
share

AAP Statement Opposing Separation of Children and Parents at the Border

5/8/2018 by: Colleen Kraft, MD, MBA, FAAP, President, American Academy of Pediatrics

"As a pediatrician, as a parent, as the president of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), I am appalled by a new policy reportedly signed by Department of Homeland Security that will forcibly separate children from their parents, a practice that this Administration has already been carrying out for months. In fact, during my recent trip to the border, I saw its impact with my own eyes, and I am not alone in my outrage and dismay at its sweeping cruelty. The AAP is opposed to this policy and will continue to urge the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice to reverse it immediately.

"So many of these parents are fleeing for their lives. So many of these children know no other adult than the parent who brought them here. They can be as young as infants and toddlers.

"Separating children from their parents contradicts everything we stand for as pediatricians – protecting and promoting children's health. In fact, highly stressful experiences, like family separation, can cause irreparable harm, disrupting a child's brain architecture and affecting his or her short- and long-term health. This type of prolonged exposure to serious stress - known as toxic stress - can carry lifelong consequences for children.

"The new policy is the latest example of harmful actions by the Department of Homeland Security against immigrant families, hindering their right to seek asylum in our country and denying parents the right to remain with their children. We can and must do better for these families. We can and must remember that immigrant children are still children; they need our protection, not prosecution."

###