



Title	Hong Kong's children: our past, their future : executive summary
Author(s)	Pryde, NA; Tsoi, MM
Citation	Pryde, NA & Tsoi, MM. Hong Kong's children: our past, their future : executive summary. Hong Kong : Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong. 1999
Issued Date	1999
URL	http://hdl.handle.net/10722/144833
Rights	Creative Commons: Attribution 3.0 Hong Kong License

Hong Kong's Children: Our Past, Their Future

Executive Summary

成長路上：
香港兒童今昔
報告書提要



HKP
305.230951
25
H772
P9
e

Hong Kong's Children: Our Past, Their Future

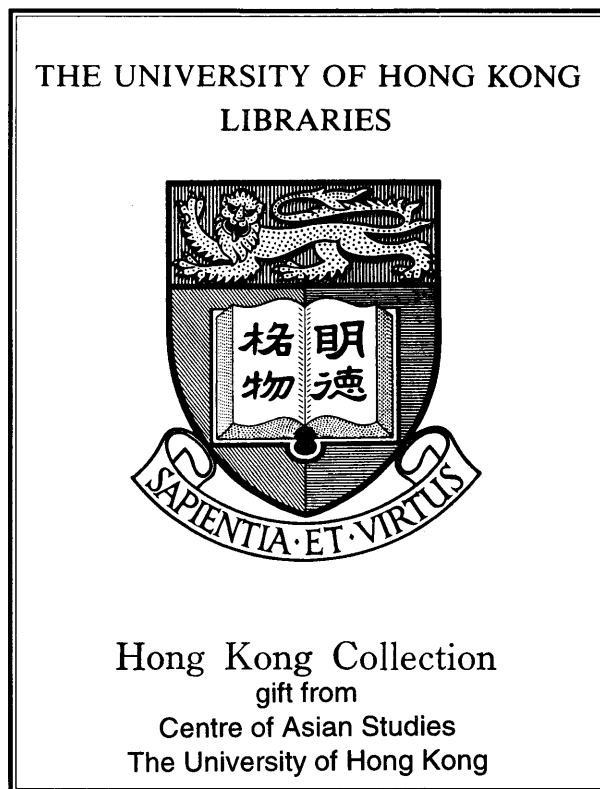
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

成長路上：香港兒童今昔

報告書提要

Edited by

NIA A. PRYDE
MONA M. TSOI



CENTRE OF ASIAN STUDIES
THE UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG
1999

Hong Kong's Children: Our Past, Their Future
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

成長路上：香港兒童今昔
報告書提要

Cover Design: Michael Lau
Photo Courtesy: CLIC Limited

©Copyright by the University of Hong Kong, 1999



This booklet is financed by the Research Fellowship
in Children's Studies Trust Fund.

General Editor: Wong Siu-lun

The Centre of Asian Studies is established to provide a focal point for the activities of The University of Hong Kong in the areas of East, South and Southeast Asia; research assistance to scholars in these fields and with special reference to Hong Kong; and physical and administrative facilities for research, seminars and conferences dealing with both traditional and modern aspects of Asian Studies.

CONTENTS

LIST OF TRUSTEES		1
INTRODUCTION		2
SOCIOECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN HONG KONG	<i>Edward K.Y. CHEN & Teresa Y.C. WONG</i>	3
PHYSICAL WELLBEING OF HONG KONG CHILDREN	<i>CHOW Chun-bong & LAU Sum-ping, Sam</i>	5
MENTAL HEALTH OF HONG KONG CHILDREN	<i>C.K. WONG & Mona M. TSOI</i>	7
A SURVEY OF RESEARCH ON HONG KONG EDUCATION	<i>Bernard Hung-kay LUK</i>	9
EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND POLICY-MAKING IN HONG KONG	<i>Mark BRAY</i>	11
PRESCHOOL EDUCATION IN HONG KONG	<i>Sylvia OPPER</i>	12
SPECIAL EDUCATION IN HONG KONG	<i>Farideh SALILI</i>	13
SOCIAL WELFARE AND CHILD WELFARE IN HONG KONG	<i>Mary K.W. HO</i>	15
THE LAW RELATING TO CHILDREN IN HONG KONG	<i>Elsie LEUNG & Judith SIHOMBING</i>	17
HONG KONG'S CHILDREN: OVERVIEW AND CONCLUSION	<i>Mona M. TSOI & Nia A. PRYDE</i>	19

The Research Fellowship in Children's Studies Trust was set up in February 1987 to study and evaluate the needs and wellbeing of the children of Hong Kong. It arose from an observation that the social policies and programmes in Hong Kong were skewed towards the treatment of casualties rather than the provision of an optimal environment to nurture its future citizens. The founding members of the Trust thus felt the need to conduct a comprehensive review of the state of physical, social, and psychological wellbeing of the children of Hong Kong, to map the areas of neglect and deprivation adversely affecting child development, and to make recommendations for preventative policies.

Through generous donations from various individuals, companies, and foundations – amounting to one million dollars – a trust fund was set up to finance the research project. The Centre of Asian Studies of the University of Hong Kong hosted the project and later assisted in the publication of this report.

