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Ban entrance exam, EAG tells Govt

THE Education Action Group yesterday urged the Government to stamp out all Primary One school entrance examination.

The pressure on thousands of kindergarten pupils now undergoing stiff tests before being admitted to Primary One would remain despite proposed controls to be stepped up by the Government under the long-awaited Green Paper on Pre-Primary Education, EAG chairman Anthony Ha said.

"All efforts made by the Government to improve pre-primary education would be smashed as long as Primary One school entrance examination is allowed to exist," he added.

"What we have been fighting for is a total ban on the Primary One school entrance examination,

instead, of just stepping up certain controls on it," Mr Ha stressed.

The Green Paper is expected to be published next week.

On the proposal of a balanced curriculum, Mr Ha said it would be almost impossible to introduce when kindergartens pupils had to face tough examination to get into Primary One.

"The examination casts an unhealthy shadow on a child who is only five years old, especially when, he fails. He may suffer from an inferiority complex throughout his life.

"Such a feeling of inferiority can be disastrous to a child's personality development for it almost condemns his future," he added.

Mr Ha also ruled out the

possibility of introducing an oral test as a substitute.

"Examiners may ask subtle questions to understand the background of a child, which will be very unfair to those children coming from the working class who may be discriminated against entering so-called distinguished schools," he said.

Mr Ha advocated that the Government should allocate Primary One places by a random system according to pupils' districts.

Apart from the entrance examination, he welcomed the proposals to improve the curriculum for kindergarten pupils and the lowering of teacher and student ratio.