

HOW TO TALK TO A CHILD WORRIED ABOUT DEPORTATION

Children often worry when adults around them worry. News reports and adult discussions about deportation can cause children many worries because they do not understand concepts about the law and policy and they fear separation from their parents.

COMMON PROBLEMS SEEN IN CHILDREN DURING STRESSFUL TIMES ARE:

- Eating & sleeping changes (including nightmares)
- Crying
- Feeling afraid
- Anxiety
- Withdrawal (especially adolescents)
- Clinginess (especially young children)
- Feeling angry
- Aggressive behavior
- Regressive behaviors (displaying behaviors typical of younger children)
- Problems focusing in school

HOW PARENTS CAN HELP THEIR WORRIED CHILDREN:

- Have an open discussion at the child's level of understanding. Explain words such as DEPORTATION, IMMIGRANTS and ILLEGAL. (remember children are listening to others so it is best for them to get accurate information from their parents).
- Maintain usual routines (e.g. meal times, homework and bed times). Routines help children feel safe and secure.
- Send child to school regularly.
- Try to have adult discussions when the children are not around.
- Turn off news sources such as television and radio. These are usually at a level difficult for children to understand.
- Share with children family plans in case a parent is detained (e.g. who will pick up the child or where the child can go and who will be in charge of the child while parent is away)
- Do not lie or make promises that you are not sure you can keep.
- Assure the child that you are making plans for their safety.
- Take care of yourself. Children do better when their parents are healthy and calm.

PREPARATIONS THAT PARENT SHOULD MAKE BEFORE AN EMERGENCY:

- Prepare legal documents appointing a trusted adult to care for children in the event of removal or deportation.
- Maintain copies of your child's medical records. Give a copy to a trusted adult.
- Maintain a copy of your child's birth certificate, social security and passport(s). Give a copy to a trusted adult.
- Maintain documentation of any public benefits your child is receiving. Give a copy to a trusted adult.
- Maintain documentation of your child's school records. Give a copy to a trusted adult.

CENTER for CHILD STRESS & HEALTH
FLORIDA STATE UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

www.FSUSTRESS.org

FOR MORE HELP FOR YOUR CHILD OR YOURSELF:

Talk to your child's physician

Contact Florida State University Center for Child Stress & Health: (239) 658- 3123 or www.fsustress.org