

PM's 'no homework' tweet proves a big hit

BY ADRIAN LIM

PRIME Minister Lee Hsien Loong said that his call for parents to let young children play, and learn through play, has struck a chord with Singaporeans.

In a Facebook post yesterday, Mr Lee said he was glad that many parents and educators agreed with him on points raised during his National Day Rally speech on Sunday.

In the speech, he had cautioned parents against hothousing their children and teaching three- or four-year-olds the Primary 1 syllabus.

He added in his post yesterday that his comment, "No homework is not a bad thing", had become the most re-tweeted tweet from his Twitter account – possibly by pupils, he quipped.

A check by *my paper* showed that Mr Lee's comment had been re-tweeted more than 1,800 times since Sunday.

At the rally, he also announced that a new statutory board will be established to oversee pre-school education, and that more pre-school operators will be introduced.

Reinforcing his point yesterday, Mr Lee cited on Facebook a

New York Times report entitled "Simon says don't use flashcards".

He said that the report showed how children will "gain much more (educationally) through playing games and fun activities, than through drills and rote learning".

While the majority praised his ideas, some netizens expressed concern that pupils will inevitably face a stressful, competitive environment in primary school.

"Without changes in mainstream education to lessen the emphasis on grades...parents have no choice but to continue to have the *kiasu* attitude," wrote Facebook user Dennis Ho.

Meanwhile, during a book launch held at the Singapore Management University yesterday, Deputy Prime Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam stressed that academic performance was not a definitive indicator of success later in life.

He said: "Success tends to come with doing what you enjoy. I believe in that. It's the way I've raised my own kids with my wife. They've got to do what they enjoy."

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