

JUNIORS' SPECIAL PROGRAM: ADVOCATES FOR CHILDREN

120-010 Child Foster Care (Convention 1976; Reaffirmed 1980; Amended 1981; Reaffirmed 1986; Amended 1990; Amended 1994; Amended 1998; Amended 2002; Amended 2006; Amended 2010; Reviewed 2014; Amended 2018; Amended 2022)

WHEREAS, According to the Department of Health and Human Services, more than half a million children in the United States are in out-of-home care; and

WHEREAS, The Adoption and Safe Families Act of 1997 establishes national goals for children in the child welfare system, including safety, permanence, and wellbeing; and

WHEREAS, In some states, children in foster care may not have access to adequate medical and mental health services under Medicaid statutes; and

WHEREAS, Placement of children in out-of-state foster care is a slow and time-consuming process due to antiquated systems; therefore

RESOLVED, That the General Federation of Women's Clubs urges its member clubs to support:

- Legislation and programs that facilitate recruitment, training, and retention of high-quality foster parents and kinship providers;
- Legislation mandating procedures for the orderly and timely out-of-state placement of children in foster care, including an electronic processing system;
- Efforts by agencies that have legal custody of foster children to keep siblings together and maintain their cultural heritage;
- Legislation for the expansion of Medicaid to ensure adequate medical and mental health services for children in foster care;
- Legislation providing adequate and equal financial support and services for foster parents and kinship providers.

120-020 Keeping Children Safe (Convention 2022: Includes “Safe Children,” Convention 2017; and “Child Care,” Convention 1988)

WHEREAS, A safe, educational, and nurturing environment is essential to the wellbeing and development of children at home and/or in childcare; and

WHEREAS, Millions of children are alone in the home before and/or after school; and

WHEREAS, Young children are left unattended due to the lack of available, affordable, accessible, and quality childcare, thus putting them at risk; and

WHEREAS, Unexplained absences of young children may be overlooked and under-reported; and

WHEREAS, Unattended children are vulnerable to the misuse of mass media and/or other forms of technology; therefore

RESOLVED, That the General Federation of Women’s Clubs urges its member clubs to support:

- Availability of affordable, accessible, and quality childcare;
- Health, training, and safety standards for children at home and/or in childcare;
- Legislation expanding the availability and amount of childcare tax credits;
- A living wage for childcare providers;
- Community awareness of the need to ensure children’s safety;
- Establishment of designated neighborhood safe houses;
- Education of parents and/or guardians, and childcare providers, on the importance of monitoring children’s use of mass media and/or other forms of technology;
- Establishment of out-of-school programs and workplace childcare facilities;
- State and federal legislation to ensure recovery of unlawfully abducted, detained, or concealed children.

120-030 Sexual Exploitation of Children (Convention 2022: Includes “Legal Reform in Sexual Abuse of Children,” Convention 1986; and “Sexual Abuse of Children,” Convention 1978)

WHEREAS, Sexual exploitation of children, including child sex trafficking, child sex tourism, and child pornography, refers to a range of crimes and activities involving the sexual abuse or exploitation of a child for the benefit of an individual or in exchange for anything of value; and

WHEREAS, All children should reach the age of majority without suffering sexual trauma, exploitation, or forced marriage; and

WHEREAS, Child sexual exploitation may occur in or outside the home, or on the internet; therefore

RESOLVED, That the General Federation of Women’s Club urges its member clubs to support:

- A national strategy for child exploitation prevention that reaffirms our unwavering commitment to ensure that all children are protected from violence and abuse;
- Counseling programs for survivors of child sexual exploitation and their families;
- Medical services and assistance programs for the survivor.

120-040 Youth Suicide Prevention (Formerly “Youth Suicide”; Convention 1986; Amended and Reaffirmed 1989; Reviewed 1993; Amended 1997; Amended 2001; Amended 2005; Amended 2009; Amended 2013; Reviewed 2017; Amended 2022)

WHEREAS, According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, suicide is one of the leading causes of death among youth ages 15 to 24 years old; and

WHEREAS, Suicide attempts are the greatest predictor of death by suicide and major risk factors include abuse of alcohol and/or drugs, mental disorders, and self-destructive behaviors; and

WHEREAS, Suicide is complex and tragic, but may be preventable; therefore

RESOLVED, That the General Federation of Women’s Clubs urges its member clubs to support programs to:

- Increase awareness of behavioral characteristics, risk factors, and warning signs of at-risk youth to peer groups, parents, school personnel, and other concerned adults;
- Offer treatment, counseling, and other services;
- Build self-esteem and develop coping skills;
- Provide support groups and networks for youth who have survived an attempted suicide, and for family and friends of suicide victims;
- Fund and develop school plans to identify at-risk youth and provide staff training in recognizing risk factors and warning signs of suicidal behavior.