APRIL 2026

EVEN THE PLAYGROUND ISN'T SAFE:

How Immigration Policies are Harming Our Youngest Children

Getty/MesquitaFMS

BY

SUMA SETTY, MPH

KAELIN RAPPORT, PhD

EMILY RODRIGUEZ

RENATO ROCHA

CLASP

The Center for Law and Social Policy

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors are grateful to the numerous individuals and organizations who recruited for and facilitated focus groups and interviews with immigrant parents, early care educators, and other community advocates. They are incredible organizers facing unprecedented barriers who will do anything for their communities. We also thank those who reviewed the drafts of these reports. These collaborators and reviewers include the African Bureau for Immigrants and Social Affairs, Children at Risk, Colorado Statewide Parent Coalition, Latino Community Fund, New Jersey Alliance for Immigrant Justice, and Washington State Parent Ambassadors. We would also like to uplift Autistic Self-Advocacy Network, Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund, Linda Corchado, Cindy Liou at OneAmerica, Liza Davis at The Children's Partnership, Hiro Yoshikawa, and Mark Greenberg for their advice and guidance. Wendy Cervantes, director of Immigration and Immigrant Families at CLASP, provided courageous and empathetic leadership on the genesis and completion of this project. Mikayla Slaydon of the CLASP Child Care and Early Education team provided critical research and analytic support. We extend our gratitude to CLASPers Juan Gomez, Priya Pandey, Stephanie Schmit, Isha Weerasinghe, and Rachel Wilensky for contributing their time and expertise. In addition, Sarah Erdreich, Grace Li, Nic Martinez, and Tom Salyers of CLASP's Communications team provided critical editing and project management support. We are also grateful to Melissa Stek at MountainGem Advocacy & Communications as well as HerreraDesigns for their intrepid, good-humored attitude and compassionate design.

Support for this research was provided by a number of foundations, including the Foundation for Child Development, Irving Harris Foundation, The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. The views expressed here do not necessarily reflect the views of the foundations.

We also are deeply appreciative of interviewees for their compassion and contributing their perspectives. Most importantly, we thank the immigrant parents for their time, perspectives, and opening their hearts to us during focus groups. ■

DESIGNERS' NOTE

Getty/ MStudioImages

Those impacted by family separation and those striving to transform the system are more than numbers and statistics. They are parents seeking safety and stability, children searching for belonging, and advocates who refuse to accept injustice as inevitable. They are people who came looking for security and found uncertainty. They are lives that have been shaped and transformed by the power of community and those who challenge and reimagine the systems around them. The design of these reports is meant to honor this transformative journey, and each element has been intentionally crafted with honesty and care.

The visual narrative moves from rupture toward restoration. The motif of the tear emerged as a way to make the disruption visible, reflecting not only moments of separation but the lasting strain placed on families and communities. But the story does not end there. Rather than concealing the damage, the design acknowledges it. Inspired by Kintsugi, the concept of the mended fabric highlights repair without erasing what came before. Fractures are rejoined and remain visible, representing the work of the providers, advocates, and communities supporting families and advancing change. Together, these elements show not only how families experience separation, but how they find stability and hope through community support.

Each tear becomes a part of the larger story. A story where strength emerges through repair and community support and where lived experience informs the path forward. A story where healing is not about returning to the past, but about building something stronger and more intentional. We invite you to engage with these stories as they are: complex, human, and still unfolding.

Since the beginning of President Trump's second term, all communities have felt the blunt force of indiscriminate and cruel anti-immigrant policies. The expansion of immigration enforcement, decimation of pathways for legal immigration status, and severe restrictions on public benefits have caused immigrant families across the country to feel a heightened sense of uncertainty, fear, and anxiety. States have either attempted to serve as protective buffers or force multipliers for federal immigration enforcement activities, but wanton anti-immigrant actions have negatively impacted immigrants everywhere.

Children ages six and under, especially those in immigrant families, are bearing witness to and internalizing the fears, arrests, and deportations of the adults around them. Young children have a range of developmental capabilities; some cannot yet talk, walk, read, or speak. And they certainly cannot vote. When young children at crucial stages of development have their sense of safety with their primary caregiver threatened, however, their foundation for health and well-being becomes shaky. Research has consistently demonstrated that hardship and stress in the early years can particularly compromise healthy development and growth in the short and long terms.[1] The cumulative impact of anti-immigrant policies will reverberate throughout the lifespans of these young children, affecting their health, economic security, and opportunities to thrive. The harm to children must be documented as the first step toward collective responsibility and accountability.

Between June and December of 2025, CLASP staff conducted focus groups with **56** at-risk immigrant parents and family caregivers of **74** children ages six and under. Additionally, staff interviewed over **67** child care and early education staff, WIC staff, home visitors, health care workers, and community advocates in Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, Texas, and Washington. Parents and family caregivers shared how the increases in immigration enforcement and related activities have created an environment of fear and isolation. This is affecting their day-to-day lives and access to basic supports. They shared how the constant sense of uncertainty and stress is negatively affecting their physical and mental health and their deep concern about the impact of stress and isolation on their children. Most of all, they were terrified about being separated from their children. Conversation after conversation confirmed that anti-immigrant rhetoric, policies, and practices are significantly harming the security of young children in their care. Parents want nothing more than to provide their children with a safe and healthy environment to thrive.

A companion report, "Caregiving in Crisis: How Immigration Policies are Undermining Early Care and Education Programs," focuses on insights from interviewees and the impact to early care and education programs and providers.[2]

The stories from these reports demonstrate the dire and worsening threats to children's and families' welfare because of anti-immigrant practices, policies, and sentiment.[3] Policymakers, funders, and advocates must take action to protect these families now and in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FEDERAL POLICYMAKERS

We call on federal policymakers to:

1. Limit immigration enforcement in places critical to child and community well-being.
2. Promote family unity by prioritizing the use of prosecutorial discretion, ensuring that immigration judges make decisions based on hardship to children regarding a parent's ability to enter or remain in the U.S., and safeguarding parents' and guardians' ability to make decisions about the care of their children.
3. Advocate for policies and practices that protect the needs and rights of adults with disabilities as well as their immigrant caregivers.
4. Restore access to and protect funding for programs that allow families with children to meet their basic needs and support their well-being.
5. Support efforts to reduce disparities in and increase access to mental and behavioral health care.
6. Cease funding enforcement actions that demonstrably harm children and families. Congress must refuse to direct additional funding for DHS removal and enforcement operations and enact accountability guardrails.
7. Protect the status of people authorized to be in the U.S. and expand pathways to legal status and citizenship.
8. Uphold due process and increase access to legal support and justice for children and families.

Getty/ Bloomberg Creative

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR STATE POLICYMAKERS

In the absence of federal reform, state policymakers can support families with young children by:

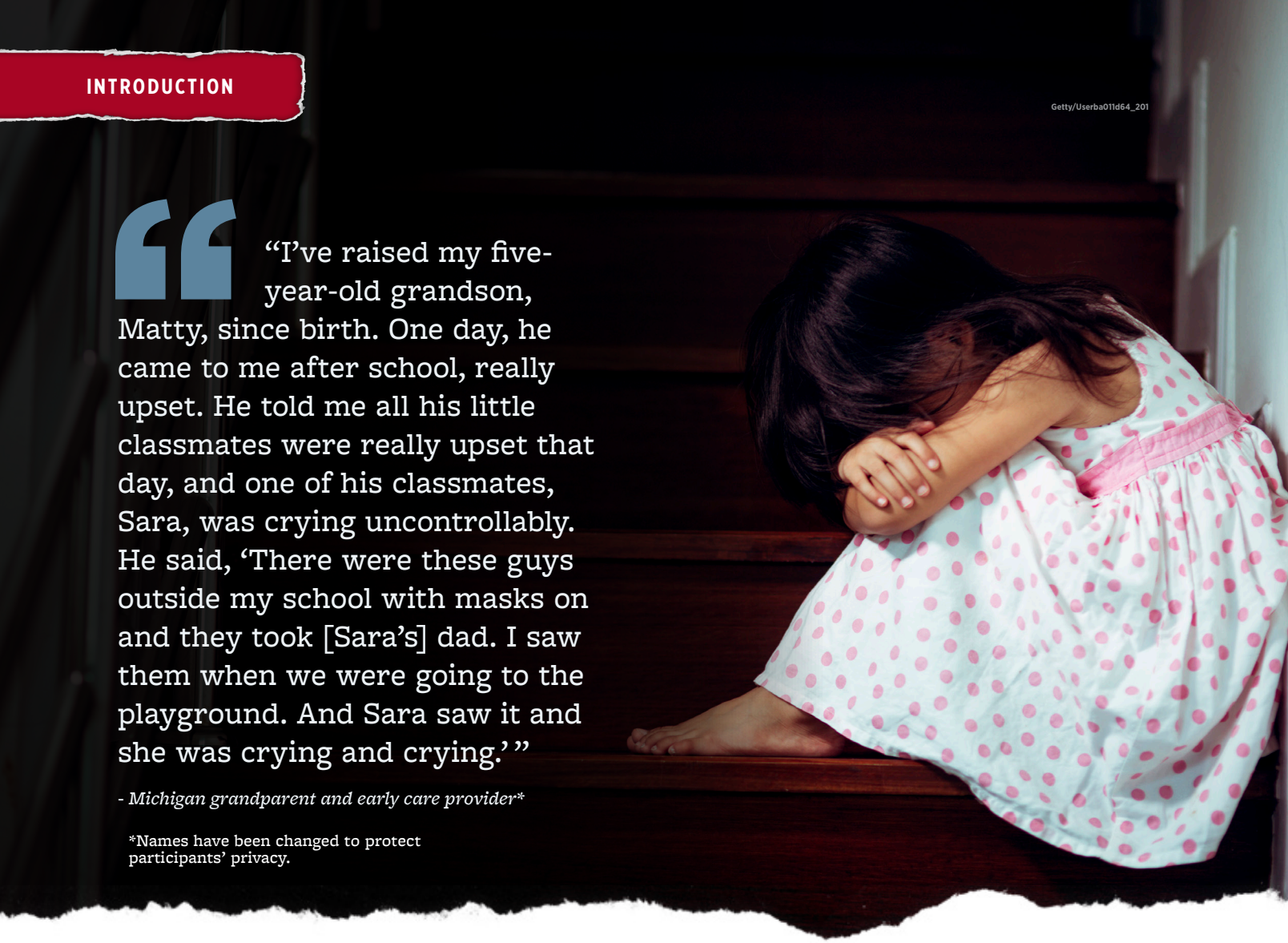
1. Enacting policies that limit immigration enforcement in areas important to families and children, including schools, hospitals, and early education centers.
2. Enacting policies that prevent cooperation between federal immigration authorities and local law enforcement.
3. Enacting policies that protect the personal data and information of participants in public benefit programs and their family members.
4. Enacting policies that allow parents to easily create temporary guardianship and care authorization plans for their children.
5. Reforming the child welfare system to increase the chances of reunification with a detained or deported parent.
6. Expanding and preserving access to critical basic needs supports, especially mental health support for children.
7. Enacting policies to guarantee legal representation for immigrants in civil immigration proceedings.

Getty/ EJ_Rodriquez

THE PHILANTHROPIC COMMUNITY CAN PROVIDE IMMEDIATE INVESTMENT IN:

1. Urgent, direct support to children in immigrant families and the programs that serve them.
2. Litigation efforts to delay or stop harmful policies and practices.
3. Policy advocacy at all levels of government.
4. Efforts to support the mental health of staff at organizations that are on the frontlines of immigration enforcement.
5. Community-based maternal and infant mental health interventions.
6. Affordable legal services and representation for immigrant families.
7. Strong multi-racial collaborations across all sectors serving children.
8. Creation and dissemination of resources for early care and education staff.
9. Outreach and information dissemination to inform immigrant families about policies that affect them, their rights, and how they can advocate for themselves and their communities.
10. Efforts to connect researchers and advocates.
11. Documentation on the impacts of immigration policies on young children and their caregivers.
12. Awareness-building among the public, policymakers, and other funders about the importance of young children of immigrants to our country's future.
13. Narrative change efforts to ensure that the general public as well as policymakers are aware of the archaic nature of the immigration system, the humanity of immigrants, and the need for comprehensive child-centered reforms.

Policymakers and funders must act now to mitigate the harm of immigration enforcement on young children. The policies and practices that affect our youngest population reflect the values of the society we live in and provide the foundation for a stable future. All children deserve to live with safety, security, and the promise of a morally just society.



> "I've raised my five-year-old grandson, Matty, since birth. One day, he came to me after school, really upset. He told me all his little classmates were really upset that day, and one of his classmates, Sara, was crying uncontrollably. He said, 'There were these guys outside my school with masks on and they took [Sara's] dad. I saw them when we were going to the playground. And Sara saw it and she was crying and crying.' "
>
> *- Michigan grandparent and early care provider**

*Names have been changed to protect participants' privacy.

The above account is a snapshot of the terror that young children in immigrant families and their parents and peers experience every day. Between June and December 2025, we spoke with 56 at-risk immigrant parents and family caregivers of 74 children ages six and under, and 67 people who provide services to these families or advocate on their behalf in Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, Texas, and Washington.[4] The conversations demonstrate how inescapable the anti-immigrant environment and the fears of immigration enforcement are for these families. Immigration activities deeply harm their daily lives and well-being, especially that of the young children in their care.

"Even the Playground Isn't Safe" builds on CLASP's 2018 report, "Our Children's Fear: Immigration Policy's Effects on Young Children," to continue documenting the impact of harmful immigration policies and activities on those who are caring for the nation's youngest children.[5] This report shares and uplifts the experiences and perspectives of parents and providers and offers ways that funders, advocates, and policymakers can mitigate the harm. "Even the Playground Isn't Safe" covers our research methods; the political context around the current moment; findings from focus groups with parents of young children who are at risk of detention and deportation; and insights from community leaders and early care educators. It concludes with policy recommendations at both the federal and state level to curb the harm of immigration enforcement on families with young children.

The parents represented in this report come from a range of backgrounds and countries. Their socioeconomic levels are different and they have completed various levels of education. Their reasons for coming to the U.S. are diverse, as are their immigration statuses. But they are united by an acute fear for their children's well-being.

Unfortunately, these fears are justified. Peer-reviewed studies, news reports, and public documentation have provided undeniable evidence of the harm that immigration activities have on children in immigrant families. The cruel measures immigration authorities are taking have only increased in recent months and show a complete disregard for the impact on children, from reports of inhumane conditions in family detention centers to the use of tear gas near schools.[6] Children ages six and under are facing multiple threats to their emotional and physical well-being. For young children at crucial developmental stages, when their sense of safety with their primary caregiver is threatened, their foundation for health and well-being becomes shaky. Research has consistently demonstrated that hardship and toxic stress in the early years can particularly compromise healthy development and growth in the short and long terms.[7] The cumulative impact of anti-immigrant policies will reverberate throughout the lifespans of these young children, affecting their health, economic security, and opportunities to thrive.

In addition to the dangers immigrant children are facing, the family caregivers featured in this report are at risk of immigration enforcement. While undocumented parents and caregivers have always faced some risk, previous policies had provided some level of protection for parents of minor children and other immigrants with humanitarian concerns, whereas now, immigration agents have been afforded widespread authority to carry out brazen, unpredictable, and indiscriminate enforcement actions. Parents and providers know people in their families or communities who have been detained and deported and don't know what laws will be enforced, or when. They are also increasingly unsure if their constitutional rights will be respected. As a result, new levels of insecurity and risk shape their daily lives.

While the majority of family caregivers were parents, a small number were aunts or uncles; for the sake of simplicity, "parents" is used in this report to refer to all family caregivers of young children. Additionally, while young children are typically defined as ages five and under, this report includes the experiences of people whose children were six and older at the time of conversations with parents. The majority of parent participants were from Latin and Central American countries who spoke Spanish; one focus group in Michigan consisted of Black West African immigrants who spoke Wolof or English. While "Even the Playground Isn't Safe" did not collect the immigration status of parents, community-based partners recruited parents who self-identified as at risk of immigration enforcement or who the partners identified as being at risk.

A companion report, "Caregiving in Crisis: How Immigration Policies Are Undermining Early Care and Education Programs," focuses on findings from interviews with people who work regularly with immigrant families with young children, including child care providers and administrative staff, home visiting staff, staff who administer the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and others who have dedicated their livelihoods to supporting families with children.[8]

Taken together, the stories from these reports demonstrate the dire and worsening threats to children's and families' well-being because of immigration threats and anti-immigrant sentiment.[9] Policymakers and funders must take action to protect these families now and in the future. ■

CLASP staff partnered with community-based organizations with trusted local connections to recruit parents of young children who are at risk of immigration enforcement for focus groups. While we did not specifically ask what the parents' countries of origin were, the majority were Spanish speakers who identified as Latino or Hispanic. One group in Michigan consisted of only West African immigrants. Those who did share their countries of origin were from Mexico, Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru, Honduras, El Salvador, Nigeria, Senegal, Cameroon, Mauritania, and Gambia. CLASP and our partners also reached out to providers who serve these families for semi-structured interviews about their work.

Between June and December 2025, the research team observed one focus group each in Texas, Washington, Michigan, and Georgia, and two focus groups with parents in both Colorado and New Jersey. These locations were chosen because they represent a mix of political leanings: states were red (Texas and Georgia), blue (New Jersey and Washington), and purple (Michigan and Colorado). Focus groups facilitators were advocates already known by and supportive of these communities. CLASP staff were present during the focus groups to take notes and audio recordings and compensate participants once the sessions were complete.

Focus groups and interviews were audio recorded, transcribed, coded, and analyzed using Dedoose qualitative software alongside notes taken by CLASP staff during focus groups and interviews to find overarching themes among the experiences of parents in immigrant families with young children. Additionally, CLASP staff conducted follow-up virtual meetings with parents from the focus groups to ensure that the initial interpretations of the information accurately captured their experiences and to share resources about their parental rights and how to create a family preparedness plan. CLASP staff also distributed a secure survey to all community partners that they could share with focus group participants who were interested in offering additional insights about their experiences.

Ultimately, the findings reflect the insights and perspectives of 72 parents, 56 of whom have children ages six and under; and 67 early education and child care providers and others who serve immigrant families with young children like WIC staff, community advocates, home visitors, and health care providers. The majority of interviewees were those who work in the field of early education. This group includes two child care providers in Illinois who were interviewed during the heightened period of immigration enforcement in Chicago in fall 2025, also known as Operation Midway Blitz. ■

Getty/ Bloomberg Creative

Since January 2025, the federal immigration policy landscape has been defined by a sweeping and coordinated effort to expand enforcement, restrict legal status, deter access to public benefits, and destabilize family life. Taken together, these actions threaten children's health, safety, and development and represent a broader strategy that makes stable family life increasingly out of reach for immigrant communities.[10]

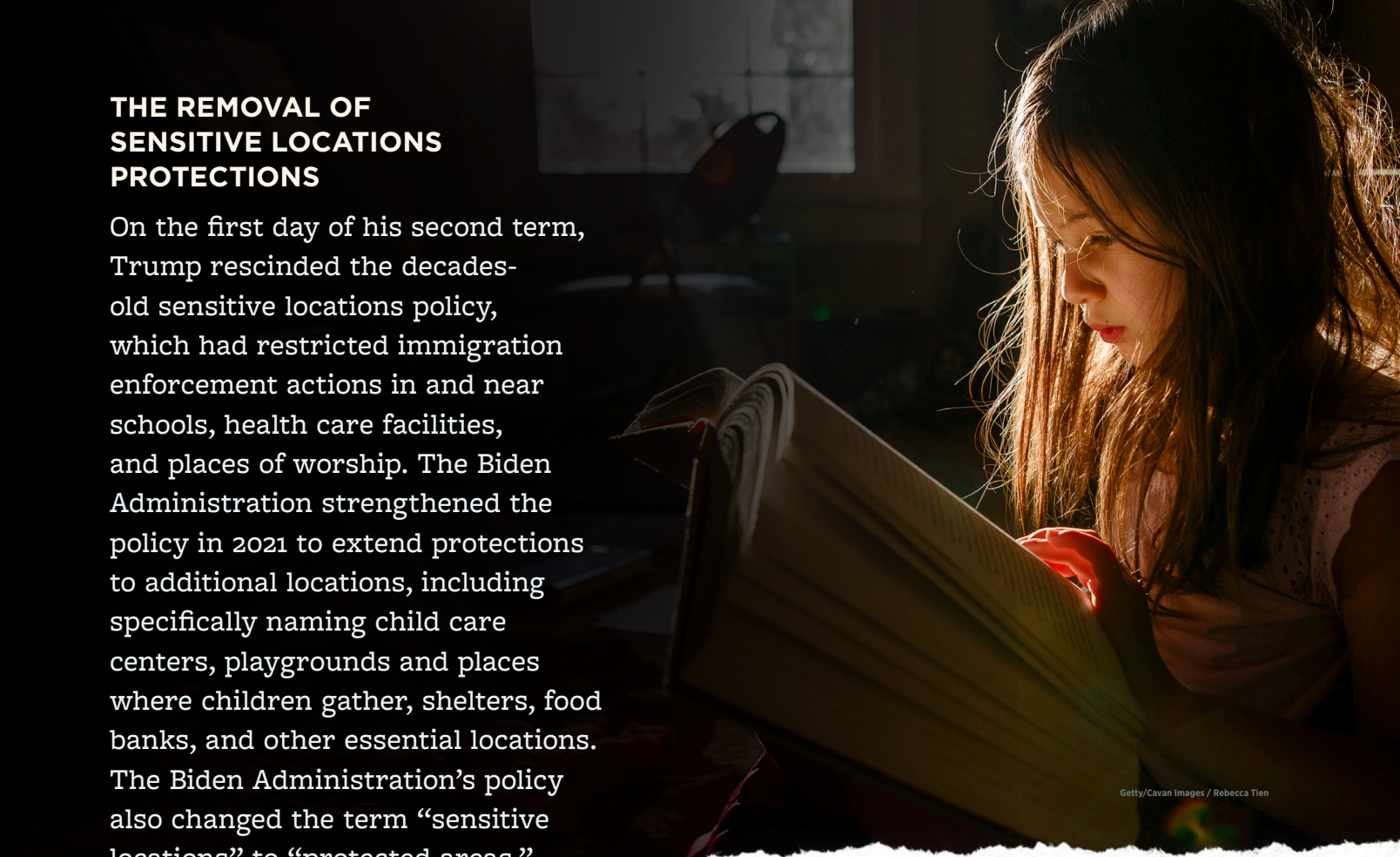
FEDERAL POLICY LANDSCAPE

Expansion and Deepening of Immigration Enforcement

The Trump Administration rapidly expanded interior immigration enforcement through executive orders and administrative changes. It dramatically increased 287(g) agreements, which empower local law enforcement to function as immigration agents. Since the beginning of Trump's second term, the number of these agreements has risen to more than seven times its January 2025 level.[11] This expansion embeds immigration enforcement into routine local policing, discouraging community members from reporting crimes or seeking help.

THE REMOVAL OF SENSITIVE LOCATIONS PROTECTIONS

On the first day of his second term, Trump rescinded the decades-old sensitive locations policy, which had restricted immigration enforcement actions in and near schools, health care facilities, and places of worship. The Biden Administration strengthened the policy in 2021 to extend protections to additional locations, including specifically naming child care centers, playgrounds and places where children gather, shelters, food banks, and other essential locations. The Biden Administration's policy also changed the term "sensitive locations" to "protected areas," although these terms can be used interchangeably.[12] The Trump Administration issued a new policy that extends minimal protections to a narrower set of locations, allowing ICE agents to carry out enforcement activities in these locations with either written or verbal authorization. The significant weakening of the policy has led to increased reports of ICE presence in spaces previously considered safe, exposing children to traumatizing ICE raids, forcing schools and child care centers to find ways to protect students and staff, and deterring families from accessing health care, early education, and other critical needs.



Getty/Cavan Images / Rebecca Tien

Increased Family Detention and Threats to Parental Rights

The Trump Administration continues to provide guidance for preserving parental rights and ensuring ICE protects those rights during detainment. However, the administration replaced prior guidance with a weaker directive[13] and also made plans to jail families with children in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) detention facilities, a practice the Biden Administration ended.[14] By June 2025, two family detention centers were in operation. One of these facilities, the South Texas Residential Center in Dilley, Texas, had stopped operating as a family detention center in 2021; now, it is the largest family detention center in the country. Advocates have reported alarming conditions at Dilley,[15] including a measles outbreak, poor food and water quality,

and pregnant women not receiving timely medical care.[16] New rules also allow ICE to access the immigration status of sponsors and family members of unaccompanied children, creating a chilling effect that may prolong children's stay in federal custody. Together, these policies heighten the risk of prolonged detention, family separation, and trauma for children in immigrant households.

Restriction and Termination of Lawful Status Pathways

A central feature of the current immigration policy landscape has been to detain and deport more people living in the U.S. This includes threats to lawful status programs like Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS) as well as attempts to reverse birthright citizenship.

Since its creation in 2012, DACA has provided temporary work authorization and relief from deportation to over 800,000 young adults who arrived in the U.S. as children and fulfilled other eligibility requirements. Due to the Trump Administration's attempts to weaken and repeal DACA and subsequent litigation and court rulings, first-time initial DACA requests are no longer being granted, but individuals whose DACA status has not expired or expired within a year can still apply for renewals of their status.[17] The future of DACA is currently uncertain due to litigation challenging the legality of the program. Reporting shows, however, that despite DACA recipients having protection from deportation, federal immigration agents arrested over 250 recipients in the first 10 months of the second Trump Administration and deported 86 of them.[18]

The Trump Administration moved to revoke or terminate TPS for multiple countries, affecting hundreds of thousands of individuals, including U.S. citizen children whose parents were recipients.[19] Humanitarian parole programs for Cubans, Haitians, Nicaraguans, and Venezuelans were also terminated early, ending work authorization for many. These changes destabilized employment, income security, and long-term planning for the affected families.

Additionally, on the first day of the second Trump Administration, the president issued an Executive Order (EO) to deny birthright citizenship to babies born in the U.S. unless at least one of their parents is a U.S. citizen or legal permanent resident. While the EO is not currently in effect due to a nationwide injunction, the Supreme Court will soon decide whether the executive order is lawful. If it goes into effect, more than 4.7 million children would be born stateless over the next two decades alone.[20] Eliminating the right to citizenship for anyone born in the U.S. would increase burdens for all children and families welcoming a new child, lead to poor developmental outcomes, and increase these babies' risk of detention and deportation.[21]

Restrictions and Deterrence from Accessing Public Benefits and Critical Services

The Trump Administration has also restricted immigrants' eligibility and access for public benefits and deterred their use of essential services. The administration reinterpreted the definition of "federal public benefit" under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) to restrict eligibility for a larger set of programs based on immigration status.[22] This rule does not apply to the states that have challenged it, including Colorado, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, and Washington, due to a preliminary injunction.[23] The administration also restricted access to health coverage for DACA recipients by excluding them from receiving tax credits through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) Marketplace.

Moreover, the Trump Administration's proposed changes to public charge rules that threaten immigrants' chances for a green card or entry visa also explicitly acknowledged that this would threaten the access of U.S. citizen children to health and nutrition programs. A long-standing feature of the immigration system, public charge refers to someone who is dependent on the government, and allows immigration officers' discretion in determining whether an immigrant should get an entry visa or green card by assessing their current and past use of public benefits. The Trump Administration expanded the public benefits usage that qualify to be taken into consideration for public charge determinations to include food, health, unemployment, and housing assistance, among other benefits. The first Trump Administration's attempt to expand public charge considerations led to widespread disenrollment from public benefit programs, including by families and programs not subject to public charge rules, resulting in increased uninsurance and food insecurity among children in immigrant families.[24] Executive actions have also directed federal agencies to share personal data with the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), including Medicaid enrollment information and taxpayer data. These data-sharing policies weaken privacy protections and risk

turning benefit systems into enforcement tools.

In addition, many lawfully present immigrants are no longer eligible for essential public assistance. Congress passed H.R. 1, the Budget Reconciliation Act of 2025, which excludes immigrant children with Individual Tax Identification Numbers as well as U.S. citizen children with Social Security numbers (SSN) whose one caregiver lacks an SSN from eligibility for the Child Tax Credit. H.R. 1 also strips Medicaid, Children's Health Insurance Program, Medicare, Affordable Care Act premium tax credits, and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) for previously eligible lawfully present immigrants. These measures will increase the number of children who are uninsured, live in poverty, and experience food insecurity by imposing barriers to economic support, health care, and nutrition assistance.[25]

STATE POLICY LANDSCAPE

Since January 2025, states have increasingly functioned either as protective buffers for immigrant families or as force multipliers for enforcement. The result is a widening geographic divide in the lived experience of children in immigrant families. This section focuses on the states included in this study: Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, Texas, and Washington.

Some local jurisdictions limit cooperation with federal immigration enforcement, while others participate in 287(g) agreements or maintain closer collaboration. In states like Texas and Georgia, coercive cooperation policies and enforcement investments increase exposure to detention and deportation risks, which research links to economic instability, toxic stress, and adverse child development outcomes.[26]

Michigan has no comprehensive statewide sanctuary framework. In Colorado, Illinois, New Jersey, and Washington, policies that limit enforcement cooperation and strengthen data privacy protections aim to mitigate the fear of immigration enforcement and reduce barriers to accessing essential services. At the same time, the Trump Administration's intentional targeting of blue states and deployment of immigration enforcement operations in sanctuary cities erodes the public's sense of safety and trust in government in these locations as well.[27] Moreover, some local law enforcement agencies cooperate with federal immigration authorities, sometimes in violation of local or state sanctuary policies.[28]

This widening policy gap means that geography increasingly determines whether immigrant families encounter a supportive or punitive state infrastructure. In the absence of federal stability, state policy choices have become determinants of immigrant children's safety, security, and opportunity.

