

**NATIONAL CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS DAY | MAY 3, 2011**

February 28, 2011

Dear Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) State Leadership Teams, Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services for Children and Their Families Program (CMHI) grantees, Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Initiative grantees, Head Start State Collaboration Offices, State Child Care Administrators, State Mental Health Children's Directors, and State Mental Health Program Directors:

Tuesday, May 3, is the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day, a day to raise awareness about the importance of positive social, emotional, and mental health to a child's healthy development from birth. The day, which brings together organizations and programs from across the country, presents an opportunity for us to come together to raise awareness about our common goal of promoting children's mental health. The theme for this year's national event is building resilience in young children dealing with trauma.

Awareness Day calls for:

- Integrating mental health and modeling resilience skills in every environment that has an impact on child development from birth.
- Enhancing resilience and nurturing social and emotional skills in young children from birth.
- Providing information to the public and teaching them to recognize the signs of traumatic stress.
- Raising awareness that treatment for trauma is critical to achieving the milestones of a child's social and emotional development from birth.
- Promoting trauma-informed services and supports in all child-serving settings.

Last year, more than 80 organizations (<http://www.samhsa.gov/children/participants.aspx>) and programs collaborated on Awareness Day activities; their joint efforts resulted in almost 1,000 Awareness Day events being planned nationwide.

This year, we have commitments from 13 States\* to work together on the State level for Awareness Day 2011 with the following programs:

- Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL) State Leadership Teams
- Comprehensive Community Mental Health Services Program for Children and Their Families Program (CMHI) grantees, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services

Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)

- Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems (ECCS) Initiative grantees, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, Health Resources and Services Administration, HHS
- Head Start State Collaboration Offices, Office of Head Start, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), HHS
- State Child Care Administrators, Office of Child Care, Administration for Children and Families (ACF), HHS
- State Mental Health Program Directors and State Mental Health Children's Directors

As we all face the reality of trying to do more with less, we believe the most efficient and effective way to help children and youth is to combine our efforts when we can, and Awareness Day offers an opportunity to do just that at a State level.

Although this is not mandatory, we urge you to reach out to your statewide counterparts in the other organizations included in this letter to jointly plan at least one Awareness Day activity, whether it be a joint request for a governor's proclamation announcing National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day in your State, or an awareness-raising activity around this year's theme of trauma. Please sign the attached pledge form and return it to [AwarenessDay2011@vancomm.com](mailto:AwarenessDay2011@vancomm.com).

If you are looking for ideas about collaboration, visit [www.samhsa.gov/children](http://www.samhsa.gov/children) for regular updates about Awareness Day. We all do so much separately to raise awareness about children's mental health; by working together, we can amplify our voices to help children and families.

Sincerely,



Lisa Rubenstein  
Government Project Officer  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration



Roy E. Praschil  
Director of Operations  
National Association of State Mental Health Program Directors (NASMHPD)

cc: Gary Blau, Larke Huang, Ann Matthews-Younes, Jennifer Oppenheim, Jean Plaschke

\* California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Nebraska, Tennessee, Vermont, and Wisconsin



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