

A RESOURCE TOOLKIT TO HELP NEWCOMER PARENTS NAVIGATE THE U.S. SCHOOL SYSTEM

Purpose: To orientate and equip families with information to navigate the school system and to increase school integration and engagement.

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I. THE AMERICAN SCHOOL SYSTEM

Objective

To explain how the school system works, to highlight educational pathways and subjects taught, to explore the school calendar, to explain the roles of different school personnel and to offer families a chance to share their school experiences and reflect on similarities and differences.

Resources

- ▣ [**Educational Handbook for Refugee Parents – IRC Handbook**](#)
 - Section 2) U.S. School System - different levels of school and what children learn at each level
 - Section 3) School Calendar and School Days – breaks, holidays, the school year, transportation and school lunches

- ▣ [**Tukwila School District Parent Handbook**](#)
 - Section 2) About School - basic rules and dress code with visuals and school personnel chart
 - Sections 3-5) Elementary School, Middle School and High School (all Tukwila specific)
 - Section 7) School Days – school hours, important dates, different weather, traveling to school (safety and rules) and school lunch
 - Section 8) School Enrollment – process and required paperwork

- ▣ [**A Guide to Your Children's Schools: A Parent Handbook – Illinois Handbook**](#)
 - Section 1) U.S. School System – districts, types of schools, alternative programs
 - Section 2) Enrolling in School – paperwork/forms and medical requirements
 - Section 3) The School Calendar and the School Day – length of school day and school holidays
 - Section 4) Getting to School – riding the bus
 - Section 6) People Who Work in the Schools – description of roles and school contacts
 - Section 7) Instructional Programs – subjects at different levels, ELL and special needs program

- ▣ [**Cultural Orientation Resource Center \(COR\) Extended and Enhanced Orientation Curriculum - Education**](#)
 - Unit 1) Understanding the School – school room picture cards covering different places/parts of schools and school expectation picture cards around subjects, activities and procedures

▣ [Talk's In: Families of refugee backgrounds and schools in dialogue – Foundation House](#)

- Workshop 1) The Education System - school profile, school council/board, school staff and roles, school tour and structure of school day
- Workshop 3) Teaching and Learning – activity-based learning and subjects taught

▣ [LEP Parent Involvement Project: A Guide for Connecting Immigrant Parents and Schools](#)

- Module 5.1) Life at School: American Schools - school day with sample schedule activity, school year with sample calendar activity, registration information, school messaging

▣ [Office of Education Ombudsman \(OEO\) Brochure– How Does a School District Work?](#)

- Overview of education system

Tips/Activities

- To build on families' past experience, invite families to share about schools in home countries.
 - Use school tours/videos/photos to show different parts of school and school day.
 - Anchorage School District 3 min video tour <http://www.asdk12.org/depts/ELL/>
 - Review calendar and sample schedule.
 - Explain different personnel (with photos of your district personnel, if available).
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II. PARENTAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES AND SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Objective

To work with families to recognize their rights and responsibilities in the schools, to explain school rules and school expectations for student behavior and to walk through school discipline, what it means, and what families can do.

Resources

▣ [Educational Handbook for Refugee Parents – IRC Handbook](#)

- Section 1) Parent's Educational Rights and Responsibilities – graphic overview of rights, responsibilities and student behavioral norms/rules
- Section 6) School Rules and Discipline – school rules, prohibited items list and disciplinary actions

▣ [Tukwila School District Parent Handbook](#)

- Section 2) About School – visual charts of basic rules and dress code
- Section 13) School Rules – basic rules, serious offenses, items not allowed at school
- Section 14) School Discipline – different disciplinary actions and their implications

- [Talk's In: Families of refugee backgrounds and schools in dialogue – Foundation House](#)
 - Workshop 2) Rights and Responsibilities - values promoted in school, behavior policy, homework, projects and student reports

- [Cultural Orientation Resource Center \(COR\) Activity - Reaching Out for Advice](#)
 - Challenges students may face
 - Who parents can go to for help
 - How parents can help their children overcome challenges

