



**Statement from the School Social Work Association of America: Rescission of the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Program**

**October 26, 2017**

On September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017, the Trump Administration announced the decision to rescind the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program. This decision will impact more than 800,000 adolescents and young adults in our schools and communities across the U.S. DACA provides approximately 800,000 young immigrants across the United States with temporary, renewable authorization to live, study, and work in the United States, and is set to expire by presidential order on March 5, 2018.

DACA was first implemented in 2012 by the Department of Homeland Security after Obama's presidential executive order. DACA allows youth who were brought to the United States as children and who meet certain criteria, to request consideration for deferred action, or the DHS's decision to not pursue their removal from the United States for a period of two years, with the possibility for renewal. DACA recipients can live in the U.S. and go to school, and may be eligible for work authorization.

DACA created access to opportunities for immigrant youth to achieve their goals and dreams. Various studies have analyzed the economic and educational outcomes of DACA recipients including a national survey by Tom K. Wong of the University of California, San Diego; the National Immigration Law Center and the Center for American Progress; and another published by United We Dream. These studies illustrate that DACA promotes educational and economic outcomes that are contributing factors to economic growth, not only for DACA recipients and their families, but communities as a whole. Thus, inclusion of unauthorized immigrant youth benefits our economy and strengthens our society.

What does this decision mean for the students and families with whom we work?

1. ***As of September 5, 2017, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) is no longer accepting new applications for DACA.*** Anyone who had not applied or who became newly eligible can no longer apply.
2. Anyone with current DACA status will continue to be protected under the law.
3. Those whose DACA expired or will expire between September 5, 2017 through March 5, 2018 were eligible to apply for renewal only if they were able to submit their application on or before October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017.
4. Those whose ***DACA expires after March 5<sup>th</sup>, 2018 will not be eligible to reapply.***

Unauthorized children and families are a uniquely vulnerable population. As school social workers, we are in a pivotal position to advocate for the value of DACA. Thus, we call on the SSWAA membership to stand in solidarity with DACA recipients and their families by:

- Supporting DACA through various channels, including social media such as: #Resist #DefendDACA #HereToStay
- Call Congress members and the Attorney General of the United States and urge them to vote in favor of a bipartisan stand-alone **DREAM Act (Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act)** without building the proposed wall or further border enforcement; and to work toward comprehensive immigration reform. The DREAM Act was originally introduced in 2001, and provides a path to citizenship for youth brought to the U.S. before the age of 16. When you call, state your concerns about the administration's decision regarding DACA, how DACA has improved the lives of individuals in your school or community, and encourage your congress members to act quickly to protect those impacted by this decision.
- Advocate that our local institutions, schools, organizations, governments, and communities protect DACA recipients and provide necessary information, resources, and services to them and the public.
- Sponsor attorney led workshops at your school so that families can understand the specific guidelines, legal rights, and options they might have.
- Develop a safe network of people in the community for potential referrals and assistance with navigating other institutions such as higher education or social services.
- Unauthorized students suffer from higher rates of PTSD and depression as well as chronic, high levels of anxiety. This anxiety is triggered by the constant threat of deportation as well as the lack of resources for college and encouragement. Connect students with any existing information and resources to help them navigate higher education or planning for their future. *Remember that undocumented status is a form of psychological violence.*
- Trust building is the most important aspect of serving the unauthorized student population. Emphasize to students that all of the information shared with you is confidential. Let students know that you are an ally.
- Don't ask about status. Even though you may know of a student's unauthorized status, don't directly confront the issue. The student must initiate the coming out process.
- Assist families in developing a safety plan in case of deportation. See Family Preparedness Plan link below.

## Resources:

Immigrant Family Support 24-hour Hotline: 1-855-435-7693

Know Your Rights. <https://www2.dom.edu/sites/default/files/know-your-rights-info-nijc-english-and-spanish-nov-2016.pdf>

Know Your Rights Wallet Card [https://www2.dom.edu/sites/default/files/icirr-know-your-rights-card\\_2017-english-and-espanol-and-polish-and-arabic.pdf](https://www2.dom.edu/sites/default/files/icirr-know-your-rights-card_2017-english-and-espanol-and-polish-and-arabic.pdf)

Family Preparedness Plan <https://www.ilrc.org/family-preparedness-plan>

Know your rights at airports and other ports of entry <https://www.aclu.org/know-your-rights/what-do-when-encountering-law-enforcement-airports-and-other-ports-entry-us>

Here to Stay Tool Kit for Educators <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1o-zD9Yy-oJboGOtWkBD3E8bz3DhEPPikOBBzYOOXSdU/edit>

Wong, T.K., Rosas, G. M., Reyna, A., Rodriguez, I., O’Shea, P., Jawetz, T., and Wolgin, P. E., (2016) *New Study of DACA Beneficiaries Shows Positive Economic and Educational Outcomes*. Center for American Progress. Retrieved from: <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigration/news/2016/10/18/146290/new-study-of-daca-beneficiaries-shows-positive-economic-and-educational-outcomes/>.

## Suggested Citation

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