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## Preparing for Immigration Raids: What Early Childhood Stakeholders Can Do

Two weeks ago, President Trump tweeted out his administration's intention to conduct a series of massive immigration raids around the country. The operation was confirmed by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) acting director Mark Morgan, though at a smaller scale than described by the president. The raids—which were set to begin on Sunday, June 23—were delayed while Congress negotiated funding to address the crisis at the Southwest border. A bipartisan bill passed both chambers of Congress last week and is awaiting the president's signature. While the bill sends resources to the border, it fails to include critical provisions to hold the Trump Administration accountable for upholding basic health and safety standards for children in government-run facilities.

Based on recent intelligence, ICE enforcement actions would target recently arrived immigrants—including families with children—who already have removal orders. Raids are expected in as many as 10 cities, including Miami, Los Angeles, New York City/Newark, Washington, DC/Baltimore, Chicago, and possibly Houston, San Francisco, Atlanta, Denver, and New Orleans. However, ICE may also conduct enforcement actions in other areas, and agents may target unaccompanied youth who have aged out of federal care and protections and who have removal orders against them. ICE is likely to focus its enforcement actions on Central American families.

We are deeply concerned about the harm of such enforcement actions on young children, families, and communities. In CLASP's own [research](#), we heard first-hand how children are severely affected by such actions. Children who witness the arrest of a parent—particularly in their own home—are at greater risk of developing mental health and behavioral problems that have long-term implications for their overall development and future success. The detention or deportation of a parent also decimates families' household incomes, making it more difficult for the remaining parent or caregiver to make ends meet.

Massive enforcement actions also take a major toll on the organizations that serve children and families, including child care providers, schools, churches, food banks, and others. These organizations are forced into crisis mode to meet families' immediate needs and to ensure that families are reunited. Over time, these providers also bear the added responsibility of mitigating long-term harm to children whose families were needlessly torn apart.

Early childhood providers are trusted resources for immigrant families. Here's what you can do to fight back against this immoral attack and prepare for the possibility of a raid:

- **Issue organizational statements or guidance.** Don't wait for a raid to occur in your community. As soon as possible, advocacy organizations should issue statements in opposition to the raids; government agencies should issue guidance around data privacy and immigrants' rights; and service providers should communicate their plan if enforcement actions occur in the community and connect clients and parents with resources. CLASP has [talking points](#) on the raids for early childhood stakeholders.
- **Have a plan.** Early childhood providers should take steps to prepare your program for the possibility of a raid in your communities. Ensure that children's emergency contacts are current. Know your rights and have a plan in place in the unlikely event that immigration enforcement actions occur at your center- or school-based location. CLASP has a [guide to creating "safe space" policies](#) for early childhood programs, including a template policy. Contact Rebecca Ullrich ([rullrich@clasp.org](mailto:rullrich@clasp.org)) for questions and technical assistance.
- **Share resources with families and community members.** CLASP is compiling resources to help providers and families prepare for possible enforcement actions. We

will continue to update [this spreadsheet](#) as we learn about additional resources that can help you make sure families:

- Know their rights in the event of an enforcement action at their home, workplace, or in the community;
- Have a plan in place for their children's care in case they are subject to enforcement actions; and
- Can locate a free or low-cost immigration attorney nearby.

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