- [Office of Education Ombudsman \(OEO\) Brochure – Parent and Student Rights](#)
 - Families' rights regarding: enrollment, attendance and truancy, behavior issues, discrimination and bullying, services for students with disabilities, programs for ELL and access to student information

- [Office of Education Ombudsman \(OEO\) Discipline Manual](#)
 - Students' basic rights and responsibilities at school
 - Overview of different disciplinary actions, process of suspension and expulsion
 - Children's rights when disciplined and how parents can support their student and advocate in the school

- [LEP Parent Involvement Project: A Guide for Connecting Immigrant Parents and Schools](#)
 - Module 5.2) Life at School: Rules at School – activities on sample rules, consequences and potential responses

Tips/Activities

- Discuss rights and responsibilities and school approaches to discipline in home country, and compare and contrast to the U.S.
- Start with the basic rights: Education is free and mandatory. Students are responsible for attending school daily. Parents need to help their children be ready to learn (fed, rested, and clean).
- Use visuals of prohibited items and of dress code and discuss rules at school.
- Discuss different disciplinary actions.
- Role play steps parents can take to advocate for student.

III. SCHOOL PROCEDURES AND COMMUNICATIONS

Objective

To understand basic school procedures, to be informed about how to request an interpreter and to be familiar with school communications as well as when to contact the school and who to contact at school.

Resources

- ▣ [**Educational Handbook for Refugee Parents – IRC Handbook**](#)
 - Section 4) School Procedures – requesting interpreters; reporting when a child is late, absent, sick or needs medicine at school; understanding school communications, grades, progress reports, school fees and school contacts

- ▣ [**Tukwila School District Parent Handbook**](#)
 - Section 10) School Procedures – how to communicate a child is late, absent, sick, needs medicine at school, or needs to leave early
 - Section 11) School Communication - report cards, grades and papers sent home from school

- ▣ [**A Guide to Your Children’s Schools: A Parent Handbook – Illinois Handbook**](#)
 - Section 5) School Procedures – communication between home and school for emergencies, scheduling school visits, and when child needs medicine, or is sick, late or absent

- ▣ [**Talk’s In: Families of refugee backgrounds and schools in dialogue – Foundation House**](#)
 - Workshop 2) Rights and Responsibilities – understanding student reports

- ▣ [**Cultural Orientation Resource Center \(COR\) Activity – Navigating the School System**](#)
 - Mechanisms of parent-teacher relations
 - Communications in U.S. Schools

- ▣ [**Office of Education Ombudsman \(OEO\) Brochure - Resolving Conflict with Schools**](#)
 - How to communicate with school to address and resolve conflict

- ▣ [**LEP Parent Involvement Project: A Guide for Connecting Immigrant Parents and Schools**](#)
 - Module 5.7) Life at School: Communications with school – understanding report cards and papers sent home (samples included)

Tips/Activities

- Discuss home-school communications in home country and experiences, challenges or successes of communications with schools in the U.S.
- Use real papers from school to review and explain sample communications.
- Identify who to contact at school and simple ways to contact school with limited English proficiency.
- Role play calling school if child is sick, late, has to leave early or needs medicine.
- Share existing templates for notes to school.

- Practice filling out notes to school/interpreter form and writing notes to schools.
 - Use sample report card to explain grades.
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IV. PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AT SCHOOL AND AT HOME

Objective

To present the idea of parent-school partnership, to highlight ways parents can be involved at home, to talk about school involvement and the importance of parent-teacher conferences and to invite parents to share their ideas and experience with school involvement.

