

ELL Connect Kit

*Teacher Resource for Supporting ELL Students
Social Emotional Learning in the Classroom*



VSB Collaborative Inquiry

Spring 2021

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ELL Connect Kit Binder

1. Mission Statement and Kit Overview
2. Resource to Support Students Experiencing Trauma
3. Master copy of Storybook Lessons:
 - A Different Pond
 - The Day You Begin
 - Marwan's Journey
 - The Ant Hill Disaster
4. Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A Guide for Teachers and Schools
5. The Resilience Guide: Strategies for Responding to Trauma in Refugee Children
6. 40 Icebreakers for Small Groups



ELL Connect Kit



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2. *Managing Trauma Workbook for Teens: A Toolbox of Reproducible Assessments and Activities for Facilitators* by Ester R. A. Leutenberg and John J. Liptak, EdD
3. *Stand Together or Fall Apart: Professionals Working with Immigrant Families* by Judith K. Bernhard
4. *Teaching to Diversity: The Three-Block Model of Universal Design for Learning* by Jennifer Katz
5. *Fostering Resilient Learners: Strategies for Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom* by Kristin Souers with Pete Hall
6. *Storybooks with lesson plans:*
 - *Marwan's Journey* by Patricia de Arias
 - *The Day You Begin* by Jacqueline Woodson
 - *The Ant Hill Disaster* by Julia Cook
 - *A Different Pond* by Bao Phi
7. ELL Connect Kit Binder:
 - Mission Statement and Kit Overview
 - Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A Guide for Teachers and Schools
 - The Resilience Guide: Strategies for Responding to Trauma in Refugee Children
 - 40 Icebreakers for Small Groups
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 - The Ant Hill Disaster



ELL Connect Kit



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Additional Recommended Resources

The following resources have been added to the kit as of September 2022:

Elementary Add Ons:

- ***Building Resiliency in Children: A Trauma-Informed Activity Guide for Children*** by Kate McGrady
- ***1 Minute Happiness Journal*** by Eva Olsen

Secondary Add Ons:

- ***Building Resiliency in Teens: A Trauma-Informed Activity Guide for Teens*** by Kate McGrady
- ***Teens Managing Life's Expectations*** by Ester R. A. Leutenberg & Carol Butler Cooper
- ***1 Minute Happiness Journal*** by Eva Olsen



ELL CONNECT KIT

*A Collaborative Inquiry Project compiled by:
Richard Edge, Ann Hunter, Stephanie Tsui*



February 2020

Background:

This inquiry project came about in the Fall of 2018. Counsellors at John Oliver and David Thompson Secondary saw a need for additional social-emotional support for our struggling ELL students. Some students were disengaged from school and feeling unmotivated. We wanted to dig deeper into these feelings, where these feelings originated and how we can better support ELL students. We began by discussing our concerns across the school communities. There were over-arching themes that became apparent such as: difficulty in language acquisition and understanding, fear of stigma and sense of inadequacy, pressures of not progressing and specifically, how to meet learning goals, a need to feel welcomed, a need for increasing supports surrounding social-emotional learning, a difficulty in change/transitioning from home country to Canada. This all led back to how we, as their educators, can support them in all of these challenges.

Inquiry Question:

What supports best meet the needs of our struggling ELL students?

Next Steps:

We began by surveying approximately 80 students in secondary ELL classrooms, mixed grades and ELL levels, at David Thompson and John Oliver Secondary using slido.com and compiling responses. We were keen to know their answers to the following questions:

- What is something you would like your ELL teachers to know?
- What supports would you like more of to help ELL students?
- How can school and family work together to support you?
- What do ELL students find most difficult?
- Looking back to your ELL, what is something you wish you did differently or wish you had known more about?

Introduction to Our ELL Connect Kit:

The ELL Connect Kit was designed to supplement the resources of classroom teachers using the social-emotional learning lens. Its focus is to connect and meet the learning needs of students through an interactive and trauma-informed set of lessons and resources. It uses storybooks as a creative base for exploring the various themes of adjusting and transitioning to school and life in Canada that many of our ELL students are experiencing. All core-competencies in the new BC Ministry of Education Curriculum are incorporated in the lesson plans. The kit's intended target audience is for grade 8-12 ELL classrooms; however, lessons could be adapted to fit intermediate aged students in elementary.

We envision this resource being used in various ways:

- To be used independently by classroom teachers or in collaboration with school counsellors
- To be used as a professional development resource to better understand potential trauma in our ELL students

Guiding Tips


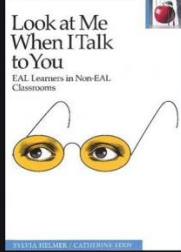
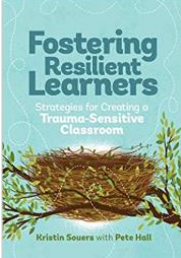
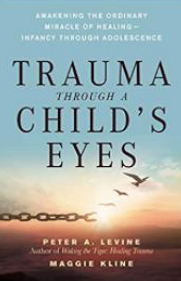
- Sensitive topics require a safe space. Provide rules around confidentiality and a respectful code of conduct in the classroom before beginning any lessons
- Allow time for discussion or inner thoughts
- Encourage but do not require everyone to share
- Topics may trigger strong emotions – connect with the counsellor as needed
- Activities are meant to foster self-awareness and ownership over potential change

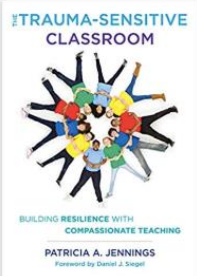
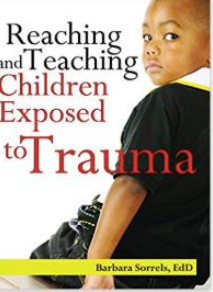
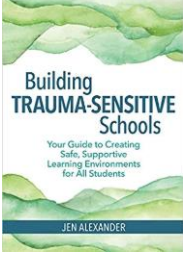
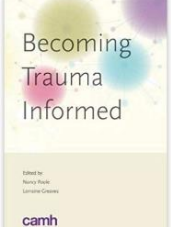
ELL Connect Kit Contents:

- Resources to Support Students Experiencing Trauma
- Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A Guide for Teachers and Schools
- The Resilience Guide: Strategies for Responding to Trauma in Refugee Children
- 40 Icebreakers for Small Groups
- Lesson Plans and Story Books:
 1. The Ant Hill Disaster
 2. A Different Pond
 3. Marwan's Journey
 4. The Day You Begin

Resources to Support Students Experiencing Trauma

Books that may be helpful:

| Book Cover | Title and Author |
|---|---|
|  | <p><i>Stand Together or Fall Apart: Professional Working with Immigrant Families</i> by Judith K. Bernhard</p> |
|  | <p><i>Look at Me When I Talk to You: EAL Learner in Non-EAL Classrooms</i> by Sylvia Helmer and Catherine Eddy</p> |
|  | <p><i>Fostering Resilient Learners: Strategies for Creating a Trauma-Sensitive Classroom</i> by Kristin Souers with Peter Hall</p> |
|  | <p><i>Relationship, Responsibility, and Regulation: Trauma Invested Practices for Fostering Resilient Learners</i> by Kristin Souers and Pete Hall</p> |
|  | <p><i>Trauma through a Child's Eyes: Awakening the Ordinary Miracle of Healing</i> by Peter Levine and Maggie Kline</p> |

| | |
|--|---|
|  | <p><i>Trauma Sensitive Classroom: Building Resilience with Compassionate Teaching</i> by Patricia Jennings</p> |
|  | <p><i>Reaching and Teaching Children Exposed to Trauma</i> by Barbara Sorrels</p> |
|  | <p><i>Building Trauma Sensitive Schools: Your Guide to Creating Safe, Supportive Learning Environments for All Students</i> by Jen Alexander</p> |
|  | <p><i>Becoming Trauma Informed</i> Edited by Nancy Poole and Lorraine Greaves</p> |

Additional Resources/Websites:

BC Ministry of Education

Compassionate Learning Communities – Supporting Trauma-informed Practice webpage
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/erase/mental-health>

Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A Guide for Teachers and Schools
<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/diverse-student-needs/students-from-refugee-backgrounds-guide.pdf>

Caring for Syrian Refugee Children: A Program for Welcoming Young Children and Their Families
https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/diverse-student-needs/caring_for_syrian_refugee_children-final.pdf

Vancouver Association of Survivors of Torture (VAST) – Trauma-Informed Counselling Group:
<http://vast-vancouver.ca/>

Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Services Agencies of BC (AMSSA) -
<https://www.amssa.org/resources/videos/webinars/>

The Resilience Guide: Strategies for Responding to Trauma in Refugee Children
<https://cmascanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/resilienceguide.pdf>

| Title: A Different Pond | | |
|--|--|-------|
| Concept: Family, Responsibility, Tradition, Hope | | |
| Core Competencies: Personal Awareness and Responsibility, Critical Thinking, Communication | | |
| Objectives: To create awareness of a family's responsibility to each other, how traditions carry over, hope for better future | | |
| Length: 80 Minutes Materials: Book, Traditions List, Reader's Guide | | |
| Size: 30 students | | |
| Space: Classroom | | |
| ITEM | INSTRUCTIONS | NOTES |
| Ice Breaker | Use list of traditions and have students be in partners/teams to guess what country/culture that tradition is from | |
| Mini Lesson | What is a tradition? Have groups form a definition and share with the class Collaborate to agree on the wording for a single definition to be used for the class Have students share traditions from their family/country/culture – class wide or think/pair/share | |
| Linking | Why do traditions carry over so many years? What are some new traditions your family may have adopted while in Vancouver? | |
| Core Lesson | Read book, stopping along the way as necessary for questions/clarification/extensions | |
| Reflection | Were there concepts in the story that students can connect to? How is this family similar or different than yours? | |
| Student Task | Ask students to write a sequence of events that happened in the story. In the next column, students write about their own family that connects with the story. | |

Linking with Textbook

Managing Trauma Workbook for Teens:

- *A Historical Perspective, pg 70*
Mandala, pg 74
Hopefulness, pg 75
Self-Esteem, pg 76
My Strengths and Talents, pg 77

A Different Pond – sequencing of events

| Sequence of Events in A Different Pond | Using these events, write/draw about a time in your family's life that is related to the story |
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Customs and Traditions From Around the World

Depending on where you are these traditions from around the world may appear a little strange, but to others they are part of their history and heritage,

Here's a list of the most unusual. You may already know some of them, but all of them are very fascinating and give you an insight in to other peoples cultures and traditions.

If you have any, or know of any other customs and traditions that aren't mentioned in this list please feel free to add them within the comments section.

Ivrea City, Italy.

The core celebration of carnival is based on a locally famous Battle of the Oranges.

Tooth Throwing.

In Greece, a child's tooth is thrown onto the roof for good luck.

The 'Evil' Santa Claus.

Krampus Night. Celebrated in Austria on December 5th, Krampus is described as Santa Claus' evil twin brother!

Pointing the Thumb.

In Indonesia, a person points with their thumb as it's considered very rude to point with a forefinger.

Hold your Stomach, the Thunder is Coming.

Japanese children cover their tummy button when they hear thunder.

Happy Feet?

Foot Binding, a beauty ritual for women to keep their feet from growing too large, is a painful Chinese tradition that only stopped in the 1930s.

Coming of Age.

The Fulani Sharo Tradition. A coming of age ceremony celebrated in some parts of Africa

Wealthy Start.

In Brazil, New Year's Day is celebrated with a bowl of lentil soup as the lentil is considered a symbol of wealth

Touching in Thailand.

It's considered very rude to pointing the bottom of one's foot at another person, as is touching the top of another person's head.

361 Days a Year.

The Bahai People of Iran have their own calendar consisting of nineteen months each with nineteen days.

Tooth Fairy.

In many Western cultures, children leave teeth under their pillow for the tooth fairy to collect – usually in return for some money!

Silver Protection.

A Norwegian bride traditionally wears a silver crown with dangling charms to ward off evil spirits.

Five Parties. One Celebration.

Wedding celebrations can involve five parties in some parts of the Middle East, beginning with the engagement party and ending with the wedding shower, seven days after the marriage.

Don't Muddy the Carpet.

Shoes must always be removed before entering a Japanese home. This also holds true for Indian households too.

Father Frost.

In Russia, Father Frost brings presents for the children on New Year's Day.

Walking on Money.

Gold and silver coins are placed inside a brides wedding shoes in Sweden.

No Best Man.

At a Caribbean wedding ceremony, the groom never has a best-man.

Santa's Helper.

Zwarte Piet. In the Netherlands, Santa has a helper named Zwarte Piet or Black Pete.

'Morning Mr Magpie'.

Often said by people in the UK to counteract the bad luck brought by the sighting of a single magpie.

A Different Pond Reader's Guide

Tips for reading & discussing a quiet picture book



Family. Survival. Hope.

Sometimes a fishing trip is about more than catching fish... Carrying a tackle box and gathering kindling, a boy helps his dad catch the family's dinner.

And a father helps his son begin to understand the long journey their family has taken.

About the Author

Bao Phi was born in Vietnam and raised in the Phillips neighborhood of South Minneapolis. He is an author, a poet, a community organizer, and a father.

About the Artist

Thi Bui was born in Vietnam and grew up in California and New York. Now all these places are a part of her. She draws and writes and teaches. Her graphic novel, *The Best We Could Do*, (Abrams, 2017) is about her mother and father.

★ “This wistful, beautifully illustrated story will resonate not only with immigrant families but any family that has faced struggle.”
—*Booklist* (starred review)

★ “Powerfully understated picture book, which shifts the focus of the refugee narrative from the harrowing journey to the reality awaiting the family members once they reach their destination.”
—*Horn Book* (starred review)

★ “Phi’s gentle, melodic prose and Bui’s evocative art ... rise above the melancholy to tell a powerful, multilayered story about family, memory, and the costs of becoming a refugee. Spare and simple, a must-read for our times.” —*Kirkus Reviews* (starred review)

★ “An unexpected superhero: a father who endures a strange new culture, works to support his family, cherishes time with his son, and draws no attention to the sacrifices he’s made.”
—*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

★ “This gentle coming-of-age story is filled with loving, important aspects of the immigrant experience and is a first purchase for all libraries.” —*School Library Journal* (starred review)

★ “In Bao Phi’s affecting picture book, a Vietnamese American boy illuminates the immigrant experience with his description of a father-son fishing expedition.” —*Shelf Awareness* (starred review)

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Tips and Suggestions for Reading *A Different Pond*

Reading picture books *with* rather than *to* a student keeps them more engaged and allows for better comprehension. To share a picture book, study and point out interesting details in the illustrations. Allow students to linger over pictures before moving on to the next section. Share your thoughts about each illustration, and allow students to share theirs. The layout of this book allows for several illustrations on each spread. Use a finger to connect the text to its accompanying artwork.

Read aloud with expression, changing voices for each character. Almost all of the action in this book takes place before dawn. To maintain the quiet mood the setting evokes, keep your voice soft and slow.

As you read, pause to answer any questions students may have. Ask questions that will require students to use higher level reading strategies, such as inferring, comparing and contrasting, predicting, and analyzing.



Always ask:

What does the picture tell you about how the little boy is feeling?

How do the pictures help you understand the words you are reading?

BEFORE READING

- Ask students if anyone has moved from another country, or has family members who have done so. Discuss what it would be like to move far away with very little, and to try to make a new life for yourself. Allow volunteers to share their experiences learning a new language and new customs, or teaching family members the same.
- Read the title aloud, and allow them to analyze the book's cover. Ask students to describe the setting by asking questions like: *What time of day is it? What is the weather like? How can you tell?* (Night, chilly, the dark sky and coats give it away). Next, point out the expressions of the characters, and have students describe what they are doing and how they may be feeling. Ask: *Why do you think that?* Point out that all of their answers have been based on clues the art offers.
- Then, relate the title to the art and ask students to predict who the people featured on the cover are, and what the book might be about.
- Open the book and point out the art on the inside leaves. Have students name the objects they recognize (stuffed bunny, sneakers, etc). *Which of these objects are like objects in your home? Which are not?* Point out that these drawings are a peek inside the home of the main character.
- Before beginning, tell students that the author of this book is also the little boy on the cover—the story is based on his own childhood experience with his father. Let them know they will learn more about the author's experience after reading this story. An essential element of this story is the love that bonds this family, despite their struggles and their very different upbringings. When at all possible, draw students' attention to this. Tips are offered on how to do so in the *While Reading* section.



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WHILE READING

- As you begin reading, establish that the text moves from the left page to the right, as later pages will have more panels and text spread across them.

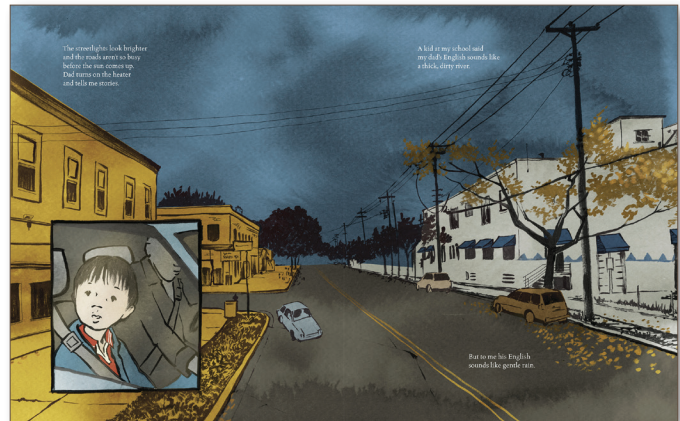
- When you have finished reading both pages, ask students what time of day it is (night). Ask them to analyze text and picture clues to get their answer (It will be hours before the sun comes up; everyone is still sleeping except his father, the boy wiping the sleep from his eyes, to night sky outside). If you have advanced readers, guide them to see that pictures offer clues for determining the meaning of unknown words. For students not yet reading, explain that they, too, can often use pictures to gain an idea of what the book is about.

- Explain to students that looking closely at illustrations can reveal more details about the story. Invite inference: *What can you tell about the author's life by looking around his home?* (He shares a bed with his parents; they have a single bulb hanging from the ceiling instead of something with a cover. They may not have a lot of money.) Point out that art can also reveal more about a setting than text. Say, *In this case, the calendar on the wall in the kitchen tells us it takes place in 1982. The leaves fallen on the ground tell us that it's fall or early winter, and the location is northern, where leaves fall from trees.*



- On the next spread, point out the small image of the boy looking out his windows, and the background image of the wide street. *Compare the two images.* Why might the artist have decided to include both? (One shows the boy gazing out his window, and the larger photo shows what he is seeing.) Invite students to describe the scene the boy is seeing (empty streets, dark sky, quiet.) Challenge students to place themselves in the boy's seat. Ask, *What is the mood of this scene? How does it make you feel?* (Answers will vary: tired, sleepy, peaceful, calm.)

- Next, reread aloud both sentences about his father's English. Ask, *Why do you think the kid would say that? What can you tell about his father?* (He doesn't speak English very well, or it's not his first language.) *What does the boy think about his father's voice? How do you think he feels around his father?* (He thinks it sounds like gentle rain. He likely feels very comfortable in his presence.) Tell students that writers often use descriptive words to set a feeling or mood. Ask a volunteer to explain how a *thick, dirty river* evokes different feelings than a *gentle rain*.



- On the next spread, make sure students notice you read the top panel before the bottom one; guide them to understand that this is the sequence in which the events happen. Point out the dialogue in the top panel. Ask *Is this the father and son's first fishing trip? How can you tell?* (The bait man knows the father; the son knows that the store is always open.) *Why didn't the father wait until his son woke up to go fishing?* (He is starting a second job and will be working later.) Invite students to predict whether they are fishing for fun, or necessity. Guide them to use the clues in the text (the second job, waking so early) to determine their answer.



- Allow students to carefully observe the art on the next spread of the father and son walking down the hill to the pond as you read. Ask students, *Are there any text or picture clues you can use to confirm or deny your prediction?* (Yes; the father explains they must fish because everything is expensive, even though he has a second job. There is a sign that indicates they are trespassing, but they fish there anyway.)

- On the next spread, allow students to study the boy's expressions in each of the pictures. *Do you think the boy minds his father waking him so early to fish? Why or why not?* (No, because they are laughing and smiling like they enjoy each other's company.) Point out the lines, *"This time it is just me and my dad"* and guide students to notice that it is set apart, alone, in the center of the page. Explain that placement of a text can be a conscious decision an author makes. In this case, putting that statement alone causes the reader to pause before and after reading it. Tell students, *Being alone with his dad is important to him. It's something he is pleased about.*

- Explain to students that authors use many devices to help a reader form a mental picture of an event or setting, or to get to know a character better, or to evoke a certain feeling in the reader. One of those devices is *simile*, in which a comparison is made between two unlikely things, using the words like or as. Ask for a volunteer to find the simile on this page (... *faint stars like freckles*).

- The next spread shows a step-by-step series of illustrations of the boy making the fire. Make sure students understand the chronology by challenging them to explain the steps in sequential order, using transition words like *first, next, then, etc.*

- Students may be surprised to see the boy is allowed to make and light a fire on his own. This is a good opportunity to explain the existence of cultural differences and parenting styles changing over time: some cultures assign responsibilities at younger ages than others. Invite student volunteers to share some of their own chores and discuss the differences among them. Close the discussion by pointing out similarities between shared chores.

- Have students analyze the illustrations. Ask: *What can you infer, or tell, about the boy using illustrations and text as hints?* (He likes being helpful; he is patient and takes pride in a job well done.) Then have students look at the last panel, the close up of his face. Say, *Look at his expression. Who is he looking at? How does he feel? Why does he feel that way?* (He feels proud. He is looking at his dad, who nodded at him for only needing one match.) You may also use this opportunity to again illustrate how art can reveal unwritten details about a text: The bridge and city beyond show that they live in an urban area.

- On the next page, students may giggle at the boy's face when his father offers him the minnow. Ask, *Why does his father ask if he wants to put the minnow on the hook?* (He knows that his son likes to help.) *What generalization about his personality can you make based on his refusal?* (He has a kind, gentle heart.) Allow students to study the art of the father and son fishing along the banks with the moon in the water. Ask, *What feeling do you get looking at this illustration?* (Answers will vary—love, comfort.) *What kind of relationship do you think this father and son have? What clues did you use to make this decision?* (They have a good relationship. He isn't afraid to tell his father he doesn't want to help; his father isn't upset and smiles at his son. They hold hands as they fish in quiet comfort.)



- Turn the page, and read the father’s warning to his son about the “spicy stuff.” Guide students to see that his father is taking care of him in big and small ways, and that they sit in happy quietude while they fish.

- Focus on the last paragraph when reading the next page. Ask students to infer what happened to the father’s brother. (He died in the war.) Invite analysis for clues about what each is thinking and feeling. (His father looks away and is likely remembering the past and his brother. The son is eager to hear more of his story.) If time allows, remind students that the father in this story has had a very different life from the one he lives now. Invite students to share stories told by any family members about growing up in other countries. During the discussion, point out similarities, rather than just differences, in life experiences.

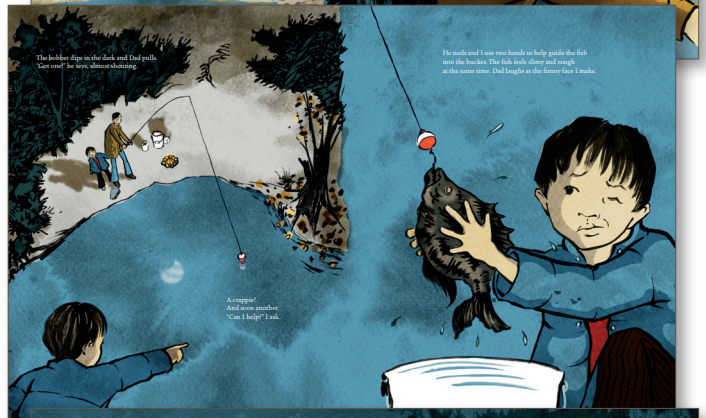
- You may expect to hear some giggles on the next page, so begin by telling students that “crappie” is a kind of fish. Ask, *Why does the boy make a funny face?* (Because he doesn’t like the way the fish feels.) Challenge students to connect this feeling with an earlier one: *When have you seen him make that face before?* (When his father asked him to hook the minnow.)

- The mood of the story changes slightly on the next page. It begins with an image of his father smiling, and a description of his father’s teeth illustrating again the hard life he has endured. Ask: *What makes the father smile?* (He knows they will have food to eat tonight.) *What can you infer about other nights in his home, based on this statement?* (They do not always have food on the table at night.)

- Point out that the boy wants to know more about his father’s upbringing, because he doesn’t remember Vietnam. You can also use this as an opportunity to point out small details that reveal their comfort, such as the two of them holding the pail together; sharing soap.

- The next page shows the two of them heading home. Students may not recognize what the man with the shopping cart is doing. Let them know that he is collecting pieces of metal from various junkyards to sell for money. Use this opportunity to point out that there are many people who have less money than others. Fishing for one’s own food and collecting metal to sell require very early hours and are resourceful ways to help make ends meet.

- Lead students to look at the picture of the father and son being greeted at home. Say, *The boy describes his mother as looking tired; how do you think she looks? How do the other family members look? Why?* (They look happy. They are happy because they have fish for dinner.) Point out that it isn’t only the fish that keeps this family happy: it’s love that holds them together. Challenge students to find picture evidence of the love between family members. (They are all smiling at each other; his mother has made lunch for his brother. His mother puts her arm around her son, and he looks up proudly.) Students may ask who the other people in the picture are, or what they’re doing. Let them know, these are probably his siblings or other extended family; and his brother is heading out to work for the day.



- Ask students: *How does his father's expression look now, compared to when they are fishing? Why do you think that is?* (He looks sad now. He is probably tired after fishing. He probably also enjoys fishing with his son more than working.)

- Point out that helping his mom clean the fish is another chore he has. Invite students to discuss: *When you are asked to help around the house, do you feel proud, or annoyed?* Then ask: *How does the boy in this book feel? How can you tell?* (He feels proud. His mom and dad compliment him on a job well done. The expression on his face is proud.) *Why does he think, "I'm not a baby...I helped catch dinner?"* (His mom asks his brother and sister to look after "the baby," meaning him. Catching dinner and being a helper makes him feel grown up. Babies can't help fishing.)

- As you read on, ask students: *What new facts did you learn about his family on this page?* (He has more than one brother and more than one sister; his mom works, too. He is the youngest.)



- On the next page, connect the text to math: have students look at the table and ask, *How many brothers does he have? How many sisters?* (2 and 2); *How can you tell?* (Because he is sitting with his dad and next to his mom. There are two boys and two girls at the table. He says his brothers and sisters are telling funny stories.) Explain that the recipe the boy describes is a traditional Vietnamese one. Invite students to share traditional recipes from their culture or family. Then ask: *Does anyone help their family prepare dinner?* If students answer yes, ask how it makes them feel to see their family enjoying the food they brought home. Connect their personal experience to the boy's experience by pointing out his father saying, "Good fish."

- The last page shows the boy falling happily to sleep and dreaming of fish. *How does the last line explain the title of this book?* (The father and son are probably dreaming of different ponds—each from their own childhood.) Instruct students to study the illustration closely. Remind them that the boy wondered what the pond from his father's childhood looked like. *Which pond do you think this picture shows? How do you know?* (It shows his father's childhood pond. The one they were fishing in didn't have lily pads or fish that looked like these.) If students have a hard time answering, encourage them to look back at drawings of the pond where they fished, and make comparisons.



AFTER READING

- Allow time for questions and answers students may have about the text.
- Break the plot into its elements: rising action, climax, and resolution. Explain each: First, the father takes his son fishing; the climax occurs when they catch their fish; the resolution occurs as the son goes to sleep and describes his dreams. Have students point out which picture in the text best illustrates each of those moments.
- Encourage students to determine the themes, or overall messages, in the book. Ask: *What is the author saying about family?* (That with family, even difficult times can be fun.) Lead students to understand the author’s message about cultural traditions and differences by asking: *What does the title of the book mean? What does the father have in common with his son?* (It refers to the two different ponds—the one they fish in now, and the one his father fished in as a child. Both fished as children.) Point out that the father grew up in a different country, far away. *What is the author saying about cultural differences?* (That no matter how different we

- are, we are also alike and those differences shouldn’t set us apart from each other.) If students are up for a challenge, guide them to see how the author uses the pond as a metaphor for this theme.
- Once students have discussed theme, have them turn to the *Note from Bao Phi*. Read it aloud. *How does knowing these details about Bao’s life affect your understanding of this story?* (It makes sense that this was based on his own experience.) *Why did Bao feel like he needed to write about this experience now?* (He is a father and wanted to honor all the struggles his parents endured.) Many students may not be aware yet of the Vietnam War. Depending on what is appropriate for your students, you may want to describe the effects it would have had on Phi’s family: the prejudice they likely faced; the way American soldiers were treated upon their return; that the war changed the way wars were fought.
 - Now, share the *Note from Thi Bui* with students. Invite students to find the items she mentions throughout the pages of the book. Ask: *If you were going to illustrate a book that included items from our life now, what would you include?*

Respond by Writing, Speaking, and Listening

RESPOND BY WRITING

- Recall what simile is and the example we used while reading (...stars like freckles). Make a list of other similes found in the story. Then, write a description of a scene from nature using a simile. (Scribe for younger children.) [Reproducible 1]
- Work with a partner. Choose a favorite illustration and describe it in detail on paper. Then, switch descriptions with another group and determine which illustration each chose to describe. Use descriptive words to make it easier to guess.
- Write a paragraph or illustrate a drawing that describes either a way you help around your house, or a favorite time you spent with an adult in your life. Include words or images that will help evoke for your audience the mood you felt. Organize your text in chronological order of events, as this book is organized. Before sharing your narrative with a partner, check for grammar, spelling and punctuation mistakes, and edit to correct them.
- Think about Bao Phi’s childhood experience. How was he

- fortunate? How did he struggle? Make a list of each. (He had a family that loved him and he was happy with them; they all worked hard as a team. He struggled because he didn’t have a lot, sometimes not even food for dinner.) Finally, form an opinion on whether or not Phi had a happy childhood. Argue your point with reasons and evidence from the text.
- Bao Phi is better known as a poet than a writer of children’s books. Write a poem using descriptive words about a stream, lake, beach, or other body of water you’ve visited. Write at least five lines, describing it from each of your five senses: sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste. [Reproducible 2]
 - Page through *A Different Pond* again. Looking at the images, notice that the plot unfolds in chronological order. With a partner, make a list of clues that the illustrations offer to show how time passes from the beginning of the story to the end. [Reproducible 3]

RESPOND BY SPEAKING AND LISTENING

- Pretend you are Bao Phi. Retell this story in your own words.
- Act out the story with each partner taking turns playing a different role.
- Imagine the conversations that might have occurred between Bao Phi and Thi Bui as they worked together to make the book. Choose classmates to play the roles of news reporter, Bui, and Phi. As the reporter interviews them on the process of making the book, listen respectfully. Take notes of questions you may have. After the interview is done, the reporter will allow you to ask your questions. Do so respectfully, speaking loudly and clearly, using words that your class can understand. When others ask questions, be respectful of their turn.

