

# **Enhanced Marriage & Parenthood package in support of a profamily environment in Singapore**

The Government recognises the importance of families in Singapore and is committed to helping Singaporeans achieve their marriage and parenthood aspirations. Deputy Prime Minister Teo Chee Hean, Coordinating Minister for National Security and Minister-in-charge of population issues, announced the enhanced Marriage & Parenthood Package today. The enhanced package aims to provide more comprehensive support for Singaporeans in getting married and starting their families.

## **Enhancements to the Marriage and Parenthood Package**

The enhancements aim to: (a) make it faster and easier for married couples to get housing to support earlier marriages and births; (b) provide support for medical costs related to conception and delivery costs; (c) further defray child-raising costs, including healthcare costs; (d) enhance work-life measures to help working couples to balance work and family commitments; and (e) signal to fathers to play a bigger role in bringing up their children.

In summary, the following policy enhancements were announced:

### **a) Make it faster and easier to get housing to support earlier marriages and births**

- i) Parenthood Priority Scheme to provide priority allocation of new HDB flats to first-timer married couples with children by setting aside a proportion of flats for them.
- ii) Parenthood Provisional Housing Scheme to allow first-timer married couples with children to rent a flat from HDB at an affordable rental rate while awaiting completion of their flats.

### **b) Provide support for medical costs related to conception and delivery**

- iii) Enhanced Government co-funding for Assisted Reproduction Technology (ART) treatments, to cover up to 75% of treatment costs, capped at \$6,300 per cycle and \$1,200 per cycle for 3 fresh and 3 frozen treatment cycles respectively. Couples with more than one child will also be eligible for cofunding.
- iv) Accouchement fees in public hospitals will no longer be differentiated across birth order.

### **c) Further defray child-raising costs, including healthcare costs**

- v) Enhanced Baby Bonus Cash Gift of \$6,000 per child for the first two births, and \$8,000 per child for the third/fourth births. This marks an increase of \$2,000 per birth over the current Baby Bonus Cash Gift.
- vi) Creation of a CPF Medisave account for each citizen newborn with a grant of \$3,000 to

further support parents in planning for their children's healthcare needs and encourage early and continuous enrolment in MediShield.

vii) MediShield to be extended to cover congenital and neonatal conditions, to take effect from 1 Mar 2013, at the same time as other broader changes to MediShield announced earlier

#### **d) Enhance work-life measures to help working couples to balance work and family commitments**

viii) 2 days of Government-Paid Child Care Leave annually for parents with children aged 7-12, to provide parents of children in primary school with more time to tend to their children's needs. Parents with at least one child below age 7 will continue to have 6 days of Child Care Leave.

ix) 4 weeks of Government-Paid Adoption Leave for working mothers, to support bonding with the adopted child in the child's first year.

x) Government-Paid Maternity Benefit to allow working women who do not currently qualify for any maternity leave (e.g. shorter-term contract workers) to enjoy the Government paid share of maternity leave in the form of a cash benefit.

xi) Extended maternity protection period to cover the full term of pregnancy, for employees who are retrenched or dismissed without sufficient cause.

#### **e) Signal to fathers to play a bigger role in bringing up their children**

xii) 1 week of Government-Paid Paternity Leave for fathers.

xiii) 1 week of Government-Paid Shared Parental Leave to allow fathers to share 1 week of the working mother's maternity leave entitlement. Please refer to [Annex A](#) for more details on the enhancements.

These enhancements complement existing Marriage & Parenthood measures, which include the Medisave Maternity Package, Child Development Account, Parenthood Tax Rebate, Qualifying Child Relief and others. The enhanced M&P package has a new budget of \$2 billion a year, up from the previous \$1.6 billion budget of the 2008 package. A summary of the enhanced Marriage & Parenthood Package can be found in Annex B.

"Addressing our falling birth rate requires a concerted effort beyond Government initiatives. We will continue to work with the community to strengthen positive attitudes towards family life. We hope that the enhanced Marriage & Parenthood measures will help create a more conducive environment for Singaporeans to set up families." said DPM Teo.

#### **Other measures under study**

In addition, the Government is currently studying other measures pertaining to the pre-school sector. Measures to address infant and child care fee affordability will be announced on Wednesday. The Ministry of Manpower is also studying ways to provide incentives for employers to offer flexible work arrangements for their employees. These will complement the measures under the enhanced Marriage & Parenthood Package.

## **Public engagement and feedback received**

The enhancements draw on suggestions made by Singaporeans in the public engagement over the past year. During the review, NPTD engaged various stakeholders such as community organisations and employers as well as the members of the public.

The factors affecting Singaporeans' decisions to get married and have children are multi-faceted. There were practical concerns about access to housing, the availability and cost of child care, healthcare expenses and other costs of raising a family. Both men and women also expressed the desire for better work-life harmony to fulfil their family and career aspirations. Many reflected on the importance of family values, and pointed out that it is ultimately values and social attitudes which will determine personal decisions regarding marriage and parenthood.

NPTD also considered the proposals and suggestions submitted by various organisations and interest groups, such as the National Family Council, I Love Children, Singapore National Employers Federation, NTUC, PAP Women's Wing, AWARE, Focus on the Family, the Centre for Research on Islamic and Malay Affairs, and Touch Community Services.

In total, NPTD received more than 800 pieces of feedback on marriage and parenthood issues during the consultation period from 28 Jun to 31 Oct 2012. We would like to thank all contributors for their feedback and suggestions.

For more information on the Marriage & Parenthood Package 2013, please visit [www.heybaby.sg](http://www.heybaby.sg).

[Annexes for the enhanced Marriage & Parenthood Package \(111kb, pdf\)](#)