

Kiwanis[®]

International

Serving the Children of the World[®]

Potential projects

Young Children: Priority One

Young Children: Priority One (YCPO) is an ongoing service program of Kiwanis International, addressing the needs of young children. Kiwanis clubs are encouraged to carry out at least two YCPO projects per calendar year, helping children, families and communities with critical issues affecting youth.

Before beginning a project:

- Determine the most relevant and important issues affecting youth in your community.
- Conduct a community needs analysis and discuss options with club and community leaders.
- Identify your club's skill set and how you can make a measurable impact. Projects should strike a nice balance between resources, time and energy.
- These YCPO project ideas are divided into four categories. Browse the list and search the downloadable resources below for more information on how to help your community. Feel free to come up with your own ideas for projects that will benefit children in your area.

These same resources, as well as additional service bulletins, are available at www.KiwanisOne.org/ycpo. If you need more help or have questions about any of these projects, you can reach the Branded Programs Department at the Kiwanis International Office at 800-KIWANIS, ext. 211, or ewarren@kiwanis.org.



Project idea list

SERVICE BULLETIN

YCPO project idea list

There are so many children in need, and so many ways to help. The ideas in this list fall into four key categories. Choose the area that's right for you and your club.

1 Maternal and infant health

Healthy mothers are more likely to deliver healthy babies. Learn how your club can play a part in caring for babies even before they're born.

2 Child care and development

Toys, hugs and a safe place to play—children need all of these. Find out what you and your club can do to help young children grow, thrive and learn.

3 Parent education and support

What job could be more rewarding—or difficult—than parenting? Discover ways your club can empower parents to cope with the demands of caring for young children.

4 Safety and pediatric trauma

Too often, parents don't know what to do when an accident happens. You and your club can provide tools to show parents how to respond when the worst really does come to pass.



1

Maternal and infant health

Some children born today die or suffer needlessly, in spite of all the medicines and technology available. Many will die because their mothers didn't know how to take care of themselves during pregnancy—eating poorly, drinking, smoking or even taking drugs. Others will be handicapped permanently by their mothers' lifestyles.

Some children won't be seen by a doctor for checkups and won't be immunized. They will never have a chance for wellness care or preventive medicine. As a result, by the time they see a doctor, they often are terribly ill.

Kiwanis clubs can address these problems by educating the public and making sure that appropriate health care is available to all children.

PROJECT

Educate the public

Funding—Moderate
Hours—High
Personnel—Moderate

Kiwanis clubs can work with the March of Dimes on a variety of awareness activities. The March of Dimes has a catalog of educational brochures, pamphlets, curriculums and audio/visual programs. Many of the printed pieces are free. Any club planning its own awareness campaign should request the March of Dimes catalog and consider using one or more of its publications. Contact the Fulfillment Center of the March of Dimes at 800-367-6630 or www.marchofdimes.com.

PROJECT

Provide prenatal health-care education in the workplace

Funding—Low
Hours—Moderate
Personnel—Low

The March of Dimes has developed a series of nine seminars, titled "Babies and You," designed for presentation during lunch hours or other periods of the workday. These seminars educate potential parents about lifestyle behaviors that can affect a pregnancy and encourage early and regular prenatal care. Many employers have begun to realize that their companies benefit from programs that improve the pregnancy outcome of workers.

A Kiwanis club could be the catalyst to bring the "Babies and You" seminars to a community. The club can work with small businesses in the community to organize a class of employees for the seminars.

The "Babies and You" seminars are conducted by local March of Dimes offices. To find the nearest March of Dimes office, contact the Fulfillment Center of the March of Dimes at 800-367-6630 or www.marchofdimes.com.

PROJECT

Immunizations

Funding—Low to moderate
Hours—Low to moderate
Personnel—Moderate

A dollar's worth of vaccine can prevent death or permanent disability and thousands of dollars in hospital care. That's why it's important for every child to be fully immunized by age 2.

Kiwanis clubs can work with health departments and medical personnel to educate parents, overcome institutional barriers and reach out into neighborhoods. To learn more about immunization projects, download the service bulletin on [immunizations](#).

PROJECT

Alcohol awareness for pregnant women

Funding—Moderate
Hours—Low to moderate
Personnel—Low

A woman who drinks regularly during pregnancy increases the possibility that her child will be born mentally retarded or physically handicapped. Many women do not realize this or do not know how to stop drinking. Working with other agencies, a Kiwanis club can educate the public and ensure that support is available to women who want to stop drinking for their babies.

To learn more, download the service bulletin on [alcohol awareness for pregnant women](#).

PROJECT

Set up a health screening or free clinic

Funding—Moderate to high
Hours—Variable
Personnel—Moderate

Health exams by a doctor and dentist make it possible to solve simple problems that could become dangerous or cause permanent afflictions. Some programs, such as Head Start, build in these health screenings but often don't have funding for the follow-up treatments that are needed. In other programs, the teachers or caregivers know there's a need but can't find the funding. Kiwanis clubs can help in a number of ways:

Professional recruitment—Find a doctor, dentist or nurse willing to volunteer a few hours to provide screenings and immunization. Offer to pay for follow-up treatments at a reduced rate.

Parent recruitment—Get parents to help ensure that all children in the community have the chance to participate in the program. Give them the supplies and organizational assistance to get out the message.

