

# Effects of deportation essay



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Life is a struggle for U. S. born children who have undocumented parents. The Immigration Law in America is undeniably broken and has emotionally impacted the lives of many Hispanic families, mostly the children. Since the Senate passed the Immigration Reform bill and sent it to the house, more than 75, 000 children have had one or both parents deported. According to an estimate by the Pew Hispanic Center, there is an estimate of 5. 5 million children with unauthorized parents, three-quarters are of U. S. born citizens.

Therefore, the U. S. born children are severely at risk of being separated from their undocumented parent(s). When a U. S. born child's undocumented parent(s) is deported, he/she is faced with many difficulties and is effected in a numerous of ways. U. S. born children struggle to survive after their parent(s) are deported. Because of the recent intensification of immigration enforcement in America, the children have been put at risk of being separated from their parent(s), economic hardships, and psychological trauma. The children of undocumented immigrants are just as vulnerable to the immigration enforcement.

When a parent who is the provider of the household gets deported, the entire family undergoes a traumatic shift, because they are left to struggle through economic hardships, and are impacted emotionally. A study released by the Center for American Progress (CAP) revealed a high number of fathers being deported which have led to many single- mothers households, many of whom that do not have a well-paid job and lack health care/public benefits due to the mother's status (" Falling Through the Cracks" 2012). Not only does this affect the families living situation, but it also affects the children because of the absence of the parent.

On some occasions, when a parent is deported, he/she has the decision of leaving or bringing the children with them, either option affects the children because of the living adjustments that they endure. When a child is deported along with his/her parent(s), he/she undergoes a drastic adjustment to a different culture, living environment, and school system (“ Falling through the Cracks” 2012). However, some of the children are rather unfortunate due to the fact that both parents can end up being deported or detained; they are left behind with other family members and are significantly impacted emotionally and socially.

Moreover, the family members who take in the children are left with the burden of economic hardships, because they hesitate to seek assistance from the state in fear of additional arrests of other family members. Randy Capps, along with Cataneda, Chuadry, and Santos explain the immediate impact of deportation on the children and families in their report *Paying The Price: The Impact of Immigration Raids on America’s Children: ICE’S* processing and detention procedures made it difficult to arrange care for children when parents were arrested.

Many arrestees signed voluntary departure papers and left the country before they could contact immigration lawyers and their families. Some single parents and other primary caregivers were released late on the same day as the raids, but others were held overnight for several days. Many of the arrested parents were afraid to divulge that had children because they believed that ICE would take their children into custody as well (2).

Undocumented immigrants in America live in fear of deportation, but their

children and families are the ones who truly suffer from the consequences when they are deported.

Deportation is not the only issue that undocumented parents have to worry about, because their children are also vulnerable to inadequate health care. Children of undocumented parents experience many difficulties such as living in poverty, having diminished access to food and health care, and limited educational opportunities. A majority of Immigrants “hesitate” to seek health insurance and other help beneficiaries because they fear that their legal status will draw authorities’ attention (Sherman and Matsi).

Legal status is a major factor of immigrant’s access to social services and jobs with benefits in the United States. According to census data, nearly 40 million people living in the U. S. who were born elsewhere, do not have health insurance (Sherman and Matsi). Cheryl O’Donnel, state director of Enroll, stated that “there is a lot of fear, particularly if the noncitizen is applying for a citizen child.” (Sherman and Matsi). This problem is more acute to the U. S. born children of immigrants.

U. S. born children of undocumented parents, who do not have health coverage, are more than likely to lack health coverage and other access to needed care; the children are twice as likely to go without insurance and access to medical care, which leaves them in poor health and poverty. More than half of unauthorized immigrants live in poverty, and among U. S. born children whose parents are unauthorized immigrants, 25 percent are uninsured (Passel and Cohn).

