CHAPTER 14

Resources for Allies, Activists, and Advocates for Immigrant Children and Their Families

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This chapter lists resources to support advocates and allies who are seeking social and educational justice for undocumented immigrant children and their families. Recommended community and national organizations, scholarly academic books, first-person narrative works, and scholarly journal articles offer an examination of the DREAM Act and aspects of immigration from various perspectives, including educational, social-emotional, and legal perspectives. The top national and local DREAM organizations are representative of the types of groups that are making a difference in the lives of undocumented immigrants (see Table 14.1). The web pages in this chapter should be checked on a regular basis, as many of them update and add new information.

Although these resources will help you advocate for social justice and equity in a highly charged political environment, please keep in mind that there are many more resources available that are specific to your communities.

The following questions will guide you as you become an ally and advocate for and with your students.

1. What are the focus and rationale of the book, article, study, report, or fact sheet?
2. How does this information help me to address the needs of the immigrant children and families I work with?
3. How can I adapt the essence of these materials into useful guidelines for my situation?
4. What steps do I need to take to implement these recommendations at my site? Will creating a team help to carry them out?
5. How can I share this information with others in similar situations?
Resources for Allies, Activists, and Advocates

Table 14.1. Top National and Local DREAM Organizations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United We Dream (UWD)</td>
<td>Activism, Young People, Deportation Support</td>
<td>DC, TX, NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF)</td>
<td>Policy, Attorney Support</td>
<td>DC, CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCLA Labor Center</td>
<td>Leadership Building, Community Support</td>
<td>CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Immigration Law Center (NILC)</td>
<td>Policy, Research</td>
<td>DC, CA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FWD.US (Facebook)</td>
<td>Social Media, College Outreach</td>
<td>DC, CA</td>
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<tr>
<td>Generation Progress</td>
<td>Research, Organizing</td>
<td>DC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UnidosUS (formerly NCLR)</td>
<td>Research, Policy</td>
<td>DC</td>
</tr>
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Top Local DREAM Organizations

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dream Act Coalition</td>
<td>Community Organizing, Communications</td>
<td>AZ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virginia Organizing</td>
<td>VA Policy, Community</td>
<td>VA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make the Road NY</td>
<td>Community, Activism</td>
<td>NY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CT Students for a Dream</td>
<td>Activism</td>
<td>CT</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Mexico Dream Team</td>
<td>Activism</td>
<td>NM</td>
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DREAMer and Immigrant Youth Organizations

10,000 Degrees (www.10000degrees.org/)

10,000 Degrees is a California-based organization providing a list of private scholarships for undocumented students, including both national and California-based scholarships.


This book outlines the importance of immigrant youth involvement in the political process through empirical data. The author proposes that the educational system and course offerings specific to civics and political mechanisms are the linchpin of shaping political engagement.

Written by students at the University of California, Santa Cruz, this journal article challenges the reader to reframe traditional thinking of undocumented immigrants, changing the view of them from objects of pity to contributing and valuable members of American society and members of the human race—not illegal aliens.

Dream Project (www.dreamproject-va.org)

The Dream Project is an organization in Arlington, Virginia, that provides mentoring, scholarships, and internships to undocumented students in the area. (See Chapter 8.)

Educators for Fair Consideration (E4FC) (www.e4fc.org)

Educators for Fair Consideration is an organization dedicated to empowering undocumented students to pursue college, a career, and citizenship in the United States. It also provides lists of scholarships and fellowships and other guidance directly to undocumented students—at both the undergraduate and the graduate level.

Latin American Coalition (La Coalición) (www.latinamericancoalition.org)

The Latin American Coalition is a community that promotes full and equal participation of all people in the civic, economic, and cultural life of North Carolina through education, celebration, and advocacy.

Golden Door Scholars (www.goldendoorscholars.org)

Golden Door Scholars is a nonprofit dedicated to increasing educational opportunity for undocumented students. The organization provides undocumented students with both scholarships and internship opportunities along with tips related to the college application process.


This investigative book begins with two historical chapters: one on the United States political landscape before the DREAM Act was first introduced and another a history of how the DREAM Act movement began. The remaining chapters outline the mobilization of movement through various grassroots organizations, interviews of DREAMers and activists, and social media.

