chinese Medium of Instruction kindergarten provides the young child with three hours a day of Cantonese immersion. The Chinese language can therefore be acquired in a naturalistic way, making admission to a Chinese Medium of Instruction Primary a real possibility.

¹³ 2016 Yearbook p.127

¹⁴ <http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/curriculum-development/major-level-of-edu/preprimary/KGECEG-En-Draft-2017.pdf>

Page 92

¹⁵

<https://www.policyaddress.gov.hk/2017/eng/index.html>

Grant for Support to Non-Chinese Speaking Students

Also starting from the 2017/2018 school year, kindergartens taking part in the FQKES and admitting eight or more NCS students may apply for the **Grant for Support to Non-Chinese Speaking Students (NCS Grant) of \$363,510**. By December 2017, around 140 kindergartens had been approved as eligible to receive the NCS Grant¹⁶.

The NCS Grant must be used to enhance support for NCS students; these students may typically be children from ethnic minority families, however the scheme also provides for students who are ethnically Chinese but who do not speak Chinese at home.

The grant of \$363,510 is comparable to the mid-point of the recommended salary range of one kindergarten teacher. It can be used to appoint additional teaching staff, acquire services to provide teachers with more manpower support or teaching training, as well as for the provision of strategies to raise cultural and religious sensitivity and enhance communication with parents. Kindergartens in receipt of the grant are required to submit a school plan to describe how the funding will be used as well as a school report at the end of school year to summarise the implementation and evaluation of the measures taken.

The grant is disbursed in two installments, at the beginning of the school year in August or September and in April. If a kindergarten admits eight or more students after the school year has already begun, the subsidy may be calculated on a pro rata basis.

The Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework.

In 2014/2015 the government implemented the **Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework** for use in primary and secondary schools. The scheme provides teachers with a set of objectives and outcomes that describe the learning progress of NCS students at different learning stages. However, it does not provide schools with a structured and content specific teaching curriculum. In order to facilitate schools' implementation of the Learning Framework, the government allocated HK\$200 million a year to be distributed among schools admitting 10 or more NCS students. The Learning Framework may be seen as an indication of the government's commitment to helping NCS students, but as yet does not cover kindergarten education.

External Chinese language support programmes

Several language support programmes are currently being run by the major Hong Kong universities in conjunction with experienced NGOs, with a view to providing extra Chinese language support for children from non-Chinese speaking backgrounds. Some examples of these include:

¹⁶ <http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr17-18/english/panels/ed/papers/ed20180105cb4-427-2-e.pdf>
Paragraph 11

EDB-University-School Support Programmes

EDB has partnered with various educational institutions to implement a range of University-School Support Programmes at selected kindergartens. The projects, financed by the Education Development Fund have been running since 2012/13 school year and around 250 schools have benefited from the programme to date¹⁷.

The **Hong Kong Jockey Club C-for-Chinese@JC** project has been co-created by three local universities and two non-governmental organizations. Twenty schools are participating in this five year programme, which is developing teaching and study resources, as well as providing school based support and teacher training. As part of this project, The Education University of Hong Kong established the Multicultural Teaching Assistant (MTA) Foundation programme to train kindergarten teaching assistants from ethnic minority backgrounds. Eleven MTA students graduated from the programme in 2017.

Oxfam Hong Kong is in the second phase of the ‘**Start From the Beginning**’ project, implemented in partnership with the Centre for Advancement of Chinese Language Education and Research, Faculty of Education of the University of Hong Kong and the Department of Early Childhood Education of The Education University of Hong Kong. The project aims to develop a Chinese as second language curriculum, teaching materials, out-of-class instruction and assessment tools for kindergarten students.

Community Concern

Despite the enactment of the Race Discrimination Ordinance in 2008, parent groups continue to raise concern about systematic racial segregation throughout the Hong Kong education system.

Parents from ethnic minority backgrounds have long complained that they experience discrimination and rejection when applying to kindergartens¹⁸. At a TZF Town Hall event with Chief Secretary for Administration Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, in November, 2017, parents spoke about being turned away from kindergartens on the basis of their race and complained about the lack of support for their school-age children¹⁹.

“When I applied to kindergarten, a woman came over and asked: ‘why are you applying to this school? This is a Cantonese school.’”

“Schooling for my daughter was almost like a nightmare. The teachers called twice in two weeks to ask my daughter to leave the school.”

¹⁷ http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/student-parents/ncs-students/summary-ncs-support-services/Overview_Support_measures_E.pdf

¹⁸ <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education-community/article/1795057/minority-children-cut-70pc-hong-kong>

¹⁹ https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/5242b7_eba0d6a0bb1b40a791dd3166b79c2492.pdf

Ethnic minority children are often directed towards a predominantly English language based system of education and young people voiced their frustration at their lack of Chinese language skills, which leaves them disadvantaged throughout life.

“Our Cantonese level is too basic. This is a hurdle for us. It’s not that we don’t want to learn – it’s that we are not given the opportunity to learn.”

At the TZF Town Hall in November 2017²⁰, parents also noted the continued presence of racial stereotyping in textbooks, raised questions about the availability and efficacy of Chinese language support programmes as well as uncertainty over the Chinese language requirements needed for entrance into Hong Kong universities.

While the HKSAR Government has committed HK\$200 million per year to facilitate the implementation of The Learning Framework, questions still arise about the efficacy of the scheme and lack of transparency from participating schools over how the funding is spent²¹.

The role of pre-school education in Hong Kong

In many parts of the world, early childhood education is not considered a pre-requisite for success further up the school system.

In Hong Kong, however, the language of instruction used at primary level and beyond is inextricably linked to the language of instruction used at kindergarten level.

If ethnic minority children are to enter and thrive at CMI primary and secondary school, they need to lay down a good foundation of language skills during the kindergarten years. In fact, the level of Chinese that a child attains by the end of secondary school may impacts their ability to enter university in Hong Kong. It can be seen therefore, that securing a good start pre-school is critical to breaking the cycle of poverty.

The kindergarten years are therefore crucial to a child’s chance of continuing to learn in the CMI school system. The decisions about schooling that a parent makes, when the child is only 2 years old, is very likely to have long term repercussions on the child’s journey through the rest of the Hong Kong education system – and beyond.

²⁰ On 6 November, 2017, The Zubin Foundation arranged a town hall event. It was attended by Chief Secretary Matthew Cheung, to understand the challenges and issues faced by ethnic minority children and their parents. This event was attended by over 150 people

²¹ <http://www.scmp.com/news/hong-kong/education/article/2134792/chinese-language-help-hong-kongs-ethnic-minority-pupils?edition=international>

A plea for new language

This report begins with a plea for new terminology to be used to describe children who need Chinese language support at school.

Currently the term non-Chinese speaking (NCS) student is most widely used. This term is not accurate as it does not describe the full range of attainment levels of students learning Chinese.

The term 'NCS' is used as an umbrella term for anyone who is not a native Chinese speaker. NCS is used indiscriminately to describe children with beginner level Chinese, right through to children who speak Chinese fluently, but struggle with some aspects of writing. The term is most commonly used to describe children from ethnic minority backgrounds, to the extent where the terms EM and NCS become almost interchangeable. NCS is an inherently negative label that accompanies the child for life and from which there is no escape.

The term Chinese as a Second Language (CSL) is also used inaccurately to describe ethnic minority students in Hong Kong. The child's mother tongue may be Hindi, Urdu, or any number of other languages and they may experience more ease learning English – making Chinese their third or fourth language.

TZF prefers to use the more inclusive term Chinese as an Additional Language (CAL). This term encompasses a full range of attainment levels, from children with no prior knowledge of Chinese through to students who have achieved near native level language proficiency, but still need some support to operate well in a fully native Chinese speaking environment.

CAL nods at the better understood discipline of English as an Additional Language (EAL), for which a wide range of resources and support tools are available.

Crucially, CAL is an inclusive term, which overrides endless mention of the child's ethnicity. Indeed, there are various other groups of children who may benefit from extra support learning Chinese in school.

The phased withdrawal of the government subsidy for the English Schools Foundation schools and accompanying price hike in school fees, is prompting more middle-class families to consider the local school route²². As such, children from a wider range of linguistic background are likely to enter the government school system. Likewise, ethnically Chinese children and mixed-race children living in predominantly English-speaking families often need help with CAL.

However, accepting that the terms NCS and EM are currently the most widely understood in the educational field, researchers felt it necessary to use these terms during the interviews with school principals participating in this study. Likewise, much of the data from EDB that this study draws upon also used the term NCS. Inevitably therefore, this report also refers to NCS students.

²² <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01425692.2017.1351866>

TZF is however aware of the limiting nature of this term and hopes that in future the HKSAR Government and wider community can embrace the more accurate and more inclusive term: **Chinese as an Additional Language**.

Methodology

Objectives

Securing a Good Start seeks to gain a better understanding of the provision of Chinese language teaching to ethnic minority students in Hong Kong kindergartens. The study aims to find out what resources and interventions are currently in place to help these children. It asks if, at the end of three years of kindergarten education, the students' Chinese language skills are sufficient to enter a mainstream Chinese language primary school. The purpose of the project is to make recommendations for tangible measures that will enable teachers to teach CAL students more effectively and to achieve better Chinese language learning outcomes for children from non-Chinese speaking backgrounds in Hong Kong kindergartens.

The aim of this research is to:

- Understand the challenges faced by kindergartens teaching ethnic minority children
- Understand what resources are currently available to teach ethnic minority children
- Learn what resources and interventions kindergarten teachers believe they need to teach ethnic minority children
- Make policy recommendations in light of the findings
- Making recommendations for teaching / study resources required for this group. Potentially develop these materials in partnership with other interested parties
- Be a catalyst for community discussion about how to ensure ethnic minority students achieve high levels of Chinese proficiency

Collection of Data

1) The survey collected data from schools in the six District Council districts that have the highest percentage of ethnic minority residents. These are: Central and Western, Eastern, Yau Tsim Mong, Kowloon City, Yuen Long and Sha Tin.

The information on District Council districts was taken from the Hong Kong 2011 Population Census Thematic Report: Ethnic minorities²³. When work on this project began, the Hong Kong 2016 Population By-Census Thematic Report: Ethnic Minorities²⁴ had not yet been released.

²³ Hong Kong 2011 Population Census, Thematic Report: Ethnic minorities
<http://www.statistics.gov.hk/pub/B11200622012XXXXB0100.pdf>
Table 8.1. Page 110

²⁴ Hong Kong 2016 Population By-Census Thematic Report: Ethnic Minorities
<https://www.statistics.gov.hk/pub/B11201002016XXXXB0100.pdf>
Page 136

As the table below shows, the districts with the highest percentage of ethnic minority residents in the Hong Kong 2016 Population By-Census remain the same as in the Hong Kong 2011 Population Census.

Table 4. Proportion of ethnic minorities by District Council district and ethnicity, 2011 & 2016

District	Overall Population in 2011. Ethnicity: Asian (other than Chinese) (%)	Overall population in 2016. Ethnicity: Asian (other than Chinese) (%)
Hong Kong Island		
• Central and Western	7.7	6.8
• Wanchai	6.0	6.0
• Eastern	10.2	9.5
• Southern	6.0	5.3
Kowloon		
• Yau Tsim Mong	9.3	10.0
• Sham Shui Po	4.3	4.6
• Kowloon City	8.4	8.2
• Wong Tai Sin	2.9	2.6
• Kwun Tong	4.7	4.6
New Territories		
• Kwai Tsing	4.0	4.3
• Tsuen Wan	4.0	4.0
• Tuen Mun	3.6	3.5
• Yuen Long	7.0	7.2
• North	2.1	2.1
• Tai Po	3.4	3.5
• Sha Tin	6.8	7.1
• Sai Kung	6.1	6.5
• Islands	3.7	4.4

2) A list was compiled of all schools in these six districts that are participating in the Free Quality Kindergarten Education Scheme²⁵.

Schools were contacted by email and school principals invited to participate in a one-hour long interview with members of our research team. The emails were then followed up with telephone calls.

²⁵ <http://www.edb.gov.hk/en/edu-system/preprimary-kindergarten/free-quality-kg-edu/index.html>

Table 5. School outreach data: number of schools reached out to and response rate

Contacted by email and phone	278
Interviews completed	36
How many did not agree	139
Response rate	36/278 = 13%

Table 6. The number of kindergartens reached out to, according to school district

Districts	Kindergartens reached out to
Central & Western	24
Kowloon City	42
Yau Tsim Mong	27
Yuen Long	69
Eastern	55
Sha Tin	58
'other'	3*
Total	278

*Kindergartens in Kwai Chung and Sham Shui Po taking part in the Oxfam 'Start from the Beginning' project.

Researchers were able to secure interviews with school principals from 36 schools.

A combination of quantitative and qualitative research questions was employed to understand the experiences of kindergarten teachers teaching ethnic minority children at kindergarten level.

