



## Family Unity, Family Health:

How Family-Focused Immigration Reform Will Mean Better Health for Children and Families



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National HIA Meeting  
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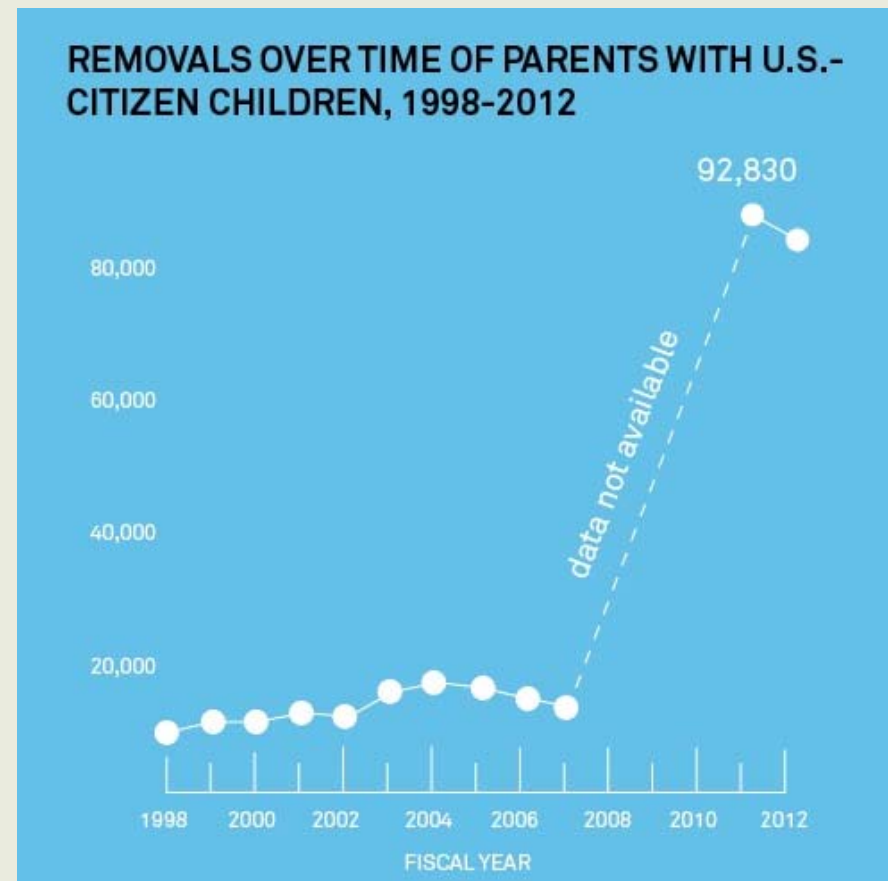
## Comprehensive Immigration Reform (CIR)