Community and Religious Organizations

Catholic Charities USA (catholiccharitiesusa.org)

Catholic Charities is the second-largest provider of social services in the United States, behind only the federal government, serving more than 10 million people per year regardless of their religious, social, or economic backgrounds. It provides medical, dental, educational, vocational, and legal services for low-income immigrants and refugees.
Identity, Inc. (identity-youth.org)
This organization is working with youth and families in Montgomery County, Maryland. It is a strong example of how persistent dedication to understanding the needs of youth and families can lead to program and policy development to foster stronger communities and student success.

League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) (www.lulac.org)
LULAC is the oldest Hispanic civil rights organization in the United States. Since 1929 it has fought to obtain full access for Hispanic Americans to the U.S. political process and to improve economic, educational, health, and housing conditions for Latinos by advocating for their civil rights. It provides current research on issues important to the Hispanic community to inform advocates. They include information on the economic benefits of comprehensive immigration reform.

Make the Road New York (www.maketheroadny.org)
This organization is embedded in the community and highly visible to passersby. They want to be seen as they work to build the power of Latino and working-class communities. They are focused on social justice through organizing, policy, transformative education, and more. They are a great model of a community organization with extensive services for immigrants.

Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) (www.maldef.org)
MALDEF is a national nonprofit legal organization that employs litigation, policy, advocacy, and community education programs to protect and promote the civil rights of the Latino community. MALDEF works with parents, community members, activists, educators, and school authorities to promote social change that brings Latinos into the mainstream of American political and socioeconomic life. The website includes many resources with up-to-date information on issues affecting Hispanics and the immigrant community.

United We Dream (unitedwedream.org)
United We Dream is the largest immigrant youth–led organization in the nation. This organization is made up of over 100,000 immigrant youth and allies and 55 affiliate organizations in 26 states. The purpose of United We Dream is to organize and advocate on behalf of immigrant youth and families, regardless of immigration status. It has resources to support undocumented youth pursuing higher education.

**Education and Curricular Resources**

Association for Library Service to Children (dia.ala.org)
This website is a division of the American Library Association’s Diversity in Action. It showcases an extensive list of books for teaching about cultural diversity and the immigrant experience.

This book is a compelling exploration of the history between the United States and Mexico and how the global economy has influenced immigration, communities,
and personhood. The author offers teachers and students a deeper understanding of the many lines between countries and within countries and those that separate the rich and the poor. Ultimately, this book offers teachers creative tools, a sizable list of classroom-appropriate films, and powerful classroom activities that give students opportunities to engage in discussions about inequality.


This journal issue addresses a broad range of topics related to the life circumstance of immigrant families and their children, from birth to adolescence. The articles provide analyses of the strengths and challenges facing children growing up in immigrant families, and information on the types of resources and supports they need today to become engaged citizens of tomorrow.


This book tells the story of creating the acclaimed 1977 film Alambrista. It is an example of the challenges and the joys faced by a young Mexican as he crosses the border to find employment to support his family back home.

First Book (www.firstbook.org)

First Book is an organization where allies can obtain free books for their school or community program serving children from low-income families. It also provides high-quality books on college preparation; healthy eating and exercise; antibullying; science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM); diversity; and many other topics, as well as bilingual titles and resources. First Book partners with Latino Education and Advocacy Days (LEAD) to add a Latino Interest Titles category. This section includes books written in Spanish, bilingual (dual-language) titles, books that feature Latino characters, and books by Latino authors and illustrators that reflect Hispanic culture and heritage. Anyone who works at a Title I school or in a community program that serves at least 70% children from low-income families is eligible to participate in the First Book program.

Immersion (www.immersionfilm.com)

This 2009 video from Media That Matters focuses on an elementary student who has strong mathematics skills, but is a beginning English language learner. The film depicts a family that supports their child with their best resources and a teacher who struggles to understand his needs.


This journal issue includes background information on immigrant children and families as well as special articles focusing on early care and education, K–12 educational outcomes, and access to higher education for children of immigrants.