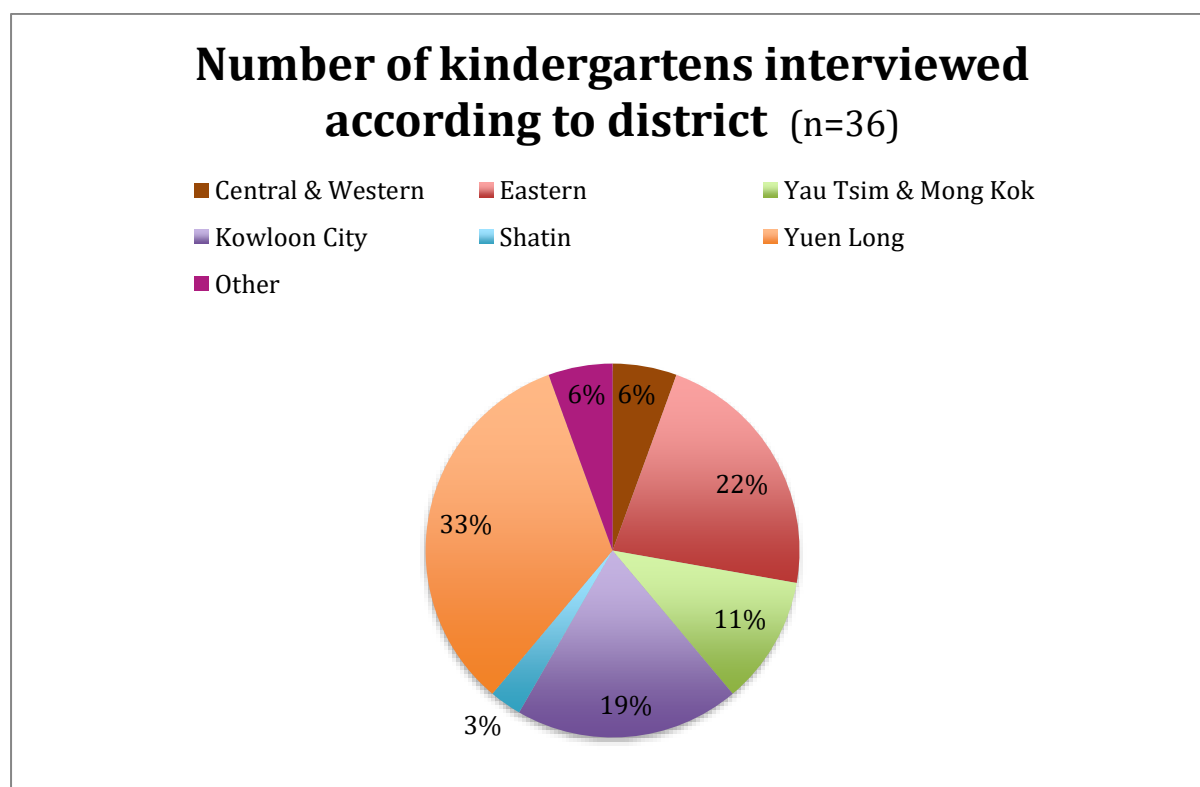
The research involved face to face in-depth interviews with school principals and teachers from 34 schools which lasted between 45 and 60 minutes. Two school principals, who were unable to take part in the face-to-face interview, submitted written responses. Interviews were analysed to identify key themes, which are presented in this report.

Demographic

1. School Districts

The schools surveyed were selected from the six District Council districts in Hong Kong that have the highest percentage of ethnic minority residents

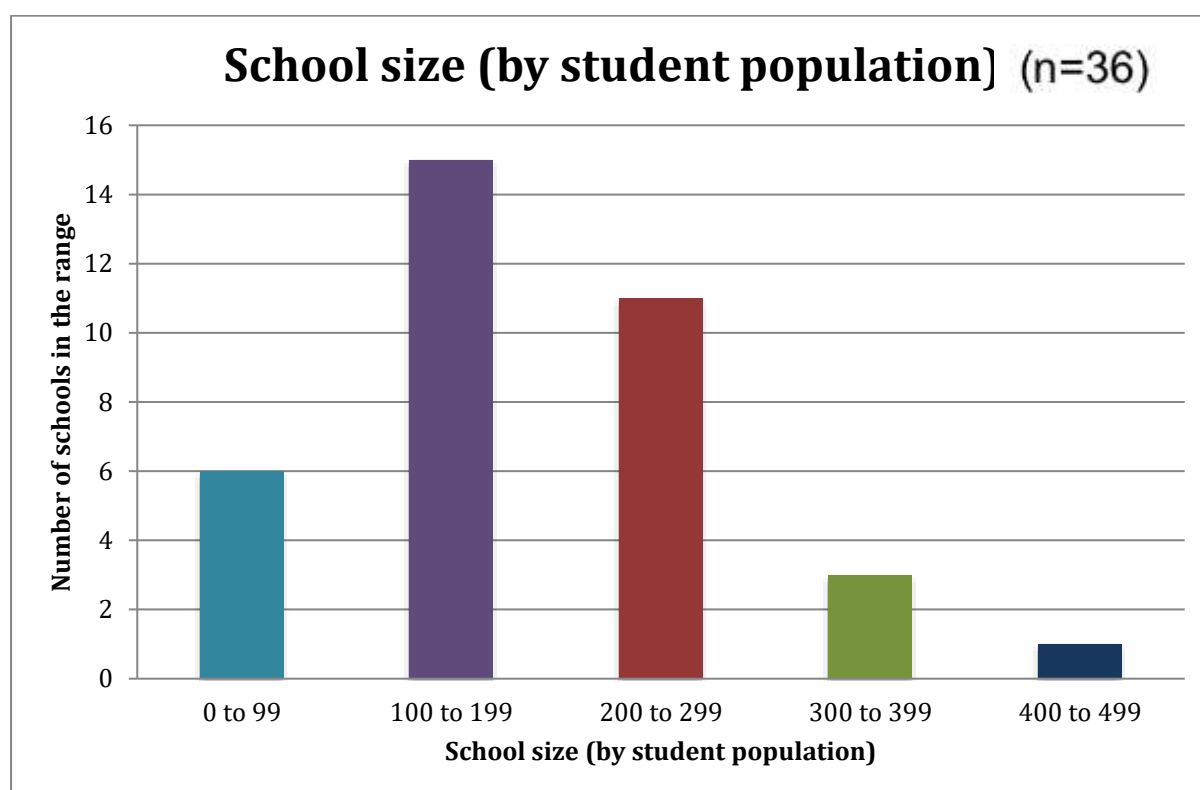
Chart 1. The number of kindergartens interviewed according to district



2. School size

The kindergartens surveyed present a range of school sizes and reflect the variety of kindergartens operating in Hong Kong. The smallest school had a total population of 41 students and the largest had 472 students.

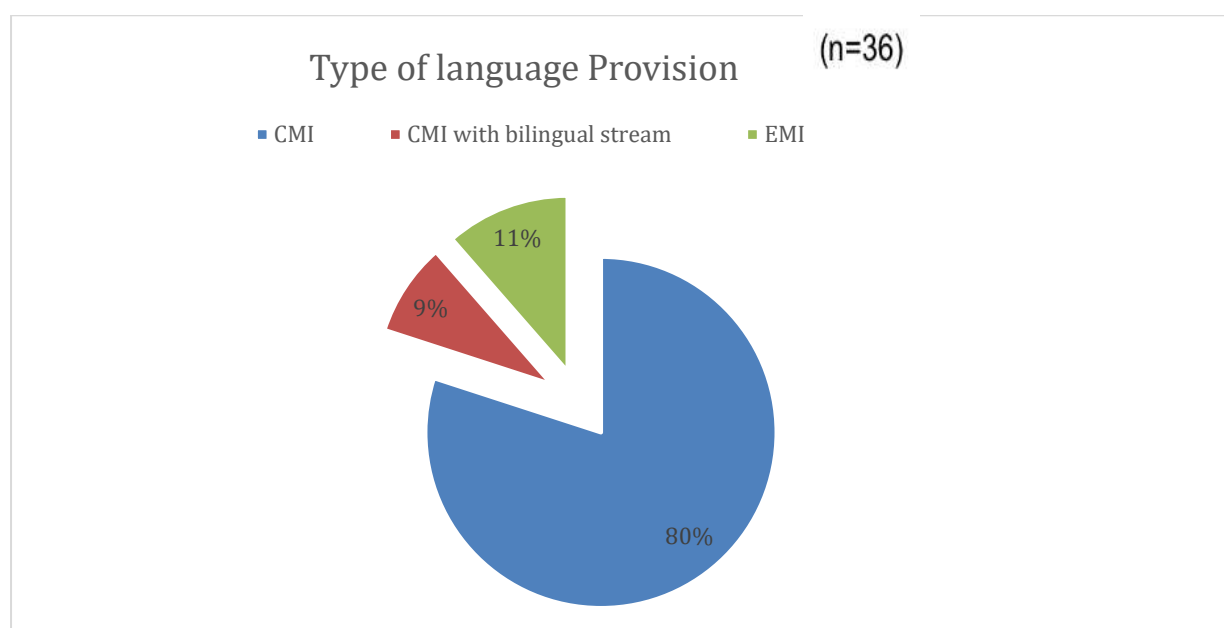
Chart 2. School size by student population



3. Language Provision

Of the 36 schools surveyed, 29 are CMI schools. Four schools are EMI schools, but provide some Chinese teaching each day and another three are CMI schools with a separate 'bilingual' stream, wherein English is the main medium of instruction, but 30 minutes of each session is taught in Chinese.

Chart 3. Types of language provision in surveyed schools



It should be noted that most of the situations outlined in this report are common to all kindergartens, no matter the language of instruction. When issues relate to only type of school, this has been specified.

Research limitations

Although the research sample of 36 kindergartens is relatively small, it may be considered representative of a key cohort of schools, which admit children from ethnic minority backgrounds.

The research team acknowledges the possibility of selection bias inherent in this project, as kindergartens with a higher concentration of ethnic minority students may be more likely to participate in the study. Researchers are aware of this bias and take it into account when reporting the data, making observations and drawing up recommendations.

Confidentiality

Quotes and comments included in this report have not been directly attributed to particular individuals or schools, in order to protect the confidentiality of research participants. A full list of schools that agreed to take part in this project is available in Appendix 1.

Report Findings

THE NCS GRANT

From the beginning of the school year 2017/2018, kindergartens taking part in the Free Quality Kindergarten Education Scheme and admitting eight or more NCS students may apply for a full year grant of \$363,510 from EDB²⁶. The 'Grant for Support to Non-Chinese speaking Students' (NCS Grant) is to enable kindergartens to enhance the provision of support for NCS students.

Of the kindergartens surveyed for this report, all schools who were eligible to apply for the NCS Grant, did so. The kindergartens who did not apply for the NCS Grant, were not eligible, due to insufficient numbers of NCS students.

Table 7. Number of kindergartens surveyed receiving NCS Grant

Received EDB grant?	Number of schools
Yes	23
No	13
Total	36

Most school principals spoke favourably about the application process, which they said was straightforward and convenient.

One school, with seven NCS students, **viewed the grant as an incentive** to seek more NCS students for her school. She had asked the parents of her current students to reach out to their friends and relatives to encourage them to join her school, so that next year the school will be eligible to apply.

This is the first year of the NCS Grant and a few schools **expressed concern** about **what would be required** and **how the money is allocated**.

Two school principals, who were not eligible to apply for the grant, said the school management were worried about what the process would involve and whether they would be required to provide new materials and programmes, which would create **a burden for their teaching staff**. One school principal expressed caution at admitting more ethnic minority students and said the kindergarten did not want to become labelled as "a school where the EM children go".

Schools with a higher concentration of ethnic minority students expressed frustration that the lump sum grant of \$363,510 was the same amount, whether the school had eight EM students or many more. **Some school principals felt this was unfair and**

²⁶ The information about the NCS grant of \$363,510 http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/english/hc/sub_com/hs52/papers/hs5220161123cb2-208-2-e.pdf

believed the grant should be allocated according to a tiered system, as per the provision of financial support for public sector primary and secondary schools²⁷. One teacher said the money should be allocated according to how many classes of EM students they had. Another noted:

“We hired an extra teacher, but how do we make best use of her among 33 students in different classes?”

Among the kindergartens surveyed, the majority of schools **used the grant to appoint an extra teacher**.

Table 8. Type of service purchased with funds from the NCS Grant.

Types of support provided	Number of schools
Extra teaching staff – class teacher or teaching assistant	19
Chinese classes for parent and child	1
Parent workshops on cultural life in HK	1
To be decided	2
Total	23

Some of the schools used the extra funding to **hire ethnic minority teaching assistants** to help with translations and liaise with families. The presence of ethnic minority staff was much valued in the school community.

“It helps if the teacher is an ethnic minority herself, she will understand the culture better and the parents find it easier to communicate with her.”

School principals clearly **welcomed the chance to have an extra pair of hands** in the classroom. One teacher said there were already indications that the higher teacher to student ratio would lead to better Chinese learning outcomes for children from non-Chinese speaking backgrounds.

“After we received the EDB funding, in just two months, we feel the students have improved a lot with the extra time given to them by the new teacher.”

