



Executive Summary: Trump Administration Immigration Policies Are Harming Children and Families

All children—no matter their background or circumstances—deserve the opportunity to just be kids: To know the love of their families. To have a safe, stable place to live with plenty of healthy food to eat. To play with their friends. To go to school and learn without fear. To grow up to become thriving, productive adults.

The Trump Administration has demonstrated time and again that it is indifferent to the harm its policy decisions inflict on children in immigrant families across the country, and in some cases is deliberately using harm to children as a political lever. As a direct consequence, the lives of families are being upended by harsh immigration policies and pervasive fear. In late 2019 and early 2020, the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), in collaboration with Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy (MIRA) Coalition, Charlotte Center for Legal Advocacy, and South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center, conducted a series of site visits to deepen our understanding of how immigrant families are affected by immigration policy changes at state and federal levels.

We held conversations with immigrant-serving organizations in Boston, MA, Charlotte, NC, and Columbia, SC that reveal parents are altering their daily lives and avoiding public health, nutrition, and education programs—including for their children who are U.S. citizens—in response to the administration's relentless attacks. We heard stories of parents being detained in front of their children, kids who are afraid to go outside and play, and children experiencing chronic stress that could have long-term consequences. Although the demographics and politics of Massachusetts and the Carolinas differ, we heard several consistent themes across all the interviews. In both reports, we found that fears are disrupting families' day-to-day lives and that chronic stress is taking a toll on the wellbeing of children of all ages. In nearly every interview, we also learned that families are avoiding publicly funded health and nutrition services for which they are eligible. The administration's relentless drumbeat of anti-immigrant rhetoric and racist immigration policies have left many families terrified of what happens when they leave their homes and reluctant to seek resources that can help their families thrive.

Children and families deserve better. We need to reverse course and help ensure that children and their families are on a path to success by advocating for policies that truly support economic security—rather than undermining our nation's collective wellbeing and long-term success. After all, every child deserves the chance to just be a kid.

Trump Administration Immigration Policies are Harming Children and Families in the Greater Boston Area.

Between September and October of 2019, CLASP conducted semi-structured interviews with organizations in the Greater Boston area. Participants included more than 30 staff across 15 organizations that provide the following services: primary health care, patient support and care coordination, mental and behavioral health care, center-based child care and early education, home visiting and early intervention, nutrition assistance, and immigration advocacy and legal services.

Trump Administration Immigration Policies are Harming Children and Families in the Carolinas.

Between January and March 2020, CLASP conducted interviews with organizations in the Columbia, SC and Charlotte, NC metropolitan areas either in person or by phone. Participants included more than 20 staff across 9 organizations that provide the following services: primary health care, mental and behavioral health care, health insurance navigation and care coordination, immigration advocacy and legal services, community organizing, center-based child care and early education, and home visiting and early intervention.