



The Association for Child and Youth Care Practice (ACYCP) finds the United States government's policy to separate children from immigrant families as a coercive practice to deter illegal immigration in violation of the Code of Ethics as outlined in the Standards for Practice of North American Child and Youth Care Professionals as well as the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of the Child. Specifically, we condemn the following practices affecting children and families:

- The separation of children from their families as a deterrent to illegal immigration;
- The failure to return more than 1500 immigrant children to their families;
- Careless practices resulting in children being 'lost' in the system; and
- Inhumane and abhorrent conditions in detention centers housing immigrant children and youth.

In following these practices, the government of the United States is not only in violation of basic human rights, it is also knowingly and egregiously participating in practices that disrupt the healthy development of children, youth, and families. The failure to return children to their families is counter to decades of research on attachment, and the number of unaccounted for children is horrific, especially considering that these children likely disappeared into human trafficking circles.

Not only are these practices immoral, they are also inherently traumatic. Research indicates that traumatic events are especially deleterious to youth, resulting in lifelong, systemic problems related to health, the formation of healthy relationships, and the ability to engage as productive members of society. The United States, therefore, is enacting irrevocable damage to the lifelong human capital for thousands of children and youth.

ACYCP serves as the United States' professional development association for child and youth workers and represents the United States to the International Federation of Educative Communities (FICE-USA), the world-wide body addressing the needs of children. We are at a loss of how to explain these uninformed, undue practices to our international colleagues.

We call on all Americans to recognize this emergency and honor our constitutional heritage to extend inalienable human rights and respect to all. To preserve these rights, it is the privilege and responsibility of all Americans to vote, and considering the matter at hand, voting has become a matter of professional responsibility for all child and youth workers and advocates for the healthy development of children and families. Not only is it our responsibility to vote, but we also need to inform the general public about the gravity of this situation as well as to educate youth and families on the importance of voting, including information on how to vote.

Let your voices be heard, lest these families' cries of pain and agony go unnoticed.

ACYCP Board of Directors, June 2018