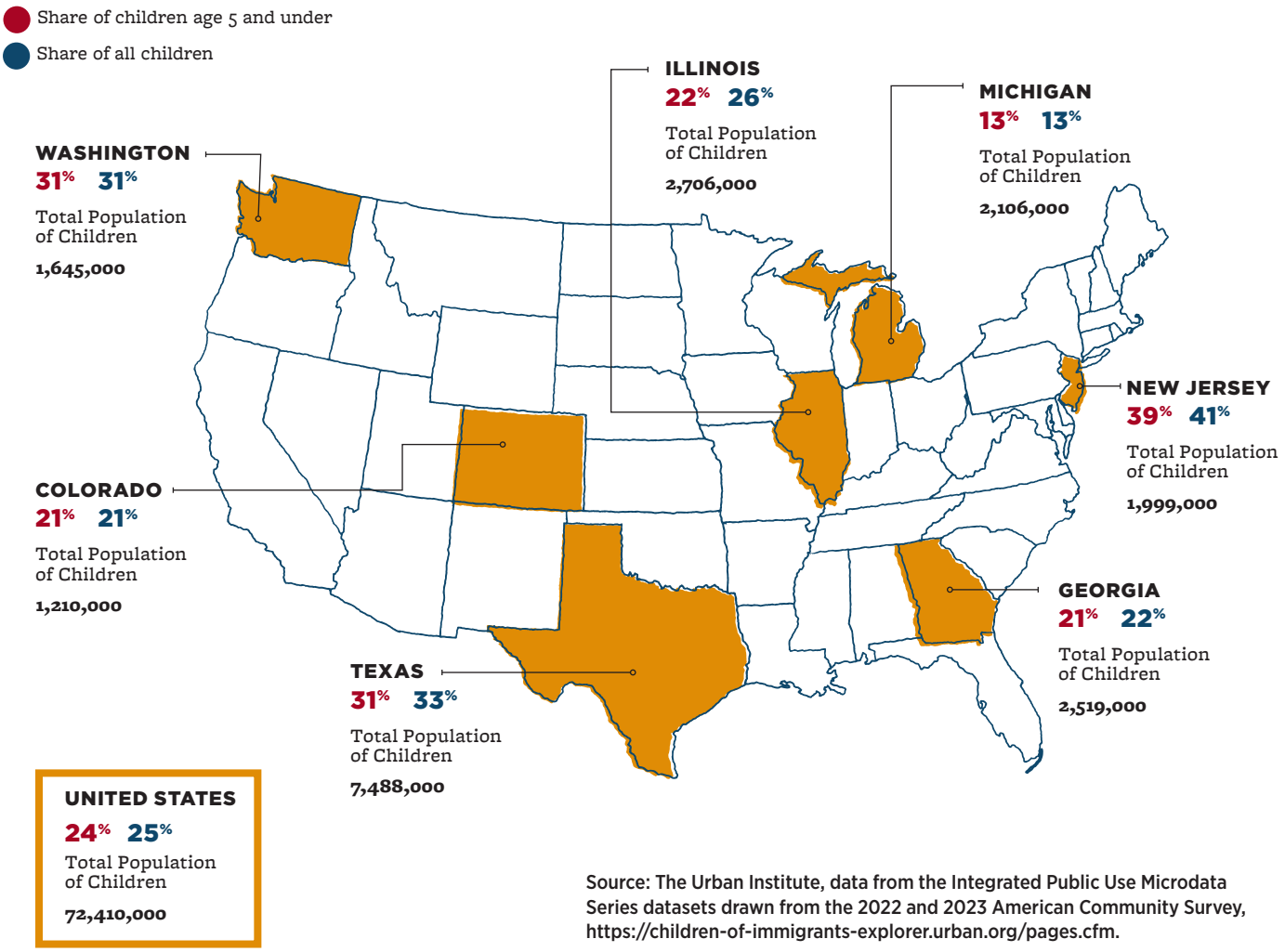

Getty/Cavan Images/Westend61

IMMIGRANT FAMILIES IN COLORADO, GEORGIA, ILLINOIS, MICHIGAN, NEW JERSEY, TEXAS, AND WASHINGTON

Nationwide, one in four children in the U.S.–approximately 18 million children–have at least one immigrant parent.[29] Ninety percent of these children are U.S. citizens, entitling them to all the legal rights and privileges that citizenship guarantees.[30] Most young children in immigrant families live with parents who have some form of legal U.S. immigration status. Many others are members of "mixed-status families," meaning that they live with at least one noncitizen family member. Among children with at least one immigrant parent, an estimated 34 percent of children nationwide live with only noncitizen parents.[31] Approximately 6.3 million children under age 18, 84 percent of whom are U.S. citizens, live with at least one unauthorized immigrant parent.[32] Additionally, more than half a million U.S. citizen children have parents with DACA or TPS.[33]

In the seven states discussed in this report, immigrant families represent a meaningful share of the child population, ranging from 13 percent in Michigan to 41 percent in New Jersey. In Texas and Washington, roughly one in three children have at least one immigrant parent. In Georgia and Colorado, approximately one in five children are part of immigrant families, while in Illinois, just over one in four children have at least one immigrant parent. ■

Children with At Least One Foreign-Born Parent

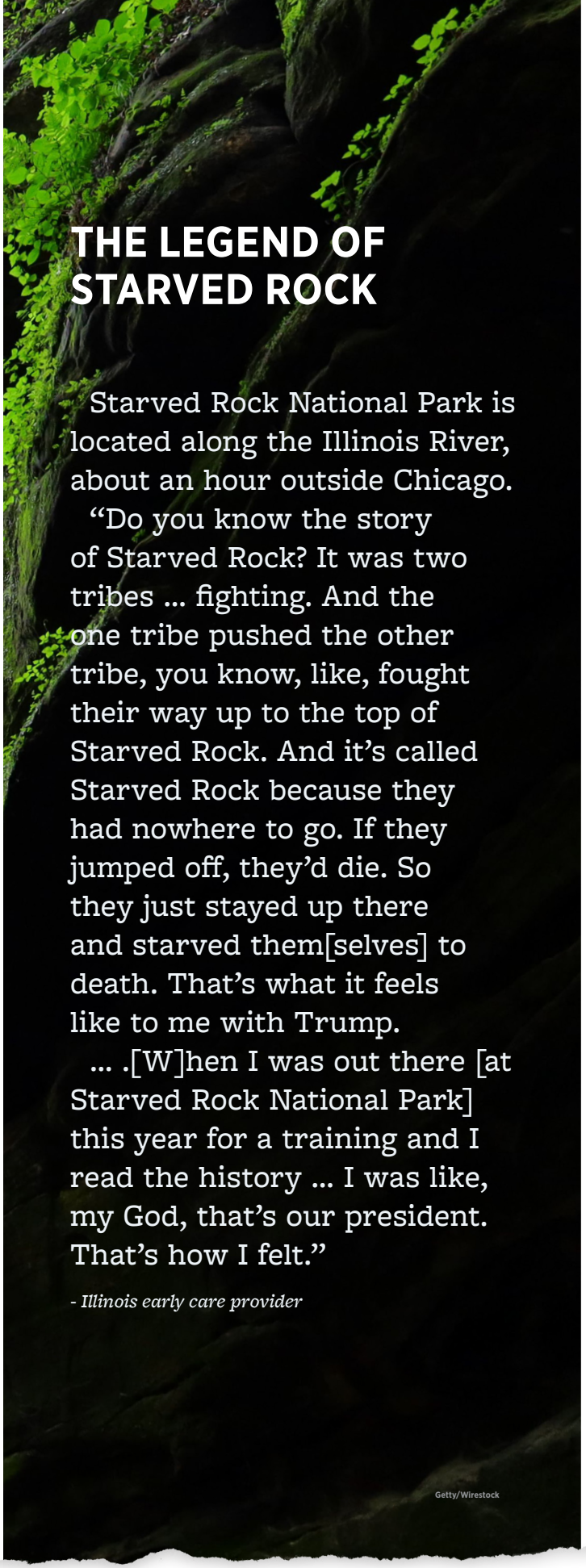


Source: The Urban Institute, data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2022 and 2023 American Community Survey, https://children-of-immigrants-explorer.urban.org/pages.cfm.

"Doing the bare minimum:"

FEAR, ISOLATION, AND CHILLING EFFECTS

Even before the beginning of Trump's second term, immigrant communities expressed concern and anxiety about the possible impact his proposed racist and xenophobic policies would have on their families and livelihoods. One immigrant parent explained, "You could hear from many Latinos the fear they had if the new, well, the current president took office."[34] The CLASP research team found that immigrant parents were terrified to leave their homes because they were scared of detention, deportation, and separation from their children. As a result, immigrant communities have taken drastic steps to protect themselves, including staying in their homes, forgoing trips to the grocery store, passing up opportunities to earn money, not taking their children to school or child care, avoiding court hearings, severely limiting their use of health care services, not participating in recreational activities, and not applying for or disenrolling from public benefits. This section describes the intensified sense of uncertainty, terror, and anxiety, as well as the resulting chilling effect on families' willingness to engage in their communities.



THE LEGEND OF STARVED ROCK

Starved Rock National Park is located along the Illinois River, about an hour outside Chicago.

"Do you know the story of Starved Rock? It was two tribes … fighting. And the one tribe pushed the other tribe, you know, like, fought their way up to the top of Starved Rock. And it's called Starved Rock because they had nowhere to go. If they jumped off, they'd die. So they just stayed up there and starved them[selves] to death. That's what it feels like to me with Trump.

… .[W]hen I was out there [at Starved Rock National Park] this year for a training and I read the history … I was like, my God, that's our president. That's how I felt."

- Illinois early care provider

Getty/Wirestock

Families are Terrified of Deportation and Family Separation

Some of parents' main worries and anxieties centered around the uncertainty of being detained, whether their rights would be respected, and the possibility of being deported back to danger or to an unfamiliar country. This latter concern stems from the administration's decision to deport and detain immigrants in countries that they were not originally from and are unfamiliar with. One of the highest-profile instances of this occurred in early 2025, when the administration deported over 200 immigrants, the vast majority of whom had no criminal record, and imprisoned them at El Salvador's Terrorism Confinement Center (CECOT), despite a federal judge's order to stop the transport.[35] As one parent from New Jersey said, "[I]t would be fine if they deported you to your own country. But some are saying they'll deport you to El Salvador. So it's unfair that a person being from one's country be deported to another country."[36]

Moreover, many parents who participated in focus groups cited how they left their home countries because they did not feel safe there. Many have active asylum applications because they are seeking refuge in the U.S. from war, crime, domestic violence, or fears about their children's safety. Said one Michigan parent, "Where we come from, currently we have a lot of political uprisings, there are a lot of killings and atrocities going on, but you can't help your family back home. Because where we used to consider as maybe where we can rush to for refuge, we are rather being pushed back to our countries where we are coming from. So it's like you are in between the devil and the deep blue sea, and you don't know where to turn to."

> "So it's like you are in between the devil and the deep blue sea, and you don't know where to turn to."
>
> *- Michigan parent*

Beyond their own well-being, parents were terrified about the possibility of being separated from their children. Thinking about what could happen if she and her husband were detained, a mother of two young children asked, "Who picks up my girl [from school]?" She added, "It's the fact that I don't know how long they can keep me without being with them, without seeing them."[37]

> "As mothers, we fear that we could be separated from our children at any time."
>
> *- Michigan parent*[40]

In a two-parent household, one parent may worry about what could happen to the other when they leave for work or to drop the kids off at school. One couple told us that they never leave the house together because they are afraid that they could be deported and their children would not have someone to care for them. Even if parents have a contingency plan in place, they still worry about what could happen to their children in their absence. DHS has internal guidance, "Detention and Removal of Alien Parents and Legal Guardians of Minor Children," that protects detained parents' rights to make decisions about the care and well-being of their minor children. But parents know that ICE agents often fail to follow the law and leave children in dangerous situations without their parents.[38] One Colorado community advocate spoke to parents' anxieties: "With what you see in the news about how immigration takes parents and leaves them, the children, there [left] in the cars is very worrying for them."[39]

One provider in New Jersey said that a parent she worked with took his wife and child with him during his shifts as an Uber driver. He thought that if they got caught while driving, they would at least be together.

Constitutional Rights are No Longer Guaranteed

Before January 2025, many of the parents we spoke with told us that they believed that if they obeyed the law, they and their families would be safe from persecution and discrimination. Such guarantees no longer apply in many parts of the U.S., as shown in documented cases of law enforcement agents and local government officials ignoring constitutional rights and federal officials protecting them from any consequences.[41]

Another parent from Michigan observed, **"My main concern is that detainees who wish to be deported should be deported. Instead, they are detained for months without their families knowing what they are going through."**[42] A Washington parent recounted how, when two of her relatives were detained while going grocery shopping, they were told in detention that they had to sign papers that expressed voluntary deportation. If they didn't, they were told they could be in detention for up to a year.

Moreover, although parents were aware they had certain constitutional rights, reports about ICE officers' not respecting peoples' rights exacerbated their distress about their treatment and options should they be detained.

> "[T]hey don't even treat [immigrants] with dignity; they take them, beat them, and kick them; they throw them, they almost suffocate them. I mean, they are not treated with dignity. We are not animals, we deserve respect. I say, where are our human rights, where are they?"
>
> *- Texas parent*[43]

The Trump Administration's disregard of judicial orders and constitutional rights has left immigrant parents feeling dehumanized and afraid of prolonged and inhumane detentions, being deported back to dangerous conditions, and third country deportations.[44]

Discrimination

Immigrant parents' alarm was deepened by self-described instances of discrimination and racism related to their perceived immigrant status. Parents in focus groups, even those with legal immigration statuses, were incredibly afraid of being stopped, detained, or deported by law enforcement. While the majority of focus group parents identified as Latino Spanish speakers, participants in the Michigan focus group were primarily Black immigrants from African nations. In all focus groups, parents said they didn't feel safe speaking in their native languages, dressing in the clothes of their home countries, visiting places where there are a large number of Hispanics or immigrants, or doing anything that visibly made them look like immigrants. Said one Michigan parent, speaking through an interpreter, **"So now it's like we don't even wear our traditional clothes. People [are] telling us, you know, don't speak your language, don't wear traditional clothes, go and hide."**[45]

Parents' apprehension about indiscriminate enforcement have been exacerbated by a Supreme Court ruling in September 2025 that allows immigration agents to apprehend anyone they believe might be in the U.S. without legal status.[46] This decision clears the way for agents to engage in racial profiling, stopping anyone who appears to be foreign-born based on the way they look, speak, or dress.

Distrust of Local Law Enforcement

The increase in ICE enforcement has led to a deep distrust of the government, including local law enforcement. Along with the rise in immigration enforcement and legally allowable racial profiling, the administration has increased the use of 287(g) agreements, which allow local law enforcement to enforce federal immigration law and cooperate with federal immigration authorities. Texas and Georgia are two of the states with a high number of 287(g) agreements, where ICE has given state and local officers the power to perform particular immigration agent functions.[47] Even in states where protective measures are in place, like in New Jersey, there is evidence that local law agencies are still helping ICE carry out immigration enforcement, confusing state residents.[48] Families expressed how the presence of law enforcement has increased their stress and wanted to know how to distinguish between "good" and "bad" agents. One New Jersey parent described being afraid of all people in uniform, "Because the uncertainty of no longer knowing if the police on the street are now for people who are really doing bad things or if they are also now there to be telling them, 'here is a group of people who seem to be undocumented,' right?"[49]

> "Before, you had trust. You had the confidence to call the police. We no longer have that confidence. Why? Because we don't know how it will go for us."
>
> *- Colorado parent*[50]

Parents described their children being afraid of police officers, including hiding from officers when they drive by and no longer feeling that police would "provide them with protection," said another New Jersey parent. ICE's use of unmarked vehicles and plain clothes have left many families unable to distinguish between authorized and unauthorized authorities. This lack of transparency contributes to immigrant parents' general distrust of the government and concern that agencies are sharing their data with immigration enforcement.

Mitigating Risk Through Isolation

The increasing unpredictability with which the Trump Administration has enforced immigration law and their attempts to disenfranchise immigrant families have left many with a crushing sense of uncertainty for themselves and their future. One immigrant parent said, "We started, as a family, to feel fear, anxiety, and doubts. What do we do? Shall we stay? Shall we leave? Do we move? What do we do?" Even immigrants who are now citizens feel worried about the implementation of immigration enforcement in their communities. A Michigan parent said, "I'm a citizen, but I'm worried all the time. … Nobody knows what happens and then what happened to your other community members' lives? It's very hard."

As a result of this uncertainty, immigrant families described limiting their time outside their homes, with many comparing the moment to lockdown during the COVID pandemic. One immigrant parent in Texas said, "Now, instead of being about COVID or illness, now it's about fear of what's going to happen to you out there."[51]

> "Now, instead of being about COVID or illness, now it's about fear of what's going to happen to you out there."
>
> *- Texas parent*

Parents are also limiting their recreational time, forgoing roadtrips, shopping, and spending time in parks or other outdoor spaces. They described how, before Trump's second term began, they would spend a lot of time outside of their homes with their kids. Now parents are staying home because there, they feel a deeper sense of security from ICE raids. One immigrant parent from New Jersey encapsulated the feeling of immigrant parents all over the country: "For example, before this craziness happened, I used to go out a lot with the girls to the park. I would look for a nice park, I would look for any place to take them, which I can't do now because I'm afraid to be out on the street if I don't have something important to do. I'm afraid to take them out, they have the right to their space for recreation, but I'm afraid because **who guarantees me that if I leave the house I will return?"**[52]

Former "Sensitive Locations" are No Longer Safe

Places that people once thought were accessible are no longer protected from immigration enforcement. Immigrants don't feel safe seeking health care, are hesitant to visit government offices for driver's licenses or assistance with basic needs, no longer visit food distribution sites, and are forgoing WIC benefits. These are just some examples of how immigrant families are going without forms of support that they previously relied upon to meet their families' basic needs.

Reports of ICE agents attending immigration court hearings and ICE check-in meetings have added another layer of trepidation and concern. This is exacerbated by accounts of loved ones and friends being apprehended when they attend their own check-in meetings or court hearings. One focus group participant told us, "Last month my nephew had to go to the immigration report. He went with a lot of fear, obviously […] My sister was waiting on the corner just in case."[53] Another participant said that their family member had previously experienced long wait times at immigration court, but in 2025, "He didn't take any time at all, about half an hour … There was no one, because people are afraid to go to the court, but it is worse not to go."[54] These attacks have caused immigrant families whose cases are currently pending to weigh the risks and benefits of complying with the law; previously, they would have never hesitated to attend court hearings or ICE check-ins.

Some parents also admitted that they were not even taking their children to school or child care. This was the case for many families at the start of 2025, but attendance in school or child care also drops when there are reports

of ICE agents in the community. This was corroborated by reports from early care providers, health care workers, WIC staff, and others who provide community services. They reported lower attendance in child care and community health programs and increased no-show appointments. As one Georgia focus group participant shared, "I didn't let [my children] go to school....I felt unprotected, I felt afraid to go out to work... I haven't even gone out to buy groceries."[55]

Justified alarm over ICE agents at hospitals and health care clinics has also kept families from accessing necessary health care. Parents shared instances of the immigrant community being scared to seek medical care. One Michigan parent explained, "You're afraid to go to the hospital even when you need to. You see people who are sick but too afraid to seek care," with another adding, "So it makes it a little bit difficult, and when you are sick, like you are in a critical situation, you are even afraid to call the ambulance. Because once you get to the hospital, you need to be identified, they need to start asking. And [if] some people leave from the hospital, ICE will pick them up and maybe send them straight back to where you were running away from."[56]

"You're afraid to go to the hospital even when you need to. You see people who are sick but too afraid to seek care."

Other essential errands such as going to food distribution sites or buying groceries have also turned into difficult decisions for parents. A Michigan parent said, "Sometimes your child's food runs out, but you are afraid to go to the store. That is our main concern. Even when you do go, you are so anxious that you become confused and rush."[57] A provider in Washington explained that some parents preferred to use Instacart and other delivery options, despite the added expense. One home care provider in Georgia said that people have even stopped going to a church that distributes free food to community members. However, providers, including school staff, health clinic employees, church staff, and community activists, are still arranging food delivery to families too scared to leave their homes.

"A lot of the families are just doing the bare minimum...Some of the families were saying that they are doing like Instacart for now, because they're afraid, even though you are a citizen. The kidnapping[s] are happening. Like nobody's asking anything, because the way we look, and the way we dress right before you speak. [ICE is] judging based on how people look... they're afraid because they're being targeted."

- Washington home child care provider

Losing Income and Working Despite the Risks

Immigrant parents are aware that ICE actively monitors locations they frequent, including workplaces where immigrant labor makes up the majority of the workforce. Their hypervigilance has only been made worse by the Supreme Court ruling that allows immigration agents to stop and harass anyone they think is living in the U.S. illegally. As a result, many immigrant parents are balancing the risk of working a job that may put them in danger with the risk of imperiling their children's livelihoods if they are unemployed.

Both parents and providers gave dozens of examples of how parents' crippling dread of being deported or separated from their children has caused them to reduce their work hours or stop working entirely. Avoiding work due to concerns about immigration enforcement means that families are losing income and experiencing food and housing insecurity in addition to other financial stresses.

As one parent from New Jersey says, "[T]he truth is, it has caused that fear of going out or going to work, of going out and not returning. Of me not being there maybe when my child needs me. If I go to work, [I'm] worried about, if my child is okay. Will be okay. And worrying about myself, at what moment could someone arrive and detain us? Or not be able to return home."[58] Another Michigan parent adds, "We came here to improve our lives and eventually return home, but now we can barely work because we are constantly anxious."[59]

Another New Jersey parent said that his wife quit her job after seeing ICE agents nearby. "She chose to leave work out of fear that they might come... since it's close, out of fear that they might come to the place where she was working."[60] Despite the risks, many immigrant parents still leave their homes every day to provide for their families. As a Washington parent put it,"I mean, we can't stay at home. We have to work, we have to go to school, we have to go out... Who is going to pay the rent and who is going to pay for the electricity?"[61]

Some parents described how they or others they knew went through a cycle of trial periods at jobs, where their labor was never compensated. One Georgia parent recounted how one of her husband's customers threatened to call immigration authorities when he asked for payment for a completed job. Others were driven to a worksite and forced to find their own way back home. What this amounts to, according to one parent, is "[Full time employers and temp agencies] are stealing that person's salary... the poor person has lost their time, has lost their pay, and what does that mean? Exploitation and discrimination for people."[62]

Disenrollment from and Avoidance of Public Benefit Programs

In addition to staying under the radar, parents are also choosing to not enroll in or disenroll from public benefit programs they qualify for due to worries that federal agencies will share that information with ICE or that their or their children's use of benefits could compromise their chances of getting a green card. Even in areas that don't have a notable ICE presence, the very real anxiety about personal information shared in a health care setting being used against immigrant patients is another deterrent to getting timely medical attention. After being blocked by a judge's temporary order in August 2025, the Department of Health and Human Services was able to resume sharing personal data of Medicaid enrollees with DHS in January 2026.[63] A parent in Texas described her husband missing a medical appointment out of fear he'd be asked for his status: "I just don't want to go because they are saying that they are also going to ask your status in the clinics."[64]

A Washington mother said, "I don't apply for food stamps because I'm also afraid. They have offered them to me, but... Well, then they say they have all your information and everything, and my husband says no."[65] A parent from Colorado told us, "I also did not request the renewal of food stamps. I didn't know that because of the little one I have, who is one year old, they would give me stamps. I did not go to Human Services. I was afraid they would catch me outside."[66] In general, immigrant parents felt uncomfortable sharing information with any organization that could possibly send it to immigration enforcement.

They were equally uneasy about accepting any assistance that could label them as a public charge in the future, even when it is their children, not them, who receive the benefit.[67] A Colorado parent said, "For example, my daughters have [Medicaid]. I no longer want to renew it... They put it on automatic [renewal], but I honestly have fear even using it because ... [i]f someday I can [apply for legal status], will it affect me?"[68]

Uncertainty for Asylum Seekers, TPS Holders, and DACA Recipients

In addition to targeting legal status holders and asylum seekers, the Trump Administration knows how burdensome the excessive immigration court backlogs have become. One New Jersey immigrant parent explains, "We have been in the United States for a full year and when we entered, we entered in quotation marks 'legally,' you understand? ... When we started the [asylum permit] paperwork with ... an immigration lawyer ... everything was going well ... but that is held up by the [new] government. Everything is delayed, everything."[69]

DACA recipients are also feeling the uncertainty. One parent said, "My daughters have DACA. Only the 25-year-old was born here. But they, with everything that is happening, are very frustrated, they are very frustrated, they are nervous about everything that is happening, about whether they will be able to renew... and, I mean, they have even had the... idea or the thought of saying: 'Mom, let's go, let's leave from here.' So, it really has impacted my family a lot, yes."[70] ■


Getty/Stockbyte

Deteriorating Parental Health

Elevated levels of uncertainty and risk are pervasive in every part of immigrant families' lives, and contribute to parents' fear and deteriorating health. The isolation, fear of being separated from their children, risk of detention and deportation, and a lack of adequate social support, food, housing, access to preventive health care, and outlets for expressing their frustrations exacerbates their precarity. We found that parents in blue, red, and purple states described worsening mental and physical health during the first year of Trump's second term.

Impacts of News and Media Consumption

Since early 2025, videos and photos of people being threatened, kidnapped, thrown into filthy and dangerous detention centers, or being deported to third countries by masked agents brandishing military-style weapons on the same streets where immigrants walk their children to school or go to the grocery store have flooded local and national media outlets.[72] These images are accompanied by anti-immigrant rhetoric, either in mainstream or social media. This exposure has contributed to the higher stress experienced by parents in our focus groups. One parent in New Jersey shared:

"I suffer watching the videos I see right now. I mean, seeing parents and families being torn away from their families, and the children crying. I have three children. Those are my eyes... everything I see, I see it for my children."[73]

> "There is no peace of mind to go out, to walk, to be able to go to New York, because there is no longer a peace of mind like before. For me there is no peace of mind anymore."
>
> *- New Jersey parent*[71]

Emotional Distress and Health Concerns

Parents reported feeling frustrated that they were not able to live a happy and healthy life with their families. We asked parents if they spoke about immigration enforcement and policy with their young children. Many said that they wanted to shield their kids from what was happening as much as possible, in part to avoid making the entire family anxious. But parents repressing their worries and concerns, combined with the pressures of parenting in the current environment, can affect the entire family. "Sometimes, it even reduces them (parents) to some sort of depression," a parent in Michigan said. This strain can also lead to parental conflict and arguments, potentially weakening the social support capabilities of the family unit.[74]

Immigrant parents' struggles manifest physically as well, in disordered eating and its accompanying health impacts as well as high blood pressure and panic attacks. A child care provider in Washington mentioned how in one of their parent support groups, a parent shared that because of how stressed and overwhelmed they felt, she had to pull over her car to recover. The provider described the parent's symptoms as akin to a panic attack.

> "I had to pull over on the side of the road because I couldn't breathe."
>
> *- New Jersey child care provider, recounting a parent's words*

Another parent in the Texas focus group said, "I started suffering from binge eating, I gained a lot of weight because I had anxiety and I would eat out of impulse, because I was anxious about the whole situation, I didn't know what the future held for me."[75] Another mentioned that her husband "[A]lso got sick after all the stress and worry. Now he has to take blood pressure pills."[76] Many parents also reported having trouble sleeping at night due to stress and anxiety. One parent in New Jersey said that work was their outlet for dealing with stress, and fear of immigration enforcement denied them even that.

Stigma of Mental Health

Even if mental health care is specifically available to address immigrant families' needs, a provider in Colorado shared a sentiment that was repeated by both community advocates and parents: not everyone is comfortable seeking out or relying on the conventional, Westernized version of mental health services. In some immigrant communities, seeking mental health support carries a stigma; as a result, interviewees were also unsure if their immigrant clients would access mental health services even with referrals. During the interview, one Colorado home visitor said, "I just feel like there's so much that people could share and don't. ... The perception of mental health in the Latino community is very tricky 'cause it's, I don't want anyone to think that I'm loca [crazy] or ... where it's just like, we don't talk about it, or you're crazy if you're thinking that, or you should be so happy, your baby's here. Like, why would you cry? Why would you feel depressed? Or I [heard] this one [saying]... in the last year that I hadn't heard before, they said **depression is a luxury of the rich**."

This sentiment was confirmed by a provider in Washington, who spoke of the importance of a gentle approach, such as being in a group setting with peers, for parents to be able to name that they have been feeling overwhelmed, stressed, or worried, or that they have suffered from insomnia and panic attacks. She said, "If we say we have a mental counselor, it'd be like, no, I don't want to, and I'm okay. There's so many bias[es] accessing those things...So ... you know, having an open environment, like you were saying, come in, talk about it. And also maybe not calling it mental services, but saying, like, you're going to talk about stress and everybody has it."

Stigma around accessing mental health services among immigrant and non-white communities in the U.S. is common.[77] When this stigma is combined with the distrust of government and medical practitioners caused by current immigration enforcement, historical inequities, and generational differences in sources of mental health support, immigrant parents face increasing obstacles to adequate health care.

These experiences are a snapshot of what immigrant parents have lived through over the last year. All the targeted efforts to flatten immigrant identity with criminality have exacted a high emotional and bodily toll on members of immigrant communities that make daily life even more difficult. The concerns and worries shared with CLASP researchers corroborate the link between increased immigration enforcement and worsening physical and mental health that other researchers have found.[78] Constant worry and fear compound with time, putting immigrant parents at heightened risk for a range of other mental health challenges not explicitly named in interviews such as PTSD, substance misuse, suicidal ideation, and increased vulnerability to sexual violence. People suffering from mental health conditions are also more prone to suffer from chronic physical conditions like diabetes and heart disease.[79] One parent in New Jersey described the unsustainable nature of this harm, saying, **"We're going to die psychologically.** Just thinking about [being detained by ICE], you're going to have a stroke."[80] ■

> "We're going to die psychologically."

Impacts on Child Health

Children in immigrant families are caught in the crosshairs of immigration enforcement regardless of whether they are the intended targets. As parents and providers alike made clear, it would be difficult for any child to handle having a caregiver suddenly taken away or to understand a complicated and antagonistic immigration system. For children ages six and younger, the effects can be particularly detrimental. Young children can feel what their parents are feeling. Thanks to phones, tablets, and the news, they can see what ICE is doing to other children and their loved ones and hear the vitriol directed at immigrants, without understanding why. On top of the fear of parental separation and anti-immigrant rhetoric, disruptions to health care, early education programs, and basic needs supports can have tremendous negative impacts on young children's developmental health and overall well-being in the short and long term.

This section provides an overview of the ways in which the current climate is separating children from their loving caregivers, preventing them from accessing the care every child deserves, and negatively affecting their behaviors and mental health.

Children Separated from Parents and Caregivers Due to Immigration Enforcement

Safe, stable, and loving connections with trusted caregivers are the cornerstone of early childhood. Evidence demonstrates that deportation of a parent and parental separation can harm children's mental health, is associated with developmental delays, and worsens children's educational outcomes.[81]

In at least two instances, both in New Jersey, interviewees recounted when immigration enforcement resulted in children being left alone or in a child care facility. One provider told us about a child care center nearby, where two siblings' parents never came to pick them up. Another New Jersey afterschool director for kids in kindergarten through middle school mentioned that one of their students came home to an empty house; the child's mother had been picked up by immigration authorities while the child was at school. In this case, the child, who was old enough to walk to and from school alone, came back to school and told afterschool staff that his mother was missing. Staff stayed with the child at the afterschool center for hours into the late evening until the child's aunt arrived. The afterschool staff worked with the aunt to fill out a power of attorney before allowing her to take the child home. The director recounting this story mentioned that in cases where staff cannot get in touch with alternative contacts, they would be required to contact the NJ Division of Child Protection and Permanency.

