Growing Up Undocumented in Ireland

We surveyed 108 undocumented parents raising their children in Ireland. Here's what we found out.

68% of those born in Ireland are over 5 years old. 20% are over 10 years old.

78% of those born outside of Ireland have been living here for over 5 years. Some have been here for more than 16 years.

Maria*, 19 yrs old

“My home is here in Ireland. I came when I was 7 years old, and now I’m 19. My dream is to attend college, get a degree and find a job. I don’t know what to do as I’ve spent my whole life studying and look forward to attending college, only to find out that I can’t.”

Jon*, 17 yrs old

“I feel trapped and like there is no way out for me. The future is very worrying for me and it’s very hard to be hopeful as I don’t know if I will be able to have a future here.”

*Names are pseudonyms.
The average length of time in school is 5 years

- 31% are under the age of 9
- 42% are between 10-17 years old
- 27% are over 18 years old
- 8% have spent over 10 years in school

For these children and young people, Ireland is home – the home they know and love.

Just like everyone else, they have hopes, dreams and ambitions. They’ve grown up here, they live here, and they belong here.

But right now there is no pathway to residency for undocumented children and young people, whether they were born here or came here with their parents.

This is an enormous waste of talent and a loss of great potential. These children and young people are valuable and have a valuable contribution to make, but uncertainty and fear will stop them from thriving and being the best they can be.

The government has the power to bring about a solution and provide a pathway to residency. All they need to do is introduce a straightforward and sensible mechanism that ensures no child or young person grows up undocumented in Ireland. These children and young people are our future, and their future is here.

This survey was carried out from January to March 2019, representing a total of 108 parents and 185 children.

*Names changed to protect identities

Being undocumented means not having a legal status in the state.