Resources

- ▣ [Educational Handbook for Refugee Parents – IRC Handbook](#)
 - Section 5) Parent Participation - in home, school events, afterschool activities and setting expectations for student
- ▣ [Tukwila School District Parent Handbook](#)
 - Section 15) Parent Involvement - parent rights, responsibilities and volunteerism
- ▣ [A Guide to Your Children's Schools: A Parent Handbook – Illinois Handbook](#)
 - Section 8) Parents' Role in Their Children's Education and Learning – events and volunteering at school, supporting learning at home, monitoring student's progress
- ▣ [Cultural Orientation Resource Center \(COR\) Extended and Enhanced Orientation Curriculum - Education](#)
 - Unit 2) Parental Involvement – list of parental involvement examples and think-pair-share activity of why and ways to be involved
- ▣ [Talk's In: Families of refugee backgrounds and schools in dialogue – Foundation House](#)
 - Workshop 4) Supporting your child – at home and at school
- ▣ [Family Talk Time: A Curriculum for Refugee and Immigrant Parents](#)
 - Chapter 2) Understanding American Schools - ELL activities around parent-teacher conferences, supporting child in school, and notes from school

- [Cultural Orientation Resource Center \(COR\) Activity - Refugee Parents and U.S. Schools](#)
 - Descriptions of parent-teacher interactions in U.S.
 - Illustrated situation cards to identify parent-teacher interactions

- [PIE \(Parent Involvement in Education\) Reader](#)
 - Unit 1) Filling out School Forms – basic school information reference form for parents, registration and emergency contact forms for schools
 - Unit 2) Parent-Teacher Meetings – meeting participation practice activities

- [Neighborhood House](#)
 - Homework Family Time Tips and Ideas
 - Parental Involvement and School Partnership Ideas and Tips

- [Office of Education Ombudsman \(OEO\) Brochures – Participate in Your Child’s Education](#)
 - A guide for family involvement

- [OEO Brochure – Make the most of Parent Teacher Conferences](#)
 - Practical tips for before, during and after parent-teacher conferences

- [Getting School Ready – Foundation for Early Learning](#)
 - Parent’s role in helping young children transition into Kindergarten
 - Meeting young children’s social-emotional learning needs

Tips/Activities

- Compare parent involvement in home countries to the U.S.
- Discuss how parents, teachers and schools are partners in children’s education.
- Model reading to child in any language or discussing pictures from books and stress how these strategies strengthen literacy skills.
- Model/role play parent-teacher conference and review tips.
- Highlight tips to create a learning environment in the home and have parents set goals towards this.

V. HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION AND COLLEGE/CAREER PREP

Objective

To familiarize families with high school graduation requirements, preparing for different post secondary options, applying for colleges and different ways to pay for college including financial aid, loans and scholarships.

Resources

- ▣ [Educational Handbook for Refugee Parents – IRC Handbook](#)
 - Section 7) Preparing for College - high school graduation requirements; college entrance requirements; applying to, choosing, and paying for college
- ▣ [Cultural Orientation Resource Center \(COR\) Activity – Jum’s Stepping Stones](#)
 - Educational options in the U.S.
 - Requirements needed to complete different degrees
- ▣ [Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction \(OSPI\) Graduation Toolkit](#)
 - WA State high school graduation requirements and state-approved alternative options
- ▣ [OSPI: Earning a Diploma](#)
 - Overview of WA State high school graduation requirements
- ▣ [Let’s Talk About It: Your Child’s Education Handbook \(OSPI\)](#)
 - p.23) Learning for Life – accessibility of college, different options, state testing, and high school graduation requirements for WA State
- ▣ **Additional Resources**
 - [College Board](#) – Finding/planning for colleges, preparing for SAT, and learning about financial aid
 - [FAFSA](#) – Free Application for Federal Student Aid
 - [Washboard](#) –Washington scholarship providers

Tips/Activities

- Discuss rationale and strategies for early planning to ensure high school graduation and successful post-secondary transition.
 - Review high school graduation requirements and alternative ways to earn a diploma.
 - Discuss strategies for addressing the differences between high school graduation requirements and college admission requirements.
 - Explain different college and career tracks and corresponding requirements.
 - Review sample college admissions and application processes.
 - Help families understand resources for college loans, grants and scholarships.
 - If possible, arrange tours with local technical/vocational schools, community colleges, and universities.
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VI. CHILD SUPERVISION AND CHILD WELFARE LAWS

Objective

To explore parents' home country experiences/cultural norms around child supervision and discipline; to explain American laws and norms around child supervision, neglect and discipline; to explore different discipline techniques and strategies; to explain the role of Child Protective Services (CPS); and to address families' questions or concerns.

