

Proclamation 7281 of March 17, 2000

National Poison Prevention Week, 2000

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Children face many dangers growing up, including some which we cannot foresee or prevent. But the danger of accidental poisoning from medicines, household chemicals, or other substances used routinely in the home is something we can—and must—stop. Each year during National Poison Prevention Week, we assess our progress in saving lives and reaffirm our national commitment to preventing injuries or deaths from poisoning.

We have indeed made progress in the nearly 4 decades since the Congress first authorized this annual observance. In 1962, almost 450 children died of poisoning after swallowing medicines or household chemicals. By 1996, that tragic statistic had been reduced to 47. Our goal is to reduce it to zero.

The first and most effective means to achieving this goal is the proper use of child-resistant packaging, which the Consumer Product Safety Commission requires for many medicines and household chemicals. While this special packaging is child-resistant, however, it is not childproof; therefore, it is essential that adults keep potentially poisonous substances locked away from children.

Our second line of defense is America's poison control centers, where life-saving information is only a phone call away. If a poisoning does occur, parents or other caregivers can call one of these centers and immediately learn the appropriate actions to take to mitigate the poison's effects. Last month, I was proud to sign into law the Poison Control Center Enhancement and Awareness Act, which authorizes \$140 million over the next 5 years to fund our Nation's poison control centers, to carry out a national public awareness campaign, and to establish a national toll-free poison control hotline. Each year, more than 2 million poisonings are reported, a million of which involve children, and this new funding will ensure that callers have immediate access to the vital services and information they need to save lives.

I thank the Poison Prevention Week Council, which brings together 35 national organizations to distribute poison prevention information to pharmacies, public health departments, and safety organizations nationwide, for its vital role in the progress Americans have made in reducing accidental poisonings. By following its lead, properly using child-resistant packaging, keeping poisonous substances locked away from children, and keeping the number of a poison prevention center close by the telephone, we can greatly reduce accidental poisonings.

To encourage the American people to learn more about the dangers of accidental poisonings and to take responsible preventive measures, the Congress, by joint resolution approved September 26, 1961 (75 Stat. 681), has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation designating the third week of March of each year as "National Poison Prevention Week."

NOW, THEREFORE, I, WILLIAM J. CLINTON, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week beginning March 19, 2000,

as National Poison Prevention Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week by participating in appropriate programs and activities and by learning how to protect our children from poisonous substances.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of March, in the year of our Lord two thousand, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fourth.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Proclamation 7282 of March 24, 2000

Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A., 2000

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

As we welcome a new millennium, America stands at a unique moment in time. We can look back over the past century, where we experienced profound advances in science, medicine, and technology that fundamentally altered the world in which we live. At the same time, we can look ahead to a new century filled with unparalleled promise and unlimited possibilities for further progress.

Throughout our Nation's history, education has been at the heart of achievement in America, and it is the key to meeting the challenges and seizing the opportunities that lie before us. To succeed in the global community of the 21st century, we must provide all our citizens with a world-class, well-rounded education. We must ensure that every American has not only the knowledge and the skills he or she needs to flourish, but also a solid foundation of moral guidance and values. As the technology revolution breaks down barriers of geography, culture, and economic status, it is more crucial than ever that young people learn the importance of tolerance, cooperation, and sharing. Imbued with these values and enriched by a quality education, our children can look forward to a bright future.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, recognized early the importance of such comprehensive learning. In addition to being one of the world's highly respected religious leaders, he was also an accomplished scholar in mathematics and science. Understanding that both secular education and spiritual training contribute enormously to human development, he sought to provide young people with fresh opportunities for academic, social, and moral enrichment through the more than 2,000 educational and social institutions he established throughout our country and around the world. His efforts continue to bear fruit today, helping a new generation to develop into responsible and mature adults.

As we observe this special day, let us renew our commitment to excellence in education and to nurturing our young people's academic and spiritual development. Let us also remember the example of Rabbi Schneerson and pass on to our children the values and knowledge that have strengthened our Nation in the past and that will empower us to face the challenges of the future.