

Immigration Enforcement Actions at Maryland Child Care Programs

A Guide for Providers and Families

On January 20, 2025, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security rescinded its policy restricting immigration enforcement actions at schools and other places where children gather, including child care facilities. This has caused uncertainty for child care providers and families alike, even if no such actions occur. Having a plan is the best way to protect the well-being of children, parents, and staff. Below are topics to consider when developing a plan to maintain a safe and welcoming environment for all children and families in Maryland, regardless of immigration status.

Creating a Safe Space

- Basic security protocols (e.g., locked doors, access codes, key fobs, staff at door) should be implemented to keep children safe and prevent unauthorized access to child care facilities.
- Staff members may only release a child to the child's parent or to another individual, if directed by the parent, whose identity is verified, or to Child Protective Services. A parent or guardian can update authorized individuals to pick up their child and emergency contact information using the [Office of Child Care Emergency form](#).
- Parents must have access to their child at any time during the child care facility's hours of operation, without appointment.
- Visitors must be accompanied by a staff member who has successfully cleared background checks whenever they are in the presence of a child.

Communicating with Families

- Child care programs should review and update their communication protocols to ensure messages can reach families in real time and trusted adults can be contacted as needed.
- Parents may wish to update their emergency contact information and list of individuals authorized to pick up their child in case the parent is detained or deported.
- In the event an immigration enforcement action occurs at or near a child care facility, parents should be notified when immigration agents arrive and depart.
- Child care programs should proactively inform parents of the steps being taken to protect their children and their private information.

Resources for Families

- In addition to identifying additional emergency contacts, parents/guardians can also identify a "standby guardian" to care for their child if they are detained or deported by completing this [Maryland Judiciary form](#) and providing a copy to schools, health care providers, child care providers, and family members.
- Families trying to locate someone who has already been detained may use the [Immigration and Customs Enforcement \(ICE\) detainee locator](#).
- Legal assistance is available from a variety of sources, including immigration lawyers in private practice, accredited representatives (non-attorneys who assist individuals in immigration proceedings), and legal-aid organizations:
 - o [The People's Law Library of Maryland](#)
 - o [Immigration Advocates Network](#)

- Several immigration organizations have prepared comprehensive guidance on preparing for and responding to immigration enforcement actions:
 - o [Michigan Immigration Rights Center: Preparing Your Family for Immigration Enforcement](#)
 - o [ACLU Know Your Rights: Immigrant Rights Scenarios](#)
 - o [Catholic Legal Immigration Network Rapid Response Toolkit](#)
 - o [USAHello 2025 Immigration Guide](#)
- Families also may wish to contact the consulate or embassy of their country of origin for further information.
- The [Immigrant Legal Resource Center's \(ILRC's\) Red Cards](#) offer tips for interacting with Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents and outline rights under the U.S. Constitution. Child care providers can share these cards with families, electronically or in print. Printable Red Cards are available in multiple languages.

Training for Program Staff

- Child care programs should identify which staff member(s) will be responsible for speaking with immigration agents and notifying others off-site (e.g., corporate, legal counsel).
- Staff members should ask immigration agents for their credentials and authorization to enter before permitting them access to a child care facility. Agents cannot enter non-public spaces without a warrant signed by a judge or exigent circumstances.
- Staff members should never physically interfere with an immigration agent but should strive to minimize the agent's encounters with children and parents.
- Focus on de-escalation and trauma-informed practices so that staff know how to respond and support children and families who may be impacted by immigration enforcement.