

Trauma-Informed Approaches to Working with Immigrant Children

Presenters:

- **Giselle A. Hass, Psy.D., ABAP**
- **Jennifer Podkul**, Policy Director, Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)
- **Gail Pendleton**, Executive Director, ASISTA Immigration Assistance

Facilitator:

Jennifer Rose, Consultant, Futures Without Violence

Welcome to the Webinar

We will begin at 11:00am (PT) / 2:00pm (ET).

A recording and PDF version of the presentation slides will be available after the webinar.

Your line will be muted to cut down on background interference so please use the chat box to share your name, your organization, your location and any questions you have for our featured speakers.



DEFENDING CHILDHOOD

PROTECT HEAL THRIVE



- **US Department of Justice**
 - Office of the Attorney General
 - Office of Justice Programs
 - Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
 - Office for Victims of Crime
 - National Institute of Justice
 - Office on Violence Against Women
 - Office of Community Oriented Policing
 - Executive Office of US Attorneys
- **US Department of Health and Human Services**
- **US Department of Education**



- Prevent children's exposure to violence.
- Mitigate the negative effects experienced by children exposed to violence.
- Develop knowledge about and spread awareness of this issue.



- Research and Evaluation
- Direct Action in Communities
 - Comprehensive Demonstration Project
 - Safe Start Program (www.safestartcenter.org)
 - OVW Children Exposed to Violence grants
- Training and Technical Assistance
- Attorney General’s Task Force on Children Exposed to Violence (www.justice.gov/defendingchildhood/cev-rpt-full.pdf)
- Attorney General’s Task Force on American Indian and Alaska Native Children Exposed to Violence (https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/defendingchildhood/pages/attachments/2015/03/23/ending_violence_so_children_can_thrive.pdf)
- Action Partnerships with Professional Organizations

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Jennifer Podkul, Director of Policy, Kids in Need of Defense

Moderator: Gail Pendleton, Executive Director, ASISTA Immigration Assistance



Goals

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1. Understand how the history and nature of the trauma immigrant children have experienced may inform your work with them
2. Recognize additional barriers they may need to overcome to successfully access your help
3. Identify ways you can implement what you've learned in your work with immigrant children



Poll

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Do you already work with immigrant children?

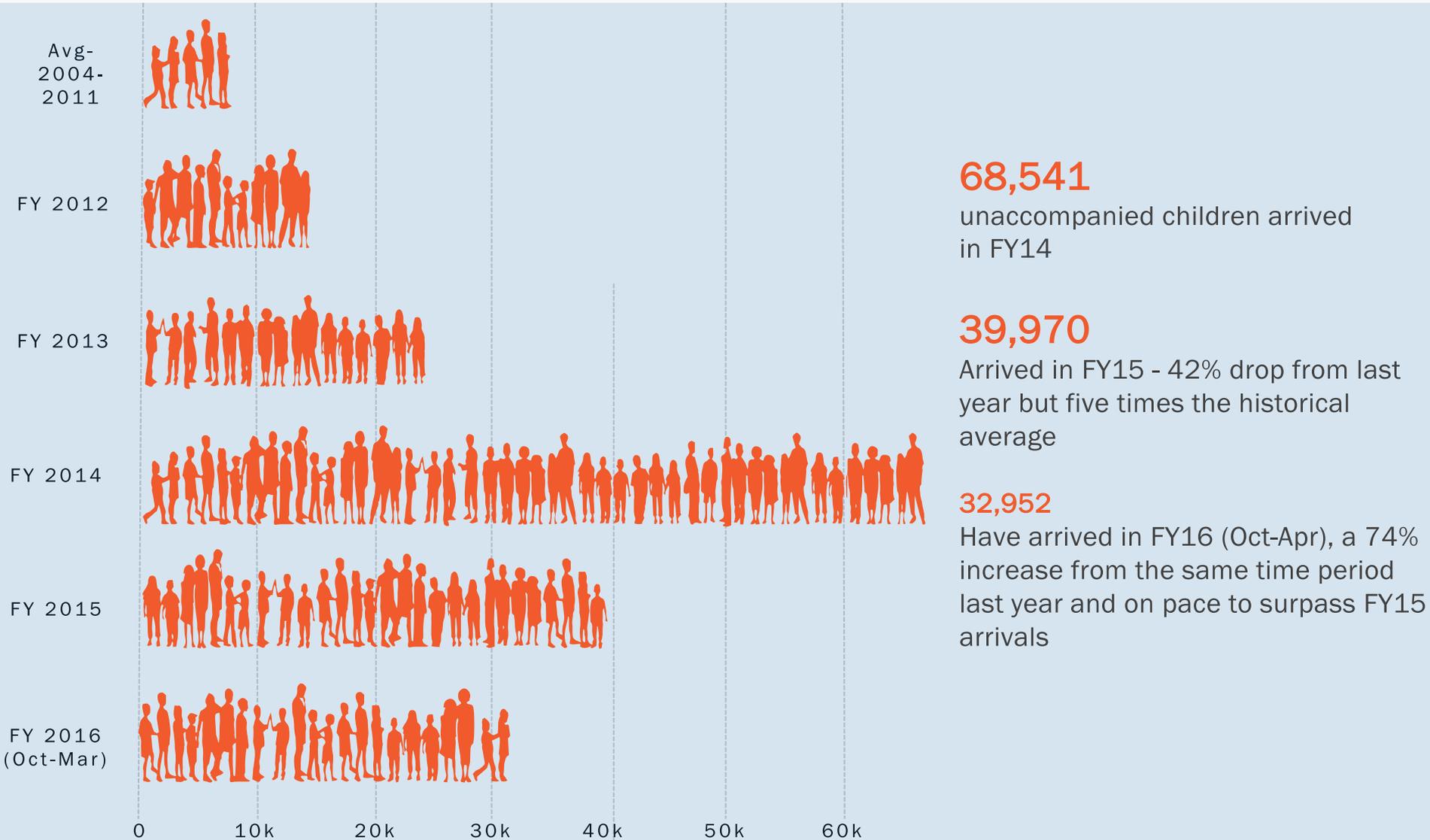
If yes, did they come by themselves?

With their mothers?

With other family members?



Child Migration Crisis



Children Escape from Direct and/or Indirect Violence

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Domestic & sexual violence

Gang violence & recruitment

Narco-trafficking cartels and other organized crime

Political violence and/or persecution

- Including being lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender

Gender violence

- Being female in a world that does not protect women and girls' rights



Fleeing Death, DV and Rape

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- Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador were three of the five most dangerous countries in the world in recent years
- Many women and children in family detention centers had experienced sexual or domestic violence in the homeland and/or on the journey



Also...

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- No adequate caretaker
- Stark poverty
- No future or job opportunities
- Poor or limited education



Trauma of Journey

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- The walk
- The train of death
- Being assaulted, drugged, kidnapped
- The physical exhaustion
- The mistreatment and abandonment by “coyotes”



Plus Separation

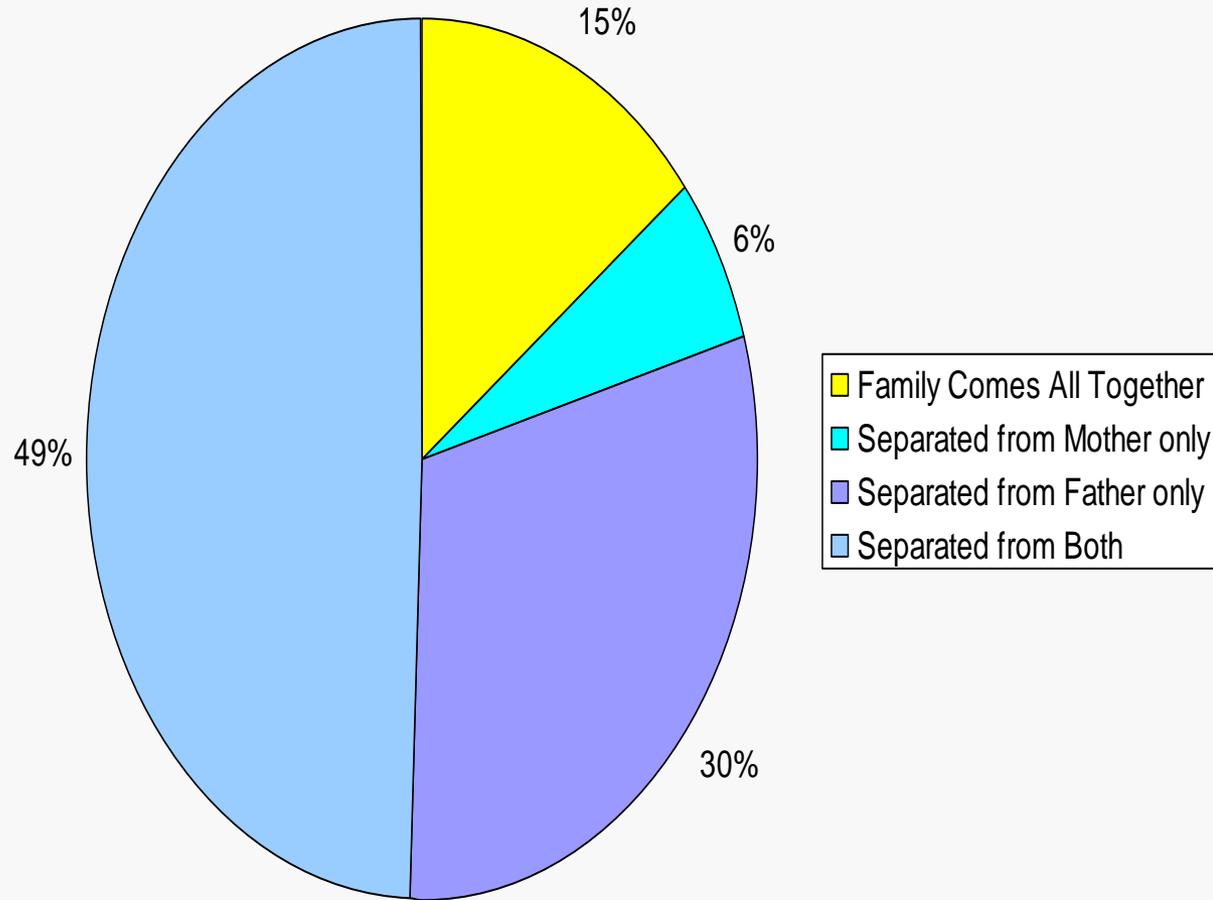
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- Children carry immense grief generated by the separation from their loved ones
- Often superimposed on earlier separation from parent



From Whom was Child Separated?

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Brought Involuntarily

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- Trafficking for forced labor, domestic work, work on construction sites and plantations
- Many children are trafficked for sexual exploitation
- Girls trafficked for forced labor and domestic work often end up sexually exploited by their employers



At the Border

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- Most cross into the United States through the U.S./Mexico border
- At the border, they may ask for asylum or protection but
- Many cross between ports of entry, usually in the desert
- Initially detained in border facilities then
- Sent to longer-term detention or custody



Once Detained

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- Placed in removal proceedings
- 50% have no one to represent them in deportation proceedings
- 90% of those without attorneys are deported
- With an attorney = 5 times more likely to be granted protection



Family Detention (Moms & Kids)

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- Not a child-friendly setting
- Security protections are lax
- Segregation overused
- Lack of culturally sensitive management of detainees
- Lack of appropriate mental health services



Unaccompanied Detention

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Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) facilities

Attempt to reunify with sponsor pending
deportation proceedings

- Parent, relative, other adult



POST RELEASE EXPERIENCE

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Older teenagers are seen as economic contributors

Sponsor homes are at greater risk of abuse

Family integration is very complicated and often dysfunctional

Mental health services are rarely accessed



What they Need

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- Medical attention
- Legal counsel
- School enrollment
- Referral to child protection services if in an unsafe placement



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

Self-actualization

morality,
creativity,
spontaneity,
problem solving,
lack of prejudice,
acceptance of facts

Esteem

self-esteem,
confidence, achievement,
respect of others, respect by others

Love/Belonging

friendship, family, sexual intimacy

Safety

security of body, of employment, of resources,
of morality, of the family, of health, of property

Physiological

breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, excretion



Guiding Values of Trauma-Informed Care

“Healing Happens in Relationship”



What can you do? Help...

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- Educate your systems
- Assure them you are there to help them, not get them deported or detained
- “Accompany” them on their journey through our systems
- Be patient and empathic and demonstrate warmth and respect
- Follow through with promises and provide explanations



For Instance

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- Connect children with needed services and support
- Find interpreters who can work with traumatized kids
- Find and work with lawyers to prove immigration cases
- Help them navigate child protection & civil court systems



When they have a lawyer

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- Deportation proceedings last several years
- Many (including moms) qualify for legal immigration status
- Many are working or attending schools.
- NO regular government oversight to ensure the child is safe in the home placement after release from government detention



Flagging for Possible Status

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- Did they come voluntarily, or were they kidnapped once in US?
- T visas for trafficking survivors
- Did they suffer domestic or sexual violence in the US (or other crimes)?
- U visas for victims of crimes



More Flagging for Possible Status

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Did they come alone?

Special Immigrant Juvenile Status
(SIJS)

Did they flee domestic or sexual violence or other forms of persecution in the homeland?

Asylum



Remember:

Effects of Trauma on Development

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Brain development and abilities may be developmentally delayed

- Memory difficulties
- Emotional & behavioral problems
 - Depression, violence/aggression, frustration
 - Guilt, isolation, anxiety, nightmares, paranoia
 - Lying, regressing, eating issues
 - PTSD



Herman's Stages of Recovery

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Stage 1: Safety

Stage 2: Remembrance & mourning

Stage 3: Reconnection

Stage 4: Commonality



VULNERABLE BUT NOT BROKEN

The story of Maritza

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Resilience

Migrant children have

- Hope
- Determination
- Self-reliance
- Positive attitude towards US



Questions?



For more information or to learn about volunteer opportunities:

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Immigration Option Help

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ASISTA Immigration Assistance = asistahelp.org

- OVW and STOP grantees for free
 - Other options if this doesn't apply to you
- General questions = questions@asistahelp.org
- Gail or Giselle follow-up = gail@asistahelp.org



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