Safe and Humane Treatment of Refugee and Immigrant Children

**Position Brief**

**SUMMARY**

The National Association of School Nurses calls on the Departments of Justice and Homeland Security to ensure that refugee and immigrant children and families have access to clean, safe housing, hygiene, and other supplies necessary to maintain health and to prioritize the reunification of refugee and immigrant children who have been separated from their families.

**RATIONALE**

Children subjected to unsafe and inhumane conditions can experience trauma, resulting in irrevocable damage for a vulnerable population deserving of our protection regardless of their immigration status. Studies show that adverse childhood experiences have long-term physical and mental health consequences and that immigrant children are at greater risk due to the trauma experienced before, during or after immigration to the United States (Franco, 2018 and Metzler et al., 2016; Nurius et al., 2015). While family separation issue have quieted down, the crisis-facing immigrant children and families has intensified and spread (Roth et al, 2020).

School nurses, who are the frontline, need the skills necessary to meet the complex mental and physical health concerns of immigrant children (Clausson & Cowell, 2019). The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that immigrant children should have access to care that mitigates harm and trauma, promotes well-being and supports their health (Linton, et al, 2017). School nurses practice ethically, which is demonstrated by showing compassion and respect for all people and advocating for the rights, health, and safety of children and youth (ANA & NASN, 2017).

Adopted: August 2019
Renewed: December 2020

**References**


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