LIST OF TRUSTEES

* Mr. Ti Liang YANG	Chairman
* Ms. Mary K.W. HO	Secretary
* Professor Edward K.Y. CHEN	Treasurer
* Ms. Patricia PENN	Member (until February 1987)
* Mr. Brian TULLY	Member (until April 1987)
* Professor David P. DAVIES	Member (until October 1989)
* Mrs. Wendy MCCALLUM	Member
Mrs. Peggy MIU	Member (until January 1989)
Mrs. Christine KUOK	Member (from September 1988)
Ms. Nia PRYDE	Member (from January 1989)
Professor C.K. WONG	Member (from June 1989)
* Founding member	

INTRODUCTION

In 1979 the International Year of the Child Commission published the first comprehensive review of provisions for child welfare and development in Hong Kong. Since that time, although some advances have been made in the overall level of child health and welfare, the primary focus of social policies in Hong Kong has remained the treatment of casualties rather than the prevention of avoidable problems. In 1987 a group of concerned individuals founded the Research Fellowship in Children's Studies with a view to providing an independent and comprehensive appraisal of children's needs and wellbeing.

The vision of the Fellowship has been to collate and annotate the available literature and information on the legislation, policies, and services relating to children and to produce an evaluative report on the physical, social, and psychological wellbeing of Hong Kong children. To this end the Trustees have invited experts in the fields of social economics, law, education, physical health, mental health, and social welfare to write a critical review of their field. The result of their hard work, and that of the editors, is presented in this book, which is the first of its kind.

The book represents an ambitious attempt to collate and review current knowledge about children in Hong Kong and to appraise their actual status, as reflected in existing laws and policies. Our purpose in compiling this information is not only to document but also to evaluate, to comment, and to recommend. The material presented here is extensive, if not quite exhaustive. In giving this synopsis, we are summarizing the views and conclusions of the chapter authors and providing what we hope will be a useful guide to the report.

Nia A. PRYDE
Mona M. TSOI
Ti Liang YANG

December 1999

SOCIOECONOMIC TRANSFORMATION AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN HONG KONG

Edward K.Y. CHEN & Teresa Y.C. WONG

Hong Kong's rapid economic growth and development in the last few decades has been accompanied by large-scale socioeconomic transformations. This chapter analyses the effects of these changes on the physical, intellectual, and psychological development of Hong Kong children.

Economic growth has generated four facets of socioeconomic change that have affected the development of children: namely, increase in household income; increase in female labour force participation; growth of government expenditure on social services; and environmental deterioration.

As household income has increased our children are found to be healthier, to have more educational opportunities, but to be more materialistic. Family structures have also changed. Although parent-child relations in nuclear families are more intimate, more children have been affected by the rising rate of divorce and remarriage. We may also speculate on the potentially stressful consequences for families resulting from the expanding number of mothers in the workforce.

Increased demand for and expenditure on social services in the last few decades has been of most benefit to children in the lower income group. Whereas the living conditions of children generally have improved, the environment in which they live has deteriorated. The New Towns were built partly as a remedy but children living there have encountered new problems in their relationships, family ties, and mobility.

Rising income inequality since the mid-1970s has led to increasing inequality in opportunities. As the social mobility of

the lower income class in Hong Kong becomes restricted the attitudes, values, and self-esteem of the parents are adversely affected, impacting on their children in turn.

The rapid economic growth and development of Hong Kong has generally benefited children in terms of their physical, intellectual, and material wellbeing. However, not all of the results have been advantageous. The "hurrying" of children through their childhood has resulted in precocity, increased conflicts, and emotional distress, with consequences for their psychological development and adaptation.

PHYSICAL WELLBEING OF HONG KONG CHILDREN

CHOW Chun-bong & LAU Sum-ping, Sam

The health status of children in Hong Kong and the standard of child health services have improved significantly over the last two to three decades, as evidenced by the very low mortality rates, good nutritional status, and much improved growth parameters for children.

With improvements in living standards nutritional deficiencies have become rare, but unhealthy eating habits and obesity have become a problem. As a result of better medical care and immunization infectious diseases and acute illnesses have been brought under control. The challenges now are the management of chronic illness and handicap and the emerging "new morbidities": that is, behavioural, learning, decision-making, and lifestyle problems, and child abuse. How to reduce accidents and injuries to young children continues to be a matter of concern.

With greater demand for primary care and with improving health care standards, there is a growing trend for health care to be in the community. A multidisciplinary approach is recommended to provide total child health care. The care of children should be team-based, flexible, and centred on the child and his or her family.

Although the government is providing a wide range of child health care services, they are not well integrated or coordinated, particularly since the separation of hospital services from primary health care by the formation of the Hospital Authority.

Whereas the standard of services has been maintained, the scope is insufficient. There is generally a lack of personalized

and integrated care for children and their families, and long-term planning to meet ever-changing needs leaves much to be desired. Expanded and improved services for children are greatly needed in the community, also in hospitals the physical and psychological needs of children are still not adequately met.

