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## **To check dropout rate, civic body likely to start anganwadis at its schools**

To decrease the dropout rate in civic schools, BMC is likely to start anganwadis in its schools next year.

The proposal, mooted by the civic body's education committee, says BMC should start upper and lower KG classes to attract more children.

These classes will be run at a minimal cost in semi-English and English-medium schools.

"In BMC schools, there is no provision for pre-primary schooling, due to which children have to go to private schools. Later, they might not want to switch to a civic school even though they are not as expensive," said Manoj Kotak, chairman of BMC's education committee.

Currently, about 3.85 lakh children study in 1,174 civic primary schools across the city, while over 60,000 children study in 145 secondary schools.

NGO Praja Foundation's white paper on the "status of municipal education in Mumbai" says that the dropout rate rose from 4 per cent in 2010-2011 to 7 per cent in 2011-2012.

The report also says that less than a decade ago, the municipal education system used to cater to over 7.5 lakh students, but now attracts less than 4.5 lakh students.

Civic officials said the plan to begin anganwadis is in the preliminary stage and suggestions from various stakeholders will be taken into account.

"In our initial survey, when parents were asked why they prefer to send their children to a private school, many said it was because they did not have to go through the admission process again up till class X, which is not the case with BMC schools," said Milind Mhaske of PRAJA Foundation.