



U.S. Immigration  
and Customs  
Enforcement

# Press Release

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## **DHS, HHS Sign Statement of Principles on Unaccompanied Alien Children**



Washington, D.C.- Michael J. Garcia, Assistant Secretary for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), today signed a Statement of Principles with Wade F. Horn, Health and Human Services (HHS) Assistant Secretary for Children and Families, that improves care for Unaccompanied Alien Children (UAC.)

The Statement of Principles formalizes key departmental roles as they relate to immigration benefits, immigration enforcement and the treatment and placement of unaccompanied alien children – minors who arrive in the United States without a parent or legal guardian and are temporarily in the custody of federal authorities because of their immigration status.

“This agreement is an example of how intra-government partnerships work, in this case to better protect vulnerable children and enhance the integrity of our immigration system,” said Garcia.

“Today’s agreement will help move us toward a more organized system of assistance for children who, through no fault of their own, find themselves without their parents in our country and in need of care,” said Horn.

Pursuant to the statement: DHS will continue to be responsible for apprehension, processing and immigration benefits. This includes placement in immigration proceedings; removal from the United States when appropriate; decisions, after consultation with Office of Refugee and Resettlement (ORR), regarding consent to the jurisdiction of a state court when a child in the UAC program wishes to pursue Special Immigrant Juvenile (SIJ) status; and adjudication of petitions for SIJ status. ORR will make decisions regarding a child’s medical care while the child is in custody, and is responsible for making placement determinations. ORR, however, is not responsible for children placed in facilities without ORR approval.

The Homeland Security Act of 2002 gave primary responsibility for the custody and care of unaccompanied alien children to the ORR within HHS, while DHS retains authority over immigration status issues relating to juveniles.

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