

HAVING KIDS™

Child-first Advocacy

HavingKids.org

info@havingkids.org

Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein
Office of the United Nations
High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
Palais Wilson
52 rue des Pâquis
CH-1201 Geneva, Switzerland

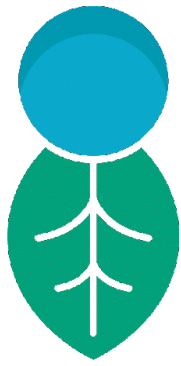
June 21, 2018

Dear High Commissioner Al Hussein:

We write to thank you for your comments this week in front of the U.N.'s Human Rights Council condemning the Trump administration's policy of forcibly separating migrant children from their parents as unconscionable and government-sanctioned child abuse. Having Kids, as well as numerous other groups and individuals in the United States, have been equally appalled at this and other policy decisions of the Trump administration that target children, particularly those children already struggling for a fair start in life.

Even though President Trump recently issued an order reversing his administration's barbaric policy, the spate of children in crisis highlights a much broader issue that Trump's reversal will not fix. This is but one extreme example of hardship faced by children all over the world as a result of our adherence to the archaic parent-first family planning model. That model prioritizes parental choice over the needs of future children, and ignores the obligations of communities to ensure all children a fair start in life. We have been, for far too long, putting a band-aid on child welfare issues because we don't want to address the underlying issue of family planning. Addressing the Trump policy will do nothing to solve the problem of 20% of children across the globe living in poverty and millions of children suffering abuse and neglect each year.

There is a bigger border at issue here. There is the border of family planning, the one across which children enter this world. That is the border that matters for long-term outcomes – for children, for the community, and for the environment we share. After children cross the border into our world there is no great solution, just the cobbling together of efforts to minimize harms. Children in need do not fall from the sky, and we are all accountable for the foreseeable and preventable harms that result from poor family planning.



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Would there be headline stories about these kids suffering in their home countries if they had stayed? No. Would there be similar stories about these kids suffering, homeless and roving, in the United States if they were admitted? No. We focus on sensational moments. But until we give up our unrestrained authority over future generations and start ensuring every child a fair start in life, until we go to a child-first and Fair Start family planning model, children will continue to suffer.

In the wake of one of the worst moments for children in recent history, the Human Rights Commission has the opportunity to make meaningful change for children and future generations in the long term. Having Kids urges the HRC to adopt Fair Start modeling and encourage a child-first approach to family planning. Without this shift, we only stand to see more disparity between children in need and those born into a life of privilege.

There are critics of this approach. But those who will say we are blaming parents are simply demonstrating the inability to see from the child-first perspective. It's not about the parents, but squarely about the rights of children to be born into a more equitable world. Better family planning is the long-term and universal solution.

Now is the time to take a bold step forward towards creating a better world for future children through the adoption of a child-first and Fair Start family planning model. Now is the time to prioritize the needs of future children and promote the universal value of smaller, more sustainable, and truly equitable families. Please take the lead in getting ahead of the problem.

Sincerely,

Anne Green

Executive Director
Having Kids

Having Kids is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization dedicated to reforming family planning by replacing parent-centered family planning models with the human rights-based and child-first Fair Start model.