

# ARELI IS A DREAMER

## Readers' Discussion Guide



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Español

**Content Advisory:** This readers' guide discusses content from *Areli Is a Dreamer*, a true story written by a real life DACA recipient, Areli Morales, about her journey to the United States from Mexico as a child. It discusses the complex emotions that come with living in a new country and discovering your sense of belonging.

# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Moving away from someone you love can make you feel lonely. Areli feels this way when her parents and brother move to America, and then she feels it again when she has to leave her abuela and friends in Mexico. Have you ever had a friend or family member move or go on a long trip? How did that feel?
2. When Areli starts at her new school, kids tease her for things she cannot control, such as not speaking English or being from Mexico. Have you or someone you know ever been teased for being who you are? Did you stand up to that person or tell a teacher?
3. Sometimes people call us words we don't understand. Areli is called "illegal" during her first day at school and asks her mom what it means. How would it feel to be called "illegal"?
4. Areli tries really hard at school, and before long she can speak English and count by fives, and has learned about the Constitution. Have you ever tried really hard at something? What was that experience like? How does that make you feel about Areli's experience?
5. Areli learns about the millions of people who immigrated to America before her. Did you know so many people moved to America? Do you know anyone who moved to the US?

## SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS

For more information on approaching potentially difficult topics, check out these resources.

- [Immigration](#), Britannica Kids
- [Discover Immigration](#), Kids Discover
- [How to Talk to Your Child about Immigration](#), Recommendations for Parents
- [Fact Sheet: Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals](#), National Immigration Forum
- [Teaching About Refugees](#), United Nations Refugee Agency



# SPEAK UP FOR DREAMERS

Dear Reader,

I am honored you have picked up a copy of *Areli Is a Dreamer*, written by me and illustrated by the wonderful Luisa Uribe. I have been a DACA recipient since 2013, and my debut picture book tells the story of my journey from one home to another. When I was only six years old, I left my beautiful home in Mexico to be reunited with my parents and brother in the United States. When I crossed the border eighteen years ago, I had no way of knowing the complexities and struggles that I would face. Writing this book has helped me step back into my six-year-old self's shoes and reflect on what brought me to where I am today. I'm eternally grateful to Brenda Bowen, Lee Wade, and Luisa Uribe for helping to transform my story into a book that is accessible to young readers.

When I was just a baby, my parents left my older brother and me with our abuela and embarked on a dangerous journey from our beloved hometown of Puebla, Mexico, to the busy streets of New York City. Their hope was that they could start a life in the United States that would better provide for my brother and me. It took years, but we were finally reunited with our parents in New York City. Since then, I have made the United States my home. As I grow older, I'm often reminded that I am the daughter of immigrants who sacrificed their dreams so I could pursue mine.

American immigration laws are complex, limiting, and difficult to navigate. The Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy has provided some relief to thousands of Dreamers who came to this country as children. DACA has allowed many of us to come out of the shadows and speak our truth. DACA is a privilege for many of us, but it is not a permanent solution. Millions of undocumented immigrants contribute meaningfully to this country and deserve permanent immigration relief. Please use the provided contact information to call your state representatives and urge them to support DACA and push for legislation that could provide comprehensive immigration reform to millions of immigrants. No one should live in fear in a country they call home.

Sincerely,



Areli Morales



# DREAMERS

Deferred Action for Children Arrivals (DACA) is a policy that allows certain individuals who meet program requirements to request a grant of deferred action.<sup>1</sup>

**On average, DACA recipients arrived in the U.S. when they were 7 and are currently 28 years old.<sup>2</sup>**

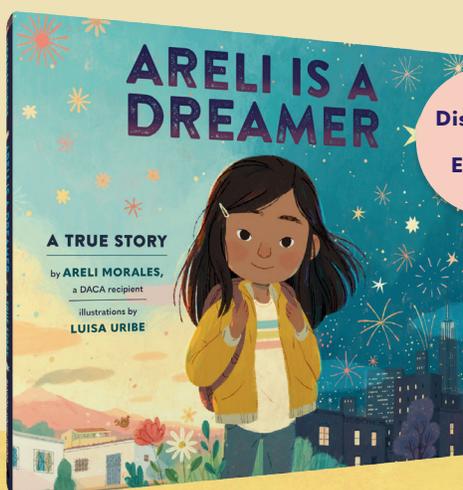
**There are over 600,000 DACA recipients in the United States.<sup>3</sup>**

**79.4% of Dreamers are from Mexico.<sup>4</sup>**

Over the past four years, DACA and other immigrant protection policies have faced a number of reforms and attacks. Many families and young people who have only ever known this country as their home are in danger of being labeled illegal. While DACA applications were reinstated at the beginning of the year, newly proposed legislation is being introduced to the House soon and promises a pathway to citizenship for noncitizens. RHCBS is proud to introduce Areli, a DACA recipient, and help her tell her story to young readers. We urge our readers to learn more about these programs and those that depend on them.

Find your state representative with the link below and contact them to show your support for our Dreamers.

[house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative](https://www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative)



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<sup>1</sup> DACA, <https://www.ilrc.org/daca>

<sup>2</sup> What We Know About the Demographic and Economic Impacts of DACA Recipients: Spring 2020 Edition, <https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/immigrationnews/2020/04/06/482676/know-demographic-economic-impacts-daca-recipients-spring-2020-edition/>, April 6, 2020

<sup>3</sup> Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) Data Tools, Migration Policy Institute, <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/programs/data-hub/deferred-action-childhood-arrivals-daca-profiles>, June 30, 2020

<sup>4</sup> Approximate Active DACA Recipients - March 31, 2020, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, <https://www.uscis.gov/sites/default/files/document/data/Approximate%20Active%20DACA%20Receipts%20-%20March%2031%2C%202020.pdf>, March 31, 2020

# MEET THE TEAM

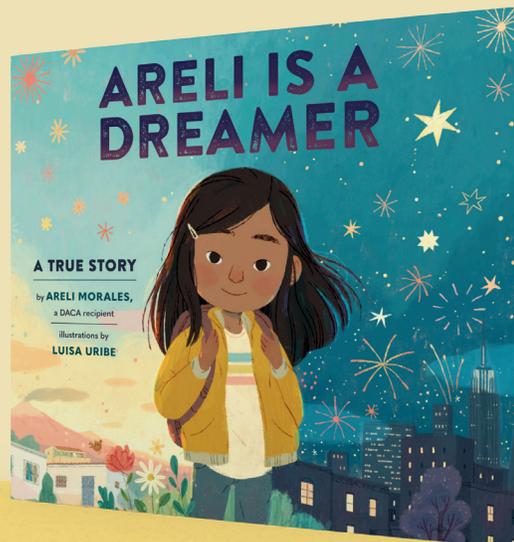


Elizabeth Morales

**Areli Morales** was born in Puebla, Mexico, but was raised in New York City. She is a DACA recipient, and *Areli Is a Dreamer* is her debut children's book. A graduate of CUNY-Brooklyn College with a bachelor's degree in childhood bilingual education, she currently works as a substitute teacher. One day, Areli hopes to have her own classroom, where she can teach children to value the power of storytelling and empower them to share their own stories. She lives in Brooklyn, New York, with her family.



**Luisa Uribe** was awarded the Society of Illustrators Dilys Evans Founder's Award for *The Vast Wonder of the World* by Melina Mangal. She also illustrated *Your Name Is a Song* by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow, which received a starred review from *Kirkus Reviews*, describing her work as "dynamic." She lives in Bogotá, Colombia, with her partner and two cats.



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