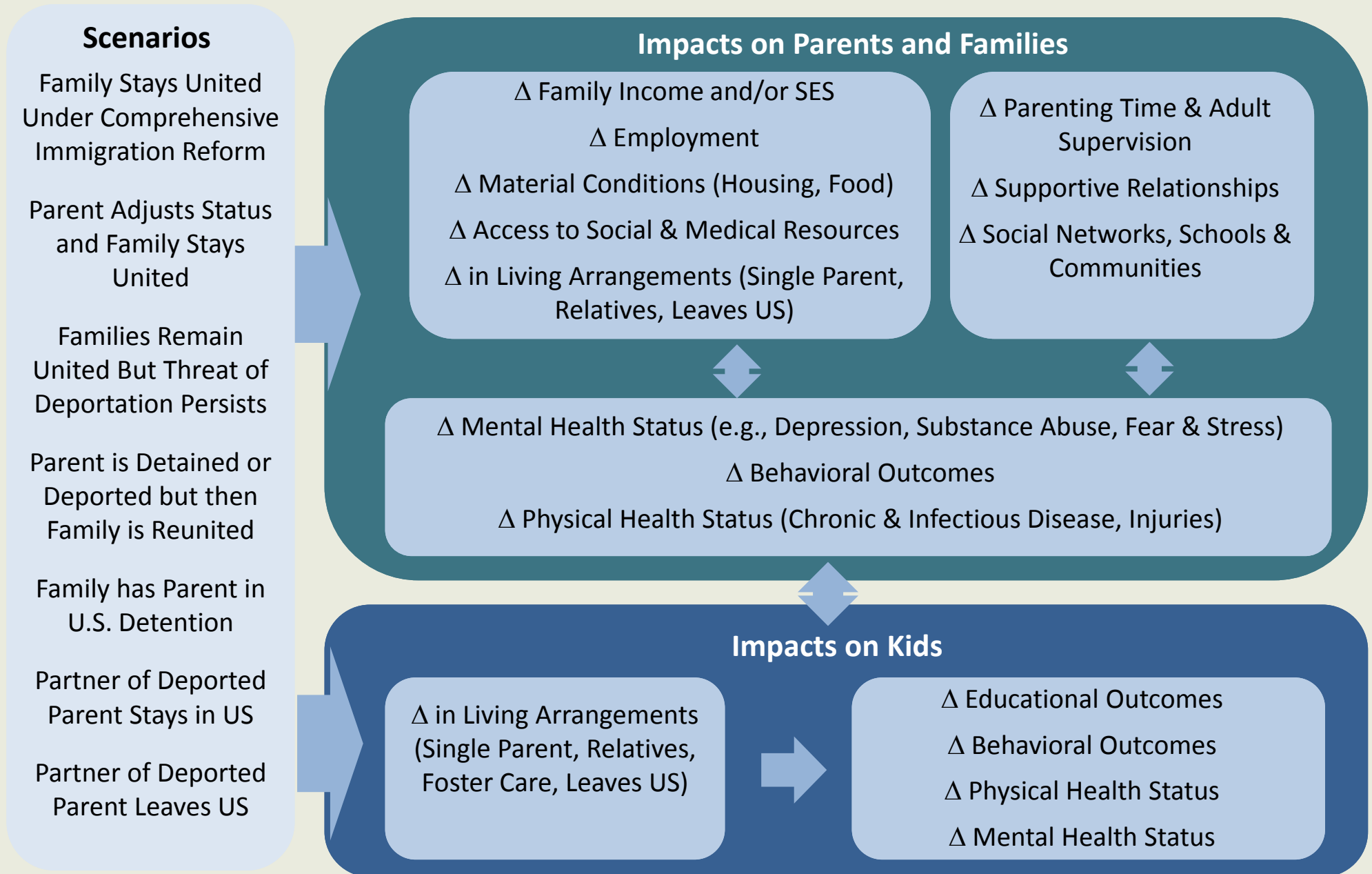
11 million undocumented residents in the US; detentions and deportations, including parents, at historic levels

After November 2012 election, federal immigration reform on the legislative agenda

Senate began negotiating a bill in early 2013; approved S.744, the The Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act, in June 2013

House of Representatives currently considering what, if anything, to do





Literature review (n=59)

Review of existing statistics and data

Convenience survey with parents and youth living in mixed-status families (n=533)

Focus groups (n=2)

Interviews with doctors or providers serving immigrant populations (n=3)

Quantitative predictions (n=7)

## Literature

“According to a 2010 study, almost half of Latino immigrant parents said the threat of deportation affected their child’s emotional and mental well-being. Other studies report that immigrant children – regardless of their legal status or their parents’ status – express fear that they may be separated from parents and families by immigration-related arrest.”



“One day, [my nieces and nephews] heard that [immigration officials] would start deporting people. And they started asking ‘How could this be?’ The youngest boy began to ask, ‘Are they going to deport us?’ I told them ‘No, no, no – they are only saying that on the news.’ And then they began to cry. They said, ‘No, they cannot leave us without you, without my mother and my aunt – without them.’”

– *Mateo, undocumented immigrant who dreams of going to college*

## Focus group

Fig. 2. Parents reporting that their child feels:



