

# CENTER ON IMMIGRATION & CHILD WELFARE INITIATIVE

## 2025 YEAR-IN-REVIEW



THE CENTER ON  
IMMIGRATION  
AND CHILD WELFARE  
INITIATIVE

### REFLECTING ON OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS & COLLABORATIVE PARTNERSHIPS

We are pleased to share highlights from the Center on Immigration and Child Welfare Initiative's (CICW) work throughout 2025. With the generous support of [Casey Family Programs](#), we have advanced our mission to protect and support immigrant children and families at the intersection of child welfare and immigration systems.



### COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & PARTNERSHIPS



Throughout 2025, the CICW team strengthened connections across the immigration and child welfare landscape.

- **March 2025:** The CICW participated in the [Uniting to Meet the Moment: Cross-Coalition Convening](#) in Washington, D.C., bringing together leaders working to protect children in immigrant families.
- **April 2025:** The CICW hosted Dr. Luis Zayas at UC Berkeley's School of Social Welfare for a [presentation](#) on the psychological impact of migration and immigration enforcement on families.
- **November 2025:** Director Dr. Kristina Lovato facilitated a panel at the [California County Immigration & Child Welfare Convening](#) in Sacramento, where county leaders shared strategies for advancing culturally responsive services statewide.

### RESEARCH INITIATIVES

The CICW expanded our research efforts in 2025. Dr. Lovato continued her [study examining the mental health and service needs of unaccompanied transitional age youth](#) (18–24 years old) navigating the precarious transition to undocumented adulthood, with publications forthcoming. She was awarded the Emerging Poverty Scholars Fellowship at the University of Wisconsin, Madison (2024–2026) to expand this work.



In January 2025, Dr. Kristina Lovato presented research at the Society for Social Work and Research annual conference in Seattle, WA, including presentations on “Building the Capacity of Social Service Systems to Serve Unaccompanied Immigrant Transitional Age Youth (TAY) during the Precarious Transition to Adulthood” and “Illegality & Immigration Policy in the Wake of the 2024 Election: Impacts to Immigrant Communities and Finding a Path Forward.”

In September, the CICW received funding from the Walter S. Johnson Foundation for a two-year initiative called “[Empowering Child Welfare Practice at the Intersections of Immigration and Child Wellbeing](#).” We will partner with practitioners, legal providers, and immigrant families to conduct a statewide needs assessment, deliver trauma-informed trainings for 225 child welfare professionals, and produce actionable practice briefs across California.

## PUBLICATIONS & RESOURCES

The CICW published three peer-reviewed articles in 2025, including:

- [Under surveillance: Immigrant children and families caught between public child welfare and immigration enforcement systems.](#)
- [Understanding the Needs of Immigrant Families Who Are Involved in the Public Child Welfare System: A Case for Transformation](#)
- [Understanding the needs of unaccompanied immigrant children separated from their parents under Zero Tolerance Policy in the U.S: A Systematic literature review.](#)

In August, we released "[The 2025 ICE Detained Parents Directive: Practice Advisory](#)," a collaborative effort providing recommendations for child welfare practitioners to advocate for immigrant families.

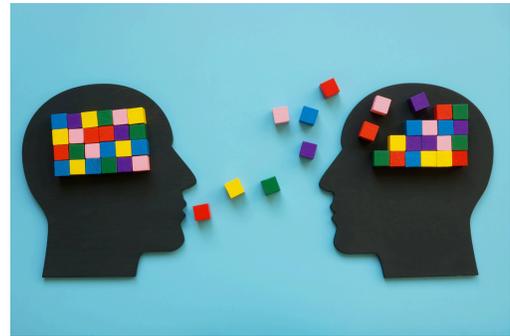
Our monthly [e-newsletter](#) now reaches over 1,000 subscribers, and we continue expanding our online resource repository. We're also developing a brief on supporting immigrant kinship caregivers, scheduled for early 2026 publication.

## PROFESSIONAL NETWORKS

- **Practice Network:** We convened quarterly meetings featuring policy updates from the Young Center for Immigrant Children's Rights, the ABA Center on Children and the Law, and Kids in Need of Defense, along with guest presentations from experts in the child welfare and immigration fields on actionable resources and promising practices.



- **Research Workgroup:** Members collaborated on a [policy brief](#), "The Trump Administration's First 100 Days of Immigration Policy: Impacts to Immigrant Children and Families," examining the Trump administration's first 100 days, and submitted multiple presentations for the 2026 Society for Social Work and Research conference, including a symposium on community healing and a workshop on research ethics with immigrant populations.



- **Legal Network:** Our network of attorneys, judges, and court administrators met regularly throughout the year to share best practices for working with immigrant families in child welfare proceedings.
- **Emerging Scholars:** The CICW launched a new network for doctoral students conducting research at the intersection of child welfare and immigration to provide opportunities for collaboration, mentorship, and professional development.

## LOOKING AHEAD

As we navigate the challenges facing immigrant communities, the CICW remains committed to collaborative efforts that protect immigrant children and families. We stand in solidarity with advocates, partners, and communities who share this vital work, resolved to create a future where all children thrive.

Thank you for your continued support.

With Gratitude,

Kristina Lovato & Sophia Sepp

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