



Frequently Asked Questions about Family Separation and Reunification

What happens to children who come to the U.S. unaccompanied or are separated from their families?

Unaccompanied children are detained by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and transferred into the custody of the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). Once in HHS custody, the children are placed in a child-friendly setting within 72 hours. HHS refers children to organizations like Bethany, where they are placed in licensed foster homes and assigned a treatment team that includes a clinician, case manager, teacher, and their foster family. The treatment team works together to assess and meet the needs of the child, as well as evaluate the ability of an identified family member to care for that child through a formal application process. The treatment team then makes a recommendation for placement of that child, based on the family member's application. That recommendation is then reviewed by HHS and when approved, we proceed with reunification.

The process for reunifying separated children with their families is similar; however, it may be more challenging to find family members able to provide care if the primary caregivers are in detention. As separated children are reunified with family, we believe it is important to respect the rights of parents and children to select their preferred reunification plan.

What will happen to the separated children who are currently in Bethany's care?

We will not rest until every separated child in Bethany's care is safely reunified with family. Our mission has always been, and will always be, to keep and bring families together.

How will reunification work?

We have been informed by HHS that separated children will be reunified with their families and are working with HHS to ensure children are safely reunified with families. You can [learn more](#) about family reunification from HHS.

Does Bethany plan to put separated children up for adoption?

No, they will not be adopted. These children have families, and we will continue to pursue reunification with their families.

Is Bethany evangelizing to the children?

No. The children are offered the opportunity to participate in whatever religious activity they prefer, if they choose to participate. Our faith drives us to serve children and families.

Who owns Bethany Christian Services?

Bethany Christian Services is a nonprofit organization that brings and keeps families together. Bethany is run by a national board of directors who help serve children and families faithfully through leadership, governance, and approving policies. The list of board members can be found [here](#).

Does Bethany Christian Services profit for its efforts in supporting separated children?

Bethany does receive funding to support our work with unaccompanied and separated children based on the services these children need, including a clinician, case manager, trauma-informed teacher, and foster family to provide trauma support. This is critical because these children have been traumatically separated from their families and are at significant risk for long-term harm. Additionally, the funds are used to provide essential supplies to the child during their stay with the foster family, including food, clothing, and other materials, as needed. The specific amount of funding varies based on circumstances, but the care provided by Bethany is significantly more affordable than placing children in detention facilities.