



Nevada Psychological Association Statement and Call to Action: Safety of Our Migrating Children and Families

As parents, community members, and experts on psychological research and health service psychology, the members of Nevada Psychological Association (NPA) are gravely concerned about the safety and welfare of migrating children and families, both at the border and throughout our community. We stand strongly behind the statements made by the American Psychological Association (APA), American Psychiatric Association, American Medical Association, and American Academy of Pediatrics opposing the policies of interning children and families.

Decades of scientific research indicate that extreme stress and trauma, including the forcible separation of children, of all ages, from their caregivers, and detention or incarceration of children, even when their caregivers are present, can have profound negative effects on child development. These negative effects include a wide range of emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and physiological symptoms and potentially long-lasting medical and mental health disorders.

Many immigrant and refugee children and families already in the United States live in fear every day. Exposure to the ongoing reports and images of the confusion, fear, and grief being experienced by migrating families near the border pose additional risks to children and families who are already a part of our local community.

NPA upon the people of the United States, through their local, state, and federal legislators and leaders, to take action. Migrating children and families must be guaranteed due process rights including the long-established right to make asylum claims as mandated by our own laws, and in accordance with international law and basic human rights.

NPA calls upon the Office of Refugee Resettlement and the Department of Health and Human Services to comply with the U.S. District Court order to develop and implement an immediate plan to reunite the almost 3,000 children already separated from their caregivers. NPA stands ready to assist with such a plan.

Every licensed psychologist has an ethical responsibility to safeguard the rights and welfare of those we serve, and to recognize that fairness and justice entitle all persons to access and benefit from the contributions of psychology. To this end, NPA calls upon our members to take action. 1) We cannot accept this violation of human rights in the treatment of families and children. Write to your federal legislators. This website can help: <https://www.aclu.org/writing-your-elected-representatives>. 2) We must ensure access to behavioral health services for those impacted by these immigration policies and events. Contact NPA to add your name to the list of providers willing and able to provide reduced fee and pro bono services to impacted family members. 3) Learn more about providing psychotherapy for migrating families and other community resources (<https://www.nvpsychology.org/public/migrant-family-safety-resources/>).

Nevada Psychological Association (NPA) has compiled a list of resources for families, teachers, and other community members, including information on supporting children directly and indirectly impacted. NPA also has compiled a list of resources and information for behavioral health providers. Please visit www.nvpsychology.org.

About Nevada Psychological Association - *The mission of the Nevada Psychological Association is to advance and represent psychology as a science and a profession, as well as to serve the professional needs of its membership and the community.*

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