Club volunteers—The paperwork, preparation of the site, organization of the check-in lines and other logistics should be handled by Kiwanians and parents. The club needs to make sure that the medical people lend their expertise, but do not need to take total control of the project.

Materials—The club can provide funding for necessary medical supplies. In addition, it can purchase and distribute pamphlets on medical care, nutrition and first aid. Perhaps more important, the club can bring the prizes for the children who participate in the checkup or immunization program.

Special event—One way to draw people to a health-care project is to offer entertainment. This provides an incentive to come and helps the time pass quickly for the people waiting in line. Other ways to draw a crowd are prize drawings and giveaways, a visit by a fire truck or the presence of a sports celebrity.

Mini medical missions—Kiwanis clubs in the Philippines and Latin America organize health missions to needy areas. Several club members gather materials and escort a volunteer doctor and dentist to a needy area, where they spend the day giving medical and dental treatment to people who would otherwise go without. The club announces the visit ahead of time so that people will gather in the village for medical checkups. The club pays for the medical and dental supplies and the doctor and dentist—and the Kiwanians—donate their time.

PROJECT

Prevent lead poisoning

Funding—Moderate
Hours—Moderate
Personnel—Low

Even very low levels of lead in a child's blood can permanently lower the child's intelligence and development. Yet lead is in old paint, water pipes and the dirt around houses and highways. Protecting children from lead requires testing and removal or coverage of the lead source.

To learn how a club can prevent lead poisoning in a community, download the service bulletin on [lead poisoning](#).

PROJECT

Develop new health-care services for children

Funding—Variable
Hours—High
Personnel—Moderate

In many communities, the available health-care services for children are inadequate. The CATCH program assists communities in evaluating the services available and developing solutions to meet needs. It shares the experience of other communities that have solved similar problems through imaginative and efficient use of resources available in the community.

If a Kiwanis club concludes that its community needs additional health-care services for children, it can learn more about the CATCH program by requesting literature from the American Academy of Pediatrics at 800-433-9016 or www.aap.org/catch.

PROJECT

Develop a smoking awareness campaign for pregnant women

Funding—Moderate
Hours—High
Personnel—Low

A public health expert has estimated that infant mortality would decrease by 10 percent if all pregnant women quit smoking. However, many pregnant smokers don't know they are hurting their babies or the degree to which developing fetuses can be damaged. The Kiwanis service bulletin on [smoking awareness for pregnant women](#) provides reproducible materials and suggestions for the campaign's organization, including a smoking cessation class for future parents.

2 Child care and development

A human being learns more in the first six years than during any other time in his or her life. But children can't learn in a vacuum. They need toys, people to talk and listen to, books to admire and enjoy, opportunities to explore, a safe sanctuary and warm hugs. Children deserve such an environment, but for many, such opportunities are not available or affordable. Kiwanis clubs can help change that.

In the United States, more than 10 million children under the age of 6 have their only parent or both parents in the labor force. In fact, only seven percent of families have the "traditional" structure, with a stay-at-home parent who takes care of the children while the other parent is the breadwinner. Today, child care is a necessity for parents and for the businesses that employ them. Unfortunately, there is a shortage of high quality child-care providers, and no coherent system exists that solves this problem. Kiwanis clubs can be part of the solution on the local level.

In the activities suggested below, two organizations are referred to several times: the [National Association for the Education of Young Children \(NAEYC\)](#) and the [National Association for Family Child Care](#).

PROJECT

Playgrounds

Funding—High
Hours—High
Personnel—High

In many newer communities, there aren't enough playgrounds to serve all the children. In older communities, some playgrounds are dangerous to children, due to hard surfaces, protruding bolts and poor maintenance. Some lack play value, leaving children more inclined to play dangerous games on inappropriate equipment.

Clubs can evaluate and upgrade older playgrounds using safety checklists that pinpoint dangers. Refurbishing an old playground can be a major undertaking that clubs address with community partners.

An even larger challenge is building a new playground. This requires formation of an organization specifically for the project and support from the entire community. It requires research, use of a consultant or playground company and thorough planning.

To learn how a club can update or build a playground in a community, download the service bulletin on [playgrounds](#).

PROJECT

Play days

Funding—Low
Hours—Moderate to low
Personnel—Moderate

Parents sometimes don't understand their young children's skills or how to assist them in developing. A play day provides a chance for parents to learn about the developmental stages of their children and try out age-appropriate activities.

To help educate parents on the importance of play in their children's development, download the service bulletin on [play days](#).

PROJECT

Intergenerational programs

Funding—High

Hours—Moderate to low

Personnel—Moderate to low

At a time when senior citizens and children are segregated from one another, when there's a great need for experienced child-care workers and when more senior citizens are looking for meaningful activities, it makes a lot of sense to involve older adults in child-care programs.

The format of a program depends on the age and interest of the seniors and the resources available to support a program. An intergenerational project is a considerable challenge, but the rewards for young and old are great.

Learn more about the benefits of and resources for developing this relationship from the service bulletin on [intergenerational child care](#).

