



To the Public in General

SAVETHE CHILDREN respectfully calls on the representatives of the different levels of government in Mexico, as well as on society in general, within the context of the epidemiological crisis caused by the A/H1N1 virus that is currently affecting Mexico both directly and indirectly, to take into account the following statements.

SAVE THE CHILDREN perceives that there is a heightened level of stress throughout the country, particularly in Mexico City. There is no doubt that this is reflected in a number of different emotions among children and adolescents, including depression, uncertainty, and major tension.

At this moment, more than 33 million children and adolescents are not attending school across the nation. In some states, particularly those with a risk of the A/H1N1 virus having caused deaths and where there are people under observation. This suspension has extended to include spaces where it is common for people to gather, such as parks, community centers and public spaces;. At the same time, the parents of these children and teenagers continue working fulltime.

After seven days of the epidemiological emergency having been declared, no child protection system has been developed, which is particularly alarming in the cases of children in situations of high vulnerability. These situations are: being left alone at home, homeless children, child-workers, and children with special needs amongst others.

Based on the provisions of Mexico's Constitution, through the First and Twenty-ninth articles, in accordance with the recommendations made by the World Health Organization, and in agreement with the guidelines established in the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, SAVETHE CHILDREN exhorts all parties to emphasize the prevalence of the children's best interests during this emergency.

In other words, at all moments, children and adolescents in our country "go first". This means that is a priority for society to establish integral protection mechanisms that guarantee, at the very least, the implementation of the following measures:

- 1.- To provide clear government information in accordance with the child's age and development.
- 2.- To establish integral health provisions that include aspects such as hygiene, balanced diet, rest, physical exercise, etc., for all children and especially those in vulnerable circumstances.
- 3.- To orient families through the mass media about the emotional accompaniment that children and adolescents require during these times of stress. This implies:
 - Not underestimating children's perception and participation;
 - Prioritizing preventive measures and personal care as basic home protection strategies in the greater context of the solutions being offered;



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- Actively listening to the children and creating a safe and trusting environment that takes into account their doubts in such a way that the most relevant information is received directly from their parents;
- Showing serenity and empathy, understanding that the children and teens are spending a lot outside of their regular routine, thus increasing their confusion, anguish, fear, and lack of trust;
- Being patient and creative so it is possible to suggest safe, fun, and constructive activities based on their interests;
- Establishing agreements with the children and adolescents that are clear and that commit them to respect, to protect, and to keep themselves and one another safe during the absence of their parents or other adults that care for them;
- Monitoring their situation and conditions at home during the time they are unaccompanied.

4.- To produce through the coordination of the Public Education Ministry (SEP), mainstream TV companies/ broadcasters, radio stations and social organizations, “special programming” targeted at children that offers educational and recreational alternatives for an extended schedule, even taking advantage of quality shows for children and adolescents broadcast in the past.

5.- To create spaces for children and adolescents in which they can participate with the media, through which contests and festivals can be announced, stimulating their creativity and taking advantage of their spare time.

6.- To establish a contingency program for those individuals that provide the livelihood for their families before the economic crisis intensifies, provoking employment loss and the deterioration of the national economy.

7.- To permit, through the coordination of the different levels of Government, civil society, different segments of society, and international organizations, the aid and support efforts for social recuperation during and after this contingency; this can be carried out by offering services, advice, orientation, incidence in defining public policy, by contributing to the definition of programs, and developing actions in the community, amongst others.

Taking into account the twentieth anniversary of the approval of the Convention for the Rights of the Child by the United Nations, as well as the commemoration of Children’s Day on the 30th of April, the full exercise of children’s rights, be it in an emergency or not, should be the most important task and objective in any society. This crisis demonstrates that, as a society, we must redouble our efforts to make these rights a reality.

Mexico City, 2nd of May, 2009.

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