²⁷ The information about funding for admitting EM students being according to a tiered system at public primary schools: http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr16-17/english/hc/sub_com/hs52/papers/hs5220161123cb2-208-2-e.pdf

SEGREGATION

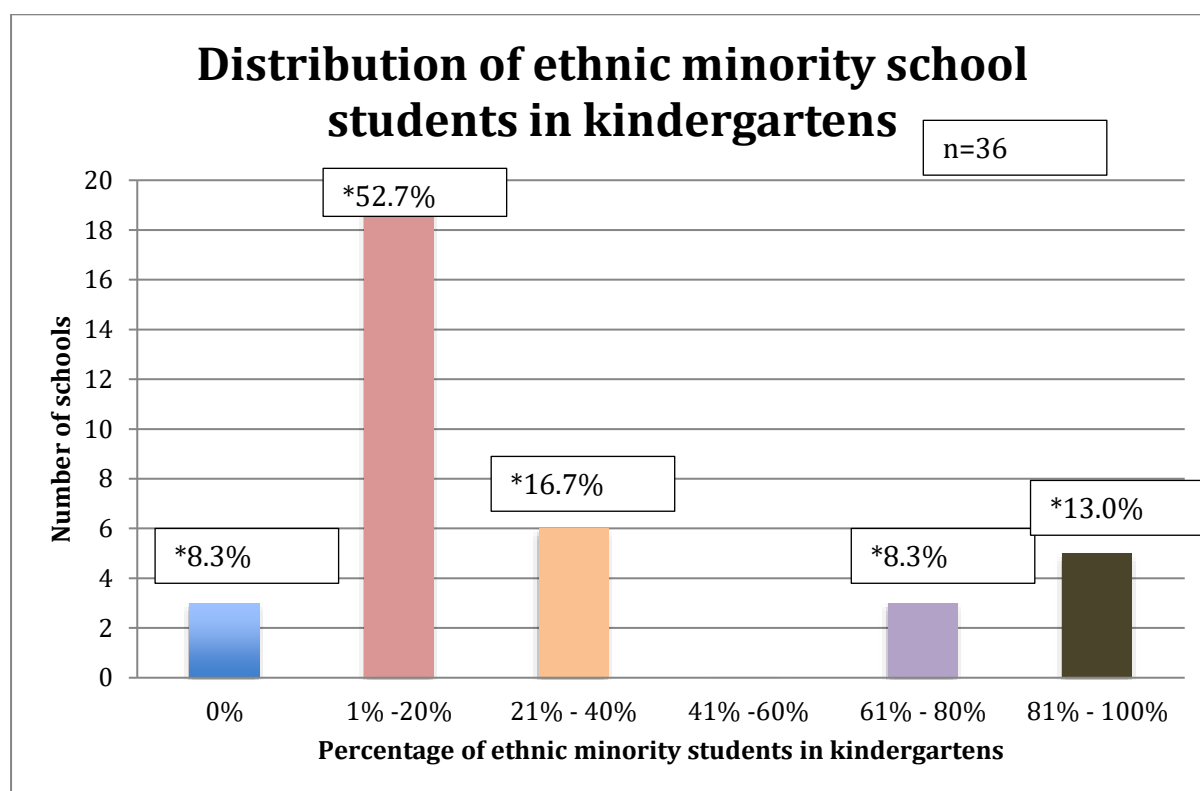
This research shows that more than half the schools surveyed have a school population of 1% to 20% ethnic minority students.

Five of the schools surveyed have a school population comprised of over 81% ethnic minority students.

Nearly a quarter 22% of the schools surveyed have an ethnic minority population of over 60%.

The possibility of **selection bias** must be acknowledged as kindergartens with a higher concentration of ethnic minority children may be more likely to agree to participate in this survey. However, these findings are corroborated by Hong Kong Unison's 2015 report, which showed a high concentration of the EM student population studying in 8% of the surveyed kindergartens²⁸.

Chart 4. Distribution of ethnic minority school students in surveyed kindergartens



²⁸ [http://www.unison.org.hk/DocumentDownload/Researches/R201505 Research on KG support and attitude ENG.pdf](http://www.unison.org.hk/DocumentDownload/Researches/R201505%20Research%20on%20KG%20support%20and%20attitude%20ENG.pdf)

40+% Kindergartens have no NCS students

The research shows that over 40% of kindergartens in Hong Kong do not have any ethnic minority students.

Table 9. The prevalence of kindergartens in the selected districts which do not admit NCS students

Kindergartens not willing to take part in survey because no NCS students	112
Kindergartens taking part in survey with no NCS students	3
Total number of kindergartens reached out to	278
Percentage of kindergartens with no NCS students	41.3%

This figure is corroborated by statistics recently released by EDB, which show 435 kindergartens did not accept any ethnic minority children for the 2016/2017 school year²⁹. This represents 42.8% of the total number of kindergartens in Hong Kong.

Table 10. Distribution of NCS students in Hong Kong kindergarten 2016/2017

Number of NCS Students	Number of Kindergartens
Zero	435
Less than 10	361
10 - 30	113
31 - 50	37
51 or above	68
Total number of kindergartens	1014

Some kindergartens comprise over 90% of ethnic minority children, making interaction with native Chinese children almost impossible.

One of the kindergartens, with a student population comprising of 100% ethnic minority children, is a Chinese Medium of Instruction school.

Presence of ethnic minority students is a deterrent to Chinese parents

The segregation of ethnic minority students from their Chinese counterparts is partly a result of **community attitudes towards ethnic minority families**.

The presence of ethnic minority children, especially those from the South Asian community, in a school, is considered **a deterrent to Chinese parents**. Some teachers say negative perceptions of South Asians in the wider community impact on

²⁹ The information about some schools not having any EM students in kindergarten.
Page 375 <http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/about-edb/press/legco/others/17-18-EDB-2-e1.pdf>

attitudes towards ethnic minority families and their children in the education system.
“In Yuen Long EMs may be labelled as trouble makers, even criminals.”

Chinese parents may feel ethnic minority children **are not well disciplined** and **bring down the level** of Chinese teaching. As such, some schools are cautious about being too closely identified with the ethnic minority communities.

“Chinese parents think the EM kids are naughty and wild. They ask: ‘will my child be in the same class as the EM children?’”

“If we get more resources and become labelled as ‘a school where the EM children go’ the relatives and friends of the current EM children will all want to come here. That’s not a good thing.”

Mindful of the income gained from the presence of the Chinese children, kindergartens may be cautious about admitting too many EM students and some schools segregate the EM children into different classes.

One teacher said EM parents had asked for their children to be put in the morning session, but the school had to consider that the Chinese parents might move their children out of the school. So, **they kept the EM students together, in the afternoon session.**

“EM parents ask us why the child is not in the morning class. Because if we give a morning place to a NCS student, the Chinese parent will move out. It’s the issue of the Chinese parents – we also want local students.”

In the CMI kindergartens that have accepted larger numbers of EM children, EM students are sometimes **grouped together in the same classes**, usually an afternoon session. This **restricts interaction with Chinese children** and hinders their chances of learning in an immersive Chinese language environment.

“If there are too many EM children in the same class, they will speak their own language. We think progress is slower in the afternoon session.”

After becoming aware that lack of contact with native Chinese speakers was having a detrimental effect on the learning outcomes of the ethnic minority students, one school, which had previously separated the EM children into an afternoon session, changed their policy and now disperses the EM children throughout the morning classes.

However, some teachers say **EM families prefer afternoon sessions because they do not like to wake up early** or because, before the introduction of FQKES, afternoon classes were cheaper than the morning ones. Teachers also note that **EM families tend to be less punctual with the application process** and are therefore less likely to be given their first choice of timeslot.

“By the time they apply, all the morning positions have been taken by the Chinese children.”

LANGUAGE SKILLS AND ATTAINMENT

Language deficit at K1

Ethnic minority children entering kindergarten for the first time, typically start school with absolutely no prior knowledge of Chinese. Teachers see this as a bit problem for the child’s ability to make friends and engage well in lessons. It also has a negative impact on the way teachers perceive the presence of children from non-Chinese speaking family backgrounds in the classroom.

Teachers say: “**乜都唔識**” – **they don’t know anything at all**. Not the numbers, not even the basic greetings.

“We have no way of communicating. He doesn’t understand us – and we don’t understand him.”

Without any Chinese language ability, the **EM child may prefer to stay close to and talk to other ethnic minority children** in the class. This further **limits opportunities** to hear and use Chinese. One specialist teacher observed:

“Our main role is to facilitate the inclusion of the NCS students with their Chinese language speaking classmates.”

When ethnic minority children do not speak any Chinese, there is a **danger the teacher will speak to them in English** to make their instructions understood, thus further reducing contact time in Chinese and setting a precedent for future patterns of interaction. Teachers said that some NCS children have English speaking domestic helpers at home, find English easier and by K3 are still mixing English and Chinese together.

Most ethnic minority children start kindergarten with no prior knowledge of Chinese. By the end of K3, teachers report that children from non-Chinese speaking backgrounds are typically able to make good progress with listening and speaking skills. However, with little exposure to Chinese characters beyond the classroom and nobody to help with homework at home, **reading and writing skills remain weak at the end of K3.**

It should be noted that kindergartens have been advised not to teach writing skills during K1 and for this reason over half of the school principals responded ‘no comment’ when asked about writing skills at the start of K1.

Chart 5: The Chinese language skills of EM children at the beginning of K1, in comparison with Chinese children – as reported by kindergartens school principals

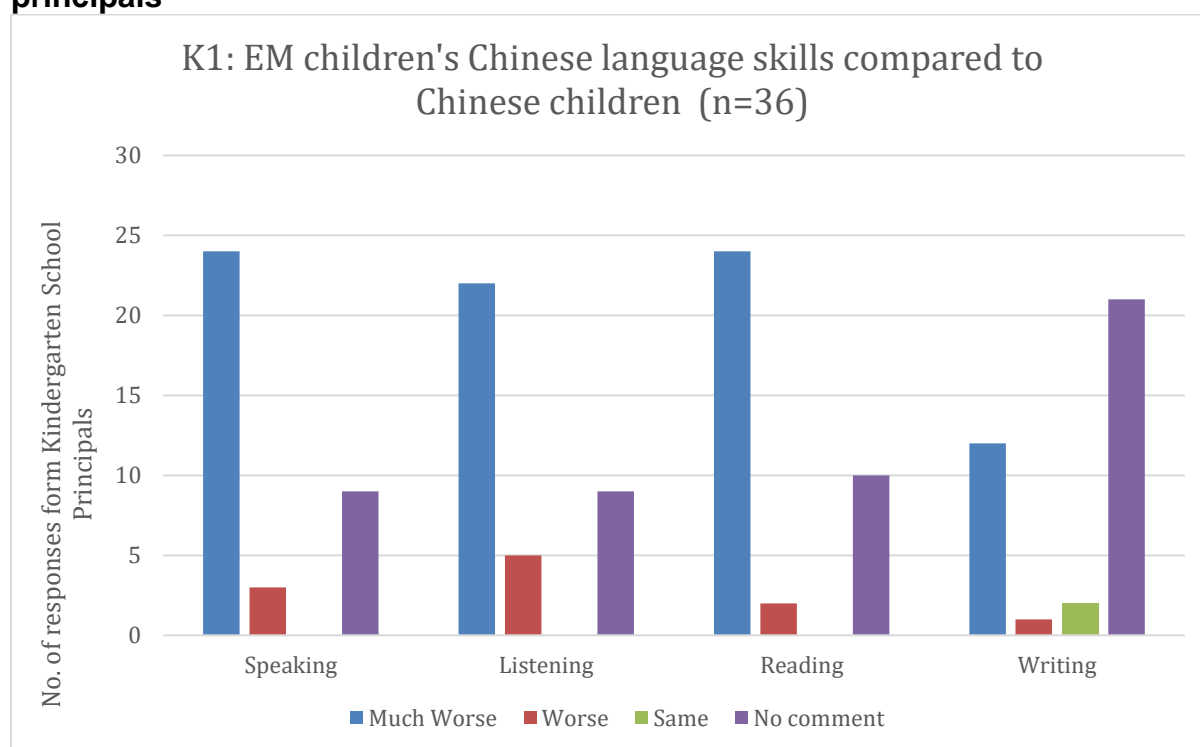
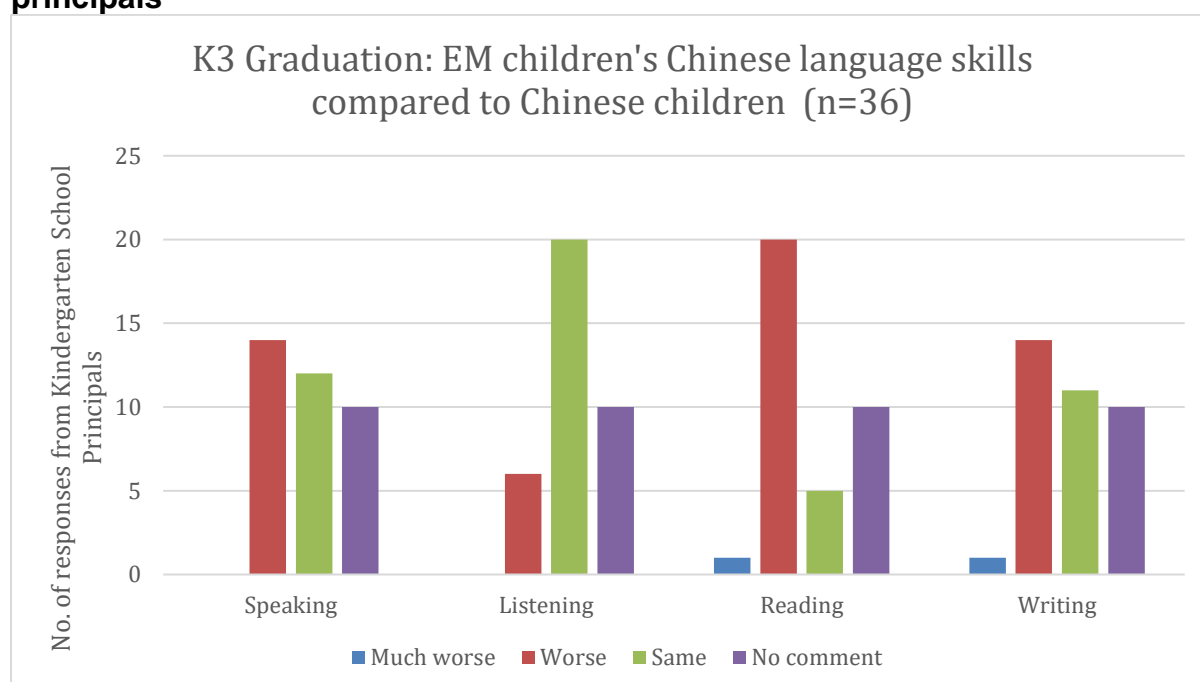


Chart 6: The Chinese language skills of EM children at graduation from K3, in comparison with Chinese children – as reported by kindergarten school principals



Listening and speaking

It would appear that the skills of **listening and speaking do not generally present many problems** and by the end of K3 most EM children, in CMI schools, speak Chinese at a level which is comparable to the Chinese children in their class. Some teachers said **children from families with South East Asian background were able to pick up spoken Cantonese more quickly than children whose families originate in Pakistan and India**. They observed that languages such as Vietnamese and Thai are more closely linked to Cantonese and that South East Asian parents find it easier to assimilate into Hong Kong culture.