PROJECT

Develop an awareness campaign

Funding—Moderate

Hours—Low to moderate

Personnel—Moderate

Affordable, quality child care for preschool children can be difficult to find at a time when a majority of women with young children work. Child-care workers frequently are paid less than minimum wage, and staff turnover in child-care centers is commonly more than 40 percent a year. Clubs can help educate the community—especially new parents—about this problem.

Parent education—Parents need to learn how to choose good programs for their children. The National Association for the Education of Young Children produces excellent brochures on a variety of related topics, and many are produced in Spanish. These materials are available in large quantities and distributed through doctors' offices, childbirth educators, baby clothing stores and toy stores.

Community education—To educate the community about the local child-care problem, the club will need to research the local conditions. The club should survey child-care providers, educators of young children, businesses and social service agencies. After the club assembles its data into a report on local needs and ways to meet those needs, it should publicize its findings. The club could send the report to the media, present a copy to the mayor or city council, make a presentation to the local chamber of commerce or hold a public meeting. Many of the people who provide information for the report might want to help publicize it, and the club could become the main provider of activities that address child-care needs.

Quality maintenance—Parents depend heavily upon child-care centers to provide developmental education for their children. Thus, quality in early education programs has become more and more important. Unfortunately, child-care centers often operate on low budgets and have difficulty attracting and retaining qualified staff members. The National Association for the Education of Young Children has developed a brochure, "The Full Cost of Quality in Early Childhood Programs," which outlines the problems of maintaining quality child-care standards, how they affect children and what Kiwanis clubs can do to help alleviate the difficulties. For copies of the brochure, contact the National Association for the Education of Young Children at 800-424-2460 or www.naeyc.org.

PROJECT

Promote reading

Funding—Low

Hours—Moderate

Personnel—High

The National Education Association (U. S.) promotes [Read Across America](#) day early in March each year. The NEA has permission to use Dr. Seuss characters and activities for this event and provides ideas like a "green eggs and ham" breakfast party. For activity ideas and information on where to get supplies like Cat-in-the-Hat costumes and hats, contact 202-833-4000 or readacross@nea.org, or visit seussville.com.

PROJECT***Support a preschool, child-care center or Head Start program***

Funding—Variable

Hours—Variable

Personnel—Variable

Preschools and child-care centers offer settings for exploration and learning, supervised by qualified teachers. Children have opportunities they might not have at home to experiment, interact and prepare for future challenges. In the United States, [Head Start](#) programs are government-supported preschools for underprivileged children and their families. Their purpose is to give children the “head start” they need to do well in school.

If a Kiwanis club discovers a need in the community for higher quality child care at affordable prices, it will probably need to work with centers to improve or expand their programs and to educate the public about quality programs. Download these service bulletins about [supporting a child care](#) or [early childhood development program](#). They suggest a variety of ways in which clubs can help.

Volunteers—A club rich in volunteer time can give regular assistance in the classroom by reading stories or writing down those told by the children, supervising the playground or art area or providing transportation. If the club prefers to sponsor a special event, it could stage a party, picnic or field trip. Maintenance work and assistance with bookkeeping are other possibilities. The club could also assist by organizing the recruitment and training of volunteers from churches, senior citizen centers, high schools and colleges.

Funding—A club with more significant funds available—or the ability to raise them—might adopt the school or center and supplement its budget, buy equipment, remodel the preschool or even acquire a site for a larger center. Schools and centers always need playground equipment, long-lasting toys and consumable materials such as paints, crayons and paper. But there may be other, less expected needs, like cribs, smoke detectors, safety equipment, a computer or office supplies. Clubs also can improve child-care quality in the community by providing financial incentives or support to programs seeking NAEYC accreditation.

Training—Many child-care workers have no training but genuinely want to learn more about working with children. However, they often cannot afford to take university classes or are unable to travel far. A club could assist with such costs by purchasing printed materials or videotapes from NAEYC and working with a state or local affiliate to put on a seminar or series of classes at the center. For a more ambitious training program, the club could work with a university to bring training to a location that would be convenient for workers at several centers and provide financial assistance. The Cooperative Extension Service is another source of support for such training.

Helping families—The club could turn its attention directly to the children and their parents, supplying whatever is needed, from clothing for a child to food for the family to job training for the parent. In addition to meeting basic needs for food and clothing, clubs could provide scholarships to children from low-income families, to allow them the opportunity to participate in a quality program.

PROJECT

Support home-based child-care providers

Funding—Variable
Hours—Moderate
Personnel—Moderate

More than 1.5 million women in the United States provide home-based care to more than five million children. That's more than 70 percent of the children in full-time child care. Some parents find these care providers, usually with three to six children in their own homes, to be generally less expensive, more conveniently located and more flexible, and to have a more homelike environment than most child-care centers. However, they are also less regulated and may have no trained personnel. A Kiwanis club could undertake one of several projects to improve home-based child care in its community.

Immediate needs—Many home-based care providers can't afford equipment or needed repairs. Some require organizational assistance to plan a budget, exercise their tax rights or apply for the [Child and Adult Care Food Program](#). A set number of service hours or a small grant from club members could solve any of these problems and improve the quality of care for children.

Licensing or registration—Less than 10 percent of home-based care providers are licensed or registered by a state agency, even though law generally requires this. A club could promote licensing in the community and offer assistance in working with the state agency, completing paperwork or modifying homes so that they meet state licensing requirements. A club could also print a list of home-based care providers who are licensed.