- Consider how this story would be different if it were told from another point of view. Page by page, retell the story from the father’s point of view.
- What feeling did the story leave you with? Share your feeling and explain why with the class. Listen intently as others share theirs.

Common Core College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards (Grades K-12)

Anchor Standards for Reading Literature: R.1-R.7, R.10
Anchor Standards for Writing: W.1-W.3, W.5
Anchor Standards for Speaking/Listening: SL.1, SL.2,
Anchor Standards for Language: L.1, L.2, L.5

REPRODUCIBLE 1

Similes in *A Different Pond*

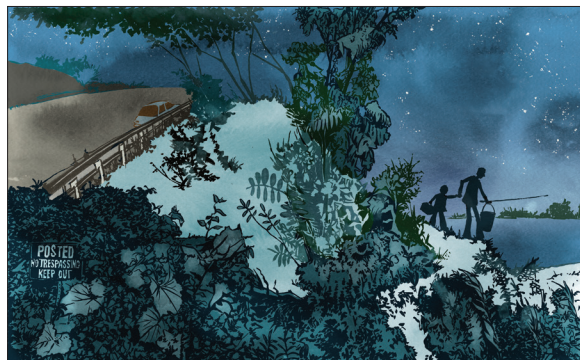
A **simile** is a comparison between two unlikely things, using the words like or as.
Find examples of **similes** in *A Different Pond* and list them below

Write a description of a scene from nature using a **simile**.

REPRODUCIBLE 3

Sequencing for Comprehension

Cut out the images below. Which happened first? Which happened last? Use illustrative clues to sort them into chronological order. Glue them in order on a separate piece of paper. Share with your class which clues helped you.



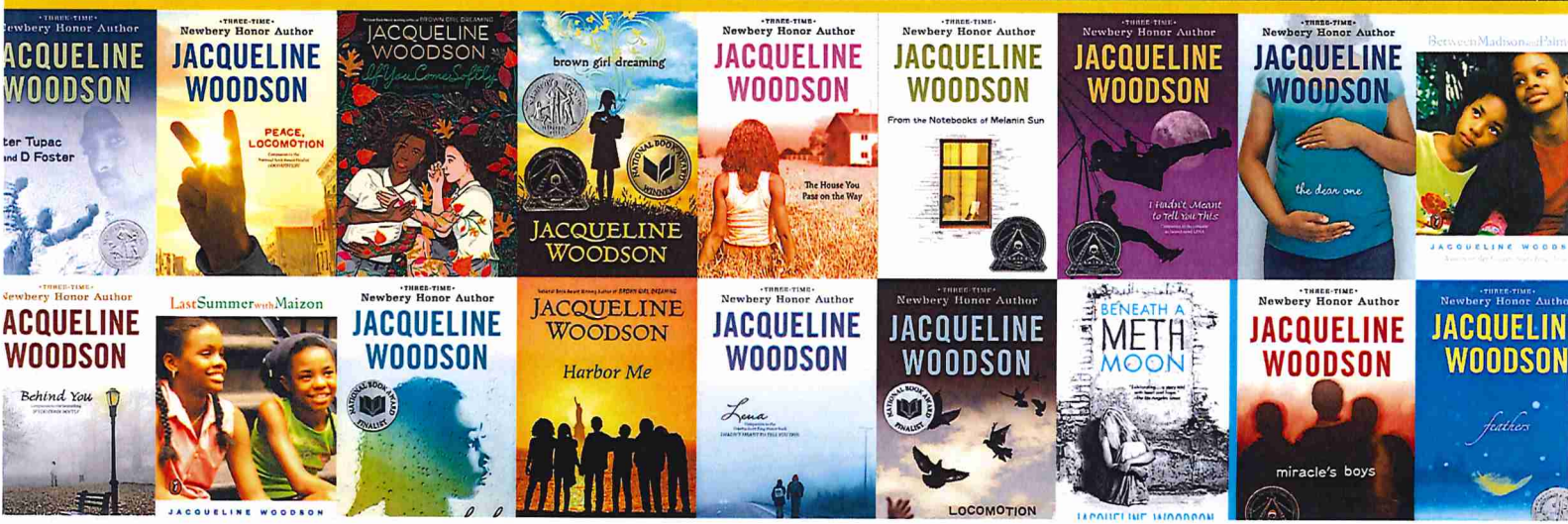
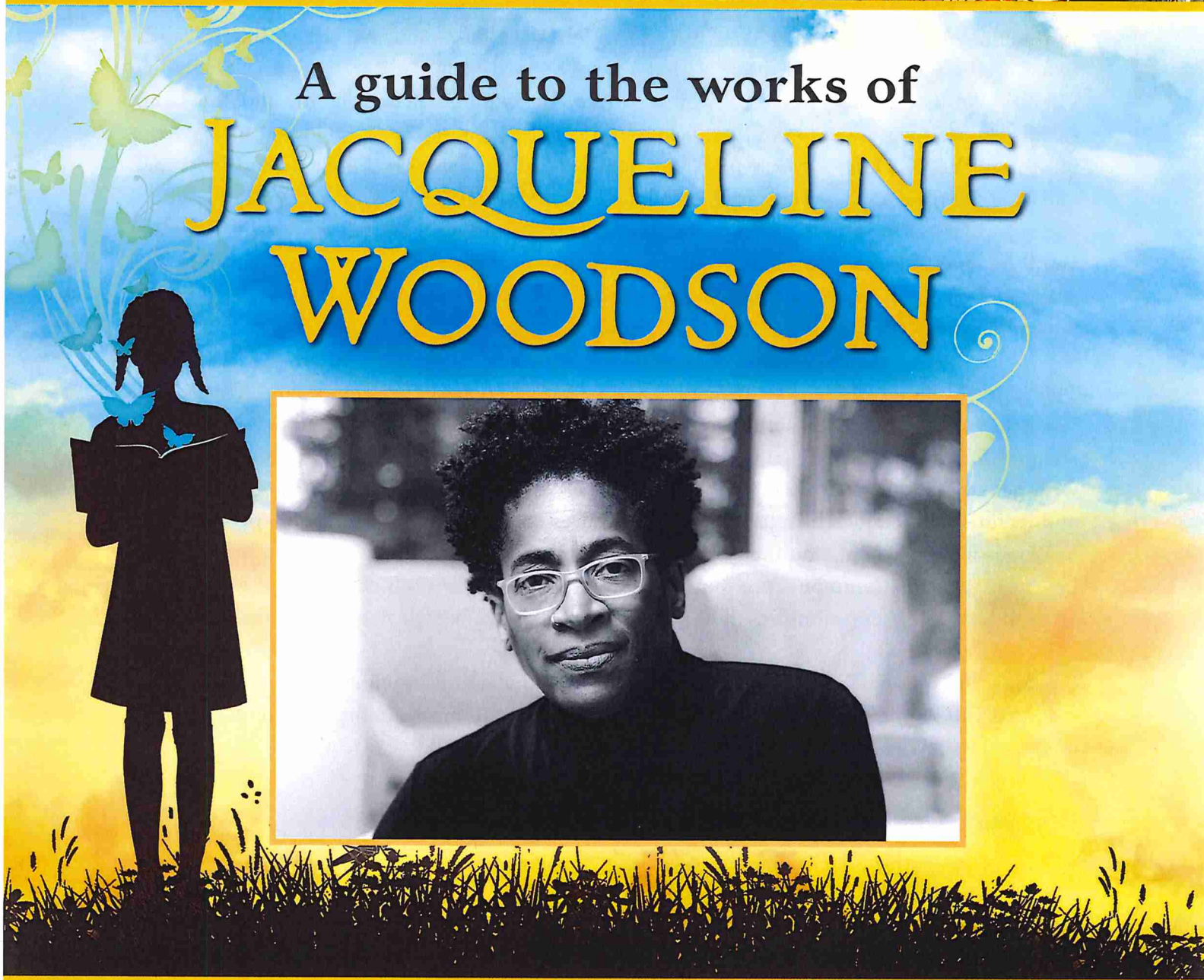
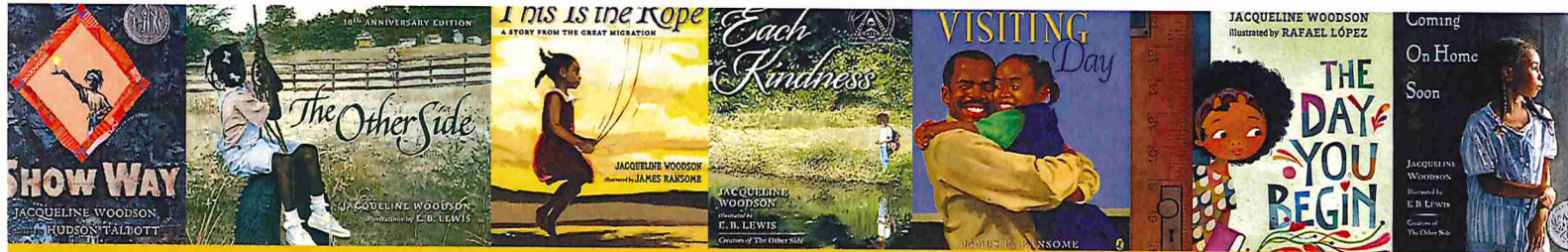
| Title: The Day You Begin | | |
|---|---|---|
| Concept: Connection, Exploration, Reflection | | |
| Core Competencies: Positive Personal and Cultural Identity + Communication | | |
| Objectives: inferring, comparing and contrasting, similes, diversity, imagery, self-esteem | | |
| Length: 80 Minutes Materials: Book, Readers Guide, Reproducible if wanted | | |
| Size: 30 students | | |
| Space: Classroom | | |
| ITEM | INSTRUCTIONS | NOTES |
| Ice Breaker | Ask probing questions about how long students have been in Vancouver | |
| Mini Lesson | Have students quiet down and close their eyes - Opening question - what were some feelings you felt on your 1st day in Vancouver, what was that day like? Who were you with? Where did you first go after leaving the airport? What did you do? Do you remember your first day or first week of school in Vancouver? What was that like? | As you ask each question, leave time in between for students to be able to recall back/think |
| Linking | If students are comfortable, share some of the thoughts going on in their head. Explore students' first impressions, first positive experiences, first negative experiences, make connections between each other. | If students are not comfortable, provide examples of your own experiences in another country. |
| Core Lesson | Read The Day You Begin - making note of pages to go back and review concepts Class discussion - what is something in the book that connects to an experience you had Watch video - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KDs5d_qFbEs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Did you notice anything in the video? Why were there no words in the book? How did you feel listening to the author read aloud her book? | |
| Reflection | Think/Pair/Share - have partners share to each other what makes them different/unique. Ask volunteers to share afterwards. | Looking back to the story, what did you notice about the students or characters? |

| | | |
|--------------|---|--|
| | Class discussion or Writing Activity - how is being different a positive thing? | |
| Student Task | <p>Venn Diagram - compare their life from home and in Vancouver, noting similarities and differences</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Personal Writing Composition (possible topic: What I Miss Most From My Home Country)</p> <p>OR</p> <p>Illustration and describing how settings create feeling</p> | |

Linking with Textbook

Managing Trauma Workbook for Teens:

- *Close Relationships, pg 57*
Connected or Not, pg 59



Dear Educator,

Jacqueline Woodson's books are revered and widely acclaimed—four Newbery Honor awards, two Coretta Scott King Awards, a National Book Award, a NAACP award for Outstanding Literary Work, the Margaret A. Edwards Award for Lifetime Achievement, and the Laura Ingalls Wilder Award. On top of that, Jacqueline Woodson is also the 6th National Ambassador for Young People's Literature. Awards and accolades aside, her stories are relevant, personal, and thought-provoking. Woodson writes picture books, middle grade and young adult novels—and regardless of the target audience, her books push boundaries. We realize it is unlikely that you'll be able to teach every single one of her books in a class curriculum, but we hope this guide will give you an appreciation for her work as a whole and will help you select the right books for your students.

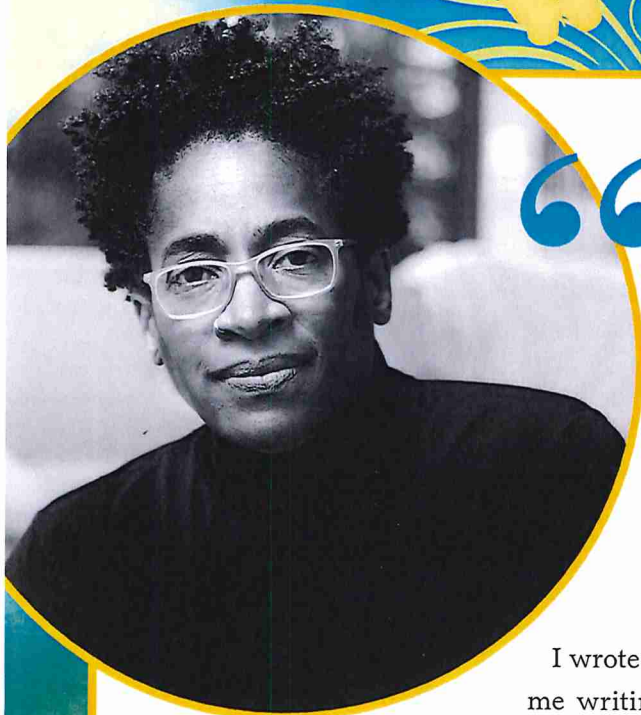
This guide includes discussion questions, close reading exercises and extension activities for Woodson's work. While the activities are written for whole class instruction, they can be easily adapted for independent reading, school book clubs, or literacy circles. Each section begins with general activities exploring some of Woodson's more commonly used literary elements and techniques in books from that particular genre. The sections also highlight specific books in Woodson's collection, and the activities coincide specifically with those books. We've listed the most relevant Common Core State Standards that align to each activity and included an array of text-to-text opportunities that range in complexity to engage all of your unique learners.

We know this guide will be useful to immerse your students in Jacqueline Woodson's work and we hope you'll enjoy discovering and revisiting some of the most quality literature for young readers. Thank you for your support of our books and our brand

Penguin Young Readers School & Library Marketing

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| Young Adult | Pages 18-25 |



I used to say I'd be a teacher or a lawyer or a hairdresser when I grew up, but even as I said these things, I knew what made me happiest was writing.

I wrote on everything and everywhere. I remember my uncle catching me writing my name in graffiti on the side of a building. (It was not pretty for me when my mother found out.) I wrote on paper bags and my shoes and denim binders. I chalked stories across sidewalks and penciled tiny tales in notebook margins. I loved and still love watching words flower into sentences and sentences blossom into stories.

I also told a lot of stories as a child. Not "Once upon a time" stories but basically, outright lies. I loved lying and getting away with it! There was something about telling the lie-story and seeing your friends' eyes grow wide with wonder. Of course I got in trouble for lying but I didn't stop until fifth grade.

That year, I wrote a story and my teacher said, "This is really good." Before that I had written a poem about Martin Luther King that was, I guess, so good no one believed I wrote it. After lots of brouhaha, it was believed finally that I had indeed penned the poem, which went on to win me a Scrabble game and local acclaim. So by the time the story rolled around and the words "This is really good" came out of the otherwise down-turned lips of my fifth grade teacher, I was well on my way to understanding that a lie on the page was a whole different animal—one that won you prizes and got surly teachers to smile. A lie on the page meant lots of independent time to create your stories and the freedom to sit hunched over the pages of your notebook without people thinking you were strange.

Lots and lots of books later, I am still surprised when I walk into a bookstore and see my name on a book or when the phone rings and someone on the other end is telling me I've just won an award. Sometimes, when I'm sitting at my desk for long hours and nothing's coming to me, I remember my fifth grade teacher, the way her eyes lit up when she said "This is really good." The way I—the skinny girl in the back of the classroom who was always getting into trouble for talking or missed homework assignments—sat up a little straighter, folded my hands on the desk, smiled, and began to believe in me.

Jaqueline Woodson

PICTURE BOOKS

Woodson's picture books are perfect for exploring sophisticated themes with young children. Depending on students' ages, reading levels, and prior knowledge, read aloud to a group for a shared reading experience or have students read independently and explore the pages on their own.

Family Theme

A major theme throughout Woodson's children's books is family. She shows that families are unique. Ask students: What makes a family? Who do you consider to be part of your family? Is it just people that you are related to or can it include other important people? Have students write a list of the people in their lives that are part of their family. Have students illustrate their work and share it with the people on their lists.

R.CCR.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Perseverance Theme

Perseverance is a theme that Woodson has woven throughout all of her stories. Her strong characters work their way through difficult times like family hardship, historical events, and social issues. Explore these examples. Students can connect to these stories on a variety of levels. Ask them to make a text-to-self connection and share a time that they had to overcome something difficult. This can be done through writing, artwork, or music. Their choice of presentation should highlight their strengths.

R.CCR.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Metaphor

Woodson artfully uses common objects in her stories (e.g., quilts, pebbles, a rope). The deeper meanings that she is trying to convey can be found within these objects. Ask students: How can a simple object become an important part of a person's life? For example, the quilts in *Show Way* are a metaphor for family history and strength. Have students bring common objects to school that mean a great deal to them (baby blanket, stuffed animal, a book). Ask each student to prepare a presentation that will explain the object and its importance. Students may arrive at new ideas about how their objects have shaped their lives.

R.CCR.4 Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.

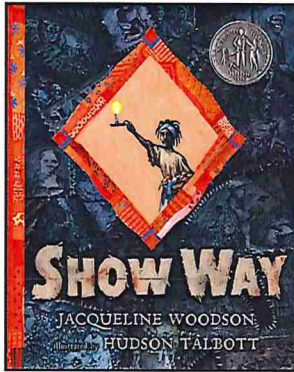
Setting

Many of Woodson's books travel through extended periods of time. Define setting with the class—focusing on the passage of time and change, and how they see this developed in Woodson's books. Students can analyze the things in their lives that change as time passes. As a culminating activity, help students create a time capsule to be opened years later. This may include the letter (see *Rope for Hope*)

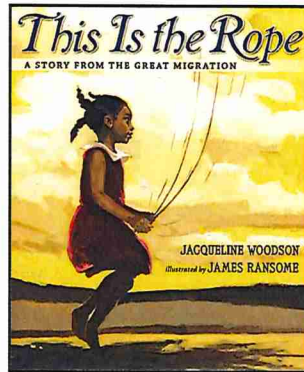
activity in *This Is the Rope* section) that they wrote to themselves, a self-portrait, photographs, a letter from the teacher and parents, a list of current favorites, and small meaningful objects. All of these things can be sealed in a paper towel tube to be opened in the future; a second grade class that creates a one year (or ten year!) time capsule will be surprised how much can change in such a short time. What a fun way to follow the passage of time!

R.CCR.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

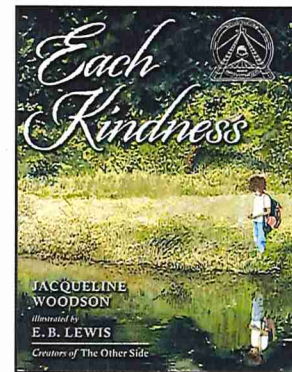
Picture Books by Jacqueline Woodson



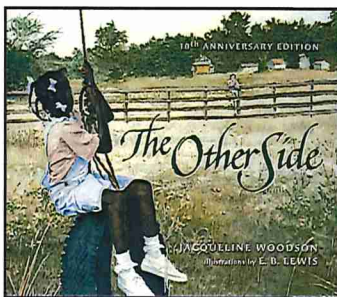
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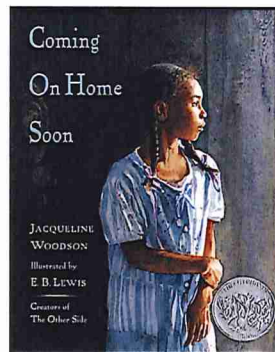
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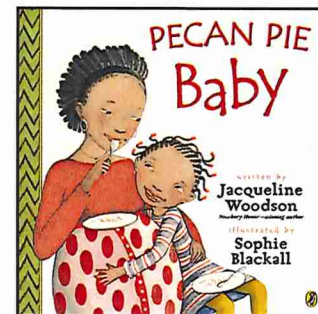
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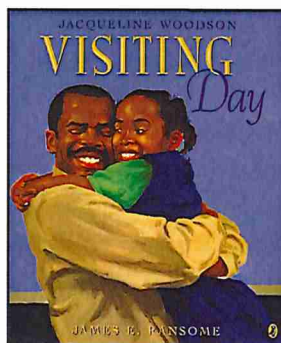
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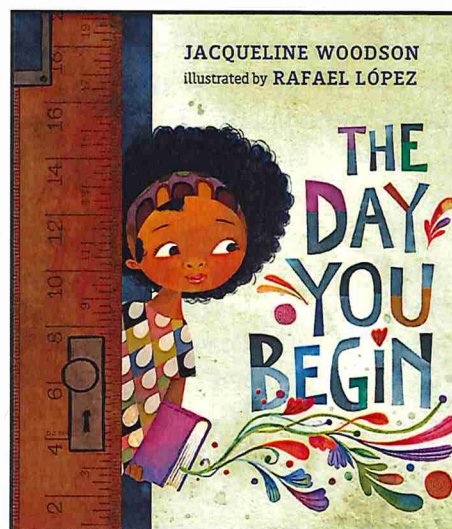
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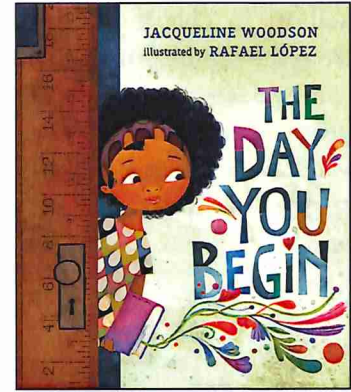
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On Sale 8/28/18

The Day You Begin

The Day You Begin is a beautiful picture book that celebrates the differences of people in the world. The classroom may be one of the first places that children experience these differences and the celebration of them. The message in this book is clear: Your unique story may feel uncomfortable at first, but eventually it will be the very thing that helps you find your place. A great choice for the first day of school!



- ✓ Diversity
- ✓ Imagery
- ✓ Self-Esteem

Dive in & Discuss

1. Have you ever walked into a room full of people who seemed different than you? How did you feel? What made you feel that way? Discuss your feelings and how they changed as time passed.
2. What is something that makes you unique? Is it a positive or negative trait? How can you turn this trait into your new beginning?
3. What is diversity? Create a kid-friendly definition and post it in the classroom. Why is it important to have conversations about diversity? How might people with differences in ability, culture, race, gender or wealth/money feel when they are in a group that seems different from them?

Explore & Extend

Who's in the Room?

This would be a great first day of school activity or one to use any time your class is entering a new situation and meeting new people. After reading *The Day You Begin*, lead the class in a discussion about what information is important to know when you meet someone new. What things do you learn about each of the characters in the book as they reveal themselves to one another? What would you ask someone when you meet them for the first time? Generate a list of questions that the class feels will help them get to know their classmates. Encourage them to think of a few questions that will help them dig a little deeper when they interview their peers during the activity. Partner students and ask them to interview each other. Have them list all of the answers that they have in common as well as their differences. A Venn diagram is a great graphic organizer to use with this activity. At the conclusion of the interviews ask students to introduce their partner to the class. They can choose the most interesting parts of their conversation to share. Finally, ask the class if there is a character from the book that they relate to and, if they are comfortable sharing, to explain why.

To extend the above discussion, explain that your class is a safe place for everyone to share and celebrate their own unique qualities. Sharing should be done in a way that is loud and proud! Have students express themselves through art. Take out the art supplies and encourage students to create a display that shares their awesomeness! Have students think about what makes each of them unique. The possibilities are endless! Invite students to decorate the classroom with these displays of themselves or make a class book. The title can be *The Day Our Class Began!* What a great way to create a positive classroom culture that celebrates diversity!

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.5 *Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.*

Think Like an Illustrator

The Day You Begin is an illustrator's dream. A story with such strong feeling and emotion can be illustrated with a great deal of imagery. That's just what Rafael López, the illustrator of the book, did! Ask your students to imagine that they have been tasked with the job of illustrating this beautiful story. Read the book one time aloud to your students without showing them the illustrations. What lines from the book would make them pick up their pencil and start sketching? What are the words that Woodson chooses that might make the illustrations easily fall onto the page? How does she use imagery to create a picture in the reader's mind? When students have completed their illustrations, read the book a second time and show them López's drawings this time around. How do their own drawings compare and contrast with López's? Ask students to share why they created the images they did and why they think López chose the artwork he created. Help your students walk in the shoes of an illustrator for a day!

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.4 *Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.*



| Title: Marwan's Journey | | |
|--|---|-------|
| Concept: Safety, Courage, Cooperation | | |
| Core Competencies: Communication, Critical Thinking, Cultural Identity, Social Responsibility | | |
| Objectives: Have students reflect on their personal and shared experiences as immigrants to a new country and identify the elements of culture that either promote or dissuade courageousness amongst learners. | | |
| Length: 80 Minutes Materials: Chart paper, sticky notes, pens/markers | | |
| Size: 30 students | | |
| Space: Classroom | | |
| ITEM | INSTRUCTIONS | NOTES |
| Ice Breaker | <p><u>Step into the Circle</u> <i>Arrange students standing in a circle facing the middle.</i></p> <p>"We all took different roads to be here – to be in this class, to be in this school, to be in this city, to be in this country.</p> <p>I'm going to read a series of statements, please step into the circle if it applies to you.</p> <p>(Ask students about the barriers to being present in the class. These questions can be superficial or more personal depending on the teacher's and/or students comfort level)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I had a hard time getting out of bed this morning • I had to walk to school • I travelled with a friend to school ... • I have come from another country • Leaving my home country was challenging <p>I wish to acknowledge you have all experienced some form of struggle to be here today and I am honoured by your presence."</p> | |

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| Mini Lesson | <p><u>Iceberg Model</u></p> <p><i>Explain what an iceberg is and how most of its mass is located beneath the surface. Explain how this idea applies to people.</i></p> <p><i>Hang several chart paper-sized sheets with icebergs drawn on them. Ask for students to write traits and feelings that (immigrant) students may hold on post-it notes and place them either above the surface (apparent) or below the surface (hidden/masked).</i></p> <p><i>Once completed, debrief the models with questions about why certain traits are shown or not and how that impacts feelings of authenticity, safety, validity, etc.</i></p> | |
| Linking | | |
| Core Lesson | <p><u>Story</u></p> <p><i>Introduce and read "Marwan's Journey"</i></p> <p><i>"How did people feel about the book?"</i></p> <p><i>"What feelings did it cause you to feel?"</i></p> <p><i>"What is the message of the book?"</i></p> <p><i>Acknowledge that everyone will have unique feelings, thoughts and opinions about the book's message.</i></p> <p><i>Highlight the message of courageousness and sacrifice.</i></p> <p><i>Acknowledge that learning a new skill (language) takes courage because it is something new and hard.</i></p> <p><i>Divide the class into two groups: Fire and Darkness</i></p> <p><i>Explain that in Marwan's Journey, the fire in the tent gave him warmth, and a feeling of safety. The darkness brought fear and terror.</i></p> | |

| | | |
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| | <p><i>The fire group will brainstorm ways we can support one another, make people feel safe, and encourage courageousness.</i></p> <p><i>The darkness group will brainstorm things that can happen that bring fear and promotes hesitance.</i></p> <p><i>After brainstorming, students will create a mission statement or code of conduct for the class that will be agreed upon by everyone.</i></p> <p>***</p> <p><i>Extension lesson can be how to take these class rules to the wider school culture.</i></p> | |
| Reflection | <p><u>Exit Slip</u></p> <p>Return to the circle and ask students to individually state something they learned/remembered about themselves and/or something they are going to try to put into practice when they leave the room</p> | |

Linking with Textbook

Managing Trauma Workbook for Teens:

- *My Trauma Story, pg 22*
- *Thoughts about my Trauma, pg 23*
- *Who I am Now, pg 30*
- *Feeling Feelings, pg 42*
- *Avoiding My Feelings, pg 43*
- *Avoiding Situations, pg 44*
- *Expressing Feelings, pg 47*
- *Close Relationships, pg 58*
- *Connected or Not, pg 59*
- *Trust, pg 60*
- *My View of Others, pg 61*

| Title: The Ant Hill Disaster | | |
|--|--|-------|
| Concept: Change, Resiliency, Safety, Coping | | |
| Core Competencies: Personal Awareness and Responsibility, Social Responsibility, Creative Thinking, Communication | | |
| Objectives: To better understand how change affects us and how the feeling of safety is significant in moving on. To be aware of our feelings during change and realize self-resiliency and coping strategies | | |
| Length: 80 Minutes | | |
| Size: 30 students Materials: Book, Authors Guide, Breathing Activity, Body Scan | | |
| Space: Classroom | | |
| ITEM | INSTRUCTIONS | NOTES |
| Ice Breaker | <p>Team building activity – have 2 students volunteer at the front of the class. Have 1 student try to make a chair with their arms and the other student sit onto their arms - this should be difficult. Have another student come to the front. 2 students should put both their arms out straight, then fold one putting their hand onto the opposite elbow making a L-shape. These 2 students come together to join their arms so they are now connected. Have the 3rd student sit on the “chair” that the 2 students have made with their arm. Having 2 people lift a student up should be much easier.</p> <p>Have groups of 3 try this around the class.</p> | |
| Mini Lesson | <p>What is the definition of change? Is change good or bad? Give examples.</p> | |
| Linking | <p>What are some feelings you feel when change is happening?</p> | |
| Core Lesson | <p>Write the chorus onto the board “We breathe in and out, and hold onto each other. We shed a lot of tears, and we love one another. We all come together as a strong team of one, and then we rebuild and get things done!”</p> <p>Read the book.</p> | |

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| Reflection | Has there ever been a time in your life that made you scared to go back to something? Think about this time. Did you stay away from this thing? Did you attempt to try to do it again? Did you wait? Did you just do it? What worked and didn't work? | |
| Student Task | Exploring coping mechanisms - Teacher use body scan and breathing activity as an example for the class. Have students list other ways they can cope with change either independently or in groups. Share these strategies as a group next class. | |

Linking with Textbook

Managing Trauma Workbook for Teens:

- *Suppressing My Feelings*, 41
- *My Coping Tools Scale and Introduction*, pg 84
- *My Coping Tools Scale*, pg 86
- *Scoring Directions*, pg 87
- *Intrusive Thoughts*, pg 88
- *My Trauma Triggers*, 89



Body Scan

Lie down in a comfortable place like a carpeted floor, couch or bed. Although you may feel sleepy or your mind may drift while doing this exercise, the goal is to try and remain alert and aware of the present moment.

Gently close your eyes. Let your shoulders drop down and away from your ears. Bring your attention to your breathing. Breathe in...and out... and just allow yourself to continue to breathe naturally.

The aim of this exercise is to bring awareness to the physical sensations in different parts of your body. Your mind is probably used to labeling these sensations as good or pleasurable; or bad, uncomfortable, or even painful. For this exercise, see if you are able to just notice what you feel without judgment – for example, do you notice tingling, warmth, pulsating, tightness, or other sensations. Again, it's not about whether these sensations are good or bad, it's just about noticing them.