Reading

Reading was seen to present the greatest challenge to children from non-Chinese speaking backgrounds.

Ethnic minority families are not able to help their children by reading books with them and there may be no Chinese language resources in the home environment, so families rely entirely on the school to provide opportunities for reading.

Whilst the children may be able to recognize the individual characters that have been taught in the classroom, they tend to **forget the characters quickly** and are **unable to read** longer sentences with any fluency.

One teacher, who works in an EMI school with a high concentration of ethnic minority children, noted that it was **important to teach the concept of the character** before teaching the characters.

“If you want them to be able to read something, they need to have the concept first. They need lots of listening input before they start reading.”

Writing Skills

At kindergarten level, writing focuses on copying individual characters rather than creating sentences or engaging in free writing. As such, some teachers feel the EM students are able to perform quite well at this skill and some spoke with great pride about their students' writing ability. One teacher even said the ethnic minority children have better fine motor skills than Chinese children. One school principal said: **“Our Thai student has beautiful characters.”**

However, many teachers noted that, when writing Chinese characters, although the final result appeared much like the work of the Chinese students, in fact, the **children were often not following the character stroke order** and were **treating each character as a picture**. They were able to reproduce the likeness of an individual character, but **without understanding what the character meant, or how it was pronounced**. Teachers noted this will have **serious repercussions further along the school system**, when the memorisation of many more characters is required.

“They draw the characters like a picture.”

“We teach them the words, but they forget them so quickly. They can’t absorb it.”

EDB guidelines state that kindergartens should not teach character writing during K1³⁰, but teachers observed that some Chinese families may begin to practice character writing with their children even before school starts. **Ethnic minority children are therefore at a further disadvantage** as the only exposure they get to character writing is at kindergarten and writing skills will only be taught from K2.

Other language challenges

No Chinese outside the classroom

For many ethnic minority children, the only exposure they get to Chinese is during school time and teachers view lack of opportunity to practice Chinese at home as the biggest hurdle to developing high levels of Chinese proficiency.

This is a particular problem for reading and writing. Lack of writing practice at home seen as the **biggest obstacle to the children acquiring competency in writing**. Teachers say that while many EM students are able to successfully reproduce individual characters in a classroom setting, they **do not get the amount of repetition** needed not commit the character to long term memory.

“For writing, the home environment is the most important thing and they have no one to help them, because their parents don’t know Chinese.”

Some ethnic minority children, especially those from South Asian communities, **return to their parents’ home countries** for extended periods during the summer months. This means they may **miss some scheduled classes** and may go for several weeks, or longer, without any Chinese language input. School **principals expressed frustration** that when the students returned to school after the holidays they had forgotten much of what had already been taught.

“They leave HK for such a long time in summer, and when they come back, it’s like we have to start all over again.”

For those children who stay in Hong Kong over summer, they are **less likely to attend extracurricular activity classes (興趣班)**, perhaps because of the financial cost or because of the lack of English language information about these classes. During holiday periods, therefore, ethnic minority children tend to lack exposure to the Chinese language and have little chance to integrate with Chinese children.

³⁰ EDB Page 40

<http://www.edb.gov.hk/attachment/en/curriculum-development/major-level-of-edu/preprimary/KGECEG-En-Draft-2017.pdf>

Poor Chinese skills affects other aspects of learning

Lack of Chinese skills may **affect the child's level of attainment in other areas**, not just Chinese language. Mathematical concepts and all other subjects are explained in Chinese and there is a danger that the child is not fully able to comprehend. Teachers said the child tends not be able to fully engage with the lesson and becomes unmotivated.

"Teaching materials created by the school do not cater to their needs and this makes it harder for the children to grasp the study content."

"It can be difficult to explain concepts of other subjects as the children don't have enough Chinese. Are they able to understand? We are not sure. It's difficult to convey the ideas effectively."

Poor language skills: implications for the child

Arriving in a new school environment, with no language skills is **extremely difficult** for many children. Teachers talked about them **having a silent phase or crying for long periods**. They said that for first term, or even the first year, the **ethnic minority children often appear lacking in confidence and are more passive than their Chinese speaking counterparts**. The **child may also become frustrated** as they cannot respond to the teacher's instructions.

"The NCS students tend to be more passive and we have to try and draw them out and get them to engage more actively. They tend to be lacking in confidence and afraid to speak."

"If the children can't communicate with us – and vice versa – they may be quite passive and not be able to join in the lessons properly."

Poor Chinese skills **may result in the students being perceived negatively by the teachers**. Unable to understand the most basic instructions, teachers say they need to spend more time explaining what is required. Teachers may have to **use hand gestures** to try to communicate with the children; they say that even having one or two NCS students in the classroom is **time consuming and tiring**.

"Even one or two in the class is hard work for the teacher if they can't understand anything."

“It would be better if they could understand at least some basic Cantonese before they start school - otherwise it’s such hard work.”

Unable to express themselves verbally, the children may also **use physical means to make themselves understood**. This may lead to misunderstandings with other pupils and the ethnic minority child may gain a **reputation for being unruly** and difficult to handle.

“The kids don’t know Chinese so it’s difficult to control the class.”

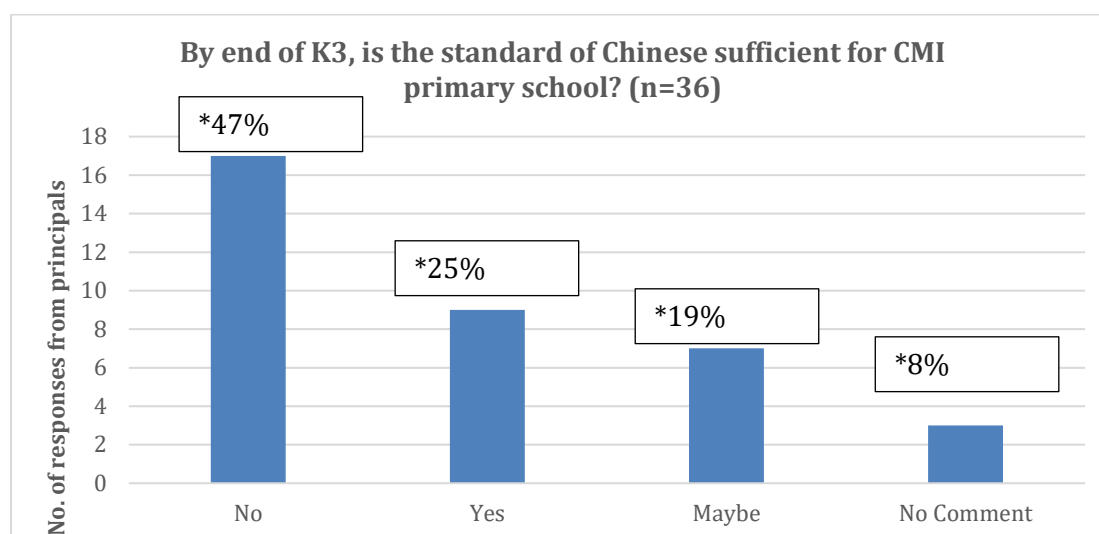
Many school principals feel that **three hours of kindergarten is simply not enough** Chinese language input to gain sufficient skills across the core disciplines of speaking, listening, reading and writing. They stress the importance of finding ways to increase the child’s exposure to Chinese language outside of the classroom.

THE TRANSITION TO PRIMARY SCHOOL

Teachers reported that **parents are increasingly keen for their children to pursue a Chinese language education**. Second generation parents believe Chinese language proficiency leads to a wider range of job opportunities and a better chance of integration into Hong Kong society. For this reason, more **parents seek to place their children in CMI primary schools**; they understand that attending a CMI kindergarten is an important first step along the CMI education route and a potentially better life due to enhanced job opportunities.

This report shows however that **three years of CMI kindergarten does not guarantee a child’s language ability** will be sufficient to enter into and thrive at a mainstream CMI Primary School.

Chart 7. Is the child's Chinese ability sufficient by the end of K3 to enter a CMI primary school?



Nearly half the respondents said that by the end of K3 the NCS children would not have sufficient Chinese to enter and thrive at a CMI primary school.

School Principals said that children who are able to enter a fully mainstream CMI primary school usually have some Chinese language support at home, this could be a Chinese speaking parent, sibling or the help of a tutor.

Some teachers said their students will have sufficient Chinese to enter a CMI primary school but immediately qualified this statement raising concerns about the students' reading and writing skills, remarking, **“but it will be tough” ... “but their marks will not be high”**.

Many teachers said the children would be able to go to a CMI primary school, with the proviso that: **“it must be a school that caters to ethnic minority students”**.

These primary schools often have **separate classes for ethnic minority children** where Chinese is taught at a lower level than in regular CMI schools. They usually provide bilingual notices and provide some support programmes for children from non-Chinese speaking backgrounds. However, these schools are often not be perceived as being high academic quality by the majority Hong Kong community.

“Most government schools are very good quality and not easy to enter, but near here there is a government school that has a lot of EMs - so it’s not a very good school.”

School principals said **EM parents feel they do not have much choice** about the kind of primary school that would be appropriate for their child. They have concerns about their child’s ability to cope in a mainstream CMI primary school as they are unable to offer any Chinese language support at home - **weekly dictations are of particular concern**. Parents also worry about their own ability to communicate with the school as many CMI primary schools only provide school notices in Chinese.

“Most parents choose an English medium school. If it was a CMI school the parents and children would both face a lot of problems.”

Parental determination alone is not sufficient to help an ethnic minority child thrive in a CMI primary school.

“We had one father who very much wanted his son to learn Chinese. They are very poor, and he wanted his son to have a better job. So they really supported him at kindergarten and put him in a CMI primary school. But he couldn’t read well enough, so he changed to a designated school and his other siblings went to a designated school.”

“We had one child go to a mainstream primary school, but they couldn’t even finish primary 1 – they switched back to a Delia school.”

Two school principals said they did not believe the Chinese level of their EM students was sufficient for CMI primary school – but added that despite the language problems the students would still be moving on to study at CMI schools.

The school principal of a large CMI kindergarten, which has been taking part in a University/NGO support programme for 5 years and has a specialist teacher creating resources for ethnic minority children, said despite all this support, very few of her students would go to a mainstream CMI primary school.

“In the last years of our experience, altogether...less than 10 students have gone to a CMI school.”

CHALLENGES

Resources

There is currently **no centralized, structured support programme** for students from non-Chinese speaking family backgrounds at kindergarten.

There are **no ready-made resources** centrally available for use by teachers. There are **no commercially available resources**. Kindergarten **principals and teachers make their own materials on an ad hoc basis. If at all.**

EMI schools that offer 30 mins per day of Chinese have to create their own Chinese language learning programme from scratch. There are no books, no online programmes, and no suggested pathways to help them. Teaching Chinese (Cantonese) as an Additional Language, from scratch, to very small children is uncharted territory and the kindergartens have no models to follow. They must scabble around to make their own programmes and resources. A school principal at an EMI kindergarten said:

“To teach Chinese, the class teachers use some library books and see what they can find on the internet.”

In the CMI schools, where teachers need to support ethnic minority children that are following the school’s regular curriculum, several school principals lamented the lack of suitable resources and the difficulty of making their own.

“For learning English there are so many resources, but for Cantonese there is nothing.”

“The resources are not enough – it’s difficult to find anything.”

“Different schools are using their own materials... it would be good if we could standardize the materials.”

Most schools do not make use of any resources that are specifically geared to the needs of children from non-Chinese speaking backgrounds. However, some schools point out that this is according to the preference of parents, who do not wish their children to be treated any differently to the native Chinese speaking students.

DIY resource making

EMI schools and those with a bilingual stream have created some workbooks specifically geared to the needs of the children from non-Chinese speaking families.

A kindergarten chain makes workbooks and adapts Hong Kong produced story books for use at all its branches. The books contain some explanation in English and some use of romanisation. One school, with a high percentage of ethnic minority students, makes character writing work books, showing stroke order, romanised form, English language definition and a visual representation of the concept. This was the only school to use Jyutping, a romanised form of Cantonese in a methodical way on writing practice materials.

See below:



In other schools, tailor-made resources for NCS children are few and far between. One school had ordered some 'dim zi bat' audio pens and intended to use them to record school reading books. One school principal had shown parents a phone app that had been created by an NGO, another explained that a phone app for SEN children could be used to support NCS students. One teacher said she had received some flashcards from EDB – but she was not able to find them. One EMI school had made videos of a series of books and put them on YouTube, this resource, they said, was extremely popular with parents.

One school showed a story book that had been provided by one of the university/NGO support programmes. The book appeared to be of Japanese origin, as Japanese writing was visible in the book's illustrations, and had been published in Taiwan, as Bopomofo, the phonetic system commonly used in Taiwan, was written alongside the characters. It was not clear how this was specifically geared to the needs of NCS readers.

Buddy System

Some schools use a buddy system, whereby an ethnic minority child is paired with a Chinese speaking child, thus ensuring a higher degree of Chinese language contact during class time. At one school, the teachers ask a child from the same ethnic background, in a higher grade to help the younger student. The teacher noted:

"The use of the home language is helpful. They think – finally someone understands me!"

Differentiation by Task

Some schools adapt the type of tasks – school work and homework that they set for the ethnic minority students. This usually involves reducing the amount of work to be completed.

“If the other students have two words to write per week – we might just give them one word.”

“We talk with the parents and if the parents tell us the children are stressed, then we give them less.”