In order to optimize policy-making various measures may be considered, including the setting up of information and planning units and the training of health professionals in organization and management. Whereas the introduction of public consultation would help to safeguard consumer interests, the broader issues in child health care can only be addressed by a comprehensive child health policy.

MENTAL HEALTH OF HONG KONG CHILDREN

C.K. WONG & Mona M. TSOI

The whole spectrum of children is considered in this chapter from those categorized as psychiatric cases to those regarded as mentally healthy. Despite a general shortage of information on the psychological status and development of Hong Kong children, some interesting comparisons with Western findings have been made. Whereas Hong Kong children score higher on digit span, they encounter more difficulty in creativity and problem-solving. They are more introverted and private in behaviour and their self-esteem is related to socioeconomic and academic standing.

Recent changes in Hong Kong families and in the role of parents have affected children's socialization. Fathers have become more involved with their children. However, mothers have undergone stress in coping with the dual roles of parent and worker. Although parents continue to be more concerned about achievement in school than about psychological needs, children themselves are reported to be stressed by school work and examinations.

Recreation and leisure activities are somewhat restricted in Hong Kong, and watching television is the most popular leisure activity. We may infer that the mass media is an important socialization agent in the lives of many Hong Kong children.

Epidemiological studies indicate that 10 to 23% of secondary students and 6 to 16% of primary school students can be considered to suffer from psychological problems. These figures are comparable with Western studies, but differences in the incidence of certain types of disorder may need further inquiry.

The rising incidence of child abuse and adolescent suicide indicate that we need to pay more attention to the mental wellbeing of children and to the adequacy of support at home and in school. Parents need to be educated on how to discipline children, as well as on the importance of close parent-child relationships.

Preventive measures include public education and the proper use of leisure and recreation. Parents must learn to understand the psychological needs of their children and the importance of positive relationships, and teachers should couch their demands according to the relevant developmental stages. More efficient identification of children who are adversely affected or at risk requires greater professional awareness and more channels for aid, also services must be coordinated with community networks. Mental health services are provided by various government departments and nongovernment agencies and better liaison will be necessary for more efficient service provision.

A SURVEY OF RESEARCH ON HONG KONG EDUCATION

Bernard Hung-kay LUK

Research on education in Hong Kong experienced a slow start in the 1950s and 1960s but has grown rapidly since the 1970s. This has been mainly as a result of the policy of requiring professional training for secondary school teachers and the consequent expansion of the university faculties of education.

According to a systematic survey around 855 studies were completed postwar until 1982, and many more since then, but they have not yet been collected and annotated comprehensively. Although many valuable studies have been produced, the coverage of topics has been uneven with classroom teaching and learning in secondary school accounting for the majority.

This chapter covers some 460 studies produced since the 1940s, however most are recent. In reviewing them the emergence of Hong Kong as a distinct society is outlined, following the school ladder from kindergarten to completion of secondary school and examining briefly issues of gender, class, and community identity.

Our education system, like Hong Kong itself, is a unique amalgamation of Chinese and Western influences. Whereas the indigenous mass culture and traditions have provided the background for the development and education of our young people, they have also helped to maintain an ambiguous sense of identity and belonging which has accounted for much of the generation gap in Hong Kong families.

Preschool and primary education have been little studied. Priority areas for research have been the induction process, the curriculum, language development and the learning of English, and numeracy.

In secondary school the impact of the Secondary School Places Allocation system on the individual's abilities, skills, and values needs to be studied, as do the practices associated with mixed ability teaching and streaming and issues pertaining to language and the language medium. Whereas curriculum structure has been a major area of concern up to now, what is currently needed are philosophical, psychological, and social investigations pertaining to the goals of education, as well as studies on how to make the curriculum more relevant to these goals.

There is a sizable literature on public examinations, most of which focuses on individual subjects or exam techniques. Given its central place in our education and society, the examination system and culture deserves a lot more study than it has received.

The education system in Hong Kong has done a great deal to facilitate social mobility and the resultant openness of the social structure has been an important element in the growth experience of our young people. However, opportunities for education have not been equal and more research is required to ascertain the causes and remedies.

EDUCATIONAL POLICIES AND POLICY- MAKING IN HONG KONG

Mark BRAY

The scale and shape of the education sector have altered substantially during the postwar period. The strongest priority at the beginning was expansion. This was achieved at the primary and junior secondary level in the 1970s with the introduction of nine years compulsory schooling. Since then the government has turned to qualitative factors.

In addition to analysing the priorities of policy-making, this chapter also examines the processes. It notes the emergence of the Education Commission as a major force in policy-making, as well as commenting on the implications of the changing political climate.

Particular attention is given to policies in relation to bisessional and unisessional schooling, language of instruction, teacher education, and streaming. These topics serve to illustrate both the complexities and the dilemmas of educational policy-making. On the one hand, there is evolution over time; on the other, we see the intractable nature of some tensions. Although major changes will occur as a result of the political changeover, we may also expect many continuities.

PRESCHOOL EDUCATION IN HONG KONG

Sylvia OPPER

This chapter looks at the origins, development, and current situation of the two types of early childhood education and care facilities in Hong Kong: that is, kindergartens and day nurseries. It presents figures on enrolment and type of programme as well as examining curricula, educational philosophy, and the learning environment provided.

