

SEPARATION OF UNDOCUMENTED CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

A founding principle of National PTA's mission is to promote the safety and well-being of all children and youth. National PTA recognizes that the United States began as a country of immigrants and the resulting blend of cultures enriches our nation. National PTA believes all children, regardless of their immigration status, have the right to access a quality public education, adequate food and shelter, and basic health care services. The separation of a child from their parent creates toxic stress and trauma that can have significant harm on a child's brain development. Children entering the United States either unaccompanied or accompanied by a parent or adult family member must be treated with dignity and respect, should be adequately cared for, and reunited with their family as soon as possible under U.S. laws and policies.

The National PTA supports the following statements:

- Family unity is a core principle of society. Children belong with their parents, family members or legal guardian.
- The 1997 Flores Settlement Agreement (*Flores*) lays out the protections and expectations regarding the detention, release, and care of all children – both accompanied and unaccompanied undocumented children – arriving in the United States.
- The separation of families for purposes of immigration enforcement, management, or detention is never in the best interest or well-being of children. Children should not be used as a deterrent to enter the United States.
- If a child is separated from their parent(s) during immigration detention, federal policy should ensure children are reunited as soon as possible with their parent(s) in accordance with *Flores* to maintain family unity while they pursue their immigration and protection claims.

It is in the national interest to ensure all children, including undocumented children, have the opportunity to reach their full potential and become productive members of society.

National PTA calls on the U.S. Congress and the administration to take the necessary steps to immediately stop any zero-tolerance policy that may result in harmful separation of undocumented children from their parents or family members. National PTA also seeks the immediate reunification of families presently separated under current enforcement policy.

Adopted: by the 2018 National PTA Board of Directors

Endorsed: by the 2018 Convention Delegates