

Family Separation:

TWO YEARS LATER

May 2020

It has been two years since the Trump Administration's Zero Tolerance Policy issued on **May 7, 2018** that forcibly separated immigrant and refugee parents and children who arrived at the U.S. border seeking safety. Over 2,800 children were taken from their parents before the administration abandoned the policy more than a month later following broad public outcry. On June 26, 2018, a federal court ordered the government to halt separations, except in limited circumstances, and to reunify the families it had separated.

Since the first days of this crisis, KIND has worked tirelessly to protect children and address the far-reaching consequences of separations by:



Providing legal screenings and representation for separated children and parents



Facilitating reunifications between separated parents and children



Connecting children and families with trauma-informed social services



Advocating for safeguards to prevent harmful and unnecessary separations in the future.

KIND has assisted more than **1,100 individuals** impacted by family separation in the U.S. and Central America and continues to represent newly separated children held in Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) custody, and to challenge separations.

Children Separated Since the End of Zero Tolerance

While the Zero Tolerance Policy formally ended almost two years ago, family separations have continued because the government has broad discretion to separate children from parents with little oversight, with devastating impact.

In one case, a **6-year-old boy** was separated from his father for several months because Customs and Border Protection doubted their relationship. Unable to speak Spanish and understand questions asked, they were accused of fraud and sent to facilities thousands of miles apart. The government did not acknowledge the separation. After months of advocacy by KIND and our partners, and a DNA test that proved the relationship, the father and son were reunited.

4 MONTHS

The youngest forcibly separated child represented by a KIND attorney was just **4 months old** when he was taken from his mother and **6 months old** when he appeared with KIND in immigration court.

+5,400

Children Have Been Separated From Their Parents

2,814



1,556



1,150



+200

children separated as a result of the Zero Tolerance Policy.

children separated July 2017 - June 2018 before the Zero Tolerance Policy.

children separated since a court found family separation unconstitutional in June 2018 and issued an order to stop future separations with certain exceptions.

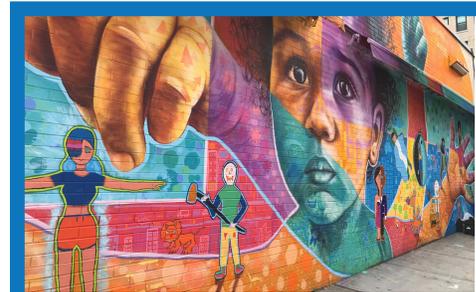
of these children are younger than 5 years old.

The majority of KIND child clients separated from a parent or legal guardian after the end of the Zero Tolerance Policy are under **5 years old**.

Together with coalition partners, KIND has helped to reunite **over 165 children** with parents who had been deported, and continues to identify and assist deported parents who are still seeking reunification with their children, including recently placing **17 parents** with attorneys to pursue claims to return to the U.S. to reunify and apply for asylum. Some have been separated for nearly three years.



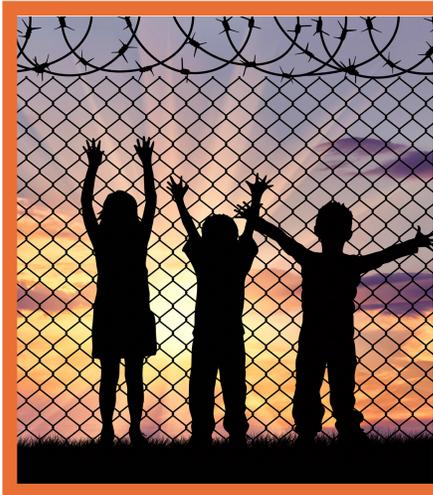
In June 2018, KIND met a mother at a shelter in Texas whose 6-year-old son had been taken from her. She did not know where he was or when she would see him again. After the June 2018 court order, they were reunified and released. KIND matched them pro bono attorneys from Venable LLP who helped them win their asylum case.



KIND partnered with Artolution to teach a separated child how to use art, movement, and technology for healing and self expression. The child contributed to a mural and an accompanying performance.

Migration Protection Protocols

KIND is working with an increasing number of children separated as a result of the Administration’s Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), under which the U.S. sends certain asylum seekers to Mexico for the duration of their immigration cases. Hundreds of children were forced to separate from their families and seek entry to the U.S. alone to request protection after a parent disappeared or because of threats and danger in the camps where they are waiting. KIND has served approximately **80 of these children**. Their average age is **just under 11 years old**.



KIND was recently referred the case of three young boys, ages 4 months, 9, and 14 years old who sought asylum at the U.S. border with their parents. The family was sent back to wait in Mexico under MPP. While waiting, their parents disappeared and the boys, desperate and alone, went again to the border.

After being apprehended and sent to an ORR shelter, the 4-month-old was found to have a severe heart condition that required emergency open-heart surgery. KIND worked with partners to find the baby’s parents in Mexico so they could be with him as he underwent surgery. The boys were released to a family member and have now been reunited with their parents.