

CWS | Standing with Unaccompanied Children in the U.S.

2025 Impact Report | Children's Services

JULY 2024-JUNE 2025

CWS walks alongside thousands of unaccompanied children as they navigate the uncertainties of starting over in the United States. 2025 brought extraordinary challenges for these children: federal policies narrowed pathways to safety, delayed family reunifications, reignited fears of separation and limited access to care and protection. Throughout it all, CWS was steadfast in its commitment to stand with every child seeking safety. This report highlights that commitment and our transformative work together.

At a Glance, CWS Supported:



3,000+
unaccompanied
children, representing
41 countries across
48 states



6,000+ people across
households (including
parents)



15,800+ advocacy
actions to protect
unaccompanied children

Who are unaccompanied children?

Unaccompanied children (UC) are children under 18 who arrive to the United States without a parent or a legal guardian—often escaping violence, trafficking threats and hardship in their country of origin. Though they arrive unaccompanied, many have loved ones in the United States who can provide safety and care.

UC navigate many traumatic events in their most critical windows of development, including displacement and separation from family. These children seek what every child deserves: a stable childhood and a bright future.



"Continue to support children. It is not easy being separated from their families. The children need emotional support in the transition—someone to speak to and provide helpful advice."
— PARENT

The Difference We Made Together

● Safe Reunifications and New Beginnings

CWS supported families in preparing to welcome their children home, ensuring environments would be safe, nurturing and centered on the individual care needs of each child.

● A Stable Path Forward

CWS helped families rebuild stability and confidence in their shared future. With trauma-informed and child-centered expertise, we supported every home in meeting a child's emotional, physical, legal, basic (food, housing, clothing) and educational needs. We deepened access to crisis support and safety and permanency planning to strengthen family resilience amid emerging uncertainties.

Snapshot of Healing and Stability

Sofia was only four years old when she fled to the U.S. with her grandma. At the U.S.-Mexico border, the two were separated while being processed - an experience that was very hard on young Sofia. After reunifying, CWS provided the responsive care their little family needed to heal together. Sofia is growing, engaging and feels safe in her home and relationships. Her family reports "she's doing so much better and is happy!"



Standing up for Children in Both Practice and Policy:

Throughout the year, shifting policies created new threats to the safety and wellbeing of unaccompanied children. CWS amplified advocacy and education to:

- **Protect children from prolonged separation from their loved ones.**

This year, the average time children spent in federal custody before reuniting with family increased from 30 days to 6 months. CWS opposed policies that delayed reunification with vetted family members and championed practices supporting safe placements with loved ones.

- **Reject enforcement tactics that endanger children.**

CWS opposed policies prioritizing immigration enforcement over child wellbeing, compromising traditional safe spaces for children such as schools, hospitals and care settings. CWS strengthened coordination with child advocates to support children impacted by these tactics.

- **Defend every child's right to due process.**

Thousands of children were put at risk of facing immigration court alone or removal without review. In both policy and practice, CWS affirmed that every child deserves a fair hearing and the chance to express their reasons for seeking safety.

- **Uphold standards that safeguard children from harm and abuse.**

CWS opposed policies that weakened basic protections for children, including efforts to rollback protections for children in detention. CWS defended the nation's ability to provide safe welcome to children fleeing danger.

Impact Snapshot*

- **95%** of children reported having enough food every day.
- Nearly **90%** of families said they felt confident navigating educational systems for their children.
- **98%** of children reported emotional wellness: feeling secure, supported and hopeful for the future.
- **100%** of children said they felt safe in their homes.

Overwhelmingly, families and children expressed that their lives were changed for the better because of this vital work.

**Survey responses from children and families who completed CWS' Home Study and Post Release Service program*

Looking Ahead

The challenges of 2025 tested our nation's compassion for its youngest members. The stakes continue to be high for the year ahead as unaccompanied children feel widening gaps in the safety nets meant to support a vibrant childhood. We commit to mending and weaving support around each child that both uplifts their strengths and cultivates communities that honor their precious worth.

Here's How You Can Join that Commitment



[Donate now](#): Support programs providing safety, protections and care for children and their families.

[Take Action](#): Urge Congress to advocate for policies that safeguard unaccompanied children and prevent enforcement overreach. Share our alert to raise awareness and amplify the message.

[Learn more](#): Visit CWS' Children's Services page for more information and resources.

"The only thing I can say is, **thank you**. My brother was in good hands. Thank you to everyone. I know you do a good job and do the best for each child. Keep working because it helps so many children."

— SIBLING