Resources

- ▣ [**Raising Children in a New Country: Illustrated Handbook**](#)
 - p.8-9) Information with visuals on general child supervision guidelines and safety in public places
 - p.11-14) Discipline laws and American alternatives such as time outs, rewards and consequences, and privilege and limits
 - p.15-17) Child Protective Services (CPS) overview
- ▣ [**Cultural Orientation Resource Center \(COR\) Activity – Child Supervision**](#)
 - Laws regarding supervision of children in the U.S. and implications for parents
- ▣ [**Cultural Orientation Resource Center \(COR\) Activity – Changing Parent/Child Roles**](#)
 - The impact of resettlement on parental and child roles and strategies for handling negative impacts on parental and child roles
- ▣ [**Family Talk Time: A Curriculum for Refugee and Immigrant Parents**](#)
 - Chapter 1.2) Methods of discipline in different cultures - case studies and ELL exercises regarding discipline
- ▣ [**LEP Parent Involvement Project: A Guide for Connecting Immigrant Parents and Schools**](#)
 - Module 4.1) Discipline: Who teaches children? – identify range of teachers and influences
 - Module 4.2) Discipline: Problems and Punishment – age-specific problem charts with strategy activities
 - Module 4.3) Discipline: Communication: Talking and Listening – expectations across cultures
 - Module 4.4) Discipline: Praising and Rewarding for Good Behavior – rationale and suggestions
- ▣ [**Journey of Hope: Module II: Parenting – USCRI**](#)
 - Section 2) Child Development – development overview and questionnaire, overview for appropriate discipline, exploring symptoms and responses to child trauma

- Section 3) Child Abuse & Neglect – types of, reasons for, and reporting of abuse and neglect
 - Section 4) Guidance vs. Discipline – discipline styles, differences between discipline and punishment
 - Section 5) Time Out – technique suggestions
 - Sections 6-7) Behavior Management – managing behavior, making rules, natural and logical consequences, ‘ignoring’ and redirecting techniques
- ▣ [Refugees and the U.S. Child Welfare System: Background Information for Service Providers](#)
 - Reference - a comprehensive overview for service providers on CPS issues refugees may encounter, preventing negative CPS encounters and supporting families
 - ▣ [Washington State Children's Administration DSHS](#)
 - WA State material and resources around child safety laws and procedures

Tips/Activities

- Discuss discipline differences across cultures. Talk about norms and laws in different countries.
- Role play/model different U.S. alternative discipline approaches. Discuss challenges in applying these approaches.
- Explain Child Protective Services – their role and mandate and what CPS can and cannot do.
- Address parents’ concerns and any misinformation families may have about CPS.
- If possible, invite a CPS worker to share information about their role/the process and to answer questions.

VII. HEALTH/SAFETY AND BULLYING

Objective

To explain health and hygiene norms, safety norms and laws, and bullying indicators, prevention, responses and supports.

Resources

- ▣ [Raising Children in a New Country: Illustrated Handbook](#)
 - p.3) Meals and nutrition
 - p.4-7) Street safety, car safety and home safety
 - p.8-9) Child supervision and safety in public places
- ▣ [Cultural Orientation Resource Center \(COR\) Activity – Health: Staying Healthy](#)
 - Exploring hygiene and its importance in the U.S. (youth activity that can be adapted for families)

- ▣ [Refugee Youth and Bullying Workshop Materials](#)
 - Bullying/cyber-bullying definitions, responses and supports
- ▣ [Office of Education Ombudsman \(OEO\) Brochure - Bullying at School](#)
 - What is bullying, what to expect from school, what the family can do to help child at home, how to prevent bullying and how to know if your child is bullying others or is a victim of bullying
- ▣ [Stopbullying.gov](#)
 - Bullying and cyber bullying definitions, descriptions, risk factors, prevention strategies and potential responses (resources for parents, educators and children and youth)

Tips/Activities

- Use visuals or real items/props for home and car safety presentations.
- Review different American hygiene norms and products. Discuss relationship between hygiene norms and external perceptions of neglect.
- Review case studies or role play different safety scenarios.
- Role play scenarios to help families identify bullying and highlight ways to respond and support child.