Training—The [National Association for Family Child Care](#) offers an accreditation program for providers, and the [Council for Early Childhood Recognition](#) oversees a credentialing program. Clubs could pay the fees for a provider to participate in either program. In addition, child-care providers may choose to participate in training opportunities offered by NAEYC state or local affiliates. Working with an NAEYC affiliate or a university, a Kiwanis club could sponsor a one-day seminar or a series of workshops.

Support van—Because these care providers operate in their homes, they often are isolated. They cannot afford to have materials or services delivered to them, and many resource centers are closed when the work day ends. To solve this problem in Miami, Kiwanis clubs worked with the Junior League and the Council of Jewish Women to purchase and equip a van that visits home-based care providers. An early childhood expert offers advice, educational materials for the care providers and loans of equipment, toys and books from the library system. The van's personnel are employed by the county.

PROJECT

Develop a reading program

Funding—Moderate
Hours—Low
Personnel—Low

Children don't learn to read if they aren't exposed to books. Part of the solution, therefore, is to make sure children—especially those who don't have books at home—receive a book to take home. That is where Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) enters the picture. The RIF program puts books in the hands of children, to excite them about books and motivate them to read. A club can develop a RIF program for a preschool, Head Start program or kindergarten. Many clubs have done so over the years. Although RIF is a U.S. organization, the information on how to set up the program can be used by a club in any country.

Download the service bulletin on [RIF](#) to learn more.

Other reading programs your club may want to work with are the [Read Around the World](#) program and [Reach Out and Read](#).

PROJECT

Set up a storyline phone

Funding—Low
Hours—Moderate
Personnel—Low

As many libraries have already discovered, children love to hear stories over the phone. For a child whose parents cannot read to him or her, this may be the only way to hear a story each day. This is a simple project. If the library is involved, the club purchases a phone machine that plays a tape over and over, pays the monthly charge for the phone line and promotes the new storyline. Club members in good voice can help record the stories. Libraries report heavy use of their storylines, before and after school, at bedtime and at times when children are asleep!

PROJECT

Expand child-care services in the community

Funding—High
Hours—High
Personnel—Moderate

A club may find that existing programs can't meet the real problem in the community. There may be more children who need care than there are spaces available, or a particular kind of service may be lacking. In either case, the challenge for the Kiwanis club is to find a way to create the program without bearing the full burden of its cost.

Involve the business community—Convenient, affordable child care can reduce absenteeism, personal phone calls and turnover at the same time that it builds employee morale. A company—or group of companies—doesn't need to assume all costs for a center, nor does the center need to be on the company's premises. It simply needs to provide enough support to make a viable, attractive program.

Contact colleges and universities—Many schools have or need child-care facilities for use by students and staff. In addition, many schools have faculty members who are experts in early childhood development as well as students who need practicum. There is great potential for support of a new care center on or near campuses.

Support new home-based care givers—The fastest way to increase the number of child-care spaces in the community may be to encourage development of family child-care homes. The club could sponsor a meeting or seminar that explains how to set up a child-care program and become licensed. It might also offer small loans, training, technical assistance or repairs to help start care providers with properly organized and equipped homes.

Start a program in the high school—A high school may have space for a center and a willing pool of volunteers.

Develop additional service—Two services commonly needed by parents but rarely offered by care providers are extended hours and sick-child care. The club should attempt to collect information on the extent of the need. If the need for extended hours is large enough, one child-care center may be willing to extend its hours because it will be able to afford an additional employee. Sick-child care is an additional problem. Sick children often require special child-care arrangements. It also leads to absenteeism in local businesses, so financial support from the businesses may be available as a solution. The club might work with a hospital or clinic to set up a sick-child care center. Or it might seek out a nurse who would set up a sick-child care program—perhaps subsidized on the days when no children are ill. A third possibility is to develop a list of qualified retirees who will care for sick children in their homes.

To learn more about how your club can help meet the community's child-care needs, download the service bulletin on [child care](#).

PROJECT

Support or develop a resource and referral agency

Funding—High
Hours—High
Personnel—Low

A resource and referral agency provides a link between providers of child care and families who need child care. The basic role of a resource and referral agency is to develop files on all child-care services available in the community and refer parents to the groups that can best meet the family's needs.

This leads to other important roles:

- Educating the public about the availability, affordability and quality of child care in the community.
- Providing training and support for current care providers that will improve the quality of their programs.
- Encouraging the development of additional care programs.

If your community has a resource and referral agency, learn whether it has sufficient funding, personnel and equipment to accomplish its goals. The purchase of a computer or software, club support of a survey or assistance in obtaining a grant could make the agency a more effective coordinator of child-care services. If your community doesn't have a resource and referral agency, consider calling together business leaders, child-care providers and elected officials to discuss the value of working together to establish such an agency. To learn more about resource and referral agencies, contact the National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies at 202-393-5501 or www.naccrra.net.

