(No. B/879) Mrs L. D. Dookun-Luchoomun (Third Member for La Caverne and Phoenix) asked the Minister of Education and Human Resources whether, in regard to the pre-primary schools, he will, for the benefit of the House, obtain from the Pre-School Trust Fund, information as to—

(a) the present number of children who
   (i) attended thereto in 2007
   (ii) are attending in 2008 and
(b) the expected number thereof for the January 2009 intake.

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, I am informed that the number of children attending pre-primary schools in Mauritius for the year—
   (i) 2007 was 36,016 of which 29,788 attended private pre-primary schools and 6,138 attended PSTF-run pre-primary schools, and
   (ii) 2008 was 33,301 of which 31,406 attended private pre-primary schools and 6,225 attended PSTF-run pre-primary schools.

The expected number for January 2009 is 36,786.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: May I ask from the hon. Minister where will the extra students be attending school?

Mr Gokhool: There is another question of the hon. Member on preprimary schools. I will reply to it at the same time.

Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun: My question relates to the number that the hon. Minister has just mentioned, namely that for next year, he is expecting some 36,786 to be attending pre-primary institutions. Following the budgetary decision to provide assistance to people so that they may attend pre-primary schooling, may I ask from the hon. Minister where he expects to send these students?

Mr Gokhool: Mr Speaker, Sir, for the purpose of accommodating the additional 5,000 students, there are already 1,718 seats which are available in the 181 pre-primary units attached to the Early Childhood Care and Education Authority. As regards the provision for the remaining ones, around 3,500 seats have been identified in private pre-primary schools.