

President of UAE honours parent-friendly organisations

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President His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan has stated that prioritising support for the family and enabling it to fulfil its critical role is a central focus of the government's programmes and strategies. He noted that families are the foremost source of education and the cornerstone of a robust and stable society.

His Highness' comments came during an event to honour institutions awarded the prestigious Parent-friendly Label (PFL) by the Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority (ECA).

The PFL programme targets institutions in the UAE's semi-government, private, and third sectors, aiming to encourage them to adopt policies and frameworks that support working parents and enable them to provide the best possible care to their children. The recognition ceremony, which took place today at Qasr Al Shati in Abu Dhabi, was attended by His Highness Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Chairman of the Office of Development and Martyrs Families Affairs and Chairman of the ECA.

His Highness Sheikh Mohamed expressed his appreciation to all the institutions participating in the programme for their commitment to adopting a parent-supportive work culture. Enabling parents to balance work and family life, said His Highness, helps to strengthen family bonds and promote effective parenting, which has a positive impact on the child, family, and society.

The UAE President noted that allowing working parents ample time to nurture their children is key to raising future generations able to actively contribute to society and advance the nation's development and growth.

His Highness also emphasised the importance of all state institutions being aware of the need to create a work environment supportive of parents and instilling this culture within them, given its significant social, cultural, and educational impact, and its positive effect on workplace efficiency.

Also present at the recognition event were a number of senior officials including Khalid Khalifa Al Mubarak, Chairman of the Abu Dhabi Executive Affairs Authority and Member of the Executive Council, Dr Mugheer Khamis Al Khaili, Chairman of the Department of Community Development; Sana Mohamed Suhail, Director General of the ECA; and representatives of those institutions awarded the PFL label.

His Highness Sheikh Theyab bin Mohamed bin Zayed commended the UAE leadership for their support for the PFL programme which has positively impacted workplaces across the UAE. More and more organisations, he said, are placing a greater importance on offering flexibility, listening to and understanding the needs of families, actively welcoming back new parents, and

supporting the overall wellbeing of employees and their families. His Highness noted that parent-friendly workplaces enable working parents to flourish at work and at home and can achieve positive business outcomes such as retaining employees, enhancing employer attractiveness, and contributing to increased profitability.

Referencing the PFL programme as just one of numerous initiatives contributing to early childhood development, His Highness Sheikh Theyab reaffirmed his belief that it will positively influence the future of work across many industries. Of the 12 organisations that earned the Parent-friendly Label, two were awarded the PFL+ classification for meeting or exceeding global standards in parent-friendly policies and practices. The two were Emirates Nature in association with WWF, and Tappy Toes Nursery. The remaining 10 organisations, who earned the PFL for exceeding local leading parent-friendly policies and practices, were Bain Co, Mubadala Investment Company, Novartis, Nestle, LinkedIn, Houbara Defence Security, Visa Middle East, Chalhoub Group, Nabta Health, and Wintershall DEA Middle East.

The latest cycle saw 75 applications received from across the country, with each being evaluated by an independent judging panel consisting of senior leaders from various emirates. Overall, this cycle positively impacted the lives of over 48,000 children and reached more than 127,000 employees working in participating institutions, including around 66,000 parents and 1,500 children of determination.

Applications for the next cycle (Cycle 3) will open on 27 February 2024 and close at the end of September 2024. Organisations in the private sector, semi-government sector or third sector in the UAE are encouraged to review the eligibility criteria online and apply at www.eca.gov.ae.

Through the Parent-friendly Label programme, the Abu Dhabi Early Childhood Authority aims to support working parents to flourish in both their professional and personal lives and to empower them to offer their young children the best start in life.

<https://www.mohamedbinzayed.ae>