Continue to breathe at your own pace, allowing each breathe to come as it may, without any conscious effort to change your breathing. Notice your lungs slowly fill with air when you breathe in and deflate when you breathe out.

Now, bring your awareness to where your body makes contact with the floor, couch or bed. On each outbreath, allow yourself to let go, to sink a little deeper into the surface below you.

Scan your left foot for any sensations. Simply become aware of them. Scan your left calf. Notice and allow any sensations that may be present. Scan slowly, up through your thigh now. Allow yourself to feel any and all sensations. If you don't feel anything at the moment, that's okay. Just allow yourself to "not" feeling anything.

If you do become aware of tension, or other intense sensations in a particular part of your body, see if you can "breathe in" to it —using the in-breath to bring a gentle awareness to the sensations present in your body, without trying to change them.

Now, scan for any sensation in your right foot your calf and thigh. Simply notice all sensations and feel what is happening. Continue to bring awareness, and a gentle curiosity to the sensations in your right leg.

The mind will inevitably wander away from the breath and the body from time to time, which is normal. When you notice your mind has wandered, gently acknowledge it, and then return your attention to the part of the body you intended to focus on.

Now focus on your stomach. Feel it rising as you breathe in. Sinking as you exhale. Nice and slow. Your heart rate may slow down. This is normal. Remain aware of your stomach, your breath. Breathe in... and out... Continue to notice any sensations in your stomach area.

Now scan for any sensations in your left hand and arm. Simply become aware of the different sensations and feel what is happening. Continue to bring awareness, and a gentle curiosity to the sensations. Again, If you don't feel anything at the moment, that's okay.

Scan for any sensations in your right hand and arm. Continue to bring awareness, and a gentle curiosity to the sensations.

Come back up to your chest. Continue scanning up along your neck, and to your face. Feel the sensations in your jaw, and your throat. Notice how the back of your head rests against the surface under you. Bring your awareness the top of your head.

Now, take a moment to notice how *all* your body parts are connected. Let any sensations come to you. Just notice what kind of sensation it is – tingling, warmth, coolness, heaviness, floating. Accept whatever sensation there is as just that, a sensation that will arise and slowly and gradually change. It is just another part of you.

Continue to focus on your breathing for as long as you like. When you are ready, slowly open your eyes and bring your attention back to your surroundings.

A BODY SCAN SCRIPT

Begin by making yourself comfortable. Sit in a chair and allow your back to be straight, but not stiff, with your feet on the ground. You could also do this practice standing or if you prefer, you can lie down and have your head supported. Your hands could be resting gently in your lap or at your side. Allow your eyes to close, or to remain open with a soft gaze.

Take several long, slow, deep breaths. Breathing in fully and exhaling slowly. Breathe in through your nose and out through your nose or mouth. Feel your stomach expand on an inhale and relax and let go as you exhale.

Begin to let go of noises around you. Begin to shift your attention from outside to inside yourself. If you are distracted by sounds in the room, simply notice this and bring your focus back to your breathing.

Now slowly bring your attention down to your feet. Begin observing sensations in your feet. You might want to wiggle your toes a little, feeling your toes against your socks or shoes. Just notice, without judgment. You might imagine sending your breath down to your feet, as if the breath is traveling through the nose to the lungs and through the abdomen all the way down to your feet. And then back up again out through your nose and lungs. Perhaps you don't feel anything at all. That is fine, too. Just allow yourself to feel the sensation of not feeling anything.

When you are ready, allow your feet to dissolve in your mind's eye and move your attention up to your ankles, calves, knees and thighs. Observe the sensations you are experiencing throughout your legs. Breathe into and breathe out of the legs. If your mind begins to wander during this exercise, gently notice this without judgment and bring your mind back to noticing the sensations in your legs. If you notice any discomfort, pain or stiffness, don't judge this. Just simply notice it. Observe how all sensations rise and fall, shift and change moment to moment. Notice how no sensation is permanent. Just observe and allow the sensations to be in the moment, just as they are. Breathe into and out from the legs.

Then on the next out breath, allow the legs to dissolve in your mind. And move to the sensations in your lower back and pelvis. Softening and releasing as you breathe in and out. Slowly move your attention up to your mid back and upper back. Become curious about the sensations here. You may become aware of sensations in the muscle, temperature or points of contact with furniture or the bed. With each outbreath, you may let go of tension you are carrying. And then very gently shift your focus to your stomach and all the internal organs here. Perhaps you notice the feeling of clothing, the process of digestion or the belly rising or falling with each breath. If you notice opinions arising about these areas, gently let these go and return to noticing sensations.

As you continue to breathe, bring your awareness to the chest and heart region and just notice your heartbeat. Observe how the chest rises during the inhale and how the chest falls during the exhale. Let go of any judgments that may arise. On the next outbreath, shift the focus to your hands and fingertips. See if you can channel your breathing into and out of this area as if you are breathing into and out from your hands. If your mind wanders, gently bring it back to the sensations in your hands.

And then, on the next outbreath, shift the focus and bring your awareness up into your arms. Observe the sensations or lack of sensations that may be occurring there. You might notice some difference between the left arm and the right arm – no need to judge this. As you exhale, you may experience the arm soften and release tensions. Continue to breathe and shift focus to the neck, shoulder and throat region. This is an area where we often have tension. Be with the sensations here. It could be tightness, rigidity or holding. You may notice the shoulders moving along with the breath. Let go of any thoughts or stories you are telling about this area. As you breathe, you may feel tension rolling off your shoulders.

On the next outbreath, shift your focus and direct your attention to the scalp, head and face. Observe all of the sensations occurring there. Notice the movement of the air as you breathe into or out of the nostrils or mouth. As you exhale, you might notice the softening of any tension you may be holding.

And now, let your attention to expand out to include the entire body as a whole. Bring into your awareness the top of your head down to the bottom of your toes. Feel the gentle rhythm of the breath as it moves through the body.

As you come to the end of this practice, take a full, deep breath, taking in all the energy of this practice. Exhale fully. And when you are ready, open your eyes and return your attention to the present moment. As you become fully alert and awake, consider setting the intention that this practice of building awareness will benefit everyone you come in contact with today.

Script written by Shilagh Mirgain, PhD, for UW Cultivating Well-Being: A Neuroscientific Approach

Body Scan Meditation

Begin by bringing your attention into your body.

You can close your eyes if that's comfortable for you.

You can notice your body seated wherever you're seated, feeling the weight of your body on the chair, on the floor.

Take a few deep breaths.

And as you take a deep breath, bring in more oxygen enlivening the body. And as you exhale, have a sense of relaxing more deeply.

You can notice your feet on the floor, notice the sensations of your feet touching the floor. The weight and pressure, vibration, heat.

You can notice your legs against the chair, pressure, pulsing, heaviness, lightness.

Notice your back against the chair.

Bring your attention into your stomach area. If your stomach is tense or tight, let it soften. Take a breath.

Notice your hands. Are your hands tense or tight. See if you can allow them to soften.

Notice your arms. Feel any sensation in your arms. Let your shoulders be soft.

Notice your neck and throat. Let them be soft. Relax.

Soften your jaw. Let your face and facial muscles be soft.

Then notice your whole body present. Take one more breath.

Be aware of your whole body as best you can. Take a breath. And then when you're ready, you can open your eyes.

Laura Candler's Teaching Resources

Helping Children Cope with Tragedy

Guest blog post by Julia Cook

Our country has been plagued with several disasters in the last few years. There was the Joplin, Missouri tornado in May of 2011, we've had numerous catastrophic wildfires, Hurricane Sandy tore the east coast apart in October of 2012, and then there was that day...

I remember that horrible day...December 14th, 2012... The Sandy Hook Elementary School tragedy. My eyes filled with tears as I watched this horrific event unfold on television. How could this happen? How could we ever let anything like this happen?

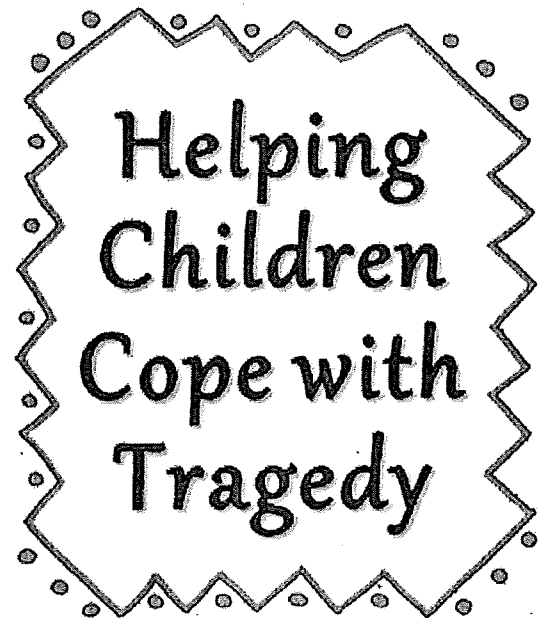
Three days later, I found myself in front of 400 children doing an author visit at a different elementary school that was thousands of miles away. When the kindergartners and first graders walked into the gym, sat down on the floor, and looked up at me, I lost it. I couldn't talk. I couldn't even breathe! My heart felt like it had a hole in it...a big, empty hole. Our world can be so cruel. I made eye contact with one of the teachers. Her eyes screamed "There's a hole in my heart too!"

At that moment, I knew I had to find a way to reach out. Parents needed to know what to say to their kids and how to say it. Teachers needed to know what to do, what to say, and how to act.

When a disaster occurs, it affects everyone at different levels of intensity, much like the ripple effect when a rock is thrown into water. With natural disasters, most humans feel responsible for helping. We empathize and then focus our efforts on comforting and rebuilding. But we realize deep down that what happened could not have been prevented. Sandy Hook was different...disasters caused by man happen by choice.

The Ant Hill Disaster

In the months following, I wrote numerous articles and gave several media interviews surrounding the topic, "Helping Kids Cope with Disasters and Violence," but the gnawing of hole



in my heart continued. I knew I needed to write a book, one that spoke to children about living through and living after a disaster. I decided to use ants as a metaphor.

Ants are masters at working together and rebuilding. Also, ant hills can be destroyed by humans as well as by storms, so the metaphor applies to both natural disasters and those caused by man. By writing this book, I could demonstrate empathetic understanding for children, as well as model positive parent and teaching strategies.

But this book would be very different from the others. All of my other stories were proactive. The Ant Hill Disaster is reactive...reactive to the hole inside my heart...inside all of our hearts.

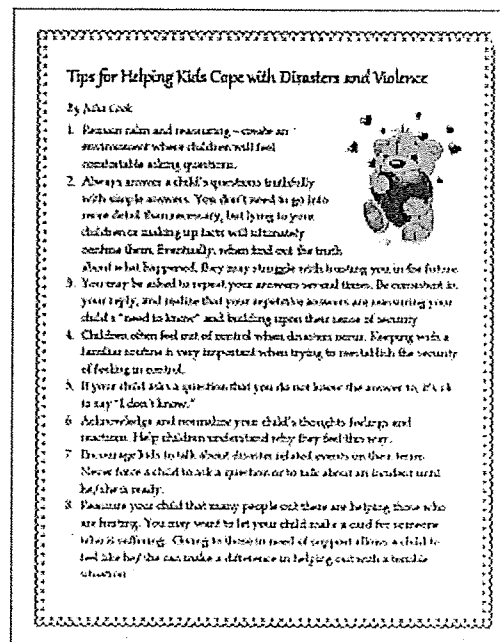
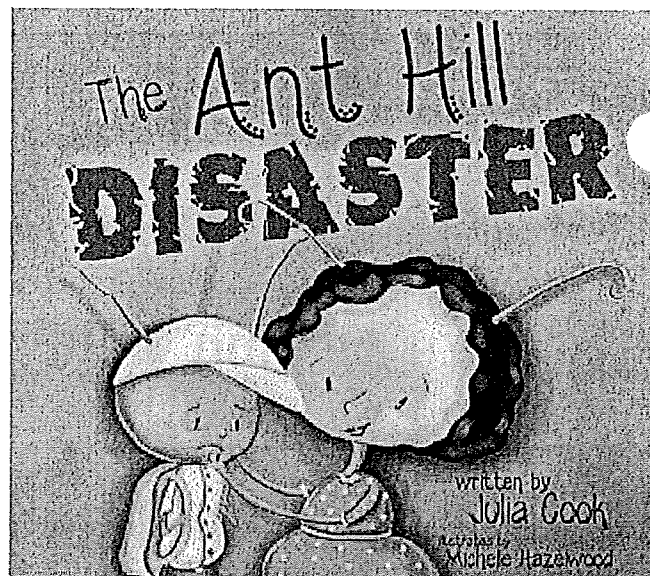
After the Ant Hill School is destroyed, a little boy ant is afraid to go back to school. His mom caringly explains to him that sometimes things happen in life that we have no control over, but we have to find a way to keep living and growing.

Helping Kids Cope with Disasters and Violence

The Ant Hill Disaster thoughtfully addresses fears associated with both natural and those caused by man. It models effective parenting and teaching responses. This book can help assure children that through love, empathetic understanding, preparation, and effective communication, they can stand strong, even in the midst of uncontrollable events.

When disasters, both natural and man-made occur, parents are faced with the challenge of discussing tragic events with their children. Although these might be difficult conversations, they are important and necessary. Always remember, there is no "right" or "wrong" way to talk to your child about traumatic events. At the end of the Ant Hill Disaster, I included tips for parents to help them talk about tragic events with their children. You can download a page of these tips on the right. Always remember: you are your child's coping instructor!

I had the great honor of reading the Ant Hill Disaster over the phone to Michelle Gay who lost her 6-year old daughter in the Sandy Hook tragedy. She graciously agreed to write the forward of the book and I want to share her thoughts with you.



Foreword to The Ant Hill Disaster by Michele Gay

On the evening of December 14, 2012, my husband and I were faced with the unimaginable task of telling our older daughters of our family's loss. Our precious daughter and their little sister, Josephine, had perished in the tragedy at her school, Sandy Hook Elementary.

Though a mother and former elementary school teacher, I grasped for words that could explain the events of that morning... but there were no words.

What I did manage to say was that I knew our Joey was in heaven and we would find a way to carry on together. That we loved them, and so did she, that we would never allow her sparkling personality and loving spirit to be lost in this tragedy.

We came together with family, friends, neighbors, and our community to defy this tragedy with our love.

In the weeks following, we sent our daughters back to school, confident in the love and support they would receive in our community. I volunteered to stay. I wanted to deliver a message: that we were meant to carry on together. And so we began our journey.

Julia Cook's Ant Hill Disaster honors this journey out of loss and into hope. She lights the path for the youngest of readers with words, colors, and a familiar setting that young children understand and need. Her adorable characters model team work, empathy, and compassion in a child-friendly story that may translate to a tragic event in their own community or another, man-made or natural.

Ant Hill Disaster is a message of hope and love that will touch and inspire young children and the adults who love them.

Michele Gay

Mother of Josephine Gay, A Sandy Hook Angel

Co-Founder of Safe and Sound: A Sandy Hook Initiative

Words to Comfort Us from *The Ant Hill Disaster*

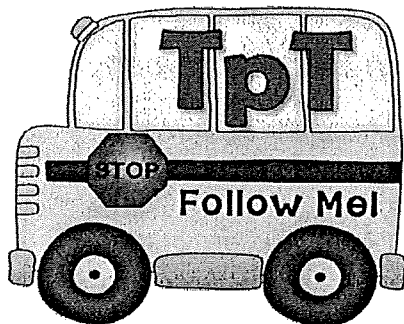
*"We breathe in and breathe out, we hold onto each other.
We shed a lot of tears, and we love one another.
We've all come together as a strong team of ONE,
We've rebuilt our lives, and we're get things done!
They say that when change happens, it makes everyone grow.
Our pain is never forgotten, this we all know.
But together we somehow are learning to cope.
Because disasters will NEVER diminish our hope!"*

To me, it is an absolute must to align the information contained in my books with the best research-based topic information available. This led me to contact the ALICE Training Institute. For more information on disaster preparedness visit the ALICE website: www.alicetraining.com.

Julia is nationally recognized as an award-winning children's book author and parenting expert. She holds a Master's Degree in Elementary School Counseling, and while serving as a school counselor, she often used children's books to enhance her classroom lessons. Julia has written dozens of books that teach students to become life-long problem solvers and enable them to deal with difficult situations in their lives. She enjoys visiting schools and talking with kids; in fact, she's done over 800 school visits! You can learn more at her website, www.juliacookonline.com.



Laura's Blog



Candler's Classroom Connections

Awesome freebies and resources for elementary educators sent to your inbox!

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Students from Refugee Backgrounds



A Guide for Teachers and Schools



Students from Refugee Backgrounds

A Guide for Teachers and Schools

October 2009/Revised December 2015

“There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.”

~ Nelson Mandela ~



Ministry of
Education

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Much of the content that appeared in the 2009 version remains in the 2015 revision. Some new information has been incorporated to augment 2009 content. All resource links have been reviewed for currency. The overall presentation of content has been refreshed, i.e., reformatted and reordered in the 2015 version of *Students from Refugee Backgrounds: A Guide for Teachers and Schools*

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Students from Refugee Backgrounds

A Guide for Teachers and Schools

Introduction

Resettling refugees is a proud and important part of Canada's humanitarian tradition. It demonstrates to the world that we have a shared responsibility to help people who are displaced and persecuted.

Individuals and families who arrive in Canada from a refugee background have overcome great obstacles and adversity. They bring with them strengths, abilities, and qualities to share, with hope of thriving in their new home country.

The following is the Geneva Convention definition of a refugee – recognized worldwide, and signed by Canada:

Geneva Convention Definition of a Refugee, 1951, 1967

A refugee is a person who “owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence..., is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”

Source: “Convention and Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees,” Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, August 2007.

An understanding of the refugee experience of children and youth, awareness of cultural differences, and appreciation of their individual strengths and needs will help receiving school communities create for them, a positive first impression of school in British Columbia, and will encourage their learning progress and success in their new life.

Purpose of this Guide

This *Guide* has been developed for teachers and other school personnel to assist them in welcoming and supporting students, and families who have come from a refugee background. It is designed to

- provide background information about the refugee experience,
- offer support strategies and suggestions for teachers and other members of the school community who will be working with these children and youth and their families, and
- provide information about resources that teachers and other school and district personnel may find helpful as they prepare for the arrival of new students and families – and for their ongoing support.

Understanding the Refugee Experience

New patterns of survival, new relations with neighbours, and new dependencies and alliances have to be established.

In general, refugees are persons who seek refuge or asylum outside their homeland to escape persecution. Their escape may seem to them like the beginning of a long journey to nowhere.

Fleeing their country, their home, and their culture – often having lost family members and friends, or having had to leave loved ones behind – they are forced into a life of uncertainty, with no guarantee of sanctuary or a welcome.

Their escape often leads to the challenges of life in a refugee camp, sometimes for many years. New patterns of survival, new relations with neighbours, and new dependencies and alliances have to be established. Refugee relief agencies work to bring a sense of normalcy to a new existence and stability in the face of uncertainty.

Many refugees become residents of Canada through the generous support of private sponsors. Many more become residents of Canada through the direct assistance of the Government of Canada.

Under the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP), individuals who arrive in Canada in the Government-Assisted Refugees category are provided with financial assistance that includes loans for their transportation to Canada, a start-up allowance, monthly support allowance, and a bus pass allowance. They are also provided with a basic household goods package. Financial assistance is repayable after one year, or when they become self-sufficient.

The Resettlement Assistance Program process is illustrated in Appendix C of this Guide.

British Columbia welcomes refugee immigrants to the province every year. Currently, refugees are most likely to settle in the Greater Vancouver area. Detailed immigration trends and facts about refugee immigrants in British Columbia can be found at:

www.welcomebc.ca/en/communities/facts_trends/facts.html

Through the years, educators in British Columbia have worked both with immigrant children, youth and families as well as those from refugee backgrounds. While there are some similarities between their experiences – that is, both are new to the country and both must go through a process of adjustment – there are also some significant differences in the transition experiences of these newcomers that may significantly impact their adjustment in settlement in a new country.

The information presented in the following pages provides some general observations of the differences between immigrant and refugee transition experiences, offers insight into potential psychological effects for individuals who have experienced violence, and describes how escape from conflict and a subsequent refugee experience impacts their transition, from a life of instability and uncertainty to a life of new normalcy in a new country and new culture.

Suggestions are made for ways in which all members of the school community can help ease this transition – creating conditions in which children and youth and their families feel welcome and safe, and in which student success enables them to see a positive future for themselves and their families.

Immigrants

Individuals and families who come to Canada as immigrants have, typically, had time to prepare for their transition to a new country – and have developed awareness of or familiarization with their destination country and culture. They have had opportunity to plan and to take care of personal business before leaving their home country. If they are of school age, or were studying at a post-secondary level prior to leaving their home country, their education usually continues uninterrupted. Trauma during their transition to Canada and a sense of loss of their homeland and former life is not necessarily present. The possibility of returning to their homeland in the future is a personal choice.

Families often arrive intact, that is, they include parents and children, or other family members who are also caregivers.

Arrangements – for basic requirements, such as food, housing, and medical and dental care – have usually been made before they arrive in Canada.

Refugees

Individuals and families who arrive in Canada as refugees – whether they come through private sponsorship or the direct assistance of the Government of Canada – have overcome great obstacles and adversity in their journey:

- upheaval and displacement from their homeland caused by increased conflict
- delays and prolonged time periods in refugee camps
- interruption of their education, or a complete lack of schooling resulting in innumeracy and illiteracy in their first language as well as in English or French
- limited current labour market skills, including technology-based skills
- large/extended families, blended families (sometimes due to a loss of parents), or children without parents/adult supports
- use of less commonly spoken languages, causing communication challenges
- limited or no access to healthcare in their countries of origin or in refugee camps
- complex physical and mental health concerns (a consequence of war or torture)
- emotional trauma due to exposure to violence
- poverty, loss of income, depleted financial resources
- lack of awareness of the potential dangers of urban living for those having come from rural/remote settings
- changes to the family unit, and roles and responsibilities within the family unit (e.g., different cultural norms, role reversals, or children taking on adult responsibilities for their parents)
- different parenting styles arising from cultural norms
- negative emotions and significant stress on children, youth and families
- loss of identity and self-esteem
- isolation and loneliness

Because they had to escape from their home in a hurry – fleeing conflict or persecution – their personal business in their home country will likely have been left unsettled. If they are of school age, or were studying at a post-secondary level prior to fleeing, their education may have been interrupted due to strife in their home country, or may have been disrupted or postponed during a lengthy waiting period in a refugee camp before opportunity to resettle in a new country became possible.

Sudden transition to a new country and culture, with little or no advance knowledge about their destination creates many challenges, anxiety, confusion, and uncertainty. They may have a real sense of loss of homeland, and have experienced profound trauma during their transition. They may have lost beloved family members and friends/or personal property – experiences that may have significant psychological impacts. Return to their homeland is not an option unless the crisis situation and/or personal circumstances from which they have escaped stabilizes or ends.

Families very often have been separated – that is, some members may have been left behind and/or children may be without parents, or guardians. Basic requirements, such as food, housing, and immediate medical and dental care, may be urgently needed upon their arrival in Canada.

Lasting Psychological Effects of the Refugee Experience

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Those who have been victims of war, violence, torture, or crime may suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). However, not everyone in a war environment experiences stress in the same way, nor do they react the same way to similar experiences.

“Post Traumatic Stress Disorder is an anxiety disorder caused by exposure to a traumatic event that threatened or caused death or grave physical harm.”

Source: “Post Traumatic Stress Disorder,” Canadian Mental Health Association, 2009

Some may be able to deal with their traumatic experiences and move on with their lives.

Others may struggle to deal with life in meaningful ways because the horror of their experiences continues to be too much for them to bear. Most adults and children fall somewhere in the middle of the extremes, exhibiting post-traumatic stress in a variety of ways and at different times in their lives.

There is no cure for trauma. However, there is a need for victims of trauma to learn to care for themselves and move on with their life.

Source: “Post Traumatic Stress Disorder,” Dr. Y. de Andrade, lecture notes, April 28, 1995

Trauma

Specialized school and district personnel will likely be required to guide and support school personnel response to some student behaviours and associated feelings related to trauma and PTSD.

These behaviours may be emotional, cognitive, physical and/or interpersonal. There may be delayed onset of the symptoms of trauma and grief, which may occur in response to unrelated stressful situations or reminders of traumatic events. It may be months, or even years, before symptoms occur.

Traumatic experiences may also have an indirect effect on other immigrant and refugee children, children whose relatives have been or are refugees, children with relatives unable to leave war-torn regions, school staff, or other students in the school.

Recognizing when to refer children or youth for additional services is critical. If there is concern about a student’s emotional wellbeing, the school counsellor or the school-based team will be able to provide advice about supports services that are available to help students who have experienced trauma. These may include the services of a school psychologist or mental health clinician.

There are also immigrant- and refugee-serving agencies that can provide trauma support.

A list of helpful Resources and Community Connections – begins on page 33 of this Guide

The following are common behaviours manifested by children and youth from a refugee background who have experienced trauma:

- difficulty in concentrating and completing tasks
- tiredness because of lack of sleep
- avoidance of particular activities and situations
- physical ailments, such as headaches, vomiting or stomach aches
- irritability or hyper-alertness
- impaired memory
- exaggerated startle responses
- preoccupation with violent events (conversations, drawings)
- unrealistic worries about possible harm to self and others
- excessive distress upon separation or when anticipating separation from parent
- recollection of traumatic events

Students who manifest these kinds of behaviour may also be experiencing:

- violent nightmares or flashbacks
- disturbing memories
- feelings of being in danger
- feelings of betrayal
- anger
- denial
- pervasive or generalized anxiety

Source: “PTSD in Children and Adolescents” and “Survivors of Natural Disasters and Mass Violence,” National Center for PTSD, August 11, 2009.

Their journey into exile and transition to their new life may have caused many children and youth to miss months or even years of school. Some, particularly older youth, may have lost the drive to start again, especially if this requires enrolling in school at a lower level than that which they had previously achieved.

Predictable Anxiety Triggers

Trauma may lie hidden or may manifest in seemingly unrelated behaviours.

For children and youth from refugee backgrounds in particular, occurrences in their new school-based environment may remind them of negative experiences in their homeland or of leaving their homeland and may have detrimental effects.

The following are some potential anxiety triggers:

- dark hallways/institutional 'feel' of the school facility
- law enforcement or military personnel in uniform coming to or being in the school facility
- sound of boot-like footsteps
- harsh language
- bells/alarms
- fire and earthquake drills or any evacuation procedures/routines (e.g., lock down)
- groups of children talking loudly/excitedly
- situations that may seem out of control, like children 'horsing around'
- other children staring at them
- not understanding English, or some of the other languages children speak outside the classroom
- body language that may be misinterpreted
- unfamiliar festivals and celebrations, such as Halloween with masks or firecrackers
- airplanes flying overhead (whether heard from indoor or outdoor locations)

Source: Dr. Y. de Andrade, personal communication, July 26, 1999.

Positive Predictive Experiences/Anxiety Buffers

One way to counteract or prevent negative trigger experiences is to create positive predictive experiences, or anxiety buffers.

School personnel can –

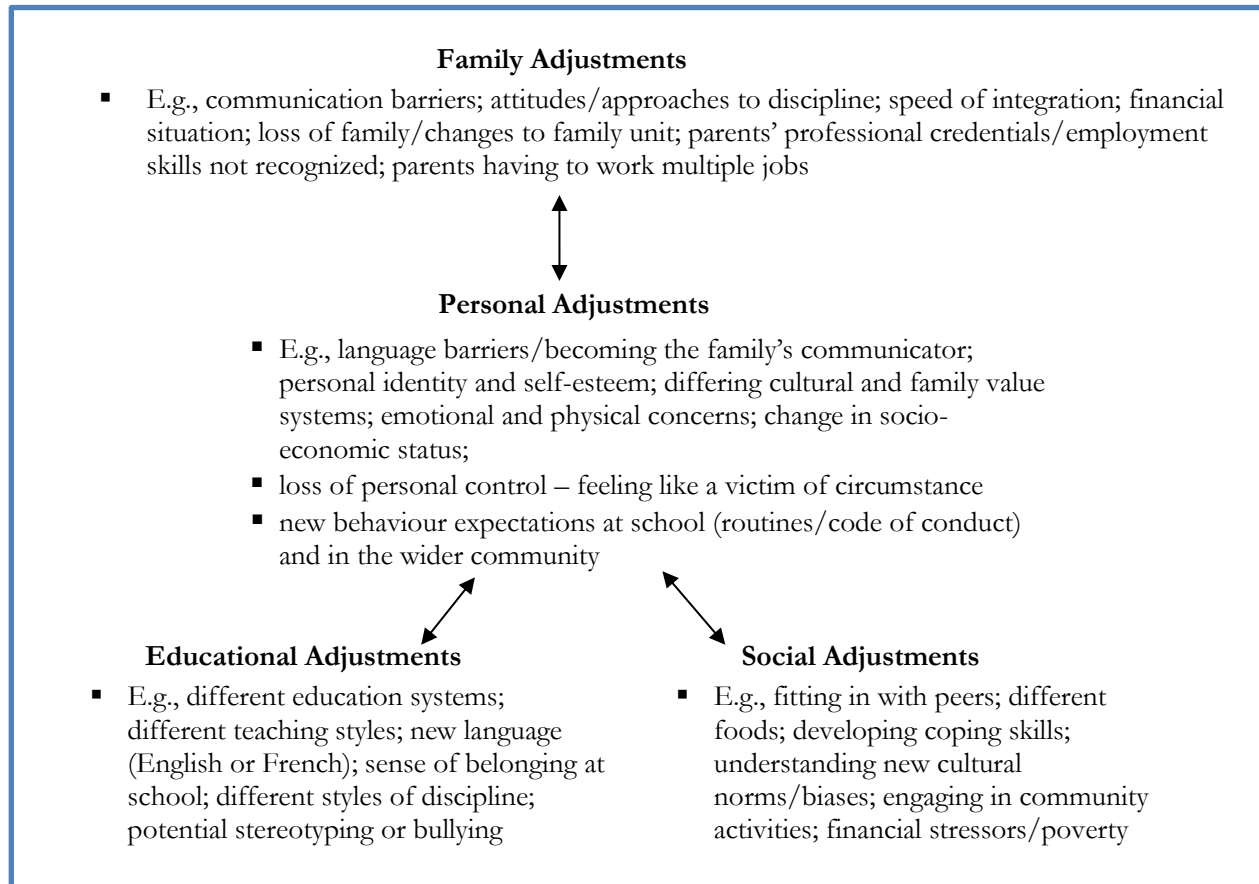
- establishing and following a set schedule and classroom routines/opportunity to practice
- providing advance knowledge about school start and dismissal bells ringing at the same times every day ... and reminders in advance, when bells are about to ring
- familiarizing children with the neighbourhood sounds (e.g., airplanes passing overhead)
- providing a sense of community within the classroom and in the wider school environment
- minimizing number of moves from one class to another throughout, and changing teachers
- utilizing cooperative learning, facilitating peer connections/buddy system
- learning through games/play

Source: Adapted from Dr. Y. de Andrade, personal communication, July 26, 1999.

