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The recent controversy over immigration policies will have only one group as its major victim – children. It is children who perhaps have the hardest task in settling into a new country. Children do not influence the circumstances which make leaving their homeland a necessity. They do not ask to leave their homeland to go to a new country with strange customs, a strange language and expectations of them which may conflict with their parents' expectations. These children are required to undertake "double learning" in school – learning about their new society as well as their basic education. Often these children have to change roles to become "teachers" to the adults in their lives – both their parents and adults from the new country – who try to understand the children's new culture.

It is easy to see that the current debate on immigration puts an added burden on these children. Perhaps non-immigrant children can be more enlightened than their parents and avoid the racism which is inherent in the debate.

No debate on immigration policy can be free of emotional and value issues any more than it can be free of social justice and economic issues. But the debate should be on policy and criteria for immigration – not on racial grounds. For example, if a priority is given to refugees it is not right to look to "balance" that priority if it is mainly non-Europeans who fall into that category.

As mentioned, in the area of Child Welfare most of us would have seen the effects of racism on children. We should also be aware of the difficult task immigrant children have in learning to be part of two cultures. As caregivers we have a special responsibility to speak up against racism.

In this issue: Anthony Maluccio discusses permanency planning; Ro Roberts and Dot Shamley, Susan Andrios and Vicki Anthanasiou take different perspectives of child abuse. Ro Roberts suggests a new framework with which to review child abuse. Dot Shamley, et al identify attitudes to child abuse in a particular group of Greek families and demonstrate the failure of protection programmes to become known by this group. The topic of Family Group Home Care is again discussed in this issue. Lesley Oakley identifies the difficulties for children who come into family group home programmes and the importance for agencies to ensure their programmes are geared to minimize these difficulties.

MARGARITA FREDERICO
