

TEMPLATE LETTER TO PARENTS

** Educators can use this letter to provide parents with information about A Dream for the Holidays.

Dear Parents,

I want to tell you about an exciting project [our classroom/school/program] is participating in. The project is called A Dream for the Holidays, and it is being coordinated by a collaborative of women's and immigrant rights groups called We Belong Together. The goal of We Belong Together is to keep families and communities whole by showing the true impact of deportations and other policies that harm immigrants on women, children and families. You can find out more about A Dream for the Holidays at www.dreamfortheholidays.org.

Keeping families together is important. Did you know that more than 5.5 million children in the U.S. have one or more parents who are undocumented and at risk of deportation? Also, more than 250,000 parents of U.S. citizen children have been deported since 2010, and over 5,000 children are now in foster care because their mother or father was detained or deported.

Children whose families are separated—or who live in fear of separation—can develop serious health problems and learning difficulties. It is this fear and anxiety, which no child should ever experience, that make us want to lend our voices to this campaign.

In September, President Trump announced he was ending the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program that has provided more than 800,000 immigrant youth with the chance to study, work, and follow their dreams. Now these 800,000 young people are at risk of being deported. And they are parents to more than 200,000 children who now also have to live with the fear of losing a parent.

In this moment Congress has the opportunity to do the right thing and stand with immigrant families. We need Congress to pass the DREAM Act for immigrant youth and stop policies that are tearing families apart. We know the voices of children and youth are powerful and can sway them to do the right thing.

A Dream for the Holidays will involve children all over the country writing letters to Congress about why we need to keep all families together. The letters will be delivered to Congress in early December, right when our representatives are looking forward to spending time with their own families.

As we prepare to write our own letters as part of A Dream for the Holidays, we'll read stories of children who have been separated from their families, and stories of other children who think this should never happen to anybody. We'll talk about why family is important, and explore our ideas about the impact that family separation can have on children and youth. We'll also talk about how we all have the power to speak out about things we think are unfair, and will use this letter-writing exercise to practice voicing our opinions to policy-makers.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Thank you,