Resilience

Resilience refers to an individual's ability to bounce back from adversity.

It is important to note that the recovery process may differ for individuals, depending on their age and the experiences they have had fleeing their homeland. Additionally, because they are in a new place, children and youth from refugee backgrounds must make significant life adjustments in their family, school, and community life.



Source: Adapted from "Settlement Workers in Schools Module on Settlement and Immigration," British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, pp. 8-11

All members of the school community – are reminded that it is important to recognize and appreciate that students from a refugee background bring with them strengths, abilities, and qualities to share, with hope of thriving in their new home country.

A person may be able to recover from disruptions or misfortune without being overwhelmed or acting in dysfunctional ways. Sometimes difficulties can be used as a springboard to positive development.

Resilience is fostered by protective factors – the personal attributes and social supports that shape and affect a person’s ability to trust, grow, and learn.

Young people develop a world view and positive habits and attitudes in response to family support, school attachment, and a sense of personal relevance and significance in the community.

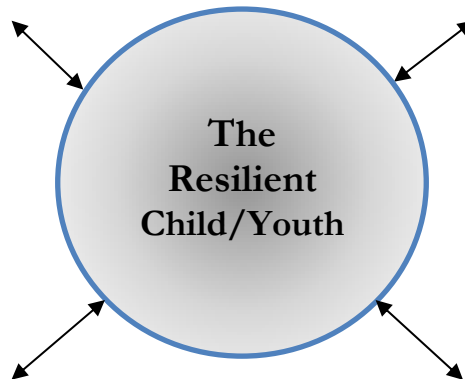
Profile of a Resilient Child/Youth

Skilled at Problem-Solving

- survival – safety/self-protection
- coping skill – ability to successfully manage something difficult or challenging – especially under adverse or unusual circumstances
- ability to develop alternative solutions
- ability to learn/change attitude and behaviour based on experience (non-avoidance)
- self-discipline/self-regulation

Socially Competent

- empathy/care/kindness
- sense of humour
- good inter-personal communication skills
- attachment to school, a sense of belonging and worth
- interacts well socially – engages with others, is culturally aware/ responsive
- expresses him/herself confidently (needs, opinions)
- strives to develop academic skills



Self-confident/Autonomous

- self-aware – positive self-worth, personal identity
- acknowledges personal strengths and abilities
- independent/internal locus of control
- can act independently – self-regulates

Personal Sense of Purpose and Future

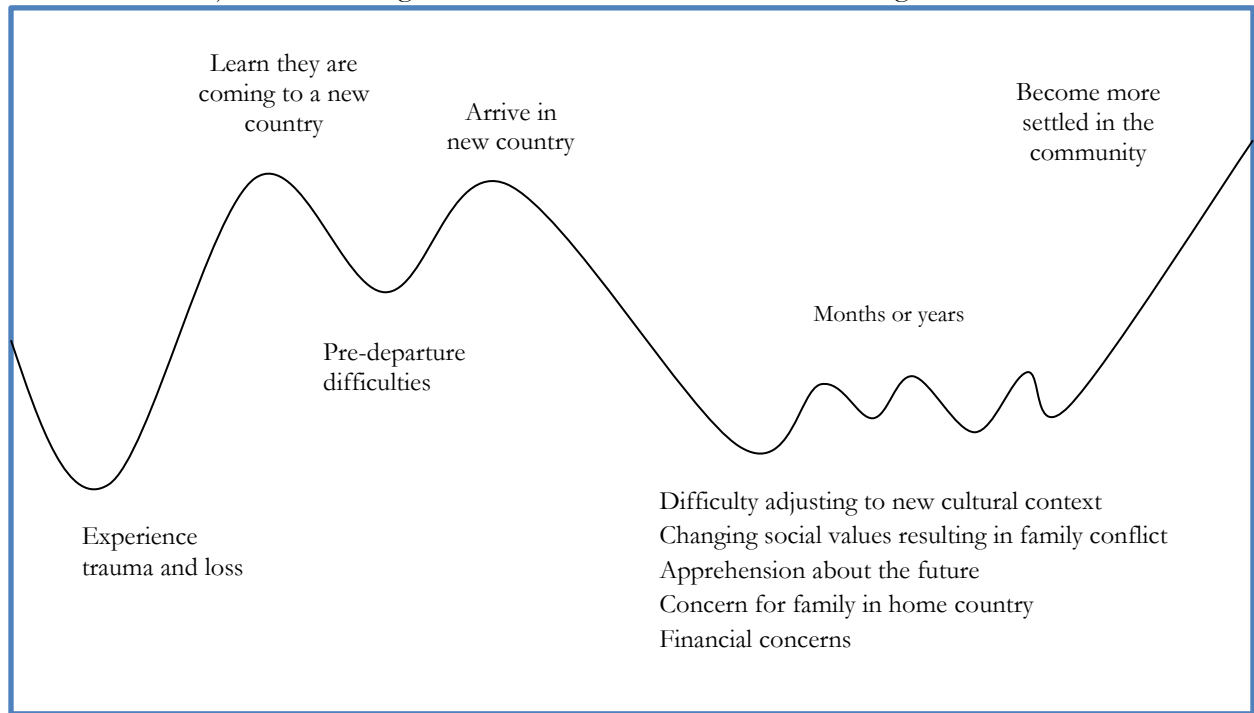
- hopeful
- is goal directed
- views personal future as positive – full of opportunity

Source: Adapted with permission from Dr. Y. de Andrade, lecture notes, 1999.

Adjustment

Newcomers to Canadian culture and school typically go through a period of adjustment during resettlement. Having experienced the trauma of leaving their homeland, and likely coping with a limited ability to understand or speak English they may, upon arrival in Canada, feel a sense of dislocation that may cause them to appear withdrawn, fatigued, or uninterested.

The course of adjustment during resettlement is filled with a series of highs and lows:



Source: Adapted from “Count me in!: A resource to support ESL students with refugee experience in schools,” Minister for Education, Literacy Secretariat, Government of South Australia, 2007.

Stages of Adjustment

This is a time when students and their parents too are trying to make sense of their new world. While individual circumstances and personal responses will vary enormously, it is common for new arrivals to go through four stages of adjustment.

Within all four stages there will be instances where students are silent or seem non-responsive. During the early stages of settlement and adjustment it might be that the student does not yet have adequate English vocabulary. It may also simply be that they are engaged in an internal process of translating that which is being said to them – from English to their home language for understanding and to formulate a response, and then translating their response back to English before speaking/reacting. Later on, this silent period may be due to emotional transitioning.

Parents might have only minimal or no understanding of English/minimal or no ability to speak English; be unfamiliar with social norms when interacting with English-speaking adults or persons in positions of authority; feel embarrassed at having to rely on their children as interpreters; have different cultural experience or view regarding the role of parents in a social or school context.

The following model identifies four stages of adjustment.

1. The Honeymoon Stage

This takes place when people first arrive. Individuals may demonstrate the following traits:

- enthusiasm, fascination, curiosity
- optimism, excitement, and hope for a new life
- unmistakable foreignness
- little identification with British Columbia
- fatigue
- anxiety regarding the future
- superficial attempts to adjust

At this stage, school personnel can – can learn as much as possible about students’ backgrounds and cultural differences – and familiarize the new student and their parents or guardians about the school facility and day-to-day operations, and about available school community programs, routines, and activities.

2. The Hostility Stage

After about four to six months, reality can set in. This is most often the time when culture shock becomes evident. Newcomers know a bit about getting around and have begun to learn how to manage, but where they are now is not like their home: the food, appearance of things, life, places, faces, and ways of doing things are different. Gradually they begin to feel that they ‘hate’ their new country/situation and want to go back home. Individuals may demonstrate the following traits:

- culture shock
- feeling the ‘strangeness’ of BC schools
- little verbal communication, except with others who speak their language
- slow second language retention
- distraction by unsettled family life or growing family problems
- confusion over Canadian social norms and expectations
- frustration and possible withdrawal or depression
- inexplicable or erratic behaviours
- difficulty sitting still
- possible cultural disorientation and misunderstandings, both verbal and non-verbal

At this stage, school personnel can – help the students and families to set realistic goals and expectations; create opportunities to build students’ self-esteem; encourage students to take pride in their heritage and language; show compassion and understanding; and highlight student success.

3. The Humour Stage (or Coming to Terms)

Gradually, after about six months, newcomers begin to work toward resolution of their feelings and their sense of being torn between the old and the new. They begin to accept their new home and to find friends. They begin to discover that there are good things about where they are living and come to terms with both the old and new ways of life. Individuals may demonstrate the following traits:

- proficiency in conversational English
- disengagement from English as a Second Language classes
- peer influence at its greatest
- some attitudinal and value changes
- parent-teen conflict at its worst
- behavioural problems
- improvements in economic situation as at least one parent finds acceptable employment

At this stage, school personnel can – help students to see the value in their original culture as well as in their new culture; present opportunities for students to communicate about their past; and offer students the opportunity to become role models and peer supporters. Introduce students to club activities and team sports in the school and local community – encourage and facilitate their participation.

4. The Home Stage (Integration)

This is the stage at which students and families realize they are here to stay. This last stage may take years, and for some will never fully take place. Students may still respond in unexpected ways to particular classroom situations or events, due to cultural conditioning or because their cultural values and beliefs differ from those of other students. Individuals may demonstrate the following traits:

- proficiency with both their first language and with English
- appreciation of cultural symbols of original and adopted countries
- viewing him or herself as an integral part of a multicultural society
- friendships with individuals from different ethnic origins
- participation in school and community activities associated with both original and new homeland cultures
- acceptance and identification with host culture, without giving up on original identity

At this stage, school personnel can – take pride in the support they have provided throughout each student’s unique process of adjustment and integration.

Source: Adapted from “Settlement Workers in Schools Module on Settlement and Integration,” British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, pp. 2-5.

The Receiving School

Cultural Diversity – Many cultures in the world are represented in the population of British Columbia. Factors such as social class, religion, level of education, the region from which people come within their homeland, whether they lived in a rural or urban setting – all contribute to differences among various cultures – in their beliefs about teaching and learning, their expectations of teachers and school personnel, and often, their willingness to seek help. Traditional beliefs, values, and customs of various cultures may be retained to varying degrees by different individuals.

For many refugee children and youth, school is a safe place where they can learn new things and make friends. It helps them to restore some normalcy in their lives, and develop future goals.

Coming to a new country and adjusting to a new way of life can be difficult and frightening. Older youth may be particularly challenged by starting life in a new country.

While English language learning is essential, children and youth from refugee backgrounds often have additional urgent needs that must be addressed if they are to benefit from their new school experience.

The first year or two are very important to successful resettlement. Schools can smooth the adjustment process by providing responsive services and programs for these students.

Teachers, students, and families all bring their personal and cultural beliefs, expectations, and practices to the education process. When the process involves a student from another cultural background, it may be important to explore the student's cultural experiences, values and attitudes in order to effectively assess the student's learning needs.

Every culture is dynamic, with shared beliefs, values, and experiences among people from a given cultural group as well as widespread diversity within the group. This diversity prohibits generalized assumptions about individual beliefs and responses to specific circumstances. The degree of adaptation to a new life in Canada does not necessarily compare with the length of residence in the country, and integration in aspects of Canadian life does not imply a rejection of traditional ways.

Knowing some of the key characteristics in the traditional cultures among us may help to improve mutual understanding and ability to work effectively with students from different cultures.

To help understand the backgrounds of immigrant and refugee students, this website from Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada has very useful information about almost every country in the world: www.intercultures.ca/cil-cai/countryinsights-apercuspays-eng.asp .

A Warm and Welcoming Beginning

A child's first impression of the learning environment is affected by the way they are welcomed and introduced to their new life.

This can be a very vulnerable period for students. For example, this is a time when some adolescents and youth may be particularly susceptible to gang recruitment.

Schools have the opportunity to create a warm, friendly, and safe environment with an appropriate educational program and opportunities for interaction and understanding.

School personnel can – help by carefully monitoring students' social, emotional, and cognitive development.

School and District Personnel

Much of the student's introduction to their new life in Canada and early relationship building may take place at school, with the support of the school principal, teachers, other support staff, and peers.

A school and district team made up of various professionals can best support these students:

- School Principal
- Counsellors
- English Language Learning (ELL) Teachers
- Learning Support Teachers
- Settlement Workers
- Other student support staff who may be accessed through the district's support services, school administrators, or existing school-based teams

School and district personnel have an opportunity to make a positive first impression on families and set up new students for early success.

School Principals – have a leadership role to play, ensuring that students are provided with the support they need and that the school is a welcoming place for all students and their families.

Counsellors – can assist with information and support in understanding the emotional needs of the student and can assist with referral to youth mental health services and other community support agencies.

Teachers – can begin to have a positive impact as soon as children and youth with refugee experience arrive by establishing and maintaining a positive, welcoming classroom climate. It is important to recognize that teachers may not have all the necessary training to help the student deal with traumatic experiences.

English Language Learning (ELL) Specialist Teachers – along with classroom teachers, can play a significant role in helping refugee children and youth learn English, adjust to a new way of life in a new country, and achieve success in school.

Learning Support Teachers – can provide classroom teachers with teaching strategies, behaviour management support, and assistance with adaptation and modification of materials.

Settlement Workers – can offer information and support services to students and their families, helping to smooth their transition into a new school and community.

Local immigrant- and refugee-serving agencies have expertise that may help.
See the Resources – Community Connections section – beginning on Page 33 of this *Guide*.

It is important to provide receiving school personnel with professional development and in-service opportunities geared toward understanding and addressing the unique needs of students and families from refugee backgrounds.

School Community

Many members of the wider school community will be interested in participating in school plans for the arrival of new students, and may be keen to learn how they too can help new parents and school/classmates feel welcome and included in school and community life.

Students and families within the receiving school community can also contribute in positive ways to creating a warm and welcoming beginning for newcomers.

Reassurance

A safe and predictable environment, with routine and stability is very important for students who have experienced many uncertainties and challenges as refugees, and are beginning a new life in a new school environment – all the while dealing with the universal trials of growing up.

For the first few days at school, it may be difficult for students who have spent much of their recent past living outdoors to remain inside the school building or to remain in the same classroom for long periods of time. While keeping safety in mind, build some flexibility into students' daily schedules.

Families who have fled from violence or persecution and have often experienced humiliation, discrimination and marginalization during their search for sanctuary, and then the challenge of life in a refugee camp. Safety – their own and that of their children has been, and will continue to be, a top priority.

Upon arrival, children and their families may feel happy that they are safe and away from conflict. There is a great deal of optimism because they may now begin a new life.

British Columbia schools strive to develop positive and welcoming school cultures, and are committed to fostering optimal environments for learning. Members of these school communities share a commitment to maintaining safe, caring and orderly schools.

- ✓ They focus on prevention of problems and use school-wide efforts to build “community,” fostering respect, inclusion, fairness and equity.
- ✓ They set, communicate and consistently reinforce clear expectations of acceptable conduct.
- ✓ They teach, model and encourage socially responsible behaviours that contribute to the school community, solve problems in peaceful ways, value diversity and defend human rights.

BC schools are safe schools

School personnel can – reassure newcomer parents – that in British Columbia, schools work to prevent problems through community building, fostering respect, inclusion, fairness and equity; they set, communicate and reinforce clear expectations of acceptable conduct; they teach, model and encourage socially responsible behaviour; they work to solve problems peacefully; and they place high value on diversity and defending human rights.

Talk with parents about ways in which the school responds and works to prevent bullying, harassment and intimidation – also explain how parents and students can inform school authorities of safety concerns.

Safe schools are ones in which members of the school community are free of the fear of harm, including potential threats from inside or outside the school. The attitudes and actions of students, staff and parents support an environment that is resistant to disruption and intrusion, and enables a constant focus on student achievement.

See also – ERASE Bullying - website
<http://www.erasebullying.ca/>

BC schools are caring schools

School personnel can – share, both with parents and with students, ways in which the school honours diversity, and works proactively to build ‘community’ and a sense of belonging among its members.

The school’s Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) and all school parents can – help newcomer parents learn how to advocate for their children’s well-being, and they can encourage their own children to be kind and supportive of their new school/classmates.

BC schools are orderly schools

School personnel can – plan in advance for newcomer arrivals, this will increase the chances that all will ‘go right’ – and prepare to respond proactively if/when things ‘go wrong’.

Endeavour to minimize distractions for newcomers from purposeful learning activities. Provide a climate of mutual respect and responsibility.

Help both newcomer parents and students understand school and classroom routines and other established operational protocols.

Caring schools know that a sense of belonging and connectedness – not just for students, but for everyone in the school community – is a necessary element in the creation and maintenance of a safe learning environment. In caring schools members of the school community feel a sense of belonging and have opportunities to relate to one another in positive, supportive ways. All aspects of school life embrace and reflect diversity. School is an inviting place for students, staff, parents and visitors. Staff members make conscious and concerted efforts to help other members of the school community feel connected.

Orderly schools are free from chaos and confusion, and alive with the sights and sounds of purposeful learning activities. Routines for repetitious activities are well established so students’ minds and bodies are free to focus on the learning and development work at hand. A businesslike atmosphere exists, yet there is creativity and fun in abundance. Everyone has work to do and does it in a timely way – and in a way that doesn’t interfere with the learning and development of others. Everyone feels a sense of meaningful accomplishment, and feels that school is a good place to be. All members of the school community are informed about, and exercise their rights and responsibilities as school citizens.

Source: *Safe Caring and Orderly Schools – A Guide* – website <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/sco/>

Social Responsibility – a role for students

The arrival of newcomers from other countries and other cultures can provide many opportunities for students in the receiving school to learn about cultural differences, and to model for their new school/classmates the kinds of socially responsible behaviours expected of students in British Columbia schools.

School personnel can – encourage students to be kind and helpful to their new school/classmates – they too will then begin to learn these expected behaviours.

Many of the behaviour expectations held for students in British Columbia schools are universal – and therefore may already be familiar to newcomers. For some students from refugee backgrounds, their very survival during their recent experience may well have depended upon, or sharpened, these behaviours. Some expectations may however be unfamiliar or culturally different from behaviour expectations in their former homeland.

School personnel can – share the school’s Code Conduct/behaviour expectations with parents and students as part of their school orientation.

Being able to interact positively with others is essential in social situations at school, at home and at work – throughout one’s life.

School personnel can – play an important role in helping children and youth develop this essential aspect of their social development – both by teaching healthy relationship skills and by modeling healthy relationship skills in practice.

- ✓ Students learn to reflect on their actions, respond appropriately to others, manage their emotions, recognize and control impulsive behaviour, and resolve conflict peacefully.
- ✓ Students learn and practice kindness, respect, and compassion for others in their actions, speech, and ways of thinking; and gain an understanding of what it means to be a ‘good friend/partner/citizen.’
- ✓ Students cultivate and practice such qualities in their day-to-day activities and in their relationships with others within and beyond the classroom.

In this way, children and youth come to understand and value healthy relationship skills as essential for success in social situations at school, at home and at work – throughout their lives.

All students benefit from opportunities to learn and practice socially responsible behaviour:

- ✓ *Contributing to the Classroom and School Community* – Being welcoming, friendly, kind and helpful; participating willingly in classroom activities and working cooperatively; and volunteering for extra responsibilities.
- ✓ *Solving Conflicts in Peaceful Ways* – Expressing feelings honestly, managing feelings of anger appropriately and listening respectfully; showing empathy and considering differing points of view; working to solve interpersonal problems calmly; and knowing when to get adult help.
- ✓ *Valuing Diversity and Defending Human Rights* – Treating others fairly and respectfully and trying to be unbiased and ethical; showing interest in correcting injustice and speaking out; and taking action to support diversity and defend human rights.
- ✓ *Exercising Democratic Rights and Responsibilities* – Showing a growing sense of responsibility; following school rules; showing a sense of community-mindedness; being accountable for personal behaviour; and taking action to improve the world.

Source: *The BC Performance Standards – Social Responsibility* - website
http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/perf_stands/social_resp.htm

Introduction to the School

Orientation for Families

- introduce the whole family to the school facility, teaching and support staff gradually; include an introduction to *StrongStart BC* early learning program for families who have both school and pre-school aged children
- provide a map and a tour of the school and school grounds, including entrances/exits and explain routines for entering and leaving the building
- provide a map and orientation to the surrounding neighbourhood
- explain behaviour expectations for students (school code of conduct)
- provide ongoing information about school events
- provide all initial information in the family's first language if possible (consider using translator services to prepare materials; some Ministry resources for parents are available in multiple languages)
- consider using an interpreter to ease communication during initial contact

Families with pre-schoolers – *StrongStart BC* early learning programs are located in schools within every school district in British Columbia. These programs can play a significant role welcoming and supporting refugee families – offering newly arrived parents the opportunity to learn how they can support their pre-school aged children's early learning and school readiness.

Many families from refugee backgrounds have experienced trauma, and the ability for parents to remain in close proximity to their older children, i.e., participating with their younger children in the school's *StrongStart BC* program while their older children attend school, can help to lessen separation anxiety for both parents and children during their introduction to school.

StrongStart BC programs offer newly arrived parents opportunity for community engagement and peer socialization. Here, they will meet other neighbourhood parents with children of similar ages who can help familiarize them with local school and community life. *StrongStart BC* program staff can also help families connect with other support agencies and programs within the wider community. There are often opportunities for English Language instruction for adults alongside the *StrongStart BC* program.

More information about early learning programs including, *StrongStart BC*, is available at: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning>; and information about Early Years Centres is available at: http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/early_years/centres.htm

Orientation for Students

- utilize a gradual entry process in accordance with individual student's confidence/comfort level
- introduce the student to their assigned teacher(s) and classmates
- provide a classmate or older student 'buddy' for the new student
- assign a locker or other personal/private compartment storage space
- provide access to a quiet area or place of refuge for times when the student feels overwhelmed
- ensure the student has necessary school supplies, textbooks/resource materials (also lunch/snack)
- ensure necessary school and district level support services are in place
- minimize the number of teachers the student will interact with, at least initially
- explain and provide opportunity for the student to practice school routines (bells, alarms, drills) and use consistent messaging to encourage expected behaviour

The Classroom and Learning

Starting Points for Student Learning

Much of students' initial healing may take place in the classroom with the support of the teacher and other school and district

While in school, students spend a great deal of time in the classroom – so what goes on there is very important.

support personnel. Teachers have the opportunity to create a warm and welcoming environment, designing an appropriate program of instructions, and providing opportunities for positive teacher-to-student and student-to-student interaction and understanding.

Students too can learn about ways to support their new classmates' recovery.

Some children and youth may have had little formal schooling in their homeland or during their refugee experience, or had their formal education interrupted by their need to flee conflict. These students may be unfamiliar with some cultural conventions associated with schooling in Canada.

School personnel and students can – help their new students/classmates understand and become accustomed to these cultural conventions – they may serve as a practical starting point for student learning. Examples:

- using bathroom facilities
- opening and closing doors
- waiting in line
- waiting one's turn
- speaking one person at a time
- sitting still
- staying in one room or indoors for long periods of time
- staying inside the school for long periods of time
- understanding common non-verbal cues
- recognizing the letters of the alphabet (in English or any language)
- recognizing that information in English is oriented from left to right, top to bottom
- holding a writing instrument
- using a notebook; copying passages from an original source, e.g., whiteboard, textbook
- using technology, e.g., cell phones and computers, tablets

Communicating

School personnel can – help to ease and facilitate communication by:

- encouraging and acknowledging student efforts to communicate
- speaking slowly and clearly – and at a normal conversational volume
- keeping vocabulary and sentences direct and simple
- avoiding the use of metaphors, jargon or popular sayings
- repeating if necessary and/or paraphrase
- using examples to illustrate your point
- using visuals (diagrams, photographs, etc.) whenever possible
- providing key information in writing (points, details)

- linking verbal and visual cues
- allowing time for the student to formulate a response
- being patient
- checking frequently for understanding
- making communication/information sessions short; communicating across languages is demanding and exhausting

It may also be helpful to research differing cultural body language cues. A person’s body language sends signals that can be confusing or misunderstood ... both for new students and their families, and for members of the receiving school community.

Adapted from: “Settlement Workers in Schools Module on Cross-Cultural Communication,” British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, pp. 14-16.

Interacting with Peers

Classroom interaction also helps teachers ascertain the level of need of individual students. Observation of student-to-student interaction will help teachers assess how well children and youth from refugee backgrounds are managing their adjustment to Canadian society. It can also provide an opportunity for helping students begin to cope with their past traumatic experiences.

Children and youth learn best by interacting with their peers and by practising what they have learned.

Students who are shy need to be encouraged to participate in the context of an accepting, safe learning environment, in which class members can confidently express themselves. Children and youth who are reluctant to interact with others need to be encouraged to work in situations where they have a significant role to play in the success of the group. It is through meaningful interactions that children and youth develop friendships.

It is important to keep in mind that, while not fully skilled in the academic domain, students from refugee backgrounds possess valuable life experience and skills that can serve as a basis for academic learning.

School personnel can – utilize some of the following instructional strategies for facilitating interaction:

- Varying group size: pairs, triads, small groups, circle of knowledge.
- Using cooperative learning strategies: brainstorming, role playing, jigsaw, think-pair-share.
- Using questioning strategies.
- Providing opportunities to practise conflict resolution techniques.
- Focusing on similarities among children and cultures; as children learn about the things they have in common with others, they develop a sense of belonging and overall comfort in the classroom.
- Communicating that school-wide rules and behavioural expectations apply to all children equally and equitably.
- Being explicit about classroom rules, and posting them in a location where they can provide visual cues and reinforce positive behaviour expectations.

Sources: “The Multiple Intelligences Handbook,” B. Campbell, 1994, p. 50; “Educating Everybody’s Children,” R. Cole, 1995, pp. 24, 38, 65, 146, 149, 152; and “Teaching to Diversity,” M. Meyers, 1993, pp. 72-82.

Cultural Awareness – differences that may impact behaviours, expectations, or practices in school learning environments.

As we learn about other cultures we need to be sensitive to the fact that not all people from a particular culture or society behave in the same way. Just as regions and peoples within Canada manifest a variety of cultures and social behaviour, even though we share many common characteristics, so there are regional and cultural variations among people from other nations.

| Behaviours, expectations, or practices that are common in BC school learning environments ... | ... may be perceived differently in other cultures. |
|---|---|
| Praise is expressed overtly/and is welcome. | Praise is experienced as embarrassing. |
| Making direct eye contact is appropriate/expected. | Making direct eye contact is inappropriate/may be seen as rude. |
| Physical contact between peers and between teachers and students is unexceptional, particularly in working with younger children. | Physical contact between individuals is taboo, particularly physical contact between males and females. |
| The polite or acceptable physical distance between individuals is 40-70 cm. | Physical distance is either much closer or much further apart. |
| Silence is never prolonged; an instant answer is expected. | Silence is comfortable and can imply thought. |
| Most feelings may be displayed but not necessarily acted upon. | Feelings must be hidden, or, in other cases, displayed with gusto. |
| Some personal topics can be discussed openly. | Taboo topics are highly variable and culturally defined. |
| Punctuality is prized. | Time is flexible. |
| Relative status is not emphasized. | Status is very important. |
| Roles are loosely defined. | Role expectations are strict. |
| Competition is desirable. | Group harmony is desired. |
| Politeness is routine; lapses occur and are forgiven. Thank you is enough. | Politeness and proper conduct are paramount, especially in children. |
| Education is for everyone. | Education is for primarily or for males first. |
| Girls and boys are educated together. | Girls and boys are educated separately. |

Source: “Settlement Workers in Schools Module on Cross-Cultural Communication,” British Columbia Ministry of Advanced Education and Labour Market Development, p. 12.

Predictable Stressors

School personnel can – be aware of and sensitive to some common school and classroom activities that may cause students from refugee backgrounds unnecessary stress if they are asked to participate/respond in the beginning stages of their adjustment.

- Show and/or Tell – may evoke painful memories of what they no longer have/or what they have endured during their refugee experience.
- Current Events Discussions –while a common activity in many classrooms; asking students from refugee backgrounds to share their experiences, discuss their views of the events underway in their homeland, or comment on the plight of refugees in general – may be distressing to them. When/if students feel able to discuss some of the more sensitive aspects of their experience, they will do so.
- Detentions – may be an unfamiliar concept, both to students and their parents – and may even be construed as a form of arrest. It will be important to explain clearly – both to students and parents (an interpreter may be needed) how expectations are established and how consequences are applied in the school.
- ‘Busy Work’ – i.e., activity that simply has students filling in time is not recommended. All assigned learning activities should clearly relate to the subject and lesson content being taught and take into consideration the challenge level/complexity of tasks as well as any language limitations.
- Seating – situating the student next to a positive student role model or ‘buddy’ will help students who may have little or no school experience be learn how to conduct themselves in schools and classrooms. Seating the student close to the teacher may help to facilitate communication and comprehension and enable the teacher to monitor and support student success.
- Field Trips –plans need to be communicated, especially for outings involving ‘camp or camping’. The word/concept of ‘camp’ may evoke association with ‘refugee camp’ and subsequent misunderstanding of the outing that is being planned.

Families will benefit from an explanation of how field trips are incorporated as learning activities. An explanation will also be helpful regarding school requirements for permission forms to be signed by parents and procedures for returning these to the school before the event.

- Cultural Views on Gender – will differ from on culture to another. Cultural customs may not allow for some students to participate in activities that include both boys and girls (e.g., physical education, or group learning activities). School personnel can – check with students or parents regarding participation in co-ed activities
- Clubs – a ‘club’ is, in many cultures, often understood as a ‘night club’. An explanation that ‘school clubs’ such as a ‘drama club’ or a ‘chess club’ as part of the school learning experience may be helpful.

Learning Supports and Services

Students from refugee backgrounds have many needs that are similar to all children and youth, and have some special needs that are unique to their personal experiences. Coming to a new country and adjusting to a new way of life can be difficult and frightening.

Learning supports and services can ease the way.

In providing specialized supports and services for students from refugee backgrounds, it is important to remember that the goal for the majority of these students is integration into a regular classroom setting. Ultimately, it is anticipated that most students will perform to the same standard as is expected of all British Columbia students once they become familiar with the English language and Canadian culture.

Supports for English Language Learners (ELL)

There is no such thing as a typical English Language Learner – a student whose primary language (or languages) at home is not English. Some students require additional support, but not all require the same type of support.

Because English Language Learners come from varying linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and bring with them a wide variety of life experiences, they enrich our schools and enhance learning for all students.

English Language Learning Specialists together with classroom teachers play a significant role in helping students learn English, adjust to a new way of life, and achieve success in school.

The Ministry of Education has developed several resources to assist school districts and schools to assess students' language learning needs and provide necessary supports and services.

