

Children's Defense Fund

Children's Rights

<https://www.childrensdefense.org/blog/children-need-a-welcome-not-endangerment-end-mpp-for-all/>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

Since 2019, at least 21,300 children seeking asylum in the United States have faced threats of violence and endured dangerous conditions as a result of the so-called Migrant Protection Protocols (MPP), according to a [February 2022 report](#) from Human Rights Watch. Under MPP, also referred to as the Remain in Mexico policy, the U.S. government forces asylum seekers to wait in Mexico while pursuing asylum in the United States. In tandem with [Title 42](#), which will be the subject of an upcoming blog, MPP violates U.S. asylum law and treaty obligations by pushing back asylum seekers who by definition are seeking protection to places where they face endangerment.

Children and families deserve better. They deserve a *welcome*.

For children, feeling a sense of belonging, a *welcome*, in their families, schools, and communities is an essential part of their mental and overall health. When children experience healthy development, they reach developmental and emotional milestones, which allow them to establish coping mechanisms to overcome adversity in childhood and beyond.

Instead of a welcome, MPP creates hardship, danger, and rejection. [MPP was initially implemented by the Trump Administration in 2019](#). Under the policy, non-Mexican migrants from the Western Hemisphere who arrive at the southern border and ask for asylum are given notices to appear in immigration court and pushed back to dangerous conditions in northern Mexico while they await their hearings. The policy has persisted under the Biden Administration, which expanded the program to include Haitian migrants. This expansion is the latest in a [long history of anti-Black immigration policies targeting and endangering Haitian migrants](#) seeking safety in the United States.

[The Supreme Court last month agreed](#) to consider whether the Biden administration can terminate the policy, and the Court may decide the case this summer. While the government waits to have its day in Court, it is not relieved of its obligation to protect children from harm, nor is it relieved of its duty to reduce the human cost of a program, as [37 lawmakers in the House and Senate wrote](#) in a letter to the White House in December 2021.

The U.S. government is legally and morally obligated to act in the [best interest of children](#) by preserving family unity and welcoming children seeking safety. Like belonging, family unity and safety are two critical qualities of relationships and environments that make a lasting difference for children as they grow and develop. For children like [Oscar](#), that opportunity was lost.

Threats against his father's life forced 6-year-old [Oscar](#) and his family to flee their quiet life in El Salvador. Upon arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border, Customs and Border Protection forcibly separated Oscar's family, deciding arbitrarily and without explanation only Oscar's mother and sibling could enter the United States. Oscar and his father were returned to Matamoros under MPP, where they were trapped for six months. There, again, the family was compelled to separate when reports of kidnappings of children at the camp prompted Oscar's father to send Oscar across the border alone. Oscar's story is one of many accounts of the dangers children face under MPP. You can read more powerful stories through [this amicus brief](#) filed by immigrant and children's rights organizations.

MPP endangers children's lives and undermines their opportunity to thrive by forcing them to suffer inhumane conditions and subjecting them to devastating harms. Children need and deserve better. Children need a *welcome*. The Biden Administration must end MPP now.

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