VIII. PARENTING ADOLESCENTS

Objective

To help parents understand bicultural teen identity, to identify positive and negative influences and ways parents can support adolescents, to explore strategies for addressing changing family roles, and to discuss different approaches for disciplining teenagers.

Resources

- ▣ [Raising Children in a New Country: Illustrated Handbook](#)
 - p.14) Privileges and Limits method of disciplining teenagers
- ▣ [Cultural Orientation Resource Center \(COR\) Extended and Enhanced Orientation Curriculum - Cultural Adjustment](#)
 - Unit 4) Changes within the Family – case studies to discuss different situations and healthy approaches to handle changes
- ▣ [Cultural Orientation Resource Center \(COR\) Activity – Changing Parent/Child Roles](#)
 - The impact of resettlement on parental and child roles and strategies for handling negative impacts on parental and child roles

▣ [Journey of Hope: Module II: Parenting – USCRI](#)

- Section 9) Child Development – developmental stages for adolescents and signs of and reactions to trauma
- Section 10) Parenting a Bicultural teenager – bicultural identity exercise (using tree analogy)
- Section 11) Parenting Adolescents – parenting approach questionnaire
- Section 12) Handling Problems – privileges and limits and natural and logical consequences for teaching responsibility
- Section 13) Building Strong Relationships – communication techniques and adolescent needs

▣ [Family Talk Time: A Curriculum for Refugee and Immigrant Parents](#)

- Chapter 1.3) Activities and discussion around parenting teenagers, teen activities, and setting limits for teenagers

▣ [Strengthening Services for Refugee Parents: Guidelines and Resources](#)

- Section 4) Parent and child adjustment issues and challenges to successful parenting of adolescents

Tips/Activities

- Explore bicultural identity exercise from Journey of Hope, which uses a visual tree metaphor for the bicultural experience, and allows parents to reflect on identifying and supporting what is good in both cultures.
- Identify strategies to prevent role reversal between parents and adolescents.
- Brainstorm positive and negative influences and ways to support adolescents.
- Discuss pros and cons of traditional discipline approach and American privilege and limits approach.
- Role play scenarios. Discuss case studies of disciplining adolescents. Share local resources for supporting parents who are struggling in their relationships with their adolescents.

IX. PRIMARY RESOURCES

▣ [Cultural Orientation Resource Center \(COR\) Activities: All Lesson Plans](#)

Activities designed for initial resettlement cultural orientation. Topics: Reaching Out for Advice: Critical Incident; Navigating the U.S. Public School System; Refugee Parents and U.S. Schools; Jum’s Stepping Stones; Child Supervision: A Critical Incident for Refugees; Changing Parent/Child Roles: A Critical Incident for Refugees

