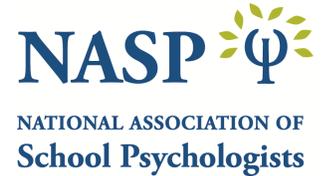


Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NASP Calls for End to Policy Separating Families at the Border

Bethesda, MD—The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) stands with our colleague organizations, including the American Psychological Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics, in calling upon the Trump Administration to end its policy of separating children from their families at the border. While NASP does not claim expertise in immigration policy, we are experts in what is harmful to children and families. Needlessly and abruptly taking children from their parents is most definitely harmful and must stop.

NASP is committed to ensuring that all children and youth attend schools and live in communities that are free from violence. Importantly, we are committed to meeting the mental and behavioral health needs of all children, regardless of race, sex, ethnicity, religion, disability status, real or perceived gender identity, sexual orientation, or immigration status. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the U.N. in 1989, and endorsed by NASP, asserts that in all actions pertaining to children, the primary concern should be the best interests of the child. In addition, all children are to be cared for and protected from all forms of violence and exploitation in all settings and sectors in their lives. All children have the right to survive and develop healthily.

The current practice of separating children from their parents at the border violates all of these principles. It is intentional infliction of trauma as a deterrent to attempting to enter the United States. This is a form of emotional violence. Such trauma can have life-long consequences with respect to children's mental and behavioral health and their academic success. Many of these children may have already experienced trauma, which puts them at even greater risk of adverse outcomes when wrenched from their most important sense of security and stability—their parents. As a result, many of these children and adolescents are at risk for entering an already broken and dysfunctional foster care system. Some of these young people will attend U.S. schools, where they will require comprehensive social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health supports to mitigate the negative effects of such a traumatic experience.

School psychologists are committed to helping to support these children to minimize their trauma and to support their mental and behavioral well-being. Our first focus, though, is always on prevention, which means keeping these children and families together as they navigate the immigration process.

Additionally, the reports and images of the fear, anxiety, confusion, and grief being experienced by these children and families poses potential psychological risks for immigrant and refugee children already in the United States. Many of these children live in fear on a daily basis that one or more of their parents will be deported. The Administration's child separation practice at the border can make

this fear feel all the more real, potentially leading to the increased likelihood of negative mental health outcomes such as anxiety and depression for thousands of children in schools and communities across the country.

There is no justification for intentional cruelty against children under any circumstance for any reason. Doing so not only undermines the well-being of the children involved, it also diminishes the core values of social justice and human rights for the nation as a whole. NASP urges the Administration to end this policy and to protect the rights of these children, and all children, as outlined in the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- [NASP Position Paper on Child Rights](#)
- [Supporting Refugee Children: Tips for Educators](#)
- [Supporting Vulnerable Children in Stressful Time](#)
- [Treating Toxic Stress in Immigrant Children](#)
- [Unauthorized Immigrant Children in the United States: Educational Policy, Practices, and the Role of School Psychology](#)

For more information, visit www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/diversity/social-justice.

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