



June 28, 2018

President Donald Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump: We, the members of the Colorado Psychological Association, stand with and support the members of our national institution, the American Psychological Association, in expressing our profound concern and opposition to the Administration's recent policy of separating immigrant parents from their children while being detained at the U.S. southern border. Although we have all breathed a collective sigh of relief with the Administration's most recent order to stop separating migrant children from their parents, there are more than 2,000 children who have been relocated all over the nation in temporary childcare detention facilities without any clear decision as to how long before, or if, these children will be reunited with their families. Research over a number of decades has supported findings of the numerous deleterious effects on children who have been separated from the security and stability of their families.

When children are separated from their parents, feelings of abandonment can bring about symptoms of psychological trauma such as anxiety, depression, withdrawal, aggression, self-stigmatization, low self-esteem, and later learning difficulties. Wendy Cervantes, former Vice President of Immigration and Child Rights at First Focus, aptly spoke of the lasting effects on migrant children, "The immigration system can really take a kid's childhood away from them."

For the children who have been separated and relocated across the nation, there is not yet a comprehensive plan in place to reunite them with their parents. These children will continue to be traumatized by an uncertain future. Will they remain in temporary government child care facilities or will they go into the foster care system, possibly never being reunited with their parents/families again? The psychological damage to these children can be lifelong.

Whether or not a child remains because undocumented parents are deported or because both the child and their parents are undocumented, separation brings about psychological trauma. Members of the Colorado Psychological Association, along with members of the American Psychological Association and other state run psychological associations, remain deeply concerned over the psychological well-being of these immigrant children. The sooner action is taken to reunite these children with their parents, the greater the chances of mitigating their trauma.

Sincerely,

Dr. Reine Evereteze, Psy.D.,
Chair Society for the Advancement of Multiculturalism and Diversity
Colorado Psychological Association

Dr. Rebecca Richey, Psy.D., President Colorado Psychological Association