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# A Pathway to Citizenship is Essential for Children to Thrive

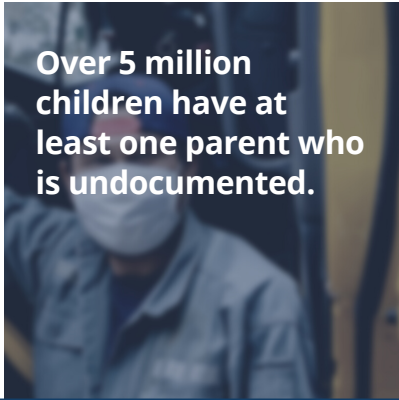


## Who are children in mixed-status immigrant families?


Mixed-status immigrant families are those with at least one citizen and one non-citizen member. Non-citizens include (but are not limited to) family members with green cards, temporary visas, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and Temporary Protected Status (TPS), as well as undocumented immigrants.




A quarter of all children in the United States have an immigrant parent—a majority of those children are U.S. citizens themselves.



Over 5 million children have at least one parent who is undocumented.



Approximately 1 million children under the age of 18 are undocumented.



Over half a million children in the U.S. have a parent who is a TPS or DACA recipient.

## What Does a Pathway to Citizenship Mean for Children in Immigrant Families?

- ▶ **Success in Schools.** The harmful effects of immigration enforcement on children—such as lower academic achievement and increased absenteeism—would decrease. Undocumented students would also be better able to pursue higher education, including more access to financial supports.
- ▶ **Access to Critical Supports.** Anti-immigrant policies can make it less likely for children to be enrolled in health and nutrition programs. Without fear of immigration-related consequences, families would have greater access to supports that are critical to their healthy development.
- ▶ **Better Health.** Uninsured rates are double for U.S. citizen children with an immigrant parent and undocumented children are almost completely barred from accessing health care. Expanded health care access and removed social stressors related to undocumented status would improve health outcomes for children and families.
- ▶ **Better Mental Health.** The fear of separation has serious long-term developmental impacts on children, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder symptoms are significantly higher for children of detained and deported parents. A pathway to citizenship would ensure that children and families do not have to deal with the anxiety related to being undocumented or having an undocumented parent.
- ▶ **Economic Stability.** U.S. citizenship means greater access to income supports that help lift families out of poverty, like the Child Tax Credit. Parents would also be able to obtain more stable, higher paying jobs with greater work protections to better support their families.
- ▶ **Keeping Families Together.** A safe and stable household and connections to a caregiver are essential to a child's wellbeing, yet many families live in fear of separation due to detention or deportation. Removing this fear would provide long-term security for children and youth who are undocumented or have an undocumented family member.