WHAT CAN I DO?

The American Legion has been actively involved with children's issues since the early 1920s. In many instances, the Legion has been the driving force on behalf of children on the federal, state and local levels.

In 1938, April was formally designated as Child Welfare Month (now called Children & Youth Month) and has continued on an annual basis. During this special time, we urge each of you to show your community that The American Legion Family is dedicated to America's youth.

Each year at the American Legion's Spring Meetings, the Committee on Children & Youth focuses on three primary areas of concern. They may include:

Child health

- Immunization programs
- School nutrition programs
- Teen pregnancy prevention programs

Child safety

- Child pornography
- Drug abuse prevention
- Drug trafficking
- Alcohol abuse prevention
- Child/sexual abuse and neglect
- Teen suicide prevention

Family support

- National Family Week Activities
- Day care safety
- Foster care
- Temporary Financial Assistance
- Missing and exploited children

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THE AMERICAN LEGION

APRIL IS... CHILDREN & YOUTH MONTH

APRIL IS **CHILDREN** & **YOUTH** MONTH

WHERE DO I BEGIN?

To start, consider:

- Obtaining a speaker on one of our areas of concern or other pertinent topics.
- Conducting a community project with and for children.
- Forming a Community Committee on Children & Youth to discuss current problems, generate solutions and then take action.
- Sponsoring a carnival or show featuring young people to raise money for a community project.
- Featuring a youth panel at a local school where participants can discuss some of their concerns.
- Using videos, if applicable, enlisting the aid of an individual familiar with the subject matter to both present it and be available to answer questions following the viewing.

Use these suggestions, or develop your own projects, but get involved. Remember: The only limitation you have for youth programs and activities is your own imagination!

LEGISLATIVE ACTION

Legislation to improve conditions for children is a focal point of The American Legion's Children & Youth program. By working on behalf of sound legislation, the Legion, in accordance with mandated positions, strives to bring into enactment the laws necessary to meet the needs of all children.

Whether the legislation involves a local matter, pertains to a problem of a particular state or is an item of national concern, it requires the efforts of all interested in the well-being of children and youth if it is to become law.

Most state assemblies begin their sessions early in the year. This is the best time to present legislators with any new legislation or changes needed in current laws.

Within each community, there is a great deal of local legislative action, which deserves continued attention: city ordinances affecting children and youth, appropriations for schools and school budgets, immunization, child abuse and neglect statutes, juvenile courts, local public welfare departments, playgrounds, traffic regulations and other such matters relating to the health and welfare of children.

There is a great need for informed public participation in local government matters. And when it comes to local matters affecting our children and youth, The American Legion should make itself heard.

PROMOTE YOUR ACTIVITIES

You should publicize your programs and activities. Have the mayor or other local official issue a proclamation declaring April as Children & Youth Month. The post commander should issue a news release proclaiming April as Children & Youth Month and list what the post will be doing for its annual observance. (For a sample news release, see www.legion.org/youth.)

Remember, programs affecting the children and youth of your community are news! Invite the news media to your activities and keep them informed.

REPORT SUCCESSES

Following the observance of Children & Youth Month, the Children & Youth chairmen need to turn their attention to the annual reporting of expenditures and activities. Be sure you have an accurate record of all money spent for the benefit of children and youth by your post/unit during the current year, as well as the number of children who received services and assistance.

Shortly after the first of the year, American Legion departments receive copies of the Consolidated Post Report (CPR) for later distribution to posts. This form has been developed to track necessary information about the Legion's overall program. It is the responsibility of the post Children & Youth chairman to report his/her program activities to the individual designated in the post to complete the Consolidated Post Report. The CPR can be done online at myLegion.org by the post adjutant.