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October 6, 2016

Advisory Committee on Family Residential Centers  
c/o U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement  
500 12th Street  
Washington, D.C. 20536-5600

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Dear Committee Members:

On behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), I am writing to endorse the September 2016 Report of the DHS Advisory Committee on Family Residential Centers. The AAP is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization of 66,000 primary care pediatricians, pediatric medical subspecialists and pediatric surgical specialists dedicated to the health, safety and well-being of infants, children, adolescents and young adults.

The AAP appreciates the importance of the Advisory Committee's report in addressing the needs of vulnerable immigrant children and families. We support the recommendations that call for comprehensive improvements in the quality of care in the family detention facilities, the exploration of alternatives to detention, prevention of inappropriate separation of children from families, and ultimately, an end to the detention of children.

Immigrant children seeking safe haven in the United States, whether arriving unaccompanied or in family units, face a complicated evaluation and eligibility process from the point of arrival through resettlement in communities. Both the conditions in which children and families are detained and the support services that are available to them are of great concern to pediatricians.

In accordance with internationally accepted rights of the child, immigrant and refugee children should be treated with dignity and respect and should not be exposed to conditions that may further harm or traumatize them. Existing ICE family detention centers do not meet the basic standards for children, as witnessed by both pediatricians and staff of the American Academy of Pediatrics, who have toured all three of the ICE family detention centers.

The Report of the DHS Advisory Committee on Family Residential Centers substantiates those concerns. Detention centers are no place for children.

We appreciate the dedication of the DHS Advisory Committee on Family Residential Centers to this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Benard P. Dreyer".

Benard P. Dreyer, MD FAAP  
President