> "There was no one there to pick them up."
>
> *- New Jersey child care director*

In Washington, an in-home child care provider recounted how her employee, whom she also considers a friend, was deported with her husband and two young children last year when they attended a regular ICE check-in appointment. She was horrified with immigration agents' inhumane treatment of her friend and her family, who were detained for weeks in Dilley Family Detention Center in Texas. While in Dilley, the family did not have medical care, which was concerning because her six-year-old son had a medical condition that needed treatment.

"[The six-year-old] got very sick, and they were held in the Dilley Detention Center for two weeks without medical care, separated from their father."

- Washington child care provider

Moreover, her employee was the trusted care provider for a young child with developmental disabilities. The mother of the child had to quit her job after this employee was deported because she did not trust anyone else to care for her child. This example demonstrates how deportation clearly affects more than just young children in immigrant families; the negative consequences of deportation radiate out to all families with young children.

IMPACTS OF CHILLING EFFECTS ON FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

Providers and families are concerned about what it means for children if they cannot attend child care programs or they or their families miss out on services like nutrition assistance, parenting support, and health care–especially mental health care.

Reluctance to Seek Medical Care

Reluctance to seek health care was driven by two concerns: the potential presence of ICE at medical centers and, for families with limited or no health insurance, being unable to cover health care costs. One Texas mother recounted how her husband was reluctant to take their sick daughter to the hospital. "[M]y little girl had an accident once, and my husband says to me. "No, we're not taking her [to the hospital] because you've already had your immigration status checked. Then I say to him, "Is that what you really want to offer your children?"[82]

A pediatrician in Washington worried that fear of ICE would prevent families from getting the health care they needed. He mentioned that he had heard about ICE vehicles parked in the parking lot of another primary care clinic or at other locations near his clinic and how, as a result, patients–including families with children–will not attend their appointments.

"Just in general, when people are seeking help with their health, I think they shouldn't be worried that they could get in trouble. Because if they are fearful of our clinic, then they will be fearful of all aspects of the medical system. And if people aren't comfortable or they don't feel safe getting help, then medical problems can worsen. And I think it helps all of us in the community when every kid is healthy, able to participate in our community and in our schools."

- Washington pediatrician

Research supports the pediatrician's concerns about missed well-child visits, which can lead to fewer vaccinations, delayed interventions, poor management of developmental and chronic health concerns, and increased risk of contracting a preventable disease.[83] One provider was worried about several infants and toddlers she worked with suffering from a condition caused by poor nutrition or chronic conditions called "faltering growth," explaining that, "It used to be called failure to thrive, but it's when a child is not meeting their expected growth potential, like they're not gaining weight. And when there's gaps in checkups and, well, care, there's a higher risk for that." This is a severe and relatively rare condition in the U.S.; cases are more often observed in low- and middle-income countries. Faltering growth can cause children to have worse cognitive development and economic outcomes as adults.[84]

Developmental and Prenatal/Postpartum Concerns

Many parents and providers also reported that pregnant people were scared to visit hospitals and clinics for check-ups. If access to care is disrupted during the prenatal or postnatal period, the likelihood of preterm complications increases, threatening the pregnant person's physical and mental health. If a new parent is unable to be screened and interviewed for postpartum depression, providers' ability to treat the condition is compromised. This, in turn, could negatively affect a child's cognitive and behavioral development and eventually their school readiness.

During a conversation about why health clinics should be safe spaces for immigrants, a Washington provider described how crucial the first five years of a child's life are for development.[85] The structures for cognitive development are laid early in life, meaning that high levels of stress can affect brain development and the child's ability to regulate stress later in life. Indeed, children are at risk even before they are born, as research has shown that the fetal brain is impacted by external factors like maternal health that can have consequences after birth and into childhood.[86]

Missed Benefits of ECE Programs

The missed benefits of early care programs can have serious consequences for children's healthy development as well. Providers shared that they had noticed attendance declines at child care and school, and in after-school programs, due to caregivers' terror of immigration enforcement. As a result, these children are missing out on the benefits of participating in early care and education programs, like foundational math, reading, social, and behavioral skills, which can affect a child's development through high school.[87] Participation in Head Start and other ECE programs can also lead to behavioral improvements, which are associated with positive economic and social outcomes.[88] In addition, decades of evidence has shown that WIC effectively supports the health of pregnant people and promotes the healthy development of infants and young children, including improving the quality of their diet and reducing premature births and infant deaths.[89]

One child care administrator in New Jersey was con-

> "[F]or kids under five, it's a really important stage of development where their health and their parents' health really affects their development … [A]ges zero to five is when we recommend the most frequent… checkups. As many as six times in the first year, three in the next few years because that developmental stage is so important … even things that don't necessarily show up in early childhood can still carry on into adulthood. So the early childhood years are really crucial to helping a child develop."
>
> *- Washington pediatrician.*

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and Toxic Stress in Early Childhood:

ACEs are a framework that children's health experts utilize to assess the impact of traumatic events in childhood on long-term outcomes. ACEs, such as experiencing violence, abuse, or neglect, or incarceration of a parent, are linked with higher likelihood of poverty, poor mental health, and risky health behaviors, including substance abuse in later life.[97] Researchers, clinicians, and advocates have argued that exposure to immigration enforcement, including the threat of detention and deportation of a parent, qualify as exposure to trauma or ACEs due to the definitive body of evidence on the harms of deportation and detentions to children of immigrants.[98] While having stable caretakers is a cornerstone of a healthy childhood, especially for young children, since January 2025, many children of immigrants are living with a constant fear that their parents could be taken away at any moment.[99] Toxic stress, or the constant activation of stress-response systems, disrupts brain development, immune function, and emotional regulation in young children and increases the risk of developing mental health disorders and other chronic diseases later in life.[100]

cerned about children not in attendance going hungry, because their center provides two meals per child, which represents over half of the nutrients a child gets in a day. She was distressed because, "[W]e don't know what they're going to eat when they get home. We don't know what their parents are going through." Research has shown how child care and early education facilities can buffer the negative effects of food insecurity on children's cognitive and social-emotional development. They can also teach families about resources to help them with food costs, like SNAP, which is available to U.S. citizen children, and food pantries.[90] ECE staff are understandably concerned about children missing out on these benefits if they are not attending their facilities or programs.

Some parents confirmed that they were keeping their children home so the family would not be separated, or detained together. These fears are justified. The Trump Administration has allocated billions of dollars toward building detention facilities and reviving family detention.[91] Approximately 6,000 detainees in ICE custody have been categorized as family units as of January 2026,[92] with the total population reaching an all-time high of 70,770.[93] Hundreds of children are currently being held in detention centers.[94] ICE agents have also been seen outside of schools across the country, and have targeted teachers and careworkers.[95]

Early education providers had this in mind as they and parents acknowledged the all-encompassing nature of the anxiety and stress that immigrant families are currently experiencing. One Washington parent said, "It is very difficult that the children's generations are affected because I think we all know here that this stage that the children are going through is one of the most important stages of life, the ones that will shape them forever. Imagine if children start having anxiety at this age … having worries that a child shouldn't have."[96]

Impacts on Older Children: Bullying and Missing School

Colorado and Texas parents shared that their older children are experiencing more bullying at school from students and staff related to their perceived immigrant background. During one interview, a Texas parent shared, "[R]ight now I think I am at a stage of saying: If we came, and sacrificed, gave up a better life we had in Mexico to allegedly have another better life for our children, and right now you are not actually offering anything to your children but insecurity, mockery, or bullying. Because it happened at my kid's school too...they come home from school: 'Hey, Mom, so-and-so said he was going to call the police on them.'"[101] Another pointed to how the racism her children experienced was exacerbated by educators and administrators: "Once [children] go back to school, well, they're going to hear more from their peers, or there's going to be more racism ... Because it has been seen, it has been seen from the teachers themselves."[102]

A provider in Washington told the researchers that parents were talking to her more about bullying in general as well, and felt like this kind of discriminatory behavior had been okayed by the federal government. The provider said, "And it's sad because kids are in school right now. You could see the difference between whose parents are racist and who's not. It's like day and night because this administration almost endorsed racism, right?"

Immigrant children suffer whether or not they go to school. Several providers noted that school absences could contribute to children's social isolation but, when the child returns to school, they may find themselves academically behind their peers and have to make up a large amount of work. One Colorado provider reiterated the significance of early education programs specifically when she said that missing preschool could mean that a child would not be ready for kindergarten. In fact, national research shows that preschool absenteeism leads to lower vocabulary, literacy, and math skills.[103]

BEHAVIORAL CHANGES

Though they may not be old enough to fully verbalize their thoughts and feelings, young immigrant children express their heightened fright, stresses, and anxieties through their behavior.

> "[Trauma] can really negatively impact [young children's] development. And that can show up in a lot of ways. It can show up as a delay in speech or their ability to communicate. It can show up as behavioral issues because young kids don't have the language yet to handle big feelings and big emotions. And when they're in an environment that's full of stress and they don't feel safe, then they can't develop that language. They can't develop those social skills that help them grow up into a functioning child in the community."
>
> *- Washington pediatrician*

Hiding, Separation Anxiety, Sleep Disruptions, and Antisocial Behavior

Many parents described worrisome behavioral changes in their children's responses to any kind of law enforcement. One New Jersey parent told us that their child runs and hides whenever he hears a knock at the door, because the child saw a news report of ICE coming to people's homes. An early care provider in Texas recounted how, prior to 2025, children were curious about strangers who visited their center. Now, she said, they hide behind their teacher when they see a new face in their classroom. For an immigrant WIC provider, that visceral fear manifested in her daughter when she jumped out of a chair after hearing a fire truck's siren–she thought it was the police. This kind of hypervigilance is associated with early symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder.[104]

The distress around being separated from family has been internalized so deeply that some children's sleep habits have changed. A Texas parent shared, "Yes, he sleeps with me. Also, he has to be physically touching me. And it's extreme what he's doing because he needs to be right on top of me. I guess that he imagines that I have to leave, so, well, it's a big impact for him because it's affecting his sleep as well. He doesn't sleep very well, he doesn't sleep very well because of that. This is my experience with my little boy."[105] CLASP researchers heard similar stories related to sleep and separation anxiety at all research sites; parents and providers also reported noticing more bedwetting over the past year.

For other children, their mental and emotional challenges were expressed through anger and nervousness. Providers in Georgia, New Jersey, and Washington saw more levels of anger and dysregulation in children as young as seven months than they had seen before in their careers. This included an increase in challenging behavioral and emotional regulation, as well as problems with social and emotional learning among all children. Some were even "quasi-violent" and threw chairs. Others picked at their bodies, pulled on their hair, or bit their nails. "He never used to do that," one Washington parent noted. But since Trump was elected again, "He's always chewing them…"

When children's fears came true and a parent was detained or deported, providers in Washington noticed that, "[Y]ou can see those little ones, their behavior is different. They are sad or they are not listening. And they want to be with their parents."

Dire Consequences of Limiting Children's Mobility

Several parents and providers made comparisons between the feelings of insecurity and reduced mobility caused by the current administration's anti-immigrant policies, and what life was like during COVID lockdowns and quarantines. Parents detailed the stress these more confined lives were causing their young children, describing the feeling as "Being in a box again, locked up."[106] As one parent in Texas remarked, "[I]t's like a migration pandemic. Now, instead of being about COVID or illness, now it's about fear of what's going to happen to you out there."[107]

Another parent of a two-year-old and a four-year-old explained that their daughter was frustrated that they couldn't go to the park. "She doesn't understand that it's the fact that I'm afraid,"[108] they said, explaining how in 2024 they spent all summer and every weekend at the "beach, lake, [and] park." Yet another parent described their children saying, "Daddy, I want to go to the mall." He quickly denied the request due to fear that "Oh, ICE was near [the mall], around there."[109]


Getty/Lisa5201

While many parents described shielding their young children from their own stress about the current political climate, they highlighted that their children still recognized that they were going out less and were becoming increasingly frustrated. A New Jersey parent said, "They are children and children need to run to release their energies. If one as an adult sometimes feels frustrated that you are from work to home and from home you only go out to shop or to do what is necessary out of fear, I imagine how the child must feel…[B]efore I took him to soccer to play with the other children on a large field for such hours and now he doesn't do that anymore…I don't take them to the park anymore…It is honestly quite frustrating. For an adult it is frustrating, for a child even worse. He feels inhibited."[110]

As a result, not only are their kids' physical activity and exposure to green space limited, but the children are also trapped inside with parents and other family members dealing with their own psychological burdens. Research shows that having access to parks is associated with improved mental health for children and parents alike.[111] Children are also growing more attached to the same phones, tablets, and TVs that show the violence of immigration enforcement and less keen to socialize with their peers, as reported by parents and providers alike. Recent studies have found that screen time at early ages can inhibit language and cognitive development and is associated with emotional reactivity and aggression.[112] While parents expressed concern about their children's exposure to screens, many also felt as though they have run out of options when they feel too scared to take them outside.

All of these challenges and expressions of fear and stress merely scratch the surface of what immigrant children are experiencing. The range of symptoms that caregivers and providers reported in children that stem from threats of separation, detention, and ostracization–from extreme anxiety to loss of sleep, bedwetting, increased aggressive and withdrawn behaviors, and hypervigilance–can have lasting consequences for children's later academic, social, emotional and health outcomes.

Community Response and Preparations

> "When the pressure comes … one just has to keep going and guide the children … 'you fight, you continue.'"
>
> *- Colorado parent*[113]

Creating a Child Care Plan

In response to the unpredictable climate, parents in focus groups reported having a range of strategies to ensure their children are cared for in case they were detained, deported, or otherwise became involved in immigration enforcement activities. Although many of these plans involved trusted adults as potential caregivers, some parents discussed the possibility of older siblings looking out for their youngest siblings. Other parents felt immobilized by worry and could not make plans.

When asked whether they were thinking about making a preparation plan, many parents said they were not. The widespread anxiety, stress, and mental health concerns reported in the previous sections served as a deterrent to this kind of planning. "[T]hat word 'plan,'" a Georgia parent said, "I have heard it like 1,000 times, and for me that is very stressful, so much so that sometimes I can't even sleep. Well I already suffer from anxiety, many problems, so for me that makes me think even more, what am I going to do? I don't have family, I don't have anyone, I don't have friends to leave my children with, and as [the facilitator] said, you have to know who to leave them with, but now in these times, there is no one to trust our children with, so for me this is stressful, not having a family. What am I going to do?…[A]ll four [children] are minors."[114]

Some parents are talking to neighbors they trust and family members to ensure that their young children have somewhere safe to go in case they are deported. In a few cases, parents mentioned having older children who are legal adults care for their younger siblings. A parent in New Jersey made this clear when she said, "I have talked to my daughters, I have told them that they have two older siblings, to go live with them. That is the only thing one can say. What else? They can't work."[115]

Others are relying on even younger children. While many parents are not sharing their plans with their youngest children, one parent mentioned that she had spoken to her four children, who are between 12 and 4 years old, about what could happen if she and her husband are detained. She's told her oldest child to insist on being with the youngest, and her 11-year-old to be with their seven-year-old sibling. That way, each child still has at least one sibling with them in case all four children cannot stay together.

Financial Preparations

Parents shared the ways they are financially preparing for being detained or deported. They are buying less, not setting money aside for future plans (e.g., saving to buy a house), and researching what would happen to their property and assets should they be deported. One Washington parent said, "We are not spending on unnecessary things or things far in the future right now. We are spending on future things but in our country [of origin]."[116]

This parent, like others, also was concerned that if she and her husband were deported, they would not be able to claim his pension or their social security payments: "So, it seems unfair that after so many years of him working, he has done everything right, because he got his permit practically the year he arrived. So, he has paid taxes for more than 20 years … He came here at 17 and is now in his forties. So, he has spent more than half his life in this country and has always worked. And he cannot claim [his pension] if, by bad luck, they send him away. Just like that, I mean, just like that."[117]

Returning to Their Country of Origin

Parents, especially in the New Jersey focus group, mentioned how they heard about many families who just disappeared overnight, with rumors swirling that they had returned to their country of origin. Others told CLASP staff that they are exploring what it would mean to return and are preparing their children for that possibility. Parents who shared their countries of origin were from Mexico, Ecuador, Guatemala, Peru, Honduras, El Salvador, Nigeria, Senegal, Cameroon, Mauritania, and Gambia. Many are scared about the prospect of going back because they don't feel that it is a safe place to raise their children, or that their kids won't have as many educational or economic opportunities. Some parents of children with special needs are concerned that their kids won't have the health or educational support that they have in the U.S.

To prepare, parents in the focus groups said that they had begun to research schools in their home country. One parent in Washington shared, "[W]e have researched schools back in El Salvador, in the area where we would go to live. A more decent school for them. Yes, we have done all that. I never thought that for my children who were born here, I would have to do something like that, investigating schools back in my country. And I told them about it. They started to cry. That's why ... I didn't want to continue the topic, but we did tell them."[118] In Texas, one parent said that they and their children had video calls with relatives in their home country to get them acquainted with those family members: "We tell the girl; we tell her, 'You're going to go to your grandparents because we talked to the grandparents there in Honduras by video call, and you're going to go to your grandparents. Do you want to go to Honduras?' ... And now she says, 'Yes, I'm going to Honduras.'" In the case that deportation happens, "...one way or another, she already knows that her grandparents are there, that she even has an aunt there, she can go and live and that it's nice there too."[119]

Daily Care, Support, and Protection

These parents have multiple strategies to cope and resist the negative narratives weaponized against immigrant communities. They are educating themselves about their rights and available resources; relying on their friends, family, faith, and community networks and resources for support and joy; and reminding their children of their worth.

Families are also helping to uplift each other during this time of discrimination and hate. When speaking about the pervasive risk that immigrant families face, a Michigan parent said, "[W]e cannot remove the anxiousness, we cannot remove the worries, but we can have groups that organize mutual aid. So, if you know that your neighbor is anxious, when you go to the grocery, take their list. So people should be like ... 'I'm going grocery shopping, she's stressed and she has a child, she is not going to go.' Because in her mind [she's thinking], I'm already arrested."

Another parent in Colorado reiterated the significance of community solidarity. "What helps me a lot is talking about it a lot with the people I know, with my employees, with my community. Staying very informed because sometimes we are misinformed and that is what affects us the most, and we pass that stress on to our children, to our loved ones. So, something that has helped me a lot is doing research, talking, looking for resources, preparing myself. All of that has helped me feel comfortable, confident, because the first few days it was difficult to go buy even our food... But that's what helps me, staying informed, sharing in meetings like this and collaborating with my community."[120] Another parent in Colorado built a community around maintaining a sense of normalcy and joy. "This year has been difficult, but it has been nice and fun because of my friends. I have many friends who are citizens or residents, but ... they would call me: 'Don't go out and don't go out,' because I am very outgoing and I help people, and everything. And what all my friends planned was that as soon as they heard something, that we shouldn't go out ... they would bring me cooked food and we would play lotería [Mexican bingo]. And now we have a routine where they meet every eight days to play lotería ... since February... And it has been difficult and hard, but at the same time I have very nice friends, American and non-American, who are at my house every day. My house is not empty."[121]

Finally, immigrants are reminding themselves, their communities, and their children that they are doing everything they can to provide a good life for their children. They want their children to feel safe, valued, and free, even if immigrant parents don't actually believe they are safe and free themselves. Speaking about the moral dimension of anti-immigrant rhetoric, a Colorado parent encouraged families to talk, "[T]alk to your children. It's not a bad thing. Being undocumented is not bad. Arriving to live and build life projects, better futures for them, for their families, for the children, is not bad. What is bad is the kind of government we are enduring and how sadly this has affected the entire community."[122]

Federal Policy Recommendations

We urge federal policymakers to support policies that prioritize the safety and physical, mental, social, and economic well-being of children in immigrant families. This requires rejecting immigration enforcement policies that traumatize children and separate families as well as harmful policies that prevent families from meeting their basic needs. As the findings of this report demonstrate, immigration enforcement actions are wreaking havoc on the well-being of children, their families, and their caregivers. Policymakers must invest in measures that will help communities heal from the trauma of anti-immigrant actions and restore public trust in government institutions.

1 **Limit immigration enforcement in places critical to child and community well-being.** Following the rescission of DHS guidance that limited immigration enforcement in sensitive locations, the number of arrests in and near child care centers, schools, health care clinics, and other locations important for meeting families' basic needs has sharply increased. Families we spoke with said they were scared to take their children to school, child care, and health clinics. Early education providers shared that program attendance has decreased and children have witnessed armed agents near child care centers.

- **Support the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act (H.R. 1061/S. 455)**, which would limit immigration enforcement activities in these and other locations that are essential to community well-being.[123] This policy would reduce the chances of children witnessing or being part of potentially violent altercations due to immigration enforcement and help families feel safer taking their children to places like schools, child care, health care appointments, and food pantries.

2 **Promote family unity by prioritizing the use of prosecutorial discretion to safeguard parents of minor children from deportation.** ICE has previously had policies to allow for parents, legal guardians, nursing and pregnant people, and other immigrants with humanitarian needs to be considered for prosecutorial discretion, allowing them to remain in the United States to work and care for their children. Many of the providers and parents we spoke to shared how parents who were previously granted prosecutorial discretion have now been deported, sometimes upon arrival at their scheduled ICE check-in appointment. Restoring the use of prosecutorial discretion can help provide relief to families at risk of being separated by deportation.

3 **Support policies to ensure that immigration judges make decisions based on the hardship to children regarding a parent's ability to enter or remain in the U.S.** Currently, there is no clear mandate or legal requirement for immigration judges to consider how their decisions about who enters and stays in the U.S. affects children. Congress must correct this oversight to adopt a "best interest of the child" standard and guarantee that children are no longer an afterthought in judicial decisions.[124]

4 **Ensure that parents and guardians are able to make decisions about the care of their children.** Parents who participated in this study are terrified about what could happen to their young children if they were arrested or detained. They also shared that, even if they know their rights, they have no confidence that ICE or other government agents would honor those rights.

- **Demand consistent implementation of the Detained Parent Directive and codify parental protections to mitigate the harm of enforcement on children.** It is essential to codify the ICE directive that allows parents who have been apprehended and detained to make decisions about the care of their children. Consistently implementing the 2025 Detained Parent Directive, as well as training all ICE agents on this directive, should help protect the rights of parents and legal guardians of minor children to make decisions about the care and well-being of their children and to reunite with children who are in the state child welfare system. Congressional oversight can also help uplift the numerous reported violations of the policy and ensure it is effectively and consistently implemented.125 Ultimately, passage of legislation to codify and strengthen the directive is necessary to ensure that the rights of detained and deported parents and legal guardians are guaranteed.

- **Create processes and support legislation to allow those who have been wrongfully deported to return to the U.S.** It is evident that a growing number of youth, and families have been wrongfully deported, often without any due process or regard to their safety and well-being. In some cases, parents were denied their right to take their children with them or leave them with chosen guardians.126 It is imperative that the federal government be held accountable for the harms suffered by those deported under such circumstances and remedy the harm by providing avenues to return to the U.S.

5 **Advocate for policies and practices that protect the needs and rights of adults with disabilities as well as their immigrant caregivers.** Policy solutions must be developed in close collaboration with disability and immigrant rights organizations, especially those led by people with disabilities. While this report focuses on parents and caregivers of young children, a small number of those parents are also caregivers of older or adult children with disabilities. Their experiences are a testament to how essential it is for a whole-family approach that addresses all the responsibilities of a potentially detained individual and adult(s) they support for alleviating stress and protecting everyone. This protection would provide caregivers and disabled adults with the peace of mind that even if caregivers are detained, the disabled adult and other dependents will be unharmed.

6 **Restore and protect funding and trust for programs that allow families to meet their children's basic needs and support their emotional, physical, and mental health.** In every focus group and interview, participants expressed concerns about the rising cost of living, citing increasing food, housing, and health care costs. Moreover, immigrants who are authorized to be in the United States, including green card holders and those who immigrated for humanitarian reasons, are partially or fully barred from accessing federal benefits programs like Medicaid and SNAP. Research shows that these exclusions, along with other barriers, create confusion and fear around enrolling in programs, which can result in children who are eligible and able to enroll going without care. These families and their young children deserve access to healthy food, a roof over their heads, and basic health care, all of which provide a foundation for children to survive and, hopefully, thrive.

- **Reverse cuts and exclusions for immigrant communities to federal health care, food assistance, and the Child Tax Credit (CTC) from the Budget Reconciliation Act of 2025.** Congress must restore eligibility for these programs and continue to invest and protect funding for federal programs that support parents' livelihood and child development, such as Medicaid, SNAP, CTC, and WIC.

- **Rescind recent executive actions and regulatory proposals that expand immigration-related restrictions or verification requirements across health, housing, and other public benefit programs.** These include policies that attempt to broaden eligibility restrictions established in PRWORA, expand public charge considerations, or impose new immigration status verification requirements that deter families from accessing essential supports.

- **Support the LIFT the BAR Act, the HEAL for Immigrant Families Act, and the WISE Act (H.R. 2851).** These bills would restore eligibility for federal public benefits, including health care, and establish other important protections to immigrants with legal status, many of whom were excluded from these programs through PRWORA and H.R.1.[127]

- **Protect the privacy and data of public benefit participants and their family members.** Parents were deeply concerned about enrolling their children, most of whom are U.S. citizens, in government programs like SNAP and Medicaid, due to concerns that their information would be shared with immigration enforcement authorities.

- **Support the Limiting ICE's Nationwide Encroachment Act (H.R. 5319) and Home Together Act (H.R. 5340)** and other policies that protect the data of families whose children rely on government programs to meet their basic needs.128 These bills prohibit the Department of Health & Human Services, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development from sharing data with DHS for immigration enforcement purposes.[129]

7

Support efforts to reduce disparities in and increase access to mental and behavioral health care. While all health care is crucial to individual and family well-being, affordable mental health care is especially important–and out of reach for many. Parents and providers spoke about children living with the constant fear that they might be separated from the loving adults in their lives. Caregivers are worried they are going to disappear without family members knowing where they are; that they will be taken to an unfamiliar country; or that they will be injured or killed as a result of immigration enforcement actions. To withstand the attacks on their communities, our children and communities need support that meets them where they are, is culturally responsive, and is offered in languages they speak.

- **Support the EARLY Minds Act**, which provides prevention and early intervention services under the Block Grants for Community Mental Health Service program.[130] Early intervention services are crucial for supporting babies and young children with developmental delays and disabilities. These services have consistently demonstrated improvements in the socio-emotional and physical well-being of young children.

- **Support the Health Equity and Accountability Act**, which aims to reduce health disparities.[131] This legislation, last introduced in 2024 as of March 2026, would increase access to health care, including mental and behavioral health; support language access for health care; and restore and expand health coverage eligibility for noncitizens.

- **Support the Mental Health Workforce and Language Access Act**, which incentivizes health centers to recruit behavioral health professionals who have language proficiency in English as well as one other language.[132]

- **Support the Mental Health Professionals Workforce Shortage Loan Repayment Act and other legislation** to increase the availability of qualified, culturally responsive mental health professionals, especially school-based mental health providers. Other bills introduced in prior sessions that also address workforce shortages include the ACCESS in Mental Health Act and the Compacts, Access, and Responsible Expansion for Mental Health Professionals Act.[133]

8

Stop funding enforcement actions that have demonstrably harmed children and families. Parents and interviewees were extremely concerned how children may be harmed, both physically and emotionally, if they are present during immigration enforcement actions, which news reports have confirmed have endangered children.[134]

- **Refuse to direct additional funding for DHS removal and detention operations and enact guardrails in apprehension/detention.** Parents, early care educators, WIC staff, health care workers, and community advocates all agreed that the immigration enforcement they were witnessing and hearing about in the news is excessively violent and indiscriminate. These enforcement actions contribute to an atmosphere of uncertainty, fear, and stress among all immigrant families with young children, regardless of their legal status. Continuing to funnel money into the U.S. deportation system is unnecessary for public safety. Data has shown that the majority of people being apprehended and detained do not pose a harm to public safety; rather, such enforcement activities endanger the public, especially young children.[135] The only way to curb the agency's abuse of power is to reduce its resources for monitoring, apprehension, and detention.

- **Support the Dignity for Detained Immigrants Act (H.R. 6397/S. 3702)**, which would repeal mandatory immigration detention laws, end the use of private and family detention facilities, and promote community-based alternatives to detention.[136]

- **DHS must minimize potential harm to children when they are present during immigration enforcement actions.** DHS must implement processes as well as trainings on these processes for field officers to mitigate the trauma to children who are present during immigration enforcement actions and prevent them from becoming unnecessarily involved in the child welfare system.

