

SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

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SPEECH BY HAJI SHA'ARI TADIN, SR PARLIAMENTARY
SECRETARY TO THE MINISTER FOR CULTURE AND MP FOR
KG CHAI CHEE AT THE BABY SHOW ORGANISED BY THE KG
CHAI CHEE COMMUNITY CENTRE WOMEN SUB-COMMITTEE AT
3.30 PM ON SATURDAY, 7.6.76, AT 2, BLK 8, CHAI CHEE
ROAD, SINGAPORE 14

I am pleased to officiate at the Baby Show organised by the Women Sub-Committee of the Kg Chai Chee Community Centre. The qualities stressed upon at a baby show particularly such qualities as - health, vitality and vigour - are both useful and necessary for a full life. The quality of individual life in its turn determines the total life of the nation and therein lies the importance of healthy individuals.

This Baby Show bears ample testimony to the fact that parents take a great deal of trouble to ensure that their babies have vigorous and healthy lives. They realise that a rugged body needs to be nurtured from birth and is a prime ingredient for a vigorous life.

However, it is hoped that parents, while conscious of the need for physical health in their children, will not neglect their mental and spiritual health. Mental and spiritual health can be ensured through the inculcation of correct values and attitudes from young. It is never too early to start on the moral training of the young.

Schools are generally regarded as the natural centres for the inculcation of right values. However, the moral strength of a nation is immense when these same values proceed from the basic unit of society - the family. To cooperate with the nation in directing our youth must be regarded as the key-note of responsible parenthood. The responsibility of parents is all the greater in view of the variety of influences that children are exposed to through the mass media. The conflicting attitudes, life-styles and values that the mass media conveys, oftentimes, wreck the spiritual and moral bearings of the young. The result is a misguided attraction for life-styles and values that are irrelevant to Singapore. The problem can best be met if parents in concert with schools, direct their children to life patterns and values that are relevant and helpful to them in the Singapore context. Parental responsibility must

manifest itself in an awareness of social and national problems and in a desire concordant with society and the government in overcoming them.

A Baby Show cannot pass without a few remarks on what must be considered as one of the primary responsibilities of parenthood namely the careful planning of their families. Cognisant of the demographic and social problems that Singapore faces parents must limit their families. It has for long been the Asian way of life to have large families. Wealth had come to be equated with the number of children one had. However, it must be realised that what was practical and customary in the agrarian labour intensive economies, to which all the various ethnic groups of Singapore hark back, cannot be considered practical in an urban, industrialised economy. We have, therefore, to accommodate ourselves to the changing life patterns demanded by our need for survival and development. With smaller families, parents will be able to give more to each of their children in terms of both material goods as well as moral guidance and direction. I am sure that the adaptability that has stood Singaporeans in good stead in the past will not be wanting in this instance. The government is doing its part in providing sufficient family planning services. It is up to the people to cooperate.

In conclusion, I would like to thank the Women Sub-Committee of the Kampong Chai Chee Community Centre for inviting me and my wife to this function.
