



FAMILY PREPARATION IN CASE OF IMMIGRATION ENFORCEMENT: 7 STEPS PARENTS CAN TAKE NOW

Immigrant parents who have children under the age of 18 in New York can take steps now to prepare in case of immigration enforcement. Here are 7 things that you can do:

1. GET LEGAL ADVICE ABOUT YOUR IMMIGRATION STATUS

Everyone should get advice from a licensed attorney about their options to gain lawful immigration status or to become a full citizen. Catholic Migration Services provides free advice, and in some cases full representation, to residents of Brooklyn and Queens. Our services are available regardless of race, religion and national origin. Contact us at 718-236-3000 (Brooklyn) or 347-472-3500 (Queens) for an appointment.

2. ARRANGE FOR A CARETAKER FOR YOUR CHILD

Identify someone who can take care of your children, at least on a temporary basis, if you are arrested and put in custody by immigration officials. It is really important that your child gets picked up at their school or daycare provider, and that they have someone to shelter and feed them. If no one picks up your child, it is possible that the school or daycare provider will contact the NYC agency that investigates child neglect.

When selecting a caretaker, it is best to pick someone who lives close to you, and is:

- At least 18 years old, and preferably older than 21.
- Someone you trust, is capable of caring for children, and is willing to accept the responsibility.
- If possible, someone with lawful immigration status.
- Someone with a working cell phone who can be contacted in case of emergency, and who will be able to pick up your children from school on short notice if necessary. You should also memorize the caretaker's phone number.

3. GIVE INSTRUCTIONS TO THE CARETAKER

Provide the caretaker with **written** instructions about how they should care for your child, including the following information:

- Details about school and daycare arrangements, including how your child gets to school, and how they get home.
- Health issues, allergies, medicines, dietary issues and other special needs.
- The names and phone numbers for all health care providers.
- How the caretaker can contact you to get more instructions, or to find out if your child can come visit you.
- Contact information for other family members in case the caretaker cannot reach you.

4. GIVE THE CARETAKER LEGAL AUTHORITY TO MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL AND HEALTH MATTERS

You can take certain legal steps now to help your children in the event that you are arrested by immigration agents or deported. Catholic Migration Services can help you create legal documents that will enable a person you trust to do the following things on your behalf:

- Make sure that your children remain enrolled in school.
- Make sure someone can communicate with the school on your behalf.
- Take your children to the doctor for basic medical and dental care.

For more information, and free assistance to complete these simple legal documents, contact Catholic Migration Services' **Family Preparedness hotline: 646-597-8797**.

5. GIVE INSTRUCTIONS TO YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL

Give written instructions to your child's school and any childcare providers about who is authorized to pick up your children, and who can be contacted in case of an emergency. Your child's school may have forms you can fill out, so contact the school for more information.

6. GET TRAVEL DOCUMENTS FOR YOUR CHILDREN

If you are deported, your children will need passports to travel out of the country to visit you. In most cases, both the parents and children must go together, in person, to the government office that issues U.S. passports. It may be much more difficult to get the passports if neither parent is able to go with their child to the passport office. More information about the process for getting U.S. passports for children under age 16 is available at:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/under-16.html>. For children ages 16 and 17, information is available at: <https://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/passports/16-and-17.html>.

If your children are not U.S. citizens and do not have passports from their home country, you may need to speak with your Consulate to get assistance.

Also, keep in mind that airlines will not put children on flights leaving the United States without written authorization from both parents.

7. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOUR CHILDREN IF YOU ARE DEPORTED

Perhaps the most difficult decision that parents may have to face is whether their children will stay in the U.S. without them, or leave the U.S. to live together in their home country. If you intend for your children to remain in the U.S., you may need to arrange for another adult to become the legal guardian of your child. That requires approval from a court. You should talk to a lawyer to get more information about what steps you need to take if your children will be in the U.S. alone without either parent.

ABOUT CATHOLIC MIGRATION SERVICES

Catholic Migration Services, founded in 1971, is a non-profit organization associated with the Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn. With offices in Brooklyn and Queens, Catholic Migration Services provides free legal assistance in the areas of immigration, housing and employment. For more information, visit our website: www.catholicmigration.org.