- ▣ [**Cultural Orientation Resource Center \(COR\) Extended and Enhanced Orientation Curriculum**](#)
 Standardized orientation curriculum addresses a number of topics including education and cultural adjustment for refugees who have been in the US more than 30 days but less than five years
- ▣ [**Educational Handbook for Refugee Parents - IRC Handbook**](#)
 Topics: Parents' Educational Rights and Responsibilities; U.S. School System; School Calendar & Days; School Procedures; Parent Participation; School Rules & Discipline; Preparing for College
 Languages: *Burmese, English, French, Somali, Spanish*
- ▣ [**Family Talk Time: A Curriculum for Refugee and Immigrant Parents –Refugee Women’s Alliance**](#)
 Combines parent empowerment with language learning. Topics: Raising Children in the U.S., Understanding American Schools, Changing Family Roles in the US and Taking Care of Yourself
- ▣ [**Getting School Ready – Foundation for Early Learning**](#)
 Guide for parents, families and caregivers to help prepare children for Kindergarten
 Languages: *Cambodian, Chinese, English, Korean, Oromo, Russian, Somali, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese*
- ▣ [**A Guide to Your Children’s Schools: A Parent Handbook – Illinois Handbook**](#)
 Basic handbook to orient newcomer families to schools. Topics: United States School System, Enrolling in School, The School Calendar and the School Day, Getting to School, School Procedures, People who Work in the Schools, Instructional Programs, Parents' Role in Their Children's Education and Learning, and Adult Education
 Languages: *Arabic, English, Maay Maay, Somali, Spanish, Swahili*
- ▣ [**Journey of Hope: Module II: Parenting – USCRI**](#)
 Parenting curriculum for refugees: Birth through 12 and Parenting Adolescents. Topics include: Child Development, Child Abuse & Neglect, Guidance vs. Discipline, Time Out, Behavior Management, Parenting a Bicultural Teenager, Parenting Adolescents, Handling Problems and Building Strong Relationships
- ▣ [**LEP Parent Involvement Project: A Guide for Connecting Immigrant Parents and Schools**](#)
 To help LEP parents see themselves as active participants in child's learning. Topics: Bridging Cultures; Schools are Part of the Culture; Parents are Teachers; Discipline; Life at School; and Families
 Languages: *Cambodian, English, Hmong, Lao, Russian, Spanish, Vietnamese*
- ▣ [**Neighborhood House Resources**](#)
 Multilingual family Involvement audio clips for Seattle Public Schools and brochures: 'Homework Family Time Tips and Ideas', 'Parental Involvement and School Partnership Ideas and Tips'
 Languages: Tips – English, Spanish and Vietnamese and Audio Clips – Amharic, Cambodian, English, Oromo, Somali, Spanish, Tigrigna and Vietnamese
- ▣ [**Office of Education Ombudsman \(OEO\) Discipline Manual**](#)
 Comprehensive overview of discipline system in Washington State schools

- ▣ [Office of Education Ombudsman \(OEO\) brochures for parents](#)
 Topics: Resolving Conflict at School; Participate in Your Child's Education; Make the Most of a Parent-Teacher Conference; Bullying at School; and How Does a School District Work?
Languages: English, Chinese, Korean, Russian, Spanish Vietnamese, Somali, Cambodian
 - ▣ [Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction \(OSPI\) Graduation Toolkit](#)
 WA State high school graduation requirements and state-approved alternative options
 - ▣ [OSPI: Earning a Diploma](#)
 Overview of WA State high school graduation requirements
 - ▣ [OSPI Let's Talk About It Handbook](#)
 Overview of WA State education system, including graduation requirements and going to college
 - ▣ [PIE \(Parent Involvement in Education\) Reader](#)
 Life-skills course to teach language and socio-cultural skills for refugee and immigrant parents to help their children succeed in school. Unit 1: [Filling out School Forms](#). Unit 2: [Parent-Teacher Meetings](#)
 - ▣ [Raising Children in a New Country: An Illustrated Handbook](#)
 Topics: Safety, Child Supervision, Discipline and CPS, and Ways to Prepare Child for Learning
Languages: Arabic, English, Hmong, Karen, Nepali, Spanish
 - ▣ [Refugee Youth and Bullying Workshop Materials – Catholic Charities of Atlanta](#)
 Includes workshop outline and facilitation tips
 - ▣ [Talk's In: Families of refugee backgrounds and schools in dialogue – Foundation House](#)
 Australian resource offers a model of four workshops to facilitate dialogue between refugee families and schools. Topics: The Education System, Rights and Responsibilities, Teaching and Learning and Supporting Your Child
 - ▣ [Tukwila School District Parent Handbook](#)
 Visual parent handbook to orient newcomer families to Tukwila School District. Topics: About School, Elementary, Middle and High School, Other Programs, School Days, School Enrollment, School Safety, School Procedures, School Communication, Homework, School Rules, School Discipline, Parent involvement
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X. SUPPORTING RESOURCES

- ▣ [Raising Children in a New Country: A Toolkit for working with Newcomer Parents](#)
 This comprehensive BRYCS parent toolkit offers three sections: overview of shared experiences, characteristics of effective parenting programs, and a wide range of additional materials and resources.

