

Statement on Family Separation



The Association for Prevention Teaching and Research (APTR) stands in solidarity with other leading medical and public health organizations in opposing the Trump Administration’s “zero tolerance” immigration policy. While APTR is gratified that the President finally ended the separation of children from parents crossing the border into the U.S., this Administration’s continuation of its “zero tolerance” immigration policy perpetuates the detention of children and offers no relief for the more than 2,000 children currently separated from their families and living in detention centers.

Traumatic or stressful childhood experiences lead to increased health risks that include depression, behavioral problems and emotional issues, and are associated with an increased risk of premature death ([Am J Prev Med.](#) 2009 Nov;37(5):389-96). Additional risks include impaired brain development, as well as an increase of long-term risks of cardiovascular disease and mental illness. These children and their parents may have already experienced violence and trauma within and while fleeing their homeland, compounding the stress they face from being held in an unfamiliar facility under restrictive conditions.

It is critical that these children be reunited immediately with their families to avoid further separation and detention that is harmful to healthy childhood development and detrimental to both short and long-term health and well-being. These children should have immediate access to qualified health care professionals to assess their physical and mental well-being.

This statement was developed by the [APTR Policy Committee](#)