

Proclamation 6355 of October 11, 1991

National Children's Day, 1991

*By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation*

Few joys here on earth can compare to that of a happy childhood. As we advance in years, we begin to recognize it as one of life's greatest blessings. Of course, the ideal childhood is more than a precious age of innocence or of long, carefree days at play. It is also an exciting time of learning and discovery that shapes our values and our sense of identity, equipping us for the challenges and opportunities of the future. Because the person who enjoys a healthy, happy childhood is most likely to become a healthy, well-adjusted adult, we do well to recall our obligation—as parents and as a Nation—to protect, nurture, and provide for our children.

Most parents are keenly aware of their responsibilities of providing food, shelter, clothing, and basic health care—the fundamental material support that is essential to every youngster's physical and emotional well-being. Yet parents also have a responsibility to nurture the spiritual and intellectual development of the child whom God has entrusted to their care.

Indeed, whether he or she is their biological, adoptive, or foster child, every youngster needs encouragement and discipline, as well as attention and affection. By word, deed, and example, parents must help their children recognize the meaning of love and respect—and the difference between right and wrong. Parents can and should help their children to recognize their own talent and potential, and instill in them an appreciation of the American traditions of freedom and tolerance. Finally, because the days of childhood can never be reclaimed, we must allow our children to *be* children, never rushing them in our constant attempts to educate and inspire.

Of course, meeting the responsibilities of parenting is not easy. For many families, putting food on the table and making ends meet is an enormous challenge in itself. Filling a child's emotional and spiritual needs and material demands requires faith, sacrifice, fortitude, and commitment—virtues that are the measure of love and the strength of families. Yet the importance of giving our children ample amounts of love, discipline, and guidance cannot be overstated; statistics on drug abuse, adolescent pregnancy, and other problems underscore the consequences of offering too little, too late. And we know that while government can and should assist parents in fulfilling their duties, it is no substitute for stable, loving family life.

Thus, as we honor America's youngest citizens on this National Children's Day, let us recall the essential ingredients of a healthy, happy, and secure childhood and reaffirm our commitment to helping every American youngster to enjoy the best possible start in life. As it is written in Scripture, "Train up a child in the way that he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 126, has designated the second Sunday in October 1991 as "National Children's Day" and has

authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Sunday, October 13, 1991, as National Children's Day. I call on the American people to observe that day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities designed to honor children and to emphasize the importance of their physical and emotional well-being. I also urge all Americans to reflect on the importance of stable, loving families to children and to our Nation.

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

GEORGE BUSH

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World Food Day, 1991 and 1992

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At a time when America traditionally celebrates the promise of a rich autumn harvest, we do well to remember that hunger and malnutrition are a painful reality for millions of people around the world today. The situation is particularly tragic among infants and children in less developed countries. Each year millions die of starvation or disease; many others are permanently disabled as a result of chronic vitamin deficiencies. Recognizing the threat that hunger poses to human life and to the stability of nations, the United States is participating in the 11th annual observance of World Food Day.

The American people have long been providing generous humanitarian assistance to the hungry and less fortunate. This year alone, the United States will give more than 8 million metric tons of food, worth nearly \$1.9 billion, to hungry people in other countries. In addition to sharing our Nation's abundant agricultural resources, we will also continue to share our technical knowledge and expertise, helping needy peoples to achieve greater food production and economic development.

Although we have taken important strides in the campaign against hunger, we still have much more to accomplish. Just as there is no single cause behind this large and complex problem, there is no single solution. For example, the worst reports of hunger and starvation often come from countries that have been racked by years of political upheaval and civil war. Indeed, in countries such as the Sudan, Ethiopia, and Mozambique, famine has not been so much the result of adverse weather conditions and crop shortages as of strife-related barriers to the distribution of food. The needless suffering of millions of innocent men, women, and children compels us to persevere in the quest for lasting peace and security.