9

Protect the status of people authorized to be in the U.S. and expand pathways to status and citizenship. Parents repeatedly told us in focus groups that they want an immigration system that acknowledges their humanity. People with decades-long connections in this country, including families and business owners, risk separation from their communities due to the end of programs like TPS and DACA, which are both characterized by prolonged uncertainty. Refugees and asylum seekers are at risk as well; the Trump Administration has paused all new asylum applications and ordered re-reviews and re-interviews of applicants and refugees from specific countries.[137] Policymakers must keep programs like TPS, DACA, and asylum and refugee programs intact and offer long-term legalization for people with temporary legal status as well as those who have been living in our communities for years without real options for legalization. A pathway to citizenship is essential to the children of these immigrants in limbo to thrive.[138] Congress should pass:

- **The DREAM (S. 3348) and Dream and Promise Acts (H.R. 1589)**, which offers Dreamers and DACA recipients a pathway to legal permanent resident status.139 The Dream and Promise Act would also extend a pathway to citizenship to those with TPS and Deferred Enforced Departure.[140]

- **The SECURE Act (S. 2106)**, which offers a pathway to legal permanent resident status for people with TPS.[141]

- **The Keep Families Together Act**, last introduced in 2024, prohibits federal agents from removing a minor child from their parent or legal guardian at or near ports of entry.[142]

- **The Reuniting Families Act (S. 3419)**, which would reduce family-based visa backlogs and promote family reunification, including classifying minor children of legal permanent residents as immediate relatives.[143]

- **The Protect Vulnerable Immigrant Youth Act (S. 1965)**, which eases access to legal status for abused, abandoned, and neglected children who are classified as "special immigrant juveniles."[144]


Getty/ANDREY DENISYUK

10 **Protect due process and access to justice.** A major reason why parents, caregivers, and providers expressed a fear of immigration authorities is because they have no trust that agents will respect their constitutional rights. Additionally, we heard repeatedly from partners and community advocates that access to affordable legal counsel for immigrants is scarce. It is essential for Congress to support access to legal services as well as make sure their policies protect all children, including the:

- **The Fairness to Freedom Act (H.R. 3127)**, which establishes a right to legal representation in certain immigration proceedings for those who cannot afford it.[145]
- **The Access to Counsel Act (H.R. 944/S. 391)**, which would ensure that both U.S. citizens and immigrants with legal status who are entering the country have an opportunity to consult with legal counsel and relatives if they are stopped by immigration officials.[146]
- **The Fair Day in Court for Kids Act (S. 1297)** which would guarantee that unaccompanied children going through removal and related legal proceedings have access to free legal counsel at every step of the process.[147]

State Policy Recommendations

States have a limited amount of agency when it comes to protecting their residents from ICE. Some states have chosen to fully cooperate with ICE and Customs and Border Patrol (CBP) to enforce federal immigration law; others have not. Please see the appendices for state-specific contexts and recommendations. State policymakers should reject anti-immigrant policies that threaten child well-being and community safety and enact policies that:

1 **Limit immigration enforcement in areas important to family and child stability and security.** States have passed a number of policies, and more continue to be introduced, to protect certain areas from immigration enforcement. These areas include child care and early learning centers, schools, hospitals, clinics, shelters, and other places where families need to go to meet their basic needs. Restricting federal immigration enforcement at protected areas helps ensure that all residents can participate fully in their communities.[148]

2 **Prevent cooperation between federal immigration authorities and local law enforcement.** Evidence has consistently demonstrated the harm of 287(g) agreements, which are formal agreements between local law enforcement and ice, especially to family and child well-being.[149] These agreements are meant to extend the reach of immigration enforcement, often by using local funds and resources. States with more 287(g) agreements, like texas and georgia, have a higher number of arrests from local jails than other states.[150] The legislatures in both texas and georgia have passed laws requiring or encouraging local police to enter 287(g) agreements.[151]

3 **Protect the personal data and information of participants in public benefit programs and their family members.** States should implement policies and procedures that reinforce data privacy protections and provide resources to enable state program administrators to train frontline staff about appropriate data collection. This can help ensure that immigrants are not deterred from applying to programs. Moreover, state administrators should not pre-comply with the federal administration's efforts to collect data, unless it is determined that they are legally obliged to do so.[152]

4 **Allow parents to easily create temporary guardianship and care authorization plans for their children.** Parents in our focus groups expressed deep concern, should they be detained or deported, about the care and safety of their children. A number of states have standby guardianship laws, which enable parents to legally assign a trusted person to care for their children should they be unable to provide it. While each state law is unique, two relevant features that support immigrant parents are 1) to explicitly detail that immigration-related reasons are an allowable basis for creating standby guardianship, and 2) to allow for alternatives to court-ordered guardianships, such as permitting temporary standby guardianship or care authorization plans without requiring the parties to go to court. These temporary guardianship plans typically do not sever the legal relationships between children and their parents, allowing parents to retain their rights while still legally transferring custody to another adult.[153] States should consider measures and reforms to ease the process of obtaining temporary guardianship or care authorization plans and permit immigration-related reasons for the creation of such plans.

5 **Modify child welfare system procedures to increase the child's ability to reunify with a detained or deported parent.** These laws must prioritize retaining children's connections with their families and ensuring parental rights are not unnecessarily terminated. States can look to California's Reuniting Immigrant Families Act, enacted in 2012, as an example. This is the nation's first state law to address reunification barriers that immigrant families involved with the child welfare system face.[154]

6 **Expand and preserve access to critical benefits.** States have the authority to supplement federal benefits to expand access to health care, food assistance, housing, and other programs that help people, especially families with children, meet basic needs. This authority is critical, as the Budget Reconciliation Act of 2025 made deep cuts to programs like Medicaid and eliminated eligibility for Medicaid and SNAP for many immigrants with legal status.[155] In focus groups and interviews, parents and providers alike repeatedly expressed their concerns about the high cost of health care, food, housing, and transportation. States can ease access to these basic needs and mitigate the harm of immigration actions by:

- **Covering low-cost services for hard-to-reach populations**, like in Colorado, where the services of community health workers are covered by Medicaid.
- **Expanding access to maternal and infant mental health services.** The rate of brain development in the first five years of life surpasses any other growth period in a person's life, underscoring the need to safeguard infants' mental health. Moreover, infant and young children's mental health is closely tied to that of their parents. Funding and coverage of maternal, infant, and early childhood mental health services is critical to ensure all children have a strong foundation to thrive. Policymakers should ensure that their state's Medicaid policies and implementation of those policies support young children's access to high-quality infant-early childhood mental health (IECMH) and include interventions that are effective in immigrant communities, like community-based models for peer support and Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnostic, and Treatment services.[156]
- **Ensuring that all people, especially children and youth, can access critical mental health support.** These supports must be preventative and able to address acute crises and chronic conditions; offered in the languages that young people speak; located in places that young people already are, like schools, afterschool centers, and community centers; incorporate peer support; and centered around children's and young people's strengths.[157] Some examples are early interventions services, school-based mental health services, and youth mobile response. The last initiative is ideally a community-centered approach to addressing mental health crises that meets young people where they are and does not involve police. This approach is increasingly important, as parents in this study expressed confusion and distress over whom they could trust with their children's safety and well-being.
- **Ensuring that state benefit applications do not ask unnecessary questions** about immigration or the citizenship status of non-applicants.
- **Ensuring that people with limited English proficiency and limited literacy can access benefits** for themselves and other eligible family members.

7 **Enact policies to guarantee legal representation for immigrants in civil immigration proceedings,** especially when children are involved. New York's Access to Representation Act, for example, would guarantee a lawyer for anyone at risk of deportation who cannot afford one.[158]

The American Immigration Council and State Innovation Exchange have proposed additional ways states can support their immigrant communities, along with examples of how states have already begun to do so.[159]

Philanthropic Community Recommendations

As anti-immigrant sentiment pervades our political discourse and federal funding dries up for many mission-based organizations and foundations, local, state, and national foundations have a critical role to play in using their own credibility and prominence to elevate the importance of the well-being of young children of immigrants. This involves immediate investments in:

1. Urgent, direct support to children in immigrant families and the programs that serve them, including mutual aid groups, and flexible funding for community-based programs and early childhood programs to help support the emerging needs of families.
2. Litigation efforts to stop and delay unlawful and/or harmful policies and practices. Litigation has been a key tool in defending Head Start, data privacy, sensitive locations, and due process rights.
3. Policy advocacy at all levels of government to protect and defend the well-being of young children and the people who serve them.
4. Efforts to support the mental health of staff at organizations that are on the frontlines of immigration enforcement.
5. Community-based maternal and infant mental health interventions.
6. Affordable legal services and representation for immigrant families.
7. Multi-racial, coalition-building across national and state organizations and cross-sector collaboration across the immigrant rights community, early childhood sector, and other sectors serving children such as child welfare, health care, and education to support advocacy and direct service efforts.
8. The creation and dissemination of training and resources for ECE providers and staff.
9. Outreach and information dissemination to inform immigrant families and ECE staff about policies that affect them, their rights, and how they can advocate for themselves and their communities.
10. Efforts to connect researchers and advocates to ensure research is action-oriented and advocacy agendas are backed by a strong evidence base.
11. Documentation of the impacts of immigration policies on young children and their caregivers and the developmental consequences of those impacts.
12. Safeguarding and expanding culturally responsive mental health support for immigrant communities and frontline staff.
13. Awareness-building among the general public, policymakers, and other funders about the importance of young children of immigrants to our country's future.
14. Narrative change efforts that leverage the voices of immigrant families, early childhood providers, and other effective messengers to ensure that the general public and policymakers are aware of the archaic nature of the immigration system, the humanity of immigrants, and the need for comprehensive child-centered reforms.

PARENT FOCUS GROUP GUIDE IN ENGLISH

(Spanish to follow)

Facilitator: Welcome and thank you's. Introduces CLASP staff

CLASP staff: Hello, my name is X. I am a researcher and policy analyst with the Center for Law and Social Policy in Washington, D.C. CLASP is a non-profit that advocates for systems and policy change on the local, state, and federal levels to improve the conditions experienced by economically disadvantaged communities. We as an organization also take a deep interest in the ways that immigration policy impacts immigrant communities, and this is what we are here to speak with you about today. We are working with [name of CBO] to learn from:

1. service providers supporting immigrant communities. Our goal is to learn from your experiences in this line of work and about the needs of the immigrant families with young children that you serve.
2. immigrant parents or family caregivers of young children to understand their experiences so that we can better represent the needs of immigrant families in our advocacy work.

We are having conversations with families across the country over the coming months in order to develop and release fact sheets/public statements/OpEds/etc. by Spring 2026. We will not share any information that can identify you, like names and addresses. We will share an overall summary of what we find (which will be anonymized) with the media and policymakers to amplify your experiences and perspectives.

Now we will hand it back to [name of facilitator] and will be in the back listening and taking notes to make sure your perspectives are heard.

Facilitator: The discussion will take about 1.5 hours. During the discussion, I will ask questions about you, your family, your community, and your ideas for how policy can better support immigrant families with children. Sometimes CLASP staff may interject to ask questions to make sure they understand.

I'd like to remind you that the discussion will be audio recorded and the staff from CLASP will be taking notes during this time. This is to help gather our thoughts during the process and to ensure that we are capturing your responses accurately. The recording and notes will not be shared outside of the research team, and the recording will be deleted after it is transcribed and removed of any information that can identify you. During the discussion, you can choose not to answer any question and or stop participating in the discussion at any time. The information that you provide will be anonymized and kept confidential. The staff may quote your words, but they will make sure to erase any information that can identify you from the quote.

I also want to remind everyone to have an open mind and respect everyone's experiences and not to share people's personal stories or information outside of this group. Also please make sure that you are giving space for everyone to share. We would like to hear from everyone, so if you are someone that likes to talk a lot, consider letting two other people speak before you speak. This conversation will help CLASP and others fight for policies that support immigrant families and fight against those that harm them.

Do you have any questions before I turn on the recorder?

OPENING QUESTIONS

1. **Icebreaker:** Please tell us how many children you have and what their ages are. What moment with your child or child you care for recently brought you joy?
2. **Priority: How has the 2024 presidential election or changes in immigration policy this year impacted you and your family's day to day lives?** For example, increases in immigration enforcement, the registry rule, and overall anti-immigrant rhetoric coming from this administration.
3. **Probes: What changes have you noticed about your community, your families' lives, work? For example, how has it impacted you doing any of the following things?**
    - Dropping off child at school or child care facility
    - Taking child(ren) to extracurriculars
    - Going to health appointments for yourself or your family members, including children
    - Going to any government office

- Applying for or using public assistance
- Going to community events

4. (If applicable) **Where have you seen ICE or immigration enforcement happening? Has it prevented you from doing any of the above?**
5. **Priority: In terms of how the political environment is impacting you and your family, how is this moment different from 2016-2020?**

CHILDREN'S HEALTH

6. **Priority: How have your children or children you care for been affected by the political climate and increased emphasis on immigration enforcement?**
    - **Probes: How have your youngest children (ages under 6) been impacted? How has their behavior or emotions been at home or at child care changed, if at all? (examples, lack of sleep, worry, fear, being more clingy, stomachaches, headaches, being more irritable, nail biting, anything else).**
    - **Where do you think these changes are coming from? Probes: When did you begin to notice these changes?**
7. Have you ever talked to them about what different emotions they might be feeling?
    - Why or why not? And if you have, how did you talk about it?
8. What kind of support do you think your children need and from whom?
9. **Priority: How do you talk to your child/ren about difficult subjects?**
    - **Have you spoken with them about the police/ I.C.E.?**
    - **What about what to do if you or they are deported?**

PARENT'S HEALTH

10. **How do you deal with stress and difficult emotions?**
    - Probes: What has been helpful in helping you through difficult emotional periods?
    - Probe: How do you reduce your stress?
        - Probes: Talking to a friend, talking to a religious leader, exercise, eating differently, breathing exercises, dancing, cultural practices, prayer, etc.
        - If some people mention seeing a mental health professional, ask how they access it (health insurance, free clinic, church), and maybe ask others what would get them to consider seeing a professional.
11. **Priority: How can community-based organizations help?**
    - **Probes: What kinds of resources would you like and on what topics?**
12. **Priority: We hope to make our findings from our interviews and focus groups available to the media, policymakers, and others who are trying to help immigrants to make sure they know about the concerns and needs of immigrant parents like you, anonymously of course. What do you want policymakers to know about your experiences and your children? How do you want them to take action?**
    - Policymakers include your representatives in Congress like in the House and Senate, your Mayor and governor, local council members, and state representatives.
13. Is there anything else you'd like to share with us that you think is important or we didn't ask about?
    - Probe: what's the one thing you want to make sure we understand about your community and family's situation right now?

CLOSING

Thank you so much for taking the time to share your experiences, perspectives, and recommendations with us today. We'd be interested in hearing what you learned during today's conversation. Let's go around and share 1-2 thoughts about this. You can pass if you don't want to share.

Please reach out to us if you want to add any other thoughts to this discussion that come up later [pass out business cards or give email addresses].

MAIN RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. How are immigration enforcement policies and activities federally, at the state level, and locally, impacting families with children?
    - In particular, how are increased enforcement activities around previously considered "protected areas" impacting the behavioral and educational outcomes, physical and mental health, and other well-being indicators of young children in immigrant families?

2. Are different immigrant groups (by ethnicity, by time residing in the U.S., by mixed-status, by education level, by language, by literacy, by geography) experiencing enforcement activities and harmful rhetoric differently?
3. How are immigration enforcement policies impacting services provided by early care and education providers and other providers that work directly with families with young children?
    - Is it threatening their abilities to stay open?
4. How are the actions impacting families' willingness and ability to participate in child care and early education services?
5. What are some best practices implemented by CBOs, state, and/or local jurisdictions (including city/county), or others that mitigate the harmful impacts of increased immigration enforcement, on children especially? How can policymakers, advocates, and practitioners support them?

PARENT FOCUS GROUP GUIDE IN SPANISH

Facilitador: Bienvenidos y gracias. Presentamos al personal de CLASP.

Personal de CLASP: Hola, me llamo [X]. Soy investigadora [y analista] de políticas del Centro de Leyes y Políticas Sociales (Center for Law and Social Policy, o CLASP por sus siglas en inglés) en Washington, D.C. Estoy aquí con mi colega, [nombre]. CLASP es una organización sin fines de lucro que aboga por cambios en los sistemas y políticas a nivel local, estatal y federal para mejorar las condiciones de las comunidades económicamente desfavorecidas. Como organización, nos importa profundamente cómo las políticas de inmigración impactan a las comunidades inmigrantes, y por eso estamos aquí hoy, para conversar con ustedes sobre este tema. Trabajamos con [nombre de la CBO] para aprender de:

1. Proveedores de servicios que apoyan a las comunidades inmigrantes. Nuestro objetivo es aprender de sus experiencias en este ámbito y conocer mejor las necesidades de las familias inmigrantes con niños pequeños a quienes atienden.
2. También estamos llevando a cabo grupos focales con padres y cuidadores familiares inmigrantes de niños pequeños, con el fin de comprender sus experiencias y poder representar de manera más adecuada las necesidades de las familias inmigrantes en nuestro trabajo de incidencia

Durante los próximos meses, estaremos conversando con familias y proveedores de servicios de todo el país para elaborar y publicar hojas informativas, declaraciones públicas, artículos de opinión, entre otros, antes de la fecha que se definirá. No compartiremos ninguna información que pueda identificarle, como nombres, direcciones o el nombre de su empleador. Sí compartiremos un resumen general de los hallazgos (que será completamente anónimo) con los medios de comunicación y los responsables de la formulación de políticas, con el fin de amplificar sus experiencias y perspectivas.

Ahora le entregamos la palabra a [nombre del facilitador]. Nosotros estaremos al fondo escuchando y tomando notas para asegurarnos de que sus voces sean escuchadas.

Facilitador: La conversación durará aproximadamente una hora y media. Durante este tiempo, les haré preguntas sobre ustedes, sus familias, sus comunidades y sus ideas sobre cómo las políticas pueden apoyar mejor a las familias inmigrantes con hijos. En algunos momentos, el personal de CLASP podría intervenir para hacer preguntas adicionales y asegurarse de que todo se haya entendido claramente.

Les recordamos que esta conversación será grabada en audio y que el equipo de CLASP tomará notas durante el proceso. Esto nos ayudará a recopilar sus ideas y a asegurarnos de que sus respuestas queden registradas con precisión. La grabación y las notas no se compartirán fuera del equipo de investigación. Una vez transcrita la conversación, la grabación será eliminada, al igual que cualquier información que pueda identificarles.

Durante la conversación, pueden optar por no responder a alguna pregunta o dejar de participar en cualquier momento. La información que proporcionen será anonimizada y se mantendrá confidencial. El equipo podría citar sus palabras, pero se asegurará de eliminar cualquier detalle que pueda revelar su identidad.

También quiero recordarles a todos que mantengan una mente abierta y muestren respeto por las experiencias de los demás. Les pedimos no compartir historias personales ni información sobre otras personas fuera de este grupo. Además, por favor asegúrense de dejar espacio para que todos puedan participar. Nos gustaría escuchar a cada per-

sona, así que, si tiendes a hablar mucho, considera esperar a que al menos dos personas hayan intervenido antes de volver a hacerlo.Esta conversación ayudará a CLASP y a otras organizaciones a abogar por políticas que respalden a las familias inmigrantes y a contrarrestar aquellas que les afectan negativamente.

¿Tienen alguna pregunta antes de que comencemos la grabación?

[*Nota para el entrevistador: las preguntas en negrita son preguntas prioritarias*]

PREGUNTAS DE APERTURA

1. Rompehielo: Por favor, cuéntanos cuántos hijos tienes y qué edades tienen.¿Qué momento reciente con su hijo o con el niño(a) a quien cuida le ha traído alegría?
2. **Prioridad ¿Cómo han impactado las elecciones presidenciales de 2024 o los cambios en la política de inmigración de este año su vida diaria y la de su familia?** Por ejemplo, el aumento de la aplicación de las leyes migratorias, la regla del registro o la retórica antiinmigrante en general proveniente de esta administración.
    - Sondeos: **¿Qué cambios ha notado en su comunidad, en la vida de su familia o en su trabajo? Por ejemplo, ¿cómo le ha afectado al realizar alguna de las siguientes actividades?**
        - Dejar a su hijo(a) en la escuela o en la guardería
        - Llevar a sus hijos a actividades extracurriculares
        - Asistir a citas médicas para usted o para miembros de su familia, incluidos los niños
        - Acudir a oficinas gubernamentales
        - Solicitar o utilizar asistencia pública
        - Participar en eventos comunitarios
    - **¿Dónde has visto que está actuando ICE o la migra? ¿Te ha impedido hacer alguna de las cosas mencionadas arriba?**
3. **Prioridad: En cuanto a cómo el ambiente político está afectando a ti y a tu familia, ¿cómo es este momento diferente al del 2016 al 2020?**

SALUD INFANTIL

4. **Prioridad: ¿Cómo se han visto afectados sus hijos o los niños a quienes cuida por el clima político y el mayor énfasis en la aplicación de las leyes migratorias?**
    - **Sondas: ¿Cómo se han visto afectados sus hijos más pequeños (menores de 6 años)? ¿Ha cambiado su comportamiento o sus emociones en casa o en la guardería, si es que ha habido algún cambio? (Por ejemplo: dificultad para dormir, preocupación, miedo, mayor necesidad de atención, dolores de estómago, dolores de cabeza, más irritabilidad, morderse las uñas, u otras señales).**
    - **¿A qué cree usted que se deben estos cambios? Preguntas: ¿Cuándo comenzó a notar estos cambios?**
    - **¿Alguna vez ha hablado con ellos sobre las diferentes emociones que podrían estar sintiendo?**
5. ¿Por qué sí o por qué no? Y si lo ha hecho, ¿cómo lo abordó?
6. ¿Qué tipo de apoyo cree usted que necesitan sus hijos y de quién?
7. **Prioridad: ¿Cómo habla con sus hijos sobre temas difíciles?**
    - ¿Ha hablado con ellos sobre la policía o ICE (la migra)?
    - ¿Y sobre qué hacer en caso de que usted o ellos sean deportados?

SALUD DE LOS PADRES

8. ¿Cómo maneja el estrés y las emociones difíciles?
    - Sondas: ¿Qué le ha ayudado a sobrellevar momentos emocionales difíciles?
    - Sondeo: ¿Qué hace usted para reducir su nivel de estrés?
        - Sondas:Hablar con un amigo, conversar con un líder religioso, hacer ejercicio, cambiar la alimentación, practicar ejercicios de respiración, bailar, recurrir a prácticas culturales, orar, entre otros.
        - Si algunas personas mencionan que han acudido a un profesional de salud mental, pregúnteles cómo accedieron a ese servicio (seguro médico, clínica gratuita, iglesia). También puede preguntar a los demás qué los motivaría a considerar acudir a un profesional.
9. **Prioridad: ¿De qué manera podrían las organizaciones comunitarias brindar un mejor servicio a usted y a su comunidad?**

10. **Prioridad: Esperamos que los resultados de nuestras entrevistas y grupos focales estén disponibles para los medios de comunicación, los responsables de formular políticas y otras personas que trabajan para ayudar a los inmigrantes, para que conozcan —de manera anónima, por supuesto— las preocupaciones y necesidades de padres inmigrantes como usted. ¿Qué le gustaría que los responsables políticos supieran sobre sus experiencias y las de sus hijos? ¿Qué tipo de acciones espera de ellos?**
    - Los responsables de formular políticas incluyen a sus representantes en el Congreso, como en la Cámara de Representantes y el Senado, así como su alcalde, gobernador, miembros del consejo local y representantes estatales.
11. ¿Hay algo más que le gustaría compartir con nosotros que considere importante o que no le hayamos preguntado?
    - Indague: ¿Qué es lo que más desea que entendamos sobre la situación actual de su comunidad y su familia?

CIERRE

Muchas gracias por tomarse el tiempo para compartir sus experiencias, perspectivas y recomendaciones con nosotros hoy.Nos gustaría saber qué aprendieron durante la conversación de hoy. Vamos a dar una vuelta para compartir 1 o 2 ideas al respecto. Si no desean compartir, pueden pasar.

Por favor, no duden en comunicarse con nosotros si desean agregar otras ideas a esta conversación más adelante. [Entregue nuestras tarjetas de presentación o proporcione nuestras direcciones de correo electrónico.]

PRINCIPALES PREGUNTAS DE INVESTIGACIÓN (SÓLO PARA SU REFERENCIA)

1. ¿Cómo están afectando las políticas y actividades de aplicación de la ley migratoria —a nivel federal, estatal y local— a las familias con niños?
    - En particular, ¿de qué manera está impactando el aumento de las actividades de cumplimiento en zonas que anteriormente se consideraban “áreas protegidas” en los resultados conductuales y educativos, la salud física y mental, y otros indicadores de bienestar de los niños pequeños en familias inmigrantes?
2. ¿Diferentes grupos de inmigrantes —por origen étnico, tiempo de residencia en Estados Unidos, estatus migratorio mixto, nivel educativo, idioma, nivel de alfabetización o ubicación geográfica— están experimentando de manera distinta estas actividades de cumplimiento y la retórica dañina?
3. ¿Cómo están afectando las políticas de aplicación de la ley migratoria a los servicios que ofrecen los proveedores de cuidado y educación infantil temprana, así como otros proveedores que trabajan directamente con familias con niños pequeños?
    - ¿Están amenazando su capacidad para seguir operando?
4. Cómo están influyendo estas acciones en la disposición y la capacidad de las familias para acceder a los servicios de cuidado infantil y educación temprana?
5. ¿Cuáles son algunas de las mejores prácticas implementadas por organizaciones comunitarias, jurisdicciones estatales y/o locales (incluidas ciudades y condados), u otros actores, para mitigar los efectos negativos del aumento de la aplicación de leyes migratorias, especialmente en los niños?¿Cómo pueden los responsables políticos, defensores y profesionales apoyar estas iniciativas?

TABLES OF PARENT PARTICIPANTS AND THEIR CHILDREN

Number of children of focus group participants by state and age group

	Number of kids aged <6	Number of kids aged 6	Number of kids aged 6-12	Number of kids aged 13-17	Total number of minor children of participants
Colorado	14	4	11	6	35
Georgia	5	0	12	9	26
Michigan	12	5	6	1	24
New Jersey	8	5	10	2	25
Texas	9	2	15	6	32
Washington	9	1	8	1	19
Totals	57	17	62	25	161

Total number of focus group participants by state age range of children cared for

	Total focus group participants	Family caregivers of minor children	Participants caring for children ages <6	Participants caring for kids aged 6	Participants caring for kids aged 6-12	Participants caring for kids aged 13-17	Participants with children 18+
Colorado	21	16	12	4	8	5	4
Georgia	9	9	4	0	9	6	5
Michigan	11	10	8	5	3	1	1
New Jersey	25	17	6	5	8	2	8
Texas	12	12	8	2	10	4	4
Washington	9	9	8	1	6	1	3
Totals	**87**	**73**	**46**	**17**	**44**	**19**	**25**

Categories of employment

Type	Number	Subgroup
WIC staff	6	n/a
Early Education and Child Care (EECC) staff	39	16 Head Start staff (also counted as EECC staff)
Health care worker	2	n/a
Community advocate or K-12 educator	18	Only counted if they didn't fall into the other categories
Home visitor	2	n/a
Total	**67**	

Number of people interviewed by state

Illinois	2
Texas	9
Georgia	7
New Jersey	8
Colorado	13
Michigan	7
Washington	21
Total	**67**

FINDINGS FROM COLORADO

This appendix summarizes findings from nine interviews with 13 early and primary educators, community advocates, and health care providers and two focus groups with 21 Spanish-speaking family caregivers and parents of children ages six and under. All but one participant were women. Those who shared which countries they were from were from Mexico, Peru, and Guatemala, although this question was not explicitly asked. Experiences from these groups are uniquely informed in regard to the impacts of immigration enforcement on young children in immigrant families. Participants in these groups (with the exception of the one male participant) were also child care providers, most of whom work in home-based settings. The focus group participants collectively cared for a total of 18 children, eight of whom were ages six and under and four of whom were six years old.

Participants described how heightened immigration enforcement and anti-immigrant sentiment resulted in discrimination, increased isolation, and significant impacts on their mental and physical health. Both providers and parents expressed the ways children were affected and concern for their immediate and long-term well-being. The findings below are organized around four themes that emerged across all interviews and focus groups in all of the states conducted for this study: fear, isolation, and chilling effects; parental health; impacts on children; and community response.

Isolation, Discrimination, and Chilling Effects

Participants felt immigration enforcement is discriminatory, targeting not only people without legal status but anyone who is perceived as an immigrant or a non-English speaker. One focus group participant shared a story about how their son witnessed a Puerto Rican man being arrested by immigration authorities following a car accident that was not his fault, simply because the man did not speak English. "I recently saw that a citizen was standing alongside Latinos, Hispanics, and migrants, and started exercising free expression, and they were detained," the parent said. "And I think, imagine if they detain a person who was born here, who is white, and they detain him. Imagine us who want to speak up. It's scary."[160]

Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens by birth. Due to concerns about the indiscriminate nature of immigration activities, people described being on heightened alert and not being able to advocate for themselves or their communities

Parents shared how their worries about immigration enforcement have caused them to keep their children home from child care programs and schools, and even prevented them from going grocery shopping. One provider summed up what several of their colleagues shared with the CLASP team when they said, "Many families are afraid to ask for help anywhere," because "they think that . . . maybe you're going to give [their information] to the wrong people, right?"[161]

Parents also worry that they will encounter immigration enforcement agents while seeking help. One parent said, "[Elementary school staff] weren't going to open the doors [if immigration agents tried to get in], but there were days when I didn't send my daughter. I was afraid they were going to detain her. What would we do? I didn't have that power of attorney letter; I was afraid I would be left behind. I was very scared, I wasn't going to shop at Walmart."[162]

An early care provider echoed this sentiment, sharing that, "There have been many concerns ... including that [immigrant families] don't even want to go to food banks, especially now that it's necessary. In other words, everything is falling like this, [ICE agents] are making people close themselves off and ... there is no way out, they have nowhere to go, nowhere to look."[163]

Early care administrators and educators are reporting a decrease in the number of parents seeking services and taking their children to school. One public school resource navigator said that immigrants are even avoiding going to the hospital and appointments concerning their immigration status. Immigrant families are also anxious about being around any law enforcement, even if it is not ICE or CBP.

One focus group participant also mentioned how her husband's employer takes advantage of his fears of immigration enforcement by reducing his work hours. "[E]very week [my husband's employers] steal hours from [my husband]. And I tell him, 'We have to talk.' But he says, 'The moment I talk, they are going to take away all my work ... And right now, honestly, I am not in a position to risk having all my work taken away ... the bosses know and that's why they are taking advantage, not only with my husband ... [and also] in many companies and with several

workers. What they are doing is discrimination. I see my husband, they discriminate against him a lot, but sadly it is as we say, we can't do anything and with this government even less, because I feel that doing something is like risking losing all the work, which is the only source of income we can have."[164]

Fear of immigration enforcement and discrimination against immigrants is resulting in loss of income and additional barriers to accessing critical health, nutrition, and education services. That, in turn, is increasing the amount of stress on immigrant families.

Parent Health

Immigrant parents are feeling helpless, like their futures and those of their children are out of their control. They are reporting issues related to anxiety, frustration, and insomnia. One parent said,"Sometimes I wouldn't sleep because I was watching [the news about immigration]."[165]

Other phrases parents used to describe their feelings about family separation, detention, and deportation were "emotionally unwell," "exhausting," "frustrating," and "distressing."[166] One parent said that in her community, she is observing more "[P]eople who are attending clinics more for anxiety . . . they are entering depression because of all this situation."[167]

Providers also expressed concern about immigrant parents not getting the health care they need because they are avoiding doctor appointments or going to a hospital. One family resource navigator said, "[T]hose who are pregnant do not want to go so much to their visits from the hospital."[168]

Young Children's Well-being

Both parents and providers expressed concern about how caregiver stress would impact children. They reported children having trouble sleeping, feeling more anxious, and being scared when outside of the home. One parent said, "[Stress] is passed on to the little ones. It's passed on because [the adults] talk amongst themselves and the little ones listen, so that affects them. They don't tell us, but it affects them."[169] Another parent provided an example of their child hiding their fears: "[My daughter] didn't cry in front of us at home at night. And one day … she woke up with swollen eyes. And I said, 'Sweetie, what's wrong?' She said, 'I'm afraid that my dad … now that he's going out, since he doesn't have work here and is going out of town, they'll catch him and deport him.'"[170]

Parents worry about how children are being affected. Another parent said, "[M]y little girls … should be thinking about their school … And yesterday I saw … the news of a raid that happened in Chicago. So I say, how can it be that a five-year-old girl is worrying about her parents being deported and not about a school assignment they are giving her?"[171] Halloween was approaching at the time of the focus group, and this parent also worried that their children would not be able to fully experience the excitement of participating in the holiday either.

