April 4, 2011

Dear Child Serving Organizations and Agencies:

Please join us in celebrating SAMHSA’s National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day on May 3, 2011!!

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration created Awareness Day as an opportunity to collaborate and we are proud that at the Federal level there are over 100 agencies and national organizations that will be celebrating (see the full list at http://www.samhsa.gov/children/participants.aspx).

Last year, over 1,000 communities participated in Awareness Day to spread the word about the importance of positive social, emotional, and mental health to a child’s healthy development from birth. This year we are hoping for even more collaborations and we want to encourage you to connect with other programs in your state that serve and children, youth, and families.

Participating in Awareness Day has benefits:
  - Reinforces your commitment to the total wellness of children and youth;
  - Highlights your participation in collaboration with other organizations and agencies addressing children’s mental health needs; and
  - Provides you with access to SAMHSA’s social marketing tools to support awareness-raising efforts.

Awareness Day is an efficient and effective way to combine efforts across a variety of State agencies and programs. The national offices of the following programs have committed to work together on the State level for Awareness Day 2011:

  - 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 (SAMHSA), 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
  - Healthy Transitions Initiative Technical Assistance Coordinators, SAMHSA, HHS
  - State Child Care Administrators, Office of Child Care, ACF, HHS
  - State Mental Health Program Directors and State Mental Health Children’s Directors
  - Statewide Family and Consumer Networks Technical Assistance Centers, SAMHSA, HHS

Attached is a list with contact information that you can use to connect with your statewide counterparts. We encourage you to jointly plan at least one Awareness Day activity, such as:
• share and distribute resources and Awareness Day materials across programs and through list-servs and social media platforms;
• host statewide family activities;
• conduct media outreach;
• have an awareness-raising activity tailored to your state’s needs
• a joint request for a governor’s proclamation announcing Awareness Day in your state (a proclamation template is available at: http://www.samhsa.gov/children/pnb_proclamation.aspx);

You can also use Awareness Day as an opportunity to launch Statewide collaborative efforts that continue throughout the year.

For more information on Awareness Day and ideas about collaboration, visit www.samhsa.gov/children. For specific examples of past activities, please visit: http://www.samhsa.gov/children/communityevents.aspx.

While all states are encouraged to collaborate for Awareness Day activities, each national program partner has agreed to reach out in particular to the following 13 states in 2011: California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Hawaii, Iowa, Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Nebraska, Tennessee, Vermont, and Wisconsin. Once you have determined your collaborative activity, please share what activities you have planned by filling out the Awareness Day pledge form (http://www.samhsa.gov/children/Pledge_insert_508.pdf) and returning it to AwarenessDay2011@vancomm.com.

By working together, we can amplify our voices to help children, youth and families.

Sincerely,

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