- **ELL Policy and Guidelines (PDF)**
Provides information about rules and procedures regarding English Language Learning.
<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/english-language-learners/guidelines.pdf> ENGLISH
http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/english-language-learners/guidelines_fr.pdf FRENCH
- **ELL Students: A Guide for Classroom Teachers (PDF)**
This guide is for Kindergarten – Grade 12 classroom teachers who have had limited experience working with students.
<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/english-language-learners/classroom.pdf>
- **ELL Students: A Guide for ELL Specialists (PDF)**
This guide is aimed at ELL specialists, including district consultants, school-based teachers and itinerant teachers who work with students at several different schools.
<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/english-language-learners/special.pdf>

- **ELL Planning Tool** ([PDF](#)) ([WORD](#))

The Ministry of Education has developed a tool to facilitate a planning process and to determine the instructional support needs of students with ELL needs. Paralleling work undertaken in recent years to create a similar set of tools for students with special needs, the ELL Instructional Support Planning Tool is a new, research-based approach that can be used as an educational model for instructional and support planning.

http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/english-language-learners/ell_planning_tool.pdf

- **ELL Standards** (PDF)

The standards are designed to assist schools with language assessment and ongoing instruction for students.

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/english-language-learners/standards.pdf>

The English Language Learners *Standards* have been developed by British Columbia ELL teachers and language professionals to complement the Province's English Language Learners Policy and Guidelines (May 2013). They are founded upon the knowledge and experience of ELL educators, as reflected in literature from various educational jurisdictions, and interpreted by representative BC practitioners. The *Standards* describe characteristics that English language learners typically exhibit at various stages of the English acquisition process. Together, the standards address the range of language abilities found among K-12 ELL learners

The standards are intended as a complement to the various approaches that districts have already developed for use with ELL student populations. ELL educators may accordingly wish to use existing district-developed standards (descriptors) as an alternative or supplement to these standards.

Learners with limited or no formal schooling or pre-schooling experience

At any age or grade level there may be students who have had limited or no formal schooling or pre-schooling experience.

It is important to keep in mind that, while not fully skilled in the academic domain, students from refugee backgrounds possess valuable life experience and skills that can serve as a basis for academic learning.

Despite their age, life experience and level of developmental maturity, some may have received limited formal schooling or pre-schooling. Their backgrounds differ significantly from the school environment they are entering. Some may have been engaged in schooling that was interrupted for various reasons, including war, poverty, or migration. Some may have come from remote rural settings with little prior opportunity for formal sequential schooling.

These students may have:

- little or no experience with print
- semi-literacy in their native language
- minimal understanding of the function of literacy
- limited awareness of school organization or culture
- language performance that is significantly below their age/grade level
- insufficient English to understand what is being asked of them to accomplish learning tasks

Although many such students are at the beginning level of oral proficiency in English, some may have other more developed proficiency levels.

However, even the Standards for Level 1 (on the Primary, Intermediate, or Secondary matrices) may not yield a helpful description to determine their level of performance. These students typically require intensive, customized support (including cultural bridging experiences) before they are able to benefit from participation in regular classroom activity.

In terms of language skills, students with little or no previous school experience may benefit from:

- using pictures to express ideas (meaning)
- using single words to express ideas (convention)
- practicing copying letters, words, and phrases (style)
- stringing single words together to create simple sentences (style)
- using samples and other instructional aides to increase their awareness of spelling, capitalization, or punctuation (convention)

Sources: *ELL Standards*, British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2001, page 9-10.

The Multiple Intelligences Handbook, B. Campbell, 1994, p. 50; *Educating Everybody's Children*, R. Cole, 1995, pp. 24, 38, 65, 146, 149, 152; and *Teaching to Diversity*, M. Meyers, 1993, pp. 72-82.

Supports for Students with Special Needs

Special needs are those characteristics which make it necessary to provide a student undertaking an educational program with resources different from those which are needed by most students. Special needs are identified during assessment of a student; they are the basis for determining an appropriate educational program (including necessary resources) for that student.

All students should have equitable access to learning, opportunities for achievement, and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their educational programs. This includes students with special needs – those who have disabilities of an intellectual, physical, sensory, emotional, or behavioural nature, or have a learning disability or have exceptional gifts or talents.

Standards for all students, including students with special needs, are developed with high but appropriate expectations for student achievement. Students with special needs are expected to achieve some, most, or all provincial curriculum outcomes with special support.

To the maximum extent possible, supports and services should be organized for delivery at the school level. However, a support system should be available at the district level to ensure that schools have access to expertise and services which are so specialized as to preclude their replication in each school.

It is important to recognize that teachers may not have all the necessary training to help students work through lasting psychological or physical effects of trauma resulting from their refugee experience. A team approach is the best way to proceed.

Counsellors and/or Critical Incidence Response Teams (CIRTs), for example, are found in many school districts. They may be accessed, either through the district counselling department, or Student Support Services personnel. Additionally, schools may have teams composed of CIRT members and/or school personnel including the classroom teacher, the counsellor and ELL specialist.

In schools, counselling services are provided primarily by school counsellors and by other mental health professionals (e.g., youth and family counsellors, behavioural therapists). School counselling services should be co-ordinated with services provided in the community by other ministries (such as mental health services) and community agencies.

Detailed information regarding access to supports and services for students with special needs is provided in the Ministry of Education's *Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines* – September 2013 <http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/ppandg.htm>

Child and youth mental health services are also offered throughout British Columbia by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). Information about available supports and services, is accessible at the MCFD website: http://www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental_health/index.htm

Supports for Older Students

Older youth who immigrate to Canada in their mid to late-teens or early adulthood with little or no English and limited formal or interrupted education and/or work experience in their home country may need help with the following issues:

- ambitious academic goals and aspirations as they arrive as well as the frustrations that may follow if these are not immediately achieved
- inability to meet BC graduation requirements within the expected time
- social isolation
- lack of knowledge about BC learning, vocational training, and recreational opportunities
- need or desire to enter the work force before they are able to acquire adequate BC education or orientation
- vulnerability in the labour market (e.g., with little opportunity to move beyond minimum wage employment)
- in some cases, post-traumatic stress disorder, low self-esteem, negative outlook for the future or vulnerability to problematic behaviour, including violence, gang membership, criminal activities, and substance abuse

School personnel can –

- Encourage and support students to stay in school, i.e., continue their education for as long as possible.
- Connect students with adult education programs and clearly explain opportunities for school completion as an adult – see www.aved.gov.bc.ca/abe
- Provide time for students to complete all work during class, rather than assigning homework.
- Offer support blocks in their timetable where necessary.
- Consider work experience programs as appropriate.
- Focus on literacy and work skills programs for those not able or not intending to graduate.
- Provide translated information where possible.
- Discover and nurture student interests.
- Display posters and signs reflective of the diversity of students.
- Offer interpreter-supported clubs, e.g., homework or computer.
- Recognize efforts or accomplishments, formally and informally.
- Encourage peer supports and buddy systems.

Transition Planning

In addition to the challenging adjustments that students from refugee backgrounds face, like all students, they will experience significant transition points throughout their education. Transitions from home or daycare to kindergarten, from grade to grade, school to school, perhaps from school district to school district, and school to post-secondary or work situations – are times when students will benefit from support.

Transition planning is the preparation, implementation and evaluation required to enable students to make major transitions during their lives – from home or pre-school to school; from class to class; from school to school; from school district to school district; and from school to post-secondary, community or work situations.

School and district personnel can – help by establishing processes to ensure the transition process:

- is continuous
- occurs as part of a planned education program
- includes preparation, implementation of supportive strategies and evaluation
- includes awareness and use of support services by school teams

Transition planning – involves individual transition plan development, follow-up with students, and long-range planning. It is essential that schools and school districts establish procedures to support collaborative consultation in the transition of students into, within, and from the school system.

Planning should involve both parents and students, and include school and district personnel, as well as representatives from community services such as pre-schools and post-secondary institutions, professionals from other ministries.

Source: “Career/Life Transitions for Students with Diverse Needs: A Resource Guide for Schools,” British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2001.

The Ministry of Education document *Career/Life Transitions for Students with Diverse Needs: A Resource Guide for Schools* offers information about transitions for students learning English (pages 43 to 51) at www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/docs/moe_clt_resource_rb0144.pdf .

Resources – Community Connections

Many communities have immigrant-/refugee-serving agencies that offer various supports for individuals and families. For a complete list, refer to www.amssa.org.

Making community connections can be of great benefit to students, their families, and the school.

Making these community connections can be of great benefit to students, their families, and the receiving school. The receiving school or school district may already be closely associated with these organizations or may be involved in special projects to promote the immigration/settlement of individuals and families who are new to Canada. The following are examples of services offered by immigrant- /refugee-serving organizations:

- out of school transition programs for youth
- programs for youth at risk
- pilot projects and initiatives to promote welcoming communities
- early childhood development programs for young siblings of school-aged children and youth
- youth buddy programs

Refugee relief agencies work to bring a sense of normalcy to a new existence and stability in the face of uncertainty.

The following is a listing of resources – agencies, publications and websites that offer helpful information for assisting students and families from refugee backgrounds.

Please note that possible services for immigrants/refugees may be provided in your community by organizations not listed below, such as church groups or cultural centres.

Information Services Vancouver – www.communityinfo.bc.ca/index.html – offers the *Red Book* containing a list of agencies in the lower mainland that may be able to support schools.

- **WelcomeBC** <http://www.welcomebc.ca/home.aspx>

WelcomeBC helps ensure new British Columbians are able to settle successfully, gain employment, become active members of their communities, and contribute fully to the social and economic prosperity of British Columbia and Canada.

WelcomeBC's online channels have been designed to help prospective immigrants/refugees, and other newcomers, community leaders, and service providers find the information, tools and resources that they need, when they need it and by whichever means they choose to search for it.

Responsive design makes WelcomeBC.ca easy to view on both desktop and mobile devices.

In addition to WelcomeBC's website, individuals can access up-to-date information through a number of features and tools including:

- WelcomeBC [Ask the Expert](#)
- WelcomeBC [Cost of Living Calculator](#)
- WelcomeBC [YouTube](#)
- [Newcomers' Guide](#) (now available in video)
- WelcomeBC: [In your Language](#) (Info and resources in more than a dozen languages)

Resources in the Greater Vancouver Region

Health

- **Bridge Community Health Clinic**

Located in Vancouver, this health clinic provides primary health care services for refugees with or without legal status and within their first three to five years in Canada.

www.welcomebc.ca/shared/docs/community_health.pdf

Telephone: (604) 709-6540

- **Health Regional Offices**

This website provides contact information for all of British Columbia's health authorities:

www.health.gov.bc.ca/socsec/contacts.html

- **New Canadian Clinic**

Located in Burnaby and Surrey, these clinics provide health care services for newcomers to Canada who have difficulties accessing the regular medical system. A referral is required from health or social service providers. These are not walk-in clinics; service is by appointment only.

Burnaby – Telephone: (604) 412-6580

Surrey – Telephone: (604) 953-5030

Refugee Claimants Services

Many settlement service organizations provide a variety of services for refugee claimants in Metro Vancouver and in British Columbia. For details please check with settlement organizations in your community.

- **First Contact – Canadian Red Cross, BC Lower Mainland Region**

First Contact provides refugee claimants with one place to access assistance, on arrival, through a 24/7 multilingual information and referral phone line and an accompaniment service.

Multilingual Assistance includes:

- accurate, timely information
- referral to immigrant- and refugee-serving agencies; legal, paralegal and health services; housing; and other settlement services such as English classes and employment services
- accompaniment to appointments

www.redcross.ca/article.asp?id=27715&tid=078 and <http://www.redcross.ca/how-we-help/migrant-and-refugee-services/syrian-refugee-crisis-and-refugee-arrival-in-canada>

Telephone: (604) 787-8858 for Vancouver area

Telephone: 1-866-771-8858 Toll free outside Vancouver area.

- **Legal Services Society of British Columbia**

The Legal Services Society provides a guide explaining the process of requesting refugee protection in Canada. Called *Your Guide to the Refugee Claim Process*, this handbook includes information on starting a claim in BC, filling out the required forms for the process, and getting legal help. An overview of the refugee claim process found in this guide is provided in Appendix B. The complete guide can be found at:

www.lss.bc.ca/publications/pub.aspx?p_id=286

- **Vancouver Refugee Services Alliance**

An alliance of immigrant- and refugee-serving agencies formed to provide a continuum of services for refugee claimants: www.vrsa.ca

Refugee relief agencies work to bring a sense of normalcy to a new existence and stability in the face of uncertainty.

Schools

- **Settlement Workers in Schools**

Many school districts in British Columbia employ settlement workers in schools to address the settlement and integration needs of immigrant students and their families. These specialists can be of great assistance to families and school staff, helping to ease the transition of newcomers to school:

www.welcomebc.ca/en/service_providers/programs/settlement_program/stream1/swis.html

Contact numbers for school district Settlement Workers in Schools programs are included on this link from the WelcomeBC website:

www.welcomebc.ca/en/service_providers/programs/settlement_agencies.html

- ***StrongStart BC* Early Learning Programs**

There are *StrongStart BC* early learning programs located in schools within every school district in British Columbia. These programs can play a significant role welcoming and supporting refugee families – offering newly arrived parents the opportunity to learn how they can support their pre-school aged children’s early learning and school readiness.

Many families from refugee backgrounds may have experienced trauma, and the ability for parents to remain in close proximity to their older children, i.e., participating with their younger children in the school’s *StrongStart BC* program while their older children attend school, can help to lessen separation anxiety for both parents and children during their introduction to school.

StrongStart BC programs offer newly arrived parents opportunity for community engagement and peer socialization. Here, they will meet other neighbourhood parents with children of similar ages who can help familiarize them with local school and community life.

StrongStart BC program staff can also help families connect with other support agencies and programs within the wider community. There are often opportunities for English Language instruction for adults alongside the *StrongStart BC* program.

For more information on *StrongStart BC* early learning programs, visit:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/early-learning>

- **Student Support Services**

Find out from the school district counselling or student services department who the team members are and be prepared to work with them. These may include professional learning assessment and specialist development of student learning supports, critical incidence response teams or trauma support teams.

Settlement Services

- **Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA)**

An affiliation of immigrant- and refugee-serving agencies throughout British Columbia, their website provides a complete listing of all associated refugee-serving agencies in British Columbia communities: www.amssa.org

Telephone: (604) 718-2780 for Vancouver area

Telephone: 1-888-355-5560 outside Vancouver area

- **Newcomers' Guide to Resources and Services**

Along with a wealth of useful information for newcomers to BC, the *British Columbia Newcomers' Guide to Resources and Services* includes a listing of all the immigrant- and refugee-serving agencies in British Columbia. This information is found on pages 15 to 20:

www.welcomebc.ca/en/service_providers/publications_and_reports/publications/newcomers_guide.html

- **Settlement Workers in Communities**

Throughout BC are immigrant- and refugee-serving agencies that employ settlement workers to address the settlement and integration needs of immigrant families. Many of these community agencies have relationships with schools and can provide information to families in schools where settlement workers are not on staff. They can also be of assistance to families outside of school. Links to the community agencies can be found at: www.amssa.org

Trauma Support Services

- **DIVERSEcity Community Resources Society**

Located in Surrey, this agency offers a wide range of services and programs to immigrant and refugee communities, including grief and trauma counselling: www.dcrs.ca/index.php

Telephone: (604) 597-0205

- **Immigrant Services Society (ISS) of BC**

With offices in Burnaby, Coquitlam, New Westminster, Richmond, Surrey, and Vancouver, this multicultural immigrant-serving agency provides a variety of services to Lower Mainland immigrant and refugee communities. These services include trauma support services for government-assisted refugees and refugee claimants residing in Vancouver and Burnaby. ISS of BC is also the contracted service provider for all immediate support services, including first language services and housing, for all Government-Assisted Refugees destined to British Columbia: www.issbc.org and www.issbc.org/refugeeservices

Telephone: (604) 684-7498

- **Vancouver Association for Survivors of Torture**

This organization provides support services for and promotes the well-being of people who have survived torture and violence: www.vast-vancouver.ca Phone: (604) 299-3539

Resources – Outside of the Greater Vancouver Region

▪ **Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA)**

An affiliation of immigrant- and refugee-serving agencies throughout British Columbia, their website provides a complete listing of all associated refugee-serving agencies in British Columbia communities: www.amssa.org

Telephone: (604) 718-2780 for Vancouver area

Telephone: 1-888-355-5560 outside Vancouver area

▪ **Health Regional Offices**

This website provides contact information for all of British Columbia's health authorities:

www.health.gov.bc.ca/socsec/contacts.html

▪ **Legal Services Society of British Columbia**

The Legal Services Society provides a guide explaining the process of requesting refugee protection in Canada. Called *Your Guide to the Refugee Claim Process*, this handbook includes information on starting a claim in BC, filling out the required forms for the process, and getting legal help. . The complete guide can be found at:

www.lss.bc.ca/publications/pub.aspx?p_id=286

Note: An overview of the refugee claim process is provided in Appendix B of this guide.

▪ **Newcomers' Guide to Resources and Services**

Along with a wealth of useful information for newcomers to BC, the *British Columbia Newcomers' Guide to Resources and Services* includes a listing of all the immigrant- and refugee-serving agencies in British Columbia. This information is found on pages 15 to 20:

www.welcomebc.ca/en/service_providers/publications_and_reports/publications/newcomers_guide.html

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▪ **Settlement Workers in Schools**

Many school districts in British Columbia employ settlement workers in schools to address the settlement and integration needs of immigrant students and their families. These specialists can be of great assistance to families and school staff, helping to ease the transition of newcomers to school:

www.welcomebc.ca/en/service_providers/programs/settlement_program/stream1/swis.html

Contact numbers for school district Settlement Workers in Schools programs are included on this link from the WelcomeBC website:

www.welcomebc.ca/en/service_providers/programs/settlement_agencies.html

- **Student Support Services**

Find out from the school district counselling or student services department who the team members are and be prepared to work with them. These may include critical incidence response teams or trauma support teams.

- **Victoria Coalition for Survivors of Torture**

In Victoria, a coalition of agencies and individuals responding to the needs of survivors of torture: www.vcst.ca

Education Publications (Pre-school and Kindergarten to Grade 12)

- **Caring for Syrian Refugee Children: A Program Guide for Welcoming Young Children and Their Families** provide program staff with the knowledge and tools they'll need to better understand and respond to the unique experiences and needs of Syrian refugee children. The resource also includes tip sheets filled with practical strategies that are designed to be taken straight off the page and put into practice.”

- **Caring for Kids New to Canada.** Online health information for parents in other languages. More information on Assessment and Screening, Child Development and Parenting, Nutrition and Physical Activity, Pregnancy, and much more is accessible online at: <http://www.kidsnewtocanada.ca/care/parent-info>

- **Career/Life Transitions**

The Ministry of Education document *Career/Life Transitions for Students with Diverse Needs: A Resource Guide for Schools* offers information about transitions for English language learners (pages 43 to 51): www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/docs/moe_clt_resource_rb0144.pdf

- **Diversity**

The BC Ministry of Education document provides a framework to assist the school system in its ongoing efforts to create and maintain learning and working environments that are responsive to the diverse social and cultural needs of the communities it serves:

Diversity in BC Schools: A Framework

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/diversity/diversity_framework.pdf (English)

http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/diversity/f_diversity_framework.pdf (French)

Website – Diversity: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/diversity

- **English Language Learning (ELL)**

The following Ministry of Education documents pertain to policy and guidelines for English Language Learning programs in British Columbia’s public schools. :

English Language Learning Policy and Guidelines

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/english-language-learners/guidelines.pdf> (English)

http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/english-language-learners/guidelines_fr.pdf (French)

English Language Learning Standards

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/english-language-learners/standards.pdf>

English Language Learning Students: A Guide for Classroom Teachers

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/english-language-learners/classroom.pdf>

English Language Learners: A Guide for ELL Specialists

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/english-language-learners/special.pdf>

English Language Learning Planning Tool

http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/education/administration/kindergarten-to-grade-12/english-language-learners/ell_planning_tool.pdf

ELL Website: <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/k-12/support/diverse-student-needs/english-language-learners>

▪ **Safe Schools**

The Ministry of Education's *Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools: A Guide* provides provincial standards for codes of conduct and identifies attributes of and outlines strategies for safe, caring, and orderly schools. The guide was developed to support boards of education and schools as they strive to make the schools of our province as safe, caring, and orderly as possible:

Safe, Caring and Orderly Schools: A Guide: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/sco/guide/scoguide.pdf

Websites: Safe Caring and Orderly Schools www.bced.gov.bc.ca/sco/ and ERASE Bullying <http://www.erasebullying.ca/>

▪ **Special Education (Students with Special Needs)**

This Ministry of Education document provides policies, procedures, and guidelines that support the delivery of special education services in British Columbia's public schools:

Special Education Services: A Manual of Policies, Procedures and Guidelines
www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/special_ed_policy_manual.pdf

Website: www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed

Information re Funding for Special Needs:

<http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/education-training/administration/legislation-policy/public-schools/k-12-funding-special-needs>

Child and Youth Mental Health Publications

▪ **Ministry of Children and Family Development**

To reduce the burden of suffering resulting from children's mental illness, child and youth mental health services are offered throughout British Columbia by the Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD). These services provide a wide range of community-based specialized mental health services to mentally ill children and their families.

The Ministry of Children and Family Development provides a number of guides and information sheets about mental health issues for children and adolescents. These publications, along with information about programs and services, are available at:
www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental_health/publications.htm

Website: www.mcf.gov.bc.ca/mental_health

Resources – General Information

International

- **Citizenship and Immigration Canada**

The federal government department responsible for immigration, their website provides links to a wealth of information about immigrating to Canada: www.cic.gc.ca

Telephone: 1-888-242-2100 (in Canada only)

Deaf and hearing-impaired: 1-888-576-8502 (in Canada only) 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. your local time

- **Country Information from Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada**

The Centre for Intercultural Learning in Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada offers useful information about almost every country in the world:

www.intercultures.ca/cil-cai/countryinsights-apercuspays-eng.asp

- **International Organization for Migration**

An inter-governmental organization in the field of migration and working with governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental partners: www.iom.int

- **United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees**

Since 1950, this office has been mandated to lead and coordinate international action to protect refugees and resolve refugee problems worldwide, and to safeguard the rights and well-being of refugees. The website provides detailed information about refugees throughout the world:

www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home

National

- **Canadian Council for Refugees**

An umbrella organization for refugees and immigrants focused on the rights and protection of refugees and to the settlement of refugees and immigrants in Canada: www.ccrweb.ca

- **Citizenship and Immigration Canada – Refugees**

The federal government department responsible for immigration provides detailed information about refugee settlement in Canada, found on this website:

www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/help.asp

- **Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada**

The independent administrative tribunal that makes decisions on immigration and refugee matters. Details can be found at: www.irb-cisr.gc.ca/ENG/Pages/index.aspx

- **Immigration and Refugee Protection Act**

The federal legislation regarding immigration and the protection of refugees in Canada: www.laws.justice.gc.ca/en/I-2.5

- **Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)**

This national humanitarian program provides funding to agencies to support Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) in their first year in Canada. The program also provides income support to GARs in their first year in Canada. Information about Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Resettlement Assistance Program can be found at: www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/resettle-assist.asp

Provincial

- **Newcomers' Guide to Resources and Services**

The Province of British Columbia provides a guide for newcomers that includes comprehensive information to help newcomers settle in BC in the first few months after they arrive: www.welcomebc.ca/en/service_providers/publications_and_reports/publications/newcomers_guide.html

- **Statistics from British Columbia**

Specific data and information about refugee immigrants to British Columbia is available through the WelcomeBC website at:

www.welcomebc.ca/shared/docs/communities/fact-refugees.pdf

- **WelcomeBC**

WelcomeBC is the Province of British Columbia's main website for immigration and settlement, and includes helpful information for immigrants, service providers, and those wishing to find out more about immigration and settlement in BC. www.welcomebc.ca/en/index.html

Municipal

You may find helpful information in your local town or city, accessible at community centres, public libraries or on municipal government websites.

For example, Vancouver offers a *Newcomer's Guide to the City of Vancouver* in five languages at:

www.vancouver.ca/commsvcs/socialplanning/newtovancouver

- **Union of British Columbia Municipalities**

The Union of British Columbia Municipalities provides links to the web pages of local governments in BC through: www.ubcm.ca/EN/main/about/ubcm-members.html

Appendix A – Immigration Policy and Legislation

Immigration and Refugee Protection

The Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) is Canada’s legislation pertaining to immigration. Implemented on June 28, 2002, it replaces the *Immigration Act* of 1976.

The IRPA reflects current Canadian values and enables faster and fairer processes to welcome immigrants to Canada, including those needing protection and a safe haven. At the same time, the IRPA strongly enforces national security and public safety. The full document can be found at www.laws.justice.gc.ca/en/I-2.5.

Policy

Canada, in its humanitarian efforts, responds to global crises and UNHCR special requests regarding those needing refuge. Refugees come from different countries, depending on current global crises.

Citizenship and Immigration Canada is the federal government department responsible for immigration. Immigration policy is guided by three established, broad objectives:

- to reunite families
- to fulfill Canada’s international obligations and humanitarian tradition with respect to refugees
- to foster a strong viable economy in the regions of Canada

“Canada offers refugee protection to people in Canada who fear persecution or those whose removal from Canada would subject them to a danger of torture, a risk to their life or a risk of cruel and unusual treatment or punishment.” Individuals needing refugee protection may obtain permanent resident status in Canada.

Source: “Refugees,” Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2009.

Immigration Categories

There are different types of refugees within Citizenship and Immigration Canada’s refugee category. Some refugees are directly sponsored by the Government of Canada or private organizations and are afforded permanent resident status. Others apply for refugee status.

| Immigration Categories – Refugees | |
|--|--|
| Government Assisted Refugees | Individuals who enter Canada as permanent residents and are supported by the federal government for up to one year from their arrival in Canada. |
| Privately Sponsored Refugees | Individuals who enter Canada as permanent residents and are sponsored by private citizens. Private sponsors commit to assisting and supporting these individuals throughout their first year of residence in Canada. |

| | |
|--|--|
| Refugee Dependants Abroad | Individuals who are dependants (living abroad) of permanent resident refugees landed in Canada. |
| Asylum Refugees (includes private sponsorship, self-funded, and refugee claimants) | Individuals in refugee-like situations who seek asylum in Canada because they cannot safely return to their home country (would face persecution). |
| <p>Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada</p> <p>www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/resettle-gov.asp</p> <p>www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/sponsor/index.asp</p> <p>www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/canada.asp (in Canada Asylum)</p> <p>www.cic.gc.ca/english/refugees/outside/asylum.asp (outside Canada Asylum)</p> <p>www.welcomebc.ca/shared/docs/communities/fact-refugees.pdf</p> | |

Refugee Claimants (In Canada Asylum Program)

Some refugees seeking asylum are living in Canada and have applied for refugee status. These persons, also known as refugee claimants, are awaiting decision by the Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada. This board examines claims for refugee protection and decides if refugee claimants will be granted permanent residence.

The process of transition into Canadian society may be more difficult or confusing for refugee claimants than for other persons from refugee backgrounds who have already been granted refugee status. Claimants may be unsure of legal processes and their rights. The claim process may take years and the outcome is often uncertain.

The Refugee Claim Process is illustrated in Appendix B

Resettlement Assistance

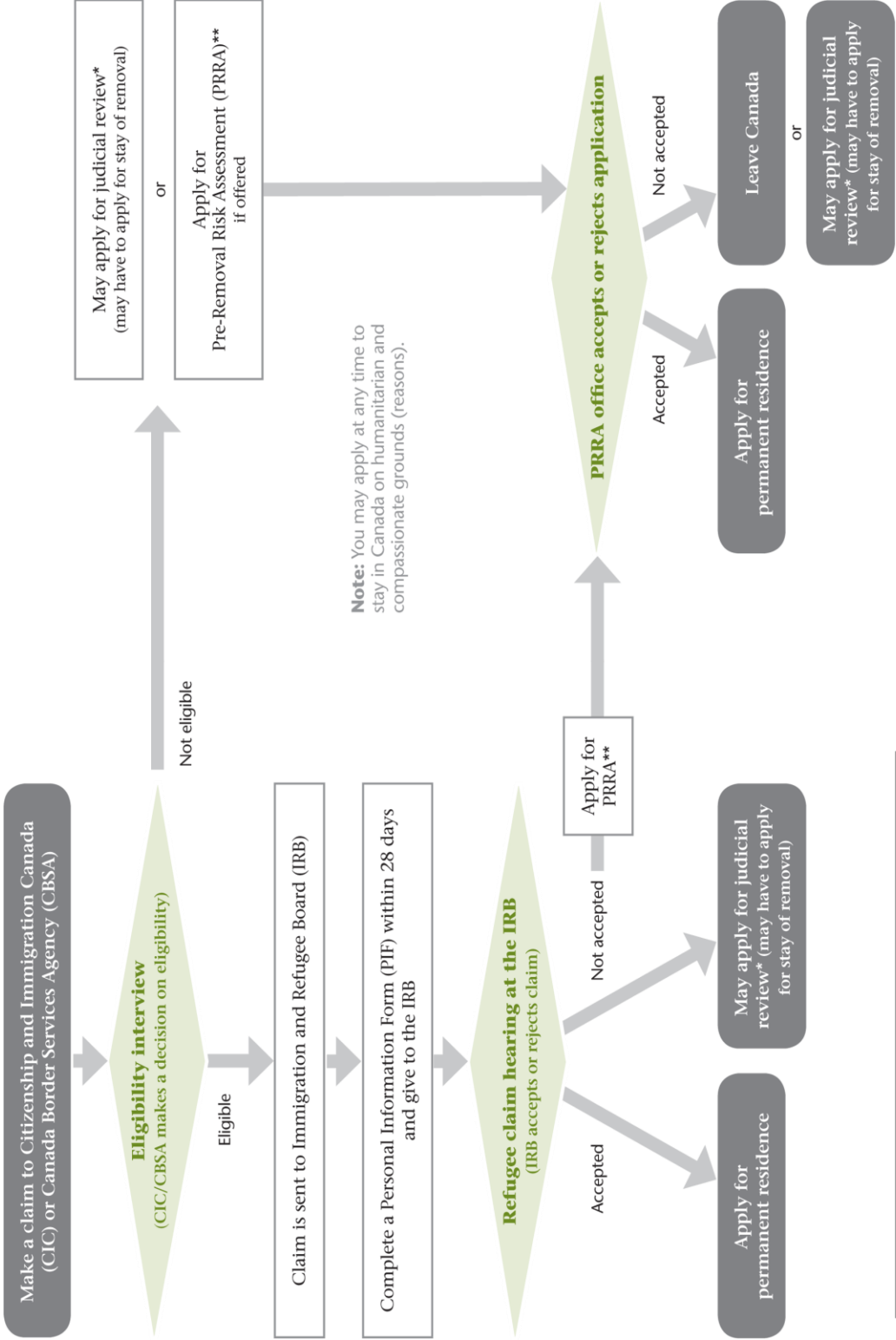
The Government of Canada directly assists some refugees in becoming residents of Canada. Government provides resettlement assistance to individuals who enter Canada as Government-Assisted Refugees to help them start a new life in Canada.