A number of issues pertaining to preschool staff are discussed such as differences between the sectors in training, working conditions, and salaries.

Whereas there are positive features in the situation of early education and care in Hong Kong, some problems also exist. Particular attention in this regard should be given to the training of staff and the unification of standards between the two sectors. Lack of research in the field also merits attention.

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN HONG KONG

Farideh SALILI

This chapter reviews the development of special education in Hong Kong and related issues. Special education has been rather slow to start and, despite major achievements in recent years, many problems still exist. Government involvement in the development of special education in the 1960s was preceded by that of philanthropists and voluntary agencies, who have continued to play a major role.

The White Paper in 1977 on integrating the disabled set out as major policy objectives the improvement and expansion of services. Although significant achievements have been made since that time, there are still shortfalls in most services and waiting lists in all. Shortage of special education teachers and support specialists affects the quality of services provided, whereas problems in coordination and communication result in gaps and sometimes duplication.

Although some progress has been made at the preschool level, parental involvement in training their children remains very limited. Active commitment by parents is not only cost effective but is crucial for developing the child's potential. More training should be provided for parents and greater psychological support given so as to enable them to participate more fully.

The government's policy to encourage integration of children with special needs has been hampered by a number of factors including inflexible curricula and high standards in ordinary schools, shortage of trained teachers and support staff, and negative attitudes to the handicapped. These problems must be addressed if the "whole school" approach to the education of exceptional children, as well as the policy of integration, are to materialize.

Much of what is done in Hong Kong is based on literature and research conducted in Western countries. However, more research is needed to shed light on the prevalence, characteristics, and needs of exceptional children in Hong Kong and to guide us in future plans and directions.

SOCIAL WELFARE AND CHILD WELFARE IN HONG KONG

Mary K.W. HO

Since the second world war social welfare services in Hong Kong have been transformed from poor relief for the destitute to a range of services that help to shape our children's environment. This chapter describes the services organized for the promotion of family functioning, protection of children, facilitation of social integration, and rehabilitation of the disabled. Taken together, these services help to ensure the basic subsistence of every family, especially when it is affected by crisis, incapacity, or loss; to enable individuals to carry out their social roles; and to integrate at-risk youths and the disabled. However, segmentation in service provision has hampered the interchange of ideas on child welfare, and clients often feel lost in the complexities of the system, especially in rehabilitation.

In terms of prevention, we should not be complacent about our welfare provision. There is still room to improve the availability and accessibility of services such as financial assistance, home-help, family counselling, daycare, school social work, assessment of disabled children, and vocational rehabilitation of the mentally handicapped and to make services more responsive to social conditions.

It is apparent that the design of many welfare services is inadequate for promoting children's welfare. There is only a tenuous correspondence with the social phenomena that these services are intended to address. We can also find fault with the passive and reactive approach taken in services like adoption, school social work, daycare, and residential care which may result in overlooking what is obvious. The absence of a child policy to provide a common frame of reference for workers engaged in different services for children is a further problem.

Inadequate attention has been paid to a number of issues including the nature of children's social and emotional needs, the culture lag in our childrearing and education methods, the widespread alienation and social apathy among young people, the process of marginalization, and the wastage of human resources represented by the many school failures and by mentally handicapped school-leavers who are unoccupied. As social problems are complex, particular attention should be paid to the points of overlap between the different services and disciplines.

If social welfare is to assume a developmental role rather than just picking up casualties, it must study the means to enable a larger number of adults to become "good enough parents", as well as attending to the few who show clear signs of dysfunction. This should help our children to find a sense of worth and achievement regardless of ability or handicap. Furthermore, even a tentative statement on child policy would help us to articulate what we want for our children and how to achieve it.

THE LAW RELATING TO CHILDREN IN HONG KONG

Elsie LEUNG & Judith SIHOMBING

There is no single legislative enactment that deals with the legal rights and liabilities of children in Hong Kong. Instead there are piecemeal statutory provisions and principles of common law and of equity, which provide some regulation of these matters. However, this makes difficult the task of establishing the nature and extent of such rights and liabilities. There is also no uniform definition of a child.

In looking at legal matters it is necessary to distinguish between common law, the principles of which are strict, and equity, which provides for remedies and rights based on what is "just and equitable". Much of the law relating to children nowadays is found in various enactments.

The circumstances of the illegitimate child in Hong Kong have changed substantially over the years from the early treatment as a child for whom no one had any legal obligation and, subsequently, as one without rights to succession or paternal maintenance. Many of the distinctions between legitimate and illegitimate children have been eliminated with the Parent and Child Ordinance.

Legislation relating to children in Hong Kong may be categorized into three major types. There are a large number of enactments that make some provision for the protection of children. One of the earliest was the Protection of Women and Young Girls Ordinance, since amended as the Protection of Children and Juveniles Ordinance. The Guardianship of Minors Ordinance is another, giving parents equal rights in the up bringing and care of a legitimate child. A second type of legislation operates differently in relation to a child than an adult,

type distinguishes the liability of persons for offences by reference to a particular age.

