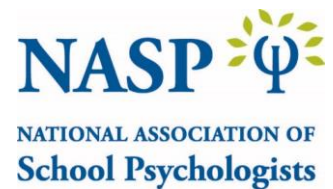


Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NASP Calls for Immediate Improvement in the Conditions and Care Provided Children in U.S. Custody; Endorses Open School Psychology Letter

Bethesda, MD—The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) joins with school psychologists across the country in calling upon the Trump Administration and Congress to ensure the ethical, humane, and healthy treatment of children and their families who are in the custody of the United States government. Reports of children in U.S. detention centers being held in unsafe conditions that lack basic physical necessities, fail to provide proper adult care, inflict unnecessarily cruel punishment, and risk causing trauma are appalling. Regardless of U.S. immigration policy or the circumstances under which children enter this country, there is NO excuse for failing to provide the proper physical and psychological care that children need to feel and be safe.

Very specifically, NASP endorses the [Open Letter to Immediately Provide Competent Adult Supervision and Medical and Psychological Care to Children Being Held in Migrant Detention Facilities](#) being circulated for signature by school psychologists and others. We encourage our members to sign it. NASP's leadership and voice as an organization on issues relevant to our mission and purpose are critical. However, the collective voices of individual school psychologists are especially powerful and embody our ethical responsibility to advocate for the rights and well-being of all children.

This open letter was not developed by NASP but rather by individual school psychologists who felt compelled to speak out. As stated in the letter:

We believe that our professional values as school psychologists require us to act. The short- and long-term effects of trauma resulting from experiences like neglect are exceptionally well-documented. Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) have been linked to outcomes including suicidal attempts and thoughts, alcohol and drug abuse, cancer, diabetes, depression, and increased risk of physical injury. Experiences of trauma may be particularly difficult for young children to resolve.

NASP is committed to ensuring that all children and youth attend schools and live in communities that are free from harm. Importantly, we are committed to meeting the mental and behavioral health needs of all children, regardless of race, sex, ethnicity, religion, disability status, real or perceived

gender identity, sexual orientation, or immigration status. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by the U.N. in 1989, and [endorsed by NASP](#), asserts that in all actions pertaining to children, the primary concern should be the best interests of the child. In addition, all children are to be cared for and protected from all forms of violence and exploitation in all settings and sectors in their lives. All children have the right to survive and develop healthily.

Furthermore, NASP's newest position statement on [Students Who Are Displaced Persons, Refugees, or Asylum-Seekers](#) affirms that families and youth who have been displaced experience significant life stressors, including the events leading up to the displacement and the challenges of migration and resettlement. School psychologists must advocate for these students to help ensure safety, access to education, and mental health support. Always, our first focus is on prevention, which requires the compassionate and responsible care of these children and their families as they navigate the immigration process.

The reports and images of the conditions being experienced by these children—coupled with reports of imminent mass family deportations—pose potential psychological risks for immigrant and refugee children already in the United States. Many of these children live in fear on a daily basis that one or more of their parents will be deported. The Administration's policies and rhetoric can make this fear feel all the more real, potentially leading to the increased likelihood of negative mental health outcomes such as anxiety and depression for thousands of children in schools and communities across the country.

There is no justification for intentional cruelty against children under any circumstance or for any reason. Doing so not only undermines the well-being of the children involved, it also diminishes the core values of equity and human rights for the nation as a whole.

NASP urges the Administration and Congress to take the immediate necessary actions to ensure that all children and families in U.S. custody are provided basic physical necessities (e.g., sleep, clean water, food, soap), access to proper adult care and supervision, and proper medical and psychological support. Furthermore, U.S. policies must protect the rights of these children, and all children, as outlined in the framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

To read and sign on to the school psychology open letter, go to www.schoolpsychopenletter.com.

Additional Related Resources

- [NASP Position Paper on Child Rights](#)
- [NASP Position Paper on Students Who Are Displaced Persons, Refugees, or Asylum-Seekers](#)
- [Supporting Refugee Children: Tips for Educators](#)
- [Supporting Vulnerable Children in Stressful Times](#)
- [Treating Toxic Stress in Immigrant Children](#)
- [Unauthorized Immigrant Children in the United States: Educational Policy, Practices, and the Role of School Psychology](#)

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