



## The Greater Bay Area Child Abuse Prevention Council Coalition

[www.bayareapreventchildabuse.org](http://www.bayareapreventchildabuse.org)

June 21, 2018

### IT IS CHILD ABUSE, NOT IMMIGRATION POLICY

The systemic separation of children from their families is government sanctioned child abuse. As we first learned about the immigration policy being enacted on our southern border, we were concerned. Because we can no longer stand by, we must add our voices to the doctors, clergy, parents, and Americans who are outraged at these actions.

On June 18<sup>th</sup> the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) announced their opposition to the Border Security and Immigration Reform Act announced by the U.S. House of Representatives leadership. The AAP has affirmed that separating families at the border is a form of child abuse.

The actions being taken today will produce real and lasting harm to these children. It has both life-long physical and developmental impacts. This kind of stress, particularly in small children, can “disrupt the neurological connections that are part of the developing brain” -- Dr. Colleen Kraft of the AAP.

Whether or not the separation policy is moral or immoral, legal or illegal, it is harming these children. The problem we are facing here is not an immigration policy or a biblical validation for the actions. The problem is child abuse. Every child deserves the comfort and security of their parents. Children should be able to rely on their parents’ nurturing protection.

We urge anyone concerned about the impact of separation on children and families to go to the National Child Traumatic Stress Network to learn more:

<https://www.nctsn.org/what-is-child-trauma/trauma-types/refugee-trauma>

While we are encouraged by the executive order halting family separations for the time being, we add our voices to the collective concern for the approximately 2,300 children who have yet to be reunited with their parents. We also urge Congress and the Administration to work together to end family separation immediately and permanently as a part of immigration policy.

Sincerely,

The Greater Bay Area Child Abuse Prevention Council Coalition

David Maradei, Chair

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