

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Contact:** Anisa Zvonkovic, Ph.D.
NCFR President, board@ncfr.org

Statement of the NCFR Board of Directors in Response to the U.S. Executive Order on Family Separation

June 21, 2018

The Board of Directors of the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) implores the Trump Administration to cease the unnecessary detention and separation of immigrant parents and their children as they seek asylum from violence and persecution in their home countries. While we are relieved that the administration has rescinded its policy of separating immigrant parents from their children, we continue to be alarmed about the treatment and care of the children who remain separated from their parents with no clear path to reunification. We condemn the indefinite detention and warehousing of immigrant parents and their children. Such treatment by the U.S. government is harmful, traumatizing, and a violation of human rights.

Children and their parents are being placed in makeshift shelters and other environments that likely lack the proper oversight to ensure the adequate care and nurturance that children need to thrive. The Family Science research on detention and separation is clear (see ncfr.org/news/separating-families-at-border). These experiences can lead to lifelong mental health problems such as anxiety and depression, intergenerational trauma, ambiguous loss, and familial rupture. NCFR is especially concerned about the youngest children being placed in facilities—infants and toddlers—who are the most vulnerable and in need of constant care and nurturance. Parents' health is also negatively affected by unjust separation, detainment, and threats of or actual deportation to unsafe places.

NCFR supports practical, humane, and dignified immigration policies that center on child and family well-being and uphold the human rights of families. We urge the administration to reunite separated children with their parents immediately to ensure their well-being. The administration should provide the mental and physical health care necessary to ameliorate children's exposures to trauma and suffering. We urge the administration to stop criminalizing families seeking asylum, and to develop alternative policies that keep families together while addressing their immigration claims and upholding their due process and human rights. Family separation and indefinite detention are not the answers.

—The NCFR Board of Directors

The National Council on Family Relations is the premier professional association for the multidisciplinary understanding of families. NCFR has a membership of nearly 3,000 family researchers, practitioners, and educators. For more information on the National Council on Family Relations or its scholarly publications, visit the NCFR website at ncfr.org.