

# **A Decade for Childhood, 2010-2020**

*A joint declaration of*

**The Alliance for Childhood**

[www.allianceforchildhood.org](http://www.allianceforchildhood.org)

**The Association for Childhood  
Education International**

[www.acei.org](http://www.acei.org)

Our understanding of childhood as a critical stage of human life has grown exponentially in recent years. At the same time we see a constellation of disturbing trends that devalue and endanger children's healthy development.

In some ways children are pushed to grow up too quickly—to adopt the style and substance of adolescent and adult life before they are ready. In other ways they remain overdependent on adults long after they should be thinking, exploring, and acting on their own initiative.

These trends are not only alarming but dangerous to the future of humanity. They are damaging to children, the most vulnerable among us, and threaten childhood as a unique stage of human development. The long-term effects of this erosion of childhood will weaken a society that needs creative, innovative individuals who can bring mature insights to complex social, economic, and ethical issues.

It is therefore with hope for the future that the Association for Childhood Education International and the Alliance for Childhood proclaim the years 2010 to 2020 as a Decade for Childhood.

This declaration is an invitation to all those who seek to uplift childhood. We invite governments, families, schools, universities, nonprofit organizations, foundations, and corporations around the world to adopt this decade and infuse the pillars of “The Essentials of a Healthy Childhood” into their programs, activities, initiatives, and strategic plans. We hope that a resolve to respect and protect childhood will be embraced in the homes, classrooms, and boardrooms of communities and neighborhoods worldwide.

Every child in every nation deserves a childhood full of hope, joy, freedom, and promise for the future.