A further group of enactments relates to parental rights and duties, with consequential reference to children. Many of these enactments have been partly amended by the Parent and Child Ordinance.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child was ratified on behalf of Hong Kong in 1994. The concepts behind many of its provisions can be found in various enactments including the Bill of Rights. When a child is brought before the courts, no matter what the context, it is usual to ensure that his or her best interests are the paramount consideration. Special legislative measures may be necessary to provide for children with special needs and to meet newly emerging social problems. The enactment of a code of law relating to children may be considered.

HONG KONG'S CHILDREN: OVERVIEW AND CONCLUSION

Mona M. TSOI & Nia A. PRYDE

In summing up the sentiments and opinions of the chapter authors we arrive at a conceptualization of wellbeing that pertains to the whole child. Emerging themes have been identified that focus on the socioeconomic context of Hong Kong, the changing role of the family, the challenges that we face in child health, mental health, education, and welfare, and the strengths and weaknesses of government provision. As we consider what has been done in the past and present, a vision for the future wellbeing of Hong Kong children may be formed. Such an agenda requires recognition of the intrinsic rights of young citizens, as well as commitment to a policy that is both comprehensive in scope and preventative in nature.

It is apparent that attitudes toward children have changed over the years as the status of the child as a person with needs and rights has become increasingly recognized. We are conscious that the position and wellbeing of our children is no longer a private matter but one that concerns society as a whole. Although Hong Kong has come a long way in providing for its children, there is a great deal more to learn and many improvements still to be made. We look forward to a future in which our present knowledge and experience will serve as the foundation for a better environment in which Hong Kong children can develop to their full potential.

目 錄

理事名單		23
導言	<i>Nia A. Pryde</i> 蔡敏華 楊鐵樑	24
香港的社會經濟轉型和兒童成長	陳坤耀 黃懿慈	25
香港兒童的健康	周鎮邦 劉森坪	27
香港兒童的精神健康	黃重光 蔡敏華	29
香港的教育研究	陸鴻基	31
香港的教育政策和政策制定	貝磊	33
香港的學前教育	<i>Sylvia OPPER</i>	34
香港的特殊教育	<i>Farideh SALILI</i>	35
香港的社會福利和兒童福利	何桂華	36
與兒童有關的香港法例	梁愛詩 <i>Judith SIHOMBING</i>	38
成長路上：香港兒童今昔	蔡敏華 <i>Nia A. PRYDE</i>	40

兒童問題研究院士基金於一九八七年二月成立，旨在研究和檢討香港兒童的福利和需要。鑒於香港的社會政策和服務偏重於照顧遭受環境傷害的人，而非營造一個理想環境，以培育我們未來的主人翁，基金的創始人認為有必要對香港兒童的身心健康和社會適應作全面性檢討，以界定兒童在成長過程中遇到的疏忽、剝削和障礙；並且提出預防性措施的建議。

由於得到各界人士、機構和基金會慷慨捐助，籌得善款高達一百萬元，兒童問題研究院士基金得以成立，資助這項由香港大學亞洲研究中心協辦的研究計劃，並得到該中心協助出版研究報告書。

理事名單

- * 楊鐵樑先生 (主席)
 - * 何桂華女士 (秘書)
 - * 陳坤耀教授 (司庫)
 - * Patricia Penn 女士 (任期至一九八七年二月)
 - * Brian Tully 先生 (任期至一九八七年四月)
 - * David P. Davies 教授 (任期至一九八九年十月)
 - Wendy McCallum 太太
 - 繆李金碧女士 (任期至一九八九年一月)
 - Christine Kuok 太太 (任期自一九八八年九月起)
 - Nia Pryde 女士 (任期自一九八九年一月起)
 - 黃重光教授 (任期自一九八九年六月起)
- * 基金始創人

導言

一九七九年國際兒童年籌委會出版了第一份對香港兒童福利和發展作全面性評論的刊物。之後，雖然兒童健康及福利水平整體上有所提高，但是香港社會政策的重點仍是亡羊補牢而非防患未然。一九八七年，一群熱心人士成立了兒童問題研究院士基金，為兒童的需要和福利作獨立的、全面的評估。

基金的目的是整理及註釋現存有關兒童法例、政策和服務的著作和資料；並出版報告書，評論香港兒童的身心健康和社會福利。因此，基金理事特別邀請在社會經濟學、法律、教育、身體和心理健康及社會福利問題素有研究的專家撰寫論文。這份報告書是多位專家和編輯的努力成果，開創這類型作品的先河。

我們在報告書裏大膽嘗試，將現時有關香港兒童的知識整理並作評論。現存的法例及政策反映出香港兒童的實際地位，我們亦對此作出評價。匯編這份資料不僅是為了做研究，還要提出批評和建議。報告書內容的涵蓋面，即使談不上巨細無遺，也可算是相當廣闊。本綱要概述了各篇文章作者的觀點和結論，希望能為讀者提供一份有用的指引。

