

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/publications/eight-ways-to-ease-the-child-detention-crisis>

Policy Issue Resources

Publication

More than a decade after the conditions in northern Central America led to increasing numbers of families and children arriving in the United States without their parents, the federal government has failed to build a humane system to ensure their welfare and safety. As a result, children as young as six are being detained in overcrowded U.S. Border Patrol stations and makeshift tent camps, going for days without being allowed outside to play or even shower. This cruel and inhumane treatment of vulnerable children must end. In this brief, the Vera Institute of Justice offers eight recommendations so policymakers can better center the interests of unaccompanied children and adhere to best practices for child welfare.

Urgent change is needed to ensure the safety and protection of vulnerable children who arrive in the United States. These recommendations can help build a system that is responsive to their needs and safeguard their humanity.

Many unaccompanied children face weeks or months in custody, even though most state child welfare agencies place children with kin within 48 hours.

The federal government should provide sufficient funding so that every child who is threatened with deportation has a lawyer trained in protecting the rights of vulnerable children.

To ensure that all unaccompanied children are treated with dignity and care, the federal government could organize special "released children" immigration court dockets equipped with child-friendly practices.

NEWS

PROJECT

SPECIAL REPORT (CHAPTERED)

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