



1. Introduction

Hello all, we hope everyone is staying safe and healthy. Thank you for taking the time to watch this training module called “**Inclusive Excellence for Immigrant Students and Families.**” My name is Bianca Gutierrez and my pronouns are (she/her). My fellow presenters and I are clinical students in the Center for Immigrants' Rights Clinic at Penn State Law.

Under the supervision of Dean Shoba Sivaprasad Wadhia, we have researched and organized helpful information to help build a better understanding and awareness about how to create an inclusive learning environment for immigrant students and their families. The purpose of this presentation is to assist State College Area School District, (or SCASD) and its faculty, educators, and staff in meeting the needs of all students—including undocumented students or mixed status families.

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It should be noted that the materials within this Presentation should be used strictly for educational purposes and should not be used as a substitute for legal advice.

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Founded in 2008, the Center for Immigrants' Rights Clinic is an in-house clinic based in Penn State Law that offers students practical experience for academic credit. The students you'll hear from today work on three types of legal work:

- Community-based education, like hosting town hall events about changes in immigration policy
- Legal support for individual cases, like someone facing deportation proceedings
- Policy work on behalf of organizational clients, like non-profits and bar associations

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The presentation and related materials cover a broad, nonexhaustive list of topics that might be helpful for individuals that interact with immigrant students and their families. Today, we will be covering four different topics:

- The Immigration Impact on Students
- Immigrants' Rights
- Role of Educators
- Ways Educators can Support Immigrant Students and Families



Throughout the video, you will come across Self-Check questions that will guide your progress through the information presented. The video is designed for viewers like you that interested in learning more about this area and even groups of you that want to get together to do the presentation together that are interested in participating in the Presentation. It might be helpful to click "Pause" on the video when a Self-Check question appears to give time to you or your groups to think of the right answer. The next slide will have the answer and an explanation why that is the right answer.

At the end of the video, there will be a reflective essay prompt that might be helpful in applying what is presented today to your own classroom or office work environment.

Finally, we want to share that there are related materials available to the you online in case you want more information about anything that is mentioned in the Presentation:

- **Presentation**
- **Outline**
- **PowerPoint Slides**
- **Self-Check Questions**
- **Reflective Essay Prompt**

A special thank you to the International and Immigration Issues Workgroup and Dr. Seria ("Ceria") Chatter's leadership for their passion and continued support in the development of this project. On behalf of Center for Immigrants' Rights Clinic and the team, we hope you enjoy the Presentation!

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2. Immigration 101

Let's begin with an important statement about inclusivity and access to education:

All children in the United States are entitled to equal access to a public elementary and secondary education, regardless of their or their parents' actual or perceived national origin, citizenship, or immigration status.

With this understanding, we can ask ourselves about inclusion and the messages we send to others, our peers, colleagues and students. The messages we send when we communicate can have a real effect on others, which is why one of the first topics we cover in today's presentation is about terminology.

Let's review some fundamental key terms because words matter. Terminology is critical because it plays an important role in creating a welcoming environment. The use of language has social consequences, and the use of a specific term may signal an educator's stance on how a student is characterized.

Undocumented v. Illegal



“Undocumented” refers to an individual residing in the United States without immigration status. This term can be applied both to groups who entered the United States without inspection and permission from the government **and** to groups who entered with valid visas but have overstayed. Undocumented is preferred to terms like “illegal immigrant” can be dehumanizing, racially charged, and often inaccurate.

(pause)

Noncitizen v. Alien

The term “noncitizen” encompasses “aliens” and does not reveal the individual’s specific status. Noncitizen is preferred. Within the immigration statute, “alien” refers to people who are not citizens or nationals of the United States. However, “alien” can be dehumanizing and characterize the noncitizen as “the other.”

If someone uses an unsuitable term, convey why terms like “undocumented” and “noncitizen” are preferred. Words matter and regardless of whether a student is affected by the words, they too will learn to choose the preferred term.

In taking a few steps back so we can understand immigration, here is a brief explanation of the main agencies responsible for administering and enforcing immigration laws.

- **U.S. Department of Homeland Security = DHS**
 - o DHS includes
 - U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS),
 - U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and
 - U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
- **USCIS** is responsible for processing applications for immigration benefits such as green cards; naturalization; and asylum.
- **CBP** is responsible for enforcement at the border.
- **ICE** is in charge of enforcing laws inside the United States, such as detention and removal.

This presentation is focused on supporting students who are immigrants, who live in immigrant families, and those who may be perceived as such. When using the terms “immigrant” students and families, we are referring to all of ***these*** groups.

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[STORY #1]

Name, pronouns

Context: Throughout the presentation, I will be describing short stories to give you an idea of some examples of what immigrant students and families sometimes face.



