

PubMed

**Format:** Abstract

*J Child Fam Stud.* 2015 Nov 1;24(11):3213-3223. Epub 2015 Jan 18.

## The Distress of Citizen-Children with Detained and Deported Parents.

Zayas LH<sup>1</sup>, Aguilar-Gaxiola S<sup>2</sup>, Yoon H<sup>1</sup>, Rey GN<sup>3</sup>.

### Author information

### Abstract

In immigration enforcement, many undocumented immigrants with children are often detained and deported. But it is their US-born citizen-children that have been overlooked in immigration debates and enforcement policies and practices. Citizen-children are at risk for negative psychological outcomes when families are fractured and destabilized by arrest, detention, and deportation. The children risk being torn from their parents and, often, their undocumented siblings. To add to the small but growing empirical base on the effects of living under the threat of deportation and actual deportation of parents, we compared the psychological status of three groups of citizen-children: (1) a group living in Mexico with their deported parents; (2) a group in the US with parents affected by detention or deportation; and (3) a comparison group of citizen-children whose undocumented parents were not affected by detention or deportation. We compared children on self-report and parent-report measures of behavioral adjustment, depression, anxiety, and self-concept. Across the three groups we found elevated levels of distress, and differences between children who had experienced a parent's detention or deportation and those who had not. We discuss findings in the context of children's clinical needs, future research, and implications for immigration enforcement policy and practices.

**KEYWORDS:** Citizen-children; Deportation; Mental health; Mexico; Undocumented immigrants

PMID: [26640358](#) PMID: [PMC4667551](#) [Available on 2016-11-01] DOI: [10.1007/s10826-015-0124-8](#)

[PubMed]

---

## Grant Support



---

## PubMed Commons

[PubMed Commons home](#)

0 comments

[How to join PubMed Commons](#)