



### **e-News from the MCWNN (MAY 23, 2011)**

The Migration and Child Welfare National Network (MCWNN) is a [FREE membership](#) coalition for individuals and agencies interested in the intersection of immigration and child welfare.

### **Resources for Child Welfare Agencies**

[Building Child Welfare Response to Child Trafficking](#) (Center for the Human Rights for Children/Loyola University of Chicago/International Organization for Adolescents, May 4, 2011). The handbook was developed to train and prepare child protection and child welfare organizations to identify and receive child trafficking victims. While the criminal justice system has been targeted nationwide for intensive training and capacity building in human trafficking investigations, child protection and child welfare agencies have been unprepared to receive these victims, resulting in a critical gap in the identification of victims and provision of services.

[Identifying Arabic-Language Materials for Children That Promote Tolerance and Critical Thinking](#) (by Gail L. Zellman, Jeffrey Martini, Michal Perlman, RAND). Building a society that supports and values the production, diffusion, and application of new knowledge and the expression of new ideas is critical for human development. This report is part of a broader effort to identify and disseminate materials whose messages encourage tolerance and support the development and use of critical thinking skills in the Arabic-speaking world. It focuses on identifying Arabic language materials targeted to children ages 4-14.

[New Toolkit Sheds Light on Lesser Known Immigration Remedies](#) (Penn State Law's Center for Immigrants' Rights, May 17, 2011). Developed to help immigration judges, lawyers, public officials, and nonprofit groups navigate what has become a last-resort option for those facing deportation, [the toolkit](#) includes the following: 1) "Best Practices" from attorneys around the country; 2) summary of the laws and procedures governing deferred action and private bills; 3) sample letters of support, exhibit lists and legal briefs; and 4) a resource page.

### **Policy and Research**

[State Bills on Access to Education for Immigrants 2011](#) (National Immigration Law Center, May 13, 2011, 10 pages).

[Unaccompanied Immigrant Children: A Growing Phenomenon with Few Easy Solutions](#) (Featured Story - Migration Policy Institute, January 2011). Children under the age of 18 traveling without their parents or an adult guardian have always been a part of global migration flows. Within the past decade or so, however, their numbers have grown.

[“Keeping the Promise”](#) (Evan B. Donaldson, Oct 2010, 99 pages). Report outlines the needs of families that adopt both from the foster care system and internationally. While the report highlights the fact that most families do well, there is a significant percentage of families that struggle with adjustment, mental health and other challenges. Generally, families need counseling services, greater access to trained medical and mental health professionals and various other resource and referral services.

[Secretary Napolitano Announces the Extension of Temporary Protected Status for Haiti Beneficiaries](#) (Press Release from the Department of Homeland Security, May 17, 2011).

[HHS Holds National Teen Pregnancy Prevention Month Event](#) (American Humane Association, Insider on the Hill Newsletter, May 16, 2011). The U.S. has improved its teen pregnancy rates since 1991 but U.S. rates are still far worse than other industrialized countries, are higher in certain demographic groups and geographic areas. Hispanic teenagers and non-Hispanic black teenagers are experiencing higher rates, as well as the higher pregnancy rates for teens in foster care.

[Plugged In: Positive Development Strategies for Disconnected Latino Youth](#) (National Council of La Raza, 2011). 28% of Latino students ages 16-24 permanently drop out of public high school. This report describes the problems facing disconnected Latino youth and describe the successes and challenges of the Latino-serving, community-based youth workforce development program developed by the NCLR Escalera Program.

[Improving the Wyden Bill – Proactive Protection of Vulnerable Youth](#) (International Organization for Adolescent, March 22, 2011). On March 16, Senators Ron Wyden (D-Oregon) and John Cornyn (R-Texas) reintroduced the Domestic Minor Sex Trafficking and Victims Support Act (S.596), a bill which would provide funding for law enforcement training and for services for victims. The proposed legislation is the 2011 version of a bill that passed both houses of Congress with strong bipartisan support in December 2010, but did not become law because it was not passed in time to reconcile differences in the House and Senate versions before the end of the 111th Congress. As the actress [Mira Sorvino](#) pointed out in a speech that she gave in support of the bill, the bill recognizes that minors involved in commercial sexual exploitation are, by definition, victims of trafficking, not criminals.

[Deprivation and Neglect Found to Age Children’s Chromosomes](#) (PR News Wire, May 17, 2011). A new study, led by researchers at Children's Hospital Boston and Tulane University, shows that early adversity even affects children's chromosomes – prematurely shortening the chromosome tips, known as telomeres, and hastening how quickly their cells "age."

[The Seventh Annual Adoption Conference](#) (New York Law School – Volume 55/No 3, 2010-2011). Includes articles on trends and research regarding international adoption written by Elizabeth Bartholet, Paulo Barrazo, Richard Carlson, Whitney A. Reitz, Diane B. Kunz, and many others).

## **News and Opinions**

[Immigration system splits families](#) (San Antonio Express-News, May 19, 2011). Viewed in a certain context, the disruptions that 4-year-old Emily Ruiz suffered when she was unwittingly caught up in an immigration debacle were tame compared to the treatment of many other families with mixed immigration status. In an article to be published in the Connecticut Law Review this fall, author Nina Rabin, director of border research at the University of Arizona Southwest Institute for Research on

Women, chronicles what she describes as the “quiet, slow-motion tragedies (that) unfold every day in immigration detention centers throughout the country.

