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DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

Tuesday, January 9, 1973

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Tuesday, January 9, 1973

ABRUPT WEANING SLOWS DOWN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

Survey Extended To Study Malnutrition

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Abrupt weaning and the subsequent replacement of milk by an inadequate and imbalanced diet partly explains the slowing down of Hong Kong Chinese children's development, both physical and mental, in the first two years of their childhood.

This was stated today by the Supervisor of the Child Development Survey, undertaken by the Paediatric Department of the University of Hong Kong and financed, among others, by the Government Lotteries Fund.

The Child Development Survey was launched in 1967 with the aim of studying the growth and development of 782 new-born Chinese babies in Hong Kong.

The survey has now been extended for another three years in an effort to examine the effect of malnutrition and child-rearing practices on general scholastic performance of children between the ages of five and eight.

A total of 447 five-and-a-half year old children, representing a fair cross-section of Hong Kong, are currently under observation at the Child Development Centre.

The Supervisor pointed out that so far there was no obvious indication of any adverse effect of malnutrition on the children's intellectual capacity, but the analysis of the results beyond the first year had not yet been completed.

/On malnutrition .....

On malnutrition during the weaning stage, she said that Chinese mothers tended to wean their off-spring milk on to solids too rapidly, thinking that by replacing congee for milk their children will be "stronger".

She said: "These children of four to six months of age are unable to digest and absorb adequately what is offered in the way of solids.

"Milk, which is most valuable to a growing child, should be given in adequate amounts until at least three years".

She described this state of malnutrition as an outcome of ignorance and misconception on the part of mothers rather than poverty alone.

Retardation Of Growth

She further pointed out that the retardation of growth around the weaning period could also be attributed to the overcrowding of Hong Kong which made children more liable to contract infections early in life.

"The general picture in the first two years in the lives of many of the children was one of irritability, lethargy and a lack of interest in their surroundings. The muscles in their limbs became soft and flabby," she added.

On the impact of environment on children's behaviour, children who live in a confined space tend to be inhibited and shy in their overall performance.

The common practice is to keep young children in their homes all day, not only because it is customary to do this, but also because of the difficulties of using lifts, and sometimes many flights of stairs in tall buildings, in order to take them outside.

/"Pre-school .....

"Pre-school children should ideally be brought outside every day into the open air and sunshine to give them more exercise and to reduce the incidence of infectious disease," she added.

Turning to the effect of schooling on children, she deplored what she called the over-emphasis on the children's imitative ability and visual memory and the unnecessary amount of homework often given at the kindergarten level which might unfavourably affect the children's personality and psychological make-up.

"Too strict a regimen imposed on young children will only result in the submergence of their natural childhood", she added, " and inhibit the development of initiative, imagination and creative ability".

Meanwhile, the total contribution of the Government Lotteries Fund to the Survey has now totalled more than $750,000.

It is hoped that the further findings of the survey will go a long way towards benefiting the Government and all bodies concerned with child welfare and care in Hong Kong.

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MOBILE REGISTRATION TEAM POPULAR

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The mobile registration team of the Registration of Persons Department has proved to be very popular among residents of the New Territories, the outlying islands, and various housing estates in the urban areas.

In the past nine months, the mobile registration team in the New Territories handled 12,075 applications for juvenile identity cards and 15,751 applications for adult identity cards. This included 397 applications for adult identity cards and 2,650 applications for juvenile identity cards received from residents of outlying islands.

The mobile registration team in the urban areas registered 750 people for adult identity cards and 6,763 children for juvenile identity cards during the same period.

A spokesman for the Registration of Persons Department said today: "Members of the public have shown that they appreciate the services provided by the mobile registration teams, and the cooperation of local kaifong associations and rural committees in the New Territories is particularly encouraging."

The length of a mobile registration team's stay in one place depends on the needs of the local population, but generally ranges from a few days to one week. Its work is divided into two parts -- the registration of applicants and the distribution of documents after processing.

/The spokesman .....

The spokesman stressed that the mobile registration teams were provided solely for the convenience of the public. He pointed out that to register a child for a juvenile identity card, one only has to produce his birth certificate and the identity card of the parent or guardian.

"A child should change his juvenile identity card for an adult identity card within 30 days after reaching the age of 17," he said. "The fee for this is only $1."

He added that people who failed to register for identity cards within the proper period would only bring unnecessary inconvenience to themselves.

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CELLO RECITAL AT CITY HALL

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An accomplished cellist, Richard Markson, who is a new arrival to the music department of the Chung Chi College, Chinese University, will give a recital at City Hall Concert Hall on Saturday, January 13, at 8 p.m.

Richard Markson began studying the cello at an early age. At 12 he was admitted to the Paris Conservatoire, where he studied cello with the famous French master, Tortelier for six years. During his stay in the Conservatoire he won many awards.

After leaving Paris, he has also had lessons with the world-renowned cellist Pierre Fournier.

He has given many successful recitals throughout the country, and has performed in Israel and Switzerland. His London debut at Wigmore Hall in 1970 was acclaimed by both critics and the audience.

Richard Markson's recital will be presented by the Urban Council here. On Saturday, he will play works by Valentini, Schubert, Shulamit Ran, Beethoven, Watson and Brahms and will be accompanied by his colleague, David Gwilt, music lecturer at the Chung Chi College, at the piano.

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Tickets at $1 (student tickets), $2 and $3 are available daily from 10 a.m. at the City Hall Box Office.

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WATER INTERRUPTION IN TSIM SHA TSUI

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Water supply to a number of premises in Tsim Sha Tsui will be interrupted for five hours from 1 a.m. to 6 a.m. on Thursday (January 11) and Saturday (January 13).

The temporary stoppage is to enable the Waterworks Office to carry out a leakage test.

The area affected on Thursday is bounded by Nathan Road, Cameron Road, Chatham Road and Mody Road.

The area affected on Saturday is bounded by Kimberly Road, Observatory Road, Chatham Road, Cameron Road and Nathan Road.

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Release time: 6.30 p.m.