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Don't discriminate against frontliners, treat their children fairly

By [New Straits Times](#) - May 24, 2020 @ 7:55pm



(File pic) Children of frontline health personnel should continue to remain at home instead of being dropped of at a Taska (child care centre). -NSTP/NURUL SHAFINA JEMENON

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) is up in arms over what it has termed as discriminatory policy against frontline health personnel and their children involving 'Taska' guidelines and standard operating procedures (SOP).

The guideline issued by the Welfare Department and approved by the Women, Family and Community Development ministry states children of frontline health personnel should continue to remain at home instead of being dropped of at a Taska (child care centre).

This is because the children of frontliners come under the high risk group, capable of contacting Covid-19 infection from their parents who are frontliners.

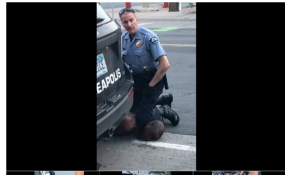
The guidelines state that in the event the children were sent to a Taska, they should be isolated from other children.

"We refer to the updated TASKA guidelines/SOP from the Ministry of Women, Family and Community Development – "Panduan Pencegahan Penularan COVID-19 Pasca Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan Bagi Keselamatan Warga Taman Asuhan Kanak-Kanak (TASKA)" which states in Appendix 12, Section 2.1.2 that "Anak-anak frontliners adalah berisiko tinggi untuk mendapat jangkitan daripada ibu bapa mereka. Tempat yang paling selamat untuk anak-anak ini adalah penjagaan di rumah. Walau bagaimanapun, sekiranya anak-anak petugas frontliners dihantar ke Taska, mereka perlu diasingkan daripada anak-anak yang lain."

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"The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) finds it disturbing and is shocked that such a policy had been approved by the Ministry concerned and circulated by the Welfare Department," said MMA president Dr. N. Ganabaskaran in a statement.

He said frontliners and their children should not be subject to such discriminatory policies and practices, which he deemed as being unacceptable.

The SOP, revised on May 22, was circulated by the Welfare department.

Dr Ganabaskaran said the Health Ministry should have been consulted on the SOP.

The country is faced with a pandemic. A global pandemic. All ministries should be working closely with the Health Ministry, he said.

He urged the Women, Family and Community Development ministry to consult with the Health Ministry on the appropriate and recommended preventive measures for Taska in the country.

"Many frontliners had also been offended by this section in the Taska's guidelines/SOP. We do hope the ministry concerned will swiftly address the matter with an appropriate response," he said.



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