

RIGHTS AND SERVICES FOR UNDOCUMENTED CHILDREN

The National PTA recognizes that the United States began as a country of immigrants and that the resulting blend of cultures enriches our nation. The National PTA also believes that all children residing in the United States, regardless of their immigration status, have the right of access to a quality public education, adequate food and shelter, and basic health care services.

The National PTA supports the following statements:

- The protection and preservation of public school attendance, student learning and well-being is of paramount import to the future and success of our country.
- It is in the national interest to ensure that all children, including undocumented children, have the opportunity to reach their full potential and become productive members of society. Access to a free public education is the most effective method of securing this opportunity, and should not be denied to any child.
- The Supreme Court of the United States concluded in *Plyler v. Doe (1982)* that undocumented school-aged children are entitled to have access to a high quality and free public K-12 education.
- Undocumented school-age children may also not be constructively denied a free education through coercion, illegal data collection, profiling or interference via threats of deportation. To allow such would be a foreclosure upon their future contributions to our society.
- Public schools are institutions of learning and are not collection points therefore public schools should not be placed in the position of determining the legal status of immigrant children nor be required to enforce immigration laws. Furthermore, school districts should not voluntarily report undocumented students to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) or other immigration authorities because such actions may constitute a denial of access to education under *Plyler*. The Immigration and Naturalization Service is the federal agency with jurisdiction over federal immigration policy and should bear full responsibility for enforcing that policy.
- Schools should be defined in statute as “sensitive locations” and Immigration and ICE officers and agents are to refrain from enforcement actions against students in schools including preschools, primary schools, secondary schools, colleges and universities, and other institutions of learning, such as vocational and trade schools.
- National PTA supports the confidentiality of school records, including records that pertain to the immigration status of children. Unrestrained access to school records to determine such status can pose a threat of unintended consequences due to any materials in a student’s file that may be inaccurate.

- National PTA supports the maintenance of official school records, electronic or otherwise, to the extent required by the state and school district for educational purposes only.
- The federal child nutrition programs, including school meals, offer all children-regardless of immigration status-an important benefit that fights hunger and enhances children’s physical, academic, and emotional growth.
- Federal, state, and local entities have a responsibility to contribute to the well-being of children by offering health care and other social services needed in their areas. Denying these services to children, regardless of their citizenship status, an endanger communities and create serious health and social concerns.

Adopted: by the 1996 Board of Directors

Amended: by the 2017 Board of Directors