



Mental Health For Children And Families

An international congress on mental health for children and families was held in Salzburg, Austria, July 8-13, 1979, and was organized by the Austrian association for Mental Health in collaboration with the World Federation for Mental Health.

Mrs. Lorfing of the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World, who attended the Congress in the company of Dr. Abu Nasr, director of the Institute, gave *Al-Raida* the following report.

The theme of the conference was "Mental Health for Children and Families." Topics related to determinants of a child's total growth were discussed in the light of the prevailing situations in different regions of the world. The effects of structural changes in society and the changing environment of families in relation to developmental needs of children and family were lengthily debated, during the plenary sessions and the workshops. Participants from all over the world contributed papers which were discussed in the various workshops, covering the following subject areas :

- 1 - Bonding attachment and early infant development.
- 2 - Alternative to the nuclear family; role of the extended family and community in child rearing.
- 3 - Divorce, separation and custody.
- 4 - Mental Health of children of migrants and cultural minorities.
- 5 - The impact on children in an overmedicated society.
- 6 - Child abuse and neglect.
- 7 - Suicide in the young.
- 8 - Food habits and mental health of children.

- 9 - External stresses on family life.
- 10 - Problems of exceptional children: the gifted and the limited.
- 11 - Psychosis, psychosomatic illness and chronic illness in children.
- 12 - Epidemiological studies of children and adolescents.
- 13 - Death in a family, terminal illness in children and consequences for family.
- 14 - Making unwanted children wanted, preparation for parenthood.
- 15 - Healthy attitudes towards developing masculine and feminine roles.
- 16 - Psychotherapy of the whole family.
- 17 - Influence of mass media.
- 18 - Creative leisure for children and families.
- 19 - Mental Health and the school.
- 20 - Alcohol and drug abuse.
- 21 - Physical surroundings and environmental influences.
- 22 - Children's rights, parents' rights, child advocacy.
- 23 - Children, religion and mental health.
- 24 - Self help and mental aid.

Dr. Abu Nasr presented the study of Dr. I. Kallab on the image of women in Lebanese elementary reading books. (see *Al-Raida*, June 1978, no. 4. p. 4).

Many issues were debated and in consequence many questions were raised on how to cope with the immediate challenge facing the families and, concomitantly, the children of the world today in their hope for achieving a better life.