Jyutping: Romanised form of Cantonese

There is **no systematic use of Jyutping**, or other romanised form of Cantonese, on teaching materials or supportive resources. Many school principals felt that Jyutping was too difficult for both teachers and students. When asked if school principals thought that training in the use of romanisation would be helpful, opinions were divided.

Table 11. Would teacher training in the use of Jyutping romanisation be helpful?

Opinion	No of school principals
Very helpful	9
Helpful	10
Not helpful	13
No comment	4
Total	36

Furthermore, there was little understanding of how Jyutping might be used to support NCS students. One teacher said: **“we teachers know how to read the characters already, so we don’t need it”**.

Only one kindergarten used Jyutping in a systematic way on their school materials. This school had made workbooks that showed the Chinese character, with stroke order, Jyutping and an English explanation.

Several schools recognized the benefit of using some phonetic aid to help parents support their children. These strategies included:

- Making word lists of themed vocabulary with an approximation of the phonetic form and an English equivalent.
- Putting stickers onto worksheets with some phonetic form.
- Asking the English teacher to write down an approximation of the Chinese sound.
- Reading the characters out loud to parents so they can write down their own phonetic version of the sound.

Teachers agree that parents find the romanised form very useful.

“If you don’t write the sound in the book our parents are blank, they don’t know how it sounds. Parents need it.”

“If we don’t write the sounds of the words down – when they go home the word disappears!”

Extra Chinese tuition

Teachers commonly observed that **three hours of kindergarten is not enough Chinese language input** for ethnic minority children to be on a linguistic par with their Chinese speaking counterparts by the end of K3.

For the majority of ethnic minority children, time spent at kindergarten is the only exposure to the Chinese language they get during the day³¹. Ethnic minority families generally do not watch Chinese TV and parents are not able to read Chinese language books with their children.

School principals believe that extra tuition in Chinese language is beneficial, but there is uncertainty about when extra classes may be best incorporated into the child’s day.

After school classes

One school initially tried separating the ethnic minority children for extra Chinese support during class-time but recognized this meant the NCS students had less chance to interact with Chinese students. As a result, they began offering extra tuition after school, to preview the upcoming content of regular classes. The school principal said this approach had been most effective:

“If they have an extra boost of language input they feel more confident and are better able to respond when back in the normal class.”

Some schools have outsourced extra lessons to social workers or nearby community organisations. At one school a social worker has been providing a series of 6 lessons before school starts. The sessions focus on daily life and classroom vocabulary. Another school displays notices listing the language tutorial services of a neighborhood NGO that holds Chinese classes. Some schools have started, or are exploring the idea of, holding parent-child Chinese classes, wherein parent and child learn daily life Cantonese phrases together. One of these parent-child classes plans to cover the content of the classroom lessons.

One teacher said that some parents send their children to **homework classes after kindergarten** but the quality of these tuition centres was uncertain. The reputable NGO homework classes only cater for primary school children; the smaller private tuition centres may mix age groups together and provide little more than a baby-sitting service.

³¹ close to 80% of parents reported the KGS were the only places their children learnt Chinese.
Page 6. http://www.oxfam.org.hk/filemgr/2639/Oxfam_Surveyon_Dec2.pdf

Teachers noted that **children from Muslim families may have to attend afternoon classes at the mosque** and do not have any extra time to spend on Chinese language classes.

External support programmes

Around one third of schools surveyed have joined one or more of the Chinese language support programmes for NCS students provided by a combination of EDB, universities and NGOs. The programmes typically involve pull-out small group sessions with storytelling and songs or provide help with memorizing and writing Chinese characters by identifying radicals and other components. They may also provide teaching training and provide parent-child Chinese classes.

The university led programmes elicited mixed responses. Many schools are grateful for the extra help and believe the programmes to be beneficial to the children's learning outcomes.

"It helped make the children more proactive in speaking Chinese and now they will speak Chinese more actively at school and at home."

However, some principals believe the programmes use teaching strategies developed from primary level teaching and are not entirely suitable for use at kindergarten level.

"It was using subject based materials and was all rather abstract and not tied to the objectives of kindergarten, which is more integrated and more hands-on."

Some school principals observed that taking part in such support programmes creates stress for teaching staff who must create lesson plans, are observed during lessons and have to do follow-up paperwork.

Pull-out Sessions

The University/NGO support programmes generally involve some degree of pull-out sessions, whereby the child is taken out of regular classes for small group intensive language support.

Some school principals **expressed concern** at the concept of pull-out sessions, which remove the child from regular class thus **depriving them of an opportunity to learn Chinese in a naturalistic way** from immersion with native Chinese speaking classmates.

"We want the NCS students to do all the other activities – they are learning Chinese in those subjects."

Teachers

Most kindergartens that have received the EDB NCS Grant have used the money to hire extra teaching staff. Kindergarten teaching is very hands-on and the extra pair of hands is seen as extremely helpful.

“The teacher does not have enough time to differentiate well for each student. Each class has 30 students and two teachers, with one teacher in charge of 15 children. There are also SEN students in the group, so it’s hard to give the NCS students all the time they need.”

Ethnic minority teachers, in particular, are much appreciated as they can help liaise with families. **One school principal said she would like to hire an Urdu speaker, but had not been able to find one.**

Teaching ethnic minority children is not seen as an easy job and **teacher turnover is high** at some of the schools.

“It’s hard to find Chinese teachers to work here. After a few years they leave.”

“It’s hard to find a Chinese teachers to teach here. The kids don’t know Chinese so it’s difficult to control the class. You have to communicate with a child who can’t speak any Chinese – and you get no response for 3 months.”

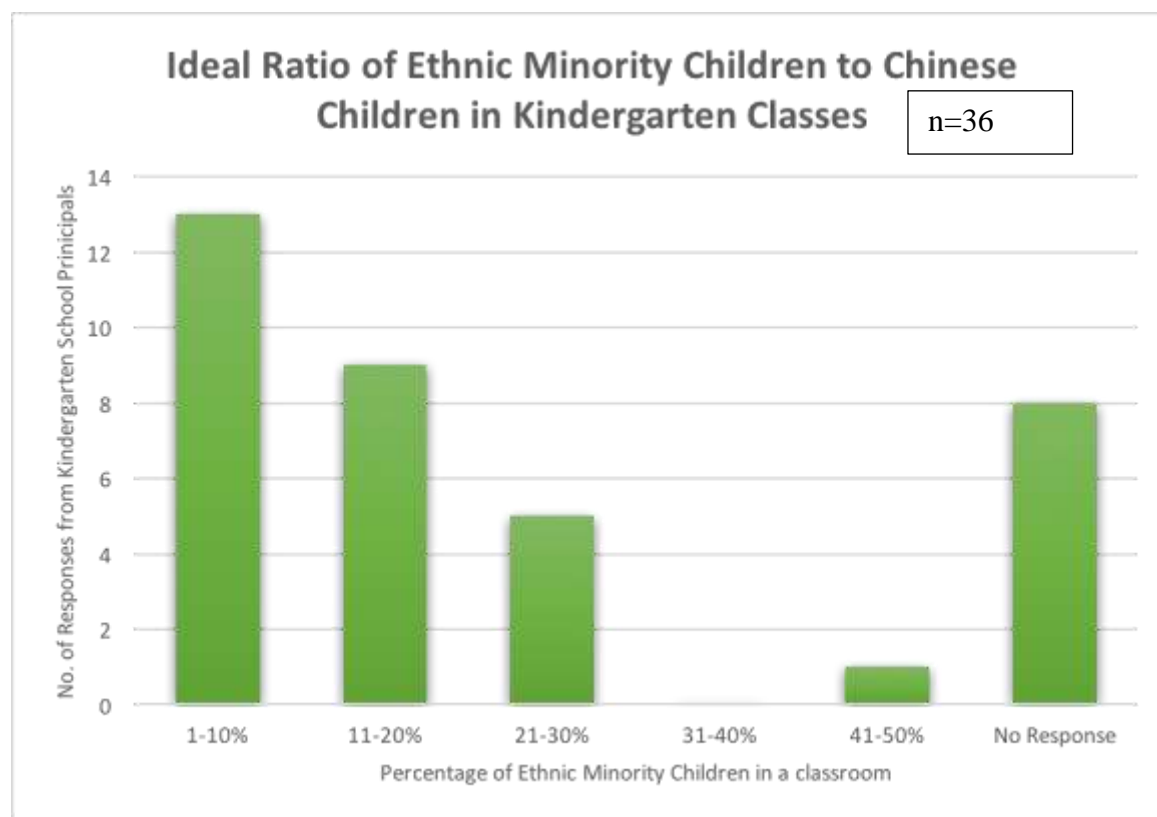
The **lack of a structured teaching programmes** and **dearth of resources** is a source of great frustration to many teachers and some feel disheartened.

“There is a big gap in knowledge. I, as headmistress, do not have an idea of ‘how’ to teach Chinese to these children, so I cannot give our teachers any guidance. Sometimes we feel we are not fulfilling the expectations of our parents, but it’s true that we are not fulfilling our own expectations as teachers.”

Many teachers felt strongly that they **needed extra training** to help teach and support ethnic minority children in their classrooms. This was particularly true of teachers in EMI kindergartens and schools with a high concentration of EM children. Others felt that no special skills were needed and that the main task of a kindergarten teacher was to encourage the ethnic minority children to mingle with native Chinese speaking classmates.

Ideal Ratio of EM children in a class to Chinese children

Chart 8. Ideal Ratio of EM children in a class to Chinese children



This survey asked school principals what they believed is the most ideal ratio of ethnic minority children to Chinese children in a class. Over 60% of school principals say that there should be 20% or less of ethnic minority children per class. Over one third of school principals (36%) said the number should be 10% or less.

Teachers reasoned that children from non-Chinese speaking backgrounds benefit most from **learning in a fully immersive Chinese language environment**. If there are too many EM children in the same class they will tend to stick together and speak in English or their home language.

A lower concentration of EM children was also preferred because some teachers felt the EM children, unable to understand instructions or engage well with classes, take up more of the teachers' time. **"Even one or two in a class is hard work"**.

Some teachers however said they preferred to have more than one EM child per class, especially at the beginning of K1, as otherwise the EM student might feel lonely.

Parents

Parental engagement

School principals view the role of the parent as crucial to ensuring successful learning outcomes for the child. However, **a lack of common language and cultural differences** can make home-school communication challenging. Many educators cite **difficulty communicating with parents** as major area of concern.

Schools find it particularly **difficult to engage with ethnic minority parents from the South Asian community, with Pakistani parents being the hardest to reach**. Ethnic minority parents may be **unwilling to join in school activities**, including parent teacher conferences, school outings and celebrations. Some school principals noted that **Pakistani mothers have low status in the household** and may not be permitted to take part in activities where other men are present.

It's not easy to encourage EM parents to come to school events– they have many children and have to look after them. Especially the Indian and Pakistani parents – the Filipino parents are better.

Some schools have used the NCS Grant to employ ethnic minority teaching assistants who **translate school notices and liaise with families**. Their role in the school community is recognised and highly valued.

Principals also recognise that many ethnic minority parents work in low income jobs and the mother is often a homemaker with no domestic help. They may find it difficult to find the time to attend after school activities or join Cantonese learning programmes organized by the school.

Parents seek a Chinese language education for their children

Parents are increasingly keen for the children to receive a Chinese language education. Second generation parents, in particular, feel aware that their own life choices and opportunities were limited by lack of Chinese skills and hope Chinese language proficiency will give their children a better future.

“Almost all our parents are very interested for themselves and their children to learn Chinese. Chinese is very very important in Hong Kong. Everyone knows that. It's easier to live in Hong Kong and get jobs if you can speak Chinese.”

Parent support

Teachers say it is important that parents play an active role in their child's schooling and while it is hard to generalise, many parents do want to be involved and want to help their child.

“Some parents pay a lot of attention to their children’s study, they are very supportive. They believe education is important and will help the child become part of society.”

One teacher, who is from an ethnic minority background, said although many parents do want to help their children, with little knowledge of the Chinese language themselves, **parents feel completely helpless** and are very frustrated. School principals also said parents need to be actively encouraged to support their children - and be given ways to do so.

“The most important thing is how to support the parents, so they can have ways to help their children. Kindergarten is just one part of the day – how can the child get Chinese help at home?”

Parents need to learn Chinese

School principals say it’s helpful if the parents know even a small amount of Chinese and some went so far as to say: **“parents must learn Chinese”**.

“It depends on the parents’ expectations, especially for the Pakistani students. Some of the parents are lazy and the children can’t quickly pick up the language.”

While some teachers feel that it is the responsibility of the parent to learn Chinese, so that they may help their child with homework, others say a basic knowledge of Cantonese implies a commitment to life in Hong Kong, and enables the family to access language learning support services offered by various community organisations.

Some schools have set up **classes to teach parents basic Cantonese** and some have tried lessons where the **parents learn alongside their child**. The short series of lessons are only aimed at teaching very basic language and teachers noted that attendance for these sessions fell off after a few sessions as the parents were busy with other commitments.

Educators believe that **poor school-home communication may have a detrimental effect** on the child’s schooling as teachers struggle to convey information about the child’s attainment levels and general classroom behaviour.

“The language barrier impacts on communication between school and parents, for example, the child’s performance, rate of progress and information provided by the school.”

Parents need to understand the Hong Kong education system

School principals say parents need to have a better understanding of the Hong Kong education system. **Parents find it difficult to access information** about the **school interview process for kindergarten** and the **transition to primary**. They may **not present well at interview** stage and struggle to understand their options for admission to primary schools.

Some **parents do not appreciate the important role that kindergartens play** in the continuum of Hong Kong education, providing a crucial foundation in Chinese language skills, which will be of upmost importance when the child transfers to primary school. As such, they may not treat school with sufficient seriousness.

“The involvement of parents is very important, we need more talks for parents to educate them on the impact and importance of kindergarten.”

