

## Differences between *jus sanguinis* and *jus soli*

The terms *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis* derive from Latin and are used in citizenship law. More specifically, *jus soli* means “right of soil”; under this system, the right of citizenship is acquired by being born in a country, regardless of the nationality of an individual’s parents. There are more than 30 countries in the world that recognize birthright citizenship. Among these are Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Cuba, Mexico and the United States, just to name a few. On the other hand, “*jus sanguinis*” means “right of blood”, and it denotes the ability of an individual to claim the citizenship of a country by virtue of being born to a parent who is a citizen of that country.

In Italy, the citizenship law is based on the *ius sanguinis* principle. This principle decides that Italian citizenship is obtained automatically:

- at **birth**: if at least one of the parents has Italian citizenship;
- by **adoption**: if an Italian citizen adopts a child who is under the age of 18;
- in the case of children born in Italy who have been **abandoned** by their parents;
- if the parents have no citizenship (stateless) and/or if their country does not allow that the citizenship of the parents is passed on to their children.

According to this law, **children born in Italy to foreign citizens do not become Italian citizens at birth, but acquire the citizenship of their parents.**

The law gives these young people the **right to apply for Italian citizenship** only at the **age of 18** if they have always resided in Italy. The application must be submitted **before the age of 19**, otherwise, they may not be approved.

In order to apply for Italian citizenship at the age of 18, it is necessary to:

**1. Be born in Italy**

**2. Having always lived in Italy regularly**

With a “permesso di soggiorno” (*permit to stay*)

**3. Have legal residence in Italy from birth up to 18 years**

If, on the other hand, your legal residence is not continuous (for example: because you have changed home many times, or you have changed city and you have not registered your new residence immediately at the Civil Registry), but you have always lived in Italy, you can submit other documents to prove that you have always lived here: school certificates (report cards, enrollment and/or school attendance documents), medical certificates, vaccinations, etc.

**4. Apply for citizenship at age 18**

The request must be submitted **before turning 19**. Applications made after the age of 19 may be denied because they are submitted late.

Over the years, there has been a discussion on **reforms to change the citizenship law** and especially to use the *ius soli* as the principle for a new law.

At the moment, however, the Italian law on Italian citizenship has not been changed and is still based on the *ius sanguinis* principle. There are many movements and associations working to bring about this change.

<https://italiahello.it/en/articolo/applying-for-italian-citizenship-at-18-for-young-people-born-in-italy/>