This book provides narratives from teachers, administrators, and community leaders who offer unique perspectives on fostering the engagement of diverse populations.
The authors discuss the intersectionality of issues faced by marginalized students, who are often segregated and disenfranchised.


This book is the outcome of Laurie Olsen’s 2 years of research in a southern California high school in the early 1990s. Using this high school as a societal microcosm, Olsen explores the challenges of being an immigrant in the United States through class, race, and racial relations. Olsen points out the problems with how immigrant children are educated in the United States and offers solutions to the barriers these children experience.


Patel uses the voices of seven immigrant students at Franklin High School in Boston. The first seven chapters include student narratives and author analyses of their education and how their outside responsibilities, documentation status, and socioeconomic factors have shaped it. The last four chapters are broader examinations of these issues.


Pérez begins the book with a discussion of the historical, educational, and legal challenges faced by undocumented students. He also uses statistics and personal interviews to disprove the common perception that students who are undocumented are criminals, showing that they are, in fact, rather engaged both in civics and academics. Pérez discusses the central role community colleges play in putting a student who is undocumented on the path to higher education and the additional challenges students face post-college. He concludes with a proposal of new educational and immigration policy framework.

Rethinking Schools (rethinkingschools.org)

Rethinking Schools is a magazine with a consistent social justice voice advocating for immigrant rights and the relationship to education. Teachers can find countless articles and issues dedicated to these topics.


This article is a testimonio about a Nicaraguan refugee fleeing civil war in the 1980s. It suggests curricular connections for the classroom.


This book helps educators position themselves as allies of and advocates for pre-K–16 English learners and immigrant children and families and includes information on career training. It is a great complementary resource to the dilemmas process discussed in this book.

With the goal of studying the immigration experience from a developmental perspective, the author conducted a 5-year study of 407 Boston-area immigrant students between the ages of 9 and 14 from Mexico, Central America, China, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods are used as chapter focuses include academic performance and engagement, relationships, learning English, and portraits of varying levels of student achievement.


Sam Swope, an author of children’s books initially hired by the Teachers & Writers Collaborative to teach a 10-day writing workshop to a 3rd-grade class in Queens, New York, has chronicled his 3 years with these students, who all either are immigrants or have parents who are immigrants. Organized chronologically by grade and by projects he worked on with the students, this narrative provides honest reflections on his triumphs and struggles as a teacher working with a diverse group of students.

Teaching Tolerance: Immigration (www.tolerance.org)

Teaching Tolerance is a project of the Southern Poverty Law Center. It provides teachers with free resources to help reduce prejudice, improve intergroup relations, and support equitable school experience for school-age children. Classroom lessons designed to develop sensitivity to immigration and undocumented families and to explore common myths about immigrants are available for grades K–12.

The College Board (professionals.collegeboard.com/guidance/financial-aid/undocumented-students)

Accurately advising undocumented students is a critical aspect of working with undocumented students. The College Board provides information about higher education policies related to undocumented high school graduates.

**Immigrant History and Narratives of Undocumented People**


Iris Chang’s *The Chinese in America* offers an easy-to-read narrative of what Chang describes as two stories: The first explains why at certain times over the course of history the Chinese decided to emigrate to the United States and the second explores the challenges they experienced upon arrival. Chang strives to break down Chinese stereotypes and misconceptions about Chinese contributions to American society.


This journal article embodies the power of art and narrative to connect people and give voice to those whose stories are untold. Dr. Glenn Hutchinson outlines his play-writing effort in “LIMBO: Marie Gonzalez & the DREAM Act,” based on interviews with an undocumented student, Marie Gonzalez.
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A project of The Immigrant Learning Center, this book contains chapters written by anthropologists, historians, and sociologists on the history of various immigrant groups in the United States and the development of and obstacles to their achievements and contributions. It dispels myths about Mexican immigrants, both documented and undocumented. Other immigrant groups in this book include Black West Indian Americans, Chinese Americans, and Muslim Americans.


