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SINGAPORE GOVERNMENT PRESS STATEMENT

SPEECH BY DR ANG KOK PENG, MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH AT THE OPENING OF THE INFANT AND CHILD CARE EXHIBITION ON FRIDAY, 13 SEPTEMBER 1974 AT 2 PM AT THE VICTORIA MEMORIAL HALL

Infant and child care has been so much a part of human life that it is easy for some parents to sub-consciously resist changes and retain attitudes and methods that have been adopted a long time ago; they do not make conscious efforts to take full advantage of new knowledge for the benefits of their children.

Exhibitions such as this one will help to propagate the relevant medical knowledge and scientific methods among mothers and would-be mothers. Being better informed, they will be in a better position to promote the health of their children and ensure their full mental and physical development.

One of the important aspects of infant and child care stressed by this exhibition is that on nutrition. During the formative years of children, nutrition plays a vital part in their physical and mental development. An inadequate supply of essential nutrients such as proteins, iron and vitamins may result in mental and physical retardation. Proper nutrition does not mean expensive food; it means a well-balanced diet which can also be derived from inexpensive and readily available food.

Another important topic covered by this exhibition is family planning. The direct link between infant and child care, and population problem is obvious. To bring up children properly the parents have to feed them and

look after them, maintain their health and educate them at home and in school, all of which need time, energy and financial resources. Needless to say we are more able to do all this when the family size is kept small with not more than two children per family. By limiting the size of our family our children can be given better opportunities to develop their potentials fully and later can more effectively play a significant role in our community. If the family is large, the same amount of resources at our disposal will have to be spread out more thinly and hence less adequately. We owe it to our children not to jeopardise their future prospects by having more children than we can cope with.

In conclusion, I would like to congratulate the organisers for this very useful and educational exhibition. I have great pleasure in declaring the exhibition open.

Date: 13 Sept 74