

How to talk to your children about immigration

Resource created by psychologist Dr. Blanche Wright (2025)

In the U.S., there are a lot of changes that affect immigrants, including the risk of deportation. Here, I present some advice on how to speak with your children about discrimination against immigrants and the possibility of deportation.

Step 1: Pride for Your Culture and Heritage

- Discuss your culture, heritage, and background with your children. Describe cultural celebrations, your city/neighborhood, family members that live there, or special songs.
- Help your children learn and understand that their culture and heritage should be celebrated.



Step 2: Your Journey to the U.S.



- Share your reason for coming to the U.S.
- This conversation can sound like:
 - *“I wanted to give you a better life.”*
 - *“I wanted to follow my dream of *your job or hobby*”*
- Hearing about your story helps your children to understand immigration in a personal way, and maybe even in positive a way.

Step 3: Give Love and Appreciation to Your Children

- If your child asks or shares concerns about immigration or deportation, reinforce their communication:
 - *“Thank you for sharing that with me,”*
 - *“I’m glad you shared that with me.”*
- Tell your children that you love them and want to ensure they are safe.
- If you feel comfortable, show them affection like a hug or a kiss.



Step 4: Speaking Directly About Immigration

- The level of detail depends on many factors, including the age and maturity level of your children, and what you feel comfortable sharing.
- Consider what types of information your child can understand.
- Here's an example of how to start the conversation:



“Some people aren't kind or friendly to immigrants, but there are also many people that do value us. If you ever feel unsafe or if someone says anything mean or upsetting, you can tell me. My job is to make you feel safe and calm.”

- Familiarize your child with your emergency plan. It's not necessary that you share all of the details. Be mindful of what your child can tolerate. We don't want to scare your children—we want to prepare them.
- Here's an example of how to start the conversation:



“Some people want immigrants to go back to the countries where they were born, and we're doing the best we can to prevent that from happening to _____ (options: us; me; someone from our family)

But, there also might be other emergencies in which I have to be far away from you. For example, there might be a fire or an accident. But if we ever separate, I want you to know that I made plans to ensure that you're okay and safe.”

- You can share who will take care of your children if they are ever separated from you – share their name or you can share a photo of them: “She's my friend.”

We are strong!

It's not easy to have conversations with your child about immigration, but by sharing the beautiful aspects of our culture, giving them affection/love, and preparing them, our children will know that their parents are doing everything possible to keep the family together.



Thank you:

- Evelyn Cruz for helping to create this resource.
- Colgan, C. A. & Lai, B. S. (October 16, 2019). How to talk to your child about immigration: Recommendations for parents. Retrieved from <https://infoaboutkids.org/blog/how-to-talk-to-your-child-about-immigration-recommendations-for-parents/>
- English translation by Laurel Benjamin, M.S.