

Resolution on Protecting Immigrant Children and Families

An official statement from the Global Alliance on Behavioral Health and Social Justice

The Global Alliance is committed to applying principles of social justice to policy development, community action, and systems change related to the behavioral health and wellbeing of populations that are vulnerable or marginalized. In keeping with our mission, we are gravely concerned that recent developments in immigration policy not only fail to protect the most vulnerable among us but also create a climate of fear and uncertainty that will surely have significant implications for the well-being of immigrant children and their families.



An enforcement-only approach toward immigration is not only costly, but it also has severe consequences for immigrant families and their children. Indeed, prolonged fear and stress can result in a multitude of physical and mental health challenges, such as a weakened immune system, anxiety, insomnia, high blood pressure, depression, and a host of digestive problems. Further, immigration policies that are discriminatory in nature and that deny refuge to children and families fleeing violence and adversity do little to enhance public safety and national security.

Such policies go against the values of the Global Alliance, the values on which the United States was founded, and the values inherit in many international human rights instruments. In recognition of the social, economic and cultural contributions of immigrant communities nationwide and the negative mental and physical health implication of enforcement-only immigration policies, the Global Alliance calls for a renewed focus on immigration reform that provides a more welcoming approach.

Additional Resources

Immigration: <http://www.bhjustice.org/immigration>

Immigrant rights:
<http://wearecasa.org/resources/know-your-rights/>
(available in English and Spanish)

Family preparedness plan:
<https://www.ilrc.org/family-preparedness-plan>
(available in English and Spanish)

Immigrant child health toolkit from the American Academy of Pediatrics: <http://bit.ly/1JQOyyR>

How You Can Help

- Learn more about the history of immigration and current policies in the United States.
- Make immigrants already in your community feel welcome.
- Donate to or volunteer for an organization that provides services and resources to immigrants.

Relevant Articles From *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*

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>

Pumariega, A. J., & Rothe, E. (2010). Leaving no children or families outside: The challenges of immigration. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1939-0025.2010.01053.x>

Yazykova, E., & McLeigh, J. D. (2015). Millennial children of immigrant parents: Transnationalism, disparities, policy, and potential.
doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/ort0000114>

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>