Allocation for education the highest so far, says Koh

PENANG: Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon said the allocation for education, which forms 27% of the proposed RM109.8bil to be appropriated under Budget 2003, was the highest ever allocated by the Government.

This reflected the Government's desire to increase the quality of education in schools and preschools, he said.

"As a former educationist, I am very happy with the focus on early education," he told a press conference yesterday.

Dr Koh said he was impressed with the allocation of RM1bil for the setting up of the Education Savings Fund to finance higher education.

"The move to provide a matching grant for every ringgit saved by children from low-income families is also good," he said.

Penang Ratepayers Association president Datuk Eddy Choong lauded the Budget as a good one that concentrated on the people's welfare, education and developing the local economy.

"I like this Budget because it has addressed the welfare of the people, education and helping local people make more money.

"It is a good Budget that concentrates on local content and not looks outside like depending on export and foreign investors," said Choong, who is also Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association Penang branch chairman.

"We should not be depending too much on the export market as the world economy is not so good now. It is good to be friendly to local industries to help them to pick up," he added.

Penang Consumer Protection Association president K. Koris said more allocation could have been given to public healthcare.

"The government should provide more cross-subsidy in public healthcare and give more allocation to eradicate diseases.

"More dialysis centres and health clinics should be set up, for instance," he said.