



Resolution on Families Crossing Borders

An official statement from the Global Alliance on Behavioral Health and Social Justice (formerly the American Orthopsychiatric Association), prepared by the Global Mental Health Task Force

The Global Alliance embeds its work in principles of human rights, including nondiscrimination, respect, and dignity. In recognition of this commitment, we are deeply concerned by the enactment of policies that threaten the unity and well-being of families attempting to cross international borders.

The role of the family in society is well-established in nearly all cultures, and families are protected under international law. The right to family unity is inherent in acknowledging the family unit. If the right to live together is taken away, there is not a family to protect.

Further, many families fleeing their countries of origin are doing so because of traumatic experiences that threatened their safety and livelihoods. Separation can result in re-traumatization and have lasting effects on their mental and physical health. For children in particular, separation from caregivers can result in dire consequences, such as increased risk for abuse and neglect, disrupted attachments, and emotional dysregulation.



In sum, the intentional separation of caregivers and children is an affront to our commitment to social justice and the right of all individuals to dignity. To ensure international commitments to caring for children in the least restrictive environment and protecting children's right to family relations, the Global Alliance calls for national laws and policies that mandate protections for families seeking to cross international borders.

Additional Resources	Relevant Articles From <i>American Journal of Orthopsychiatry</i>
<p>Universal Declaration of Human Rights: http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/</p> <p>American Immigration Council: https://www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org</p> <p>Immigrant Legal Resource Center: http://www.ilrc.org</p> <p>International Justice Resource Center: https://ijrcenter.org/</p> <p>Migration Policy Institute: https://www.migrationpolicy.org</p>	<p>Miller, A., Hess, J. M., Bybee, D., & Goodkind, J. R. (2018). Understanding the mental health consequences of family separation for refugees: Implications for policy and practice. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ort0000272</p> <p>Brabeck, K. M., Lykes, M. B., & Hunter, C. (2014). The psychosocial impact of detention and deportation on U.S. migrant children and families. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ort0000011</p> <p>McLeigh, J. D. (2010). How do immigration and customs enforcement (ICE) practices affect the mental health of children? https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.2010.01011.x</p> <p>Kronick, R., Rousseau, C., & Cleveland, J. (2015). Asylum-seeking children's experiences of detention in Canada: A qualitative study. http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ort0000061</p> <p>Talwar, G., Sianko, N., Baugh, S. A., & Brodsky, A. E. (2012). Talking about immigration: Community voices on service, research, and policy needs. doi: http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.2012.01172.x</p>
<h3>How You Can Help</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn more about the right to seek asylum in international and national laws. • Educate yourself on the ways in which a family's right to live together is protected by international human rights and humanitarian law. • Contribute to an organization that is advocating on behalf of families seeking to cross international borders. • Contact your government representatives. • Join a rally or vigil. Be heard! 	