

PM: Aim for optimum parenthood

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Malaysian parents should work towards "optimum parenthood" which encourages a situation where every family member can realise his potential in becoming more productive spiritually and physically, ~~Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad~~ said tonight.

The Prime Minister said parents needed to learn techniques to overcome situations and problems faced by their children.

"There is a need for parents to learn and experience communication strategies which can help build a closer relationship with their children besides paying attention to the changes in their behaviour and mannerism," he said in his address over Radio Television Malaysia in conjunction with "National Family Day 1991" tomorrow.

Dr Mahathir said there was also a need to look after the welfare and needs of older family members besides that of children.

While the nation pursued progress, the contributions of the elderly were still important, especially in guiding the younger generation

towards the upholding of traditional values and eastern culture.

"The elderly are a source of knowledge and have a wealth of experience to assist in creating a harmonious family atmosphere. In this context, children need to be taught to respect the elders."

The younger generation should be reminded that they too will be old one day and would need the love and attention of their families.

He said the belief that the family is the basic institution in society needed to be perpetuated and strengthened as the family is a recipient of and contributor to national development.

He said all developments at the family level had an impact on society and the country, adding that with the increasing number of families, there is a need to have a family system which is strong and healthy to give birth to children who are responsible and useful citizens.

"Seen from one perspective, achieving the objectives of Vision 2020 lies in the hands of parents.

"I like to stress the importance of studying the role of

the family institution which can bring the country to a challenging stage of development:

"If we follow the experiences of developed countries, the process of transforming the structure of their economy is accompanied by the existence of unhealthy individual characteristics including egoistic attitudes, selfishness, slighting families and society and disregarding surrounding situations.

"This brings about the collapse of the institution of marriage and family and educating the children on family values is disrupted," he said.

Dr Mahathir said failure to overcome stress among family members had resulted in child abuse, violence towards wives and other such activities which in turn led to chaos in families.

"These phenomena, a common characteristic of developed nations, have begun to rear their head here.

"How we check this trend will be a challenge for us. This fact is critical especially since the children born today will form the next generation," he said.