Some teachers said the children were **late for class** or missed many classes because of **religious commitments**, or for unknown reasons and **did not take homework seriously**.

“We have an expectation that the children will do their homework, but the parents don’t care.”

School principals recognised that many **ethnic minority parents had grown up in countries where pre-school education was not widely available**, or where the focus was on providing a play-based environment with very little academic content. As such, their **expectations about the nature of pre-school education may be very different** from those of Hong Kong Chinese parents.

“Parents from different cultures have different expectations about kindergarten. The things we think are important – they don’t. For the Russians as long as they are happy at school that is enough. For the Pakistanis – as long as they go home safely - that’s enough.”

“Parents need to wake up to the reality of school life.”

Attitudes and Expectations

Many of the schools taking part in this survey are **doing their best to make the children and their families feel welcome** in the school environment. Schools with higher concentrations of EM students have **bilingual school notices** and **post English language information at the school entrance**; this sometimes includes **details of the school lunch menu so that parents can ensure the food is in line with their religious requirements**.

“We have school notices in Chinese and English. If parents can’t speak these languages we call them. Our teaching staff speak Nepali, Hindi, Urdu and Tagalog.”

Some schools have posted **letters of appreciation** from parents on the walls, thanking them for the progress their child has made and the efforts that teachers have made to welcome the child into their schools.

Some school principals however did demonstrate some **negative perceptions** of ethnic minority families and students.

Some principals said **parents tended to be rather unorganised, unpunctual, lazy and unsupportive of their child’s education**. They believe **Pakistani families may put religion before education and allow their child to miss school to take part in religious activities**.

There is also a sense that **ethnic minority children not considered easy to teach**. This may be a direct result of the difficulties of communicating with a small child who cannot speak Chinese or English. Or it may stem from the teachers’ sense of frustration that don’t have the skills or resources to teach children who don’t speak Chinese at home.

“We don’t have any resources or a system of teaching. Even if we put them in a small group – what do we do with them?”

“You have to communicate with a child who can’t speak any Chinese – and you get no response for 3 months.”

There is a sense among some **teachers that children from South Asian backgrounds are more ‘naughty’**. This may be because underdeveloped language skills prevent them from communicating with the teacher and other classmates. Some teachers also believe they are not well disciplined at home and classroom management is perceived as being a problem.

“The family way of bringing up the children is slack, too relaxed, so we need more teachers to manage them.”

Which resources and interventions would be most beneficial?

‘Securing a Good Start’ asked school principals which resources and interventions they need to teach EM students most effectively (Appendix 2).

Teacher support

The results show that teachers were most interested to have help from a **specialist CAL teaching coordinator**, who could advise them on what teaching strategies to use and who would be a focal point for the provision and distribution of appropriate resources.

Likewise, they hoped for **teacher training** in how to best to teach and support EM students. The NCS Grant (described on page 13) enables eligible schools to hire an extra classroom teacher, and as this report shows, most schools use this funding to hire extra teaching staff. However, as one kindergarten school principal observed:

“Teachers are not necessarily of any use unless they are trained. We don’t have any resources or a system of teaching. Even if we have a small group – what do we with them. We have a big question mark.”

Some school principals said current training programmes are not ideally suited to their needs.

“The teacher has to leave school to attend their course and this uses up a lot of school time.”

“We don’t want to lose a teacher for such a long time.”

“The training course run by a local NGO was taught in English. It would be better if it’s taught in Cantonese, or our teachers won’t understand.”

Resources

School principals reported that **reading was the hardest skill** for the EM children as they do not have any exposure to Chinese characters in the home environment. Lack of reading also impacts on vocabulary acquisition and writing skills. Teachers were most interested to have **graded readers** specifically for use with their EM students as well as books which reinforce the type of vocabulary commonly used in Hong Kong daily life. This project suggested these books be supported with the provision of **Jyutping for the core vocabulary, a multi-language glossary and audio**. One teacher called such books ‘essential’:

“We really want to find something like that – every year the parents will ask for these.”

Teachers observed that even for the wider school population of native Chinese speaking students, graded reading books are more widely available in English than Chinese.

“We have graded readers for learning English – so it would be good to have the same for Chinese. You finish one level – and then go to the next level.”

Flashcards with the Chinese character on one side and Jyutping and multi-language definitions on the other side were also thought to be most useful.

Teachers felt the most crucial feature of these books and other similar resources is that they may be used by non-Chinese speaking families in the **home environment**.

“The most important thing is to support the parents and find ways for them to help their children. They are only at kindergarten for a few hours.”

Benchmark testing

More than half the teachers surveyed believe it would be helpful to have some **specific criteria with which to assess the progress of NCS students**. They believed the EM students’ attainment level is often different from native speaking children, and that it would be therefore useful to have some benchmarks, against which they could measure the learning outcomes of the NCS children.

Table 12. Would benchmark tests be helpful to assess the EM students’ Chinese language attainment levels?

Rating	Responses
Very helpful or helpful	20
Not helpful or unhelpful	14
No comment	2
Total	36

However, a substantial number of teachers – more than one third of those surveyed, did not believe that extra testing is needed. These school principals pointed out that they already have their own internal assessments and see no need for any other. They may also have joined one of the University/NGO support programmes, which include pre and post intervention assessments. Some teachers felt strongly that it is not appropriate to test such very young children. They pointed to the practical difficulties of testing kindergarten students and the stress it can cause to both child and the child’s family.

“We don’t want any more exams, this is an old tradition, it would put extra pressure on the children and be an unnecessary burden. Children don’t learn through doing exams, it causes anxiety.”

Observations

The Good News

The Free Quality Kindergarten Education Scheme (FQKES) is to be commended. The scheme guarantees children from the poorest families can have a kindergarten education in a CMI school. This provides the young child with an immersive Chinese language environment, the possibility of acquiring core Chinese language skills during the ‘golden period’ of language learning and the possibility of continuing their study in the CMI education system. Long term, this may enable children from ethnic minority communities achieve the high levels of Chinese language proficiency required for full integration in Hong Kong society and a wider range of educational and career opportunities.

The NCS Grant is a positive measure to support kindergartens accepting eight or more ethnic minority students. School principals say the application process is straightforward and they welcome the extra funding, which is commonly used to hire an extra teacher or teaching assistants. The NCS Grant may work as an incentive for schools to actively seek new EM students. It may encourage schools to maintain their population of EM students, as school principals seek to retain staff hired with the funding. The NCS Grant may have an important role to play in persuading kindergartens to become more inclusive and accept children from non-Chinese speaking backgrounds.

More support for EM students in kindergarten

There is a sense in the educational community that measures must be taken to support EM students learning Chinese at the very beginning of their school life. Collaborations between universities and NGOs are implementing support programmes in some kindergartens and creating resources that are intended for more schools in the future.

School principals appreciate the opportunities for teaching training and report that the students benefit with input from the specialist teaching.

Inclusive kindergartens

All the school principals surveyed for this report were thoughtful individuals, who are trying hard to help their ethnic minority students.

Many of the kindergartens surveyed, especially those with a high concentration of ethnic minority children, are doing their best to be inclusive. They provide a positive, warm environment for the children and are welcoming to their parents.

Some kindergartens have used the NCS Grant to employ ethnic minority teachers or teaching assistants. The Education University of Hong Kong, as part of the C-for-Chinese@JC project, has set up a Diploma programme in Early Childhood Education to train teaching assistants from the ethnic minority community. This

50

research showed that ethnic minority teaching assistants are much valued and suggests these graduates are likely to be highly sought after.

Hong Kong is a largely homogenous society and all children will benefit from the presence of a more inclusive teaching staff.

Points of concern

The implications of segregation

EM children achieve Lower Chinese Language skills

Racial and linguistic segregation underpins all the difficulties of Chinese language acquisition faced by ethnic minority children.

Segregation means that in some schools EM children have almost no contact with Chinese students. This provides them with no possibility of acquiring Chinese in a natural way and gives them no chance to mingle and make friendships with Chinese children.

One kindergarten has a student population comprising 100% EM children, yet is using CMI. It is hard to imagine how the children at this school can learn effectively in Chinese when this language is not being used naturally by their peers. The long-term implications for a child learning in this type of language environment are not well understood and this practice must be questioned.

One CMI kindergarten has an ethnic minority population of 25%. The school has several years of experience teaching EM children and has created some of its own materials. They have received the NCS Grant, are taking part in a university support programmes and have a specialist teacher devoted to the provision of language support. Still, the school principal said that very few EM children will be able to transition to a CMI primary school.

This school has the best possible support, of the kind currently available - but it is not working. Bunching ethnic minority children together in the same kindergartens is not conducive to the learning of Chinese. The type of support measures currently available are not effective. Clearly a **major re-think is needed** in order to ensure that ethnic minority children can learn Chinese effectively in kindergarten.

Lack of Inclusion in kindergarten sector

This study shows that over 40% of kindergartens do not have any NCS children. Meanwhile parents report being turned away from kindergartens on the basis of their race or lack of Chinese speaking ability. This unwillingness, by many kindergartens, to accept children from EM families has inevitably led many families to place their children in EMI kindergartens or CMI schools which are known to cater for EM children.

Kindergartens with a high concentration of EM children create an environment which is welcoming and inclusive to ethnic minority families and this may have the unfortunate consequence of keeping ethnic minority children clustered in those schools.

The focus must therefore be on putting pressure on the 40% of schools that currently do not admit ethnic minority children to have a change of policy and open their doors to children from non-Chinese speaking backgrounds.

It must also be noted that segregation is bad for Chinese children too. Too often, young Chinese students grow up in entirely Chinese communities and are deprived the opportunity of mixing with children from different ethnic backgrounds.

The NCS Grant

The NCS Grant does not provide any funding for schools with less than eight students. However, these schools may provide the best language learning environment for EM students, as the children have more chance to learn Chinese in a natural way from their Chinese speaking classmates. As such, kindergartens with even a small number of NCS students must also receive assistance from EDB - by financial means and through the provision of a structured programme of support and appropriate resources.

Over 40% of kindergartens do not admit any ethnic minority students and the NCS Grant does not provide any incentive for them to do so. Kindergartens with no history of accepting ethnic minority students are unlikely to make the leap to admitting eight students. Incentives and support must be provided to encourage this 40% to become more inclusive and begin accepting children from non-Chinese speaking family backgrounds.

Most schools use the NCS Grant to fund extra teaching staff. Schools will always welcome an extra pair of hands in the classroom. However, the presence of these teachers will not necessarily be effective without some basic teacher training in how to support NCS students and the provision of appropriate resources.

Measures must be taken to ensure that the teachers are being used specifically and most effectively to support the NCS students and not being simply absorbed into the teaching staff as another pair of hands.

Urgent need for the creation of a structured programme to teach beginner's Cantonese, for use in EMI kindergartens.

Chinese is one of the official languages of Hong Kong and is spoken by the majority of the population. However, there are no teaching programmes available to teach Chinese (Cantonese) as an Additional Language in EMI kindergartens.

Children studying in EMI schools will also need to have some Chinese language ability as they older and require access to a basic foundation in the Chinese language, but currently schools have to cobble together their own curriculum and teaching materials.

Chinese is a complex language to teach to non-native speakers. Spoken Cantonese is not supported by a single, widely used romanised form and differs significantly from standard written Chinese – as found in school books. The written form is largely non-phonetic and not easily accessible without some prior training.

Faced with these challenges, it is not appropriate that non-specialist teachers are having to put together their own curriculum. The demand for a CAL programme may not be large enough to attract commercial publishers. As such, the government, in conjunction with universities, should support the development of such materials.

It is not acceptable that in a relatively rich city such as Hong Kong it is easier to find materials to teach English, French and any number of other languages – but provision for the teaching of Cantonese is completely non-existent.

Urgent need for a structured programme of support for students learning Chinese as an Additional Language in CMI schools.

There is no structured programme of support for students learning Chinese as an Additional language in CMI schools. Provision of support in schools is organized at school – or even teacher – level and depends entirely on the goodwill and expertise of the individual schools. The concept of supporting children who have Chinese as an Additional Language is relatively new and teachers do not always have the understanding of what is needed or the skills to create their own programmes of support.

Once identified as needing CAL assistance, the child should lock into a system of support that provides targeted resources and interventions to aid in the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. This programme should be created by educational experts and made available to all kindergartens, allowing teachers to easily access a range of tailor made resources for use in their schools.

Overseas, a plethora of support programmes are in place to help children learning English as an Additional Language³². Guidance is usually available at national, county/province and school level. Resources and publications are provided to help teachers provided targeted support to EAL learners at all stages of their educational journey, from kindergarten through to academic writing at university.

In Australia for example, the government uses “English as an additional language or dialect” (“EAL”) to refer to those students for whom English is not their first language. Each Australian State has provisions which deal with the rights of students whose first languages is not English. The States have enacted various policy measures which seek to implement programs and take actions which support the right of these students to receive an education. The means by which the States implement the statutory rights through policy differs from State to State. Government policy, however, does not have the effect of law. In all States the statutory provisions which deal with the rights of EAL students do very little to set out the means by which the

³² <http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/support/diversity/eal/Pages/default.aspx>
<http://www.eal-teaching-strategies.com/reading-strategies.html>
<https://naldic.org.uk/>

States are to protect the right to education of EAL students. The manner in which the States protect such rights is therefore left to the discretion of the educational bodies in each State through their implementation of policy.

Urgent need for the creation of CAL teaching resources for kindergartens

The majority of kindergartens surveyed were not able to provide students with a comprehensive set of Chinese practice materials that could be used at home, without the presence of a Chinese speaking parent.

Kindergartens struggle to create their own resources and only a small number of schools, those with the highest concentration of ethnic minority children, are able to make materials that are appropriate to the learning needs of NCS children.