PROJECT

Assist with program accreditation

Funding—Variable
Hours—Variable
Personnel—Variable

Early childhood development and education is delicate work requiring a high degree of sensitivity to the needs and conditions of young children. Kiwanis clubs can help educate the community about the importance of the accreditation requirements from the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC). This may be accomplished by publicizing accredited programs, highlighting the importance of quality programs for all children and making club members and other business leaders aware of the value of investing in early childhood programs. Further, clubs can help other centers and programs become accredited by working with local NAEYC affiliates, thus increasing the number of high-quality resources in the community. Some of the ways clubs might participate include raising funds to help the center cover accreditation fees and materials; helping the center maintain a qualified staff by helping it provide adequate salaries and benefits; assisting with improvements and upgrades to facilities to meet health and safety standards; assisting in training for staff members; and helping obtain educational materials appropriate for the ages and numbers of children enrolled.

More information on NAEYC accreditation can be obtained by contacting the National Association for the Education of Young Children at 800-424-2460 or www.naeyc.org.

3 Parent education and support

As every parent knows, once the baby arrives, life is never the same. The changes and stresses are sometimes difficult for any parent, but being prepared can help. Parents need to understand why a baby behaves as it does, what they should do for him or her and how to cope when a baby continues to cry. Parents need to manage everything from teething to tantrums, from childproofing the house to a safety seat for the car. Kiwanis can provide pertinent information or make sure a helping hand is available.

PROJECT

Sponsor a parenting fair

Funding—High
Hours—High
Personnel—High

The purpose of a parenting fair is to show parents all the resources available in the community. The more services and organizations available to parents, the larger the fair will be. Giveaways, lectures on parenting or special events can draw a large number of people to a parenting fair. Once the parents come, the exhibitors will have their chance to educate and inform.

For topics to address and tips for planning your event, download the service bulletin on [parenting fairs](#).

PROJECT

Awareness and prevention of child abuse

Funding—Low to moderate
Hours—Moderate
Personnel—Moderate

To eliminate child abuse, society must understand that child abuse occurs and that it is unacceptable. Clubs can initiate an awareness campaign to help people understand the different kinds of abuse and establish a clear public attitude. Activities can range from a survey of family-support resources in the community to arranging for proclamations in support of Child Abuse Prevention Month (April). Clubs can also develop awareness activities that encourage parents to enjoy positive experiences with their children. Projects include distribution of a monthly list of parent-child activities to club sponsorship of outings.

Download the service bulletin on [child abuse awareness activities](#).

PROJECT

Parenting education

Funding—High
Hours—Low to High
Personnel—Low

Just as parents-to-be attend a series of classes to prepare for childbirth, many parents would benefit from classes on some of the issues that develop after mother and baby come home from the hospital. There are a number of professionally developed and run programs designed for new parents, all parents or parents in crisis. A Kiwanis club could help sponsor one of these programs in the community. A club also could develop less formal parenting classes using local resources, purchase a videotape education program or support distribution of a parenting newsletter.

For information and resources for helping support parents, download the service bulletin on [parenting education](#).

PROJECT

Initiate a home visitation program

Funding—High
Hours—High
Personnel—Low to moderate

Home visitation programs are an excellent method of educating and guiding young women toward healthy pregnancies. These programs work equally well guiding men and women through parenthood.

To learn more, download the service bulletin on [home visitation](#).

PROJECT

Start a parent helpline

Funding—Low to moderate

Hours—Moderate

Personnel—High

Fifty years ago, a new parent lived in a stable community where most people knew one another. The parent received advice from other members of the community, whether it was desired or not. Similarly, it was easy to see how other parents coped with their children. Today, many parents feel isolated, as if they have no one to talk to for advice or just to vent frustration. One way to help these parents is to provide a telephone resource. Hotlines exist in most communities to deal with crime, drug abuse, emotional problems or safety concerns. Thus, it is generally easy to learn about the logistics and costs of setting up a hotline. There is potential to draw funds and experts (for training and overseeing the telephone volunteers) for this project from the large number of organizations that deal with families: hospitals, family physicians and pediatricians, child welfare and abuse groups, the mental health association and family-oriented businesses. Kiwanians and other volunteers can staff the phone after formal training. They should be equipped with a list of organizations and professionals who are willing to accept referrals.

PROJECT

Parents Anonymous

Funding—Moderate to high

Hours—Variable

Personnel—Moderate

Parents Anonymous helps families by offering free, professionally facilitated, peer support groups for parents with abuse problems. The philosophy of the organization is that parents have the ability to heal themselves by seeking solutions to their problems within themselves. Kiwanis clubs can support Parents Anonymous groups or help start new groups.

To learn about activities that range from volunteer administrative support to fundraising, download the service bulletin on [Parents Anonymous](#).

PROJECT

Shaken Baby Syndrome

Funding—Low

Hours—Low

Personnel—Low

Each year babies are permanently disabled or killed by parents and caregivers who don't understand the fragility of a young child's brain. By shaking a child, tossing him up in the air or vigorously bouncing him on a knee, an adult can cause permanent brain damage. Clubs can prevent Shaken Baby Syndrome (SBS) through a public education campaign on the dangers of shaking babies.

The service bulletin on [Shaken Baby Syndrome](#) contains a brochure ready to be reproduced and scripts for radio public service announcements. Information on other SBS materials available for purchase is also included in the bulletin.

PROJECT

Start a family resource library

Funding—Moderate to high

Hours—Low

Personnel—Low

Some hospitals, churches and public libraries have set aside a bookshelf or a room for a family resource library, a collection of books and pamphlets that offer guidance to parents. If a club discovers that there is no family resource library in the community, it could work with any of the organizations mentioned above to develop a library. Books, newsletters, magazines and videotapes on parenting belong in this library.