Nia A. Pryde
蔡敏華
楊鐵樑

一九九九年十二月

香港的社會經濟轉型和兒童成長

陳坤耀 黃懿慈

過去數十年，香港的經濟增長和發展迅速，社會經濟轉變很大。本文分析了這些轉變對於香港兒童的生理、智能和心理發展的影響。

經濟增長帶動了四類社會經濟轉變，影響兒童的成長。這些轉變包括：家庭收入、女性就業和政府社會服務開支的增加，以及生態環境的破壞。

隨着家庭收入增加，我們的兒童比以前健康，也有更多機會接受教育，但亦更注重物質享受。家庭的結構也改變了，雖然核心家庭裏父母和子女的關係比以前親密，但是離婚和再婚個案的增加也令更多兒童受到影響。我們亦不難估計，增加婦女就業對家庭構成的潛在壓力。

過去數十年社會服務的需求和開支增加，低收入家庭的兒童獲益最大。兒童的生活條件整體上改善了，但是居住環境卻越來越差。雖然興建新市鎮可稍為改善居住環境，但是居於新市鎮的兒童卻要面對人際關係、家庭聯繫和流動性等新問題。

自七十年代中期開始，由於收入不平均的情況愈趨嚴重，機會不平等的現象亦隨之增加。香港的低收入階層在社會的流動性受到限制，因此父母的態度、價值觀和自尊受到負面影響，亦間接影響他們的子女。

雖然香港的經濟增長和發展迅速，整體上使兒童在生理、智能和物質方面都受惠，但是並非所有影響都是正面

的。兒童被社會「催迫着」很快渡過了童年，因此變得早熟，衝突和情緒上的困擾也多了。這對於他們的心理發展和適應都有影響。

香港兒童的健康

周鎮邦 劉森坪

過去二、三十年間，香港兒童的健康狀況和兒童保健服務的質素都有顯著改善。這段期間，兒童的營養充足，死亡率甚低，而兒童成長指標亦大見改善。

隨著生活水平提高，營養不良的情況已不常見。但是不良的飲食習慣和過胖的現象卻比以前普遍。醫療及防疫進步，使傳染病和急性疾病受到控制。現今的挑戰是應付慢性疾病和殘障，兒童受到虐待的問題，還有逐漸浮現的「新病態」——即是有關行為、學習、決策和生活方式的問題。至於如何減少幼兒受傷和遇到意外，仍需關注。

隨着對基層衛生服務的需求增加和衛生服務水平的提高，在社區內推行保健服務是今日的趨勢。作者提倡以綜合方式提供全面的兒童保健服務：結合不同專業人士，提供團隊式、有彈性的服務，以兒童及他們的家人為服務重點。

雖然政府提供的兒童衛生服務範圍廣濶，但是各種服務之間的配合和聯繫不足。自從設立醫院管理局將醫院服務和基層衛生服務分開之後，這情況日趨嚴重。

雖然衛生服務能保持水準，各項服務的範圍卻過於狹窄。整體來說，為兒童和家人而設的個人和綜合性服務不足，也沒有長遠的計劃去應付不斷改變的需求。社區的兒童服務極需要擴展和改善，而醫院對於住院病童的身心照顧仍然不足。

要使決策發揮最大的作用，可以考慮採用不同的方

法，例如成立資料及計劃部門，為醫護人員提供組織及管理訓練。諮詢公眾意見雖有助於維護消費者權益，要解決兒童衛生服務的問題，唯有制訂全面性的兒童健康政策。

香港兒童的精神健康

黃重光 蔡敏華

本文涉及的範圍廣闊，無論患有精神病或心智正常的兒童都包括在內。雖然有關香港兒童心理狀況和發展的資料大致上不足，但是本文將之與西方國家的資料作一比較，結果相當有趣。儘管香港兒童在數字廣度測試中表現較好，但創作力和解決問題的能力則較弱。他們比較內向，不大與別人交談，自尊心則與社會經濟地位和學業成績成正比。

香港的家庭和父母的角色近年有所轉變，影響了兒童的社會教化。父親接觸子女較以前為多，而母親則要承受雙職（母親和事業女性）帶來的壓力。父母仍然關注子女的學業成績多於其心理需要，兒童本身亦感受到學校功課和考試帶來的壓力。

香港的娛樂消閒活動有限，電視是最普及的餘暇活動。我們可以推斷，對於香港的兒童來說，大眾傳播媒介是他們的重要社教媒介。

流行病學研究顯示百分之十至廿三的中學生及百分之六至十六的小學生心理上有毛病。雖然這些數字與西方研究的數字差不多，但是兩者在某些心理偏差發病率的差異可能需要更深入研究。

虐待兒童和青少年自殺的個案不斷增加，因此我們必須更加關注兒童的心智健康、家庭和學校是否給予他們足夠的支持。我們還需要教導父母管教子女的方法和親子關係的重要性。

公眾教育和善用餘暇都是預防的方法。父母應該學習了解子女精神上的需要和維持良好關係的重要性。而教師對兒童的要求必須符合他們成長的階段和需要。專業人士要及時察覺那些兒童受到嚴重困擾，而提供更多的求助渠道。這些服務必須與社區網絡聯繫起來。不同的政府部門和非政府團體都設有精神健康服務。部門與團體之間必須更緊密合作，以提供更高效率的服務。

