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Child And Youth Welfare

By

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CHILD AND YOUTH WELFARE

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I. OBJECTIVES

One of the most significant responsibilities of the Department of Public Welfare is to render social welfare services to underprivileged children from birth until reaching legal age. The objectives of this provision are as follows.

- 1) To assist and protect children of needy families all over the country in order to strengthen family security and help develop children to be productive citizens in the future.
- 2) To provide residential care and education, both primary and vocational, for children who are orphaned, abandoned, vagrant, misbehaving, physically and mentally handicapped and under improper environment.
- 3) To find and arrange proper home for neglected children.
- 4) To promote and protect welfare of children under the care of welfare institutions and day-care centers being operated by private sector in order to guarantee proper development of these children, physically, mentally and socially.
- 5) To promote and provide opportunity for vocational training, including employment opportunity for children in general.
- 6) To rehabilitate children who are misbehaving, handicapped and drug-addicted.
- 7) To assist exploited children and to protect children against all forms of exploitation which are illegal, immoral and not in conformity with the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child.

II. EXISTING CHILD AND YOUTH WELFARE SERVICES

1) Services for Children in their own Homes

In order to strengthen security and welfare of the family which is recognized as the most important social institution, family assistance has been made available with the aim of enabling the families under distress to take care of their children in their own homes with opportunities for proper development and education. The families whose bread-winners are

dead, ill, unemployed or with marginal income are the examples of the families entitled to this type of services. The services may be rendered directly to children and/or to their families whenever indicated in each individual case and usually in the forms of cash for vocational capital and house repair, educational and medical expenses; necessary commodities; school supplies and uniforms; powdered milk for infants; advice giving and counselling services

2) Foster Home Care

Foster home care is a service of finding temporary proper home for children preferably at younger ages who, under any adverse circumstances, have to be separated to live apart from their natural parents. Foster parents must have necessary qualifications approved by the Department of Public Welfare. During placement period of a child in a foster home, social worker will closely supervise by paying regular home visits and giving advice. Accordingly, it is rightful for foster parents to receive monthly allowance in the amount of 300 Baht per child to partly cover the cost of child care. As regards foster parents who refuse to accept the allowance, such expenses as school tuition and medical cost may be granted instead, whenever suitable.

3) Adoption Service

Adoption is recognized as an important matter related to guardianship and welfare of the child in both legal and social aspects. The Department of Public Welfare may arrange adoption particularly for young children who have permanently neglected without parent or guardian and been committed to the care of the Department for at least one year. This is to find permanent home for such children and afford them opportunities for proper development. Adoption has been arranged under relevant legislation namely, Civil and Commercial Codes (Section 5), the Act of Family Registration of B.E. 2478 and Adoption Act of B.E. 2522 which was promulgated in the International Year of the Child 1979.

Under the Adoption Act of B.E. 2522, Child Adoption Board is appointed; and Adoption Center is established to function as a central body for adoption matters and the secretariate of the Board.

Adoption Center is designated with responsibility of probing adoption applications made by applicants who have residency in Bangkok Metropolis. After an application is filed, home study and investigation will be made on qualification, eligibility, documents and evidences concerned. As regards a child whose biological parents' consent is granted and the applicant is exempted from probational supervisory placement due to his

blood relation to the child, the case will be submitted to Central Child Adoption Sub-committee for approval for adoption registration. In case the child has parents and is not related to the applicants, approval will have to be granted by the Director-General of the Department for probational supervisory placement for at least 6 months, during which home visits and bi-monthly reports will be made by a social worker. If the supervisory placement is proved satisfactorily, submission will be also made to Central child Adoption Sub-committee for registration. As far as neglected child is concerned, probational supervisory placement with the applicant is required regardless of the applicant's residency. As regards a foreigner applying for adoption of a Thai child who is either orphaned or with parents' consent, approvals have to be granted by the Child Adoption Board and the Minister of Interior before coming to Thailand to be interviewed by the Child Adoption Board and to receive the child for probational supervisory placement. Provided that the placement is proved satisfactorily, the case will again be submitted to the Board for approval for registration of the adoption.

As regards an adoption applicant who reside in other provinces, the application has to be made to respective District Office, Sub-district Office or Provincial Public Welfare Office. Accordingly, provincial public welfare officer will conduct home study and regular home visits for making reports of probationary placement. In case of adoption with parents' consent, submission will be made to the respective Governor for approval for probationary placement. If the placement is proved satisfactorily, approval will have to be granted by the respective Provincial Child Adoption Sub-committee for registration of the adoption. Provided that the applicant is legally exempted from probationary placement, the Governor has to approve in principle before submitting the case to Provincial Child Adoption Sub-committee for approval for registration.