Under the Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP), Government Assisted Refugees are provided financial assistance including loans for their transportation to Canada, a start-up allowance, monthly support allowance, and a bus pass allowance. They are also provided with a basic household goods package. Financial assistance is repayable after one year, or when they become self-sufficient.¹

The Resettlement Assistance Program process is illustrated in Appendix C

Source: "Faces of Refugees," Immigrant Services Society of British Columbia, 2007.

Appendix B – Overview of the Refugee Claim Process

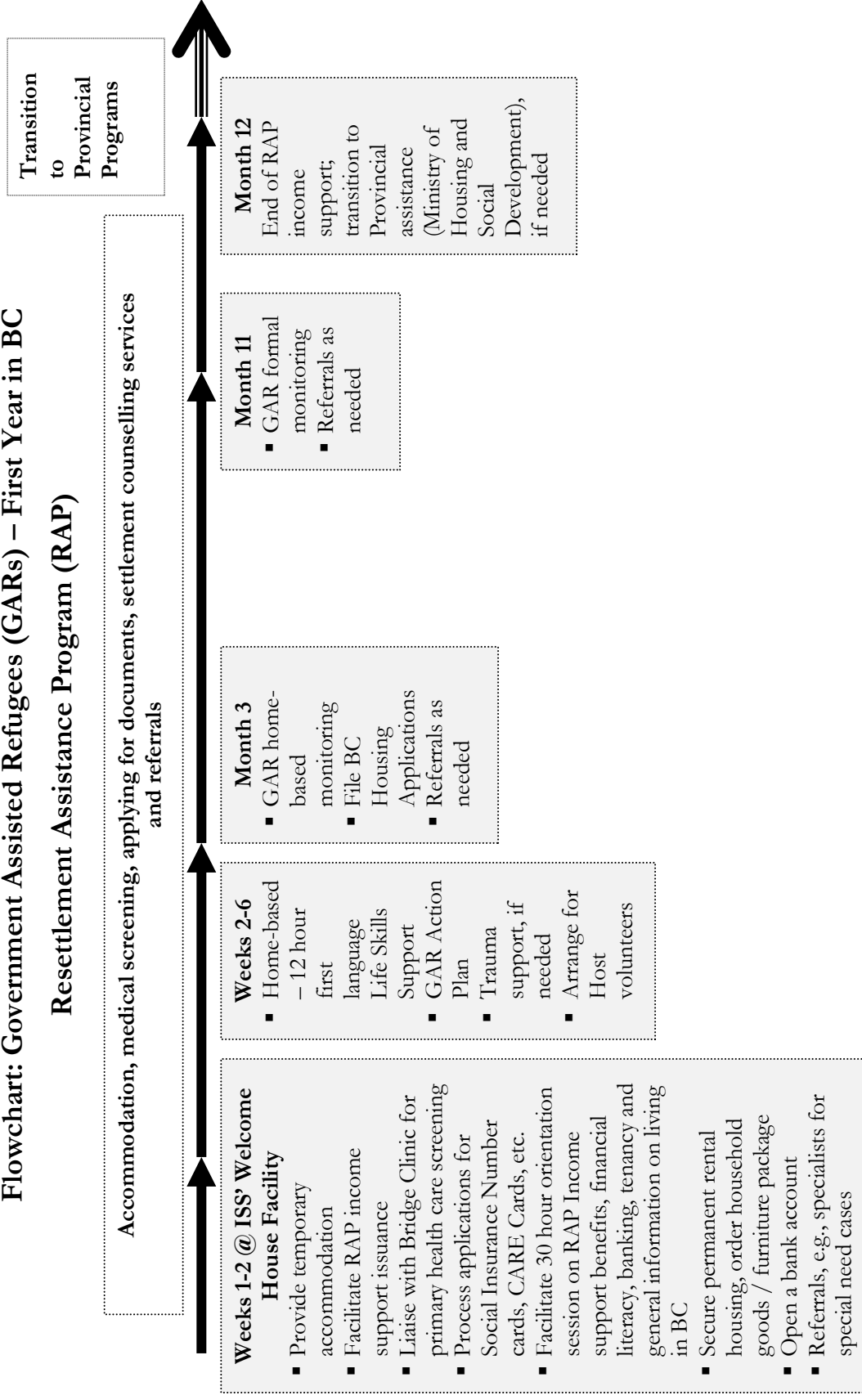


* Must apply to Federal Court of Canada within 15 days of receiving written decision.
 ** Must apply within 15 days of receiving PRRA application form.

Source: Used with permission from Legal Services Society of British Columbia.

Appendix C – Resettlement Assistance Program

Flowchart: Government Assisted Refugees (GARs) – First Year in BC Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP)



Source: Used with permission from Immigrant Services Society (ISS) of BC.

Appendix D – Learning Environment Readiness Checklist

Student – Social and School Adjustment

- assessment/program assignment/placement
- introduction to classroom teacher and students
- introduction to layout of the school and classroom
- assignment of mentor or buddy
- language assistance if needed (Ref: ELL Planning Tool)
- consistent routine or schedule
- access to a quiet area or place of refuge
- accommodation for religion-related requirements (prayer)

Student – Physical Needs

- school supplies
- textbooks/resource materials
- lunch/snack
- orientation to bell schedule
- access to a quiet area or place of refuge
- religion-related requirements
- assessment of any medical needs, e.g., hearing and vision

Classroom Teacher – Readiness

- become familiar with refugee background
- be aware of adjustments of children and youth
- speak slowly
- pay attention to non-verbal cues
- become aware of the cultural background
- be aware of cultural differences in mannerisms and responses, e.g., eye contact
- consider different cultural norms associated with gender
- contact settlement worker for support

Instruction – Starting Points

- assess educational background – essential for placement
- determine need for pre-literacy and pre-numeracy instruction
- assess need for language assistance
- determine any learning disabilities/special needs
- access age-appropriate resources
- use direct, explicit instruction
- offer a variety of activities to start
- use visual aids
- use repetition, or find opportunities for multiple exposures to information, if needed

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The Resilience Guide



Strategies for Responding to Trauma in Refugee Children



• ACKNOWLEDGMENTS •

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Supporting Child Care in the Settlement Community / Soutenir les services de garde d'enfants dans la communauté d'accueil

• PREFACE •

Your care and compassion can help families to overcome trauma.

For almost two decades, CMAS has had the privilege of supporting programs in their important work with newcomer and refugee children and families. Since publishing *Care for Syrian Refugee Children: A Program Guide for Welcoming Young Children and Their Families* in 2015, we have travelled across the country consulting with experts, including people like you who work hands-on with families when they need support the most. This guide is a reflection of all that we've learned about how to support refugee families.

What program staff have told us, above all else, is that families who have faced forced migration are resilient. And studies show that supportive relationships are the most important factor in helping to foster resilience in children who have been exposed to trauma. Your support, care and compassion are what make the greatest difference for the children in your program.

In these pages you'll find information about refugee trauma, potential developmental effects, and key strategies that foster the resilience of children and families. The guide also includes tip sheets filled with practical strategies that are designed to be taken straight off the page and put into practice.

By combining the care and compassion you show on a daily basis with the information and strategies you'll learn in this guide, you'll be well on your way to making a lasting difference. Working together, one child at a time, one day at a time, and one supportive act at a time, we can help refugee families to heal from trauma and to regain the sense of security many of them have lost. And, in doing so, help families to step forward with confidence into their new lives in Canada.

Special Thanks...

Special thanks go out to Heather Savazzi, Julie Dotsch and Mary-Jo Land for their key contributions, invaluable expertise and insights. Their ongoing commitment to immigrant and refugee children and families is truly inspiring.

We would also like to thank Michael Ungar, Jennifer Pearson and Darlene Kordich Hall for sharing their research and expertise on resilience, as well as all the CNC program administrators and staff who have shared their strategies and stories and provided feedback and insights. You make a difference in the lives of each child and family that you work with, and we have so much appreciation and respect for the important work that you do.

Yours in partnership as we work toward the successful settlement of immigrant and refugee children,



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Why Understanding Refugee Trauma and Resilience is Important

Two-thirds of Syrian refugee children have lost a loved one, had their house bombed or shelled, or suffered war-related injuries.

Invisible Wounds: The impact of six years of war on the mental health of Syria's children, Save the Children, 2017.

Many of the things we already do in early childhood programs—like providing safe, predictable routines; helping children manage feelings and behaviours; and providing creative, sensory and physical activities—not only support healthy child development, but also strengthen the capacity for resilience and recovery in young children who have experienced trauma.

Trauma can impact a child's attachment and ability to bond with family, their alertness and attentiveness, their ability to play and control their behaviour, and their overall development. Temporary challenges or regression due to trauma can also sometimes lead to children being misdiagnosed with special needs.

Refugee families with young children¹ need responsive programs and professionals who understand:

- the impact of the refugee experience,
- the developmental effects of trauma and resettlement, and
- key strategies to strengthen families' capacity for resilience and support their settlement.

¹While the terms “refugee families” and “refugee children” are used throughout this document to increase readability, it is important to recognize that children and families are not defined by their experiences and that, for this reason, the preferred terms are “families who have experienced forced migration” and “children who have experienced forced migration.”

Refugee families face adversity.

There are more recent refugee children and families in Canada than ever before.

No two refugee experiences are the same, but when families are forced to flee from their home country, it's common for them to have spent months—or even years—in countries of asylum where access to shelter, food, water, work and education were limited or non-existent, and daily life was a struggle.

They may have been through a tremendous amount of adversity and experienced a great deal of change and loss. Many families will have witnessed or experienced violence and have lost or been separated from loved ones. The grief can be overwhelming for parents and children alike.

Early childhood programs can help refugee families to build on their strength and resilience.

When we look at the research on trauma and resilience, it's clear that early childhood educators and early years programs are uniquely positioned to help refugee families with young children as they cope with the effects of trauma.

We used to think of young children as innately resilient and able to bounce back from adversity. And many children who have experienced forced migration do respond with incredible resilience.

Refugees are survivors. Yet even when parents do the best they can with the skills and resources they have, their ability to connect with, respond to, and care for their children can be compromised by their own trauma, suffering and struggles—and the extreme nature of their child's experiences can affect development and create unique settlement needs and challenges.

Your role as an educator and caregiver is incredibly important and can have a tremendous positive and long-term impact on the well-being of refugee children and families.





How does the refugee experience impact young children and their families?

What is trauma?

For the purpose of this guide, it's helpful for us to broadly define refugee trauma as an adverse experience that overwhelms a child's/parent's ability to cope and/or leaves them fearing for their safety or the safety of loved ones.

The causes of trauma can be direct or indirect.

Trauma in young children can be caused by:

- A direct experience (chronic/extreme fear; persecution; witnessing the injury, death/loss of a family member; lack of access to shelter, food, water, education, safety and/or medical care)

or

- An indirect experience (trauma that impacts parental functioning, watching parents suffer, witnessing violence/persecution/trauma of others who are not related)

Risk Factors

For refugee families, the degree of trauma experienced will depend on how much time the family spent in crisis before migrating. They may have experienced:

- pervasive fear and/or chronic stress (personally and in family members);
- war and persecution, chaos, sights/smells/sounds of war;
- loss of daily routines, predictability and comfort;

• REFUGEE EXPERIENCE •

- injuries, death and separation from family members;
- insecurity of basic necessities (food, water, safety, work, education, prenatal/medical care); and/or
- loss of home, community, friends and neighbours, possessions.

They also might have had a particularly difficult or lengthy journey to safety that included:

- exposure to harsh weather, violence, persecution;
- dangerous living conditions while travelling (crime, rape and ongoing violence);
- prenatal stress and lack of adequate nutrition and care;
- pre-existing illnesses and conditions; and/or
- loss of documentation.

Protective Factors

If the family is able to stay together and a child's attachment system remains intact, available and responsive, young children are often well-protected from the negative effects of trauma.

The degree of trauma is also dramatically decreased if a child and family has:

- avoided chronic exposure to war and violence;
- migrated safely and felt secure in their country of first asylum;
- had access to basic necessities (shelter, food, water, employment, education and medical care);
- maintained their cultural and spiritual values and practices;
- obtained secure immigration status upon arrival; and
- developed or maintained a strong support network.



The Refugee Experience



Each refugee family's journey is unique. Some families remain intact, while others separate by choice (e.g., grandparents decide to stay behind). Meanwhile, others are forced to separate by circumstance (e.g., a family member is imprisoned). Families are often grieving because relatives or close friends have gone missing or been killed by war. The family's home and all that once seemed so secure has disappeared. They often hope to return, but may never be able to.

For just a moment, imagine that...

You must flee your home and everything familiar.

The decision to flee your country isn't taken lightly. You'll need access to enough money to pay for the journey (e.g., by boat). You may need to leave secretly, in case authorities forbid it. Perhaps you (or a family member) have been persecuted or involved in resisting an oppressive regime and find it difficult to trust anyone.

Your survival depends on total secrecy, since you might be imprisoned and tortured or killed. In a country at war, there is no simple way to know if a missing family member is alive or dead, or whether they are suffering horrific abuses. The uncertainty is agonizing.

The journey may be long and dangerous.

You know you need to leave for your family's safety, but the process of escaping is likely to be dangerous and grueling. The refugee journey often demands basic survival skills. Many people become sick from the lack of food and shelter. You may have great difficulty protecting your children as you travel.

You arrive in a country of asylum, but the hardship is far from over.

Thankfully, your family survives the journey and arrives in a country of asylum, but there are still many challenges ahead. In times of war, there are often huge migrations. This means that your family must share limited food and shelter with others, and conditions may be unsanitary, possibly even causing long-term illness or disease. You may not be permitted to leave the camp to seek work or to attend school.

You may also be required to take on new and overwhelming family responsibilities. If you're a mother, you may assume the role of protector and provider while a father or older siblings do more care giving. Or, if you've had other family members or paid help to share responsibilities in the past, you may find yourself solely responsible for your children for the first time.

There may also be a great deal of hostility towards the influx of refugees and pressure to leave the country of asylum.

The wait is long and hard.

You and your family may remain in the camp for many years, hoping all the while that you can return to your homeland. During this time, new children may be born. Infant health and overall development could be affected by conditions in the camp, as they grow up knowing no other way of life.



Your family's future is uncertain as you await your fate, not knowing which country, if any, will accept you.

Finally, you arrive in Canada—but the uncertainty continues.

Perhaps your family arrives in Canada as refugee claimants. You are allowed temporary asylum but may not be permitted to remain here. You will need to go through various hearings to determine if your claim will be recognized and if you can become permanent residents.

You may be required to remain in temporary housing until you get to your final destination (e.g., arriving in Toronto and eventually going on to Peterborough). Where you will end up might not be your choice. Your final destination could be determined by the Canadian government, and even once you arrive in your new city, you may be placed in temporary housing until permanent housing can be found.

You'd hoped that once you arrived, things would settle down, but your life and the lives of your children continue to be filled with upheaval and change.



Developmental Effects of Trauma and Resettlement

What we sometimes think of as misbehaviour in our programs is actually stress behaviour. In these moments, it's not that the child won't behave, it's that they can't.

In the past, it was believed that young children were less affected by the stress and trauma of their refugee experience than their parents. Research on the effects of trauma experienced by young children during forced migration is limited. That said, we do know that—at a time when their brains, language skills and sense of self are in critical stages of development—refugee children often find themselves in complex situations of extreme stress and adversity that they simply haven't developed the coping skills to handle.

Traumatized children display “stress behaviour.”

We also know that trauma is experienced by the mind (thoughts and perceptions of emotions), and the body (emotions and physiology) and that the experience differs by

age group. As mammals, we have built-in responses to protect and defend ourselves against threats of bodily harm or death.

There are four possible ways that the body will respond to a threat—whether it is real or perceived:

1. Fight: displaying physical or verbal aggression or dominance (not complying, arguing)
2. Flight: running, hiding, bolting away
3. Freeze: remaining still and/or rigid, preparing to fight or flee
4. Shut down: collapsing, fainting, having seizures, being non-responsive, retreating inwardly

• DEVELOPMENTAL EFFECTS •

It's important to remember that these responses are not choices. These are our natural defense mechanisms for survival. It is very difficult to consciously control or change them. What we sometimes think of as misbehaviour in our programs is actually stress behaviour. In these moments, it's not that the child won't behave, it's that they can't.

Trauma can affect all areas of development.

For children, trauma and stress can create challenges in all areas of development:

- **Physical** (frequent illness and weak immune system, difficulties with sleeping and/or eating, toileting, headaches, seizures, fainting, regulation of arousal levels, blood pressure and heart rate)
- **Emotional** (fear and nervousness, unpredictable emotions)
- **Cognitive** (developmental delay or regression, speech problems)
- **Behavioural** (crying, increased aggressive behaviour, bedwetting, hyperactivity)
- **Social** (withdrawal, difficulty trusting others, insecure attachment, disinterest in others)

Trauma Is Experienced Differently Depending on the Child's Age

Children of different ages are impacted differently by trauma. The way trauma is expressed also differs for each child within the context of their family and culture.

Prenatal/Infant/Toddler

Children born during war or migration may have long-lasting changes in physical, developmental, psychological and cognitive processes.

Studies show that infants sense and respond to their parents' stress. As toddlers, children need peaceful, in-control, reliably responsive family members who can protect them, respond quickly to their needs and talk/play with them.

Trauma often weakens the family's awareness and responsiveness to their young children. When young children's needs go unmet or are only met intermittently, they don't understand that the parent does not intend to make them suffer. The child only knows that they are suffering and that the parent is not relieving their distress. In this way, infants and toddlers sometimes experience both physical trauma and attachment trauma when parents are unable to meet their needs for food, protection and comfort.



• DEVELOPMENTAL EFFECTS •

For example, parents may have been unable to respond to their infant's cries as readily while journeying to safety. As a result, while in your program, the infant's cries may escalate quickly as they try to get their needs met or—in the worst cases—the child may no longer cry at all because they've learned that it doesn't get them the help they need.

Another example might be a toddler who is not yet walking because their environment has been unsafe and they were carried continually for long periods. Self-help skills, speech and toileting might also be delayed if the toddler has had inconsistent access to basic necessities like diapers, toilets, responsive adults and meaningful interactions.

You might notice that refugee infants and toddlers seem to:

- have lower birth weight;
- be more difficult to soothe or calm when upset;
- be more prone to illness, digestive and upper-respiratory difficulties;
- have difficulty developing trusting relationships and forming secure attachments;
- have difficulty sleeping;
- be sensitive to touch or easily startled and frightened by loud noises and unfamiliar sensory experiences;
- be unresponsive, lack interest, curiosity and focus; and/or
- have delayed developmental milestones.



Preschool-age Children (2–4 years)

Preschool-age children are usually in the process of learning:

- to separate themselves from primary caregivers and develop trust in others, to ask for and accept comfort and assistance;
- self-awareness and self-control, to regulate emotions and bodily functions;
- language skills, helping them to communicate their needs and better understand their experiences;
- social skills, the ability to work cooperatively with others and to be caring and empathetic;
- problem-solving skills;
- to distinguish fantasy from reality.

During this time of development, children need consistent, caring adults who listen to and speak with them. They also need opportunities for safe play and reliable, empathetic parents to comfort them. If a preschool-age child has experienced trauma during this time in their development, you might notice:

- regression and/or changes in eating habits, toileting, sleeping patterns, behaviour, and/or development;
- a focus on ensuring basic needs are met rather than engaging in play, socializing and learning;
- strong emotional responses and behaviours (sadness, mood swings, nervousness, hyperactivity, impulsivity, withdrawal, tension, aggression, crying, screaming, shaking);
- changes in arousal levels (either too much energy/agitation/defiance/aggression, or not enough energy/lack of focus/detachment/daydreaming, or rapid swings between the two);
- difficulty trusting others and seeking and accepting comfort and assistance;
- re-enactment of traumatic experiences, violent and war-related play, repetitive play and/or hoarding toys;

Implicit Memory

Traumatic memories for young children can be implicit (not remembered consciously).

A traumatic response or reaction may be triggered by environmental or sensory cues without the child having any conscious memory of the traumatic event. For example, you might have a toddler who has no memory of war, air raids and bombings, but who has a strong fear response to loud noises and/or sudden movements. Fire drills, the noise of road repairs or the sound of an airplane overhead might trigger a fear response.

• DEVELOPMENTAL EFFECTS •

- bodily expressions of distress (vomiting, wetting themselves, headaches and stomach aches);
- difficulties with sleep/nightmares;
- differences in comfort-seeking behaviour (too clingy or failing to seek comfort and instead demonstrating behaviour such as rocking, moaning, chewing, sucking, rapidly falling asleep);
- sensory processing and integration problems (hypersensitive and aware, covering ears in noisy environments, banging into walls/people, seeming overwhelmed or shutting down);
- they seem unable to engage in play or are uninterested in peers because of their trauma or because the child may have had little social contact with other children (how to enter into play, take turns, share space and toys, tidying up and routines are often new to them);
- speech difficulties (language switching, language suppression, selectively mute). Note: children often go through a period of not using either their home language or their new language. Their fluency in their home language may also regress as they begin to learn a new language. Usually this is temporary.



Preschoolers are learning to control their behaviour and emotions. During forced migration, emotional control may be expected at a very early age. Many children have had to suppress emotions and control their anger and feelings of distress. Emotional expression may have been discouraged and cries rejected, putting the child at risk for attachment difficulties, isolation and feelings of disconnection.

For example, a preschooler might be withdrawn, or become overly attached to one educator/caregiver. They may be unable to leave the educator/caregiver's side and have trouble engaging in play with other children. An older preschooler might find it hard to settle if their younger sibling, who they are used to being with and caring for, is in another room.

School-age Children

Some families with young children also have school-age children who are struggling with:

- challenges that come from having no previous experience in school or interrupted schooling;
- a lack of familiarity with the education system;
- language barriers;
- separation anxiety when separated from parents and/or siblings for the first time;
- difficulty concentrating and trusting others;

• DEVELOPMENTAL EFFECTS •

- long-term excessive anxiety, depression, anger and/or aggression;
- feeling withdrawn and disconnected, unable to engage in play and learning;
- rejection of or hiding their language/culture to fit in and to avoid shame, bullying;
- nightmares and/or constant re-enactment of traumatic events (for example, a school-age child might re-enact the beheading they witnessed);
- trouble sharing space with other children, hoarding food, toys, taking things from others or trying to take things home to their families;
- trouble seeking help when needed;
- inappropriate reactions (for example, giddy laughter when hurt).

School-age children are three times more likely to have Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) than adolescents² and are frequently misdiagnosed with a developmental delay, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

For example, a school-age child who is placed in a class based on their age after years of disrupted schooling might feel angry, depressed and/or hopeless. With the added challenge of learning a new language, it can be difficult for them to seek help as needed and to make friends.

Impact on the Family

Trauma can strengthen or weaken family bonds.

The family's level of stress and their ability to cope with it directly affects children (and the younger the child, the stronger the influence). If the family relationships were strong before the trauma and the family remains supportive and reliable, the child will be more likely to recover quickly—even if the trauma is severe. Surviving trauma together can strengthen the family bonds of mutual reliance.

However, if the family relationships were weak before the trauma, the family may have difficulty knowing how to get support from each other. This can easily weaken the family bonds even more.

² War Trauma in Refugees, Here to Help, Claudia María Vargas, PhD, 2007.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is a mental health condition that needs to be diagnosed by a medical doctor or a psychologist. It can result from experiencing a threat of death, from experiencing a serious injury or from witnessing or learning of the death or threat of death of a loved one—especially an attachment figure.

For more information on warning signs, see [National Centre for PTSD](#) or visit www.mascanada.ca/supporting-refugees/

• DEVELOPMENTAL EFFECTS •



Roles may need to be re-defined.

If there is a reunion of family members after a long period of absence it can be challenging for families to redefine roles, renew attachments and learn new ways of coping with daily challenges. Long-lasting severe family tension may be seen through increasing irritability, jealousy, distrust, less positive communication or little communication at all.

In many families, older siblings care for younger ones. When this has been the custom before the trauma, it is usually a protective factor that helps the child have their needs met by more people. Usually older children feel proud of their skills and connected to their sibling as well as their parents. In some cases, however, this is a new role thrust on a child who is unprepared for the responsibility. It may have been necessary for survival during traumatic events, but parents sometimes have difficulty reconnecting with the child, and older siblings can sometimes feel resentful.

Survival fatigue can cause parents to be stressed and unresponsive.

Being in a new land helps families to feel safer, but this safety comes at a cost. Exhausted and stressed, they can be easily overwhelmed by all they have survived.

Refugee parents may be “overly alert” to potential dangers, especially those affecting their child. This is often accompanied by distrust of others. They may have extreme anxiety, including difficulty eating and sleeping. They may also have nightmares, reliving past traumas. This may cause other difficulties (e.g., poor health, irritability, difficulty focusing, intense exhaustion).

• DEVELOPMENTAL EFFECTS •

They may “shut down” and be unresponsive. It then becomes difficult for them to help their child feel secure. They may also feel isolated and insecure, and avoid contact with others. If parents become depressed and lack motivation it can cause them to be less responsive to their child. This detachment may last for some time. Without emotional support, the parent’s settlement and mental health will be in jeopardy.

Some parents might be forced to postpone some aspects of grieving—either because they are in a life-threatening situation or because they are putting their own pain aside to be strong for other family members. If there is at least one strong and reliable family member, this can help those having more difficulty.

Each family member reacts differently to grief and trauma.

There are also many refugee parents who are extremely focused on and attentive to the needs of their children. For these families, setting their children up for success in school and life is their top priority and the mission that drives them.

Each family member reacts differently to traumatic situations and the grief that comes from losing their family, home, friends, community and country.

It takes time to heal and reconnect.

The family needs time and a safe space to grieve their losses and to adapt to the many changes they’re facing.





Key Strategies to Strengthen Resilience and Support Settlement

“Resilience needs relationships, not uncompromising independence.”

Building Resilience in Children – 20 Practical, Powerful Strategies (Backed by Science), Hey Sigmund, 2016

When parents who have experienced the trauma of forced migration bring their children to a program, the family is rarely coming to us feeling like their best and most confident selves. Parents sometimes seem exhausted, unsure, lost and grief-stricken. Their cultural identity and sense of self is often shaken. They can feel less sure of themselves and of their roles in the family and society. Everything here can seem different and overwhelming.

Early childhood educators and program staff can help to foster families’ resilience by offering them a range of support and by honouring, acknowledging and reminding them of the strength that has brought them this far in their journey.

What is Resilience?

Have you ever wondered why some children and families seem to thrive, even through very stressful situations and adversity, while others need a great deal of support to manage and recover from the same (or even smaller) challenges?

Resilience is the ability to respond to significant adversity, threat or loss in a way that allows a child and family to adapt and thrive.

It requires a balance of internal strengths and access to external resources and/or support.

• KEY STRATEGIES •

How Early Childhood Programs Can Foster Resilience in Refugee Families

Research shows that *early childhood educators and programs are uniquely positioned to support healthy child development and to strengthen the capacity for resilience and recovery* in young refugee children who have experienced trauma. To foster resilience and support the refugee families in our programs, we need to:

- create a safe space;
- build relationships and support secure attachment of the child to his/her parents;
- help children understand and manage big feelings and challenging behaviours; and
- provide opportunities for mastery and success.

War and forced migration can teach children that:

- *nowhere is safe.*
- *things can change at any time.*
- *people are capable of cruelty.*
- *they have no control, and their parents have no control.*

Playing with Rainbows: A National PLAY program for at-risk refugee children, B. Revell, YWCA



Myths and Misconceptions

Resilience is not constant or permanent. Even if a child or parent had the capacity to respond with resilience during their journey to Canada, it doesn't mean they will always be able to respond well to adversity. This also means that even children who have a difficult start may build resilience with the support of consistent, caring adults.

Resilience is not a personality trait that some people are born with (and others are lacking). Everyone has the capacity for resilience.

Creating a Safe Space

Trauma impacts a child's automatic reactions, dispositions and how they perceive and interpret the world.

To change the automatic responses that have developed during war and forced migration, children need consistent, safe and predictable experiences and spaces that directly contradict what their body has learned.

When a child or parent who has experienced trauma first comes to your program, they might feel on constant alert for danger and be quick to react to threats. Children may be too anxious or frightened to engage in play. Or, especially if it's the child's first time in a group care setting, they could be overwhelmed by the new environment and all its sights, smells, sounds, people, toys, activities, expectations, limits and rules.

It's important to make your program a safe space: a welcoming and predictable environment where families can start to feel comfortable.



Tips for Creating a Safe Space for Refugee Families

For refugee children who have experienced trauma, changes to the environment, routine or staff can be frightening. To feel safe, refugee children need:

- a safe environment,
- a predictable routine,
- a consistent caregiver,
- clear expectations, boundaries and consequences.

When working to create an environment that feels safe:

- Minimize clutter and create a welcoming entry where families can observe the program and join in at their own pace.
- Be sure to greet the family with a smile. A warm, personal greeting can help families to feel welcomed and valued, and can generally set them at ease.
- Welcome both the parent and the child, if the child is not stressed by your attention.
- Learn and use the parent's and child's names (including the correct pronunciation).

When working to achieve a predictable routine:

- Ensure a very gradual separation between the child and parent. A separation plan needs to be developed together with parents. For more information on how to ease the transition, see [A Parent's Guide to Gradual Separations](#) (listed in the Resources section).
- Use visual cues before and during transitions (i.e., visual schedule, photos, gestures).

When working to provide consistent caregivers:

- Assign one staff member to take the lead with each family. This fosters stability, relationship building and trust for the parents and children.
- Introduce the family to the caregiver who will help their child settle. Show the family the room, where their clothes are stored and the indoor and outdoor play spaces. Introduce them to the other families, helping them to make social connections.

- Welcome each family personally each day, and give them your full attention. Asking how they slept or how they are feeling helps the parent realize that you want to know them better. Daily, friendly chats of 1–2 minutes are more effective than less frequent, longer conversations.

When working to provide clear expectations, boundaries and consequences:

- Guide the child through the daily routine, introduce them to activities and expectations, support their interactions with the other children, consistently re-direct behaviour that is harmful, respond calmly to emotional upset, and generally help the child to understand realistic boundaries and consequences.

Things to avoid:

- Having too many staff members help settle the child.
- Too many toys, transitions and/or long wait times.
- Overwhelming the family with a lot of information.
- Making judgements. Check your biases.
- Using children as translators for the parents.
- Responding emotionally to behaviour that challenges you. If you can't respond in a calm, unemotional way, step away if possible.
- Using different words to describe the same thing (e.g., toilet, bathroom or washroom). Pick one word and use it consistently.
- Playing music all day long. Play only soothing music for a limited amount of time (10–15 minutes) each day. Too much background noise increases stress levels, which can make children irritable. It also makes it hard for them to hear and understand things being said to them when they are learning the new language.
- Trauma reminders/triggers. Think about your program and whether there might be any triggers that you need to plan ahead for. This might include toys with loud, sharp bursts of noise; lights that flicker; loud commanding voices or school bells and fire drills. Consider how you might be able to avoid the trigger or to support the child and family when the trigger happens.

Building Relationships and Supporting Secure Attachment

Studies show that supportive relationships are one of the most important protective factors in helping children who have been exposed to trauma.