## Survey

# Child Behavioral Outcomes: Withdrawal

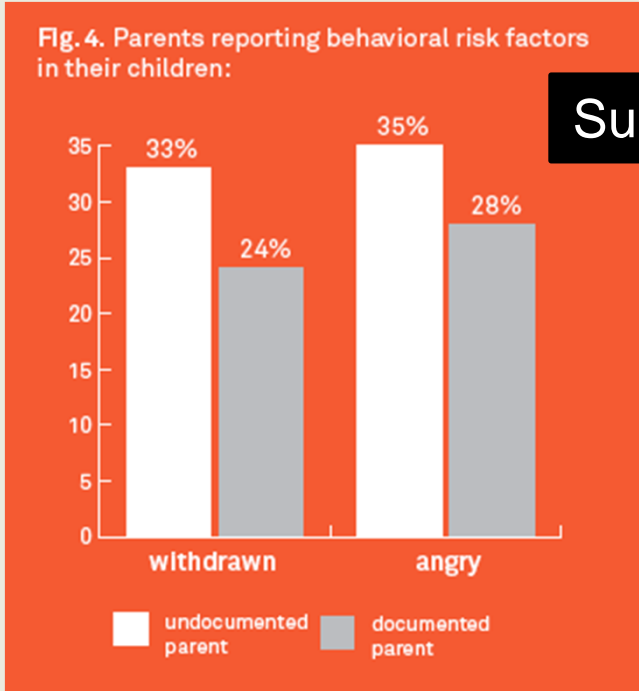
“More than two-thirds of children ages 12-17 in the Urban Institute study showed signs of withdrawal or detachment from others six months after their parent’s immigration-related arrest.”

Literature



“She is ‘gone’ for the reason that her father is gone. ... She was very happy, very attached to her father and now, she is not the same, no longer attached.” - Daniela

Focus group



Survey

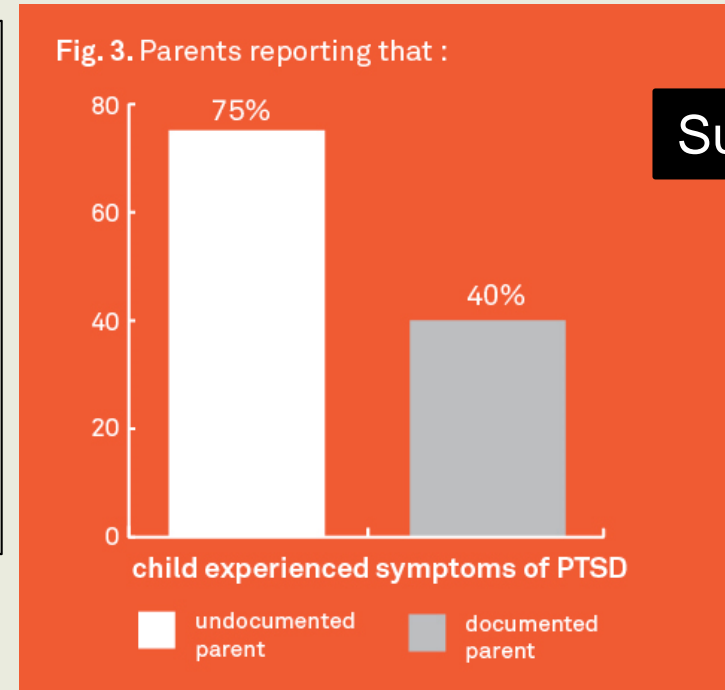
Prediction

**EXPLANATION:**

<b>88,517</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>2.10</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>82%</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>=</b>	<b>102,126</b>
Removals in FY2012 who reported at least 1 U.S.-citizen child		Average number of children in undocumented households		Estimated proportion of children to undocumented immigrants that are U.S.-born		Proportion of children who showed signs of withdrawal after deportation of parent, at 6 months after immigration-related arrest		Estimated number of U.S.-citizen children who will demonstrate signs of withdrawal annually, if deportations remain at FY2012 levels

Literature

“In a 2010 Urban Institute study of the aftermath of immigration-related arrests, psychologists found that there was a ‘pervasive sense of insecurity and anxiety,’ which led to mental health conditions such as separation anxiety, attachment disorder, and post-traumatic stress disorder.”



Survey



“Two years ago, Immigration [officials] came to look for someone in our house; someone who did not live [there]...it was very difficult impact that it caused for my children...my youngest son's performance in school suffered...[he became] fearful of everything, when somebody knocked on the door he would react in a very angry, nervous manner... he became constantly nervous, angry, he couldn't fall asleep, irritated...”

