



CALIFORNIA **YOUTH** CONNECTION  
Our Voices, Our Future

July 2018

## California Youth Connection's Statement – Children Separation Crisis

Authored and Approved By: CYC Policy/Leg Committee, Statewide Membership Council Co-Chairs, Executive Director, Director of Statewide Policy (special thanks to Katarina Kabick for her contributions)

### STATE

1611 Telegraph Ave  
Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612  
P: 800.397.8236  
P: 415.442.5060  
F: 415.442.0720

Separating children from people who love them has long-term impacts on their overall well-being. This cruel punishment has a long history in the United States that continues in the modern day domestic child welfare system. The current visibility of the crisis at the Mexican/United States border where children are being isolated and detained in locked facilities has highlighted these oppressive policies. It has also mobilized large numbers of people to demand that we create a humanitarian approach to keeping families together.

### NORCAL

744 P Street  
MS 8-4-192  
Sacramento, CA 95814

California Youth Connection (CYC) is a youth-led organization that brings together current and former foster youth to transform the child welfare system. For 30 years, CYC has championed youth voice and choice to improve policy and practice. Some of our legislation has been aimed at keeping siblings together, and breaking the intergenerational cycle of out-of-home placements for parenting foster youth and their children. In 2018, CYC introduced the #FosterStability campaign, which focuses on the need to put the well-being of youth at the center of decision-making.

### CENTRAL

1625 E Shaw  
Suite 106  
Fresno, CA 93710

Having youth-centered processes within human services is not just relevant to foster care but also to immigration, mental health, and juvenile detention/probation systems. Our children and youth need us all to hold hope for their lives and future while providing them a stable, nurturing environment with the appropriate resources. There have been disturbing reports of the extreme experiences of children at the border, from being adopted without consideration of their existing family ties to being held in locked facilities, neglected and abused.

### SOCAL

3530 Wilshire Blvd  
Suite 411  
Los Angeles, CA 90070

At California Youth Connection, we demand an end to the detention and separation of families, in all youth-serving systems. It is time these short-sighted, inhumane practices end.

### PROJECTS

**y.o.u.t.h.**   
TRAINING PROJECT

We declare that all children and youth should be treated with dignity and love, regardless of where they are born.

From the plains of South Dakota where a Native child is 11 times more likely than a white peer to be removed, and the zip code in Long Beach where more children and youth have been removed from their families than are at home, to the southern border of this nation **families belong together.**

From the youth prisons of California to the immigration detention centers, **children never belong in cages.** Children and youth should be free to run and play and sleep and dream in the loving care of their families and communities that celebrate who they are and where they come from.



CALIFORNIA **YOUTH** CONNECTION  
Our Voices, Our Future

## STATE

1611 Telegraph Ave  
Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612  
P: 800.397.8236  
P: 415.442.5060  
F: 415.442.0720

## NORCAL

744 P Street  
MS 8-4-192  
Sacramento, CA 95814

## CENTRAL

1625 E Shaw  
Suite 106  
Fresno, CA 93710

## SOCAL

3530 Wilshire Blvd  
Suite 411  
Los Angeles, CA 90070

## PROJECTS

**y.o.u.t.h.**   
TRAINING PROJECT

For advocates and policy makers who are outraged by the highlighted crisis, we encourage you to examine child welfare and juvenile justice policies that impact children, youth, and families daily.

To respond to the crisis of youth being separated from their families, we recommend the following:

- Hire/delegate social workers who are sensitive to the needs of children removed through force, who are multi/bilingual, and who have access to advocates and attorneys so they can effectively keep the children connected to their families and communities.
- Keep siblings together by any means necessary.
- Recruit families who are multi/bilingual and understand the unique needs of nurturing children through trauma and the advocacy necessary for reuniting families across borders.
- Implement family finding efforts that are safe enough for relatives in the US and abroad to come forward, regardless of immigration status.

### Resources:

- <https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/politics/texas/article/Separate-d-children-are-sent-to-foster-homes-13016054.php>
- <https://theintercept.com/2018/07/01/separated-children-adoption-immigration/>
- <https://www.myrtlebeachonline.com/news/article213834519.html>
- [https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/opinion-drinan-juvenile-justice-us\\_5b2d5673e4b00295f15c6b0f](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/opinion-drinan-juvenile-justice-us_5b2d5673e4b00295f15c6b0f)
- [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2018/06/18/the-other-missing-children-scandal-thousands-of-lost-american-foster-kids/?noredirect=on&utm\\_term=.bcf72d682b95](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2018/06/18/the-other-missing-children-scandal-thousands-of-lost-american-foster-kids/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.bcf72d682b95)
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/22/us/family-separation-americans-prison-jail.html>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/06/27/opinion/nikki-haley-united-states-extreme-poverty.html>

