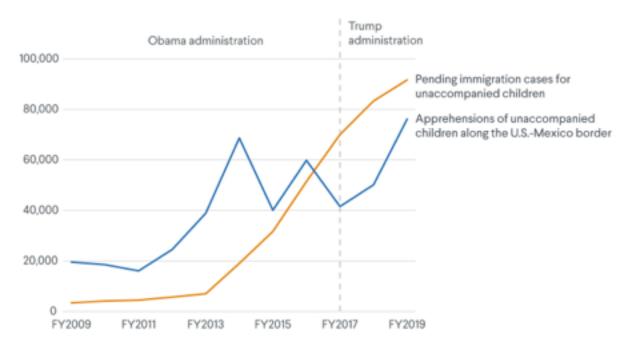
As More Child Migrants Cross Border, Immigration Court Backlog Deepens



Sources: Department of Homeland Security; Executive Office for Immigration Review; U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

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What Happens When a Child Arrives at the Border?

Arrival at border

Children, many fleeing poverty and violence in the Northern Triangle, arrive at the U.S. southern border either alone or with family or other migrants.

Under "metering" policies, children and families can be forced to wait in Mexico to file asylum claims.

Children are apprehended by officials from the U.S. Border Patrol or the Office of Field Operations, both agencies of U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP), and placed in CBP facilities.

Temporary detention

CBP detains children in facilities while authorities determine whether they qualify as unaccompanied children. Some accompanied children are separated from adult guardians who are unrelated or deemed dangerous, or from family members facing prosecution.

Under U.S. law, some unaccompanied children from Canada and Mexico can be deported immediately.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) manages the transfer of children to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Long-term custody while cases are heard

The Office of Rafugee Resettlement, a department of HHS, can hold children in temporary "influx facilities" during emergencies, but is supposed to arrange long-term shelter as soon as possible. Children can be placed in independent shelters, group homes, or foster-care centers across the country while their legal status is determined. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services rules on asylum cases and the Justice Department rules on other immigration cases.

Children can be placed with a relative, sponsor, or other guardian while their court cases continue.

The child loses their case and is deported by ICE to their country of origin.



The child becomes a legal adult and is released or detained in adult facilities while court proceedings continue.