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CASE Statement in Opposition to Trump Administration Maltreatment of Immigrant Children

The Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE) is the largest group of special education administrators in the country. Today, we join our colleagues at the American Psychiatric Association, the National Association of Social Workers, the National Association of School Psychologists, the American Association of School Administrators, the National Association of State Directors of Special Education, and the American Academy of Pediatrics in calling on the President and his administration to end the harmful and dangerous practices related to the separation of children from their asylum-seeking parents at the border. **CASE strongly condemns and seeks an end to these inhumane policies and practices** for the following reasons:

- The impact of the stress of migration felt by children is generally greater than the stress placed upon the adults in similar situations as children have fewer and less well-refined coping mechanisms than adults (Barowsky & McIntyre, 2010). Children with fewer coping mechanisms are at considerably higher risk for poor outcomes and limited success later in life.

- The long-lasting consequences of early traumatic stressors can manifest in the classroom in a variety of ways including identification for special education services (Berardi & Morton, 2017). No matter where these children are eventually educated, the costs associated with their education will be significantly increased due to these added stressors.

- Many of these children and adolescents are at risk for placement in the foster care system, overwhelming that already under-resourced system in the border states and beyond.

- The involuntary seclusion of children in cages where their exit is prevented is always inappropriate. Other evidence-based means to shelter children who may pose a danger to themselves or others should be used. That said, we do not believe, these children have demonstrated a danger to themselves or others.

- The current internment of children in the immigration cages violates the Council for Exceptional Children’s policy on **Physical Restraint and Seclusion**. Behavioral interventions for children and youth must promote the right of all children and youth to be treated with dignity. It is clear from the images and reports there is nothing dignifying about this situation.

Finally, we are strongly opposed to this practice as it runs counter to the values and beliefs of our organization, and, we believe, of this great country. This policy must be rescinded and the practice of separating children from their asylum seeking parents ended immediately.

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