

Abstract

FAMILY PROFILES OF CHILDREN IN THE HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF THAI CHILDREN STUDY

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In the national survey of children aged 1-18 years old of the Holistic Development of Thai Children in 2001, data of families of studied children were collected as explanatory factors of child development. They were family size, family structure, family type, home environment, family relation and family crisis.

Results: Average size of the studied families was 5, greater than the average size of general Thai families (3.7) from the census of the same year. The number of children per family was 2. In regard to family type, 54.6% were complete families with father, mother and children. Extended families with grand parents accounted for 37.3%. Families comprising of only children or children and other relatives were 8.2%.

One third of fathers, mothers or other types of caretakers of children had primary education level. More than half of the parents were engaged in the labor intensive work e.g. farmers, laborers. Average family income was 10,385 baht per month and 12.2% of families lived under the poverty line.

Mothers were the major caretaker of all age group. For the under six years old group, 45.2% lived in the nurtured environment e.g. living near a playground for young children, public park, library or day care center, whereas 86% of the families lived near liquor shops and 14.2% lived near gambling places or night entertainment area.

Most mothers or caretakers assessed relationship within their families as high in attachment and changeability, whereas adolescents rated their families as in the midrange group. Agreement between mother's and child's perception on level of family relation are poor.

In regard to events during the past year that had an impact on the family, the five most common causes of family crisis were economic problem, unresolved family problem,

fighting between the couple or divorce or separate, pregnancy and child rearing issue, and job change or lay off.

In conclusion, quite a few families of subjects in this study were vulnerable and might not be able to nurture their children to fully develop physically, mentally, emotionally and socially as expected.