

## CARACAS DECLARATION OF THE HEALTH OF THE CHILD\*

Submitted to the IX Pan American Child  
Congress (Caracas, January 5-10, 1948)  
by the American International Institute  
for the Protection of Childhood.

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1. It is the right of all children to receive the greatest protection of their health. In order to achieve this purpose the parents and teachers should receive basic instruction in their respective duties and obligations. The medical, health, social and other personnel connected with the program should be provided with the means of obtaining proper training either by the State or by private institutions. Schools of medicine and other institutions utilized for training personnel should broaden their training programs to include pediatrics and the physical education of children.
2. All factors pertaining to pregnancy and childbirth such as pre-natal, natal, and post-natal care should be included in order to guarantee the health of the mother, and assure a normal delivery of a healthy baby who will develop into a strong child.
3. From birth to adolescence the child should be periodically examined by doctors, dentists and specialists in order to insure its normal development. Pediatricians and specialized technical persons should be in charge of guarding the health of the child.
4. Each country, guided by local conditions, should organize specific programs to protect the child against communicable diseases. These programs shall include vaccinations against smallpox, diphtheria and whooping cough, and when deemed necessary against typhoid fever and other infections; and campaigns against parasitosis and agents which transmit diseases shall be organized. To complement these protective measures, general sanitary services such as proper treatment and disposal of sewage and garbage shall be inaugurated.
5. In order that the school age may be reached in a healthy state the child shall receive special care during the pre-school period. The child's health shall be under strict vigilance with supervision of health education, including physical and mental hygiene, in school buildings meeting standard requirements such as proper illumination and ventilation, and with adequate equipment in order to protect the child during the school period.
6. All necessary facilities, including safe water and milk and proper food, shall be provided in order to assure the child good nutrition.

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\* Translated by the Pan American Sanitary Bureau, April 30, 1948.

With this end in view child nutrition classes shall be organized in the best manner possible in schools and institutions dealing with health and social welfare.

7. Mental hygiene classes shall be included in the program to assist in protecting the child against mental and physical diseases. Mentally deficient children and those constituting special social problems, with the support of society shall receive proper treatment in order to make it possible for them to regain their mental balance, and they shall not be considered noxious beings.
8. Crippled, blind, deaf, mute, rheumatic children or those suffering from any physical defect shall be educated and receive proper medical treatment in order that they may become useful citizens in the community.
9. Scientific standards authorized by specialists should be followed in order to prevent tuberculosis in children during all ages. Adequate measures should also be taken in regard to syphilis.
10. In brief, all children in America, regardless of race, color, or creed, should be guarded by necessary precautions based on general hygiene, good living conditions, ample sunshine, and air, and adequate clothing and facilities to insure cleanliness in order for them to take advantage of every opportunity to insure them a healthful, happy and peaceful life.
11. The Directing Council of the Pan American Sanitary Organization, at its Second Meeting held in Mexico City from October 8 to 12, 1948, adopted the following resolution:

"II - RELATIONS

c) Caracas Declaration on the Health of the Child

After a careful study of the Caracas Declaration on the Health of the Child, the Directing Council

RESOLVES:

6. To register its enthusiastic approval of the Declaration as a set of principles and objectives which will serve as a standard and guide to all organizations which are interested in the health and well-being of the child.
7. To recommend that the following statement of principles be added to said Declaration: The Pan American Sanitary Organization believes that all health activities, the objectives

of which are to guarantee to the child a harmonious physical and mental development, must be based on the family unit, of which the child is an integral part; the maternal and child health services being entrusted to the National Public Health Departments which will maintain the closest possible contact and collaborate with the agencies concerned with maternal and child welfare."