

# Proceedings of Scientific Meeting

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## Proceedings of ISPCAN 5th Asian Conference on Child Protection organised by Social Welfare Department, International Society for Prevention of Child Abuse and Neglect (ISPCAN), and Against Child Abuse (Selected Articles) 25-27 November, 1999

### Keynote speeches

1. **Building a Caring Community for the Protection of Children**

J THOBURN

2. **Promoting Family Well-being – Future Direction on Family and Child Welfare Services**

P CHU

3. **Awareness of Psychological Abuse and Promoting Mental Health in Families**

D GLASER

4. **Working through Adolescence Crisis for Family Stability: a Targeted, Systemic, Integrated Approach**

YW CHOI

### Other Presentations

1. **In Peace and Stability We Develop Our Total Fitness**

PSK LUI TSANG

2. **Shaken Baby Syndrome: the Local Perspective**

ACW LEE

3. **Psychological Intervention for Sex Offenders in the Correctional Services Department**

CC LU CHAN

4. **Intra-familial Child Sexual Abuse in Hong Kong: a Descriptive Study of 23 Cases Referred for Psychological Treatment**

LKY LEE

5. **The Influence of Ethnicity, Gender, Personality, Life Satisfaction and Number of Children in the Family on Child Abuse Potential**

BS CHUA and HO ABDUL

6. **Youth Empowerment – “Let the Dolphin Lead”**

J HO

7. **The Child Rearing Approach in an Era of Change**

AC LEUNG

8. **Suspected Child Abuse Cases in Public Hospital: an Interim Analysis of 494 Cases**

ACW LEE

## Building a Caring Community for the Protection of Children

J THOBURN

University of East Anglia, United Kingdom

Each country represented at the conference, whether "rich" or "poor" or somewhere in between, has committed its government and its citizens to providing protection from what UK legislation describes as "significant harm". The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child talks of the need to protect child victims of "any form of neglect, exploitation or abuse", and lists possible causes of maltreatment as having their origins in social and legal systems as well as resulting from the acts or inaction of parents.

The commitment unites us, but beyond that, each country has to work out for itself the reasons why its children suffer significant harm, and decide, in the light of available resources, which strategies it will develop to protect them. Will it emphasise prevention and family support or will it rely on rescue? Will it rely heavily on professionals or on building protective communities, using the ideas behind the new discourse of "civil society" and "capacity building"?

In this paper I shall consider the following themes:

- Which children may need protection?
- The centrality of needs assessment
  - including the need for protection services
- Multi-level responses to childhood adversity
- From assessment to choice of service options
- When to use formal protection systems?
- The importance of preventative strategies

## Assessment of Need: the First Imperative

Put simply, assessment comprises two tasks:

- Understanding what it is in any society, local community or family, which leads to children's health or development being significantly impaired;
- Deciding how to make best use of whatever resources are available.

## Assessment at Community Level

Who are the children in adversity in your country – those who may, to use UNICEF's phrase, be in need of special protective measures? Recently a television