Some refugee children might be coming out of a period where their parents were struggling to meet basic needs and protect the family from harm. For this reason, it's important not only to build a supportive relationship with the child, but also to recognize that parents are the child's primary source of comfort and security and to support the relationship between parent and child. When you communicate effectively with parents and develop a relationship, it will allow you to support the whole family.

Communication

When it comes to building supportive relationships, communication is key. There is so much to learn upon arriving in Canada, and you are only one of many people giving the family important information. Respect the effort needed for a family to communicate with you, and keep in mind that their ability to listen and understand can be severely hampered by the trauma they have suffered and by their lack of understanding of the new language. Even if you are speaking to them in their home language, they may have difficulty processing information because, in addition to hindering communication, trauma also reduces a person's ability to absorb new information.

If others in your organization (settlement worker or coordinator) have already been working with the family, if possible, speak with them to see if they have any information that would help you to better support the family. They might also be able to help you provide important information to the parent.

Next, identify strategies for communicating (e.g., reducing language and using more props, pictures and gestures; learning a few important words in the family's home language; using a translator). If possible, provide information and materials that are translated and/or written in simple English or with visuals. If there are literacy challenges, do your best to provide verbal or visual explanations.

Understanding Gestures and Body Language

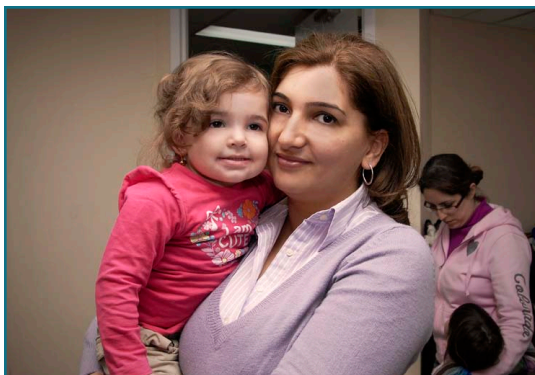
Remember that gestures and body language are often culturally determined. Every language and culture has expectations for emotional expressiveness, politeness, respect and humour. The new culture may expect children to answer openly when asked a question or to look an adult in the eye when they are being chastised. This can be very challenging for children who have been encouraged to behave more passively and it can be easy to misinterpret what a child is feeling or trying to express.

• KEY STRATEGIES •

To help build a relationship, you can ask about their children’s likes and dislikes. “What does Marwan like to play with at home?” is a good opener, and you can follow up by giving a few choices to help English language learners (e.g., Toy cars? Dolls?). Keep in mind, however, that if there’s too much talking, families stop listening and stop trying to understand. Families may even avoid being with you because it causes them stress when they don’t understand.

Here are some things you can do to communicate more effectively with parents:

- Give them your full attention. Stand face-to-face so they can see any gestures or facial expressions.
- Echo back what you think they’ve told you (e.g., “You aren’t coming tomorrow, right?”)
- Match your communication style to theirs to increase their comfort level. Consider how physically close or distant you are, the volume of your voice, and the length of pauses between when they speak and you speak.
- Speak more slowly. Longer pauses allow parents more time to process your words and meaning.
- Discuss only one idea at a time. “How many hours did Zarlashte sleep?” while pointing at your watch vs. “When did she wake up and when did she go to sleep?” or “Zarlashte needs to get at least eight hours sleep in order to do well at school.”)
- Simplify your speech (e.g., “Can you come here tomorrow?” vs. “It is important to come to the program regularly.”)
- Be careful to avoid information overload. Tell parents only what they need to know. Remember that any major changes are often best achieved through baby steps!
- Understand that sometimes families who have been traumatized have unusual reactions (e.g., an embarrassed parent may laugh when their child is crying about separation).
- Encourage the use of the home language. Families wanting their child to succeed may have stopped using their home language at home. This often leaves the child feeling even more disconnected from their family. With less communication or strained communication, tension and misunderstandings can easily build.



Consider Parents’ Priorities

Check in with yourself when you’re providing information and services. Consider whether your agenda and goals are meeting the priority needs of the parents and children at that time. For example, if you’re offering a positive parenting program to a parent with six children, but the family doesn’t have consistent access to enough food or permanent housing, positive parenting might not be their top

priority in that moment. They might need help finding housing, work and community programs instead.

Also, be sensitive about asking parents to bring food or extra things for their child. They may not have the money to do so or may not know what to buy or where to buy it. Think about adapting what you're serving rather than asking parents to bring food.

Supporting a Family's Connection with their Child

When parents feel confident and supported, they are more likely to be able to support their family's successful settlement. Showing the parent that you consider them the expert on their child is a great way to build trust and strengthen both your relationship with them and their relationship with their child.

Ask parents for suggestions and follow up on them to help parents feel valued and respected (e.g., "How do you help Laila go to sleep?") Try to find moments when you can reinforce the parents' position with the child and build their confidence. For example, if you see a mother having trouble getting her child to put their coat on, rather than stepping in as an authority figure to help, think about how you can best support the parent in their role and position. You might ask the mother if you can help, and then say to the child, "Did you hear mama? She said put on your coat." as you help slip on the coat and zip up the zipper.

When they are able, encourage parents to notice their child's cues, provide emotional support and spend quality time with their children. Help them to understand how their relationship with their child promotes self-esteem, self-confidence and development. Genuinely praise families for their positive parenting, (e.g., Ahmed is so lucky you're his mother. You are so gentle with him.) and have a consistent caregiver tell them about their child's progress, (e.g., Soraya let me play with her a bit today.) This will help them to focus on their child's strengths.

If a parent does something that makes you uncomfortable, consider whether what they're doing might be a parenting practice from back home. If it is, before stepping in, consider why they might have done it that way. Are there any benefits? There are many different practices from around the world that are very effective! Obviously if it is hurting the child or having a negative impact on others, you need to step in, but there are times when it might be appropriate for you to step back and learn a different approach.

Religious beliefs and strong faith can help families to overcome trauma and to feel more positive and hopeful.

Make efforts to respect and support religious practices in your program when possible.

For example: Provide families with a space to pray. Ask them about food restrictions and their children's rituals around meals and sleep times.

• KEY STRATEGIES •

Finally, remember that parents are often receiving advice from many other people and are always doing the best they can with the information, resources, time and energy they have at any given moment. If they're having a bad day, provide support rather than judgement.

You can also remind and reassure parents that:

- Regression is perfectly normal and temporary. It's okay if their child regresses back to wearing diapers or wetting the bed. They have been through stress and trauma.
- Behaviour is a symptom of what is going on in a child's brain. Their children aren't choosing to behave in challenging ways. It takes time to develop new patterns of behaviour and to change the way the brain is processing things when they first arrive here in Canada.
- Keeping the home language reduces stress; strengthens emotional connection to family; improves a child's focus; allows for authentic, meaningful communication; lets children express needs more easily so that parents can better respond to them; and fosters self-identification and pride. There are also academic and social advantages to bilingualism.
- It's normal for children to go through a silent stage when they're learning more than one language. During the silent phase, children are observing, listening and processing—and when they do start talking, they often have a surprising number of words! If you become familiar with the stages of language development for dual-language learners (DLLs), you will be better able to reassure parents and guide them in supporting their child. [Teaching at the Beginning](#) has a wonderful series of videos that document the stages of language development for DLLs that you might find helpful.

Children do best when:

- *They feel important and loved.*
- *They feel understood, accepted and supported.*
- *They are protected from harm.*
- *Their basic needs are being met.*

[Building Resilience in Young Children, Best Start, 2012.](#)

Ensure a gradual separation between parent and child.

Gradual separation means increasing the length of separations between the parent and child as the child becomes more comfortable in the program. It is especially important for families who have experienced trauma, and involves working with parents and children for their first separations ahead of time.

Gradual separation:

- respects the needs of children and parents,
- helps children and parents feel safer,
- supports a smooth transition into your program, and
- sets the stage for successful separations and healthy attachment as the child grows.

• KEY STRATEGIES •

Children who have experienced severe trauma often have extreme separation anxiety. Each child is different, but it's important not to rush the process. Separations can take weeks, and if done too quickly can result in more trauma, anxiety and difficulty developing trust, as well as delayed settlement and learning of the new language.

Here are some ways that the staff member who has been assigned to take the lead with the family can help to make the first separation easier:

- Welcome the new parent and give them time to settle in.
- Be respectful and positive about the attachment of the child to the parent and, if appropriate, ask about the child's previous experiences of being separated from the parent/family.
- Explain gradual separation using an interpreter or written translations that you review with the parent.
- Play beside—and eventually with—the parent and child. It can help to use toys that pop-up or hide and to practise saying bye/hi.
- Gradually come closer to the child but not between the parent and child, according to the child's readiness.
- Ask the parent to become gradually less involved and to very gradually move a little farther away from their child.
- Try the first separation when the child can play without seeking their parent for at least 5 minutes. Encourage parents to say a quick, warm goodbye with the promise to return.
- Encourage the parent to be confident (i.e., not to wait for the child to give permission for them to leave).

For more information on gradual separation, and multilingual information for parents, see [A Parent's Guide to Gradual Separation](#).

Reactions to rushed first separations might include screaming, vomiting, kicking, aggression, trying to escape, rigidity, severe withdrawal (or “shutting down”), regression, trouble eating/sleeping and/or severe anxiety. Alternatively, a child may suppress their feelings. Rather than crying, they may simply seem unfocused, unresponsive or have a rigid posture.

Tips for Building Relationships with Refugee Children in your Program

Developing relationships and trust with the refugee children in your care is key to supporting their resilience and overall settlement.

Dr. Jean Clinton is a leading expert on Infant Mental Health. She once said that “every child in your program should have someone whose face lights up the moment they walk into the room.” This should be true of every child you work with—not just those who are easy to get along with, but also those who challenge you. Never underestimate the power of caring!

The children in your care will feel secure and accepted when you:

- Provide gentle and consistent guidance.** Provide clear boundaries/limits. Once the child understands the limits, balance correction with praise, redirect, and deliver consequences without negative emotions.
- Provide calm, consistent and soothing care when the child needs comfort or is hurt, frightened, sad or angry.** Acknowledge the child’s feelings in ways they can understand. Let them know they’re not alone with their big feelings and support them in developing healthy ways to soothe and calm themselves. This creates a sense of trust and security. It also helps them to feel closer to you and to learn healthy ways to soothe and calm themselves and others as they get older.
- Be respectful, be sensitive and adjust your approach and expectations for each individual child.** Don’t expect children to want to jump right into play. Be sensitive to each child’s needs. If they need an adult, try to stay close-by. If they need space to observe, give them space to do that.
- Keep in mind that children may be sensitive to touch.** Don’t approach the child from behind and touch them on the back. Instead, approach them from where they can see you.
- Carefully observe and get to know the child.** Which toys or activities seem to interest them most? When do they seem most comfortable? Play beside or with the child and offer attention and affection when they are ready. Learn to recognize signs of distress. If possible, learn a simple comfort phrase in the child’s home language and use it. For example, “Mommy’s coming back soon.”

• KEY STRATEGIES •

- ❑ **Reinforce and respond to cues.** Look for signs that might indicate the child needs a quiet space to retreat to or an opportunity for active play. You can then provide alternative activities to avoid upset and disruptive behaviours.
- ❑ **Provide comfort.** If the child is upset, be there for them. Let them know that you're aware of their distress and respond to it appropriately by providing comfort if the child will allow it. If the child will not accept comfort, be respectful of that. Back away and try to offer reassurance from a distance. Invite the parent to bring in a comfort object (e.g., a blanket or toy) or a familiar object such as a scarf. The child can hold this item when the parent is away and it may help them to feel more secure.
- ❑ **Be calm, reliable and consistent.** It's important for children who have experienced trauma to have a calm, reliable, consistent caregiver. If staff take turns settling a child, it is likely to be more difficult and to cause the child more anxiety. This is especially true for infants and toddlers.
- ❑ **Listen carefully and with interest**—even if the child is speaking another language. Try to respond in genuinely encouraging and positive ways, and learn the phrase “show me” in the home language. This lets the child know that you think what they have to say is important, even if you don't understand yet.
- ❑ **Minimize the use of language** when the child first arrives, unless you speak the child's home language or the child understands some English. Use simple sounds and gestures to offer comfort. Do not ask too many questions and avoid unnecessary questions about potentially sensitive topics.
- ❑ **Help children safely express, identify/label feelings** (glad, sad, mad, scared, etc.). Learn some of these words in the home language and pair them with English/French. Point out that other people have these feelings too. Read or tell children stories about people who show empathy, compassion, kindness and understanding for others. (See the Resources section for a list of suggested books and activity ideas.)

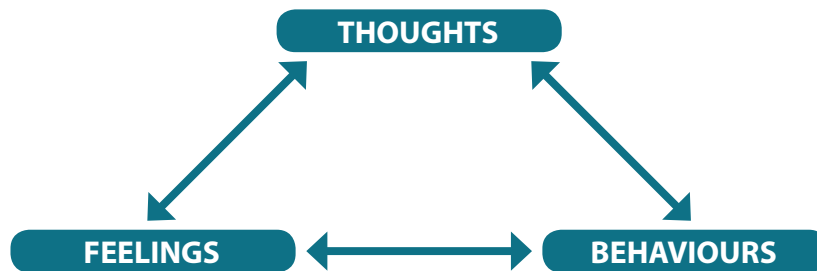
• KEY STRATEGIES •

Our goal is to help refugee children attain and maintain a state of alert calm that allows them to engage in play and learning.

Helping Children Understand and Manage Big Feelings and Challenging Behaviours

Our thoughts directly affect how we feel, and how we feel directly affects our behaviour. Every refugee child will enter your program with different experiences, thoughts, feelings and behaviours. Some children may have been sheltered from most of the stress of forced migration, while others may be working through overwhelming experiences and emotions that can be easily triggered. Trauma can also derail development and make it difficult for children to learn to identify, express and manage feelings.

Usually, babies learn to regulate and tolerate their shifting feelings through interaction with a responsive and caring adult. If a child went through this developmental stage in an unsafe environment and/or with adults who were unresponsive to them, they may still seem less emotionally mature. Our goal is to help refugee children attain and maintain a state of alert calm that allows them to engage in play and learning.



Refugee children who have experienced trauma may find it hard to:

- See connections between feelings, thoughts and behaviours.
- Understand and express emotions.
- Accurately read other people's emotional cues.
- Control their reactions to threats and/or trauma reminders.³

This might mean that the child seems aggressive and disruptive (e.g., hitting others or throwing toys) or passive and unable to initiate play. Some children may even seem to settle easily at first but later start to display signs of trauma.

Some behaviours might have been effective for survival in other situations, but are no longer appropriate or acceptable. Aggressive behaviour may have been encouraged as a means of

³ Caring for Children Who Have Experienced Trauma, National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2010.

• KEY STRATEGIES •

survival during forced migration, and children may have been encouraged to run when they felt in danger. Once children start to feel safer, they might seem giddy or very active. Children may also struggle with expectations in the child care setting that are very different from what is expected at home.

You may find that some refugee children “act out” as a way of:

- dealing with tremendous change and loss;
- re-enacting violence witnessed in a refugee camp while fleeing or during a war, or imitating behaviour seen in older siblings;
- venting frustration, anger or anxiety—especially if they are feeling misunderstood or there is a language barrier that keeps them from expressing themselves verbally;
- expressing upset, anxiety and/or panic;
- reacting to a parent’s mood or to a tense situation at home;
- protecting themselves;
- expressing separation anxiety.

It can be challenging to find the appropriate response to support refugee children when their experiences, feelings and behaviours fall outside of what we are used to and comfortable with, but it’s important to remember that behaviour is one of the many ways that children can communicate their needs.

No matter what behaviour the child is displaying, what you see is just the “tip of the iceberg” for children who have been through trauma. Below the surface are the feelings, thoughts, expectations and beliefs that the children have accumulated as a result of their traumatic experiences.⁴

Aggressive behaviour may have been encouraged as a means of survival during forced migration, and children may have been encouraged to run when they felt in danger.



⁴ Parent Workshop: Facilitator’s Guide, National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2010.

• KEY STRATEGIES •

When children are calmly focused and alert, they are best able to modulate their emotions; pay attention; ignore distractions; control their impulses; assess the consequences of an action; understand what others are thinking and feeling, and the effects of their own behaviours; or feel empathy for others.

*Calm, Alert and Happy,
Dr. Stuart Shanker, 2013*

Even a child who seems passive and observant can be struggling with intense emotions. Our role as educators and caregivers is to provide children with the support and skills they need to manage feelings in a way that keeps everyone in our programs emotionally and physically safe.

We can do this by:

- being non-judgemental, compassionate and caring;
- creating a plan for how to prevent and handle behaviours;
- shadowing and observing all new children;
- learning to anticipate a child's needs and avoid triggers;
- making changes to the environment and routine;
- adjusting our expectations and responses;
- providing opportunities for children to express their feelings;
- teaching children how to calm themselves down when they feel upset.

For more information on what to do when behaviour is challenging, refer to the [Challenging Behaviours Tutorial](#), the [Guiding Refugee Children's Behaviour](#) and [Helping Refugee Children Cope with Stress](#) tipsheets.



Responding to a Child’s or Parent’s Traumatic Memory

It can be difficult to know how to respond when a child or parent brings up a traumatic experience, or how to support refugee children who have behaviours and emotions that challenge our usual ways of responding.

In these moments, it’s important to:

- Avoid responding with strong emotions.
- Pause and think about how you can respond genuinely and compassionately.
- Acknowledge, affirm and accept the parent or child’s emotions.
- Remind the parent or child that they are safe now and, if appropriate, that they are not to blame for what happened.
- Try to reframe negative thinking patterns and/or errors in the child’s perception. You might need to clarify facts with parents. Remind them that the child needs to express themselves and be heard. The parent may think it would be better for the child to just forget about it. It is okay to listen and not try to fix things. Just be there.
- Redirect the child to an activity that allows them to either express their emotions (i.e., creative, sensory or physical) or move past the trigger, thought, action or emotion.

For example, if a child puts a dolly on the floor, lowers their head and says: “dead baby,” you might respond by saying, “It looks like you feel sad when you think about that. But it is safe here, and this is just a dolly that we can pretend to feed and cuddle and take care of.” Alternatively, if the child has limited English, you could use body language and simple terms like “sad,” “safe now,” and “dolly” to communicate the same message. Watch for cues to determine whether the child might like to talk about it, or whether they are ready to move on to pretend play like taking care of the dolly or to choosing another activity.

Tips for Helping Refugee Children Understand and Manage Big Feelings and Challenging Behaviours

When young children have empathetic, consistent, reliable supportive adults in their lives, they are more likely to learn how to self-soothe in stressful situations. By helping children understand and manage their feelings and behaviours, we can support their development, settlement, healing and resilience.

For preschool children, it's important to:

- Talk about feelings. Let children know it's okay to have strong feelings, but not okay to hurt others.
- Tune in to children's emotions. Notice when they're struggling with big feelings (anxiety, sadness, anger) and behaviours, and encourage positive emotional expression.
- Acknowledge and validate emotions. Label feelings and provide visual tools to help children identify and communicate emotions. You can use a feelings chart (full link in the Resources section), feelings charades, puppets and story books and/or labeled pictures of children experiencing different emotions.
- Even if children don't yet have the language, using a program like Zones of Regulation (full link in the Resources section), and associated visuals can help children express how they feel.
- Tell children that you are there to help them calm their strong feelings if they need you.
- Practise self-soothing and calming exercises like deep breathing, imagining something soothing, listening to a quiet song, blowing bubbles or children's yoga. By teaching refugee children how to self-soothe, we can help them to regulate their emotions in order to attain/maintain a state of alert calm that will allow them to engage in play and learning.
- Incorporate physical activity into your program daily. It reduces stress and helps children to manage emotions and energy.
- Provide opportunities to express emotions through art and sensory play (e.g., using paint, crayons, pencils, paper, clay, play dough, sand). (See list of Programming and Activity Ideas in the Resources section.)
- Enhance the sensory materials in your environment. Use a variety of textures in all areas. Have a small pillow or soft blanket available for when children need a break.

• KEY STRATEGIES •

- Read or tell children stories about feelings and how other children manage big emotions. (See list of Children’s Storybooks that Promote Resilience in the Resources section.)
- Help children understand the link between feelings, thoughts and behaviours (keeping the child’s age in mind).

As an educator and caregiver:

- Be culturally sensitive and remember that each child is different. What works well in helping one child to handle intense feelings may not work for another.
- Be clear, calm, consistent, honest and genuine. Every day, we have opportunities to set a good example in how we manage our feelings. For example, if you find yourself getting upset by a child’s behaviour, remember that before you can be emotionally and physically safe in managing the child you must be completely in charge of your own feelings. Take a breath and get calm before you react.
- Provide realistic and consistent limits and boundaries to help children feel safe and secure. When children feel secure, they are less likely to test limits with challenging behaviour.
- Practise lots of patience and understanding. Remember that when a child has been through trauma, sometimes their behaviour is fear/grief-based. At these times, a child who has experienced trauma CANNOT behave differently. It’s not that they WON’T behave differently. They are not being stubborn. Rather, they are having a physical response to a trigger. Program staff might need to get support so that they can help the child through the challenge of managing triggers and emotions/behaviours of this kind.

For infants and toddlers, focus on consistently and reliably meeting the child’s physical needs. The more you can anticipate a child’s needs before they get upset, the better.

This means:

- Carefully observing and getting to know the child. Talk to the parent if possible to find out their usual routines.
- Creating a soothing environment. Loud noises can be a strong trauma reminder for babies and toddlers. Keep the environment as soothing as possible with soft lighting and calm voices.
- Taking it slow and using texture and movement to calm and soothe babies.
- Tuning in to infants’ and toddlers’ non-verbal signs.

• KEY STRATEGIES •

Providing Opportunities for Mastery and Success

Refugee children who have been through traumatic experiences may have learned from their past that they have no control. This may be especially true if it seemed to them as though even their parents were powerless to stop bad things from happening throughout their journey.

As a result, children might be feeling unsure of themselves and their abilities. Their sense of self, confidence and competence can be deeply affected by their experiences.

Refugee children need supportive relationships, a safe space, and opportunities to nurture and regain their confidence and competence. They need to be reminded that they can do things that are hard, overcome challenges, take age-appropriate risks and have a positive impact on outcomes.

When a child has confidence in their abilities it builds resilience.

When we have confidence in our abilities, it helps us to respond to problems with resilience. This “I can do it” attitude motivates us to keep trying even when things are difficult. If we keep trying, our efforts are more likely to pay off and we will feel a sense of accomplishment.

We start to develop confidence in our ability to make things happen very early in life. When babies cry and their parents respond, they begin to learn that they have some control over their environment. They develop a sense of security and learn to trust that their parents will take care of their needs.

As they grow, this security and trust allows children to feel safe enough to explore their environment. The enjoyment children get from exploring their world motivates them to “master” the tasks that come with their age and stage. These accomplishments help children develop confidence in their ability to handle challenges and frustrating situations throughout their lives.

Building Resilience in Young Children, Best Start, 2012

Tips for Providing Opportunities for Mastery and Success for Young Refugee Children

When we build relationships and set up our programs and environment to support refugee children’s mastery and success, their new-found confidence can lead to decreased anxiety, frustration, anger and upset, and a greater sense of control and hopefulness for the future.

It can also trigger an improved ability to learn and focus, to engage in play, to relate to others, and to generally manage feelings and behaviours. To build feelings of success and mastery in your program:

Provide children with opportunities to:

- Make choices and/or make their own decisions.
- Think and act independently.
- Exercise and participate in physical activity.
- Build self-awareness, self-confidence/self-esteem.
- Take age-appropriate risks (i.e., facing fears with support; taking baby steps).
- Express themselves through physical, creative and sensory activities.
- Play with toys that are easy to master, with little likelihood of failure (for example, puzzles designed for a younger age, toy cars or animals).

Focus on the positives.

- Genuinely acknowledge children for their accomplishments and efforts, and use positive language in your program.
- Start by asking children to demonstrate the behaviour you would like to see rather than telling them to stop what they’re doing. For example, demonstrate walking and say, “Please walk” rather than “Stop running.”

• KEY STRATEGIES •

- Emphasize similarities and celebrate differences. For example, talk about “Yoshan likes to... and Maya likes to...”
- Build on each child’s strengths.
- Let them know that you are confident in their ability to manage their feelings and behaviours.

Help them build problem-solving skills and a positive outlook.

- Help children reframe difficulty. Acknowledge setbacks, then gently redirect their attention toward next steps. For example: “Oh no. It looks like you fell when you were balancing.” You might give the child a quick hug, then move on and acknowledge what they did accomplish. “But look how far you were able to balance. You got so much farther today than yesterday!”
- Help children understand that there are people in their family and community who are there to help them, and that it’s okay to ask for help! Model the phrase “Help me” as you respond to their cues for help.
- Help them focus on what they have rather than on what they’ve lost or don’t have.
- Foster a growth mindset by creating a program culture that celebrates change and growth, acknowledging how we can all learn and get better every day.
- Don’t rush to the rescue when things don’t go as planned. Obviously, you need to step in immediately if the child is at risk of harming themselves or others, but if everyone is safe, make sure to give the child space to think through a solution when things go wrong. Then you can genuinely praise them for coming up with a solution or coach them to come up with a solution.

• KEY STRATEGIES •

Your support can make a world of difference.

Many newly arrived refugee families are managing trauma while handling a great deal of upheaval and change—and often learning a new language on top of it all! As one of their first points of contact in their new community, early childhood educators and early years programs are uniquely positioned to offer a safe, predictable environment where families can begin to heal and reconnect. Your support really can make a world of difference.

With a better understanding of the refugee experience and the possible effects of trauma, you can tailor your support and programs to be more responsive to the needs of refugee children and families. Refugees are survivors. And by building strong relationships—both with parents and children—you can help to support them and strengthen their natural capacity for resilience and recovery.

There may still be struggles ahead, but your caring, compassion and support will go a long way toward helping them build a solid foundation for successful settlement as they begin to build a new life in Canada.

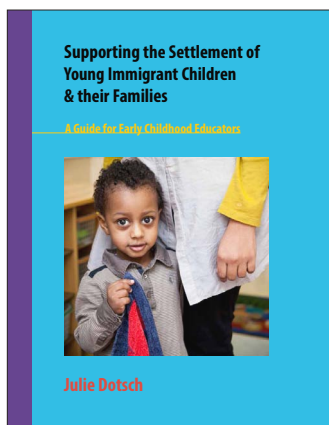




Resources

Resources for Professionals in Newcomer Child Care

cmascanada.ca shares the latest information and research to support your work with immigrant and refugee children and families.



cmascanada.ca is a comprehensive website that caters specifically to the immigrant child care community. The website is updated weekly with industry news and resources, ‘experts corner’ articles on hot topics in child care, informative videos and a variety of newcomer focused child care resources that can be downloaded free of charge.

CMAS also develops specialized training and resources that combine their expertise with the practical knowledge of other experts in the field. Important CMAS resources that can be found at cmascanada.ca include:

Supporting the Settlement of Young Immigrant Children and their Families, CMAS, 2015.

Written by child care and diversity expert Julie Dotsch, with strategies and ideas from caregivers working in the field of newcomer child care, this book builds on caregivers’ professionalism, knowledge and experience to provide a greater understanding of the new immigrant and refugee experience from a child’s and family’s perspective.

Caring for Syrian Refugee Children: A Program Guide for Welcoming Young Children and Their Families, CMAS, 2015.

Written by a team of experts in newcomer child care, this guide provides programs with knowledge and tools to better understand and respond to the unique experiences and needs of Syrian refugee children.

You can also find a comprehensive list of resources to support you in your work with refugee children and their families at cmascanada.ca/supporting-refugees/.

CMAS Resources for Newcomer Families

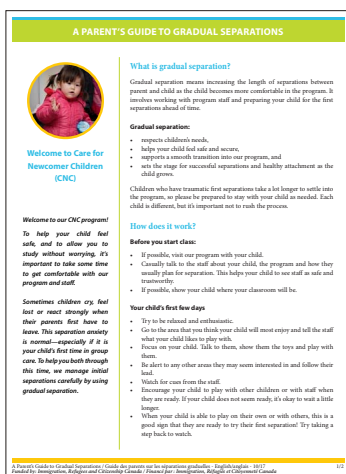
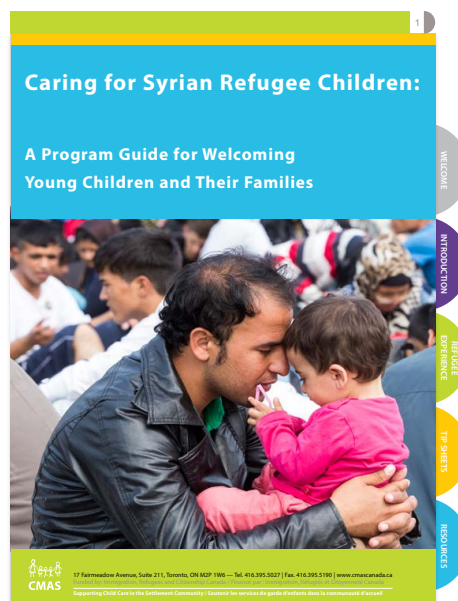
At CMAS we understand the unique needs of newcomer families and work to develop high quality resources for them that not only contain the information they need, but that speak their language—literally! Many of our parent resources are available in over 20 languages. All of these multilingual parent resources and more can be found at cmascanada.ca/cnc/parents.

All About Care for Newcomer Children (CNC), CMAS, 2017.

A resource that settlement-service-providing organizations can hand out to parents to inform them of the rules and expectations of CNC programs. It is available in over 20 languages, including Arabic, and is one of our most popular resources.

A Parent's Guide to Gradual Separations, CMAS, 2017.

This resource is available in over 20 languages. It helps parents understand how gradual separation works, what to do in the first few days and how to help if their child is upset.



• RESOURCES •



New in Canada Parenting Support Series – Brochures, CMAS 2016.

A series of multilingual newcomer-focused brochures about topics related to child safety.

Useful Resources from Other Organizations

Trauma

Helping Young Children Rebound after Traumatic Experiences, Teaching Strategies, 2005.

www2.teachingstrategies.com/content/pageDocs/Helping-Children-Rebound-PS-2012.pdf

This resource was developed to help early childhood educators support children after the trauma of natural disasters, but it is full of great information to help preschool children who are impacted by traumatic events of all kinds.

Helping Traumatized Children, The Child Trauma Academy, 2014.

childtrauma.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Helping_Traumatized_Children_Caregivers_Perry1.pdf

One of the questions educators and caregivers who work with traumatized children ask most often is: Should I talk to the child about the traumatic event? In this booklet you'll find answers to this question and many more.

Invisible Wounds: The impact of six years of war on the mental health of Syria's children, Save the Children, 2017.

savethechildren.org/atf/cf/%7B9def2ebe-10ae-432c-9bd0-df91d2eba74a%7D/INVISIBLE%20WOUNDS%20FINAL%2020020317.PDF

This 25-page report documents the impact of war on children and their families and ends with recommendations for creating solutions.

National Centre for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

www.ptsd.va.gov/

The National Centre for PTSD has information about childhood trauma, infant attachment and PTSD in preschool children.

