



PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Amy Kobeta, Communications Director
amyk@childrenfirstpa.org, 347-607-1058 mobile

Federal Policy that Harms Children Should be A Non-Starter

Children First Objects to U.S. Department of Health and Human Services that Targets Immigrant Children

July 10, 2025 –Today, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services issued a ban on children living in the U.S. without legal citizenship status from receiving services in essential federally funded health care and early childhood education programs. ([Read here.](#))

The Trump Administration actions today are a direct hit on children that should be considered unacceptable in any society. It is impossible to understand what benefit is gained by restricting access to early learning, healthcare, or education for any child.

The Administration's far-reaching ban clearly appears to exceed federal authority, harms all children, and places an added burden on already overburdened public schools and healthcare systems.

The portion of the policy that targets young children directly precludes participation in Head Start by any child without citizenship status. Banning them from proven programs like Head Start holds them back from being "ready to learn" when they enter first grade. Data shows that when children start school without the benefits of proven programs like Head Start they don't know the basics like the alphabet, colors, or how to do group activities. Our national interests are not served by decreasing the chances of academic success of any child growing up here.

The measure also cuts off access to medical and mental health care for undocumented children, something that no moral society should do to children regardless of citizenship status. It's not like they won't get sick and need care. This ban will simply cause illnesses to escalate to the point of driving up hospital admissions and spiking uncompensated care costs for health care systems. Already Pennsylvania hospitals have to cover more than \$724 million in care costs for the 147,000 uninsured children growing up in the Commonwealth.

No child should ever be abandoned to abuse and neglect, but this malicious policy change will do just that. Families will be prohibited from getting the help they need in times of crisis, exposing them to mental, emotional or financial pressures that put children at risk of harm and homelessness. For teens in the foster care system - already recovering from abuse or neglect - this policy blocks them from career building programs that would give them a bright future after a dark past.

Children do not decide where they live or how they entered the United States. Every American should agree that it is our moral and civic duty to every child growing up in the richest nation to keep them healthy, cared for and educated so they can chart their own pathway to the American Dream.

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