



2025 Fall Impact Report

The Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights

Dear Young Center Champion,

There's no denying it: today's policies are weighing heavily on immigrant children, who are being forced to navigate an immigration system that, now more than ever, overlooks their best interests.

We are bearing witness to the pressure placed on immigrant children to give up — to abandon their pursuit of safety because of unlawful Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) raids on government shelters and the burden of restrictive regulations that prevent loving family members from sponsoring children into caring homes.

In response to these direct government attacks on children's most fundamental rights, the Young Center has stood alongside immigrant children time and again – from serving as “Next Friend” on a national class action lawsuit to prevent the unlawful deportation of Guatemalan children, to racing to government facilities in the middle of the night to prevent children being taken from shelters and boarded onto planes.

It is no exaggeration to say that new policies are being enacted with the intent of wearing down the power of our community. From significant delays in children's reunification with their families, to increased ICE raids and arrests leading to more family separations, these government actions are not about family reunification and certainly not about the safety and well-being of children.

Yet through all this fear, we hold on tightly to the power that our Child Advocates hold in their accompaniment of immigrant children: in the safe, restorative space that emerges between them in the hour each week where a child is encouraged to rest into just being a child. Through a Child Advocate's accompaniment, we hold their heaviness with them and give children a break from detention facilities' rigid schedules, and some relief from having to wonder which family member they'll be allowed to speak to that week.



His trauma is deep, and despite that, he is always in a good mood and loves being silly... We draw and color and play with action figures. We listen to music and talk about his likes and interests... He has started asking me how much more time we have left to stretch our time together. **Recently he told me that when he gets to his family, he's going to buy a cat and name it Katy like me.**

Volunteer Child Advocate Catherine Kutney on her first case with a 7 year-old unaccompanied immigrant child



Instead, as the sole organization accompanying children in shelters through the **Child Advocate Program**, we create a space where they can play board games, draw, and share their exciting visions of a future life – a space where they can dream. We build trusted, caring connections that bring children moments of joy and hope, one Child Advocate visit at a time, even in places where their freedom and choices are limited.

In addition to the Child Advocate Program, other programs at the Young Center have grown to ensure that we are not only at the child's side, in the very center of this storm, but that we are also hard at work to address the larger issues that seek to deprive immigrant children of their basic rights.

Policy Program

In partnership with a coalition of immigrant and children's rights organizations, the Young Center is launching the "Protect Immigrant Children" campaign to fight back against federal and state level attacks, while centering the wellbeing of immigrant children.

Our Policy Program has continued its steadfast advocacy in the fight against child labor exploitation by lobbying against policy changes and laws, such as the recently signed Reconciliation Law, that would make unaccompanied children more susceptible to exploitation. Additionally, we are advocating for measures that ensure children receive robust trafficking screenings, basic services, and legal information that is necessary to verify their safety and secure their opportunity to seek protection.

Litigation

174 Days

the average time an immigrant child now spends in detention – a **400% increase** since October 2024

We are already fighting back against this administration's harmful policies through the litigation team we expanded this year. Most recently, on August 31, the Young Center stood alongside the National Immigration Law Center (NILC) in a national class action lawsuit to defend 10 children slated to be taken from government shelters by ICE. As a "Next Friend" in court, we made sure their wishes to seek legal protections were heard and fought to stop their unlawful deportations.

We continue to grow our litigation capacity by increasing our legal research, combining litigation with our policy program, and collaborating with key partners in the field. Together, we are bringing forward strategies and plaintiffs to challenge policies that hinder children's access to safety, permanency, and connection to family.



Technical Assistance Program

Since the new administration took office, the Young Center's Technical Assistance Program (TAP) has responded to a deluge of incidents of family separation, impacting both undocumented children and U.S. citizen children in mixed-status families.

Increased raids by ICE have led to the abrupt detention of caregivers, leaving behind children – sometimes in the care of family and community – but other times, to care for themselves. At the same time, child welfare and other family support systems in communities largely lack the training required to effectively support family reunification, especially for families separated across international borders.

TAP staff have been hard at work in providing critical training, expertise, and consultations to help caseworkers, government officials, and other professionals reunify separated families, ensuring that the family's wishes are honored, and minimizing time spent away from one another.

Now, I know that restoring faith and hope for children is a tall order. And in doing so, we depend on a community that sustains us in this work: each other. As a loving, kind, and compassionate community, we recognize the power of connection and accompaniment. Even when we lose, we win – because when we walk with immigrant children, when we accompany them, when we bear witness to their journeys, we provide a powerful example of how we can show up for others.

Just as you have impacted the Young Center's work, as a community you also sustain space for the transformation of the children who we serve. We are beyond grateful for your determination to stand alongside immigrant children through this storm, together.

Thank you,



Gladis Molina Alt
Executive Director


P.S. We're stronger with you by our side. [Subscribe to our newsletter](#) to stay connected and informed on the challenges immigrant children are facing right now.

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Stand with immigrant children.

Every immigrant child deserves safety, family, and a future. Your gift helps ensure unaccompanied children facing deportation are not alone, their voices are heard, and their best interests are protected throughout immigration proceedings.

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