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## Trauma and Psychological Distress in Latino Citizen Children Following Parental Detention and Deportation.

Rojas-Flores L, Clements ML, Hwang Koo J, London J.

### Abstract

The mental health impact of parental detention and deportation on citizen children is a topic of increasing concern. Forced **parent-child separation** and parental loss are potentially traumatic events (PTEs) with adverse effects on children's mental health. This study examines posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms and psychological distress among 91 Latino U.S.-born children (ages 6 to 12), living in mixed-status families with a least 1 undocumented parent at risk for detention or deportation. Multiagent (child, parent, teacher, clinician) and standardized assessments were conducted at baseline to assess for child trauma and psychological distress. Analyses indicate that PTSD symptoms as reported by parent were significantly higher for children of detained and deported parents compared to citizen children whose parents were either legal permanent residents or undocumented without prior contact with immigration enforcement. Similarly, findings revealed differences in child internalizing problems associated with parental detention and deportation as reported by parent as well as differences in overall child functioning as reported by clinician. In addition, teachers reported higher externalizing for children with more exposure to PTEs. These findings lend support to a reconsideration and revision of immigration enforcement practices to take into consideration the best interest of Latino citizen children. Trauma-informed assessments and interventions are recommended for this special population. (PsycINFO Database Record

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