However, U. S. born children of undocumented parents are eligible to apply for Medicaid and The Child Health Insurance Program, but their parents are afraid to enroll their children because they are living in fear of deportation. Michael Gusmano explains why immigrants are afraid to seek health care for their children in his research *Access to Health Care for Undocumented Immigrants as a Family Health Issue: U. S. born children of undocumented immigrant parents are eligible for Health Insurance Programs, but their parents may not enroll their children in these programs.*

Some of this may be due to the fears that attempting to access these services for their children will result in deportation. Even if they do not fear immediate deportation, immigrant parents may fear that applying for public health insurance will make it impossible for them to obtain citizenship or legal status at a later date. In *Risks seen for Children of Illegal Immigrants*, Preston also states that undocumented parent's fears of deportation have "led to lower levels of enrollment of their American Children in public programs for which the children were legally eligible."

More than 5 million children in the United States are at risk of lower educational performance, and economic immobility because they are growing up in immigrant families (Preston). U. S. born children of undocumented parents lack health coverage and lose out on other beneficial beneficiary assistance because their parents fear that their legal status will result in detention or deportation. The children of undocumented parents are significantly affected by their parent's legal status.

Children are the most directly affected when an unauthorized parent is arrested, detained, or deported. The greatest impact on children was the emotional trauma that followed separation from one or both parents (“Paying the Price” 50). The impact has been severe for young U. S. born children whose undocumented parent(s) have been detained or deported. The separation from the parents can lead to a number of negative effects and behavioral outcomes for the children including, anxiety, fear, depression, anger, social isolation and lack of social belonging.

The children of undocumented immigrants are predominately young children, ranging from young children, and many are infants/toddlers. In 2005, more than a third (31 percent) were ages five and younger, and almost two-thirds (65 percent) were ages ten and younger (Capps). Due to the young age, child arrangements are likely to be critical in the aftermath of deportation. Researchers have found that the children often experience frequent crying, withdrawal, disrupted eating and sleeping patterns, anxiety and depression in the short-term (American Psychological Association Statement).

Randy Capps, along with other authors, state the longer term impact on children in *Paying The Price: The Impact of Immigration Raids on America’s Children*: During the time these parents were held, their children and other family members experienced significant hardship, including difficulty coping with the economic and psychological stress caused by the arrest and the uncertainty of not knowing when or if the arrested parent would be released (3).

Arrested immigrants often experienced long and difficult periods of detention and uncertainty about their future (44). After the arrest or disappearance of their parents, children experience feelings of abandonment and show symptoms of emotional trauma, “ psychological duress”, and mental health problems (Capps). Therefore, the length of the separation that the child has from his/her parent, can damage the child and can also have serious consequences.

Nina Rabin, an associate clinical professor of law at the University of Arizona, stated that the children being separated from their parents who are caught up in the immigration enforcement is a “ quiet slow-motion tragedy that unfolds every day. ” (“ Disappearing Parents” 2011) However, some children are less fortunate and are placed in foster care homes.

A recent report by the Applied Research Council estimates that at least 5, 100 children are currently in the U. S. foster care system and cannot be reunited with their parents due to a parent’s detention or deportation (“ A View from the Ground” 13). No child should have to experience losing his/her parent(s) or being placed in a foster care system. The fear that these children go through should not be experienced at any rate; a child losing his/her parent, is a child losing his/her only support system, and can impact his/her potential for future success. Life for a U. S. born child is very complicated when their parents are unauthorized immigrants.

These children live in constant fear of their parents being arrested/deported, and they also fear that they may never see their parent(s) again, or for a long time. The U. S. born children are the most vulnerable when their

parents are deported because they are faced with the separation of their parents, instability, economic hardships and dramatic changes in their lives. Not only do the children have to undergo severe adjustments when their parents are deported, but they are also emotionally impacted by the raids of the enforcement of immigration.

No child at such a young age should experience these kinds of issues to where they are left alone, or with other family members, to having to be deported along with their parents, or being placed in the Child Welfare System. Although the systems are designed to meet a child's basic needs, the system cannot replace the child's parent(s), who has been taken away from him/her, because of the serious impact it can have on the child. An undocumented immigrant should have the rights to his/her child just as any other parent in American does; it is vital for a child to have his/her parent(s) in his/her life.