

Round-the-Clock Management of Children's Environments: The Case of Thai Children and IT

The 5th National Health Assembly

Having considered the report "Round-the-Clock Management of Children's Environments: The Case of Thai Children and IT."¹

Realizing that a large number of children spend an excessive amount of time with IT, to the point of causing dangers to health and negative developmental effects, that children are harmed by exposure to inappropriate media, through software, games, and websites, that the problem of game and Internet addiction in Thai children is at a critical stage, and is likely to become even more severe, that children can access game and Internet shops easily, while the majority of parents and society still lack understanding and awareness of the dangers of IT for child users, and that a factor that leads to game addiction in children is the lack of space and appropriate activities,

Concerned that the rapid growth of the IT media business, network systems, online games, together with the handout of computer tablets to school children without appropriate protection will cause the dangers of IT for children and youth to rapidly worsen, both in number and in degree of severity and that some examples are addictions to gaming and Internet, being lured into gambling and being defrauded by online groups,

Informed of the already existing knowledge, research, prevention and problem solving processes, and of the networks working on these issues; nevertheless, there still needs to be a more cohesive and complete gathering of information and proceedings involved, as well as more efficient cooperation.,

seeing that the problems urgently need to be solved, in an integrated, serious, and consistent way, with society and communities at the core of the movement and with support from the academic sector, the government sector, the private sector, and society,

Has, therefore, passed the following resolutions:

1. Requesting the members of the National Health Assembly
 - 1.1. to promote, support, participate, and follow the activities of the National Committee on Safe and Creative Media in order to speed up procedures in accordance with the aims of the committee, which is to "eliminate harmful media, expand good media, build immunity, and develop and improve laws regulating media so that they are up-to-date;
 - 1.2. to cooperate in the follow up and assessment of the results of the policy of handing out computer tablets to school children, to ensure maximum benefit as well as to protect children and youth from harmful effects.

¹ Document: Health Assembly 5/ Main 2

2. Requesting the Ministry of Culture, as the secretariat of the National Committee on Safe and Creative Media

2.1. to lead collaborative multidisciplinary efforts at the national level in gathering academic material, knowledge, research, laws and regulations involved, and all the information on action being taken in different sectors relating to the issue of Thai children and IT. This will provide an integrated way of proceeding with the efforts and monitoring results, and of spreading awareness and mutual understanding, and should be achieved by 2013;

2.2. to collaborate with the Ministry of Science and Technology, the National Broadcasting and Telecommunication Commission (NBTC), Ministry of Information and Communication Technology, and IT entrepreneurs to develop the technological processes and work to regulate Internet and game use in children, with a request for funding from the NBTC;

2.3. to let the Provincial Culture Offices work with local governing organizations, Provincial Social Development and Human Security Offices, IT entrepreneurs, members of the National Health Assembly, and schools to develop and monitor game and Internet shops so that they become thoroughly safe, supportive and enriching environments for children and youth and their families.

3. Requesting the Ministry of Public Health to collaborate with the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, local governing organizations, various vocational associations involved, entrepreneurs, and different sectors involved

3.1. to organize, distribute, and promote strategies and recommendations for parents, teachers, and communities about the use of IT media, games, and Internet appropriate for children and youth, which should include the potential dangers and preventive measures and ways to diagnose children who may be suffering harmful effects of IT or game addiction;

3.2. to improve the methods and processes of the rehabilitation of children with game or Internet addictions, in ways appropriate to Thai society, with the involvement of many various professions, parents, and communities.

4. Requesting the Ministry of Education coordinate with the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, and may the Ministry of Interior to coordinate with the local governing organizations, members of the National Health Assembly, schools' parent networks, family development centers within communities, children and youth networks, and with IT entrepreneurs, to improve the quality of schools, families, and communities in a collective effort to take care of children and protect them from dangers of IT, and to help one another solve problems and build greater awareness about appropriate IT use for children and youth.

5. Requesting the Ministry of Interior, working through local governing organizations, to coordinate with Provincial Social Development and Welfare Offices, the provincial Offices of Buddhism, schools, temples and other religious institutions, and may communities organize spaces and activities appropriate for children, both indoors and outdoors, so that children can spend their free time in a beneficial way, so that they become good children and feel proud of themselves, and are able to develop their IT experience appropriately, using computers safely outside the classroom.

6. Requesting the National Child Protection Committee and the Provincial Child Protection Committee to work together with the involved sectors in protecting children from the

dangers of IT, through procedures spelled out in the Child Protection Act, B.E. 2546 (2003), with participation from child and youth networks and families in the involved areas.

7. Requesting the Royal Thai Police to work together with the Ministry of Culture to lead efforts in analysis for the development and improvement of legal measures to regulate and monitor computer game and Internet businesses, to ensure safety for children and youth.

8. Requesting the various sectors involved such as the National Science and Technology Development Agency, the Health Systems Research Institute, and educational institutions, etc., to support research and studies which assess effects of IT public policies on the health and development of children and youth.

9. Requesting the Thai Health Promotion Foundation (Thai Health) to support and promote projects and activities which are beneficial to children and youth and keep them safe from IT use, as well as continuous activities which are positive, enriching, and are able to keep up with change, especially cooperative integrated efforts at the local level.

10. Requesting the Secretary-General of the National Health Commission to report progress to the 6th National Health Assembly.