[Local Victory for Undocumented Minor Immigrants](#) (New America Media, May 19, 2011). After years of advocacy, SF Mayor institutes new policy to grant due process for undocumented immigrant youth caught up in the juvenile justice system.

[The U.S. needs to protect children at the border](#) (The Hill, May 18, 2011). The U.S. border with Mexico is often a dangerous place, particularly unaccompanied Mexican children. Congress addressed the plight of these children in 2008, when it passed the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection and Reauthorization Act (TVPRA). Unfortunately, despite Congress’s best intentions, the revolving door at the border has not stopped. Unaccompanied Mexican children are quickly returned to Mexico without any substantial review of their claims to protection in the U.S., without regard to the harms that may befall them – including exploitation by criminal gangs and drug cartels.

[Reflections on the Special Humanitarian Parole Program for Haitian Orphans](#) (By Whitney A. Reiz, New York Law School, 2011). ABOUT THE AUTHOR: The opinions in this article are the personal opinions of the author and not those of the U.S. government, the Department of Homeland Security, or the U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services (USCIS). Whitney Reitz has worked on immigration issues at the U.S. Department of State and the USCIS for nineteen years. She currently serves in the USCIS International Operations Division as the Branch Chief for Programs.

[Saving Face Can’t Make API Women Safe](#) (New America Media, May 2011). A growing number of Asian and Pacific Islander women are living with HIV/AIDS in the United States.

[Miami child removal rates lowest in state](#) (Associated Press, May 16, 2011). Miami-Dade County has the lowest rate of calls to the state's child abuse hotline among Florida's large counties and some experts say it's because its largest ethnic groups fear calling the hotline or any government authority will only worsen the situation.

[Arizona State University’s 2011 Valedictorian is Undocumented](#) (Fox Phoenix, May 16, 2011).

On this Arizona State University graduation day, Angelica Hernandez should be reflecting on her accomplishments and her future career prospects. Instead, she worries about being deported and not being able to get a job. Just Wednesday Democrats in Washington re-introduced the Dream Act, and said they are open to having the bill paired with other immigration enforcement measures.

[Uniting Our Voices for Immigrant Children of Incarcerated Parents](#) (by Yali Lincroft, First Focus blog, May 10, 2011)

Immigrant advocates often use phrases such as “innocent” or “they are not criminals” when they are defending immigrant detainees. However, these statements are actually problematic since they fracture solidarities between marginalized populations and create frictions between immigrants and laborers, prisoners, and other native residents. As any experienced public defender can share, there are many individuals in jail and prison whose principal offense is associated with poverty, mental health, domestic violence, or substance abuse. For example, research indicates that the increasing rate of female incarceration, which has led to more children entering the foster care system, are not due to increases in offenders but rather legislation requiring mandatory minimum sentencing for drug-related and non-violent crime offenses. Rather than challenging the status quo of the criminal justice system, the

rhetoric of the “innocent immigrant” undervalues and ignores the injustice of the U.S. incarceration system which systematically punishes and separates parents from their children (with mandatory minimum sentencing for relative minor crimes) and often disregards due process.

In the past two decades, state general fund spending on corrections has increased by more than 300%. Given gaping budget shortfalls, communities are struggling to preserve core services like education, fire protection and park services. There has been a dramatic shift in the political landscape from the previous “tough-on” crime era with even conservative politicians pushing for reform to reduce bloated corrections budgets. And, in this climate where the private corrections industry faces a decline in revenue and political popularity, immigration enforcement represents a profitable and largely unexamined growth area. Fiscal Year 2010 had the highest number of deportation in U.S. history primarily due to increased enforcement due to an expansion of Department of Homeland Security (DHS) enforcement programs which use fingerprints to identify immigrants in prisons and jails. In 2009, approximately 40% of Corrections Corporations of America’s \$1.7 billion revenue was generated by immigration detention.

“For those of us who have worked with families of the incarcerated, our challenges facing children of detained immigrant parents are all too familiar and heart-breaking – reducing child trauma at the time of arrest, improving contact and visitation between parent and child, providing supportive services for family members carrying for children left behind,” says Angie Vachio, co-founder of PB&J Family Services, a program serving children of incarcerated parents in New Mexico. “As children’s advocates, we believe that children of prisoners – whether they are in jail, prison, or detention facilities – need a safe place to live and people to care for them in their parents’ absence,” says Dee Ann Newell, Executive Director for Arkansas Voices for Children Left Behind. “These issues aren’t just limited to a border state like New Mexico – even in the jails of Arkansas, there have been many cases involving an immigrant parent with deportation/child care custody issues.” Correctional reforms involving U.S. citizen incarcerated parents (such as anti-shackling of pregnant women, mandatory phone calls by caregiver parents at the time of arrest, parenting programs inside prisons) have not been implemented by DHS despite the obvious similarity of issues.

**Most of the children with a detained and deported immigrant parent are U.S. citizens. As new Census data reveals, in states like California and New Mexico, over 50 percent of children under 18 are Latino or of immigrant descent. These children are our future and how we treat them - and their parents - will profoundly influence how these children grow up.**

Our goal should be consistency in our message and commitment to the principles for supporting the rights of all children of incarcerated parents - regardless of immigration status.

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