This book presents a teacher's effort to understand and reveal the inner world of immigrant children. Hearts and minds of children are revealed through powerful, personal stories, which offer a qualitative and ethnographic report of their hopes, dreams, and fears. The author gives readers classroom practices that facilitate belonging and self-empowerment and support immigrant children through often traumatic and unknown transitions.


This work highlights the struggles of potential DREAMers. It provides first-person accounts of young adults who passionately want to continue their educational experiences, but who face obstacles because of their immigration status.


Inspired by her housekeeper, a Guatemalan woman who was separated from her children for 12 years, Nazario retraces the journey of Enrique, who travels by train top from Tegucigalpa, Honduras, to Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, in order to find his mother in the United States. Nazario faces dangerous and brutal conditions that are, as she describes, only an “iota” of what these children, as young as 7 years old, face in search of their parents.


Containing first-person narratives of 24 undocumented immigrants living in the United States, this book is part of Dave Eggers and Lola Vollen's Voice of Witness project (voiceofwitness.org/), whose mission is to use oral history to bring human rights issues to national attention.


Pérez's work includes personal narratives of undocumented students along with the author's own observations and informal interview of their teachers and peers. Special features of this book are the author's introduction, which includes an in-depth look at the myths surrounding undocumented persons and a history of the DREAM Act as well as a reading group guide.

This book can help educators understand the challenges faced by immigrant families as they prepare their children for success, the values they teach, and the resilience they engender.

Welcome to USA.gov (www.welcometousa.gov/)

This website is dedicated to providing immigrants and the organizations that serve them with basic settlement information, increasing awareness of federal government resources available to immigrants, and supporting the needs of receiving communities and immigrant-serving organizations.


This book is a tribute to two DREAM student activists, Tam Tran and Cinthya Felix, who died tragically, in a car accident. The first part of the book contains student and faculty narratives reflecting on Tran and Felix’s advocacy work. The second part includes student and faculty essays on the immigrant youth movement from different perspectives, including those of gay and lesbian youth, and different countries such as Iran, Mexico, and the Philippines.

**Legal Information, Policy Analysis, and Immigrant Rights Organizations**

American Immigration Council (AIC) (www.americanimmigrationcouncil.org)

The Council's goal is to help shape a 21st-century vision of American immigration through research and policy advocacy, legal education and litigation, educational outreach, and international exchange. Its Education Center sponsors an annual Celebrate America creative writing contest for 5th-grade students to explore the effects of immigration on their lives, other projects for various grade levels, and mini-grants for educators. The AIC publishes the *Educators’ Immigration Resource Guide*, which offers K–12 lesson plans, book and film reviews, and other resources that value the contributions of immigrants. The website includes current state-by-state information on the economic and political power of immigrants.

AYUDA (ayuda.com)

AYUDA advocates for low-income immigrants through direct legal, social, and language services; training; and outreach in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. They work to address the illegal efforts of individuals misrepresenting themselves as licensed attorneys who offer legal services to immigrants. In partnership with Georgetown University Law Center’s Community Justice Project, AYUDA published a report titled *To Protect and Serve: Accessing Justice for Victims of Notario Fraud in the Nation’s Capital*. There is also a manual, *Notario Fraud Remedies: A Practical Manual for Immigration Practitioners*.

The author proposes that because of repeated attempts by Congress to overturn *Plyler v. Doe* (1982), it should be codified by federal legislation, as the benefits outweigh the cost of educating children who are undocumented. He further argues that public schools should request federal reimbursement for their education. This article also includes an extensive history of the case.


This book explores the history of U.S. immigration policies and how policies are created to exclude and exploit groups of people, especially immigrants from Mexico and Central America.


This book dismantles 20 common myths about education, including “Immigrants take American jobs,” “Immigrants don’t pay taxes,” and “The rules apply to everyone, so new immigrants need to follow them just as immigrants in the past did.” Chomsky describes how race, ethnicity, and gender are used to marginalize immigrants.


This book offers a discussion of the increasing immigrant populations of Canada and the United States. The book will inform teachers and policymakers of the unique characteristics and challenges facing immigrant children and their families.