I want to introduce you to Cho Chang. Cho is an 11-year-old girl who immigrated into the United States from China with her mother Sandra Chang. They arrived in the States without documentation and only Cho speaks English, Sandra does not. Sandra and Cho are facing multiple difficulties, including language barriers and extreme fear because of their undocumented status. Because they are unfamiliar with their local surroundings, they don't know how to access resources available to them. Sandra is primarily concerned sending Cho to school, where she feels safe and not vulnerable as an undocumented immigrant while at school.

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3. What rights do immigrants have?

In order to support students impacted by immigration it is important to know what rights they have under the law.

a. *Plyler v. Doe*, 457 US. 202 (1982)

First, states may not deny free public education to any child in the US, including undocumented children.

b. The Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)

Second, according to the ACLU "The Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) prevents schools from releasing students' education records, including information about immigration status, except in exceptional circumstances."

c. Sensitive Locations Memo (2011)

Last, according to Department of Homeland Security policy, ICE and CBP should avoid taking enforcement actions at or near sensitive locations. Sensitive locations include hospitals, places of worship, public religious ceremonies, public demonstrations, schools, and school bus stops.

Enforcement actions insides schools are less likely but should ICE enter a school, ACLU advises schools to direct ICE to the Superintendent and further notes: "Only a judicial warrant, not an administrative warrant, will allow ICE agents to enter locations in which there is a reasonable expectation of privacy."

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[QUESTION 1]

Let's review the first Self-Check question now. As mentioned before, feel free to Pause the video to take time and think of which is the right answer. The right answer will appear in the next slide.

1. Which of the following is true?
 - a. It is up to an educator's discretion to release information from a student's personal file
 - b. ICE has to avoid taking enforcement action at sensitive locations
 - c. States cannot deny students a free public education based on their immigration status**
 - d. None of the above

The correct answer C, because under Plyer v. Doe, any child is entitled to free public education regardless of status. It is not A because educators are bound by FERPA to keep student information confidential. It is not B, because while ICE should avoid sensitive locations they do not have to.

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[STORY #2]

Now let's talk about Julio Espinosa, a 15-year-old boy in your class. You've known Julio all year; he's a bright student, always participates in class, tried out for the football team, and is never absent or late. One day, you notice that Julio becomes quiet and withdrawn. He comes into class late with dark circles under his eyes, wears hoodies that he can hide behind, and stops turning in his assignments.

After class, you talk to Julio and ask what is wrong. He confides in you that his mother was deported last week, one month after ICE entered the warehouse where she worked and arrested the workers who were undocumented. Julio is now in the custody of his 22-year-old sister. He does not have a way to contact his mother which makes him feel depressed and in turn makes it hard for him to sleep. He is also scared for his mother's safety. All of these feelings are impacting his mental health and school performance.

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4. How does immigration impact students?



- There are 5.9 million U.S.-born children in mixed status families where at least one parent or family member is undocumented.
- Immigrant families are vulnerable to immigration enforcement, and ongoing uncertainty about the future of DACA.
- SCASD should avoid singling out immigrant families or mixed status families and instead create safe spaces for support.

According to an analysis by the Washington Post, students of color outnumber teachers of color in nearly all U.S. school districts, so the lived experiences of teachers can be drastically different from those of their students from immigrant backgrounds.

A mixed status family is one in which at least one parent or family member is undocumented. This status can make a student and their family vulnerable to immigration enforcement. Immigration enforcement may be carried out at a person's home, on the street, or at a workplace. A student may also be worried about family members who are in immigration proceedings, preparing for a hearing before an immigration judge, or waiting for an application to be processed.

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Who is vulnerable and why?

Physical and Emotional Impact:

- The vulnerabilities mixed status families face under these rapidly changing circumstances may have significant physical and emotional effects on a student. Such effects include increased stress levels due to fear and uncertainty of a future for them and their family.
- According to the American Psychological Association, for many students, growing up and attending school is hard enough to navigate without the added difficulties that come with being an immigrant in this country.
- This stress and anxiety may manifest in many ways including fatigue due to lack of sleep, disassociation from schoolwork, or irritability.
- Students may also feel isolated or "othered" by their classmates who single them out for being different because of their immigration status or perceived status as an immigrant.
- Students may develop depression from bullying they may face or from difficulty in making friends or joining social groups because they are seen as an outsider, or because they dress and talk differently than the other students.

Healthy and Safety:

- Due to COVID-19, students and their families may face significant obstacles.



