

## **Responding to Professor Jack Shonkoff's article on Reducing toxic stress for children - and society.**

We cannot agree more with the entire notion of acting now in the best long term interest of children.

Hong Kong does need leaders with will, determination and political wisdom not only to maneuver economic decisions but also to shoulder moral responsibility and leveraging knowledge to impact social changes.

Hong Kong encounters challenges of various kinds including deterioration of family solidarity.

Continued reporting of child deaths, domestic violence, various forms of abuse and neglect and risky situations such as the enormous number of cross border families with new born babies continued contributing to toxic stresses and reducing the resilience of our young pillars of our society.

Hong Kong still appears hesitant when urged to step up head start home visitations for new born families, legal protection of unattended children, banning corporal punishment and set up child sex offender's register. Our new child fatality review mechanism has only just started and has yet to prove its worth.

Child advocates, in this twentieth year after the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child's extension into Hong Kong, continue to urge for an independent platform: a Child Commission, representing the best interest of children. Some thirty countries in the world have been more determined in this course and set up such mechanism, making proactive policies and resources in place, law reviewed. Some twenty four jurisdictions are more determined than Hong

Kong and they have tried hard to ensure positive discipline and parental support and have banned corporal punishment of children completely in their society.

Prevention is better than cure and to be cost effective, head start programs, early childhood education as well as child rights curriculum should be made mandatory in formal education from primary to tertiary.

Parents' education should be supported by funding, child rights trained, caring and committed personnel. Our civil servants from various departments and our multidisciplinary professionals at various levels should receive quality child rights and protection training to ensure service users rights respected.

Address the circumstances that produces toxic stress and creating the right conditions for early childhood development would surely be more effective than fire saving and fixing problems.

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