

What Is DACA?

DACA stands for Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. It is a rule that protects young undocumented immigrants who were brought to the United States as children. Young people protected by DACA:

-  Have the right to stay in the U.S. for at least two years
-  Can get a work permit
-  Are able to get a driver's license (in some states)

ALL GROWN UP

Fernanda Jimenez is now a high school senior in Wisconsin. She is protected by DACA. Her mother brought her to the United States at age 5—when she had no say in the decision. The photo of her and her grandfather (far right) was taken the day before she left Mexico for the U.S.



She studied hard. By the age of 10, she knew what she wanted from life. "I'm going to college no matter what," she would tell her mother.

Fernanda knew she wasn't living in the United States legally. But she convinced herself it didn't matter. "I pretended I was just like the other students," she says.

In high school, she couldn't pretend anymore. Her friends started to get driver's licenses and jobs. Fernanda couldn't do either. And without a good job, how could she pay for college? Her dream began to feel out of reach.



PAUSE AND THINK: Why did Fernanda's dream start to feel out of reach?

A Nation of Immigrants

Today, more than 40 million **immigrants** live in the U.S. legally. That means they have permission from the American government to be here. Most immigrants are allowed to come to the U.S. because they have close family members living here already.

But the U.S. limits the number of people

who can immigrate legally every year. That's why about 11 million people face a problem similar to Fernanda's. They are living in the U.S. without permission from the government. They are known as **undocumented immigrants**. They don't have documents—or papers—giving them permission to live here.



PAUSE AND THINK: What is an undocumented immigrant?

Living on the Edge

Life is uncertain for most undocumented immigrants. Kids can go to school. But as teens they can't get a driver's license. Undocumented students can apply to most colleges. But **financial aid** is almost impossible to get. Undocumented immigrants find ways to work—and some of them even pay taxes. But few high paying jobs are available to them.

Many Americans think undocumented immigrants should be forced to leave the country. In fact, each year, more than 300,000 people are **deported**.