Children as young as five expressed fear of their parents being in public and the prospect of their parents being detained. As a focus group participant shared, "My youngest girl is five years old. And she says, 'Mommy, don't go to school … What will happen if they catch you?' and I feel bad because I have had to lie to them. I tell her, 'Sweetheart, nothing is going to happen to me … because we have the papers … So, it really hits me that my youngest girl has to worry about us. I say, she is a five-year-old girl who shouldn't have to be going through this."[172]

Providers were also concerned that children's nutrition and health could suffer as a result of not attending school or programs. Some families rely on the meals that schools and child care programs provide.

Impacts on Older Children

Parents recounted how anti-immigrant sentiment is impacting their older children as well. Children are experiencing discrimination at school; some don't want to be perceived as immigrants. One mother recounted how her child lost friends because she wore a T-shirt depicting the Guatemalan flag. Another child told her mother, "I prefer to look more like a dark-skinned American than have people think I'm from Peru."[173]

Some older children don't want their parents to take them to school because they worry that their parents could be detained on the way. When there was talk about raids at schools, an older child told their mother, "'Don't take us, Mom, tell my sister not to go to school, or to arrive earlier, or later, so she can take us.' So I say, how can the government play with the minds of children? Because we can understand and we deal with it **… but children shouldn't have to be living through what we are going through."**[174]

One teenager was afraid that raids at school could result in their arrest, as their parent explained: "[M]y son is 17 years old. He told me, 'Mommy, can you give me my documents … because if there's a raid at the school, because I look Mexican, I want to have my papers, because they're going to take me away. They say it's because of your … color and your facial profile that they'll see you and they'll deport you. I want to bring my documents with me.'"[175]

All of these conversations point to the mental, economic, and physical toll that increased immigration enforcement is having on Colorado children in immigrant families.

Parents are especially concerned about what separation could do to their children's long-term emotional well-being. One focus group parent planned to "[L]eave my 12-year-old daughter here so she can get ahead until she turns 17 and can travel alone, come here, right? But … that would also cause her an emotional problem. Something could happen to her, she's not with me. I'm taking her away from me and her father to give her a future."[176]

Community Response

Parents and providers in Colorado have created what one provider termed a "community web of support" in response to immigrant enforcement. Other providers in community based organizations are forming partnerships to spread information regarding know-your-rights training, resources for families like food and pro bono legal services, family preparedness plans, and temporary custody applications. These partnerships also revolve around creating rapid response networks to quickly disseminate information about ICE activity, and seeking support among school districts in other states with the goal of sharing best practices to adjust to life under the current administration.

Local residents are supporting immigrants as well. Some are becoming community leaders under the mentorship of providers and organizers. Others are knitting blankets, sweaters, and clothes for the children who arrived in the U.S. more recently, or organizing clothing, food, and diaper drop-offs for families in need.

State Political Context

Colorado is home to over half a million immigrants who collectively contribute $7.7 billion in federal, state, and local taxes. Of that total amount, undocumented immigrants contribute $1.7 billion.[177]

State lawmakers have taken measures to protect immigrants. In 2025, Colorado enacted S.B. 25-276 to ease immigrants' access to in-state student tuition, close data-sharing loopholes, affirm constitutional protections for immigrants at public facilities, and prohibit local law enforcement from detaining people on behalf of federal immigration authorities without a judicial warrant.[178] At the time of this writing, Colorado had only one county-level 287(g) agreement.[179]

Recommendations

State lawmakers can further protect immigrant families by:

- Prohibiting local law enforcement from collaborating with federal immigration authorities.
- Expanding protections against warrantless federal immigration operations in or near locations that are critical to community health and well-being like child care facilities, health care facilities, and food pantries.

FINDINGS FROM GEORGIA

In the summer of 2025, CLASP researchers conducted one focus group with nine Spanish-speaking immigrant parents who have 26 minor children between them, five of whom are under the age of six, in the Atlanta metro area. While not asked explicitly which countries they were from, the people who did share this information were from Mexico. Researchers also conducted seven semi-structured interviews with early educators and child care providers who serve immigrant families in the state. Findings from these conversations showed that the increase in anti-immigrant sentiment and immigrant enforcement activities created the same fear and chilling effects in Georgia as described in the report. One issue that was unique to this focus group was concerns related to children with disabilities.

The findings below are organized around four themes that emerged across all interviews and focus groups in all of the states conducted for this study: discrimination and chilling effects; economic impacts; impacts on children; impacts on providers; and community response.

Discrimination and Chilling Effect

Georgia children in immigrant families and their parents feel discriminated against for their perceived ethnicity and race when speaking Spanish in public. Immigrant parents are frightened at the prospect of being separated from their children if they are detained or deported. As a result, they are limiting time in public places; disenrolling from or avoiding public benefits, health care, and social services; and keeping their children out of early education and child care programs and school. As one parent stated, "At first, I was afraid to go to my appointments, because right now this is, more than anything, like racial profiling. They are going after all Hispanics."[180]

In addition to being scared to send her children to school, one Georgia parent expressed a desire to leave the U.S.. "I didn't want to send them ... I didn't let them go to school. At one point I thought that if I had had money, I would have left like a crazy person ... I would have taken my children. I felt unprotected, I felt afraid to go out to work."[181]

Early care administrators and educators also attested to the chilling effect, noticing a drop in attendance and participation in their programs and events since early 2025. Some mentioned that families had other parents drop off their children at early care programs. One early childhood education provider summed up these concerns when they said, "I know if parents hear that there might be a chance they're separated from their children, that's gonna decrease participation and lower attendance. If people are scared, they're gonna go home and stay home." An early care administrator shared that, "We have lost about four families, like they drop mid-school year."

Economic impacts on Families with Young Children

Due to the widespread fear of going outside to attend school, work, or engage in other activities, many focus group participants said they have experienced significant losses in income. Participants also shared stories about workplace exploitation and wage theft. One parent in particular was upset on behalf of her husband, who had not been paid for work completed. She said the employer insulted them and threatened to call immigration enforcement when her husband requested payment, resulting in $3,000 in lost wages.

There was also a shared anxiety about "working people" being targeted in general, as work sites frequented by immigrants have become targets for ICE activity. As one parent put it, "The vans of working people, immigration is going to the companies, to the places of work. They are not catching criminals. They are detaining working people. Workers, our husbands, who are going to work are being detained. And us, with children with disabilities, what do we do?"[182]

These barriers are making it even more difficult for families to keep up with the increased cost of living.

Impacts on Children

Many Georgia parents in the focus group had children with disabilities. While all of the participants were anxious about possibly being detained and what would happen to their families in their absence, parents of children with disabilities shared additional concerns. One parent asked, "For me, it was a very negative impact with everything that is happening with immigration, with everything that is happening with the cuts they are making, that the president made federal cuts like for Medicaid, for people with disabilities ... So for us, the immigrant people, who don't have other resources, and who have our children with disabilities, I mean, how [do we care for them]?"[183]

Another parent raised the issue of how difficult it was to get the medical documentation necessary for their child

to enroll in school. They had to figure out how to get their child's immunizations, medical check-ups, and hearing and vision tests, among other requirements. Acquiring these documents will be even more difficult for other parents who are now less comfortable applying for Medicaid.

Children are also absorbing the stress of their parents. The same focus group participant who described how her husband's employer threatened to call immigration authorities expressed how her child was greatly impacted by this incident, "[My husband] … arrived at the house very scared, and he says, 'I almost didn't come back' … my son is very attached to him, and he started to cry, and now he is always calling him: 'Dad, are you okay? Dad, what time are you coming home?' and things like that."[184]

Immigrant parents also felt the stress of making preparations in case of detention and deportation. They repeatedly requested assistance with making a plan, including guidance on how to create preparation plans and talk to their children about immigration enforcement. Some said that their older children are scared their parents could be detained and, as a result, are taking on more responsibilities, including driving to reduce the risk of their parents being pulled over for a traffic stop that could escalate. Other children felt the need to prepare themselves.

Families with two parents at risk of detention and deportation were scared to appear in public together, in the event that they would both be detained and their children left without a caregiver. One mother could tell that her children do not rest well because they worry that something may happen to their parents: "Right now the father and I can no longer go out together, why? Because if anything were to happen, it should only happen to one of us, but not to both of us and that is the concern of my children every night, at 1:00 a.m. I hear them going step by step checking the doors and making sure the doors are well closed and that is what worries me, that they don't even sleep well because of those things that always keep them so on alert."[185]

Impacts on Providers

Early care providers deeply care about their communities and do everything in their capacity to serve not only children, but the entire family. These providers want to ensure that the families they work with have the necessary resources to provide a healthy environment for their children, and take the opportunity to positively affect a child's life seriously. One early care provider spoke of their desire to support family engagement, saying, "[O]ne thing I've learned is about … 99 percent of families, they want to do what's best for their kids, and sometimes they just don't have the tools and the knowledge to do it. And so we are in a very rare opportunity to meet them where they are at. And many times we're with these families for like five years, so you can really make an impact. If your kid comes [to the program] as an infant, you can really pour into them in a way that is impactful for the rest of their kids' lives."

On top of the effects of increased immigration enforcement, providers are also feeling the stress of policies that impact Head Start and early care services. One early care administrator discussed how funding delays caused stress for her and her employees, many of whom live paycheck to paycheck.

"We've had situations where money has not come through. Like where you're supposed to get money deposited from the federal government on Wednesday, and that does not happen … we get funds from multiple streams. Head Start is our baby because that's $13 million … [b]ut we also receive money through state funds. We receive Georgia funded pre-K [and] a lot of money from tuition, so now families are shifting, right? And so it is literally the perfect storm. So if you don't have [the security of] your big dogs of 13 million, everything else is, like, questionable. … [W]e get a lot of private grants, but if you have, you know, foundations that themselves are experiencing a change, then … that just continues to trickle down."

A home child care provider said that because families are so economically strapped, she often provides care for free: "The only way I can help them is that sometimes, because I don't charge them from today for a week, two weeks … and those weeks I don't receive my salary … I don't buy clothes anymore, no, I don't need anything … Then I assume that I can invest that money in a beautiful work, so sometimes I don't charge the parents. Sometimes I babysit the kids [for] free [on] weekends so they can go work."[186]

Many early care providers had been asked whether they would serve as a temporary guardian for a client's child, should the parent be detained or deported. One home care provider has actually agreed to be the temporary guardian of several children. "I have two mothers who made a paper where they authorize me in case of anything happens the children stay with me … I am helping them from the program. They made a letter where … it says that if something happens to them … I take care of the girls until she can solve her problem so that if she is deported, I will send the girls to her later."[187]

Providers are also concerned about staff who may have temporary status and work authorization. One early care administrator said, "Like, if [ICE ever comes] here, you

know, then … we got to worry about our employees, so it's you know it, it impacts everybody."

Due to the added stress created by anti-immigrant policies and the current environment, providers expressed concern about their own mental health and the health of their colleagues or employees.

Community Response

In spite of the chilling effects on parents' lives, there seemed to be strong networks between parents and community-based organizations that allowed for the swift dissemination of information regarding ICE sightings. Additionally, some parents were deeply engaged in local politics, naming local government officials that had given assurances about protecting Head Start funding that was jeopardized during the government shutdown that began in October 2025.

Early care providers are protecting their staff and the families they serve by ensuring they institute procedures for what to do in case immigration authorities come to their facilities. As one early education administrator said, "[W]e put together a training where every staff person, kitchen, classroom, I don't care if you were a plumber in this building, we wanted everybody to know … if something happens, like, everybody has a role and this is what you're to do."

State Political Context

Georgia is home to 1.2 million immigrants. In Gwinnett County, where these focus groups and interviews took place, over one in four residents are foreign-born.[188] Collectively, immigrants in Georgia contribute $15.8 billion in federal, state, and local taxes; $2.7 billion of this is contributed by undocumented households.[189] Despite the high representation and monetary contributions of immigrants, Georgia has passed several anti-immigrant laws. In 2024, Governor Brian Kemp signed H.B. 1105, known as the "Georgia Criminal Alien Track and Report Act of 2024," into law. This law has resulted in close cooperation and 287(g) agreements between the state and local agencies in Georgia, and ICE. H.B. 1105 also reinforces anti-sanctuary laws in the state; penalizes local law agencies that violate these requirements by withholding funds; and makes any violation of the law a misdemeanor for local officials or employees.[190] Support for the bill was likely catalyzed by anti-immigrant sentiment in the wake of the tragic killing of Laken Riley at the University of Georgia in 2024. As of this writing, Georgia has fifty-two 287(g) agreements in place.[191]

Georgia does not have a state program that extends health care coverage to immigrants not eligible for federally funded Medicaid benefits, like undocumented people or immigrants who have had their green cards for less than five years.

Note: The CLASP research team was not easily able to reach people to interview for this project in Georgia, including WIC employees. This may be due to H.B. 1105's provision that penalizes local governments and their employees for violating anti-sanctuary laws, but researchers cannot be sure that this is the reason.

RECOMMENDATIONS

State Policymakers

Providers and focus group participants expressed a desire for policymakers to advocate on their behalf and on behalf of all children. This includes:

1. Protecting sensitive locations from immigration enforcement. S.B. 391 restricts immigration operations in "schools grounds, college campuses, public places of worship, hospitals, public libraries, and family violence shelters" by requiring a judicial warrant for any local, state, or federal agency leading the operation and repealing any laws that conflict with this law's requirements.[192] This bill could be expanded to include other locations that are frequented by young children and their families, like child care facilities, health clinics, and food pantries. Illinois' H.B. 1312 could provide guidance on how Georgia's restrictions in SB391 could be strengthened.[193]
2. Covering basic health care for all children. Early care providers expressed wanting to see children, regardless of their own status or the status of their parents, have basic health care, such as immunizations and preventative check-ups, covered.
3. Protecting funding for Head Start and early education programs. Providers also want policymakers and others to recognize that this funding occupies an essential role in a critically important developmental phase, and how important it is to protect this funding for all children.
    - "[W]e just need really outspoken support for Head Start, that's like the easiest one. … It's not just about funding, but some of the things that have happened within the last week is that they made a change, literally like a word, [carving out immigrant children from] for Head Start eligibility … if that plays out, there's a huge chunk of children that would be ineligible for our program,

so not just funding Head Start, but making it or restoring it or keeping it in a place where it's as inclusive as possible. That would be like the number one thing" - Early childhood education administrator

4. Training early childhood education providers and the general public on their constitutional rights.
    - "We need … a training program to make us understand what our rights are in Georgia and also on the federal level. State laws and federal laws. And what we should do and what we shouldn't do. Our constitutional rights. Not just for us, but … for our families. Mixed families and children who are American citizens, and what we should do if ICE came right now." - Family support specialist

School Districts

While school districts have created protocols on what staff should do if ICE or other immigration authorities are near or on campus, it is essential for school boards to also develop procedures for dealing with the presence of law enforcement on school grounds. This is especially critical given the continued increase in 287(g) agreements in Georgia.

School districts must develop policies and guidance for how to protect student data and privacy in accordance with long-standing federal guidance. A resource from the Century Foundation and the National Immigration Law Center outlines specific steps that school districts can take to protect student data.[194]

FINDINGS FROM MICHIGAN

In fall 2025, the CLASP research team interviewed seven service providers and conducted one focus group with 11 English, Wolof, and French-speaking West African immigrant family caregivers in the Detroit metro area. Participants were from Senegal, Cameroon, Mauritania, Gambia, and Nigeria; together, they cared for a total of 24 children, 12 of whom were ages six and younger. This was the only focus group in this project that included the perspectives of African immigrants.

Immigrant parents and providers in Michigan have witnessed ICE conducting raids in their neighborhoods and know community and family members who have been detained and deported. They shared how increased immigration enforcement has made them scared and anxious. The findings below are organized around four themes that emerged across all interviews and focus groups in all of the states conducted for this study: fear, lack of safety and mobility; impacts on parent health; impacts on children's health; and community response.

Fear, Lack of Safety and Mobility

Parents are scared that they could be separated from their children at any time. Many spoke about how they are constantly afraid of being apprehended or detained by immigration enforcement. A young parent mentioned their dream for education was deferred because, "When you're behind the wheel, you are constantly stressed, sometimes to the point that you no longer notice the speed limit. Your mind is never at ease. I was supposed to go to college, but if you go, you can't even focus."[195]

Immigrant parents are concerned about being stopped based on how they look, dress, or speak. They don't feel safe being themselves and are hesitant to wear clothes from their countries or speak their languages. As one focus group participant said through an interpreter, "[W]e don't even wear our traditional clothes, people telling us, you know, don't speak your language, don't wear traditional clothes, go and hide."[196]

As a result, parents are terrified to leave their homes, limiting their time in public spaces and forgoing essential errands, like grocery shopping. Their fears were valid; as one parent shared, "Recently, someone we know went shopping and was arrested there. We want to work, but we don't feel safe at our workplace. We don't even feel safe here anymore. They can arrest you at any time."[197] Another parent said that she was scared to even ride the elevator in her apartment building: "No matter how high your apartment is, you take the stairs because the elevator doesn't feel safe."

Some focus group participants felt helpless and trapped. They can't return to their home countries due to unsafe conditions, but they also face endless persecution in the U.S., where they came for refuge. Building on a previous comment, a participant explained, "Just like [the other focus group participant] said, we just want to go back home, but where will you go to? Back home, it's war, it's killing, it's burning, looting, everything happening, you know? So it's just like I said, you're in between the deep blue sea and the bedrock. It's terrible."

This fear is not limited to people without legal status. Many participants in the focus group were asylum seekers, had TPS, or even were citizens. Yet the fear of immigration activity follows them all. One parent lamented the fact that obeying the law did not guarantee protection, saying, "Even if you entered the country legally, obtained a work permit, and pay your taxes, you are still stressed. You receive your paycheck, but you don't know what to do with it because you're afraid to go to certain places. We are not free."[198]

Misinformation and a lack of knowledge about community resources adds to immigrant families' anxiety and isolation. Parents' fear of detention is causing them to miss out on important benefits and resources. Child care providers reported hearing from more parents asking about food banks. As one early childhood education provider noted, "Many families don't even know that resources exist—that they can apply for certain state or legal resources if their children are documented, if they are victims of violence, or if they are homeless. One is the lack of awareness of these resources. Another is that they prefer not to use them, assuming they even know about them, because they prefer to remain undocumented, especially if their immigration status is undocumented. They prefer to operate under the radar, thinking it's better not to use anything."[199]

Deteriorating Parental Health

Persistent worries about detention and deportation and feeling unable to move freely in public are having profound emotional impacts on parents. Some reported trouble sleeping, while one parent said that, as parents, they are internalizing their fear and anxiety to shield their children from stress, which compounds the emotional toll. As one parent put it, "And one thing being a parent is protecting them from that information that's going to put them through that trauma. ... Because if you start telling your child, oh, do you know, by tomorrow this can happen to me, now you put the child under this constant torture [of] ... oh, mommy, they're coming for you. You don't want your child to go through that. So most of the parents, they take the pressure, they take the stress, and you see, sometimes it even reduces them to some sort of a depression ... Yeah, so parents go through a lot."

Impacts on Children's Health

Both providers and parents were concerned about the potential trauma of seeing an ICE operation, or knowing a classmate who has been impacted by detention or deportation. As one provider said, "[I]f a childcare worker is getting traumatized, the children are getting traumatized, so that makes it really hard to care for children." Another provider, who has legal status, told us how her five-year-old grandson is affected by immigration enforcement because he saw his classmate's father detained by immigration authorities. "He doesn't quite understand what's happening," she said. "[H]e's asked me some questions from school [and said] 'there's these guys outside my school and they took [his classmate's] dad.'... [H] e says, it was scary. Yeah, because they had these masks on and they took them ... I don't want him to get down and I don't want him to be scared. So it's hard when you communicate with the little ones because they don't understand what's really happening. So they just know that their loved ones are leaving and they don't know why."

In addition to concern about how caregiver stress and witnessing an ICE arrest would affect children, providers also worried about barriers to health care coverage, and being able to go food shopping. At least two focus group participants mentioned that their children's Medicaid was cut, even though they are U.S. citizens. Providers also mentioned that parents, especially immigrant parents, are not taking their children to early care programs, meaning that children will lose out on the benefits of early education on their development and socio-emotional health.

Restricted access to food and medical care can further impede children's healthy development, and are especially devastating for young children who will need well-child visits and preventive health care for school enrollment and healthy development tracking. During a heightened period of ICE enforcement, one parent admitted, "I once spent an entire week without food for my child because they were around at that time, and it was too risky to go to the store."[200]

Community Response and Resistance

Parents and providers mentioned many ways immigrant families with children can be prepared, including sharing information about community resources like food banks, ensuring immigrant families have a plan for the care and safety of children should the main caregivers be detained or deported, and educating people about their rights. One focus group participant also suggested ways that community members can look out for one another: "So, if you know that your neighbor is anxious, when you go to the grocery, take their list."

State Political Context

Michigan is home to 740,300 immigrants. Collectively, immigrants in Michigan contribute $8.3 billion in federal, state, and local taxes; $3.1 billion of this is contributed by undocumented households.[201]

Michigan lawmakers have introduced some bills to mitigate the harm of immigration enforcement while also navigating the introduction of other bills that would exacerbate the hardship immigrants are currently experiencing. At the time of this writing, Michigan has seven 287(g) agreements.[202]

Recommendations

Beyond the recommendations in the main report, Michigan lawmakers can mitigate the harm that immigrant families with young children are experiencing so acutely by:

1. Opposing anti-sanctuary laws like H.B. 4339, H.B. 4338, and H.B. 4342.[203]
2. Opposing laws and practices that chill immigrants' participation in services and benefits for which they or their children are eligible, like H.B. 4340 and H.B. 4341.[204] Federal law already imposes a number of eligibility restrictions on "non-qualified" immigrants. Laws like H.B. 4340 would just increase fear and confusion, even among "qualified" immigrants.
3. Supporting the Drive SAFE bill package that includes S.B. 433, S.B. 434, H.B. 4835, and H.B. 4836 to make driver's licenses and state identification cards available to individuals with a "legal presence" requirement.[205]
4. Supporting bills like S.B. 508, S.B. 509, S.B. 510, H.B. 4858, H.B. 4859 and Senate Resolution 86.[206] Collectively, these bills and the resolution would designate schools, hospitals, places of worship, courthouses, and organizations serving populations in need as protected spaces, and prevent the disclosure of certain personal information to government entities for immigration enforcement purposes without a judicial warrant. They would also require immigrant enforcement agents to wear clearly identifiable uniforms and prohibit the use of masks.

FINDINGS FROM NEW JERSEY

This appendix summarizes findings from five interviews with immigrant-serving providers, including one health care provider and four early and primary education providers; and two focus groups with 15 Spanish-speaking mothers and fathers of young children in New Jersey. The countries that participants were from included Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Peru, although not every participant shared their country of origin. Collectively, the parent participants care for at least eight children ages six and under, and at least 25 minor children total. All interviews and focus groups were conducted in October 2025.

A consistent picture emerged across interviews and focus groups: immigration enforcement actions are not experienced as isolated events. Rather, they generate sustained fear, disrupt daily routines, alter service utilization patterns, and create measurable stress for both parents and children. Providers described visible changes in attendance, enrollment, and engagement with services. Parents described persistent anxiety and their efforts to prepare their children for potential separation.

The findings below are organized around four themes that emerged across all interviews and focus groups in all of the states conducted for this study: fear, isolation, and chilling effects; parental health; child mental health and well-being; and community response.

Fear, Isolation, and Chilling Effects

Participants described a pervasive climate of distress that has reshaped daily life for immigrant families. Providers reported sharp declines in school and program attendance and enrollment following visible enforcement activity and national political shifts. One education provider noted a sudden decrease in families seeking services, explaining that there had been no change in the types of services requested–"just people disappearing." A provider that also runs a health clinic similarly observed an increase in missed appointments and families afraid to leave their homes.

Parents described avoiding public spaces and withdrawing from programs. One recounted witnessing officers stopping people on public transportation and described praying and avoiding eye contact to prevent interaction. In neighborhoods such as Newark's Ironbound community, providers observed streets that were once active and vibrant had become "very quiet," with families returning to their countries of origin or relocating abruptly.

Parent participants were vocal about experiences of labor exploitation. While some chose to stop going to work, others reported wage theft and being left stranded. As one parent shared, "[B]oth agencies and companies are now no longer respecting the minimum wage which is $15.49. … They tell you, '$14, if you want it, take it.'"[207]

Families have also changed how they engage with public benefits. Providers reported declines in applications for Medicaid and SNAP, even among individuals with lawful permanent residency who were worried that participation could affect their immigration status. Some providers said families had withdrawn from nutrition or child care programs.

Participants described a widespread chilling effect in which families limited mobility, did not access services, and engaged in contingency planning in response to enforcement activity. The increase in requests for powers of attorney illustrated the depth of concern about family separation. As one early care provider observed, "I've been here four years, and this is the first year that I've seen so many people walk through our family services door and ask for a power of attorney." Rather than isolated anxiety, these accounts reflect a broader negative shift that constrains access to services and destabilizes family routines.

Deteriorating Parental Health

Participants linked immigration enforcement to unrelenting stress that affects parental decision-making, risk mitigating behavior, and emotional availability. Parents reported chronic anxiety tied to uncertainty about immigration enforcement, financial stability, and potential separation from their children. One parent characterized the current climate as producing "psychological trauma."[208]

This stress has tangible implications. Providers reported increased conversations with parents of young children about anxiety, sleep disruption, and persistent worry. In some cases, immigration concerns influenced decisions related to personal safety and legal protection, as providers also discussed domestic violence survivors who declined to seek court protection or call law enforcement due to potential immigration consequences. These decisions can leave parents and children in unsafe situations, compounding trauma.

Parents articulated the emotional burden of contemplating forced separation. One reflected, "As a mother, you might suffer the pain of leaving a child … but if a child is small, when you want to get them back, how will they understand that it wasn't your fault you left them alone?"[209] This statement captures the linked worries of both deportation and damaging a child's emotional understanding and attachment.

Worsened Child Mental Health and Well-Being

Providers and parents recounted enforcement-related stressors that directly affected children's sense of safety, attachment, and routine during critical developmental periods.

According to providers, in cases where a parent had been detained, their young children exhibited distress, confusion, and difficulty understanding a caregiver's absence. One provider shared about a four-year-old whose father had been detained and who was visibly upset and struggling to comprehend why his parent was gone.

Children are also internalizing terror in their daily routines. Parents described teaching children not to open the door if someone knocks, and one parent said that her child's first reaction to a knock was to hide in a bedroom. Another parent shared how his five-year-old would duck down in the back of the car to hide if he heard police sirens. Yet another described her ten-year-old daughter asking to learn how to cook in case her mother was deported, explaining that the child feared being left alone and unprepared. "My girl is only 10 years old. She tells me 'teach me how to make steak, teach me how to make chicken soup, beef soup.' When I talk about my daughter, I feel like crying and crying because she acts like she is 15 years old. So she has learned to cook all those foods because she says that if they deport me then at least she won't die of hunger."[210]

Providers also reported instances of children left at school after a parent was detained during the school day, requiring extended supervision until another caregiver could be located. Such disruptions undermine stability and can produce long-lasting stress responses. These incidents also put more pressure on providers, affecting their own emotional health.

Community Response and Resistance

In response to enforcement-related fear, community organizations have expanded their legal, procedural, and emotional supports for families. Several providers described developing clear protocols regarding how to respond if immigration officers attempt to enter school or program grounds. These protocols are intended to reassure families and maintain continuity of services.

Organizations are also assisting families with contingency planning. Providers reported increased demand for legal resources and offered free notarization services to help parents formalize guardianship arrangements in case of detention. Some organizations are partnering with legal service providers to host on-site clinics and provide immigration consultations. One provider is in the process of hiring an immigration resource navigator to support families directly.

Importantly, providers emphasized confidentiality and trust in the course of their work. Many do not ask their clients about their immigration status unless required for eligibility purposes, and the providers are intentional about safeguarding family information. As one provider said, **"We're not going to freeze in fear.** We're going to continue to provide the services."

These efforts reflect determination to serve all community members, as well as institutional adaptation. However, they also underscore the extent to which community-based organizations are absorbing the impact of federal enforcement actions.

The findings from interviews and focus groups indicate that immigration enforcement actions affect immigrant families with young children in multidimensional ways. Beyond the immediate consequences of detention or removal, enforcement activity generates sustained fear, reduces engagement with public services, strains parental mental health, and shapes children's emotional development and daily behavior.

For young children whose well-being depends on stable caregiving relationships and consistent access to health, education, and nutrition supports, these disruptions are particularly consequential. The accounts shared by parents and providers suggest that immigration raids and enforcement actions reverberate throughout households and education and community institutions.

State Political Context

Nearly one in four New Jersey residents is an immigrant. Collectively, they contribute nearly $40 billion in federal, state, and local taxes, with undocumented immigrants contributing $4.7 billion of that amount.[211] At the time of this writing, New Jersey has no 287(g) agreements in place.[212] New Jersey lawmakers have taken steps to provide some protection against the harms of immigration operations. These include:

- The New Jersey Immigrant Directive, issued by the Attorney General in 2018, prohibits local law enforcement from entering into 287(g) agreements, among other protections for immigrants in the state.[213] Even with that prohibition, however, local law enforcement continues to collaborate with federal agents informally, allowing access to people in custody. This has resulted in hundreds of people being transferred from local jails into ICE custody.[214]
- The New Jersey Safe Communities Act, which was signed into law in January 2026, codifies a portion of the New Jersey Immigrant Directive. The Act requires the state Attorney General to create model policies to protect the community when immigration authorities visit sensitive locations like schools, hospitals, and places of worship.[215]
- In February 2026, Governor Mikie Sherrill issued an Executive Order that bars federal immigration officers from utilizing non-public areas of state property. This order has been challenged in a lawsuit from the federal Department of Justice.[216]
- On March 25, 2026, Governor Sherrill signed into law three bills that codified other portions of the Immigrant Trust Directive.[217] These include:
  - NJ S. 3521, which prohibits racial profiling in policing and limits local law enforcement from enforcing federal civil immigration laws;[218]
  - NJ S. 3114 which bars law enforcement officers, including federal agents, from wearing masks while conducting official duties and requires officers to provide identification prior to arresting an individual;[219] and
  - NJ S. 3522 which limits state and local government and health care facilities from collecting certain data related to immigration status.[220]

Recommendations

In addition to the recommendations in the main report and the actions they have taken already, New Jersey lawmakers can provide further protection for young children in immigrant families by:

Ensuring that everyone, including people accused of crimes and with final orders of removal, have access to due process before they are handed over the federal immigration authorities;

Improving transparency on data sharing to ensure that every patient is notified when their medical records are shared with federal authorities; and

Protecting unnecessary data sharing, passing legislative measures to prohibit sharing automatic license plate reader data with law enforcement agencies in the absence of a judicial warrant (especially agencies in other states that may have 287(g) agreements). State policymakers should remain vigilant about efforts to increase local law enforcement's cooperation with federal immigration enforcement authorities, because this could undermine data protection policies.