PROJECT

Set up a family development or family literacy program

Funding—Moderate to high
Hours—High
Personnel—Low to moderate

A child who is excited about school and wants to learn may be discouraged by his parents' attitude and limited ability to help. This can continue an unfortunate cycle that sentences each generation to poor education and poverty.

To counter this problem, several organizations have developed programs that teach parents how to support their children's learning. Many concentrate on developing literacy in parents as the children prepare to learn to read. Others take a broader view of the skills the parents need to develop. Described below are two of these programs, which Kiwanis clubs could help bring to their communities. These programs require significant expenditures, for an office or classroom, transportation, staff and materials. But they also have a significant impact on the families involved.

HIPPY—The Home Instruction Program for Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is a two-year program for educationally disadvantaged children 4 and 5 years old. Every other week a paraprofessional visits the home and works with the mother and child. On alternate weeks, the mothers meet together with the paraprofessionals and the program coordinator as a support group. HIPPY focuses on the school-readiness skills children need for a happy, successful school experience. The step-by-step instructions develop parents' confidence in their teaching abilities and encourage positive interaction with their children. The HIPPY program was developed in Israel and is used in Chile, Holland, Turkey, Germany and the United States. To learn more, contact HIPPY at 212-532-7730.

National Center for Family Literacy—Three days a week, undereducated parents go with their 3- and 4-year-old children to a school where learning takes place for both parents and children. The children attend a preschool class while the parents sharpen basic skills, undergo employment training and learn about parenting. This program does more than teach the parents and children; it encourages them to learn together, which strengthens the family and develops the family members' roles as learners and teachers. An adult education teacher, a preschool teacher and a preschool assistant, who must be trained for two weeks, staff the program. Setting up such a program requires considerable funding and should involve government support. A booklet is available on possible funding sources. To learn more about the program, contact the [National Center for Family Literacy](#) at 502-584-1133.

4 Safety and pediatric trauma

One minute, she's playing happily; the next minute, there's a scream. The parents rush to their child, too late to prevent the accident but wishing they could. There may be dozens of crises like this in a parent's life, but it only takes one to permanently injure or kill a child. That is why parents and children need safety education. In the United States alone, several thousand children age 4 and under die each year because of accidental injuries. Forty-five times that number are hospitalized. Some 1,300 times that number go to hospital emergency rooms, and twice as many are treated at home. The leading causes of death for children 1 to 4 years old are motor vehicles, fires/burns, drowning, choking, poisonings and falls. When a serious accident does occur, special expertise and equipment may be needed to save the child's life. That is why a pediatric trauma center should be linked to every community.

PROJECT

Car seat programs

Funding—Moderate

Hours—Low

Personnel—Low

In a car that collides with a stationary object at 30 miles per hour, an unrestrained baby will suffer injuries equivalent to falling from a third-story window. That is why every child should ride in a car seat. Some parents cannot afford to purchase a car seat, and children visiting grandparents often don't bring a car seat along. Even when a family purchases a car seat, it sometimes isn't used because it's inconvenient or the baby is crying.

Kiwanis clubs can make sure that safety seats are available to everyone in the community by setting up a car seat loan program. This involves purchasing or securing donations of new car seats, establishing a location (car dealership, hospital, police station) from which the seats will be loaned or given, establishing the criteria for providing a seat to a family and making sure the people handing out the car seats have the training to install them properly.

Recent research also indicates that nine out of 10 car seats are improperly installed. This means that most children aren't really protected in an accident—and in a few cases, they are in greater danger than without the safety seat. Kiwanians can work with local SAFE KIDS coalitions or car dealerships to hold car seat safety checks. Training on fitting car seats is available from the (U.S.) National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

To learn more about car seat programs, contact the [National SAFE KIDS Campaign](#) at 202-662-0600 or the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at 888-327-4236 or www.nhtsa.dot.gov.

PROJECT

Distribute a home safety checklist

Funding—Low to moderate

Hours—Low

Personnel—Low

The possible hazards in a home are so numerous that parents often are not aware of them until tragedy strikes. A safety checklist can help parents identify and correct potential dangers in their homes. Clubs can reproduce the [Home Safety Checklist](#) and distribute it in preschools, hospitals, supermarkets, child care centers or anywhere parents of young children may be found. The checklist targets potential dangers throughout a home, from the garage and basement to the child's bedroom and outdoor play areas.

PROJECT

Educate the community about scald burns

Funding—Low
Hours—Low
Personnel—Low

Young children suffer scald burns very quickly because their skin is so thin—and scalds happen to young children more than half a million times a year. A club can promote the installation of anti-scald safety valves (that prevent tap water from reaching scalding temperatures) and work toward changes in plumbing codes to reduce maximum hot water temperatures in new construction to 120 degrees Fahrenheit.

To learn more about all kinds of burns and how they can be prevented, download the service bulletin on [severe burns](#).

