

Bilingual Pre-school Education

Northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region plans to build more bilingual kindergartens in its rural areas to promote three-year bilingual pre-school education for an extra 560,000 children.

According to the regional education department, 4,387 bilingual kindergartens will be built or expanded in 2017 across the region, 3,223 of which will be added in south Xinjiang.

More government funds will be earmarked to recruit and encourage more bilingual local officials and teachers, the department said.

China offers nine years of free and compulsory education, but in

Xinjiang, kindergarten and senior high school are also free.

Xinjiang added 2,500 new bilingual kindergartens in rural areas from 2011 to 2015, bringing the region's pre-school education penetration rate to 77 percent, or 480,000 young children, according to official figures.

With central government funds, Xinjiang plans to offer three years of bilingual pre-school education in the region's rural areas during the 2016-20 period instead of the current two years.