Kids in Need of Defense (KIND) (www.supportkind.org/en/)

KIND provides quality and compassionate legal counsel to unaccompanied refugee and immigrant children in the United States. To this end it created a pro bono movement of law firms, corporations, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), universities, and volunteers to ensure that no such child appears in immigration court without representation. Its pro bono attorneys provide mentorship until a case is completed. KIND also works to change law, policy, and practice to improve the treatment and protection of unaccompanied children in the United States by advocating before Congress and the federal government and through public outreach and trainings, including Know Your Rights presentations.


This article provides sociological and demographic information in order to support better-informed decisions for students who are immigrants. Kohli provides facts to dispel myths about undocumented students. He outlines the contributions of undocumented workers to the economy.
Migration Policy Institute (MPI) (www.migrationpolicy.org)

MPI is dedicated to the analysis of migration and immigration worldwide. It provides U.S. immigration reform resources with up-to-date information on the debate under way in Washington, DC, including updates about DACA. Its ELL Information Center addresses the growth of pre-K–12 English language learners across the United States; how they are faring in schools; and the policies affecting them through demographic maps, fact sheets, and state-level data resources.

My Undocumented Life (mydocumentedlife.org/tag/lgbtq/)

This blog is written by an immigrant who successfully navigated the educational system as an undocumented student. The resources here are extensive and inclusive of LGBTQ immigrants in double exile.

National Immigration Law Center (www.nilc.org)

This resource covers current immigration policies and litigation. It engages in court cases to ensure that due process rights of immigrants are protected.

The Pew Research Center’s Hispanic Trends Project (www.pewhispanic.org)

The Pew Research Center launched the Hispanic Trends Project in 2001 to improve understanding of the Hispanic population’s diversity and to chronicle Latinos’ growing impact on the United States. It publishes demographic studies and research on Latino identity, education and immigration trends among other Latino social matters, and materials that can be used by educators and activists wishing to inform colleagues, administrators, community organizations and legislators.

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) (www.splcenter.org)

The Southern Poverty Law Center is dedicated to fighting hate and bigotry and seeking justice for the most vulnerable members of our society. It is internationally known for tracking and exposing the activities of hate groups. It works to achieve the ideals of equal justice and equal opportunity through litigation, education, and other forms of advocacy. Through its Teaching Tolerance project, it provides free resources that teach school children to reject hate, embrace diversity, and respect differences. Its Immigrant Justice page (www.splcenter.org/what-we-do/immigrant-justice) provides up-to-date information on events affecting undocumented children and their families.

UnidosUS (www.unidosus.org)

Formerly the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), UnidosUS conducts applied research, policy analysis, and advocacy to increase policymaker and public understanding of Hispanic needs and to encourage the adoption of programs and policies that equitably serve Hispanics. They publish facts on issues affecting minority, limited-English-proficient, and low-income Hispanics from infancy through adulthood. The website has an education link with information and materials on early childhood, K–12, and higher education. Their report Buenos Principios: Latino Children in the Earliest Years of Life addresses health care and education concerns for Latino infants and toddlers (publications.unidosus.org/bitstream/handle/123456789/1212/Buenos_Principios.pdf).
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Urban Institute (www.urban.org)

The Urban Institute engages in open-minded, evidence-based research to diagnose social, economic, and governance problems facing the United States. They include resources on immigrant children and their families. Of special interest is a paper by Golden and Fortuny titled *Young Children of Immigrants and the Path to Educational Success* and *Five Questions for Ajay Chaudry on Children of Immigrants.*

Professional Organizations, Unions, and Professional Development

American Federation of Teachers (AFT): Immigration Resources (www.aft.org/our-community/immigration)

The AFT is a union that provides educators with resources in English and Spanish about protecting students. Topics covered include immigrant rights, immigration raid, dos and don'ts if ICE comes to your house, and steps for families to create an emergency plan.

Colorín Colorado! (www.colorincolorado.org)

This bilingual (Spanish and English) website has extensive resources for educators and families. It has book lists for crossing-the-border and immigration stories where teachers and teacher educators can find materials appropriate for their students. It also has extensive links to helpful videos, articles, and professionals in advocacy.