National Child Traumatic Stress Network (NCTSN)

NCTSN has a Child Trauma Toolkit for educators

(wmich.edu/sites/default/files/attachments/u57/2013/child-trauma-toolkit.pdf),

a Resource Parent Workshop: Facilitator's Guide

(nctsn.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/rpc/PC_FG_Module5.pdf),

and a useful handbook for parents called *Caring for Children who have Experienced Trauma* (nctsn.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/rpc/RPC_ParticipantHandbook_FINAL.pdf)

Playing with Rainbows: A National Play Program for At-Risk Refugee Children, B. Revell, The YWCA Canada, 2010.

cmascanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/PlayingwithRainbows.pdf

This manual outlines a play-based group model designed to facilitate healing in school-age children and youth who have been traumatized by experiences of war and migration.

War Trauma in Refugees, Here to Help, Claudia María Vargas, PhD, 2007.

heretohelp.bc.ca/visions/trauma-and-victimization-vol3/war-trauma-in-refugees

This resource identifies red flags for posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) according to age, gender and culture.

Resilience

Building Resilience in Children — 20 Practical, Powerful Strategies (Backed by Science), Hey Sigmund, 2016.

heysigmund.com/building-resilience-children/

This article succinctly describes 20 practical and powerful strategies for promoting resilience in your program.

Building Resilience in Young Children, Best Start, 2012.

beststart.org/resources/hlthy_chld_dev/pdf/BSRC_Resilience_English_fnl.pdf

This booklet offers tips and resources to help you build children's resilience.

Harvard Centre on the Developing Child — InBrief: Resilience Series, Centre on the Developing Child, Harvard University.

developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/inbrief-resilience-series/

These three short videos provide an overview of why resilience matters, how it develops and how to strengthen it in children.

RIRO Resiliency Guidebook, Reaching In Reaching Out, 2006.

reachinginreachingout.com/documents/GUIDEBOOK-MAY29-17-FINAL2_000.pdf

This guidebook is for child-serving professionals and parents. It aims to increase awareness of the importance of promoting resilience in children through caring relationships and adult modelling of resilient thinking and coping strategies.

Ten Tips for Building Resilience in Children, American Psychological Association.

apa.org/helpcenter/resilience.aspx

Here are 10 tips for building resilience that you can review and share with parents.

• RESOURCES •

The Power of Positive Adult-Child Relationships: Connection is the Key, Jean Clinton.

edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/Clinton.pdf

In a typical day, educators and caregivers may spend the majority of their time “correcting and directing,” leaving little time for “connecting.” This article invites you to consider how to shift this balance to spend more time forming connections with the children in your care.

Programming and Activities

30 Games and Activities for Self-Regulation, The Inspired Treehouse.

theinspiredtreehouse.com/self-regulation/

These 30 games and activities support planning and problem solving, memory, attention, motor control and sequencing. They’re a great way to introduce self-regulation strategies to kids!

Calm, Alert and Happy, Government of Ontario, Dr. Stuart Shanker, 2013.

edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/Shanker.pdf

This article discusses self-regulation, the signs of an excessive stress load in children and three steps for encouraging self-regulation.

Children’s Storybooks that Promote Resilience, Reaching In Reaching Out.

reachinginreachingout.com/resources-booksKids.htm

This is a list of English and French storybooks that illustrate resilient thinking and coping in action and that promote cultural competence. Each book is annotated and categorized by the resiliency abilities it supports.

Feelings Charts, Pinterest.

pinterest.ca/explore/feelings-chart/

This link will lead you to many different examples of feelings charts to choose from.

Infographic: Understanding Stress Behaviour for Teachers, Mehrit Centre.

self-reg.ca/infographic-understanding-stress-behaviour-for-teachers/

This infographic will help you to understand the difference between misbehaviour and stress behaviour.

Resource Parent Workshop: Facilitator Guide, Module 5: Dealing with Feelings and Behaviours, The National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2010.

nctsn.org/nctsn_assets/pdfs/rpc/RPC_FG_Module5.pdf

This workshop introduces participants to the Cognitive Triangle and the impact of trauma on children’s thoughts, feelings and behaviours. It also introduces techniques for helping traumatized children understand and control their emotional and behavioural reactions.

Teaching at the Beginning

youtube.com/watch?v=H763M_pOITE

This YouTube channel showcases dual language learners who are acquiring English.

• RESOURCES •

Zones of Regulation

zonesofregulation.com/index.html

This website offers live webinars and access to training that provides a framework to foster self-regulation and emotional control.

Other Organizations of Interest

Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture

ccvt.org/

CCVT is a non-profit, registered charitable organization that helps survivors to overcome the lasting effects of torture and war.

New Beginnings Clinic: CAMH Services for Refugees

camh.ca

CAMH's New Beginnings Clinic provides psychiatric consultation and possible brief culturally sensitive interventions to newly arrived refugees, as well as case consultation for care providers.

• PROJECT TEAM •

Susan Hoo, CMAS Manager

Susan has been at the helm of CMAS since 2001, leading a team of dedicated professionals who help programs to deliver safe, quality, newcomer-focused childcare. Her passion for developing solutions that lead to positive change and enhance family life is evident in all that she does, and she draws from over 25 years of experience designing, implementing and managing projects for the non-profit community.

Tricia Doyle, CMAS Assistant Manager

Tricia has over 25 years of experience in childcare. Having worked as an early childhood educator, she knows first-hand how working to create safe, welcoming environments is key to quality childcare. At CMAS, she manages projects and oversees the development of supports that help to empower childcare staff to take the lead in building strong, stable early childcare communities and quality programming for newcomer families.

Heather Savazzi, Author, CMAS Content Development Team Lead

Heather simplifies the complex, shares stories, learns and collaborates with others to create positive change. With 20 years of experience supporting diverse groups of children and families, she expertly designs and delivers customized training and resources to support early learning and childcare communities in their important work with immigrant and refugee families.

Anna Humphrey, Editor

Anna has a passion for putting things plainly. Whether she's editing resources for English language learners, creating easy-to-read website text for busy professionals, or writing medical brochures that demystify doctor-speak, Anna has built her career on putting readers' needs first and communicating clearly. She is also the author of five fiction books for young readers, including the *Clara Humble* series from OwlKids Books and the *Megabat* series from Tundra Books.

Kristina Gougeon, Graphic Designer

Drawing on over 20 years of writing, design, interactive development, education and research experience, Kristina develops and manages content for e-learning courses, as well as marketing and communications materials across all media. In partnership with clients that range from not-for-profit and government agencies to technology, healthcare and insurance organizations, Kristina transforms information into meaningful user experiences.



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Supporting Child Care in the Settlement Community / Soutenir les services de garde d'enfants dans la communauté d'accueil



*The Resilience Guide:
Strategies for Responding to Trauma in Refugee Children*

Produced by CMAS

Funded by:



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

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et Citoyenneté Canada

INTRODUCTION

REFUGEE
EXPERIENCE

DEVELOPMENTAL
EFFECTS

KEY STRATEGIES

RESOURCES



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40 Icebreakers for Small Groups



Grahame Knox

'40 Icebreakers for Small Groups' is a **FREE** eBook compiled from several articles posted on my blog **Insight**.

These posts continue to be popular, so I thought it might be helpful to put them together in a **FREE** resource for you to download. In addition, I've added several new 'bonus' icebreakers which don't appear in the articles!

These 40 icebreakers are simple to use and suitable for a wide age range. They are great with a small youth group and can be used in a small space! They require very few props and can easily be used in a home without feeling a hurricane just came through!

This selection will encourage sharing, openness, listening, cooperation and discussion, providing a useful **'getting to know you'** or **'group building'** introduction for a small group study or teaching time.

It's probably impossible to say who first thought up any of these icebreakers and games. Many are based on common party games and adapted through generations of youth leaders. Most came to me by word of mouth from friends and colleagues, or seeing them in action.

If you find this eBook helpful may I invite you to **SUBSCRIBE** to **Insight**. You'll be sent every future article and resource direct to your RSS feed or email inbox. Your subscription is completely **FREE** and you can unsubscribe at any time.



Why icebreakers?

Icebreakers can play an important role in helping young people integrate and connect with one another in a group environment. Icebreakers can also enhance your teaching by helping to stimulate cooperation and participation. They can provide positive momentum for small group study and discussion by:

- Helping a new group get to know one another.
- Helping new members to integrate into a group.
- Helping young people feel comfortable together.
- Encouraging cooperation.
- Encouraging listening to others.
- Encouraging working together.
- Encouraging young people to break out of their cliques.
- Developing social skills.
- Building a rapport with leaders.
- Creating a good atmosphere for learning and participation.

Icebreakers and you

A 10 SECOND CHECK LIST!

- Be enthusiastic, whatever happens, be enthusiastic!
- Choose volunteers carefully and don't cause embarrassment.
- If something is not working move quickly on to the next activity.
- Timing is important. Don't flog them to death. Use only 2 or 3 icebreakers as a 20-30 minutes introduction to your programme. Finish each icebreaker while young people are still enjoying it.
- Choose icebreakers appropriate for your age group. No group is the same and your understanding of what will and will not work with your group is a core youth work skill.



GETTING TO KNOW YOU

ICEBREAKERS

Fact or fiction?

Ask everyone to write on a piece of paper THREE things about themselves which may not be known to the others in the group. Two are true and one is not. Taking turns they read out the three 'facts' about themselves and the rest of the group votes which are true and false. There are always surprises. This simple activity is always fun, and helps the group and leaders get to know more about each other.

Interview

Divide the young people into pairs. Ask them to take three minutes to interview each other. Each interviewer has to find 3 interesting facts about their partner. Bring everyone back to together and ask everyone to present the 3 facts about their partner to the rest of the group. Watch the time on this one, keep it moving along.

My name is?

Go around the group and ask each young person to state his/her name and attach an adjective that not only describes a dominant characteristic, but also starts with the same letter of his name e.g. generous Grahame, dynamic Dave. Write them down and refer to them by this for the rest of the evening.

Conversations

Each person is given a sheet of paper with a series of instructions to follow. This is a good mixing game and conversation starter as each person must speak to everyone else. For example;



- Count the number of brown eyed boys in the room.
- Find out who has made the longest journey.
- Who has the most unusual hobby?
- Find the weirdest thing anyone has eaten.
- Who has had the most embarrassing experience?
- Who knows what 'Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia' is a fear of? Nearest guess wins. If that's too easy you can try Arachibutyrophobia, Alektorophobia, Ephebiphobia or Anglophobia. **(Answers on last page!)**

The question web

You need to have a spool of string or wool for this game. Ask the young people to stand in a circle. Hold on to the end of the string and throw the ball/spool to one of the young people to catch. They then choose a question from 1-20 to answer. A list of 20 sample questions is given below. Adapt for your group.

Holding the string they then throw it to another member of the group. Eventually this creates a web as well as learning some interesting things about each other! At the end of the game you could comment that we all played a part in creating this unique web and if one person was gone it would look different.

In the same way it's important that we all take part to make the group what it is, unique and special.

1. If you had a time machine that would work only once, what point in the future or in history would you visit?
2. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
3. If your house was burning down, what three objects would you try and save?
4. If you could talk to any one person now living, who would it be and why?
5. If you HAD to give up one of your senses (hearing, seeing, feeling, smelling, tasting) which would it be and why?
6. If you were an animal, what would you be and why?
7. Do you have a pet? If not, what sort of pet would you like?
8. Name a gift you will never forget?
9. Name one thing you really like about yourself.
10. What's your favourite thing to do in the summer?



11. Who's your favourite cartoon character, and why?
12. Does your name have a special meaning and or were you named after someone special?
13. What is the hardest thing you have ever done?
14. If you are at a friend's or relative's house for dinner and you find a dead insect in your salad, what would you do?
15. What was the best thing that happened to you this past week?
16. If you had this week over again what would you do differently?
17. What is the first thing that comes to mind when you think about God?
18. What's the weirdest thing you've ever eaten?
19. If you could ask Christ to change one problem in the world today, what would you like him to change?
20. What book, movie or video have you seen/read recently you would recommend? Why?

Desert Island

Announce, 'You've been exiled to a deserted island for a year. In addition to the essentials, you may take one piece of music, one book (which is not the Bible) and one luxury item you can carry with you i.e. not a boat to leave the island! What would you take and why?'

Allow a few minutes for the young people to draw up their list of three items, before sharing their choices with the rest of the group. As with most icebreakers and relationship building activities, it's good for the group leaders to join in too!

If

Ask the group to sit in a circle. Write 20 'IF' questions on cards and place them (question down) in the middle of the circle. The first person takes a card, reads it out and gives their answer, comment or explanation. The card is returned to the bottom of the pile before the next person takes their card.

This is a simple icebreaker to get young people talking and listening to others in the group. Keep it moving and don't play for too long. Write your own additional 'IF' questions to add to the list.



1. If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
2. If I gave you \$10,000, what would you spend it on?
3. If you could watch your favourite movie now, what would it be?
4. If you could talk to anyone in the world, who would it be?
5. If you could wish one thing to come true this year, what would it be?
6. If you could live in any period of history, when would it be?
7. If you could change anything about yourself, what would you change?
8. If you could be someone else, who would you be?
9. If you could have any question answered, what would it be?
10. If you could watch your favourite TV show now, what would it be?
11. If you could have any kind of pet, what would you have?
12. If you could do your dream job 10 years from now, what would it be?
13. If you had to be allergic to something, what would it be?
14. If you sat down next to Jesus on a bus, what would you talk about?
15. If money and time was no object, what would you be doing right now?
16. If you had one day to live over again, what day would you pick?
17. If you could eat your favourite food now, what would it be?
18. If you could learn any skill, what would it be?
19. If you were sent to live on a space station for three months and only allowed to bring three personal items with you, what would they be?
20. If you could buy a car right now, what would you buy?

Name that person

Divide into two teams. Give each person a blank piece of card. Ask them to write five little known facts about themselves on their card. Include all leaders in this game too. For example, I have a pet iguana, I was born in Iceland, my favourite food is spinach, my grandmother is called Doris and my favourite colour is vermilion.

Collect the cards into two team piles. Draw one card from the opposing team pile. Each team tries to name the person in as few clues as possible. Five points if they get it on the first clue, then 4, 3, 2, 1, 0. The team with the most points wins. (Note: if you select the most obscure facts first, it will increase the level of competition and general head scratching!)



Would you rather..?

Questions may range from silly trivia to more serious content. On the way you might find out some interesting things about your young people! Place a line of tape down the centre of the room. Ask the group to straddle the tape.

When asked 'Would you rather?' they have to jump to the left or right as indicated by the leader. Don't forget to encourage your adult helpers to join in too! I've included 20 starter questions, just add your own and let the fun begin.

Would you rather..?

- Visit the doctor or the dentist?
- Eat broccoli or carrots?
- Watch TV or listen to music?
- Own a lizard or a snake?
- Have a beach holiday or a mountain holiday?
- Be an apple or a banana?
- Be invisible or be able to read minds?
- Be hairy all over or completely bald?
- Be the most popular or the smartest person you know?
- Make headlines for saving somebody's life or winning a Nobel Prize?
- Go without television or fast food for the rest of your life?
- Have permanent diarrhoea or permanent constipation?
- Be handsome/beautiful and dumb or be ugly and really smart?
- Always be cold or always be hot?
- Not hear or not see?
- Eliminate hunger and disease or be able to bring lasting world peace?
- Be stranded on a deserted island alone or with someone you don't like?
- See the future or change the past?
- Be three inches taller or three inches shorter?
- Wrestle a lion or fight a shark?



Masks

You will need crayons or paints, markers, scissors and white card for this activity. Give each young person a piece of white card. Ask them to draw and cut out a life-sized shape of a face. They can also cut out eyes and a mouth if they wish. Each young person is then asked to decorate their card face. One side represents what they think people see/know/believe about them i.e. on the outside. The other side represents what they feel about themselves i.e. things going on the inside, what people do not necessarily know or see.

This is best used in an established group where the young people are comfortable and at ease with each other. 'Masks' is also a good discussion starter on self-image and self-worth.

Flags

Flags is a get-to-know-you activity, helping young people express what's important to them or more about themselves. Provide large sheets of paper, crayons, markers and paints. Ask each young person to draw a flag which contains some symbols or pictures describing who they are, what's important to them or what they enjoy.

Each flag is divided into 4 or 6 segments. Each segment can contain a picture i.e. favourite emotion, favourite food, a hobby, a skill, where you were born, your family, your faith. Give everyone 20 minutes to draw their flags. Ask some of the group to share their flags and explain the meaning of what they drew.

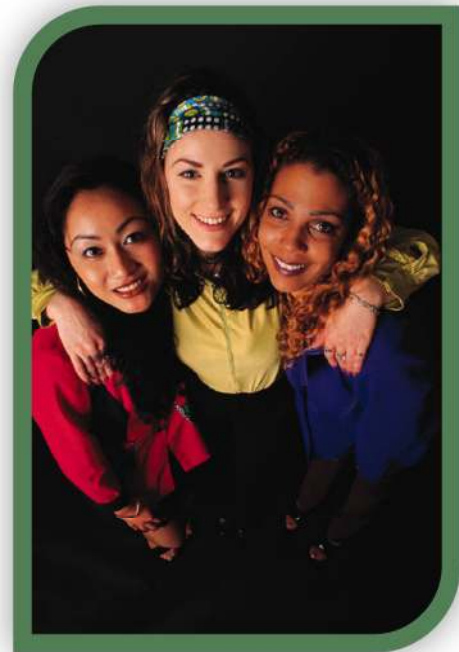
People Bingo

Great for new groups. Make a 5 by 4 grid on a piece of card and duplicate for everyone in your group. Supply pens or pencils. Each box contains one of the statements below. Encourage the group to mix, talk to everyone to try and complete their card. If one of the items listed on the bingo card relates to the person they are talking with, have them sign their name in that box.

End the activity after 10 minutes and review some of the interesting facts the group has discovered about each other. You can add your own statements appropriate for your group.



- Has brown eyes
- Has made the longest journey
- Has eaten the weirdest food
- Plays Tennis
- Is wearing blue
- Speaks a foreign language
- Knows what a muntjak is (it's a small deer)
- Plays a musical instrument
- Has 2 or more pets
- Has been to the most foreign countries
- Hates broccoli
- Has 2 or more siblings
- Name begins with an 'S'
- Loves Chinese food
- Loves to ski
- Knows what a quark is (A quark is a tiny theoretical particle that makes up protons and neutrons in the atomic nucleus. So there!)
- Loves soccer
- Likes to get up early
- Someone who's favourite TV show is CSI
- Someone over 6ft tall



GROUP BUILDERS

Around the world

The leader begins by saying the name of any country, city, river, ocean or mountain that can be found in an atlas. The young person next to him must then say another name that begins with the last letter of the word just given. Each person has a definite time limit (e.g. three seconds) and no names can be repeated. For example - First person: Londonn, Second Person: N Niagara Fallss, Third Person: S Switzerland

Supermarket

The first player says: "I went to the supermarket to buy an Apple (or any other object you can buy in a supermarket that begins with an A). The next player repeats the sentence, including the "A" word and adds a "B" word.

Each successive player recites the sentence with all the alphabet items, adding one of his own. For example; 'I went to the supermarket and bought an Apple, Banana, CD, dog food, envelopes, frozen fish'. It's not too hard to reach the end of the alphabet, usually with a little help! Watch out for 'Q' and 'X' 😊

Tall stories

The leader starts a story with a sentence that ends in SUDDENLY. The next person then has to add to the story with his own sentence that ends in SUDDENLY. Continue the story until everyone has contributed. The story becomes crazier as each young person adds their sentence. Tape it and play it back. For example; 'Yesterday I went to the zoo and was passing the elephant enclosure when SUDDENLY.....'

Once upon a time

Ask each young person to think of either the name of a person, a place or a thing. Invite them to share this with the rest of the group. Select one of your group to begin a story. However, within 10 seconds they must mention the person, place or



thing they have thought of. After 10 seconds (use a stopwatch or kitchen timer) the story is continued by the next person who must also mention their person, place or thing within the 10 seconds.

Continue until everyone has made a contribution. The stories can get really weird, but that's part of the fun! Tape the story for playback at the next parents meeting!

Word link

This is a word association game. Ask the group to sit in a circle. The first person starts with any word they wish i.e. red. The next person repeats the first word and adds another word which links to the first i.e. tomato. The next person repeats the previous word and add another word link i.e. soup, and so on. To keep this moving, only allow five seconds for each word link.

Object stories

Collect together a number of objects and place in a canvas bag. The objects can include everyday items i.e. a pencil, key-ring, mobile phone, but also include some more unusual ones i.e. a fossil, holiday photograph, wig!

Pass the bag around the group and invite each young person to dip their hand into the bag (without looking) and pull out one of the objects.

The leader begins a story which includes his object. After 20 seconds, the next person takes up the story and adds another 20 seconds, incorporating the object they are holding. And so on, until everyone has made a contribution to your epic literary tale 😊

Add words

Simple, completely ridiculous and a lot of fun. The first person says a word, for example 'The'. The second person says the first word and ADDS a second word of their choice, and so on. At the end you might have a complete sentence!

For example, 'The aardvark spiralled into the puddle of custard clutching his skateboard while whistling his favourite Bjork melody.' The fun thing is putting twists in the sentence so that the others have a hard time coming up with a word that fits. ADD WORDS can be played a few times without being boring.



Vocabulary

You begin by thinking of a word and then give the first letter. The next player thinks of a word beginning with this letter and gives the second letter. The third player thinks of a word that begins with the first two letters and adds a third. The object of the game is to avoid completing a word. When a player has completed three words or failed to add a letter they can rest their brain for the remainder of the game! You might need a dictionary handy to adjudicate on some words.

One minute please!

The aim of the game is to talk for one minute on a given subject. You announce the topic and a member of the group is randomly selected to speak for one minute. Use a pack of cards to randomly select i.e. person who draws the lowest number. Choose subjects to stimulate the imagination and which may be amusing. Put a stopwatch on each person to see how long they last before drying up! Subjects might include, my earliest memories, my favourite computer game, why beans are good for you, 10 things you can do with potatoes, Alligator wrestling, pre-millennialism (no, not really!)

Newspaper puzzle

Divide into teams of five or six people and give each group a copy of the **SAME** newspaper. Ask them to spread the newspaper out in front of each team. Describe a particular advert, article, fact or picture from the paper and the group has to find it, rip it out and bring it to you. The first team to bring it gets a point. Continue calling out items and the winning team is the one with the most points. Watch the paper fly 😊



Name grid

Divide the young people into groups of four. Each group needs paper and pens. Ask them to draw a grid on which they write their forenames. For example,

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S | I | M | O | N | |
| W | E | N | D | Y | |
| R | O | B | E | R | T |
| A | N | N | E | | |

Give each team three minutes to write down as many words (three letters or more) that they can make only using the letters in their names. Letters must adjoin each other in the grid, but do not have to be in a straight line.

When the time is up each team adds up their score.

3 or 4 letter words = 1 point

5 letter word = 2 points

6 letter word = 3 points

Line up

Ask the youth group to line up. Works best with 8-10 in a line. If you've got a bigger group, split them up and challenge each line to complete the task first. Ask the group to form a new line in order of....

- Height, from smallest to tallest.
- Birthdays, from January through to December.
- Shoe size, from smallest to largest.
- Alphabetical first names (A-Z).
- Alphabetical mothers first names.
- Alphabetical grandmother's first names!
- Anything else you think up.



Balloon hugging

Select three couples to help you with this game. Give each couple three balloons. The couple must blow up and knot all their balloons. Then place two under the girl's armpits and one between the pair as they face each other. The couple then has to burst the three balloons simultaneously by hugging each other. The winning couple is the pair who burst all their balloons in the quickest time. You need to see this to believe it!

Who am I?

Prepare a self-adhesive label or post-it note for each young person in your group. Write on it the name of a well-known or famous person. This can be an historical character or current sportsman, musician, TV personality, celebrity etc. Have a good mix of men and women. Keeping the names hidden, stick the post-it notes on the foreheads of everyone in the group. They must then ask questions of the others to find out their identity.

Each person takes a turn to ask questions and figure out who they are. For example, Am I alive? Am I female? Am I in a band? Only yes or no questions can be asked. If the answer is no, their turn is over. If the answer is yes, they can ask another question and keep going until they get a no, or guess who they are. Keep playing until everyone has guessed, or if time is short, stop after the first few correct answers.

Pass the orange

Ask the young people to form a circle. Give the first young person a large orange and explain they need to pass this around the circle. No problem. BUT, it has to be passed around the circle using only chin and neck. If the orange is dropped, it must be returned to the previous player in the circle and the game restarts. A camera is a must for this game!



Liquorice line-up

You will need some very long strands of liquorice (or smaller strands tied together). Invite five or six couples (boy/girl) to take part in the game. Each couple places one end of the liquorice in their mouth. At the signal they begin to chew until they reach the middle. The winning couple is the one which reaches the middle first. Award a bag of liquorice to the winners!

Chocolate chomp

Another old party game, but still lots of fun. Ask everyone to sit in a circle on the floor. In the middle of the circle place a large bar of chocolate on a plate, a knife, a fork and three items of clothing – gloves, scarf and a cap. (Don't forget to remove the wrapper from the chocolate!) Each person in the circle takes a turn at rolling a dice.

On throwing a six they run to the middle of the circle, put on the items of clothing and try to eat as much chocolate as possible. However, they can only cut it with the knife and pick it up with the fork. As soon as someone else throws a six, they run to the middle, put on the gloves, hat and cap, and take over. Continue until all the chocolate is eaten.

Whistle and burp

Invite three couples to take part in this simple game. Ask them to sit together at the front of the group. Give each of the boys five crackers and give each of the girls a can of coke. On the signal the boys must eat the crackers as fast as possible and then whistle a pre-selected tune to the satisfaction of the rest of the group. They then hand over to their partner (girl) who must drink the coke and then burp audibly. The first couple to finish wins a packet of crackers and a can of coke!



Pass the polo

Invite the group to line up in teams of six. Give each person a toothpick, which they must hold in their mouth. The person at the front of the line has a polo on his toothpick and he must (without using his hands) pass the polo down the line. If anyone drops their sweet, the team must start again from the front of the line with a new polo.

Knots

Divide your group into teams of 6-8. Each team forms a small circle. Ask them to extend their right hand across the circle and hold the left hand of the other team member opposite them. Then extend their left hand across the circle and hold the right hand of another group member. The task is to unravel the spider's web of interlocking arms without letting go of anyone's hands. Give them a three minute time limit to complete the task. Pressure!

Backward clumps

Divide into pairs. Ask each pair to sit on the floor with their partner, backs together, feet out in front and arms linked. Their task is to stand up together. Once everyone has done this, two pairs join together and the group of four try to repeat the task. After they succeed, add another two and try again. Keep adding people until your whole group is trying to stand together. A sight to behold!

Song scramble

Before the youth meeting write out the first lines from several well-known songs, but write down only one line on each piece of card. Make sure that only enough songs are used to cover the number of people present. The cards are then scattered on the floor. Once the game begins each person grabs a card and tries to find the holders of the other cards which will complete the verse or section of the song. The winning group is the first one to correctly assemble and sing their song. Tape the songs to playback later. Here are a couple of examples which show my age 😊

*Is this the real life? Is this just fantasy?
Caught in a landslide. No escape from reality.
Open your eyes. Look up to the skies and see.*



*I'm just a poor boy, I need no sympathy.
Because I'm easy come, easy go, a little high, little low.*

*I have climbed the highest mountain; I have run through the fields
Only to be with you. Only to be with you
I have run. I have crawled. I have scaled these city walls
These city walls. Only to be with you
But I still haven't found what I'm looking for.*

AND THE SONGS (of course, you already got them!)

Bohemian Rhapsody, Queen

I Still Haven't Found What I'm Looking For, U2

Charade relay

A simple party game but great fun. Make a list of 20 popular TV programmes. Divide your group into smaller teams who base themselves around the ground floor of your house! You stand somewhere in the middle. The game begins by each team sending one person to you. Show them the first TV programme on your list. They return to their team and silently act it out in front of the group. As soon as someone guesses it, that person runs to you for the next clue and repeats the process. The winning group is the one which has acted out and guessed 20 programmes.



Movie star scramble

Divide the group into pairs, each with a paper and pen. Ask them to visit the cards you have previously prepared and placed around the room. Their goal is to unscramble the names of 20 famous movies stars i.e. SHRIN FOR ROAD (work it out yourself!) Points are awarded for each correct answer. Alternatively there is ANIMAL SCRAMBLE, TV SCRAMBLE and so on. Anyone for OLD TESTAMENT PROPHET SCRAMBLE 😊

Body spell

Divide the young people into teams of five. They will need to play this game with bare feet. The groups can play against each other or the clock (five second time limit). Using a felt tip marker write three letters on each team member. Either two hands (palms) and one foot (sole) or one hand and two feet.

1. TDO
2. HYI
3. EHR
4. BFT
5. OCS

As you call out a series of 4, 5, 6 or 7 letter words the group has to spell the word using combinations of hands and feet. Select 20 words from the list below. The finished words must be clearly visible to the leader.

- 4 Letter words: rest, fist, dice, trot, crib, boot, rich, host.
5 letter words: shoot, first, drift, shirt, roost, shred, hired
6 letter words: forest, theory, bitter, bother, frosty, boiled, strict
7 letter words: thirsty, ostrich, october, boosted, shifted, hoisted.
8 letter word: stitched



Twenty questions

20 questions is an old party game which encourages deductive reasoning and creativity. One player is selected to think of an item. The rest of the group tries to guess the item by asking a question which can only be answered with a simple "Yes" or "No." Truthful answers only please, as anything else will ruin the game.

Wink murder

Ask the group to sit in a circle. Choose a number of playing cards to match the number of young people in your group. Be certain your selection contains an ace. Each young person then draws a card. They must not comment or show it to anyone else. The player who chooses the ace is the murderer and he kills his victims by winking at them!

The game begins quietly with players sitting looking at each other. When someone catches the eye of the killer and is winked at, they are killed, and can die in any manner they choose. Some prefer to die quietly with a whimper, some opt for the blood curdling scream technique, while others might fall off their seat and lie prone on the floor. The object is to identify the murderer while trying not to be killed in the process. An incorrect guess results in instant death!

The human chair

Invite everyone to stand in a circle shoulder to shoulder. Each person then turns to the right to face the back of the person in front of them. Ask them to place their hands on the shoulder of the person in front. On the count of three they slowly begin to sit down on the lap of the person behind. As long as everyone is helping the person in front of him or her to sit, then everyone should be supporting the weight of everyone else. Of course, should someone slip, the game becomes 'human dominoes.' 😊 It might take a couple of attempts to complete the challenge.



Your phobias answered

- Hippopotomonstrosesquippedaliophobia - Fear of long words (not a giant hippo in sight!)
- Arachibutyrophobia - Fear of peanut butter sticking to the roof of the mouth. (I think I might have this!)
- Alektorophobia - Fear of chickens. (No McDonalds today then!)
- Ephebiphobia - Fear of teenagers (tough phobia for a youth worker!)
- Anglophobia - Fear of England or English culture. (Be afraid, be very afraid!)

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