

### CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT

- WHEREAS, child abuse and neglect constitute a grave health and social problem; and
- WHEREAS, over three million cases of child abuse were reported nationally in 2000, and in Utah 17,515 cases were reported in 2001; and
- WHEREAS, 90% of the public believe that all elementary schools should offer child abuse prevention programs; and
- WHEREAS, securing the safety, protection, and education of children has been a focus of National PTA since 1897; and
- WHEREAS, recent research has shown that infancy (0 to 3) is the stage during which the foundations for trust, empathy, conscience, and lifelong learning are developed, and abuse or neglect during this critical developmental stage creates irreparable harm; and
- WHEREAS, adult violence against children leads to childhood terror; childhood terror leads to teenage anger; and teenage anger too often leads to adult rage, resulting in both antisocial behavior and self-destruction; and
- WHEREAS, a child's sense of dignity requires that he/she have a voice and representation concerning his/her best interest in all proceedings affecting him/her; and
- WHEREAS, children must be protected from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation including sexual abuse, while in the care of parent(s), legal guardian(s) or any other person who has the care of the child, including children residing in group homes or institutions; and
- WHEREAS, successful child abuse and neglect prevention and intervention require coordinated, dedicated, and competent efforts by families, child welfare agencies, civic groups, religious organizations, educators, medical and mental health professionals, individual citizens and volunteers; now, therefore, be it
- Resolved, that Utah PTA and its constituent bodies work closely with school districts to increase awareness of the problem of child abuse and the Utah child abuse laws including mandatory reporting; and be it further
- Resolved, that PTA promote prevention and intervention programs through close cooperation with families, schools, community treatment programs; and be it further
- Resolved, that PTA work together with prevention programs to develop training for parents emphasizing the importance of nurturing children during critical stages of brain

development in order to optimize learning ability and social competence; and be it further

Resolved, that PTA aid in implementing a broad-based program to teach young children the skills necessary to reduce their vulnerability to abuse; and be it further

Resolved, that PTA support prevention and intervention programs that focus on positive parenting training and encourage and assist programs which provide strategies for all caretakers to cope with the challenges of caring for children without resorting to violence; and be it further

Resolved, that PTA promote programs intended to arrest cycles of violence which affect children; and be it further

Resolved, that PTA take a leadership role in advocating for all entities who deal with children focusing on the protection and well-being of those children and assure that the child's best interests are adequately represented and respected in all processes that impact them; and be it further

Resolved, that PTA encourage educators to engage in a partnership with parents and other professionals designed as a joint effort to educate children in a way that maximizes opportunities for learning, enhancement of self esteem, and competence; and be it further

Resolved, that Utah PTA shall ensure that the educator's perspective is represented in community efforts to combat child abuse and neglect.