

CAMPAIGN PRINCIPLE 7

Working together to create a humane immigration process for children

We must tackle the challenges of child migration with respect for differing perspectives, adherence to evidence-based solutions, an openness to innovative ideas, and a shared commitment to caring for all children.

Implementing humane, flexible, and creative solutions to establish an immigration process that best serves children is possible if we work together as a community.

Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) developed the Keeping Kids Safe Campaign based on over 15 years of experience working directly with unaccompanied and separated children in the United States, Mexico, Central America, Europe, and the United Kingdom. Over the years, we have built relationships with hundreds of pro bono attorneys, other legal professionals, and partners with different expertise and backgrounds, all of whom have asked how they can help to keep kids safe.



7

From this simple question came the idea to create a space where people from diverse backgrounds and experiences could share their beliefs, experience, and ideas to work together for children. We are building a movement to lift our voices above the divisive immigration debate to recognize that children are children first and deserve protection regardless of their immigration status. The Keeping Kids Safe Campaign is taking a multidisciplinary approach to gives everyone a chance to build a new system based on our collective desire to safeguard kids.

Virtually everyone agrees that the current immigration system no longer meets the country's needs, and rational discourse and thoughtful solutions have become more difficult to maintain. In this environment, focusing on children's immigration issues is a winning strategy. The Keeping Kids Safe Campaign has concrete practical solutions to reform the immigration system for children.

Creating a New Way Forward

With its nonpartisan approach, the Keeping Kids Safe Campaign places the focus on children's needs and interests, approaching the protection of unaccompanied and separated children as we would the protection of any other child in any other context. We take a multidisciplinary approach to child immigration that includes health and well-being, safety, and education.

We aim to build solutions that adopt best practices for child protection, bringing the immigration system into line with other disciplines and laws focused on keeping kids safe and ensuring their future success.

The campaign is grounded in child protection, challenging policymakers to ensure that our immigration system complies with child protection laws and standards domestically and globally.

Most Americans recognize the need to do more. Although immigration issues are often viewed as intractable, when you place the emphasis on keeping kids safe, the conversation becomes about child protection and pragmatic solutions. The Keeping Kids Safe Campaign offers everyone a place to come together to focus on children, engage in civil discourse, and promote practical solutions to deliver a better system for kids and for the country.

This campaign needs your support.

For more information or to get involved, visit: [supportkind/KeepingKidsSafe.org](https://supportkind.org)
email: KeepingKidsSafe@supportkind.org

What Changes Can Be Made?

Commonsense legislation and policies to improve how the United States receives, cares for, and supports children in search of protection start with these principles:

- 1. Unaccompanied immigrant** children are children first.
- 2. The global community** must work together to protect children.
- 3. U.S. immigration laws** and policies should recognize and address the unique needs of children.
- 4. Support for children** at every step of their migration is essential for children to achieve safety and succeed in life.
- 5. Federal, state, and local officials** have a responsibility to work cooperatively to protect the interests of all children, regardless of race, religion, nationality, or immigration status.
- 6. Reducing forced migration** of children requires addressing the root causes that drive children from their homes.

Keeping Kids Safe has lifted up the Immigration Court Efficiency and Children's Court Act as an example of the kind of commonsense legislation we support. The Immigration Court Efficiency and Children's Court Act is bipartisan, bicameral legislation that would establish a Children's Court within the Executive Office for Immigration Review (EOIR) focused on the adjudication of unaccompanied children's removal proceedings. The bill adopts trauma-informed and child-centered practices for working with children. The Court would increase fairness for children and help relieve strain on immigration courts. You can request that your elected officials in Congress endorse the bill here.

The Immigration Court Efficiency and Children's Court Act is just the beginning of our vision for transforming the immigration system for children. In the future we will apply these same principles to creating and supporting solutions that address forced migration; custody; care; legal options for safe migration; federal, state, and local initiatives addressing fundamental needs like health care, education, and housing; civic engagement; and citizenship. And because children are children first, many of these solutions have the potential to benefit all vulnerable children, regardless of their immigration status.