Resources must be created that can be used in a non-Chinese speaking home environment. Workbooks and other materials, should be supported by use of Jyutping, a glossary, examples of stroke order and, where possible, audio. In particular, schools need resources to help children learn to read, write and remember the foundational characters.

Particular efforts must be made to:

- Expand exposure to the Cantonese language pre-kindergarten so that on entry to K1 the EM child can engage with classroom teaching more quickly, learn more effectively and be less likely to be viewed as disruptive or a burden to the teachers
- Expand the child's vocabulary through increased exposure to spoken Chinese
- Provide many opportunities to read Chinese through accessible reading books
- Ensure the child gains proficiency in writing the core foundational Chinese characters-in a way that is conducive to non-Chinese speaking families. In order to build the foundation in written literacy, much attention must be paid to stroke order and ensuring the child understand what they are writing
- Provide resources that can be used by non-Chinese parents at home – worksheets to include English (and other language) explanations, glossary, romanisation and stroke order. These must be supplemented by resources in video format so that parents with little English or Cantonese literacy can also access these
- Make all resources easily accessible to all stakeholders, and free of charge
- A website is needed to serve as a focal point for information and resources
- Ensure that ethnic minority role models are being seen at school and in books for kindergarten age

External support programmes

There is a danger that kindergartens have become dependent on university/NGO support programmes and are outsourcing the task to ‘experts’ instead of finding simple ways to support children in the classroom.

These support programmes may reinforce the belief that teaching Chinese to children from non-Chinese backgrounds is terribly difficult and best left to specialists, thus leaving regular teachers feeling disempowered and less likely to provide basic classroom support.

Kindergartens with a small population of ethnic minority students may not be chosen to take part in the university / NGO support programmes and do not benefit from their training or resources. Yet it is these schools that arguably provide the most ideal environments for the learning of Chinese. Teachers in these schools must also have easy access to appropriate resources.

The university/NGO support programmes do not appear to leave useful materials and resources for use by teachers once the programme has finished. Information and resources are kept in the hands of ‘the experts’. There is an urgent need for resource sharing and the creation of resources that are easily accessible to all stakeholders – teachers, parents, family members, community groups and volunteers.

It is unfortunate that university/NGO Chinese language support programmes tend to also be based on the practice of segregation, rather than inclusion, with their focus on pull-out sessions which teach NCS students separately from Chinese children. There may be a place for pull-out sessions as part of a spectrum of support measures, however, it must be noted that in CMI kindergartens, removing the child from the classroom is to deprive them of valuable time in an immersive Chinese language environment. There is an urgent need to create CAL tools and interventions that focus on keeping EM children learning in the classroom alongside their Chinese speaking classmates.

Language issues

Ethnic minority children begin K1 with absolutely no Chinese knowledge and even after three years of CMI kindergarten still lag behind their Chinese speaking classmates, especially in reading and writing.

Listening and speaking

Researchers saw no measures in place to expand the child's understanding of spoken Cantonese, with support measures tending to focus on reading and writing. This shortfall perhaps reflects uncertainty in the community as to the status of Cantonese, which is sometimes referred to as 'just a dialect', and may be viewed as inferior to Putonghua and standard written Chinese. There may also be a lack of appreciation among Hong Kong teachers that the vocabulary and syntax that they take for granted must also be absorbed by the children, before they can feasibly learn to read and write.

Teachers report that EM children attending CMI kindergartens generally achieve good skills in speaking and listening, with a majority of teachers reporting that by the end of K3 they are at a similar level to their Chinese classmates. However, the scope of vocabulary and interaction used in a classroom setting is rather limited. It seems likely that the children would still benefit from measures to increase their exposure to the Chinese language outside of the school setting.

Ethnic minority students need to learn spoken Cantonese to a high level. This issue must be recognized in the discussions to be had about the teaching of NCS students as well as in the provision of appropriate resources.

Reading

There is urgent need for a graded reading scheme to increase the children's exposure to Chinese characters and the conventions of standard written Chinese.

At the end of K3 ethnic minority children struggle most with reading and writing. They have little exposure to Chinese characters in the home environment and parents are not able to read books with them.

Children from non-Chinese speaking backgrounds face an additional challenge in learning to master reading and writing, as the written language differs substantially from spoken Cantonese. This is a significant cognitive leap for any child and is especially problematic for students who still do not have a strong grasp of verbal Cantonese³³.

It is crucial therefore that measures are taken to make reading universally accessible. This can be done by using an electronic pointer pen 點字筆 on existing classroom books, or ideally, by the creation of graded readers that are supported by Jyutping, a multi-language glossary and audio.

Ethnic minority children desperately need exposure to reading Chinese, but the books need considerable scaffolding to make them accessible and the reading process truly effective.

³³ <http://www.scmp.com/comment/insight-opinion/article/1483745/grounding-cantonese-will-help-ethnic-minorities-learn>

Writing

Ethnic minority children are not gaining a good grasp of the basic principles of writing Chinese characters, even at a CMI kindergarten.

Although they are often able to reproduce individual characters, they may not follow the correct stroke order, don't know what the character means, or how to pronounce it. They often approach each character as if it is a picture.

A lack of solid foundation in writing skills will leave them ill prepared for learning at a CMI primary school.

Current strategies counter-productive.

Current strategies to support writing practice may be counterproductive.

When EM children have a problem with writing Chinese characters, teachers are more likely to simply reduce the amount of writing tasks they need to complete. Arguably the opposite approach is needed - EM children need more chance to practice Chinese writing.

Another strategy focuses on showing the children how to break down the character into components by teaching radicals and phonetic components. This approach is very abstract and may be confusing for such young children³⁴.

Ethnic minority children need to learn to write Chinese characters in the same way that Chinese children do, by learning the rules of stroke order and getting plenty of repetition.

Resources needed

Materials must be produced which can be used by ethnic minority children and families in a home environment.

Writing practice books and worksheets must be created that include romanisation, a multi-language glossary, stroke order and an explanation of stroke order rules. These tools are readily available for the teaching of Putonghua and could be easily adapted for use by Cantonese learners.

Kindergartens do not follow a central curriculum, but do all cover roughly the same number of basic characters and language themes. Therefore, the creation of inclusive, accessible practice materials is not an insurmountable task. Resources must be created as a matter of urgency and made readily available to all stakeholders – schools, teachers, parents, volunteers - on a website and/or commercially.

³⁴ Chung, K. K. H., & McBride-Chang, C. (2011). Executive functioning skills uniquely predict Chinese reading. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 103, 909-921

Jyutping

Jyutping must be widely used on support materials and as part of a continuum of language scaffolding that extends through primary and secondary

Jyutping is a system of romanisation for Cantonese developed by the Linguistic Society of Hong Kong³⁵. While other systems - for example Sydney Lau & Yale – are still used by some institutions in Hong Kong, Jyutping is the most recent system and is used, to some extent, by government schools.

Teachers are unfamiliar with Jyutping, perceive it to be difficult and do not understand the role it plays in supporting language acquisition for NCS students.

Of all Asian countries that use Chinese characters, Hong Kong is the only area that does not use a standard phonetic form. Mainland China makes wide use of pinyin at primary school level, while Taiwan uses the Bopomofo system. In Japan, books for small children are written entirely in the phonetic form of Hiragana, while Furigana is commonly placed alongside or above Kanji on children's learning materials.

In Hong Kong, this lack of phonetic aid makes it difficult for non-native Cantonese speakers to input and remember new vocabulary. It means parents, who cannot read Chinese characters, are completely unable to help their children.

It is important to stress that this report does not suggest 'teaching' Jyutping to kindergarten children. Instead it should be used as a support tool on any worksheets or materials that are to be completed or used in the home environment. This will enable family members to support their child, even if they cannot read Chinese themselves.

The use of Jyutping at kindergarten may also be seen as the first introduction to the phonetic system, which should continue to be used through primary and even secondary to help children from non-Chinese speaking families learn Chinese.

The HKSAR Government is committing significant sums of money to support NCS students in kindergartens, through primary and secondary school. This money is unlikely to have much impact unless the EDB and educational community embrace the widespread and systematic use of Jyutping for the teaching of Chinese to children from non-Chinese speaking backgrounds.

Home language

There is very little use of home languages in the kindergartens. This is understandable, the teachers cannot reasonably be expected to take on a whole range of new languages. However, there is growing evidence to suggest that supporting a child's home language is important for their overall language and cognitive development and their academic achievement³⁶.

³⁵ <https://www.lshk.org/>

³⁶ <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002122/212270e.pdf> Page 57

Multi-language classroom resources are needed which highlight and celebrate the children's home languages. Parents may also be encouraged to continue to support their children in their home languages. This will have cognitive benefits for the child, strengthen family relationships and aids with their sense of culture identity as they grow older.

Parents

School-parent liaison

Kindergarten school principals place much emphasis on the role of the parent, often attributing the child's success at school directly to the parents' level of engagement. During interviews for this project, researchers were frequently told "it all depends on the parent". However, cultural and linguistic barriers are an obstacle to effective communication home-school cooperation and differing expectations about kindergarten schooling also lead to misunderstandings.

Parents need to learn Chinese

Some school principals felt strongly that parents should learn Chinese so that they can support their child with homework.

Clearly an element of parental involvement is to be desired. However, it is not realistic to consider parental competence in Chinese language as a pre-requisite to the child's own acquisition of Chinese. The child must be seen as an independent unit and measures must be taken to ensure s/he can reach Chinese proficiency with or without, a Chinese speaker in the home.

Many families in the South Asian community are living in low-income households, in fact the Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report on Ethnic minorities that was released in 2018 puts the poverty rate among ethnic minorities at close to 20%³⁷. The mothers may be new immigrants, who have only a primary education and can speak neither Chinese or English. They do not have domestic help and have to do housework and look after their children. As such, they cannot spend the many hours required to master Cantonese themselves or provide any degree of help with the child's Chinese homework.

It must be stressed that an inability to help their children with schoolwork does not indicate an unwillingness to help or an apathy towards education. Many parents want their children to learn Chinese and have access to a wider range of job opportunities than they had. They feel frustrated that they are not able to support their children with their Chinese language study.

Parents and the HK education system

³⁷ Poverty situation report, [https://www.povertyrelief.gov.hk/pdf/Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report on Ethnic Minorities 2016.pdf](https://www.povertyrelief.gov.hk/pdf/Hong_Kong_Poverty_Situation_Report_on_Ethnic_Minorities_2016.pdf)

Parents need to have a better understanding of the HK education system and the role that kindergarten plays as a foundation for future schooling. They need to be made aware that the choice of kindergarten – specifically the type of language provision the school offers – will have long term effects on the child's chances of learning Chinese to a high level.

EMI schools create a very welcoming environment for ethnic minority families, but the majority of children who attend EMI kindergartens will not be able to transfer into a CMI primary school and their chances of gaining high levels of Chinese language proficiency later in life are very limited.

Likewise, parents may be misled by schools which claim to have a 'bi-lingual' stream or a 'dual language system'. Some 'bi-lingual' schools offer 30 minutes of Chinese provision per day. This may be enough to enable Chinese children to become proficient in English, but it is unlikely to give ethnic minority children the amount immersion in Chinese that they need to attain proficiency.

Attendance at a CMI kindergarten provides the best chance for an ethnic minority child to learn Chinese to a high level but it does not guarantee that the child will have sufficient Chinese language skills to thrive in a CMI primary school.

Parents may be forgiven for not appreciating the academic nature of kindergartens in Hong Kong. In much of the rest of the world, kindergarten is optional and children who have not been to kindergarten can still do well at primary school. In Hong Kong, however, kindergartens play a crucial role in laying down the foundational skills of reading and writing. As such, the parents need to ensure their children have good attendance, complete all the homework and seek additional help if their child is falling behind.

Negative Attitudes towards ethnic minorities

The teachers surveyed in this report were thoughtful individuals with a keen desire to help their ethnic minority students do well. However, despite this atmosphere of goodwill, negative attitudes towards the teaching of ethnic minority children still prevail.

A lack of Chinese language skills on entry to K1 means the child take longer to adapt to the classroom setting – they may be perceived as 'naughty' and hard work for the teachers.

Teachers feel frustrated by a lack of knowledge of how to teach NCS students. They lack suitable resources and are unsure how to make appropriate resources themselves. EM children sometimes return to their parents' home countries for long periods of time, causing them to forget much of what they had learnt, lack of practice at home means the children inevitably lag behind the Chinese children. These factors combine to leave some teachers feeling frustrated.

Negative attitudes towards ethnic minorities in the wider community have an impact on the distribution of NCS students among schools and classes. Chinese families view the presence of ethnic minority children as a negative and wary of losing

60

income from Chinese families, some kindergartens keep the EM children in separate classes.

Low Expectations of EM students learning potential

There does not appear to be any sense of urgency to ensure that ethnic minority children gain high levels of proficiency in Chinese during the kindergarten years.

Hong Kong is a rather homogeneous society and there are few role models of non-ethnically Chinese people speaking Chinese to a native, or near-native level. The presence of non-Chinese children in CMI kindergartens is also relatively new, as non-Chinese children previously were largely educated in the EMI school system and in the 'designated' schools.

These factors, plus the possibility of the ethnic minority child transitioning to an EMI primary school – or a CMI one where Chinese is taught at a lower level - may reinforce low expectations of Chinese language learning outcomes for NCS students at kindergarten level.

Teachers do not appear to feel responsible for ensuring that EM children learn Chinese to the same level as the Chinese children during kindergarten– it simply doesn't matter that much.

This attitude is unimaginable in countries such as the USA, Europe and Australia, where expectations are that all children, regardless of family background, work towards achieving the same levels of language proficiency as children from native speaking backgrounds.

Much work needs to be done to make sure that kindergarten educators appreciate that non-Chinese children can - and must – achieve high levels of Chinese proficiency. Resources must be created, as a matter of urgency, to help kindergartens ensure that all children, regardless of family background or ethnicity, leave kindergarten with a solid foundation in the core skills of the Chinese language.

