

SEPARATING FAMILIES CAUSES TRAUMA

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Above: Taliah Drayak speaking on the BBC

"Children's Social Care as it operates in England is not fit for purpose. It alienates families and communities. It fails to protect children. And it places older children at increased risk of involvement in gangs and sexual exploitation."

This was how a BBC reporter summarized a 2022 report from the [Parents, Families and Allies Network](#), of which ATD Fourth World UK is a member.

Parent activist Taliah Drayak

In the BBC interview below, parent activist Taliah Drayak presents key findings from the report: [Children's Social Care: The Way Forward](#). She describes her family's own nightmare when social workers removed her two-year-old from her custody. After conducting an investigation, they returned the child, admitting that it had been a mistake to remove her.

However, the investigation took almost a year during which the child was separated from her family, “which is a long time in a two-year old’s life”, Taliah points out in the interview. This was devastating not only for the child who was removed, but for the entire family. “This was a terribly traumatic experience for all of our children”, Taliah says.



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Excerpts from the video:

“It’s scary and how do you explain that to your older children, to your youngest child? There is no support for parents going through that, and there’s not a lot of support for siblings, or even that child. **We need to look for ways to keep families together while we’re working through mountain-sized challenges because separating families causes trauma and harm.**”

Unable to do their jobs

“Community care did a survey of a 1,000 social workers by UNICEF that showed that **95% of them feel unable to do their job because of the impact of cuts.** 4 in 10 social workers anticipated leaving (the profession) in the next five years and we have tripled investigations into families, and yet it’s had no impact on children’s deaths, but we’ve had severe cuts since 2008 or even further back and, you know, we closed home starts... yeah they were...we closed centres for families and children, we have poured less resources into community-based support systems and early intervention therapies and case-loads are higher and higher and there’s less time to dedicate to families and that’s just a small drop in the bucket but we need to be better supporting families and resourcing social workers to do that instead of just increasing investigations.”

Prioritise those with lived experience

“We would really like them to prioritise listening to those with lived experience who understand the problems they’re facing. **I mean, this report comes from the parents and families who are largely silenced in the system but hold key information about how we can help meet the needs of their children because children need their parents and parents want to be what their children need**, but sometimes they need support and trying to develop that in a boardroom or an office, where you’ve never experienced any poverty or disability or mental health problems or domestic violence, you’re not going to create the solutions that are needed. So, we need to work with the people facing these challenges to develop the solutions and the services they need.”

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