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**SPEECH BY MR TEO CHONG TEE, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARY  
(ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS), AT THE CHILDREN'S DAY  
CELEBRATION ORGANISED BY THE CHANGI DISTRICT PRIMARY  
SCHOOLS SPORTS COUNCIL AT THE BEDOK SPORTS COMPLEX  
ON MONDAY, 1 OCTOBER 1984 AT 8.30 AM**

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I am happy to be given the opportunity to celebrate Children's Day with you today. Why do we celebrate Children's Day every year? You, the children of Singapore, are very important people. You are the future citizens of Singapore who will help to shape the destiny of our country. Singapore thrives through the efforts of its people and a good Government. This is especially true in a small country like Singapore which does not have any natural resources like tin, oil, gold, rubber, etc.

For the last 25 years, our Government together with the people of Singapore, have built Singapore into a prosperous and modern city state which has become the envy of many others. Our prosperity has greatly changed our life style. Education for young Singaporeans takes second place in priority, next to defence. Every child in Singapore is assured of a place in school. More importantly, there are ample opportunities for higher or specialised education so that every child, irrespective of race, creed or religion could realise his ambition. This happy situation is not the case in many other parts of the world where millions of children have never seen the inside of a school.

We also have excellent medical and health facilities and infra structures for commerce, industries and finance. How long can our prosperity last? This depends very much on you. You have to grow up to be as

diligent and dedicated to your work as your parents and acquire the skills, knowledge and expertise required in our modern technological age.

At your age, your character is still in a pliable state. You can mould it into a desirable and useful form inculcated with correct attitude and good values. Your teachers are doing their best to shape you into good and useful citizens. Civics and ethics are an important part of your school curriculum.

Do not ignore your parents' advice. You are still relatively inexperienced about many pitfalls in the real world. You still need guidance from your elders. You should be discriminate in your choice of friends. Your peer influence can be stronger than you can imagine - for better or for worse?

Most of you live in a better environment than that of your parents when they were your age. You eat and dress better, you enjoy good health. Therefore, you have every reason to celebrate Children's Day. But while you are celebrating your special day, also spare a thought for some of the less fortunate people living around us - the aged, the handicapped, the sick and the needy. It is why I am glad to hear that you are contributing a sum of money to the Community Chest of Singapore which gives financial assistance to many charitable organisations in Singapore. I am sure this year's celebration is a more enjoyable one for all of you. This year, for a change you have learnt to give. It is always happier to give than to receive. By your generous contributions, you have made many less fortunate people happy.. I would like to quote a saying which goes something like this: "Happiness is a perfume which you cannot give to others without getting a few drops on yourself".

On this note, I wish you all an enjoyable Children's Day.

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