FINDINGS FROM TEXAS

In the summer of 2025, CLASP researchers interviewed eight service providers across Texas and conducted one focus group in a large Texas city. Among the providers interviewed were staff from small and large child care centers and one WIC provider. The focus group consisted of eleven immigrant parents of young children; one mother, who had recently returned to her home country to await legal proceedings, joined from Zoom. Those who participated were from Honduras and Mexico. All of the parents were connected through a community-based organization.

Immigrant parents and providers shared the intense and dangerous ways that the second Trump Administration has affected them and their children. This appendix summarizes the finding of the provider interviews and focus group, highlighting increased isolation, instances of racism and discrimination, and how the strain of more immigrant enforcement and harmful policies are having a negative impact on the mental and physical well-being of children, parents, and providers.

Isolation and Chilling Effects

Texas parents were emotional and somber as they echoed the concerns of immigrant parents around the country regarding their fear of being detained by immigration enforcement and separated from their children. They described feeling as if they were reliving the COVID-19 pandemic, with one parent referring to this time as a "migration pandemic."[221] Many of the parents were reluctant to leave their homes and took steps to keep their families safe, including using expensive solutions like ride share and grocery delivery apps to minimize the risk of detention.

As immigrant parents consider the risk of attending or participating in activities, many are forgoing essential and community-based resources. One mother shared that when her young daughter got into an accident, her husband decided not to get medical care for the child since the location they'd gone to in the past had previously asked the mother about her immigration status. She asked in the focus group, "Is that what you really want to offer your children? When we come here looking for better schools, better opportunities."[222]

Child care providers have seen a drop in the number of families participating in programs and events. One large child care organization shared that it had planned a fun summer event for families to which over 150 families RSVP'd yes. But on the day of the event, the organization received multiple calls from families saying they couldn't come because they were "scared to go out." In the end, only 30 families were able to attend.

Racism and Discrimination

Parents spoke about feeling criminalized by, and discriminated against in, their communities since the start of Trump's second term. They discussed the effects of harmful rhetoric on immigrants and others, particularly in the Latino community. Parents shared instances of discrimination because of their immigration status or perceived immigration status. One parent said, "I feel that, now that he [Trump] has returned to the presidency again, that racism has returned like twice as much."[223]

Others provided stories of how they and, in some instances, their children were discriminated against by local law enforcement, teachers, and other community members. One parent shared an experience of a white man telling her and her young son to not speak Spanish when they were in a store. She described feeling like a "target" because of her status, and the difficulty of balancing that concern with her desire to teach her children not to be afraid to speak their native language. Ultimately, parents felt that the people who discriminated against them did so without worrying about possible repercussions.

One of the places that parents said they felt the most discrimination was in their children's schools. They provided examples of other children, teachers, and principals making light of immigration policies hurting families and actively targeting Latino students. Parents and providers discussed how other children had threatened to call immigration enforcement on their children. The parents felt that teachers and school leadership weren't doing enough to protect their kids from bullying. One parent added that in some cases, teachers were perpetuating discrimination and refusing to mediate instances of bullying, saying teachers are "the ones who promote discrimination...They create [it]."[224]

Parents urged lawmakers to enact policies that would protect their children from discrimination from teachers and school leadership. As one parent said, "'T]here should also be a law that would make them see that anyone who is generating hatred in minors is not going to go unpunished."[225]

Deteriorating Parental Health

Immigration policy enforcement is taking a significant negative physical and emotional toll on immigrant parents. One mother said, "My anxiety takes its toll on me ... I start eating and I don't realize if I'm eating without being hungry ... I get ... stomach problems, so many things, that my skin gets irritated from, I don't know, my skin itches out of nowhere."[226]

Other parents shared that their mental health had suffered, or that they also engaged in binge eating, had difficulty sleeping, or had high blood pressure. One parent said, "So, yes, it is a very very difficult issue that as a result of this election has affected me emotionally. My husband also got sick after all the stress and worry. Now he has to take blood pressure pills."[227]

Worsened Child Health and Well-Being

Parents and providers described young children as not fully understanding the tremendous amount of stress that immigration enforcement is causing their parents and communities. While young children may not completely grasp the extent of that stress, they are nonetheless witnessing the emotional toll these policies are having on their loved ones.

While parents agreed that they have been attempting to shield their young children from stress and anxiety, they still felt they were inadvertently passing these emotions on to their young children. One provider described young children as "sponges" who take in "everything they see. Everything they hear." Another provider said, "Adults don't realize that the children listen and understand everything and they are also anxious. They are scared."

As young children observe the intense worry and anxiety their parents and caregivers are living with, their own emotional well-being is affected. Providers described seeing noticeable differences within the last year in children as young as two or three years old, particularly an increase in separation anxiety.

Parents similarly described their children as being clingier than usual. One mother said that her young son was constantly at her side after overhearing his parents discussing their emergency plan. The mother said, "He always hugs me. If I'm not on sight, he desperately screams: 'Mom, Mom, where are you?'"[228]

In addition to increased separation anxiety, children have also become more emotionally reactive, tending to cry, scream, bite their nails, and lack focus at higher rates than in previous years. Providers have particularly noticed reactive behavior when young children are being dropped off, highlighting that they are scared to be separated from their parents. This terror is also causing children to become more distrustful of adults who are not their parents or trusted providers. One provider said that when she used to visit a classroom, the children would be eager to approach her, speak to her, and show her things. Now when she visits classrooms, "[T]he children go in and hide behind the teacher."

Parents shared the overwhelming concern that their happy and energetic children are carrying the burden of being locked down and inheriting their parents' stress. One mom talked about having an emotions chart in her home, which she would use to ask her young daughter to describe how she was feeling. The young girl would frequently indicate the "tired" and "sad" emotions.

Impacts on Older Children

While the focus of this study is the effect that immigration enforcement and policies have on young children, the parents in the Texas focus group also discussed how their older children were also deeply affected. These children took on the burden of understanding that the young children didn't fully have, as they were more acutely aware of the current political climate and its influence on their family's life. Additionally, parents with older U.S. citizen children relied heavily on these children to drop off and pick up their younger siblings from child care centers, among other tasks.

Older U.S. citizen children and teenagers also took on additional responsibilities to protect parents who are vulnerable to immigration enforcement. One provider mentioned receiving a call that a child's older brother would now be the one to drop them off and pick them up. Most significantly, parents are relying on their older children to become temporary legal caregivers of their younger siblings once they turn 18, in the event that the parents are detained and separated. One mom who asked her son to take care of his younger siblings said, "I also know that it's a huge responsibility, nineteen years and having to look after their other siblings."[229]

Even younger adolescents are being prepared for the worst-case scenario. One mother of a 12-year-old, an 11-year-old, a seven-year-old, and a four-year-old asked her older children to take care of the younger ones, so that they would at least have one older sibling with them if they are unable to stay together.

In addition to taking on greater caretaking responsibilities, teenagers have also felt the effects of a state policy

that revoked in-state tuition for immigrants who graduated from a Texas high school.[230] One mother shared that her older son who was studying at a Texas university was impacted by the policy: "My son also got depressed, he does not want to continue studying."[231]

Impact on Providers

Early child care providers have also been deeply impacted by current immigration policies. Immigrants make up 19.2 percent of the state's child care workforce.[232] Many providers and staff spoke about the personal toll these policies were taking in their own lives, as well as the additional risks of caring for the children and families they serve. One WIC provider talked about being overwhelmed with the additional stress this was adding to their already stressful job: "So we already get like that's kind of like the normal emotional stress that we get, right because [of] these things.The everyday kind of [emotional stress that] sticks with you. And you, in a way, feel bad because you can't do everything you wish you could do to help this individual or this family, but right now that feels exponential. It feels like again, no matter who you are, you are stressed to the max."

Providers were also experiencing financial hardship. Since certain funding is contingent on attendance, not enrollment, some child care centers receive less funding when families are afraid to leave their homes. As a result of the Trump Administration's charge against diversity, equity, and inclusion, many funding opportunities that child care centers rely on have either become more difficult to obtain or been completely defunded, forcing providers to make difficult decisions to keep their centers open. One provider said, "[W]e actually ended up having to lay two people off because again, you know, operational costs... we're looking out based on our participation and how much funding [is] being provided and how much are we spending ... those two things have to match. Otherwise you're too top heavy. And so we ended up having to let two people go which is terrible."

Another center described restructuring its hiring process and having to overlook an "exceptional" candidate who needed a visa because, as the provider said, "[W] e don't want to put those team members at risk" later. "I can't draw any attention to the visas that we currently have in place."

One provider shared that 90 percent of the children they serve receive government subsidies. When Texas restructured its child care subsidies program in January 2025, centers around the state were delayed in receiving reimbursement payments or missed them altogether. This provider's center went three months without getting reimbursed. They said that the delay "[S]hut ,down so many centers around our neighborhood." A provider at another center that was experiencing the financial difficulties brought on by the chilling effects plaguing the immigrant community added, "What happens If they [immigrant families] stop coming in [...] it could lead to us maybe closing, which we don't want to do, we want to stay here and continue providing the good work we're doing for our community."

State Political Context

Over 5.4 million immigrants, or nearly 18 percent of the state's population, live in Texas. Immigrants are foundational to the state's families and communities, as over three million citizens born in the U.S. live with at least one immigrant parent. In addition, Texas immigrants play a significant role in the state's workforce and economy, collectively contributing over $58 billion in state, local and federal taxes.[233] Despite the immigrant community's longstanding history and contributions to the state, Texas lawmakers have passed harsh anti-immigrant laws negatively impacting children, families, and communities, including:

- Senate Bill 8, which mandates county sheriffs enter into a 287(g) agreement with ICE. These agreements formalize the collaboration between local law enforcement and ICE, allowing law enforcement to perform immigration enforcement duties.[234] As of this writing, Texas has 317 active 287(g) agreements in place.[235]
- Invalidation of the "Texas Dream Act," which provided in-state college and university tuition to undocumented students who graduated from a Texas high school.[236] In addition, the state has mandated that colleges and universities identify current undocumented students and charge them out-of-state tuition.[237]
- In January 2025, the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals released its decision on the legality of DACA, stating that protection from deportation was legal but that the granting of work permits may be unlawful. This ruling could result in Texas DACA recipients losing access to work permits. As of this writing, a final ruling has not been implemented.[238]

Recommendations

In addition to the recommendations outlined in this report, Texas lawmakers have the ability to protect the livelihoods and well-being of children and families by:

- Expanding laws that prohibit discrimination based on race and immigration status, particularly in schools.
- Reversing harmful laws passed during this last legislative section, such as the mandate between local law enforcement and ICE officers.
- Passing legislation that protects sensitive locations such as schools, churches, hospitals, and other locations young children frequent.
- Ceasing the attacks on undocumented youth and DACA recipients, and instead supporting legislation that protects their access to higher education and the workforce.
- Voting against any legislation that promotes the creation and expansion of for-profit detention centers.

FINDINGS FROM WASHINGTON STATE

This appendix summarizes findings from interviews with ten providers of early education, health, and nutrition services who work with immigrant communities, as well as findings from one focus group with nine Spanish-speaking parents who have a total of 17 children between them, nine of whom are ages six and under. While not asked explicitly which countries they were from, those who did share were from Mexico and many referred to themselves as Latinos. The majority of the focus group and the interviews were conducted in the Seattle metro area between August and November 2025, but four interviews were with WIC staff and child care providers in rural areas of the state. Everyone who participated in the study were women, with the exception of one male health care provider. These conversations explored the impact of immigration policies on immigrant families with young children and the people who serve them.

The participants described heightened enforcement visibility, perceived targeting based on appearance or language, and widespread community alerts that have generated sustained alarm. This climate of uncertainty has altered daily routines, reduced engagement with public benefits and services, strained parental mental health, and contributed to observable changes in children's behavior and well-being. Providers also described adapting services and strengthening community response mechanisms to support families navigating these pressures.

The findings are organized around four themes that emerged across interviews and focus groups conducted for this study: fear, isolation, and chilling effects; parental health; child mental health and well-being; and community response.

Fear, Isolation, and Chilling Effects

Providers and parents reported increased visibility of immigration activity, widespread circulation of community alerts, and a perception that families are being targeted based on appearance or language. One provider noted that families are afraid of being stopped "[B]ecause of the way we look and the way we dress, right before you speak." Even people with legal status reported feeling unsafe in public spaces.

This climate has contributed to greater isolation for immigrant parents and their children. . Providers observed that many families are now "doing the bare minimum," only leaving the house for work, school, and essential errands. Parents described avoiding crowded places and community gatherings. One provider shared that a parent stopped sending their children to school due to fear that they would be taken away. Another talked about how community members remain in their homes when they receive alerts about immigration activity rather than going to work or school.

Participants also described a chilling effect on the use of public benefits. Even when children were eligible for assistance, parents declined services out of concern that personal information could be shared. As one parent explained, "I don't apply for food stamps because I'm afraid ... even though they say it doesn't affect you, at this point, you don't know anymore."[239] Providers similarly noted that families avoid SNAP and other nutrition programs because they are frightened about potential immigration consequences, despite eligibility.

Underlying these behaviors was a persistent dread of family separation. Parents spoke openly about the emotional toll of anticipating detention or deportation. One parent described the daily stress of her husband leaving for work: "Every time he goes, he says, 'What if something happens?'... It's very difficult."[240] Another parent stated simply, "It's terrifying to see families being torn apart."[241]

Together, these accounts reflect a widespread chilling effect in which families limit mobility, avoid services, and restructure daily routines in response to perceived enforcement threats. Compounding all of this are concerns about racial profiling and the visible presence of immigration enforcement agents, which contribute to sustained isolation within immigrant communities.

Deteriorating Parental Health

Parents linked the enforcement climate to physical and psychological strain. Both they and providers described living with constant uncertainty about whether routine activities like working, grocery shopping, or taking a walk could result in detention. As one provider explained, families are "[J]ust living with everyday fear... it's like the worst thing you could have."

Parents described the cumulative burden of managing immigration-related anxieties alongside ordinary financial and caregiving responsibilities. One parent reflected, "[L]ife is already stressful... and [I] still have to manage the stress of not being able to go out into the street ... it is super stressful."[242]

Providers also discussed the tangible ways that chronic stress affects physical health. Reduced mobility and isolation lead to limited opportunities for exercise and other outdoor activities. One provider noted that families who previously walked in parks or shopped regularly now avoid public spaces, contributing to dietary changes and sedentary behavior. As the provider explained, "People used to be able to go walk at the park. Now they don't even feel safe … Instead of eating veggies and fruit, they're eating all this canned stuff … it's more diabetes, more inflammation." These shifts reflect how enforcement-related chronic stress and restricted mobility can lead to long-term health risks.

Participants also recognized the relational effects of parental stress. As one parent said, "The stress, too. As an adult, as a parent, sometimes you transmit that to your children."[243] This dynamic underscores how sustained parental fear can shape children's emotional environments, even when parents attempt to shield them. As these accounts indicate, just the mention of immigration raids can affect parental well-being in ways that carry physical, emotional, and intergenerational consequences.

Worsened Child Health and Well-Being

Early care educators, health providers, WIC staff, community advocates, and parents described enforcement-related stressors that directly affect children's emotional security, development, and health. Several providers emphasized that early childhood is a critical developmental period, particularly from birth to age five. These are the years when pediatricians recommend frequent well-child visits and developmental screenings, and when children rely on consistent caregiving relationships and regular medical care. As one provider noted, "When there's a lot of stress … that also affects kids, even the youngest kids."

Participants described both direct and indirect impacts on children. In some cases, children have witnessed immigration activity in their neighborhoods or received alerts about enforcement presence. Parents reported that children are becoming hypervigilant, watching doors and windows and expressing fear that family members may be taken. One provider described young children who get scared when someone knocks, explaining that "[T]hey get anxious … they've been trained by their parents because at such an early age they have to know what's going on."

Providers also reported increased separation anxiety and behavioral changes. One four-year-old who previously separated easily from his mother began crying daily and refusing to be left at preschool after hearing discussions about deportation. Other providers described regression in toileting, sleep disturbances, and heightened social anxiety. Providers observed children engaging in stress-related behaviors such as repetitive hair pulling or skin picking, physical manifestations of anxiety that young children may not yet have the language to express. Parents similarly observed changes at home. One parent said that her child, who previously slept independently, now refuses to sleep alone and wakes during the night to seek reassurance.

Disruptions to preventive health care were also a concern. Providers described instances in which missed appointments for infants and toddlers led to gaps in monitoring growth and development. One provider noted cases of "faltering growth" among young children who had not been seen for routine checkups, raising concerns about longer-term developmental risk. When families avoid clinics out of worry about immigration activities, delays in care can compound over time.

Taken together, these accounts suggest that immigration enforcement-related fear contributes to toxic stress within households, disrupts preventive care, and manifests in observable behavioral and emotional changes across developmental stages.

Community Response

In response to this heightened fear and isolation, providers described strengthening preparedness, coordination, and service delivery to support immigrant families. Several providers emphasized the importance of helping parents develop contingency plans, including identifying trusted caregivers and connecting families to legal resources. As one provider noted, organizations are encouraging families to "be calm and be prepared," making sure that information about rights, free legal services, and emergency contacts is accessible.

Providers have adapted service delivery to ensure continuity of care. Some clinics have expanded remote services so families can access support from the safety of their homes. Others created internal food distribution systems when families stopped accessing public benefits or food banks. Several organizations have hired care coordinators to connect young children to developmental screenings, behavioral health supports, and early learning programs, recognizing that many families would otherwise struggle to navigate complex systems.

Providers also acknowledged the emotional toll of this workload. They feel limited in what they can change at the policy level, even as they work intensively to support families. As one provider reflected, "There's not a lot we

can do besides just supporting the families that we have." Despite these constraints, providers felt strongly about creating safe, welcoming environments where families feel seen, valued, and protected.

Findings from interviews and the parent focus group indicate that immigration enforcement actions are affecting immigrant families with young children in multidimensional ways. Beyond the immediate risk of detention or removal, participants described a climate of sustained fear that has affected daily routines, reduced engagement with public services, strained parental health, and contributed to observable changes in children's well-being.

At the same time, providers and community organizations are adapting to support families through preparedness planning, coordinated rapid response efforts, and modified service delivery models. These efforts reflect support within immigrant communities and also highlight the extent to which local institutions are managing the practical and emotional consequences of immigration activities.

State Political Context

Washington state is home to 1.2 million immigrants. In King County, where many of the conversations for this report took place, nearly one in four residents is an immigrant.[244] Collectively, immigrants in Washington contribute $22.9 billion in federal, state, and local taxes; $9.8 billion of this is contributed by undocumented households.[245]

Washington has taken measures to protect the immigrants in the state. One example is S.B. 5497, or "Keep Washington Working" (KWW). Passed in 2019, KWW established a statewide policy supporting immigrants' role in the economy and workplaces. Among other protections for immigrant workers, KWW requires the state Attorney General to develop model policies limiting immigration enforcement in public schools, certain health facilities, courthouses, and shelters to ensure safe access to all Washington residents regardless of immigration status.[246] Additionally, Washington just passed S.B. 5974, which requires county sheriffs and police chiefs in the state to meet heightened eligibility standards, including restricting the use of untrained volunteers from helping enforce criminal and immigration law; and H.B. 2105, the Immigrant Worker Protection Act, which protects employees and workers from threats due to their actual or perceived immigration status.[247] The governor also just signed H.B. 2355, the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights, into law. This promotes fair pay, privacy protections, and anti-discrimination and retaliation measures, among other provisions for nannies, home care providers, and other domestic workers, many of whom are immigrant women of color.[248] As of this writing, no local agencies in Washington have 287(g) agreements.[249]

Recommendations

State lawmakers can further protect immigrant families by:

- Expanding protections against warrantless immigration operations in or near locations that are critical to community health and well-being such as child care facilities, health care facilities, and food pantries, like those in S.B. 5906.[250] State advocates were successful in expanding the original text of S.B. 5904 to require that the state Attorney General create model policies for child care and early learning facilities and remove language mandating that providers implement unfunded regulations; unfortunately, the bill did not pass in the legislative session ending in 2025. This inclusion for model policies for early learning providers is significant, however, because most providers do not have legal counsel available to them to review policies and procedures and require funding to implement model policies, assist families with safety planning, and protect their clients' data and privacy.
- Establishing data and personal safety protections within public accommodation areas for all Washington residents, like S.B. 5906, and reinforcing protections in existing federal and state law, like in KWW .[251]
- Ensure that local law enforcement agencies, employers, and workers are fully educated about, are trained on, and comply with existing and recently passed state protections for immigrant families and workers, child care workers, and others, including KWW, S.B. 5974, the Immigrant Worker Protection Act, and the Domestic Worker Bill of Rights Act.

RESEARCH METHODS

CLASP staff collected data for this project from focus groups; semi-structured interviews; digitized notes; transcripts from both focus groups and interviews; and follow-up feedback sessions with participants. Staff who participated in focus groups and conducted interviews were the primary individuals who carried out analysis. Both data collection and analysis occurred in phases.

During **Phase 1**, researchers conducted their initial focus groups with the help of partners at community-based organizations. After recording and transcribing the audio from the first focus groups, three staff members reviewed the transcripts separately and then discussed emergent themes. This process was done with multiple people to enable note-sharing and ensure that overarching themes were accurately captured.

Phase 2 involved the CLASP research team collaboratively and iteratively developing a coding tree that would be compatible with coding software. The researchers agreed on words and phrases that represented concepts or experiences to be used for the second analysis of the focus group transcript; this analysis was a test of the validity of the different codes. After the new codes were entered into Dedoose and the documents were coded, the same researchers met again to discuss their continued ability to identify patterns, as well as appropriate instances for their application. This second discussion was crucial for alignment in code usage and to allow other staff members to assist in the analysis process.

Phase 3 began after researchers coded all of the focus group and provider interview transcripts from the first state that data was collected from. The researchers then met again to refine the coding tree, adding and subtracting relevant and superfluous codes.

Phase 4 spanned the time it took to conduct the rest of the focus groups and interviews and analyze all of the data gathered. The research team continued their iterative code refinement process and team discussions weekly until the report was drafted.

In close collaboration with state partners, the team convened eight focus groups with 84 people and 47 interviews with 67 people. Not all of the participants fulfilled the criteria for this project; for example, some participants did not have young children, and this paper focuses on perspectives from parents with children ages six and under. Six staff members were involved in data analysis and collection.

Measures Taken to Protect Participants

CLASP researchers took steps to ensure the safety of provider and parent participants during the data collection and analysis phase. All identifying information, such as participants' names and addresses, were omitted from this report. Only the individuals involved in the research analysis had access to audio recordings and transcripts, and the recordings were deleted before this report was published.

AREAS FOR ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

While this report focuses on the experiences of young children in immigrant families, many parents and providers brought up other issues relevant to their experiences that were outside of the scope of this project. Additional research on these topics would uplift related concerns, continue to document the harms of current immigration enforcement activities, and fill in knowledge gaps:

- The long-term impacts of immigration activity on young children (from newborn to age six) with at-risk parents. While many parents and providers we spoke with mentioned the impact of immigration activity on their health, finances, and older children, they did not always see how their young children were impacted and wondered if they would observe how they could be affected in the future. It would be particularly useful to learn about particular outcomes (e.g., development, education, and earning prospects) in the medium and long term for young children with families at risk of being targeted by immigration authorities, as compared to both older children in at-risk families and those who are not at risk.
- Research on older children, which emerged as a frequent theme in focus groups. Specifically, research on children from immigrant families who are bullied in school; how immigration activity causes or accelerates the parentification or adultification of older children and siblings; and how these occurrences impact older children's long-term physical and emotional health, educational outcomes, and well-being would be welcome.
- Research in rural areas. Nearly all focus groups and interviews were conducted in large metro areas. While some people traveled to these areas to participate in focus groups, the majority of parents and providers were connected to community-based organizations in large metro areas.
- Research on parents and caregivers of children with disabilities and dependent adults. Some parents simultaneously care for young children, adult children with disabilities, and/or elderly relatives. These parents face a unique struggle in trying to navigate draconian immigration policy and health care systems that are becoming less accessible.
- Research on worker exploitation. A number of focus group participants shared instances of employers withholding payment for work and threatening to contact immigration enforcement if workers complained about withheld wages or poor, often illegal, working conditions. Research on this subject could highlight how employers take advantage of an anti-immigrant environment to perpetuate workplace abuses, especially against workers with vulnerable immigration statuses.
- Research on landlord abuse. A handful of providers told the project team that the immigrant families they serve have been evicted by landlords and silenced by threats to involve immigration authorities. The scale to which this is occurring and solutions for mitigating these abusive practices could be explored further, as housing instability has negative consequences for child well-being.
- Research on food insecurity. Several parents and providers shared that parents who stopped working to avoid potential run-ins with ICE were unable to afford food. Others noted that the use of food banks had decreased, for similar reasons. Having a better understanding of immigrant parents' ability to feed their families could support efforts to ameliorate this harm in the future.
- Research on the effect of newly passed state legislation to protect immigrant families would help understand how the implementation of such laws affects families.

ENDNOTES

1 National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, "Persistent Fear and Anxiety Can Affect Young Children's Learning and Development: Working Paper No. 9," Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University, 2010, https://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Persistent-Fear-and-Anxiety-Can-Affect-Young-Childrens-Learning-and-Development.pdf; ; National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, "The Science of Early Childhood Development: Closing the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do," Center on on the Developing Child, Harvard University, May 28, 2007, https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/report/the-science-of-early-childhood-development-closing-the-gap-between-what-we-know-and-what-we-do/; Jack P. Shonkoff and Deborah A. Phillips, eds,. "From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development," Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development, National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000, https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/25077268/; Martin H. Teicher, Susan L. Andersen, Ann Polcari, et al.,"The Neurobiological Consequences of Early Stress and Childhood Maltreatment," Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews 27, no. 1-2 (2003): 33-44, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-7634(03)00007-1.

2 Suma Setty, Kaelin Rapport, and Emily Rodriguez, "Caregiving in Crisis: How Immigration Policies are Undermining Early Care and Education Programs," Center for Law and Social Policy, April 2026, https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/caregiving-crisis-immigration-policies-undermine-early-care-education/.

3 "Stop Terrorizing our Kids: How Immigration Agents are Harming Children and What Policymakers Can Do to Stop It," Children Thrive Action Network, January 26, 2026, https://childrenthriveaction.org/2026/01/stop-terrorizing-our-kids-how-immigration-agents-are-harming-children-and-what-policymakers-can-do-to-stop-it/.

4 CLASP staff interviewed two care providers in Illinois. The Illinois-specific findings are found in detail within a report submitted to the Illinois Advisory Council regarding the impact of "Operation Midway Blitz." CLASP-Proposal-to-IAC_CLASP_Letterhead_2021.pdf

5 Wendy Cervantes, Rebecca Ullrich, and Hannah Matthews, "Our Children's Fear: Immigration Policy's Effects on Young Children," CLASP, March 1, 2018, https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/our-childrens-fear-immigration-policys-effects-young-children-2/.

6 "Stop Terrorizing our Kids: How Immigration Agents are Harming Children and What Policymakers Can Do to Stop It," Children Thrive Action Network, February 6, 2026, https://childrenthriveaction.org/2026/01/stop-terrorizing-our-kids-how-immigration-agents-are-harming-children-and-what-policymakers-can-do-to-stop-it/.

7 "National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, "Persistent Fear and Anxiety Can Affect Young Children's Learning and Development: Working Paper No. 9," Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University, 2010, https://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Persistent-Fear-and-Anxiety-Can-Affect-Young-Childrens-Learning-and-Development.pdf; National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, "The Science of Early Childhood Development: Closing the Gap Between What We Know and What We Do," Center on on the Developing Child, Harvard University, May 28, 2007, https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/report/the-science-of-early-childhood-development-closing-the-gap-between-what-we-know-and-what-we-do/; Jack P. Shonkoff and Deborah A. Phillips, eds,."From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development," Committee on Integrating the Science of Early Childhood Development, National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2000; Martin H. Teicher, Susan L. Andersen, Ann Polcari, et al.,""The Neurobiological Consequences of Early Stress and Childhood Maltreatment," Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews 27, no. 1-2 (2003): 33-44, https://doi.org/10.1016/S0149-7634(03)00007-1; Jack P. Shonkoff, Natalie Slopen, and David R. Williams, "Early Childhood Adversity, Toxic Stress, and the Impacts of Racism on the Foundations of Health," Annual Review of Public Health 42: 115-134, April 2021, https://www.annualreviews.org/content/journals/10.1146/annurev-publhealth-090419-101940.

8 Suma Setty, Kaelin Rapport, and Emily Rodriguez, ""Caregiving in Crisis: How Immigration Policies Are Undermining Early Care and Education Programs," Center for Law and Social Policy, April 16, 2026.

9 "Stop Terrorizing our Kids," Children Thrive Action Network.

10 "The First Year of Trump's Second Term: Harms to Children, Families, and Workers," CLASP, January 20, 2026, https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/first-year-trump-second-term-families-harm/.

11 "The First Year," CLASP.

12 "AILA Doc. No. 21102707: DHS Issues Memo on Guidelines for ICE and CBP Enforcement in or Near Protected Areas," American Immigration Lawyers Association, October 27, 2021, https://www.aila.org/library/dhs-issues-memo-on-guidelines-for-ice-and-cbp; "Factsheet: Trump's Rescission of Protected Areas Policies Undermines Safety for All," National Immigration Law Center, February 26, 2025, https://www.nilc.org/resources/factsheet-trumps-rescission-of-protected-areas-policies-undermines-safety-for-all/; "What Are Protected Areas?", CLASP, updated February 2022, https://www.clasp.org/publications/fact-sheet/what-are-protected-areas/.

13 Wendy Cervantes, "Preserving Parental Rights in the Face of Deportation: What to Know About the New Detained Parent Directive," CLASP, September 10, 2025, https://www.clasp.org/blog/preserving-parental-rights-in-the-face-of-deportation-what-to-know-about-the-new-detained-parent-directive/.