- Many families in the United States have lost their jobs due to COVID-19 business closures. According to the New York Times, immigrant families are facing job loss and food insecurity at a higher rate than the rest of the U.S. population.
- Job loss during the pandemic may result in loss of income to provide food and loss of healthcare access.
- A family may feel unsafe going to a food bank or going to take a COVID-19 test because of their immigration status.
- The effects of the pandemic may leave a child attending school hungry, sick, or scared.

For these reasons, it is important to create a safe space in SCASD for these students so that they feel respected, supported, and heard. Later, we will discuss what you all as educators and administrators can do to create a safe environment for these students and their families.

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[QUESTION #2]

2. You hear about an immigration raid or enforcement action at a local company near your school. Which of the following students would you suspect was negatively impacted?
- Marco – a young boy who has always been a bully in your class who recently has become more aggressive
 - Carina – a young girl who sits alone at lunch doing her homework
 - Alicia – a young girl who recently has been falling asleep in class and has just started being bullied for her accent**
 - Julio – a young boy who is on the varsity football team, is quite popular, but has never seemed interested in school

The correct answer is C, because Alicia's behaviors recently started changing around the time of the raid and she began to be bullied. Marco's behavior, while unacceptable, has remained constant. Carina does not sit alone to be anti-social she is trying to get her homework done which is not an alarming behavior. Julio's disinterest in school in itself is not alarming because he is engaging in sports and with his peers.

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[STORY #3]

- Priya Kuthrapali is a young girl in your class who immigrated from India with her parents.
- They arrived in the United States two years ago and are terrified about the current immigration situation because of ICE enforcement and what they have seen on the news about immigration in America.



- You are teaching a lesson one day about how the United States is a melting pot of cultures because of the diversity in immigrants.
- You mention that the US sees the most immigrants from China, Mexico, and India show pictures of immigrants that you found on the internet. While you did include a select few images celebrating their different cultures, you unintentionally choose a majority of images that show immigrants who are handcuffed, sitting inside detention centers, and scheduled to be deported. After class, the student who sits next to Priya informs you that she left class crying. When you pull Priya aside the next day, she confides in you that she is an immigrant and that your presentation offended and scared her. It reaffirmed her fears about the possibility of her and her family being deported or separated.
- You apologize, because you did not mean to do this, but you want to be better at developing a safer environment for her and other students.

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5. Why is it important for educators and school staff to support immigrant students and their families?

Now we are going to offer some ideas for what you can do to support immigrant students and families. Offering support for students who are immigrants, who have immigrants in their families, or who are perceived as immigrants provides both academic and social-emotional support for your students, as well as assistance to their families.

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6. What are some actions educators and school staff can take?

We are going to break down the role of faculty, educators, and staff into three categories of actions that can be taken to ensure immigrant students and their families are supported. Those categories are: building an inclusive classroom; providing social-emotional support for your students; and addressing immigrant families' questions and concerns.

While some of this information is specifically geared toward teachers in the classroom, the underlying concepts of sensitivity, awareness, and support are applicable to all SCASD employees. Whether a teacher, an administrator, or a staff member, the following information can give you ideas for steps to take to help make your offices, lunchrooms, hallways, and buses welcoming for all students.

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(BUILD AN INCLUSIVE CLASSROOM)



First up is building an inclusive classroom. There are a number of ways you can make your classroom a welcoming space for all students. Building an inclusive classroom involves acting intentionally about both the terminology and language used in class, as well as about the images and multimedia tools utilized.

(1 – LANGUAGE USED IN LESSONS AND DISCUSSIONS)

Some students may be triggered by certain discussions, so a strong first step you can take is to be aware of phrases, examples, and comments that are made, and how they may impact your students. It can be helpful to review written lessons that contain topics that could be sensitive.

Preparing in advance for any spontaneous or planned in-class conversations about potentially controversial topics, such as rhetoric featured in ongoing election campaigns, will help you handle situations that may arise during the course of the discussion. One strategy is to avoid putting students on the spot, instead allowing voluntary participation that does not involve sharing any personal information. Additionally, it can be useful to create a list of rules to guide respectful conversation that the students agree to beforehand. Maintain some control, correct any misinformation, and re-direct the conversation if it begins to exceed its intended scope. This can stop the discussion from becoming uncomfortable for your students.

(2 – IMAGES USED DURING LESSONS)

Images can also trigger immigrant students. Remember, your lived experiences may be different from your students' experiences, so an image or phrase that may seem neutral from your perspective could directly trigger a negative emotional response in one of your students. Taking a moment to reflect on your upcoming lesson plans and how aspects may be perceived by your students of various backgrounds can create a more welcoming learning environment where all your students are comfortable.

