



## Resolution on Library Service for Children in Detention at Migrant Detention Centers

**Whereas**, Article V of the Library Bill of Rights states that “A person’s right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views”;

**Whereas**, ALA passed a resolution on Improving Access to Spanish, Bilingual, and Books in Various Language for Children in Detention Centers<sup>1</sup>;

**Whereas**, ALA passed a resolution in 2018 denouncing the separation of migrant children from their parents<sup>2</sup>;

**Whereas**, ALA asserts a compelling public interest in the preservation of intellectual freedom for individuals of any age held in jails, prisons, detention facilities, juvenile facilities, immigration facilities, prison work camps, and segregated units within any facility, whether public or private<sup>3</sup>;

**Whereas**, conditions in family and child detention centers are substandard and not adequate for the care of children including limited access to education, recreation, healthcare, and basic requirements for health, warmth, and personal sanitation<sup>4</sup>;

**Whereas**, unclear, inconsistent, or unnecessarily stringent library policies regarding documentation of identity and home address can present barriers to providing library accounts to detained or migrant populations;

**Whereas**, many historians, policy makers, and public figures have begun to use the term “concentration camps” to describe these locations<sup>5</sup>;

**Whereas**, Storytime has a positive impact on the mental health and wellbeing of refugee children, reducing instances of toxic stress<sup>6</sup>; now, therefore, be it

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<sup>1</sup> 2015-2016 ALA CD#38\_Revised-2\_63015\_FINAL

<sup>2</sup> 2017-2018 ALA CD#20.3\_7618

<sup>3</sup> “Prisoners’ Right to Read: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights”, American Library Association, August 20, 2010. <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/prisonersrightoread>

<sup>4</sup> “Lawyers Say Migrant Children Are Living in ‘Traumatic and Dangerous’ Conditions at Border Detention Site *Time Magazine* BY CEDAR ATTANASIO, GARANCE BURKE AND MARTHA MENDOZA / AP UPDATED: JUNE 21, 2019 8:55 PM ET | ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED: JUNE 20, 2019

<sup>5</sup> “An Expert on Concentration Camps Says That’s Exactly What the US Is Running at the Border” by Jack Holmes *Esquire Magazine* June 13, 2019

<sup>6</sup> “For Refugees Storytime Helps Heal Trauma” Rachel Chernasky *New York Times* April 17, 2019.



**Resolved**, that the American Library Association

1. Denounces the existence of family and youth detention centers;
2. Denounces the ongoing deplorable conditions in family and youth detention centers;
3. Denounces the removal of educational and recreational programming, such as storytimes, from youth detention centers and calls for the reestablishment of these programs;
4. Urges libraries with detention centers in or near their service areas to reach out to and work with local authorities, schools, and governmental support agencies;
5. Strongly encourages libraries to perform outreach and provide access to materials for both education and entertainment in a variety of formats and media in as many languages as possible as appropriate for the populations being served;
6. Strongly encourages libraries and library workers to provide services to migrant families and reexamine their policies to resolve any barriers to access presented to the access to services.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association  
Tuesday, June 25, 2019, in Washington, DC.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Mary W. Ghikas".

Mary W. Ghikas, Executive Director  
and Secretary of the ALA Council