14 Stef W. Kight, "Scoop: Biden to stop holding undocumented families in detention centers," Axios, December 15, 2021, https://www.axios.com/2021/12/16/biden-ends-migrant-family-detention-border-immigration.

15 "The First Year," CLASP.

16 Brian Bennet, "Conditions at ICE facility for families should be national scandal, says congressman," MSN, March 2, 2026, https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/us/conditions-at-ice-facility-for-families-should-be-national-scandal-says-congressman/ar-AA1Xmln9?o-cid=BingNewsSerpndal, says congressman

17 "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA): An Overview," American Immigration Council, September 30, 2021, https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/fact-sheet/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca-overview/; "Timeline: DACA in the Courts," National Immigration Law Center, November 17, 2025, https://www.nilc.org/resources/timeline-daca-in-the-courts/; "Guidance for DACA Recipients and Legal Practitioners – Frequently Asked Questions," United We Dream, Updated October 20, 2025, https://unitedwedream.org/resources/guidance-for-daca-recipients-and-legal-practitioners-frequently-asked-questions/.

18 Camilo Montoya-Galvez, "ICE arrested 261 DACA recipients over 10 months last year, document shows," CBS News, February 25, 2026, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/daca-recipients-ice-arrested-2025-trump-administration/.

19 "The First Year," CLASP.

20 Jennifer Van Hook, Michael Fix, and Julia Gelatt, "Repealing Birthright Citizenship Would Significantly Increase the Size of the U.S. Unauthorized Population," Migration Policy Institute, May 2025, https://www.migrationpolicy.org/news/birthright-citizenship-repeal-projections.

21 Wendy Cervantes, "Amicus Brief Details Harms to Infants and Children of Restrictions on Birthright Citizenship," CLASP, March 4, 2025, https://www.clasp.org/publications/testimony/comments/39904/; Wendy Cervantes, "SCOTUS Hears Oral Arguments on Trump's Birthright Citizenship EO: What's at Stake for Children?", CLASP, May 12, 2025, https://www.clasp.org/blog/scotus-oral-arguments-trump-birthright-citizenship-eo-harm/.

22 "Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA); Interpretation of "Federal Public Benefit," Health and Human Services Department, (90 FR 31232), July 14, 2025, https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/07/14/2025-13118/personal-responsibility-and-work-opportunity-reconciliation-act-of-1996-prwora-interpretation-of.

23 "Changes in Immigrant Eligibility," Protecting Immigrant Families Coalition, https://pifcoalition.org/resources/families/changes-in-immigrant-eligibility/.

24 Kristin F. Butcher, Luojia Hu, and Ryan Perry, "The Public Charge Rule and Program Participation Among U.S. Citizens," ANNALS of American Academy of Political and Social Science Vol. 711(1) December 19, 2024, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/00027162241293910; Wendy Cervantes, "CLASP Submits Public Comment: Public Charge Rule (HS Docket No. USCIS-2025-0304)," CLASP, December 19, 2025, https://www.clasp.org/publications/testimony/comments/clasp-submit-public-comment-public-charge-rule-hs-docket-no-uscis-2025-0304/.

25 "The Budget Reconciliation Act of 2025: Harms to Children and Families," Children Thrive Action Network, July 2025, https://childrenthriveaction.org/2025/07/the-budget-reconciliation-act-2025/.

26 Nicole Chávez, Suma Setty, Hannah Liu, et al., "Still at Risk: The Urgent Need to Address Immigration Enforcement's Harms to Children," CLASP and UnidosUS, June 13, 2023, https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/urgent-need-address-immigration-enforcement-harm-children/.

27 Tim Henderson, "Trump administration vows to 'come after' sanctuary states and cities, despite court setbacks," Stateline, August 19, 2025, https://stateline.org/2025/08/19/trump-administration-vows-to-come-after-sanctuary-states-and-cities-despite-court-setbacks/.

28 "DC Police's Collusion with Federal Immigration Enforcement Agencies Violates DC's Sanctuary Values Act," Immigrant Legal Resource Center, August 2025, https://www.ilrc.org/press/dc-police%E2%80%99s-collusion-federal-immigration-enforcement-agencies-violates-dc%E2%80%99s-sanctuary-values; Jess Kung, Gene Demby, Leah Donnella, "How local police extend ICE's reach, even in sanctuary cities," National Public Radio, January 21, 2026, https://www.npr.org/2026/01/21/nx-s1-5678587/how-local-police-extend-ices-reach-even-in-sanctuary-cities

29 The primary data source for this statistic is the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets (Ruggles et al. 2025), which is drawn from the 2005-23 American Community Survey. The researchers accessed this data from The Urban Institute Children of Immigrants Data Tool, https://children-of-immigrants-explorer.urban.org/pages.cfm.

30 The Urban Institute, data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2022 and 2023 American Community Survey.

31 The Urban Institute, data from the Integrated Public Use Microdata Series datasets drawn from the 2022 and 2023 American Community Survey.

32 Julia Gelatt, Ariel G. Ruiz Soto, and James D. Bachmeier. "Changing Origins, Rising Numbers: Unauthorized Immigrants in the United States," Migration Policy Institute, October 2025. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/sites/default/files/publications/mpi-unauthorized-immigrants-fact-sheet-2025_FINAL.pdf.

33 "U.S. Citizen Children Impacted by Immigration Enforcement," American Immigration Council, June 24, 2021, https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/research/us-citizen-children-impacted-immigration-enforcement; Nicole Svajlenka, "What We Know About DACA Recipients in the United States," Center for American Progress, September 5, 2019, https://www.americanprogress.org/article/know-daca-recipients-united-states/.

34 Original quote in Spanish: "Se escuchaba del lado de muchas personas latinas el miedo que se tenía si el nuevo, bueno, el actual presidente tomara el mandato."

35 Luke Garrett, "U.S. deports hundreds of Venezuelans to El Salvador, despite court oder," National Public Radio, March 16, 2025, https://www.npr.org/2025/03/16/g-s1-54154/alien-enemies-el-salvador-trump; David J. Bier, "DHS Doesn't List CECOT Prison Deportees in Its Worst of the Worst Data," Cato Institute, December 23, 2025, https://www.cato.org/blog/dhs-doesnt-list-cecot-deportees-its-worst-worst-data.

36 Original quote in Spanish: "Bueno fuera que te deporten a tu país. Algunos dicen que te deportan a El Salvador. Entonces es injusto que, si una persona siendo de tal país, te deporten a otro país."

37 Original quote in Spanish: "¿Quién me recoge a mi nena?; "Yo no sé cuánto tiempo me puedan dejar sin estar con ellas."

38 ICE Directive 11064.4: Detention and Removal of Alien Parents and Legal Guardians of Minor Children, July 2, 2025, https://www.ice.gov/doclib/foia/policy/11064.4.pdf; Maanvi Singh, "Trump administration is deporting parents without their children in violation of its own policies, report finds," The Guardian, March 19, 2026, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2026/mar/19/trump-deportation-children-trauma.

39 Quote originally in Spanish: "Pero con lo que ven en las noticias, de cómo migración se lleva a los padres y déjan las criaturas ahí en los carros, es muy preocupante para ellos."

40 Original quote in Wolof: "Yaw mi di Yaye sassuné dangay ragal ñu takhalé la ak sa dome."

41 "How ICE Went Rogue: A Brief Analysis of the Legal Authorities Governing ICE and CBP Operations – and How They're Being Undermined and Violated by Policy and Practice," American Immigration Council, February 11, 2026, https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/fact-sheet/ice-cbp-legal-analysis/; "Vance says ICE agent involved in fatal shooting has 'absolute immunity,'" AP News, January 8, 2025, https://apnews.com/video/vance-says-ice-agent-involved-in-fatal-shooting-has-absolute-immunity-5109e1f2c2504fc5b3249196cc6ba014.

42 Original quote in Wolof: "Sama ndiakaré bi eup moy nit yi bëg ñu délo lén sén dëk nagn lén délo, Wayé duñu ko déf fi lagn lén di diapeu aye wèrr ta sén mboku yi (Sén wa Keur yi) duñu kham si luñu nèkeu."

43 Original quote in Spanish: "También, otra cosa, o sea, lo que se ve, que ni siquiera los tratan con dignidad, los agarran, los golpean y los patean; los tiran, los asfixian casi. O sea, no les dan un trato digno. O sea, no somos animales, merecemos respeto. Yo digo, dónde están los derechos humanos de uno, ¿dónde están?"

44 A third country deportation is when an individual is deported from the United States to a country they are not a citizen of or did not previously reside in.

45 Original quote in Wolof: "Légui nakk danaka suñu yérè deuk sakh mënëtuñ ko sol. Niit yi dagn ñuy wakh bulén lakhë sén lakhu dëk, bulén sol sén yérè dëk, dém lén nëbëtu ji (lakhatu ji)."

46 "How the Supreme Court's Latest Decision Clears the Way for Racial Profiling During Immigration Raids," American Immigration Council, September 9, 2025, https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/supreme-courts-decision-racial-profiling-immigration-raids/.

47 Delegation of Immigration Authority Section 287(g) Immigration and Nationality Act | ICE

48 Jess Kung, Gene Demby, and Leah Donnella,"How local police extend ICE's reach, even in sanctuary cities," NPR, January 21, 2026 https://www.npr.org/2026/01/21/nx-s1-5678587/how-local-police-extend-ices-reach-even-in-sanctuary-cities.

49 Original quote in Spanish: "Porque el ya no sabe si los policías en la calle están ahora para las personas que andan haciendo de verdad cosas malas o si ellos ahora están también para estarles diciendo: "Aquí hay un grupo de personas que parece que están indocumentados", ¿verdad?"

50 Original quote in Spanish: "Antes uno tenía confianza. Tenía la confianza de llamar a la policía. Ya no tenemos esa confianza. ¿Por qué? Porque no sabemos cómo nos va a ir."

51 Original quote in Spanish: "Ahora en lugar de ser de COVID o de enfermedad, ahora es de miedo a lo que te va a pasar ahí afuera."

52 Original quote in Spanish: "Por ejemplo, antes de esta locura que se hiciera, yo salía demasiado con las nenas al parque. Yo buscaba un parque bonito, yo buscaba cualquier sitio donde llevarlas, cosa que ahora no puedo hacer porque yo tengo miedo andar en la calle si no tengo algo importante de hacer. Yo tengo miedo de sacarlas a ellas, que tienen derecho a su espacio para recreación, pero tengo miedo porque ¿a mí quién me garantiza que si yo salgo de la casa yo voy a volver a entrar?"

53 Original quote in Spanish: "El mes pasado a mi sobrino le tocó ir al reporte de migración. Fue con mucho miedo, obviamente... Mi hermana estuvo en la esquina esperando por si acaso."

54 Original quote in Spanish: "Él no se demoró nada, como media hora, lo mismo, no había nadie, porque la gente le da miedo ir al reporte, pero es peor no ir."

55 Original quote in Spanish: "No los dejé ir a la escuela... Me sentí desprotegida, me sentí con miedo de salir a poder trabajar... Que no he salido ni a comprar el mandado."

56 Original quote in Wolof: "One Michigan parent explained, "Dangay ragal dém si bërëb fadiukaay yi soko soxla. Dangay guiss aye niit you fébar wayé dañiuy ragala dém fadioudji," with another adding, "Légui dafay indi diafé diafé yu tarr, so fébaré, ba sonnu dangay ragala wo ambulass. Ndakh (sudéé) nit ñi demnañiu beureup fadiukaay bi, ICE mënena ñëw amaana diapë délo la dëk banga done daw."

57 Original quote in Wolof: "Yénë say sa léku dome dafay diékh, wanté dangay ragal dém thia diayukaay lékë bi. Li mooy suñu diafé diafé bi gënë rëy. So démè sakh dangay andak titangué ba dangay diakhasso di gawantu."

58 Quote originally in Spanish: "La verdad, sí nos ha provocado como ese miedo a salir o a trabajar, de saber que si va a salir y no va a regresar, de que no voy a estar a lo mejor cuando mi hijo [me] necesite, si voy a trabajar, estar con el pendiente ese, si mi hijo está bien, va a estar bien, y el pendiente de yo, en qué momento va a llegar alguien y nos van a detener o no vamos a poder regresar a las casas."

59 Original quote in Wolof: "Dañuy ñëw si dëk bi ngir am dundine bu gëne, ndakh ñu mëna délu suñu dëk, wayé liguey bu diar yone sakh mënouñu ko ndakh foñu fékë ñio ngi andak ndiakaré."

60 Original quote in Spanish: "Entonces ella optó por salirse del trabajo por temor a que, a que vengan... como está cerca, al temor a que vengan al sitio donde ella estaba trabajando."

61 Original quote in Spanish: "O sea, no podemos quedarnos en casa. Tenemos que trabajar, tenemos que salir a la escuela, tenemos que salir a las escuelas, tenemos que salir. ¿Quién nos va a pagar la renta y quién nos va a pagar la luz."

62 Original quote in Spanish: "Está robándole el salario a esa persona... La pobre persona ha perdido su tiempo, ha perdido su pago, ¿y eso qué significa? Una explotación y discriminación para las personas."

63 Ali Swenson, "After judge's ruling, HHS authorized to resume sharing some Medicaid data with deportation officers," AP News, January 5, 2026, https://apnews.com/article/medicaid-data-hhs-rfk-sharing-immigration-trump-30784ce01a403a16aca504980e4c7bc9.

64 Original quote in Spanish: "No, es que no quiero ir porque están comentando que también ya te van a pedir un estatus en lo que son las clínicas y esto."

65 Original quote in Spanish: "Yo no pido estampillas porque también me da miedo. Sí me las han ofrecido, pero... Pues luego dicen que tienen toda tu información y todo, mi esposo dice que no."

66 Original quote in Spanish: "Tampoco pedí la renovación de estampillas. Yo no sabía que por la pequeñita que tengo, que tiene un año, me daban estampillas. No fui a los Servicios Humanos.Tenía miedo que me fueran a agarrar afuera."

67 Julia Gelatt, "Trump Administration Public-Charge Rule Would Amplify Harms to Immigrant Families," Migration Policy Institute, January 2026. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/news/trump-public-charge-discretion.

68 Original quote in Spanish: "Por ejemplo, mis hijas tienen el Medicaid, yo ya no lo quiero renovar... Me lo pusieron como automático, pero yo la verdad tengo miedo hasta usarlo porque... Si algún día puedo arreglar algo, ¿me va a afectar?"

69 Original quote in Spanish: "Nosotros tenemos un año cumplido acá en Estados Unidos y cuando nosotros entramos, nosotros entramos entre comillas "legales", ¿me entiende?... Cuando iniciamos el papeleo... con una abogada... todo iba bien... pero eso está aguantado por el [nuevo] gobierno, todo está atrasado."

70 Original quote in Spanish: "Bueno, yo, por ejemplo, mis hijas tienen DACA. Nada más la de 25 es nacida aquí. Pero ellas, con todo esto que está pasando, están muy frustradas, están muy frustradas, están nerviosas por todo lo que está pasando, por si van a poder renovar, por si, o sea, y, o sea, hasta han tenido la, o sea, la idea o el pensamiento de decir: "Mami, vámonos, vámonos." Entonces, realmente sí, sí ha impactado mucho en mi familia, sí."

71 Quote originally in Spanish: "Porque no hay una tranquilidad para salir, caminar, poder ir a Nueva York, porque no hay una tranquilidad y lo que antes había. Para mí ya no hay tranquilidad."

72 Ximena Bustillo and Rahul Mukherjee, "It's the deadliest year for people in ICE custody in decades; next year could be worse," National Public Radio, October 23, 2025, https://www.npr.org/2025/10/23/nx-s1-5538090/ice-detention-custody-immigration-arrest-enforcement-dhs-trump.

73 Original quote in Spanish: "Yo sufro a ver los videos que yo veo ahora mismo. O sea, ver padres y familias despegandose de sus familias, y que los niños llorando. Yo tengo tres niños. Esos son mis ojos. O sea, yo todo lo que veo, lo veo por mis hijos."

74 Joseph H. Puyat, "Is the influence of social support on mental health the same for immigrants and non-immigrants?", Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health 15(3): 598-605, June 2013, https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10903-012-9658-7.

75 The Texas focus group was originally in Spanish. The original quote is as follows: "Bueno, yo me

vi envuelta en comer compulsivamente, llegué a subir bastante de peso porque tenía ansiedad y comía por compulsión, porque estaba ansiosa por toda la situación, no sabía lo que me esperaba."

76 The Texas focus group was originally in Spanish. Original quote in Spanish: "Mi esposo también, a raíz de todo el estrés y la preocupación, se enfermó ahora ya tiene que estar tomando pastillas de la presión."

77 Shira Small and Isha Weearsinghe, "Maternal Mental Health Equity: Policy and Program Insights from Colorado and Michigan," CLASP, January 14, 2026, https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/maternal-mental-health-equity-state-program-insights/.

78 Julia Shu-Huah Wang and Neeraj Kaushal, "Health and Mental Health Effects of Local Immigration Enforcement," International Migration Review 53(4): 970-1001, October 2018, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/0197918318791978.

79 Myriam Vidal Valero. 'U.S. immigration policy: Mental health impacts of increased detentions and deportations," Monitor on Psychology, American Psychological Association, September 1, 2025, https://www.apa.org/monitor/2025/09/mental-health-immigration-enforcement.

80 Quote originally in Spanish: "Vamos a morir psicológicamente. De solo pensar, nos va a dar un derrame."

81 "Afterthoughts: The Children of Deported Parents," Children Thrive Action Network and The Ohio Immigrant Alliance, August 2024, https://childrenthriveaction.org/2024/06/afterthoughts-the-children-of-deported-parents/; Wendy Cervantes, "Amicus Brief Details the Harm of DACA Rescission on U.S. Citizen Children," Center for Law and Social Policy, February 2, 2024, https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/amicus-brief-details-the-harm-of-daca-rescission-on-u-s-citizen-children/.

82 The Texas focus group was in Spanish. The original quote is, "[U]na vez mi niña tuvo un accidente, y mi esposo me dice: 'No, no la vamos a llevar [al hospital] porque ya te revisaron el estatus migratorio.' Entonces le digo: '¿Eso es lo que verdaderamente le quieres ofrecer a tus hijos?'"

83 Okelue E Okobi, Patience F. Akahara, Onyinyechukwu B Nwachukwu, et al., "Analyzing Best Practices for Pediatric Well-Child Clinic Visits in the United States for Children Aged Three to Five Years: A Review," Cureus 15(9), September 2023, https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10576162/,

84 Jade Benjamin-Chung, Andrew Mertens, John M. Colford Jr., et. al., "Early-childhood linear growth faltering in low- and middle-income countries," Nature 621, 550-557, 2023, https://www.nature.com/articles/s41586-023-06418-5.

85 "A Guide to Creating 'Safe Space' Policies for Early Childhood Programs," CLASP, updated 2025, https://www.clasp.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/2025_safespacesguide.pdf.

86 Susan P. Walker, PhD., Theodore D. Wachs, PhD., Sally Grantham-McGregor, MD, et. al;. "Inequality in early childhood: risk and protective factors for early childhood development," The Lancet 378(9799): 1325-1338, October 2011, https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(11)60555-2/abstract.

87 "Children's Learning and Development Benefits from High-Quality Early Care and Education: A Summary of the Evidence," Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, November 8, 2023, https://acf.gov/opre/report/childrens-learning-and-development-benefits-high-quality-early-care-and-education.

88 Diane Whitmore Schanzenbach and Lauren Bauer, "The long-term impact of the Head Start program," Brookings, August 19, 2016, https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-long-term-impact-of-the-head-start-program; "Children's Learning and Development Benefits from High-Quality Early Care and Education: A Summary of the Evidence," Office of Planning, Research & Evaluation, The Administration for Children & Families, November 8, 2023, https://acf.gov/opre/report/childrens-learning-and-development-benefits-high-quality-early-care-and-education.

89 "WIC Program Overview and History," National WIC Association, Accessed March 2026, https://www.nwica.org/overview-and-history.

90 Emma G. Casey and Adam Winsler, "Impacts of Food Insecurity on Child Development: Strengthening the Role of Childcare," Nutrients 17(15), July 2025, https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC12348265/.

91 Margy O'Herron and Lauren-Brooke Eisen, "The Detention of Families Facing Deportation Proceedings," Brennan Center for Justice, July 16, 2025, https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/research-reports/detention-families-facing-deportation-proceedings. .

92 Camilo Montoya-Galvez, "ICE's detainee population reaches new record high of 73,000, as crackdown widens," CBS News, January 16, 2026, https://www.cbsnews.com/news/ices-detainee-population-record-high-of-73000/.

93 Will Craft and Andrew Witherspoon, "By the numbers: the latest ICE and CBP data on arrests, detentions and deportations in the US," The Guardian, February 13, 2026, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2025/aug/29/trump-immigration-ice-cbp-data.

94 Miriam Jordan, Sarah Mervosh, and Allison McCann, "ICE is Detaining Hundreds of Children, The New York Times, February 13, 2026, https://www.nytimes.com/2026/02/13/us/migrant-children-ice-detention.html.

95 Elliot Spagat and Sarah Raza, "Chicago daycare worker detained by ICE at drop-off time for children, witnesses say," PBS News, November 5, 2025, https://www.pbs.

org/newshour/nation/chicago-daycare-worker-detained-by-ice-at-drop-off-time-for-children-witnesses-say.

96 Quote originally in Spanish: "Es muy duro que afecten a las generaciones de los niños, porque yo creo que todos aquí sabemos que el tranco por el que están pasando los niños es de las etapas más importantes de la vida, las que los van a formar por siempre. Imagínate si los niños empiezan a tener ansiedad a esta edad, a tener preocupaciones que no debería tener un niño."

97 Sayil Camacho and Sarah C. Henderson, "The Social Determinants of Adverse Childhood Experiences: An Intersectional Analysis of Place, Access to Resources, and Compounding Effects," International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health 19 (17): 10670, August 29, 2022, https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC9518506/.

98 R. Gabriela Barajas-Gonzalez, Cecilia Ayón, Kalina Brabeck,, et al., "An ecological expansion of the adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) framework to include threat and deprivation associated with U.S. immigration policies and enforcement practices: An examination of the Latinx immigrant experience," Social Science & Medicine 282, August 2021, https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2021.114126; Nikhil A. Patel M.D., M.P.H., Amy Hunter, M.S.W., and Royce B. Murray, J.D., "Effects of Pervasive Immigration Enforcement on Children's Health," The New England Journal of Medicine, March 11, 2026, https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2601176.

99 "Parents and Caregivers Are Essential to Children's Healthy Development," American Psychological Association (June 2023), https://www.apa.org/pi/families/resources/parents-caregivers.

100 Zayas et al., 2015; Nikhil A. Patel, Amy Hunter, and Royce B. Murray, "Effects of Pervasive Immigration Enforcement on Children's Health," The New England Journal of Medicine, March 11, 2026, https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2601176.

101 Quote originally in Spanish: "Ahorita creo que estoy en una etapa de decir: Si uno se vino, y sacrificó, renunció a una vida que tenía mejor en México para según tener otra vida mejor por tus hijos, y realmente ahorita no le estás ofreciendo nada a tus hijos más que inseguridad, burla o bullying. Porque también pasó en la escuela de mi niño... llegan de la escuela: 'Oye, mamá, que fulanito dijo que él iba a echar la policía.'"

102 Quote originally in Spanish: "Ya que regresen a la escuela, pues, ellos van a escuchar más de sus compañeros, o va a haber más racismo... porque se ha visto, se ha visto de los propios maestros."

103 Arya Ansari and Kelly Purtell, "Absenteeism in Head Start and Children's Academic Learning," Child Development 89(4), July/August 2018, https://academic.oup.com/chidev/article/89/4/1088/8260473.

104 Tim Dalgleish, Alireza Moradi, Hamid Taher Neshat Doost, et al., "An Experimental Investigation of Hypervigilance for Threat in Children and Adolescents with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder," Psychological Medicine 31(3), 2001, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/299222302_An_experimental_investigation_of_hypervigilance_for_threat_in_children_and_adolescents_with_post-traumatic_stress_disorder.

105 Quote originally in Spanish: "Sí, duerme conmigo. Igual, me tiene que estar tocando físicamente. Y es extremo lo que él está haciendo porque él necesita estar de tiro encima de mí. Me imagino que se imagina que me tengo que ir, entonces, pues, es un gran impacto para él porque le está afectando en su dormir también. No duerme muy bien, no duerme muy bien por eso. Esa es mi experiencia en mi hijo chiquito."

106 Quote originally in Spanish: "Estar nuevamente en un cuadrito."

107 Quote originally in Spanish: "Es como una pandemia migratoria. Ahora en lugar de ser de COVID o de enfermedad, ahora es de miedo a lo que te va a pasar ahí afuera."

108 Quote originally in Spanish: "Pero ella no me entiende que es el hecho de que yo tengo miedo."

109 Quote orignally in Spanish: "Papi, quiero ir al mall, vamos." "Oh, estuvieron.... por ahí cerca, el ICE."

110 Quote originally in Spanish: "Son niños y los niños necesitan correr para liberar sus energías. Si uno, siendo adulto, a veces se siente frustrado de que estás del trabajo a la casa y de la casa solamente sales a hacer compras o a hacer lo necesario por el miedo. Me imagino: cómo se debe sentir el niño de que antes yo lo llevaba al fútbol a jugar con los otros niños en una cancha grande por tales horas y ahora ya no hace eso, ya no juega fútbol, ya no los saco al parque. Es de verdad bastante frustrante. Para un adulto es frustrante, para un niño, peor. Se siente cohibido."

111 Marnie F. Hazelhurst, Sadiya Muqueeth, Kathleen L. Wolf, et al., "Park Access and Mental Health among Parents and Children during the COVID-19 Pandemic," BMC Public Health 22(1):800, 2022, https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/35449096/.

112 Sudheer Kumar Muppalla, Sravya Vuppalapati, Apeksha Reddy Pulliahgaru, et al., "Effects of Excessive Screen Time on Child Development: An Updated Review and Strategies for Management," Cureus 15(6), June 18, 2023, https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10353947/.

113 Quote originally in Spanish: "Así que cuando la presión... uno tiene que seguir y orientar a los niños... ustedes luchen, ustedes sigan."

114 Quote originally in Spanish: "Esa de que tienes un "plan" lo he escuchado ya como 1,000 veces, y para mí

eso es muy estresante, tanto que hay veces no puedo ni dormir pues yo ya padezco de ansiedad, muchos problemas, entonces para mí eso me hace pensar todavía más qué voy a hacer; yo no tengo familia, yo no tengo a nadie, no tengo amistades a quién dejarle mis niños, y como decía la facilitadora, uno tiene que saber a quién dejarlos, pero ya en estos tiempos, ya no hay nadie en quien confiarle a nuestros hijos, entonces para mí sí es estresante esto, el no tener familia, el qué voy a hacer... incluso mis niños me dicen, pues los 4 son menores de edad."

115 Quote originally in Spanish: "Yo he hablado con mis hijas, les he dicho que tienen dos hermanos más mayores para que se vayan a vivir con ellas. Es lo único que no puede decir. ¿Qué más? No pueden trabajar."

116 Quote originally in Spanish: "No estamos gastando en cosas innecesarias o cosas muy a futuro ahorita. En lo que estamos gastando en cosas futuras pero en nuestro país."

117 Quote originally in Spanish: "Entonces, se me hace injusto que tantos años él trabajando, ha hecho todas las cosas bien, porque él ha tenido el permiso, prácticamente el año que él llegó lo agarró. Así que él ha pagado impuestos por más de 20 años. Él tiene más de media vida aquí. Él vino aquí de 17 años y ya tiene cuarenta y tantos. Entonces, tiene más de media vida en este país y ha trabajado siempre. Y él no puede reclamar [pensión], si de mala suerte lo mandan así, así, o sea, así."

118 Quote originally in Spanish: "Hemos investigado escuelas allá en El Salvador, en el área donde nos iríamos a vivir. Una escuela más decente para ellos. Sí hemos hecho todo eso. Nunca pensé que para mis hijos que eran nacidos acá tuvieran que hacer algo así, andar investigando escuelas allá en mi país. Y yo les comenté a ellos. Se pusieron a llorar. Por eso yo no quise que... No quise seguir el tema, pero sí les dijimos."

119 Quote orginaly in Spanish: Lle decimos a la niña; le decimos: "Te vas a ir con tus abuelos porque hablamos con los abuelitos ahí en Honduras por videollamada, y te vas a ir con tus abuelos. ¿Quieres ir a Honduras?" Y le empezamos a decir como así, verdad. Por si llegara, para no dárselo, imagínate, de golpe. Entonces, de una u otra forma ya ella sabe que allá están sus abuelos, que allá hasta tiene una tía, puede ir a vivir y que allá también es bonito."

120 Quote originally in Spanish: "A mí lo que me ayuda mucho es estarlo hablando mucho con la gente que conozco, con mis empleados, con mi comunidad. Estarse informando mucho porque a veces estamos mal informados y eso es lo que nos afecta de más y nosotros pasamos ese estrés a nuestros hijos, a nuestros seres queridos. Entonces, es algo que me ha ayudado mucho, es el estar investigando, el estar hablando, el buscar recursos, el prepararme. Todo eso me ha ayudado a sentirme cómoda, confiada, porque los primeros días era difícil ir a comprar hasta nuestra comida. Pero eso es lo que me ayuda a mí, estarme informando, el compartir en reuniones como esta y el colaborar con mi comunidad."

121 Quote originally in Spanish: "Para mí este año, ha sido difícil, pero ha sido bonito y divertido por mis amigas. Tengo muchas amigas que son ciudadanas o residentes, pero cuando empezaron a saber de que seguido... y me llamaban: 'no vayas a salir y no salgas'... y me llevaban de comer comida hecha y jugábamos lotería. Y nos quedó ahora que cada ocho días se juntan a jugar lotería...desde febrero... Y ha sido difícil y duro, pero a la vez tengo amigas muy lindas, americanas y no americanas, que están ahí en mi casa todos los días. No está mi casa sola."

122 Quote originally in Spanish: "Hablen con sus hijos. No es algo malo. El ser indocumentado no es malo. El llegar a vivir y construir proyectos de vida, mejores futuros para ellos, para sus familias, para los niños, no es malo. Lo que es malo es el tipo de gobierno que estamos pasando y cómo tristemente esto ha afectado a toda la comunidad."

123 "Protecting Sensitive Locations Act," CLASP, Accessed April 2026, https://www.clasp.org/protecting-sensitive-locations-act.

124 Miriam Abaya, "Fact Sheet: The "Best Interests of the Child" Standard," First Focus on Children, Augsut 2, 2022, https://firstfocus.org/resource/fact-sheet-the-best-interests-of-the-child-standard/.