PROJECT

Smoke alarm safety

Funding—Low to moderate
Hours—Moderate
Personnel—Moderate to high

One-third of the smoke detectors installed in houses don't work. If a fire occurs, they won't make a sound, because most smoke alarms still contain their original batteries. A simple project can solve this problem: an annual campaign for everyone to check the batteries in their smoke detectors. This can involve ads in the local paper or distribution of fliers. This campaign can be expanded to include distribution of batteries and smoke detectors in neighborhoods.

To learn more about what your club can do to promote fire safety, download the service bulletin on [smoke detector safety](#).

PROJECT

Initiate a water safety class for young children

Funding—Low
Hours—High
Personnel—High

Young children are fascinated by water. No matter what the weather, how they are dressed or how deep it is, they want to get into it. However, many young children don't know what to do in water over their heads. Many Red Cross chapters and YMCA facilities have swimming lessons for young children and their parents. The purpose of these programs is to help children develop the techniques and confidence necessary to stay afloat. A club could work with the local Red Cross or YMCA to offer this program, perhaps subsidize it and promote the program to ensure full classes. Distribute copies of these [Open Water Safety](#) tips at classes and other health fairs so parents can reinforce these guidelines at home.

PROJECT

Distribute choke-test tubes

Funding—Low to moderate
Hours—Low
Personnel—Low

An adult learns about an object by looking at it. A young child learns about it by putting it in his mouth. Telling a toddler to stop putting objects in his mouth has little or no effect. The proper safety precaution is to make sure the child doesn't play with toys on which he could choke, and there is a device—called a choke-test tube—that helps parents determine this. If a toy or the smallest piece of a toy fit inside the tube, it is unsafe for children age 3 and under. The federal government has established a size for safe toys for kids under 3: A small part should be at least 1¼ inch diameter and 2¼ inch long. Any part smaller than this is a potential choking hazard. When parents shop for a toy, they need to make sure it has no parts smaller than these dimensions. Inexpensive, clear plastic tubes that parents can use to test small parts are available from stores specializing in children's toys and furnishings. A toilet paper roll or other empty cardboard tube would also work to test toys if a choke-test tube is unavailable. Distributing the tubes and educating parents could be a project by itself, or it could be part of a parenting fair or seminar.

PROJECT

Educate the community about poisons

Funding—Low to moderate
Hours—Moderate
Personnel—Low

The same impulse that leads a child to swallow a toy may impel him to drink or eat a poisonous substance. Clubs can help parents through an awareness campaign that reminds them to keep paints, cleaning compounds, beauty aids and even house plants out of the reach of young children. "Mr. Yuck" stickers can be distributed, so that parents can label poisonous substances with a consistent warning that they discuss with their children. Contact the local hospital or poison control center to get the stickers. Finally, a club could print and distribute copies of a chart that tells parents what to do if their children consume a poisonous substance. Educational pamphlets on poisons, designed for distribution in the community, are available from the [National Safety Council](#) at 800-621-7619, and the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) at 800-433-9016.

PROJECT

Install gates and bars to prevent falls

Funding—Low
Hours—Moderate
Personnel—Moderate

Safety devices that prevent falls are quite simple and obvious. A gate at a stairway will keep a child from trying to climb up or down. A bar across a large bay window will keep a child from leaning against a screen and falling through it. Some families need assistance in purchasing or installing these devices. A club could advertise its willingness to help families solve such safety problems and send out a fix-it team to respond to each call.

PROJECT

Train baby-sitters

Funding—Moderate
Hours—Moderate
Personnel—Low

A baby-sitter needs to do more than simply watch a child under her care. She needs to know how to prevent injuries and respond decisively to accidents. The Safe Sitter training program teaches young people 11 to 13 years old how to care for children. The course instructs how to deal with medical emergencies, the responsibilities of safe baby-sitting, age-appropriate entertainment and the basics of starting a business. Finally, it concludes with a rigorous exam. A club interested in establishing a Safe Sitter program should work with a hospital, school, library or youth agency. The program must be run by a certified instructor and requires a CPR mannequin, dolls, diapers, baby bottles and other equipment. Initial certification is a one-time cost of \$375, and training is \$50 per person, plus travel. Three or four people should be trained to teach the course. To learn more about the Safe Sitter program, call 800-255-4089 or visit www.safesitter.org.

PROJECT

Support a pediatric trauma program

Funding—Variable
Hours—Variable
Personnel—Variable

Doctors have discovered that children's responses to injuries are different from adults. To properly treat a severely injured child requires special techniques and equipment. Doctors must understand the different types of injuries that can occur to a young body, a child's unique response to blood loss and the appropriate drug dosages. Often the child can't explain what is wrong, and his or her emotional reaction can be severe. Even the equipment must be a special size to fit the child. A hospital that treats only a few seriously injured children each year may not be prepared to meet these special needs, and that can mean the difference between life and death.

That is why Kiwanis clubs in six districts have worked with leading children's hospitals to set up pediatric trauma centers. These centers then offer support to other hospitals and develop a coordinated system to ensure that severely injured children throughout the state or states receive the care they need. The most advanced program is in New England, where the Kiwanis district helped found the Kiwanis Pediatric Trauma Institute, the first pediatric trauma center in the world. This program has developed several ways for Kiwanis clubs to provide support, including fundraising, training for medical personnel, equipment purchases and building of landing pads.

To learn more about ways Kiwanis clubs can help, download the service bulletin on [pediatric trauma](#).

