

A Parent's Guide

Talking to Kids About Immigration and ICE

What is ICE?

ICE, or U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, is a federal agency responsible for enforcing immigration laws, focusing on detaining and deporting individuals without legal documentation and investigating crimes like human trafficking. They are not local police and do not handle everyday law enforcement or criminal cases; they also cannot enter private homes without proper consent, a warrant signed by a judge, or other legal authorization.



Create Space for Open Dialogue

Start early by discussing how immigration policies might affect classmates or the community, using language suited to your child's age and understanding. Encourage them to share their feelings openly, reassuring them that it's okay to feel confused, upset, or have no feeling about it at all.

Explain the Situation Clearly

Be honest while using age-appropriate explanations, simplifying complex topics for younger children while providing more detail to older kids about how immigration laws impact families. Avoid overwhelming them with details; instead, focus on what they might notice, like classmates being absent or changes in conversations at school.



Teach your child empathy by encouraging them to consider how others might feel in difficult situations. Promote kindness by suggesting ways to support others, such as being a good friend or correcting misinformation.



Model support by using mindful language, participating in community events, or donating to organizations that assist immigrants. Get involved together to teach your child that advocacy can make a difference and help create a kinder, more inclusive world.



Explain to children that ICE agents near schools are there for specific reasons and not to scare anyone, encouraging them to stay close to trusted adults if they feel uncertain. Reassure them of their safety and let them know they can always come to you with questions or concerns.



Families deserve support, understanding, and access to resources during challenging times, and no one should face this alone.

Additional Resources



- "But Why: A Podcast for Curious Kids" - This podcast addresses various topics, including episodes that explore immigration in a way that's accessible to children.
- Kids Craft Comics To Explore Immigration Fears | NPR Ed - A YouTube video about a workshop in Philadelphia using comics to help children cope with their fears around immigration and deportation.
- "Dreamers" by Yuyi Morales or "Islandborn" by Junot Díaz can spark age-appropriate discussions.
- Contact your school to ask how they are supporting affected students and families.

Community members are encouraged to call or text the RAISE free hotline at 888-600-5762 to request information, legal referrals, or report abusive enforcement actions