125 Daniella Silva, "ICE sent 3 U.S. citizen children, including boy with cancer, to Honduras with their deported moms," NBC News, August 13, 2025, https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/ice-deport-us-citizen-kids-stage-4-cancer-honduras-rcna224501.

126 "What About My Children? Family Separation Among Parents Deported to Honduras," Women's Refugee Commission, March 18, 2026 https://www.womensrefugeecommission.org/research-resources/what-about-my-children-family-separation-among-parents-deported-to-honduras/; Daniella Silva, "ICE sent 3 U.S. citizen children," NBC News.

127 "Support and Pass the LIFT the BAR Act," National Immigration Law Center, May 1, 2024, https://www.nilc.org/resources/support-and-pass-the-lift-the-bar-act/; "The HEAL for Immigrant Families Act," National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice, Accessed April 2026, https://www.latinainstitute.org/our-work/campaigns/heal/; H.R. 2851 - WISE Act, 119th Congress (2025-2026), https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/2851.

128 H.R. 5319 - LINE Act, 119th Congress (2025-2026), https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/5319; H.R. 5340 - To prohibit the disclosure of records by the Secretary of Housing and Urban Development of individuals for the purposes of immigration enforcement, and for other purposes, 119th Congress (2025-2026), September 10, 2025, https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/5340.

129 "Kamlager-Dove, Vargas Lead Federal Effort to

Block Immigrants' Personal Data from Being Used Against them for Deportations," Press Release, Congresswoman Kamlager-Dove's Office, September 11, 2025, https://kamlager-dove.house.gov/media/press-releases/kamlager-dove-vargas-lead-federal-effort-block-immigrants-personal-data-being.

130 EARLY Minds Act, 118th Congress (2023-2024), https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/7808/text/ih.

131 Health Equity and Accountability Act of 2024, 118th Congress (2023-2024), https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/4773.

132 Mental Health Workforce and Language Access Act of 2023, 118th Congress (2023-2024), https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/3817/text.

133 ACCESS in Mental Health Act, 118th Congress (2023-2024), https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/7924/text; C.A.R.E. for Mental Health Professionals Act, 118th Congress (2023-2024), https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/2438/text; Mental Health Professionals Workforce Shortage Loan Repayment Act of 2023, 118th Congress (2023-2024), https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/house-bill/4933.

134 Rebecca Schneid, "Viral Videos Show Toddlers Caught Up in Aggressive ICE Crackdown,"Time Magazine, November 9, 2025, https://time.com/7332405/ice-arrest-toddler-la-video/.

135 Will Craft, Andrew Witherspoon, and José Olivares, "Tens of thousands of people were detained and deported during US government shutdown," The Guardian, November 21, 2025, https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/nov/21/deportations-us-government-shutdown-ice-data; "Stop Terrorizing our Kids: How Immigration Agents are Harming Children and What Policymakers Can Do to Stop It," Children Thrive Action Network, January 26, 2026, https://childrenthriveaction.org/2026/01/stop-terrorizing-our-kids-how-immigration-agents-are-harming-children-and-what-policymakers-can-do-to-stop-it/.

136 H.R.6397 - Dignity for Detained Immigrants Act, 119th Congress (2025-2026), https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/6397.

137 "Refugee, Asylee, and Travel Ban Updates: What Practitioners Need to Know," CLINIC, January 13, 2026, https://www.cliniclegal.org/resources/asylum-and-refugee-law/refugee-asylee-and-travel-ban-updates-what-practitioners-need-know.

138 "A Pathway to Citizenship is Essential for Children to Thrive," Children Thrive Action Network, August 9, 2021, https://childrenthriveaction.org/2021/08/a-pathway-to-citizenship-is-essential-for-children-to-thrive-one-pager/.

139 S.3348 - Dream Act of 2025, 119th Congress (2025-2026), https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/3348; H.R.1589 - American Dream and Promise Act of 2025, 119th Congress (2025-2026), https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/1589.

140 "Dream Act of 2025: Bill Summary," The National Immigration Forum, December 4, 2025, https://forumtogether.org/article/dream-act-of-2025-bill-summary/.

141 S.2106 - SECURE Act, 119th Congress, (2025-2026), https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/2106/text.

142 Keep Families Together Act, 118th Congress (2023-2024), https://www.congress.gov/bill/118th-congress/senate-bill/4723?hl=Keep+Families+Together+Act&s=1&r=5.

143 S.3419 - Reuniting Families Act, 119th Congress (2025-2026), https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/3419.

144 S.1965 - Protect Vulnerable Immigrant Youth Act, 119th Congress (2025-2026), https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/1965/text.

145 H.R. 3127 - Fairness to Freedom Act of 2025, 119th Congress (2025-2026), https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/3127.

146 H.R. 944 - Access to Counsel Act, 119th Congress (2025-2026), https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/house-bill/944.

147 S.1297 - Fair Day in Court for Kids Act of 2025, 119th Congress (2025-2026), https://www.congress.gov/bill/119th-congress/senate-bill/1297.

148 As of March 2026, 18 states have introduced protected areas legislation in their states and nine states have enacted protected areas laws: California, Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Virginia, and Washington State.

149 Nicole Chávez, Suma Setty, Hannah Liu, et. al., "Still At Risk: The Urgent Need to Address Immigration Enforcement's Harms to Children," CLASP and UnidosUS, June 13, 2023, https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/urgent-need-address-immigration-enforcement-harm-children/.

150 Jacob Kang-Brown and Brian Nam-Sonenstein. "New ICE arrest data show the power of state and local governments to curtail mass deportations," Prison Policy Initiative. December 11, 2025, https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2025/12/11/ice-jails-update/.

151 GA Code § 35-1-17 (2024), https://law.justia.com/codes/georgia/title-35/chapter-1/section-35-1-17/.; SB8, 89th Legislature, 2025, https://legiscan.com/TX/bill/SB8/2025/X2.

152 Jude Joffe-Block, "At least 27 states turned over sensitive data about food stamp recipients to USDA," National Public Radio, October 16, 2025, https://www.npr.org/2025/10/16/nx-s1-5533045/snap-privacy-usda-lawsuit.

153 "Planning for the Possibility of Enforcement: Stand-

by Guardianship for Immigrant Parents," CLINIC, last updated October 24, 2019, https://www.cliniclegal.org/resources/state-and-local/planning-possibility-enforcement-standby-guardianship-immigrant-parents; "Standby Guardianship," Child Welfare Information Gateway, Children's Bureau, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2018, https://njarch.org/wpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Standby-Guardianship.pdf.

154 "Senate Bill 1064," California Department of Social Services, https://www.cdss.ca.gov/inforesources/foster-care/sb-1064; "The Reuniting Immigrant Families Act (SB 1064)," Immigrant Legal Resource Center, August 26, 2014, https://www.ilrc.org/resources/reuniting-immigrant-families-act-sb-1064.

155 "The Budget Reconciliation Act of 2025: Harms to Immigrant Children and Families," Children Thrive Action Network, July 21, 2025, https://childrenthriveaction.org/2025/07/the-budget-reconciliation-act-2025/.

156 Sheila Smith, Maribel R. Granja, Elisabeth Wright Burak, et al., "Medicaid Policies to Help Young Children Access Infant-Early Childhood Mental Health Services: Results from a 50-State Survey," National Center for Children in Poverty, Georgetown University Center for Children and Families, and Johnson Policy Consulting, June 9, 2023, https://ccf.georgetown.edu/2023/06/09/medicaid-policies-to-help-young-children-access-infant-early-childhood-mental-health-services-results-from-a-50-state-survey/#heading-0; Melanie Lutenbacher, Tonya Elkins, Mary S. Dietrich, et al.,"The Efficacy of Using Peer Mentors to Improve Maternal and Infant Health Outcomes in Hispanic Families: Findings from a Randomized Clinical Trial," Maternal and Child Health Journal, 22(May 2018), https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10995-018-2532-z.

157 Kayla Tawa, "Addressing the Youth Mental Health Crisis Through Equitable School-Based Services," Center for Law and Social Policy, August 24, 2022, https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/addressing-the-youth-mental-health-crisis-through-equitable-school-based-services/; Kayla Tawa, Emily Kim, and Marissa Howdershelt, "Giving the (Young) People What They Want: A Policy Framework for Youth Peer Support," Center for Law and Social Policy, July 23, 2023, https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/giving-the-young-people-what-they-want-a-policy-framework-for-youth-peer-support/; Whitney Bunts, "Youth Mobile Response Services: An Investment to Decriminalize Mental Health," CLASP, April 12, 2021, https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/youth-mobile-response-services-investment-decriminalize-mental-health/; Kaelin Rapport and Isha Weerasinghe, "Youth Mobile Response Guidelines," CLASP, October 13, 2025, https://www.clasp.org/publications/report/brief/youth-mobile-response-principles.

158 "Access to Representation," New York Immigration Coalition, Accessed March 30, 2026, https://www.nyic.org/our-work/campaigns/access-to-representation/.

159 Victoria Francis, "Protecting Immigrant Communities: How States Can Lead in 2026," American Immigration Council, December 19, 2025, https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/blog/protecting-immigrants-how-states-can-lead-in-2026/; "State Leaders are Pushing Back Against ICE–and Protecting Their Communities," State Innovation Exchange, January 15, 2026, https://stateinnovation.org/state-leaders-push-back-ice.

160 Quote originally in Spanish: "Yo vi hace poco que una persona ciudadana estaba al lado de los latinos, los hispanos, y los migrantes, y comenzó a hacer libre expresión y lo detuvieron. Y yo me quedo, imagínate si detienen a una persona que es nacida aquí, es güera, y lo detienen. Imagínate uno que quiere reclamar. Es un temor."

161 Quote orignally in Spanish: "Muchas familias tienen miedo de pedir ayuda en cualquier lugar. Y piensan que, pues, dando su información... pues quizás uno se la va a dar a la gente equivocada, ¿no?"

162 Quote originally in Spanish: "[El personal de la escuela primaria] No iban a abrirle las puertas, pero a mi hija yo, hubo días que no la enviaba. Tenía miedo de que me la fueran a detener, ¿cómo hacíamos? No tenía esa carta poder, falta que me la quede. Estaba muy asustada, no iba a hacer las compras al Walmart."

163 Quote originally in Spanish: "Ha habido muchas preocupaciones sobre eso, incluyendo que no quieren ir ni a los bancos de comida, más ahora que es necesario. O sea, todo está cayendo así, se están haciendo que la gente se cierre y no tienen, no hay salida, no tienen para dónde salir, para dónde buscar."

164 Quote originally in Spanish: "Cada semana, cada semana le roban horas. Y le digo: 'Es que tenemos que hablar'. Pero él dice: 'Es que al momento de hablar, me van a quitar todo el trabajo... y ahorita la verdad, no estoy para arriesgarme a que me quiten todo el trabajo'. Entonces digo, también no podemos estar así. Y los patrones saben, y por eso se están aprovechando, no nada más con mi esposo, o sea, en muchas compañías y con varios trabajadores que lo que hacen es discriminación. Yo veo a mi esposo, lo discriminan mucho, pero tristemente es como decimos, no podemos hacer nada, y con este gobierno menos, porque yo siento que al hacer algo, pues es como arriesgarnos a perder todo el trabajo, que es la única de las entradas que podemos tener."

165 Quote originally in Spanish: "A veces yo no dormía por estar viendo [las noticias de inmigración].

166 Quote originally in Spanish: " Emocionalmente mal," "agotador," "frustrante," "angustiante."

167 Quote originally in Spanish: "Personas que están asistiendo más a las clínicas por ansiedad, porque están entrando en depresión por todo este caso."

168 Quote originally in Spanish: "[L]as que están embarazadas no quieren ir tanto Asus visitas de los hospitales."

169 Quote originally in Spanish: "Y eso [estrés] se transmite a los chiquitos. Se los transmiten pues porque entre ellos [los adultos] hablan y los chiquitos escuchan, entonces eso les afecta.

170 Quote originally in Spanish: "[Mi hija] no lloraba entre nosotras en su casa en la noche. Y un día le dije... me di cuenta de que amaneció con los ojos hinchados. Y le dije: "mija, ¿qué tienes?", y dice, "yo tengo miedo de que mi papá...ahora que está saliendo, que no tiene trabajo aquí y está saliendo fuera, lo vayan a agarrar y lo deporten".

171 Quote originally in Spanish: "[Mis niñas pequeñas] deberían de estar pensando en su escuela como ahorita... Y ayer vi a mi hija, y eso fue un avance, las noticias de una redada que hubo en Chicago. Entonces digo, ¿cómo puede ser que una niña de cinco años se esté preocupando porque van a deportar a sus papás y no por una tarea de la escuela que le están dejando?"

172 Quote originally in Spanish: "Mi niña, la más chiquita, tiene cinco años. Y dice: "mami, no vayas a la escuela." Dice: "¿qué va a pasar si te agarran?", y yo me siento mal porque he tenido que mentirles. Yo le digo: "mami, a mí no me va a pasar", le digo, "porque tenemos los papeles". Yo le digo, "tengo los papeles, mami. No, no va a pasar nada"... Entonces, a mí sí me llega mucho. que mi niña, la más chiquita, tenga que preocuparse por nosotros. Yo digo: es una niña de cinco años que no tiene por qué estar pasando esto."

173 Quote originally in Spanish: "Yo prefiero parecer más americana morena, que piensen que soy de Perú."

174 Quote originally in Spanish: "No nos lleves, mamá, que mi hermana deje de ir a la escuela o que llegue más temprano, más tarde, para que nos vaya a llevar". Entonces digo, ¿cómo puede ser que el gobierno juegue con la mentalidad de unos niños? Porque nosotros podemos entender y nos hacemos... pero unos niños no tienen por qué estar viviendo también esto que nos está pasando a nosotros."

175 Quote originally in Spanish: "Mi hijo tiene 17 años. Él me dijo, "mami, ¿me puedes dar mis documentos?"... "Es que si llega a haber una redada en la escuela, porque yo me veo mexicano, yo quiero tener mis papeles, porque a mí me van a sacar, porque dicen que es por tu... color y tu perfil facial que te van a ver, te van a deportar. Yo quiero traerme mis documentos."

176 Original quote in Spanish: "...dejaría a mi hija a la de 12 para que salga adelante hasta que cumpla 17 y ya pueda viajar sola, venirse, ¿no? Pero digo, también le causaría un tema emocional. Le puede pasar algo, no está conmigo. Yo por darle un futuro, la voy a alejar de mi, de su papá..."

177 Alayna Alvarez, "How immigrants are impacting Colorado's economy," Axios Denver, March 3, 2025, https://www.axios.com/local/denver/2025/03/03/colorado-immigrants-economic-impact.

178 SB25-276 Protect Civil Rights Immigration Status, Colorado General Assembly, accessed February 27, 2026, https://leg.colorado.gov/bills/sb25-276.

179 "287(g)," Immigrant Legal Resource Center, map updated March 30, 2026, https://www.ilrc.org/practitioners/national-map-287g-agreements.

180 Quote originally in Spanish: "Al principio tenía miedo de ir a mis citas, porque ahorita, esto más que nada es como un perfil racial. Se están yendo con todo los hispanos."

181 Quote originally in Spanish: "No quería mandarlos... no los dejé ir a la escuela. En un momento pensé que yo sí hubiera tenido dinero, hubiera salido como loca, me hubiera ido, hubiera agarrado a mis niños. Me sentí desprotegida, me sentí con miedo de salir a poder trabajar."

182 Quote originally in Spanish: "Las camionetas de personas de trabajo están yendo migración a las compañías, a los lugares de trabajo. No están agarrando delincuentes, están deteniendo a personas trabajando, a personas trabajadores, a nuestros esposos que están yendo a trabajar, los están deteniendo; y nosotras con hijos con discapacidad, ¿qué hacemos?"

183 Quote originally in Spanish: "Para mí fue un impacto muy negativo con todo lo que está sucediendo con inmigración, con todo lo que está sucediendo con los recortes que están haciendo, que el Presidente hizo a los recortes federales como para el Medicaid, para las personas con discapacidad... Entonces a nosotros, las personas inmigrantes, que no tenemos otros recursos, y que tenemos nuestros hijos con discapacidad, o sea, ¿cómo?"

184 Quote originally in Spanish: "Él llegó así muy asustado a la casa, y dice: "Por poco yo ya no vengo" ... mi hijo está muy apegado a él, y se puso a llorar, y ahora a cada rato él le anda llamando: "Papá, ¿estás bien?, papá, "¿a qué hora vas a venir?", y así."

185 Quote orginally in Spanish: "Ahorita ya no podemos salir el papá y yo juntos, ¿por qué? Porque cualquier cosa llegara a pasar, solamente a uno le tiene que pasar, pero no a los dos, y esa es la preocupación de mis hijos todas las noches. Sea la 1:00 AM, escucho que van pasito a pasito checando las puertas y van a asegurarse que estén bien cerradas las puertas, y eso es lo que a mí me preocupa, que ni siquiera duermen bien por esas cosas que siempre los tienen tan al pendiente y ni siquiera descansan correctamente.

186 Quote originally in Spanish: "La única manera que yo les puedo ayudar es eso a veces, pues no les cobro desde hoy una semana, dos semanas gratis y pues esas sema-

nas no cobro mi sueldo... Yo ya no compro ropa, no, no necesito nada... Entonces pues asumo que ese dinero lo puedo invertir en en una bonita obra, entonces a veces no les cobra a los papás. A veces cuido a los niños los fines de semana gratis para que ellos puedan ir a trabajar."

187 Quote originally in Spanish: "Tengo dos mamás que hicieron un papel donde me autorizan a mí en caso de cualquier cosa que yo me quedé con los niños... les estoy ayudando del programa. Ellos hicieron una carta donde... dice que si le llega a pasar algo a ellos las niñas, o sea que yo me haga cargo de las niñas hasta que ella pueda solucionar su problema... para que si a ella la deporten, yo le mande después las niñas."

188 "Immigrants in Georgia," American Immigration Council, https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/georgia/; "U.S. Foreign-Born Population," United States Census Bureau, April 9, 2024, https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/foreign-born-population-2018-2022.html.

189 "Immigrants in Georgia," American Immigration Council.

190 House Bill 1105 (as passed House and Senate), Georgia Department of Audits and Accounts, https://www.audits2.ga.gov/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/House-Bill-1105.pdf.

191 "287(g)," Immigrant Legal Resource Center, March 2, 2026, https://www.ilrc.org/practitioners/national-map-287g-agreements.

192 Senate Bill 391, Georgia General Assembly, https://www.legis.ga.gov/api/legislation/document/20252026/239723.

193 Bill Status of HB1312, Illinois General Assembly, https://ilga.gov/Legislation/BillStatus?DocNum=1312&GAID=18&DocTypeID=HB&LegId=157202&SessionID=114.

194 Alejandra Vázquez Baur and Loredana Valtierra, "Trump Announcement on Public Benefits Does Not Change Legal Protections for K–12 Students," The Century Foundation, August 26, 2025, https://tcf.org/content/commentary/trump-announcement-on-public-benefits-does-not-change-legal-protections-for-k-12-students/.

195 Quote originally in Wolof: "Soo nékkéé ci ginaaw wolang bi, dangay faral di tiit, yénn saa mu dem ba dootoo séétlu witéss oto bi. Sa xel du musa dal. Dama waroon dem université, waaye soo déméé, doo mëna bàyyi sa xél ci lingay déf."

196 Quote originally in Wolof: "Légui nakk danaka suñu yérè deuk sakh mënëtuñ ko sol. Niit yi dagn ñuy wakh bulén lakhë sén lakhu dëk, bulén sol sén yérè dëk, dém lén nëbëtu ji (lakhatu ji)."

197 Quotes originally in Wolof: " "Bu yàggul dara,défa am kénn kuñu xam ku démoon si bitig di jënde ñu jàpp ko fa. Dañu bëgga liggéey, waayé da ñuyi ragal ci sunu barabu liggéey. Amatuñu fi bénn kaaraange. Saa yu nékk mën nañu la jàpp." Another parent said that she was scared to even ride the elevator in her apartment building: "Ak lu sa apartment mëna kawé, dangay yéeg ci éskaalié yi ndax assassor bi du am kaaraangé."

198 Quote originally in Wolof: "Doonté dugu ga ci réew mi ci anam wu yoon santaané, nga am këyitu liggéeykay, ba noppi nga fay juuti (maanaam tax), ba tayi dangayi amtiitangé. Da gayi am sa xaalis, waayé doo xam loo ci wara déf ndax da gayi ragal dém ci yénn bërëb yi. Mënoo déf linga bëgg."

199 Quote originally in Spanish: "Muchas familias ni siquiera saben que existen estos recursos... que pueden que... si sus hijos son legales o si sus hijos sufrieron algún tipo de violencia, homeless y todo que ellos podrían aplicar a ciertos recursos... Una es la falta de conocimiento que existe en estos recursos. Otro es que también prefieren no agarrarlos, si es que saben, porque prefieren mantenerse [indocumentado] sobre todo si su estatus migratorio es indocumentado. Entonces prefieren manejarse bajo el radar, de mejor no utiliz[ar] nada."

200 Quote originally in Wolof: "Mus naa toog juróom ñétti fan amuma lékk buma mëna jox sama doom ndax gayii ñu ngi woon fii, té dém butig bi wóorul woon."

201 "Immigrants in Michigan," American Immigration Council, 2023 data, Accessed March 2026, https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/michigan/.

202 "287(g)," Immigrant Legal Resource Center, map updated March 30, 2026, https://www.ilrc.org/practitioners/national-map-287g-agreements.

203 House Bills 4338, 4339, 4340, 4341, and 4342, Michigan Immigrant Rights Center, accessed March 2, 2026, https://michiganimmigrant.org/legislative-updates/house-bills-4338-4339-4340-4341-and-4342#hb-4340.

204 House Bills 4338, Michigan Immigrant Rights Center.

205 "Drive SAFE (Safety, Access, Freedom, and Economy) Bills – Senate Bills 433, 434 and House Bills 4835, 4836," Michigan Immigrant Rights Center, https://michiganimmigrant.org/legislative-updates/drive-safe-safety-access-freedom-and-economy-bills-senate-bills-433-434-and.

206 Anna Busse, "Michigan elected officials highlight policies they say will protect immigrant rights, limit ICE," Michigan Public, February 27, 2026, https://www.michiganpublic.org/politics-government/2026-02-27/michigan-elected-officials-highlight-policies-they-say-will-protect-immigrant-rights-limit-ice.

207 Quote originally in Spanish: "Lo que está sucediendo tanto como agencias en compañía ya ahorita están que ya no respetan más dicho el... el... pago que es de aquí 15 con 49, ya no. Te dicen: "A 14, si quieres, lo tomas."

208 Quote originally in Spanish: "Un trauma psicológico."

209 Quote originally in Spanish: "Uno como madre quizás va a sufrir el dolor de dejar un hijo … pero un hijo si es pequeño, cuando usted lo quiera recuperar, ¿cómo va a entender que no fue tu culpa dejarlo solo?"

210 Quote originally in Spanish: "Mi niña apenas tiene 10 años. Ella me dice, "enséñame a hacer bistec, enséñame a hacer caldo de pollo, el caldo de res." Yo, cuando hablo de mi hija, a mí me dan ganas de llorar y llorar porque ella es como que tuviera 15 años. Entonces ella ha aprendido a cocinar todas esas comidas porque ella dice que si me deportan, entonces ella ya por lo menos no se va a morir de hambre."

211 "Immigrants in New Jersey," American Immigration Council, 2023, Accessed March 29, 2026, https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/new-jersey/.

212 "287(g)," Immigrant Legal Resource Center, https://www.ilrc.org/practitioners/national-map-287g-agreements.

213 "AG Grewal Issues Statewide Directive Curtailing State and Local Police Participation in Federal and Civil Immigration Enforcement - 'Immigrant Trust Directive' Designed to Promote Public Safety by Building Trust Between Police and Immigrant Communities, State of New Jersey Department of Law & Public Safety, November 29, 2018, https://www.njoag.gov/ag-grewal-issues-statewide-directive-curtailing-state-and-local-police-participation-in-federal-civil-immigration-enforcement-immigrant-trust-directive-designed-to-promote-public/.

214 Jacob Kang-Brown and Brian Nam-Sonenstein, "New ICE arrest data show the power of state and local governments to curtail mass deportations," Prison Policy Initiative, December 11, 2025, https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2025/12/11/ice-jails-update/.

215 "Safe Communities Act," New Jersey Legislature, introduced January 2, 2026, https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/bill-search/2024/A6308/bill-text?f=A6500&n=6308_I1; P. Kenneth Burns, "Outgoing New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy declines to codify Immigrant Trust Directive," WHYY, updated January 20, 2026, https://whyy.org/articles/new-jersey-phil-murphy-immigrant-trust-directive/.

216 US v. State of New Jersey, 3:26-cv-1770, U.S. Department of Justice, accessed February 27, 2026, https://www.justice.gov/ag/media/1428611/dl?inline=&utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery.

217 Katie Bartlett, "New Jersey moves to limit state role in federal immigration enforcement," Politico, March 25, 2026, https://www.politico.com/news/2026/03/25/new-jersey-moves-to-limit-state-role-in-federal-immigration-enforcement-00844095.

218 S. 3521, "Strengthening Trust Between Law Enforcement and Immigrant Communities," Session 2026-2027, https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/bill-search/2026/S3521.

219 "Bill S3114/3216 (SCS), "Law Enforcement Officer Protection Act, " Session 2026-2027, New Jersey Legisla-

ture, https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/bill-search/2026/S3114.

220 S. 3522, "Privacy Protection Act," Session 2026-2027, https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/bill-search/2026/S3522.

221 Quote originally in Spanish: "Pandemia migratoria."

222 Quote originally in Spanish: "¿Eso es lo que verdaderamente les quieres ofrecer a tus hijos?" Cuando uno viene a buscar mejores escuelas, mejores... oportunidades."

223 Quote originally in Spanish: "Y siento que, ahora que volvió otra vez a la presidencia, regresó ese racismo como al doble."

224 Quote originally in Spanish: "No lo hacen, y ellos son los que promueven la discriminación. O sea, sí, sí, crean."

225 Quote originally in Spanish: "Hubiera una ley que les hiciera ver que no se va a quedar sin castigo cualquiera que esté generando odio en los menores de edad."

226 Quote originally in Spanish: "Mi ansiedad me pasa factura... empiezo a comer y no me doy cuenta si estoy comiendo sin tener hambre... De repente me... [dan] problemas del estómago, tantas cosas, que se me irrita la piel, de, no sé, que me pica la piel de la nada."

227 Quote originally in Spanish: "Entonces, sí es un tema muy, muy difícil que a raíz de estas elecciones se ha afectado emocional[mente]. Mi esposo también, a raíz de todo el estrés y la preocupación, se enfermó; ahora ya tiene que estar tomando pastillas de la presión."

228 Quote originally in Spanish: "Siempre me abraza. No estoy en un lado y él grita desesperadamente: "¡Mamá, mamá, ¿dónde estás?""

229 Quote originally in Spanish:"También sé que es una responsabilidad enorme, diecinueve años y tener que velar por tus otros hermanos."

230 Christian Penichet-Paul, "Halting of Texas' In-State Tuition for Undocumented Students: Explainer," National Immigration Forum, June 6, 2025, https://forumtogether.org/article/blocking-of-texas-in-state-tuition-for-undocumented-students-explainer/

231 Quote originally in Spanish: "Mi hijo también entró en depresión, él no quiere seguir estudiando."

232 "Immigrant Workers and the Childcare Crisis," American Immigration Council, December 11, 2025, https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/report/immigrant-workers-childcare-crisis/#immigrants-childcare-workers-texas.

233 "Immigrants in Texas," American Immigration Council, https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/texas/.

234 TPR Staff, "Senate Bill 8 and 287(g) Agreements: Where Texas Stands Today," Texas Policy Research, February 20, 2026, https://www.texaspolicyresearch.com/senate-bill-8-and-287g-agreements-where-texas-stands-today/.

235 "287(g)," Immigrant Legal Resource Center, map updated March 30, 2026, https://www.ilrc.org/practitioners/national-map-287g-agreements.

236 "Halting of Texas' In-State Tuition," National Immigration Forum.

237 Sneha Day, "Texas directs public universities to identify undocumented students," The Texas Tribune, June 23, 2025, https://www.texastribune.org/2025/06/23/texas-undocumented-students-in-state-tuition/.

238 "DACA Court Case Updates," FWD.us, February 6, 2026, https://www.fwd.us/news/daca-court-case/.

239 Quote originally in Spanish: "Yo no pido estampillas porque también me da miedo... aunque dicen que eso no afecta, pero a estas alturas ya no se sabe."

240 Original quote in Spanish: "Cada vez que se va al trabajo, dice: "¿Y si pasa algo? ... Es bien difícil."

241 Original quote in Spanish: "Es terrorífico ver que desarman a las familias."

242 Original quote in Spanish: "Ya la vida es estresante... y todavía tener que manejar el estrés de no poder salir a la calle... es súper estresante."

243 Original quote in Spanish: "El estrés también. Uno de adulto, uno de papá; a veces uno se lo transmite a los hijos."

244 "U.S. Foreign-Born Population," U.S. Census Bureau, April 9, 2024, https://www.census.gov/library/visualizations/interactive/foreign-born-population-2018-2022.html.

245 "Immigrants in Washington," American Immigration Council, https://map.americanimmigrationcouncil.org/locations/washington/.

246 "SB 5497- 2019 -20," Washington State Legislature, https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?Year=2019&BillNumber=5497; "Final Bill Report: E2SSB 5497," Washington Senate Bill Report, https://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2019-20/Pdf/Bill%20Reports/Senate/5497-S2.E%20SBR%20FBR%2019.pdf?q=20260227063644.

247 "SB 5974 - 2025-26," Washington State Legislature, https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary/?BillNumber=5974&Year=2025&Initiative=false; "Legislature passes AGO-request Immigrant Worker Protection Act Legislature passes

AGO-request Immigrant Worker Protection Act," Washington State Office of the Attorney General, March 12, 2026, https://www.atg.wa.gov/news/news-releases/legislature-passes-ago-request-immigrant-worker-protection-act.

248 "Domestic Workers Bill of Rights Signed into Law," Senate Democrats, March 10, 2026, https://senatedemocrats.wa.gov/saldana/2026/03/10/domestic-workers-bill-of-rights-signed-into-law/.

249 "287(g)," Immigrant Legal Resource Center, https://www.ilrc.org/practitioners/national-map-287g-agreements.

250 "SB 5906 - 2025-26," Washington State Legislature, https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?-Year=2025&BillNumber=5906&Initiative=False.

251 "SB 5906 - 2025-26," Washington State Legislature.