

01 SEP 2001

Mahathir-Society

PARENTS HAVE VITAL ROLE IN MOULDING CHARACTER OF CHILDREN

PETALING JAYA, Sept 1 (Bernama) -- Parents and teachers play an important role in moulding the character of children and instilling in them good values which will guide them to maturity, the Prime Minister said today.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said this moulding of character should begin at an early age and they should be given proper education so that the good principles could take root in them.

"When they are still young they can be moulded in the way we like them to be if we raise them up to practise good values, they will stick to these values even when they grow up to adulthood."

"But if we sow the seeds of bad habit in them, their attitude will surely not be good when they are adults and will not benefit them nor the society," he said when launching the Global Campaign, Say Yes for Children, at Bandar Sunway here.

The campaign organised by the National Unity and Social Development Ministry is a global effort to make the world community realise the need to create a better world fit for children.

Dr Mahathir was very sad and disappointed over the child abuse cases occurring in the country and wanted society to give serious attention to this problem and report such cases to the authorities.

"These days we are sad over the child abuse cases which even have led to death. This is most disappointing as they cannot defend themselves and depend on grown-ups," he said.

He urged the people to seriously implement the "Say Yes to Children" campaign which was aimed at creating a comfortable and safe environment to grow up for all the children of this country.

"I hope the campaign's slogan will be received seriously by all adults as children are our inheritors and we should love our children," he said.

Having said that, there was also the need to criticise the children often and forbid them from doing certain things and parents could not say "yes" when they did things which were neither good for them nor society, the Prime Minister said.

Dr Mahathir said he was proud that many Malaysians were giving attention to orphans and to Orang Asli children in this country.

"I am happy that today there are Orang Asli people with us. In Malaysia the Orang Asli are not sidelined. They have the same opportunities and place as the other communities," he said.

The campaign needed integrated effort and action on the part of all and they needed to say "yes" to the 10 basic actions to improve the life of children as agreed to by Malaysia and other countries under the Beijing Declaration.

The actions are: Leave No Child Out, Put Children First, Care for Every Child, Stop Harming and Exploiting Children, Listen To Children, Educate Every Child, Protect Children From War, Protect The Earth For Children and Fight Poverty: Invest In Children.

Some 5,000 children joined the national level campaign and placed their thumb impression on a banner which read "Say Yes For Children" which was listed in the Malaysia Book of Records as the "Largest Children Thumb Print Message Banner". The Prime Minister also put his thumb impression on the banner.

At the function, Dr Mahathir handed over appointment letters to members

of the Children's Consultative Council which would coordinate and monitor child care activities in the country.

-- BERNAMA
ZAI AKT AAM