Adoption Center is also functioned as a coordinating body of Provincial Child Adoption Sub-committee of various provinces, together with issuing guidelines for practice and producing necessary forms as required by the laws concerned.

4) Institutional Care

Placements in welfare institutions in accordance with needs, ages and sexes, have been made available for any children who are orphaned, abandoned and vagrant; including children whose parents are chronically ill, hospitalized or confined in prisons or welfare institutions; children whose behavior problems can not be properly handled by their parents alone; children who are handicapped and need special services; and children whose parents are very poor and can not afford them opportunities for education

and proper development. The services provided in child welfare institutions include residential care, education, vocational training, ethical training and development, recreational services and employment services after discharge. Application for admission to child welfare institutions under the supervision of the Department of Public Welfare may be made either through Provincial Public Welfare Offices or concerned authority, or to the Department directly.

At present, there are totally 23 child welfare institutions under the supervision of the Department namely, 4 homes for infants, 4 reception homes, 2 homes for girls, 8 homes for boys, 1 detention home for youth, 1 child welfare protection home, 1 home for physically handicapped children, 1 home for mentally handicapped children and 1 home for boys and girls.

5) Child Welfare Protection

Under the Revolutionary Party Announcement No. 294 dated November 27, B.E. 2515 the Department of Public Welfare carries out welfare protection work for children and young persons who are exploited or have problems of misbehavior due to lack of education, improper family situation and environment or unemployment. The cases of child welfare protection may be referred to the Department either by their own families, individuals or voluntary agencies concerned; or else by regular surveys of troublesome, stranded and misbehaved children in cooperation with the Police Department. After going through necessary procedures of fact-finding and assessment in order to find suitable treatment for each child's problems, suitable services are extended to these children which include releasing children to the care of their parents or guardians with or without promises of proper behaviors, family assistance and referral to such related agencies as child guidance clinic and child welfare institutions.

6) Promotion and Control of Day-care Centers and Child Welfare Institution operated by Private Sector

The Department of Public Welfare is responsible for promotion and control of child welfare institutions and day-care centers operated by voluntary organizations in accordance with the provisions of Revolutionary Party Announcement No. 294 dated November 27, B.E. 2515. This is with the aim of guaranteeing proper development of these children physically, mentally and intellectually. The work in this category is carried out through the means of probing applications for establishment of day-care centers and children's homes, licensing, renewing the licenses, supervision and inspection.

Additionally, in order to promote the operation of these voluntary agencies, the Department of Public Welfare arrange annual.

health check-up and training courses on child care for child attendants working with voluntary day-care centers and children's homes. Moreover, seminars and training courses are regularly organized for owners and child attendants of these agencies both in Bangkok Metropolis and regional areas.

7) Scrutinity of Documents and Evidences for Passport Applications of Children

Under the Cabinet resolutions on May 18, 1977 and May 30, 1978 concerning measures against children trade and welfare protection of Thai children, the Department of Public Welfare through Adoption Center is designated to scrutinize documents and evidences required for applications of passports, emergency certificates or border passes for children under 14 years of age for going abroad. It is accordingly regulated that after scrutinity of such documents and evidences, the Department of Public Welfare makes recommendations to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as to whether it is suitable for such children to be taken out of the country.

8) Developmental Services for Children of Low-income Families

The services under this category are emphasized on the aspect of educational opportunity for children of low-income families. Vocational training courses in various fields are therefore made available for adolescent girls between 14 - 18 years who finish Prathom 4 and are offsprings of the settlers in self-help land settlements under the administration of the Department of Public Welfare. Such vocational training facilities are offered at Rajvithi Home for Girls entirely free of charge. In addition, scholarships are annually offered to selected children in the care of the children's Homes under supervision of the Department who are intelligent, well-behaved and healthy. Moreover, special fund has been made available as educational loan to be lent by needy families throughout the country for educational expenditures of their children. The delivery of this loan, 100,000 Baht for each province, is under the consideration of respective provincial authorities.

III. LAWS AND REGULATIONS CONCERNED

The followings are laws and regulations concerned with the administration and provision of child and youth welfare services.

- Regulation of the Department of Public Welfare on Assistance for Children through suitable Placement of B.E. 2508 (No.1)
- Regulation of the Department of Public Welfare on Assistance for Children through suitable Placement of B.E. 2522 (No.2)

- Regulation of the Department of Public Welfare on Assistance for Children in their own Homes of B.E. 2511
 - Revolutionary Party Announcement No. 294 dated November 27, B.E. 2515
 - The Act of Training of Certain Groups of Children of B.E. 2474 (No. 1)
 - The Act of Training of Certain Groups of Children of B.E. 2501 (No. 2)
 - Adoption Act of B.E. 2522
 - Regulation of the Department of Public Welfare on Educational Loan.
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