National Education Association (NEA): Immigration (www.nea.org/home/immigration.html)

The National Education Association is a union that provides educators with resources, including a “DREAMers Welcome” poster featuring butterfly artwork and information about what educators can do when communities are threatened by immigration raids. The collective voice of union members was able to stop the deportation of a North Carolina student.

TESOL Advocacy and Policy Summit (www.tesol.org/advance-the-field/advocacy-resources/tesol-advocacy-policy-summit)

Educators from across the United States gather to learn about the latest federal education policies and how to advocate for English language learners at the federal level. On the last day of the summit participants meet with their state’s representatives and senators to advocate for their students.

Social, Emotional, and Physical Well-Being


This document explains the traumatic experience encountered by undocumented youth, including racial profiling, ongoing discrimination, immigration raids, random checks of family member’s immigration status, separation from deported family...
members, and placement in detention camps. It concludes with the importance of forming trusting relationships between undocumented youth and caring teachers.


The Peaceable Schools and Communities framework connects the personal, professional, and political aspects of peace and justice while promoting school and community unity. It provides a set of guiding principles for educators and community members, positive definitions of the self at the individual level, and the promotion of social justice.


The authors explain that many Latino immigrant youth are at risk of low health quality as a result of trauma, prejudice, discrimination, separation from family members, poverty, low levels of education, unsafe work environments, and low English proficiency. Undocumented youth are at a higher risk of mental and physical health problems, because of the exposure to anxieties and worries about legal status and possibility of deportation.

Child Welfare Information Gateway (www.childwelfare.gov/topics/systemwide/diverse-populations/immigration/wellbeing)

This website offers documents about challenges and traumatic experiences faced by immigrant youth, such as the consequences of having a parent deported. Teacher allies can use the immigrant service directory to find resources available in their state.


The purpose of this book is to expand the comprehension and understanding of the “immigrant paradox,” meaning that children in their middle childhood from immigrant families often do better academically and behaviorally and have more resilience than their native-born peers. This book challenges the stereotype of low-performing immigrant children.

GLAAD: Resources for Immigrants (www.glaad.org/blog/resources-immigrantsrecursos-para-inmigrantes)

This website has resources for LGBTQ educators and immigrants that address their unique needs and discuss the issues from their unique perspectives.


This book covers the lives of 150 undocumented young adults as they reflect on the challenges of growing up undocumented in the Los Angeles area. The author addresses the mental health impact that status has on youth transitioning into adulthood.

Health Behavior in School-Aged Children (HBSC) (www.hbsc.org)

The HBSC research network conducts cross-national research in 45 countries and regions across Europe and North America. HBSC research focuses on areas such as
clinical medicine, epidemiology, human biology, pediatrics, pedagogy, psychology, public health, public policy, and sociology.

Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) (www.icirr.org)

ICIRR works with organizations and programs to empower the immigrant community in Illinois. Its website provides health care resources for immigrants and refugees. It also introduces fact sheets to make documented and undocumented immigrants aware of health options, including Medicaid and Medicare, in different languages.

Illinois Refugee Mental Health Task Force (ILRMH) (www.ilrmh.org)

ILRMH is a volunteer task force working to raise awareness about the negative impact of current political policies toward immigrants and their detrimental effects on the health and well-being of immigrant youth and their families. The organization also calls attention to immigrants’ mental health needs and offers information on available services. ILRMH provides resources about the health and well-being of trauma-exposed immigrant populations. It offers a series of projects, resource lists, and trainings for teachers.

Kennedy Forum Illinois Resources & Hotlines to Support Youth (thekennedyforumillinois.org/resources-to-support-youth)

This website provides a list of crisis hotlines, centers, and associations that help individuals with mental disorders. These resource centers can help Illinois educators support undocumented youths who need mental health assistance.


This article explores academic, college, career, and socioemotional challenges and obstacles faced by undocumented students. It suggests strategies for teachers to use when teaching this population of students.

National School Climate Center (NSCC) (www.schoolclimate.org)

The NSCC promotes a positive school climate that fosters social, emotional, and academic skills. Its goal is to help schools to integrate crucial social and emotional learning with academic instruction to prevent dropout, reduce physical violence and bullying, and to develop healthy and positively engaged adults.