- ▣ [Refugees and the U.S. Child Welfare System: Background Information for Service Providers](#)
 This comprehensive overview for service providers addresses CPS issues refugees may encounter, preventing negative CPS encounters and supporting families.
- ▣ [Strengthening Services for Refugee Parents: Guidelines and Resources](#)
 This BRYCS resource explores common themes and approaches for planning and maintaining services for refugee parents and offers a list of guidelines and resources for strengthening services.
- ▣ [Involving Immigrant and Refugee Families in their Children’s Schools: Barriers, Challenges and Successful Strategies](#)
 Resource focuses on family involvement in school specifically addressing different barriers, challenges and strategies to increase parent engagement.
- ▣ [Involving Refugee Parents in Their Children’s Education – BRYCS Spotlight](#)
 This addresses the definition and importance of parental involvement; cultural, linguistic, literacy, educational, and logistical considerations around involving refugee parents; and recommendations for welcoming refugee families.

Additional Parent Handbooks for Reference

- ▣ [Michigan – Refugee School Impact Program: Parent Curriculum](#)
 This handbook offers mostly generic information covering these topics: Structure of the American School System, Getting Involved in Your Child’s Education, Parent-teacher conferences, Getting Ready for School, and Understanding the American Culture.
- ▣ [Boise Schools – A Guide to Your Children’s Schools: A Parent Handbook](#)
 This guide is similar to the Illinois Handbook, but includes a section on Boise School District.
- ▣ [How to Navigate the Oakland Unified School District \(OUSD\): A Handbook for Refugee and Asylee Families, Service Providers and Support People](#)
 This handbook contains information for Oakland and includes school and community resources.
- ▣ [Houston Independent School District Guidebook for Parents of English Language Learners](#)
 This guidebook contains district and state specific information.

XI. IMPLEMENTATION SUGGESTIONS

Guiding principles for planning and implementation:

- ✓ Use asset and strength-based approaches.
- ✓ Consider the full context of refugee’s life.
- ✓ Respect the participants’ prior knowledge.
- ✓ Ensure that presentations are delivered in a culturally competent/culturally responsive manner.
- ✓ Allow opportunities for participants to share their wisdom and expertise.
- ✓ Build on participants’ experiences and strengths.

- ✓ Promote the idea of parents being equal partners in their child's education.
- ✓ Start with concepts that are familiar to participants before moving to unfamiliar topics/materials.
- ✓ Plan sequentially. Connect previous lesson to next lesson.

Logistics to consider:

- Childcare
- Transportation
- Convenient day/time
- Convenient location
- Interpretation
- Seating arrangements
- Culturally competent facilitator

Implementation Tips:

- ✓ **Audience:** Determine audience. One or diverse ethnic group(s)/language group(s)? Resettlement stage of participants? Trust level between participants and your organization? Workshop requested by participants or initiated based on your assessment of their needs? Level of participant interest/engagement?
- ✓ **Outreach:** How will you promote/outreach to families? Invite families through what channels? Phone calls? In person? Through school/agency?
- ✓ **Collaborate:** Would collaboration make sense? Aligned goals and values? Who would be good partners/players to invite to take part in sessions? Could collaboration help meet logistical challenges? Enhance credibility? Meet expertise gaps? Fulfill cultural broker roles?
- ✓ **Format:** Decide how many sessions. Single workshop? Series? What format? Length?
- ✓ **Topic and Subtopics:** Choose which topic/s is most relevant to parents' concerns/needs. Decide what areas are most important under that topic. Use guide to find information on what you want to share.
- ✓ **Guide and Outline Lesson:** Create outline for lesson plan – include appropriate presenters/information/activities/visuals/presentation modes.
- ✓ **Experiential Methods:** How can lessons be presented in a way that engages parents and involves interactive and experiential learning? