

## Autism Society Resources and Guidance on Supporting the Autism Community Amid Immigration Concerns

As our community faces growing concerns surrounding immigration issues and the impact on undocumented families, we want to ensure that the Autism Society is well-equipped with the necessary resources and guidance to provide support during this challenging time. Here are some points for your consideration, based on feedback and ongoing efforts from our local affiliates:

### Key Resources for Undocumented Families:

1. **Red Cards & Know Your Rights:** Local partners and organizations have been distributing materials such as the "Red Card," which provides essential information about family rights during encounters with law enforcement or immigration authorities. Before sharing such materials, it's crucial to verify the accuracy of the information in collaboration with law enforcement and legal experts.
2. **Emergency Contact Information:** In light of the fear that some parents may be detained or deported, school districts are advising families to update emergency contact cards. This ensures that children are not placed into foster care in case of an unexpected separation. We encourage families to review this advice and update their contact information accordingly.
3. **Support for Spanish-Speaking Families:** Recognizing the heightened fear and anxiety in immigrant communities, many affiliates are moving support groups online, particularly for Spanish-speaking families. This approach helps alleviate concerns and provides a safe space for families to seek guidance. We recommend promoting online support networks and offering virtual workshops to address common concerns.
4. **Community & Legal Advocacy:** Various agencies, including local law enforcement and attorneys, are being consulted to provide guidance on navigating immigration-related issues. As local law enforcement practices vary (for example, some departments will not inquire about immigration status while others may support deportations), it's important to stay informed about local policies and share accurate information with families.
5. **Safety Protocols in Schools:** In response to the uncertainty surrounding deportation and ICE raids, some school districts have reinstated "safe school" policies to protect immigrant students. If you are aware of local policy changes, it's



vital to share them with families to reduce fear and ensure that their children are not placed in the foster care system if parents are detained.

**Action Steps and Considerations:**

- Review and adapt communication strategies to ensure families receive accurate, up-to-date information on immigration and their rights.
- Coordinate with legal professionals and local advocacy organizations to provide families with comprehensive resources.
- Ensure that any I&R (Information & Referral) services are conducted securely, particularly when collecting sensitive personal information related to immigration status. It may be helpful to adopt a code word or anonymous system to protect families' privacy and safety.

Please feel free to share any additional concerns or suggestions as we work together to provide the best support possible for our families.