

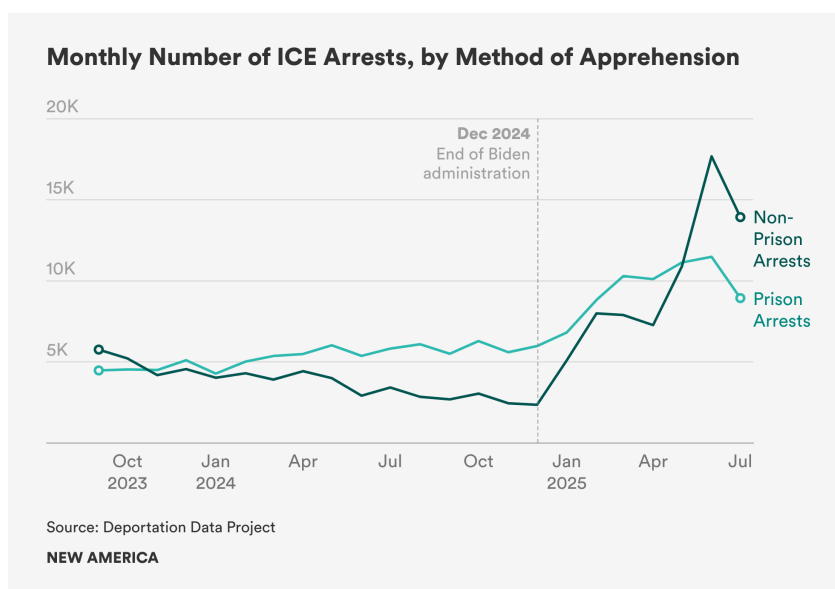
# The Impact of Increased ICE Activity on the Child Care Workforce and Mothers' Employment

A [new report from the Better Life Lab](#) at New America examines how the recent escalation in immigration enforcement—defined as the number of ICE arrests—has impacted employment among child care workers and mothers with young children.

Since President Trump took office in January 2025, the sharp increase in ICE activity has reduced employment among both immigrant and U.S.-born child care workers, while also reducing mothers' labor force participation. The report estimates there are **roughly 39,000 fewer foreign-born child care workers and 77,000 fewer U.S.-born working mothers since January 2025.**

## ICE Activity Ramps Up

Between December 2024 and June 2025, ICE arrests rose more than threefold, from 8,320 to 29,147. These arrests increasingly occur in public settings—as opposed to prisons and jails—thereby raising the visibility of recent enforcement efforts. Child care centers are no longer afforded “sensitive location” status, and recent [press reports](#) have documented ICE raids occurring near and inside these facilities.



## Why This Matters

### Immigrants are key to child care.

Nationally, about [one in five](#) child care workers is an immigrant. Immigrant child care workers are highly skilled: They are more likely than U.S.-born workers to hold a college degree, and they earn higher wages.

### Mothers are leaving the workforce.

Mothers' labor force participation—which depends on the availability of child care—has [fallen throughout 2025](#) to its lowest level since 2021.

## Key Findings

Drawing on ICE arrest data and labor market information, the report presents four main findings:

1. **The increase in local ICE arrests reduced the number of foreign-born child care workers**, particularly highly educated immigrants.
2. **The number of U.S.-born child care workers also declined**, which is indicative of “chilling effects” on non-targeted groups.
3. **Heightened immigration enforcement decreased the number of employed mothers with preschool-aged children**, especially highly educated mothers.
4. **Reductions in child care and maternal employment intensified after President Trump took office**, suggesting that ICE’s impact on the labor market has grown in recent months.

*Note on methodology: The report combines ICE arrest data from the Deportation Data Project with labor market information from the Current Population Survey (September 2023 and July 2025), using difference-in-differences models estimated with location and time-fixed effects.*

### READ THE FULL REPORT

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by Chris M. Herbst (Arizona State University) and Erdal Tekin (American University)

*Includes data visualizations and a detailed methodology*

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