– Isabelle, undocumented mother of three sons

Focus group

**17. Because of my legal status, during the last 30 days MY CHILD experienced or mentioned the following:**  
(for a-d, check *None*, *Some*, or *A lot*)

	None	Some	A lot
a. Repeated memories, thoughts or images of a stressful experience			
b. Feeling very upset when something reminded him/her of a stressful experience			
c. Avoiding activities or situations because they remind him/her of the stressful experience			
d. Being "super alert" or watchful on guard			

Answers were coded (1, 2, 3), summed, and a cutoff score of 8 was used.

Lang AJ, Stein MB. An abbreviated PTSD checklist for use as a screening instrument in primary care. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*. 2005;43(5):585–594.



## Include in the CIR bill:

Path to citizenship; fair financial requirements; end mandatory detentions; waiver provisions recognizing importance of family unification; allow those in process to receive health insurance; allow judges discretion

## Reform Department of Homeland Security policies that target immigrant families:

End Secure Communities program; continue agency discretion in deportations; use secure alternatives to detention; continue to collect and release data

## Reform Department of Homeland Security policies to protect health and well-being of children:

Provide mechanism to preserve parent-child relations (e.g., phone calls to make childcare arrangements); coordinate programs so parents can fulfill child welfare requirements; training for DHS personnel to reduce trauma

## Pass policies to allow for reunification of children with parents or guardians who have been detained or deported

Worked with AC, designer, and communications consultants on:

Materials

Report

Executive Summary

Forward

Website

Photos and videos

Infographic

Press release

Toolkit for advocates

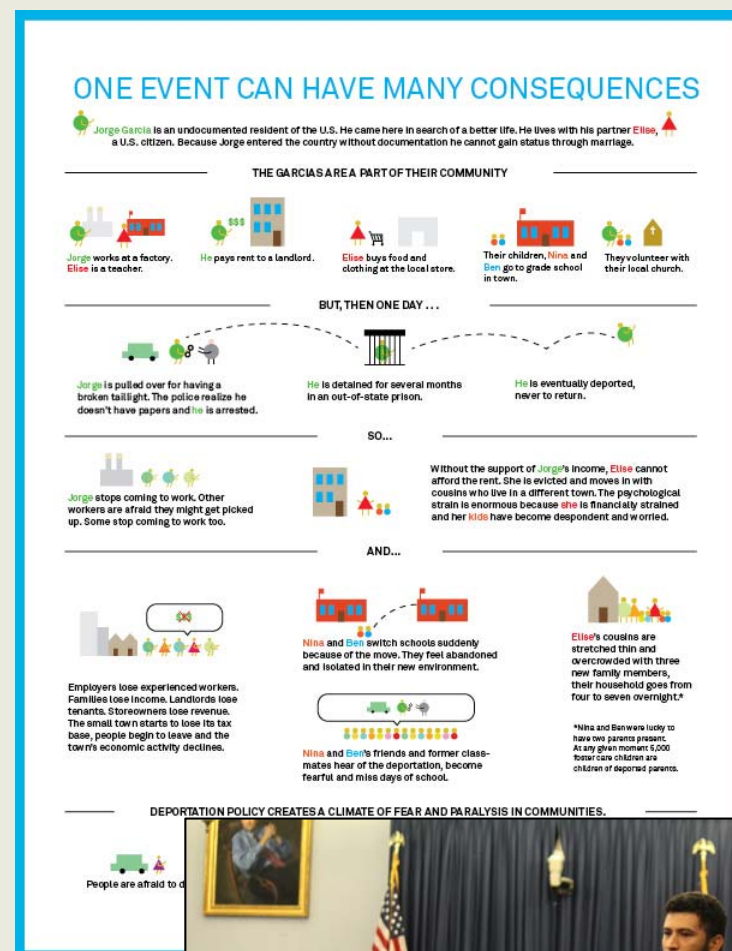
Events

National press call

Local press events (NYC, NE)

Legislative briefing on Capitol Hill

Call for advocates



## Press coverage

~16 unique tv and online news hits; about half in Spanish; still continuing to be referenced

## Use by advocates in 1-on-1 meetings with legislators

Focus on children resonates with some unmoved by other messages

## ICE “Parental Interest Directive”

Recent policy change to: regularly identify and review cases involving parents; ensure parents can participate in family court proceedings; enable detained parents to regularly see their children; train personnel on best practices for protecting children and family unity

## Stay of deportation for father who spoke at Capitol Hill briefing

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**Thank you!!!**