

Presidential Documents

Proclamation 7178 of April 1, 1999

National Child Abuse Prevention Month, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Children bring happiness to our lives and hope to our future; they are our greatest joy and our most important responsibility. Whether as loving parents or concerned citizens, we must do everything we can to nurture them, protect them, raise them in an atmosphere of love and respect, and create for them an environment in which they can grow into healthy, well-adjusted, and productive adults.

Tragically, however, statistics confirm that not all of America's children enjoy the benefits of a safe, loving home. Instead, hundreds of thousands of children each year suffer abuse and neglect, most often at the hands of their own parents or other family members. The horrors of physical or emotional trauma deny these young people their childhood, and our abused children carry the psychological scars of their mistreatment throughout their lives. Worse yet, for some—particularly those under 3 years old—the abuse they endure is fatal.

My Administration is committed to promoting effective policies and innovative programs to protect children from harm and to mitigate the stresses on families that can ignite violence in the home. We have implemented a comprehensive agenda that includes increased funding at the State level to ensure that maternal and child health programs are expanded to include child protection, family preservation, and support; we have released prevention grants for community-based family services in all 50 States; and we have worked with the Congress to pass the Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, and the National Child Protection Act of 1993, all of which support child abuse prevention efforts in State and local jurisdictions.

Yet government programs alone cannot prevent child abuse. As a society that cares about the health and well-being of our children, we must forge caring, cooperative alliances that include government as a partner, but also involve schools, community organizations, businesses, religious groups, and especially parents and family members themselves—indeed, everyone who has a stake in the future of American families. During this special month, as we focus our Nation's attention on the disturbing problem of child abuse, let us remember that behind every heartbreaking statistic is a child whose health, happiness, and future depend on our ability to recognize the signs of abuse and our refusal to tolerate abuse in our homes and communities.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 1999 as National Child Abuse Prevention Month. I call upon all Americans to observe this month by demonstrating our gratitude to those who work to keep our children safe, and by taking action in our own communities to make them healthier places in which children can grow and thrive.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of April, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-nine, and of

the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-third.

William Clinton

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