
Presidential Documents

Title 3—

Proclamation 6933 of October 7, 1996

The President

Child Health Day, 1996

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The health of our children is part of our heritage as a Nation, passed from one generation to the next. It is also our hope for the future. Our children embody our dreams and are the vessel through which we seek an ever deeper understanding of the full reach of human promise. Their physical, mental, and social well-being is the fulfillment of that potential.

For previous generations, diseases were a deadly shadow hovering over every new birth. Thanks in large part to medical advances and improved public health practices, most of today's children are no longer threatened by these afflictions. Childhood immunizations alone have saved countless American lives in the past decade, and today we are increasing our efforts to identify and immunize children who need this protection.

Since we now have the knowledge and resources to protect our children from many childhood diseases—including diphtheria, pertussis, polio-myelitis, measles, mumps, and rubella—we have the obligation to reach out to our population and do so. Immunization is a cost-effective, common-sense means of fighting disease, and States wisely require immunizations for schoolchildren and for children attending child care centers. I signed the Comprehensive Childhood Immunization Initiative so that children will receive the vaccinations they need. This initiative makes vaccines affordable for families and improves immunization outreach, with the goal that 90 percent of all two-year-olds should be fully vaccinated by the year 2000.

However, even if we achieve complete immunization of all American children, our youth today face another potential threat every bit as dangerous as disease—the devastation of violence. Children are becoming more frequent victims, and violence among children is increasing as they emulate the violence in their environment. Each year the tragic effects can be seen in the lives of millions of children. It can be observed among those who are neglected or abused, of whom more than 1,000 die each year. It can be found especially in the lives of those who witness violence against a parent—and who themselves face a significant chance of becoming victims of that same brutality.

As a Nation, we must continue our commitment to eliminating violence and to strengthening children and families. To that end, we have launched initiatives to encourage the use of school uniforms, the adoption of curfews, and the intensification of anti-truancy programs. And we have also expanded the drug-free school program to include anti-crime efforts as well, enhancing the overall safety of our schools.

America's future rests with healthy children and strong families. All across this land—within our homes and health care settings; our churches and communities; our schools and child care centers; our legislatures and halls of justice; our factories, shops, and offices—we are all charged with the responsibility to safeguard our legacy by protecting and nurturing the bodies, minds, and spirits of our children.

To emphasize the significance of fostering children's healthy development, the Congress, by joint resolution approved May 18, 1928, as amended (36

U.S.C. 143), has called for the designation of the first Monday in October as "Child Health Day" and has requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Monday, October 7, 1996, as Child Health Day. On that day and every day throughout the year, I urge all Americans to renew and deepen their commitment to protecting our most precious natural resource—our children.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William J. Clinton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "W" and "C".

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