香港的教育研究

陸鴻基

香港的教育研究在五、六十年代開始時進展緩慢，踏入七十年代卻發展得非常迅速，主要由於政府要求中學教師接受專業訓練，而大學亦擴展教育學院以應付需求。

根據一個有系統的調查，戰後至一九八二年間完成的研究大約有八百五十五份。八二年後的研究更多，不過尚未完全收輯成目錄。雖然許多研究都十分有價值，但是涉及的範圍偏重於中學的課堂教學和學習。

作者回顧了四十年代至今約四百六十份研究，大多是近期的作品。這些研究反映了香港社會獨特之處；研究項目，除了檢視由幼稚園至中學的教育階梯之外，也觸及性別、階級和社區認同的問題。

我們的教育制度一如香港社會，夾雜着中西文化的影響。在中國傳統和本土大眾文化薰陶下，我們的年青人覺得自己的身份含糊，也沒有明確的歸屬感；這一點構成了許多香港家庭的代溝問題。

社會上有關學前和小學教育的研究很少，較受人注重的範圍包括指導新生的過程，學校課程，語言發展和英語學習，以及數學能力。

我們應該研究一下中學統一派位制度對於中學生的能力，技能和價值觀的影響。此外，混合能力的教學和分流，及有關語言和教學語言的問題，亦同樣值得研究。到目前為止，課程架構仍然非常受人關注，但是當前急務是要從哲

理、心理和社會等層面，探討教育的目標，並且研究如何使學校課程更加切合這些目標。

市面上有關公開考試的參考書籍相當多，大多着重於個別科目或考試技巧。既然考試是如此重要，我們應該對香港的考試制度和文化作深入研究。

香港的教育制度大大促進了社會的流動性，開放社會階級結構，對於年青人的成長十分重要。不過，現在我們仍未有平等接受教育機會，仍需要更多的研究去尋求原因和補救方法。

香港的教育政策和政策制訂

貝嘉

戰後期間，教育界的規模及形態轉變很大。初期的首要任務是擴展教育，到了七十年代，在中、小學實施九年強迫教育，這任務便算完成。然後政府將注意力轉移到教育質素方面。

本文除了分析政策制訂的先後次序之外，亦查察制訂的過程。文章指出教育委員會冒出來成為政策制訂的主力，並評論政治氣候轉變的含意。

文章特別着墨於有關全日及半日學制、教學語言、教師培訓和分流的制度。從這些課題可以看到教育政策的錯綜複雜和進退兩難之處。儘管以上項目會隨着時日改變，有些矛盾是難以處理的。政權的移交會帶來重大的政變，但許多政策仍會維持不變。

香港的學前教育

Sylvia Opper

本文內容是關於香港兩類教育和照顧幼兒的設施——幼稚園和日間托兒所，它們的起源、發展和現況。文中提出了有關學生人數和課程類別的數字，並考查兩者的課程、教學理念和學習環境。

文章亦討論了學前教育工作者的議題，例如兩者在培訓、工作條件和薪酬方面的差異。

雖然香港幼兒教育和服務的情況有可取之處，但同時亦存在一些問題。為此，應該特別注重師資培訓和統一這兩類教育的服務水平。另一點值得注意的是這範疇的研究相當匱乏。

香港的特殊教育

Farideh SALILI

本文旨在回顧香港特殊教育的發展和有關議題。特殊教育的開展頗為緩慢，雖然近年來稍有成績，許多問題依然存在。慈善及志願團體在特殊教育的發展中一直扮演重要的角色，而政府則於六十年代才開始參與。

一九七七年的復康白皮書將改善和拓展服務定為主要目標。此後雖然有相當不俗的成績，但大多數的服務仍有不足之處，而所有服務都供不應求。特殊教育師資和支援專家短缺，影響了服務質素。而協調和溝通上的問題引致服務出現真空或重複的情況。

雖然學前服務有些改善，但是父母仍然較少參與訓練子女。父母的積極參與，對於發展兒童的潛能至為重要，也有成本效益。因此應該為父母提供更多訓練和精神支持，使他們能夠全力參予。

政府鼓勵有特殊需要的學童融入社會的政策遇到一定的障礙，其中包括普通學校的課程缺乏靈活性和水準太高，曾受訓的教師和支援人員不足，人們對於殘障人士的態度不友善等。假如要落實推行使特殊兒童就讀普通學校和融入社會的政策，必須解決以上的問題。

香港推行的政策大多是依據西方國家的學說和研究。我們需要進行更多研究，去了解香港的特殊兒童的普及率、特性和需要，在計劃將來的路向時亦有所依循。

香港的社會福利和兒童福利

何桂華

自第二次世界大戰以來，香港社會福利服務的性質已由解救貧困轉變為透過各種不同的服務去改善兒童成長的環境。本文講述各類有關加強家庭功能，保護兒童，融合社群和傷殘復康的服務。這些服務幫助每個家庭維持基本生計，尤其在他們遭遇各種變故，感到無助的時候。此外亦幫助個人發揮自己的社會功能和幫助邊緣青少年及殘障人士融入社會。然而，這些服務各自發展、自成體系，使有關兒童福利的意見交流受阻，而當事人往往面對複雜的制度而不知所措。這情況在復康服務方面尤為常見。