(PROVIDE SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL SUPPORT)

(1 – ADDRESS INSTANCES OF BULLYING)

Now we are going to talk about providing social-emotional support for your students. One way you can do this is to address instances of bullying early on. Children who are from – or are perceived to be from – migrant, immigrant, and refugee families are vulnerable to bullying. Research from *Documenting Hate* and *Education Week's Hate in Schools Project* shows students have been targeted for their immigrant status, for their family history of immigration, or for their perceived immigration status. This bullying can come in the form of taunts and slurs, derogatory references to the immigration process, physical aggression, social manipulation, or exclusion. Putting an end to such negative behavior as soon as it comes to your attention not only will protect your immigrant student, but it will also send a message to all your students that treating others in such a way is unacceptable.

(2 – HELP STUDENTS IN NEED OF EMOTIONAL SUPPORT)



Also, be on the lookout for students who may be in need of emotional support. It is important to understand and recognize stressors that immigrant students might face. For example, the student could be struggling with the challenges of relocation and trying to fit-in in a culture very different from the one in which they lived before. To help immigrant students in need of emotional support, identify those who are at high risk and plan interventions. If you feel it may be beneficial for the student, you can recommend they speak with a guidance counselor.

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(ADDRESS ANY QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS)

Finally, you can address any questions or concerns immigrant families may express. To facilitate such discussions, you must create a safe, confidential space for families in which they can bring their questions and concerns to you.

(1 – LACK OF INTERNET)

Not all immigrant families may have access to the Internet or be comfortable communicating through email. Be prepared to sit down with those families face-to-face.

(2 – LANGUAGE BARRIERS)

Additionally, some families may be speaking English as a second language, and proficiency levels will likely vary. Providing forms and messages of support in multiple languages, so parents can access the information in a way that they can easily understand, can help immigrant families feel included in the process.

(3 – COVID-19)

Keep in mind that immigrant students and families may be facing heightened hardships at home due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Have information about the local food bank and other resources on hand that can be distributed to a family that may come to you in need of assistance.

(4 – IMMIGRATION-RELATED RESOURCES)

Remember, not all students and families may be aware of their rights. While you should not inquire or make assumptions about a family's immigration status, you can provide resources to students who ask for them or make information and resources available to all students. Some helpful resources could include the names and contact information for local social workers, mental health providers, pro bono attorneys, and local immigration advocates and organizations. Additionally, "know your rights" information cards can be useful for immigrant families to have and to carry.

(5 – SAFETY PLANNING)



Safety planning is also important for immigrant families. You can assist with safety planning by helping families create an emergency plan or give them the information to make one at home. To create a plan, there are seven steps you can walk the family through to assure they are prepared, according to the National Immigration Law Center. Those steps include identifying a legal aid organization and at least two willing caregivers. It is also important for a family to save money for legal fees or bonds and to consider establishing a power of attorney. Immigrant families must not carry any false documents; instead, they need to have their documents ready and organized, including collecting important documents for the children.

At the conclusion of this training, you will receive a resource list. You will have access to website links for a number of helpful resources including “know your rights” information and lists of local organizations that provide services. Additionally, the list includes links to resources that discuss methods for creating an inclusive classroom and curriculum. Become familiar with some of these resources, as they can help guide your interactions with immigrant students and their families.

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[Question #3]

3. Which of the following is NOT a supportive way to help immigrant students?
- a. Providing pamphlets of resources that include the local food bank, “know your rights” cards, and helping to create a safety plan
 - b. Having every student who is an immigrant stand up in class and identify their status so you can know who needs resources**
 - c. Being vigilant for bullying and putting an immediate stop to it
 - d. Being sensitive in your word and media choice in your lesson plan and the classroom

The correct answer is B, because students may not be comfortable sharing their status or asking for help or resources. Also, collecting information about immigration status raises policy and legal concerns. The other answers are more discreet and do not put pressure on the students, while still being proactive about making sure they are safe.

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7. Conclusion

Thank you so much for your attention and participation in today’s training. Immigration is a complicated topic that should be approached with respect and delicacy. The time you have with students may be their only opportunity to feel safe or learn about their resources. As educators you have a unique opportunity to understand and support your students, so it is important to



be prepared for these types of situations. They need to know that educators and school staff are here to help and provide them the education they deserve. We hope this training helped provide you with some tips and resources to be a more inclusive educator.

As we mentioned in the beginning, feel free to review the related materials available online. In addition to the Recording of the Presentation, there are additional materials that can help provide more information about the topics we discussed today:

- **Presentation**
- **Outline**
- **PowerPoint Slides**
- **Self-Check Questions**
- **Reflective Essay Prompt"**

For more information about the Center for Immigrants' Rights Clinic, please visit our website through the URL mentioned here.

Thank you and good luck!