National Child Abuse Prevention Month, 2000

By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation

Children are our link to the future and our hope for a better tomorrow. Within a few short years, we will look to today's children for the vision, strength, creativity, and leadership to guide our Nation through the challenges of this new century. If they are to grow into healthy, happy adults and responsible citizens, we must provide our children with the love, nurturing, and protection they need and deserve.

However, many of America's children are not safe, even in their own homes. The statistics are staggering. Every year, there are nearly one million reported incidents of child abuse; and even more disturbing, more than 2,000 of these incidents result in the child's death. Whether suffering neglect, harsh physical punishment, sexual abuse, or psychological trauma, the children who survive will carry the scars of their abuse for the rest of their lives.

We now know that there are a variety of risk factors that contribute to child abuse and neglect—including parental substance abuse, lack of parenting skills and knowledge, domestic violence, or extreme stress—and there are practical measures and programs we can use to mitigate such factors. Social service providers can offer substance abuse programs for adults with children; schools can offer educational programs to teach parenting skills to teen mothers or instruct children on how to protect themselves from sexual predators; faith organizations can offer respite care for parents of children with special needs; and employers can introduce family-friendly policies, from child care to parental leave to flexible work schedules, to reduce the stress on working families.

Keeping children safe is a community responsibility, and prevention must be a community task. Every segment of society must be involved, including health and law enforcement professionals, schools, businesses, the media, government agencies, community and faith organizations, and especially parents themselves. Teachers and physicians need to recognize the symptoms of child abuse; parents need to ask for help in overcoming addictions or controlling violent behavior; communities must be willing to fund programs and services to protect children from abuse; and the media needs to raise public awareness of the availability of those programs and services.

My Administration is committed to doing its part to ensure the health and well-being of all our Nation's children. We have worked to increase funding at the State level for child protection programs and family preservation services. Working with the Congress, we have enacted the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act and the Adoption and Safe Families Act, and we have established the Safe and Stable Families Program. Just a few weeks ago, I signed into law the Child Abuse Prevention and Enforcement Act, which gives State and local officials greater flexibility in using Department of Justice grant programs to prevent child abuse and neglect. This new legislation will increase funding to enforce child abuse and neglect laws, to enhance the investigation of child abuse and neglect crimes, and to promote programs to
prevent such abuse and neglect. Through these and other measures, we
continue our efforts to create a society where every child is cherished
and no child bears the lasting scars of abuse or neglect.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United
States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Con­
stitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim April 2000
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 com­
munities to make them healthy places where children can grow and
thrive.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirty-first
day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Inde­
pendence of the United States of America the two hundred and twen­
ty-fourth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7286 of April 1, 2000

Census Day, 2000

By the President of the United States of America
A Proclamation

Every 10 years, as mandated by our Constitution, all persons living in
the United States are called upon to participate in the census. As the
foremost method of gathering information about our Nation, the census
plays a crucial role in helping us to maintain our democratic form of
government.

An accurate census helps to ensure that the rights and needs of every
person are recorded and recognized as we shape public policies, pro­
grams, and services. Too often in the past, children, minorities, and
low-income individuals have not been counted and, as a result, have
not been fully and fairly served. Census data are also used to deter­
mine the number of seats each State is allocated in the U.S. House of
Representatives, and State and local governments depend upon these
data to draw legislative districts that accurately represent their resi­
dents.

The census also serves as the basis for many public funding and pri­
ivate investment decisions. Census results play a part in determining
the portion each State receives of more than $185 billion in funds dis­
tributed by the Federal Government each year. State and local public
officials use census data to decide where to build public facilities such
as schools, roads, hospitals, and libraries. Census data also are a valu­
able resource for businesses that are trying to identify where to build
stores, office buildings, or shopping centers.

The census is unique. It reaches every population group, from Ameri­
cas's long-time residents to its most recent immigrants, and every age
group from newborns to centenarians. The census touches every social
class and every racial and ethnic group. The census is truly a demo­
cratic process in which we all can participate.