

# VIDA DIFERIDA (Life,Deferred)

## A study guide

Genre: Documentary

Length: 23 minutes

Release date: 2013 (additional footage added in 2017)

Director: Brenda Avila-Hanna

Official Website: [www.dreamerdocs.com](http://www.dreamerdocs.com)

### Film background

After the announcement of the policy known as "Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals", or DACA, Vanessa, an undocumented teenager, contemplates the possibility of a future she was ready to give up on. How will this policy announcement impact her life and the lives of those around her?

Vanessa's story documents life years before DACA, the application process after the policy was announced and follows up on life after DACA.

### Questions for Discussion

1. **Before you watch the film:** write down 3 things you think you already know about DACA/ current immigration policies.
2. **During/after the film:** write down 3 things you would like to know more about on DACA/current immigration policies.
3. **After watching the film:** look back at your answers for question #1. Did anything on your list change? Look back at #2. What parts of Vanessa's story make you want to learn more about those 3 things? Discuss in small groups.
4. Vanessa talks about doing things for her parents such as buying a car for them some day. "They are my parents (...) It's the least I can do". Can you relate to her sentiment towards her parents? Explain.
5. After the announcement of DACA, Vanessa hesitates to apply. What are some possible reasons? If you were in her shoes, would you apply for DACA? Why or why not?
6. Vanessa is the first one in her family to navigate the U.S. educational and legal system. Describe one example of this in the film. Can you relate to that? Why or why not? Explain.
7. How did Vanessa's life change (or stay the same) after DACA?

**8. Refer to the Define American DACA Fact Sheet**

(<https://diversity.iupui.edu/170825-DACA-Facts.pdf>).

What are the pros and cons of providing a path to citizenship or lawful permanent residency to undocumented young people?

**9. What would an ideal comprehensive immigration reform look like? How would such a policy affect Vanessa and the people in her life?**

## **Glossary**

**DREAM Act:** The Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors Act is proposed legislation that would provide a path to legal status for undocumented immigrant youth brought to the U.S. as children. It was first proposed in 2001 and was reintroduced in 2007 & 2010. It failed to pass. It has been reintroduced into the Senate again in 2017.

**DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals):** On 6/15/12, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security said it would refrain from deporting certain undocumented young people who came to the U.S. as children. Through an application process, they could be granted temporary permission (called “deferred action”) to stay in the U.S. They could also apply for an employment authorization document and a social security number. DACA was not a law; a grant of DACA was temporary (renewable every 2 years), and did not provide a path to legal status. The DACA program was rescinded by the Trump Administration on 9/5/17. It was given a 6 month extension: after 3/5/18, DACA permits will start expiring.

**DREAMers:** the young people who could benefit from the DREAM Act if it were to pass, and who qualified or potentially qualified for DACA. There are an estimated 1.4-1.8 million DREAMers in the U.S.

## **Additional information**

**Higher education:** There is currently no federal financial aid for undocumented students, even those who have DACA. 18 states now have laws or provisions permitting in-state tuition at public colleges for certain undocumented students. Some states and universities have financial aid for undocumented students. 3 states have a ban or a restriction on access to public colleges for undocumented students.

**Taxes:** DACA recipients are required to pay federal income taxes yet cannot receive federal benefits such as Social Security or food stamps.

**\*Define American DACA Fact Sheet:**

<https://diversity.iupui.edu/170825-DACA-Facts.pdf>

## **FOR EDUCATORS**

### **Additional Sources**

National Immigration Law Center: [nilc.org](http://nilc.org)

American Immigration Council: [americanimmigrationcouncil.org](http://americanimmigrationcouncil.org)

### **Study Guide Highlights**

-Remind students that this is a safe space for them to share their opinions and experiences with respect and discretion towards others.

-We recommend that students answer questions #1 and #2 before consulting the Define America Fact Sheet.

-For examples on #6, refer to scenes such as preparing for SATs, applying for scholarships, jobs, etc. and what that might be like when you are the first in your family to do these things.

-Suggested follow-up activities:

- 1) Write 3 things you learned after the Vida Diferida film and lesson. Write 3 things you want to learn more about now.**
- 2) Watch “I was born in Mexico, but...” at [www.dreamerdocs.com](http://www.dreamerdocs.com) and compare this story-telling style to Vanessa’s.**
- 3) As a class or individually, write a letter to your Representative and share your impressions on DACA, the DREAM Act and Comprehensive Immigration Reform.**