Few Choices of Primary school

EM parents feel their choice of primary school is very limited. For those children that have attended an EMI kindergarten, they are destined to attend one of the small number of EMI primary schools.

Even when the child has been studying at a CMI kindergarten, teachers say that the EM children's level of Chinese proficiency is often insufficient to thrive at a CMI primary school. Aware of the language challenges that lie ahead and fearful of the lack of support offered by mainstream CMI primary schools, parents often continue down the EMI primary route – or place their children at CMI schools which cater for EM children. Unfortunately, at these schools, the segregation of EM children from

Chinese students continues³⁸ and the EM children are deprived of the chance to learn in a truly immersive Chinese language environment.

Likewise, for the EM children who have good levels of Chinese language proficiency, parents may still be concerned about placing them in a CMI school that only provides school notices in Chinese.

Research from Hong Kong Unison shows that EM parents do not prefer their children to enter racially segregated schools³⁹. It is very unfortunate that for lack of primary CAL support and the provision of bilingual notices, EM children are still being directed towards an educational pathway that leaves them with lower levels of Chinese language acquisition. Much work needs to be done to make all Hong Kong primary schools inclusive to students from minority ethnic and linguistic backgrounds.

Inclusive Mindsets

Given that the vast majority of Hong Kong is made up of ethnically Chinese individuals, it is imperative that kindergartens are given specific tips and practices on how to be inclusive. This is not being taught effectively in teaching schools and negative attitudes towards ethnic minorities can change with education and awareness building in schools.

Hong Kong kindergartens need to be encouraged to be open and inclusive to all children, regardless of race or any other background feature. Every child deserves the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

³⁸ <https://www.hongkongfp.com/2016/03/29/racial-segregation-in-hong-kongs-public-education-system-teaches-the-wrong-lesson/>

³⁹ [http://www.unison.org.hk/DocumentDownload/Researches/R201506 Research Report Parental Choice ENG final.pdf](http://www.unison.org.hk/DocumentDownload/Researches/R201506%20Research%20Report%20Parental%20Choice%20ENG%20final.pdf)

Recommendations

1. INCLUSIVE SCHOOLS

EDB to provide a financial incentive to kindergartens with less than eight EM students.

This report shows that over 40% of kindergartens do not admit any EM students. Parents want their children to receive a CMI kindergarten education but report being turned away from some kindergartens simply because of their race. This is unconscionable and shepherds EM families towards a small number of CMI or often EMI schools. Efforts must be taken to persuade this 40% of schools to open their doors to EM students. A per capita grant may go some way to improving perceptions about the admission EM students, as well as enabling the school to purchase some appropriate tools and resources.

EDB to Monitor Ethnic Composition of schools and KPIs related to Chinese language attainment in schools

EDB must adopt inclusive terminology and use the term students of 'CAL', rather than NCS and EM.

It is imperative that EDB makes this change. Academic research and social policy reports are all driven by EDB data. So long as EDB uses the terms NCS and EM, everyone else will follow suit. As this report discusses, the term NCS is not accurate. Many so called NCS students do speak Chinese to a high level. The term CAL is inclusive. It encompasses students of all ethnicities and describes a spectrum of needs - from total beginners to those children who might need specific help with academic writing. It is high time we had some new language -and we ask that EDB leads the way.

Inclusive kindergartens – and primary schools

EDB should support or create an inclusion guide and toolkit for use in kindergartens and primary schools. This is an easy way for schools to incorporate inclusive practices in their school. Hong Kong is a rather racially homogenous society and the majority population in Hong Kong should be introduced to inclusion at kindergarten. These inclusion skills will not only help CAL students but children from mainland China, those with SEN, those from single families and others. An inclusion guide which includes advice on how to incorporate and celebrate the cultures of Hong Kong non-Chinese should be promoted and distributed. Schools that do well, should be commended.

All kindergartens and schools should have an **English language website and create bilingual school notices.**

Role Models: EDB must note that school materials rarely feature non-Chinese looking children – new textbooks and school books are needed which reflect the multi-cultural nature of Hong Kong's population.

Role Models are needed of non-ethnically Chinese people speaking Chinese. There is a danger that teachers in the Hong Kong education system do not expect EM students to achieve high levels of Chinese language competency, because at a deep level, they do not know it can be done. We need to see non-Chinese faces in media, in government and in the wider community, speaking Chinese to a high level.

EDB should monitor the ethnic make-up of kindergartens and primary schools and assess how this may affect Chinese language learning. Where the percentages of CAL students are proportionately higher, we would expect to see less “organic learning” of Cantonese and a lower Cantonese language attainment, *ceteris parabis*.

2. CREATE CHINESE LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAMMES FOR EMI KINDERGARTENS

Create a programme for use in EMI kindergartens to teach beginner Cantonese EDB, in conjunction with experts must create a Chinese learning programme for **use in EMI schools**. These children will ultimately grow up, live and work in Hong Kong and will require a higher level of Cantonese – and they must start this as early as possible.

It is not acceptable that kindergartens have to create these teaching materials themselves. Learning Chinese as an Additional Language from scratch is not easy and little work has been done on how to teach Chinese – especially Cantonese – to young learners.

In addition, a programme must be developed for **speech patterns** used in Cantonese. **The programme to teach verbal Cantonese must be supported by use of Jyutping, home language and audio-visual aids.** The writing process should be introduced separately and resources produced that can be used at home by families who do not read or write Chinese.

3. CREATE CHINESE LANGUAGE TEACHING AND SUPPORT PROGRAMMES FOR CMI KINDERGARTENS

Create a programme of support for NCS students in CMI kindergartens EDB, in conjunction with experts must create a Chinese learning support programme for use in CMI schools.

The focus should be on **supporting children** in the classroom and **providing practice materials** that can be used at home by families who do not read or write Chinese.

A series of **graded readers** is needed to increase the children’s exposure to standard written Chinese. These materials must be **supported by Jyutping, a multi-language glossary and, where applicable, audio.** It may not be necessary to create these materials from scratch; instead co-operate with the publishers of existing books to adapt these books by adding JP, a glossary and providing audio. 64

Resources are needed that are **easily accessible by all stakeholders** – kindergarten teachers, parents, NGOs, volunteer tutors. Currently it is almost impossible to find any materials that have been designed for teaching Chinese (Cantonese) to young children.

Create a range of classroom-based support resources – and monitor the net benefits of “pull out sessions”.

For EM children in CMI schools, the three hours a day at kindergarten provides a precious environment of immersion in Chinese. We **must be cautious about relying on systems of support that require pulling the child out of regular classroom teaching**. Pull-out sessions may have a role to play as part of a spectrum of support but should not be the only tool in the box. **The EDB must monitor whether these pull-out sessions are a net benefit** or not to the student. Being “pulled out” means that a child “misses out” on important times of inclusion which may contribute to further stigmatising.

4. BENCHMARK CHINESE LEVELS AT PRIMARY ONE ENTRY

EDB should consider benchmarking Chinese levels for Primary One entry, across Hong Kong. Only then, will educators know if their interventions for CAL students are working at kindergarten. Currently there is no set standard attainment in terms of number of characters students should know, for example. CAL students are automatically at a disadvantage because of their non-Cantonese speaking home environments.

Having a transparent benchmark will assist educators to develop curriculum to work towards. This can only be a positive for ethnic minority students studying Chinese.

5. MAKE METHODICAL AND WIDESPREAD USE OF JYUTPING

Jyutping must be used widely on resources for EM students. This does not mean that the JP is put above every character. Instead it should be used as part of a glossary for new or core vocabulary.

A **single purpose phone App** should be developed to demonstrate the sounds of JP. This may be used as a basic reference tool to make JP accessible to teachers and parents.

A **simple training video** may be created to introduce and familiarize teachers with JP, the role it plays in language acquisition for NCS students and to introduce them to online tools that convert Chinese characters into the JP romanised form.

The introduction of JP at kindergarten level should be seen as the first part of a **continuum of JP support**, which carries through primary school and into secondary schools.

6. IMPROVE SCHOOL/HOME COMMUNICATION

EDB must set up a **website that is aimed specifically at the needs of NCS parents. The general EDB website contains too much information and is difficult to navigate.** The website must carry information in different languages. It must provide information on the school education system and ways for families to support their children learning Chinese.

EDB must employ **Education Ambassadors** drawn from the EM community who can advise parents on the education system and processes that must be undertaken at various stages. Parents need help to make informed choices about the kind of educational pathway they seek for their child. Education Ambassadors may advise parents on the kindergarten application process and encourage the 40% of kindergartens who do not have EM students to open their doors and start accepting children from non-Chinese speaking backgrounds.

EDB and schools to use non-written forms of communication to provide information about kindergartens and the education system. Videos and other social media channels may be more effective at reaching a larger number of families than the written word.

Resources must be created to practice Chinese writing that can be used by non-Chinese speaking families. These resources should be freely available, easily **accessible** and must be supported by Jyutping, a multi-language glossary and audio.

7. TEACHER SUPPORT

Differentiated Teacher Training

Teachers do not feel confident that they understand how best to support EM students in their class. Teacher training is needed but must be differentiated according to the type of language provision used in the school. Clearly, the task of teaching Chinese as an Additional Language in an EMI kindergarten, is very different to supporting students of CAL in a CMI school and teacher training must reflect this.

EDB and universities to provide **online training courses**. Some schools struggle to release their teachers for long training courses, so creative ways of providing teacher support may be explored, perhaps by providing lessons on a Saturday or online.

8. EDB/UNIVERSITY/NGO SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

NGOs involved in projects to support CAL students must be transparent about their projects, share information and resources.

Efforts must be made to ensure that strategies and resources that are shown to be successful in kindergartens participating in NGO/University support schemes must be rolled out for use in all kindergartens.

EDB/NGO/University programmes must consider creating in-class support programmes and resources that can be carried out without external teacher support.

EDB/NGO/University programmes must create resources that can be used by parents in non-Chinese speaking families, including the use of audio/visual tools.

EDB/NGO/University programmes must have ethnic minorities on their department committees.

Appendix 1

Surveyed Kindergartens

Abiding Kindergarten
CCC Chai Wan Church Day Nursery
Chiu Yang Kindergarten
Greenville Anglo-Chinese Kindergarten
Hong Kong Christian Service Tin Heng Nursery School
Hong Kong & Kowloon Kaifong Womens' Association Wan Tsui Kindergarten
Islamic Abu Bakar Chui Memorial Kindergarten
Jade Kindergarten
Li Megan Kindergarten
Little Buds Kindergarten

May Nga Kindergarten
May Nga Kindergarten Branch
Peace Evangelical Centre Kindergarten (Tin Shui Wai)
Po Leung Kuk Fung Leung Kit Memorial Kindergarten
Po Leung Kuk Tam Au-Yeung Siu Fong Memorial Kindergarten
Pok Oi Hospital Mrs. Yam Wing Yin Kindergarten
Pristine Kindergarten
Sagarmatha Kindergarten
Shau Kei Wan Methodist Kindergarten
St James Lutheran Kindergarten

St. Monica's Kindergarten
Sun Island English Kindergarten (Belcher Branch)
Sun Island Kindergarten Metro Harbour Branch
Sun Island English Kindergarten (Lok Man Branch)
Sun Island English Kindergarten (Tokwawan Branch)
Sun Island English Kindergarten (Yuen Long Branch)
The Salvation Army Chan Kwan Tung Kindergarten
Tsung Tsin Mission of HK On Hong Nursery School
Women's Welfare Club (Eastern District) Hong. Kong Lai Kwai Tim Day Nursery
Western Pacific Kindergarten

Yan Chai Hospital Ming Tak Kindergarten
Yiu Tung Baptist Kindergarten
Yuen Long Public Middle School Alumni Association Lau Leung Sheung Memorial Kindergarten
Yuen Long Tung Koon District Assoc. Hung Ting Ka Kindergarten
HKTA Yuen Yuen Kindergarten
Zion Lutheran Kindergarten

Appendix 2

Kindergarten school principals were asked to rate which resources, tools and interventions they believed were most needed to teach and support CAL students. They rated the most helpful with 3 points and the least helpful with zero points.

<u>Type of Resource or intervention</u>	<u>Number of Points</u>
1. More teaching assistants in each class	77
2. A teacher coordinator to lead second language learning in school	87
3. Extra Chinese tuition during school time for more support	56
4. Extra Chinese tuition after school	74
5. Extra Chinese tuition during summer holidays	63
6. Teaching training on how to teach Cantonese to NCS students	80
7. Teacher training on Cantonese Romanisation system Jyut Ping	64
8. Benchmark Language Assessment for students	56
9. Teaching materials based on Benchmark test	51
10. Cantonese Lessons – in book form and with video support – narrated in EM languages	72
11. Welcome pack for parents in EM	72
12. Speakers from EM community to visit school to explain parents can help	74
13. Online translation service to make communication with parents more easy	76
14. Proficiency test for students run by independent language institutes	54
15. Tablet for watching Cantonese language cartoons	77
16. Table for watching and listening to audio books	72
17. Tablet with apps to practice stroke order and character recognition	73
18. Tablet with Chinese language games	70
19. Tablet containing textbook texts. Pop up dictionary and audio	65
20. Series of graded reading books with audio, Jyut Ping and multi-language glossary	86
21. Books/stories about HK Chinese culture with flashcards + audio	80
22. Flashcards of basic vocabulary with Jyut Ping and multi-language translations	84
23. Student pack of materials for each student at the beginning of K1, K2, K3.	63
24. Picture dictionaries of themed vocab. Jyut Ping	71
25. Video lessons to help children learn daily verbal Cantonese	73
26. Website where resources to learn and practice Cantonese are available	74