



June 22, 2018*

Institutional Position Urging Protection of Children and Families Attempting to Immigrate to the United States

WHEREAS, on April 6, 2018, the United States Attorney General's office began implementing a new "zero tolerance" policy in which the U.S. Homeland Security Department would refer individuals making illegal border crossings to the Justice Department for criminal prosecution;

WHEREAS, facing criminal charges, parents and adult care givers (hereinafter referred to as "parents") who cross the border with children because they have chosen to leave their country of origin, will be sent to detention centers;

WHEREAS, parents who cross the border with children in pursuit of asylum may be detained;

WHEREAS, *Reuters* reported that over 2,300 children were separated from their parents at the United States-Mexico border between May 5, 2018 and June 9, 2018 under the "zero tolerance" policy;

WHEREAS, some of the children separated from their parents are toddlers or younger, and are too young to be questioned or understand why they are being taken from their parents;

WHEREAS, the United Nations referred to forced separation of children from their parents as "counter to human rights standards and principles;"

WHEREAS, children depend on their parents for safety and support;

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WHEREAS, separating children from their parents is highly stressful for children and can cause lifelong trauma, increased risk of social impairment and other mental illnesses, such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder, as well as disease, disability and early death;

WHEREAS, pediatric health professionals recommend the importance of avoiding adverse childhood experiences to ensure the healthy growth and development of children; and

WHEREAS, children who are detained with their parents/caregivers need immediate access to comprehensive physical and mental health services, nutrition and safety to assure their health and well-being.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago supports policy and program initiatives that seek to protect the health and well-being of children and families in the highly stressful circumstance of immigration, including: keeping parents and children together; reunifying the parents that have been separated from their children; minimizing prolonged detainment and uncertainty for families; providing full and immediate access to physical and mental health services to assure that the children and their families' health, safety, and well-being are protected; and endeavoring to place the well-being and health of all children as a priority in future immigration policy decisions.

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