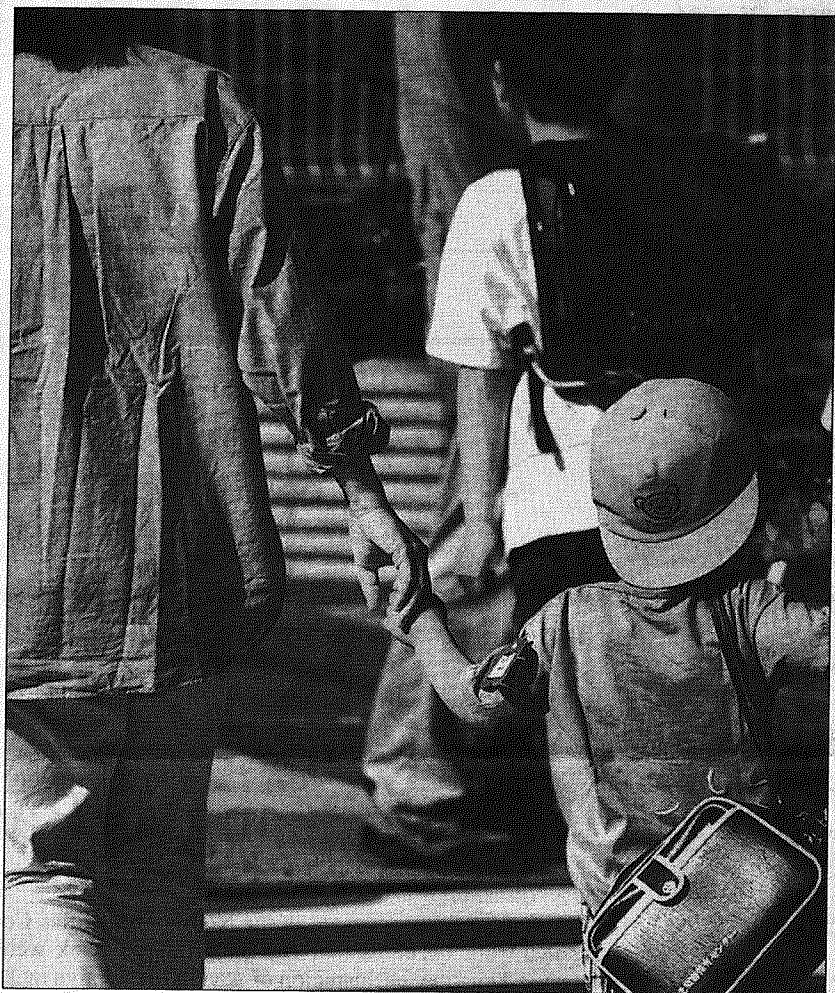




Yomiuri Shimbun

A mother holds her child's hand on the way to school in Suma Ward, Kobe.

about the effect the incident has had on his business. "Why should I explain my business to outsiders?" he said.

The investigation by police and inquiries by the media have involved not only local residents but also the society of doctors to which the murder victim's father belongs. A senior colleague of Mamoru Hase's said, "I started worrying as soon as the boy was reported missing and I was shocked when his body was found. I don't feel like saying anything more about this incident," he said.

Hidemichi Morosawa, president of Tokiwa University, who specializes in the psychology of crime victims, predicts the situation will become worse as time passes, unless residents are provided with accurate and trustworthy information.

"Because no official information is released, the residents hear different stories via the media and are therefore not sure what to believe. When a crime affects the whole community, as this one has, it is most important to provide accurate information as soon as possible," Morosawa told The Daily Yomiuri.

Morosawa advised people to keep in close contact with the authorities, and with one another, to discuss official information as well as their own experiences. "It is important for people to meet regularly," he added.

Meanwhile, stress caused by fear has led some children to show symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. As a result, the local community started a campaign Wednesday encouraging adults to smile more in public to put children at ease.