Fundraising—Establishing a significant program in a major children's hospital requires that the Kiwanis district raise at least one-quarter of the funds needed. Depending on the district and the size of the program, the annual commitment could be \$50,000 to \$250,000 a year, requiring every club in the district to make significant contributions.

Training programs—The way children are treated from the moment help arrives, the accuracy and speed of the information radioed back to the hospital, the time spent arranging for transportation to a tertiary care hospital—all of these can have a significant impact on a child's recovery. For this reason, clubs have sponsored training programs for emergency medical technicians and nurses or arranged for doctors to attend meetings sponsored by the pediatric trauma center.

Equipment purchase—Ambulance equipment that fits an adult may be useless for a child. Many clubs help purchase pediatric equipment for ambulances or local hospitals.

Landing pads—To ensure that a severely traumatized child can quickly be transported from the local hospital to the tertiary care center (the pediatric trauma center), clubs have built helicopter-landing pads near their hospitals.

PROJECT

Support the Children's Miracle Network Celebration

Funding—Variable
Hours—Variable
Personnel—Variable

The Children's Miracle Network (CMN) was created by the Osmond Foundation to alleviate children's hospitals' immense financial burdens. CMN sponsors a broadcast each year during the first weekend in June for children's hospitals and other hospitals with a strong emphasis on pediatrics that are members of the Children's Miracle Network. All funds raised locally go directly to the children's hospital in the community where the money was raised. None goes to a national office.

Kiwanis International has been a national sponsor since the broadcast was founded in 1982. Kiwanis clubs have raised several million dollars for children's hospitals since then. A club might consider starting any number of Young Children: Priority One projects at an area children's hospital, and donate the funds raised for it through CMN. (Be sure that the hospital is a member of the [Children's Miracle Network](#).) Club members should discuss with the hospital's CMN coordinator the possibility of setting up a special Kiwanis Young Children: Priority One fund, so that the club can have a better idea of how its funds are affecting the well-being of young children.

Download the service bulletin on the [Children's Miracle Network](#), which explains the celebration and other fundraisers in greater detail.

PROJECT

Kiwanis dolls

Funding—Low to moderate
Hours—Low
Personnel—Moderate

The hospital can be a scary, overwhelming place for a child. The gift of a Kiwanis doll during a hospital stay can provide comfort and a way for a child to express himself. Using the provided template, Kiwanis dolls are cut, sewn and stuffed by Kiwanis volunteers and are distributed to children by medical personnel. Because they are soft and made of a plain cotton fabric, they can be decorated with markers by patients to show injuries and to express how they feel. The medical staff can also use the dolls to explain a procedure or treatment, helping children to understand what is happening.

Read testimonials and tips for promoting this program with parents and hospital staff when you download the sewing/stuffing instructions and the doll pattern included in the service bulletin on [Kiwanis dolls](#).

Organizations

Fulfillment Center March of Dimes

1275 Mamaroneck Ave.
White Plains, NY 10605
914-997-4488
800-367-6630
www.marchofdimes.com

American Academy of Pediatrics

141 Northwest Point Blvd.
Elk Grove Village, IL 60007
800-433-9016
847-434-4000
Fax: 847-434-8000
www.aap.org/catch

National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)

1313 L St. NW
Suite 500
Washington, DC 20005
202-232-8777
800-424-2460
www.naeyc.org

National Association for Family Child Care (NAFCC)

1743 W. Alexander St.
Salt Lake City, UT 84119
801-886-2232
800-359-3817
Fax: 801-886-2325
www.nafcc.org

National Association of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (NACCRRRA)

3101 Wilson Blvd.
Suite 350
Arlington, VA 22201
703-341-4100
www.naccrra.net

Reading Is Fundamental

1825 Connecticut Ave. NW
Suite 400
Washington, DC 20009
202-536-3400
877-RIF-READ
www.rif.org

Read Around the World Branded Programs Department

Kiwanis International
3636 Woodview Trace
Indianapolis, IN 46268
317-875-8755, ext. 211
800-KIWANIS
www.kiwanis.org

Reach Out and Read National Center

56 Roland St.
Suite 100D
Boston, MA 02129-1243
617-455-0600
Fax: 617-455-0601
www.reachoutandread.org

National Education Association

1201 16th St. NW
Washington, DC 20036-3290
202-833-4000
www.nea.org/readacross

HIPPY USA

220 East 23rd St.
Suite 300
New York, NY 10010
212-532-7730
Fax: 212-532-7899
www.hippyusa.org

National Center for Family Literacy

325 W Main St.
Suite 300
Louisville, KY 40202-4237
502-584-1133
www.famlit.org

National SAFE KIDS Campaign

1301 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20004
202-662-0600
Fax: 202-393-2072
www.safekids.org

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

400 7th St. SW
Washington, DC 20590
202-366-7800
888-327-4236
www.nhtsa.dot.gov

National Safety Council

121 Spring Lake
Itasca, IL 60143
800-621-7619
630-285-1121
630-285-1315
E-mail: info@nsc.org
www.nsc.org

Safe Sitter

8604 Allisonville Rd.
Suite 248
Indianapolis, IN 46250
800-255-4089
317-596-5001
Fax: 317-596-5008
www.safesitter.org

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205 West 700 South
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