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PM's wife: Don't neglect disabled children in race for development

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - All parties must work together to ensure that children, especially those with special needs, are not left behind during the nation's development.

Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, wife of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, said today the aspects of childcare which needed looking into included ethical and moral teaching, education and training and the prevention of chronic and infectious diseases.

"Economic development that does not go hand in hand with social development will give birth to a social group that is self-centred and materialistic," she said.

"Development programmes will improve when the needs of children are given serious attention. Co-operation from all parties, including the public and private sector, voluntary bodies and the public, is needed to ensure this."

Dr Siti Hasmah was speaking during a Permodalan Nasional Berhad event, where 140 disabled children were entertained by characters from "Along", the popular children's television series.

The children were from Taman Sinar Harapan Kuala Kubu Baru, the Malaysian Association for the Deaf, the Malaysian Autism Training Centre, the Disabled Association of Selangor and the Federal Territory, the Cheras Rehabilitation Centre and the Malaysian National Communication Rehabilitation Co-ordination Committee.

The event, held in conjunction with the Malaysian Trust Fund Week, aimed to inculcate the habit of saving among children.

The Malaysian Trust Fund Week, which is being held from April 20 to 24, also coincided with PNB's launch of its sixth unit trust scheme, the Amanah Saham Malaysia.

Participants can be as young as six months and the scheme is aimed at helping parents save for their children's education.

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