

AGAINST CHILD ABUSE

Position Paper on Unattended Children and General Child Safety

Regarding the concern for unattended children and general child safety, we make the following recommendations :-

1. The Working Group on Child Abuse under the Health & Welfare Branch to be reconvened and made a Standing Committee.

It was supposed to be reconvened in the beginning of 1992.

2. The Neglect Campaign Working Group under the Government Information Services be reconvened, renamed and made a Standing Committee.

A positive name reflecting a wider concern in child care is more preferable.

It was recommended in the Working Group on Child Abuse that this group should be an on-going group with a role to work out a strategy in publicity and public education to prevent abuse and neglect.

3. We support the setting up of a Child Safety Council for the following purpose:

statistics concerning childhood injury and death should be centralised,

a clear policy in this respect needs to be listed,

necessary channels and procedures to be worked out and widely publicised;

preventive measures and programmes to be widely promoted and organised not only for adults but also for children.

4. We urge for proper legal protection to ensure basic care for children, particularly those aged eight and under.

Adult presence is a must for basic child care for the very young.

The government and NGO should be able to provide necessary information, counselling, child care services and resources etc.

For families who still do not take necessary precautions or steps to adequately protect children even after resources and services are made available, should be penalised.

The consequence of violation of such Ordinance should range from having to receive counselling, parenting training, paying a fine to imprisonment.

The public should be encouraged rather than discouraged to participate in child protection and reporting suspected neglect or abuse situations. (The public is already participating to some extent.)

5. Occasional Child Care should be made available to children aged under two and above six.

Existing services should be consistently and widely publicised. Utility statistics should be systematically kept and made available upon request.

6. Work-based child care should be properly encouraged by the Government introducing incentives such as tax reduction.
7. Mutual Help Groups should be organised with the Government recognising the need to allocate premises, funding for staff and setting proper safety standards.
8. Registration of child minders should be seriously considered rather than simply adopting the proposed Control of Child Minder Bill which would serve a minimal purpose.
9. Public Playgrounds Safety Standards must be raised.

Present available public playgrounds are sometimes very unsafe. Accidents sometimes led to permanent damage of our children. These playgrounds must be properly and regularly inspected and proper safety standards monitored.

10. The UN Convention on Children's Rights being ractified and principles being operationalised in existing services and policies.
11. A Comprehensive Child and Family Policy being adopted with its principles being followed by various government depts. and NGOs.
12. A Comprehensive Child Ordinance being worked out.
13. A Child Commission being formed to thoroughly look into child related concerns and to perform a monitoring role.
14. To do away with a reactive, mentality which only responds when crisis struck us.

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