預防勝於治療。對於目前提供的福利，我們不應滿於現狀，因為需要改善的地方仍不少。有些服務的覆蓋面或使用率還需提高，這包括：經濟援助，家務助理，家庭輔導，日間托兒，學校社會工作，殘障兒童的評核，和弱智人士的職業復康等。同時，我們的社會福利服務還須更加配合社會現況。

許多福利服務的設計，顯然不足以促進兒童的福利。欠缺了對社會現象的剖析，本為針對這些現象而設的服務便流於粗疏和公式化。此外，一些服務如領養兒童、學校社工、日間托兒、住宿照顧等，沿用被動和「治標不治本」的方式，可能連顯而易見的問題也會忽略。我們缺乏一套兒童政策，以致在不同崗位上服務兒童的工作者，沒有一套共同的哲理依據。

社會上不少問題都得不到足夠的關注，其中包括兒童的社會及感情需要、我們教養子女的方法中的文化墮距、年

青人普遍的疏離感和對社會漠不關心、以及邊緣化的歷程。此外，很多輟學者和退學的弱智人仕都失業，形成人力資源浪費。社會問題相當複雜，因此我們應該特別留意不同服務和學科的交匯點。

假如社會福利是要促進社會發展而非單是收拾殘局的話，就必須設法使大多數成年人都能當個「稱職的父母」，並關注那小部分有明顯障礙的人。這樣，我們的兒童，無論健全與否，都找到存在的價值和成就感。再者，發表一套兒童政策，即使是預告式的聲明，也有助我們表達意見，一同規劃我們兒童的未來，和達致該境地的方法。

與兒童有關的香港法例

梁愛詩 *Judith SIHOMBING*

香港沒有一條成文法令是關於兒童的法定權利和責任的。能夠提供法則依據的只有普通法和衡平法的零碎法定條文和原則。這樣，要訂定這些權責的性質和範圍便很困難；況且，「兒童」一詞，也未有統一定義。

談及法律的問題，我們必須先分辨普通法和衡平法。普通法的原則非常嚴格，而衡平法則根據「公正和平衡」的原則判予權利和補償。目前大部分與兒童有關的法例都是在不同的法律制訂時出現的。

在香港，非婚生子女的境況在過去數年有重大的轉變。以前，沒有人需要對非婚生子女負上任何法律責任，後來則演變為非婚生子女不能得到繼承權或擁有父系產業。自從頒佈了「父母及子女條例」之後，婚生子女和非婚生子女的分別也大大減少了。

在香港，有關兒童的法例可分為三大類。

第一類別中許多條例是為保護兒童而設的。最早期的例子是「保護婦孺條例」，後來修改為「保護兒童及少年條例」。另一個例子是「未成年人監護條例」，令合法子女的父親和母親同樣有權養育和照顧子女。

第二類法例分辨兒童和成人，施以不同對待。

第三類法例則確定犯事者可負刑責的年齡。

還有一類法例與父母的權利和義務有關，因此對兒童亦有影響。這類法例中許多已根據「父母及子女條例」作部分修改。

聯合國兒童權利公約自一九九四年起正式在香港生效。這條公約中許多條款的理念與人權法和其他法例的理念都相同。無論是刑事或民事訴訟，法庭通常都以保障當事兒童的利益為先決考慮。為了照顧有特殊需要的兒童和應付新的社會問題，我們可能需要制訂特別的法例，甚至考慮制訂一套兒童法例。

22132405

REF ID: A3095125

- 1 DEC 2003

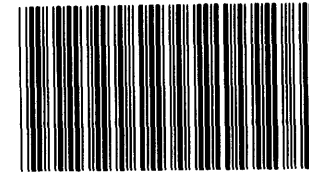
H772 1976

成長路上：香港兒童今昔

蔡敏華 *Nia A. PRYDE*

總結各章作者的觀點及意見，使我們對於何謂全人發展有一個更清晰的概念。各篇文章的內容，圍繞着一些共通的話題，包括：香港的社會經濟環境，家庭角色的轉變，兒童身心健康、教育或福利面臨的挑戰，還有公共設施的優劣。當我們細想過去及目前所做的工作時，會不期然地想像香港兒童未來的幸福光景。可是，要真正達到這境地，我們必須認同年輕人固有的權利，而且承諾推行週全的預防政策。

近年，隨着兒童的需要和權利漸受重視，人們對待兒童的態度也有明顯的改變。我們意識到，兒童的地位和福祉不再是各家各戶的問題，而是關乎整個社會。雖然，香港為兒童提供的服務，總類繁多，水準也不俗，但我們還有很多需要學習和改善的地方。我們期望以目前的知識和經驗作為基礎，建設將來，讓香港的兒童在一個更美好的環境內成長，各盡其才。



X18417683

Date Due	Date Due	Date Due
Date Due		
NOT FOR LOAN		
TOC		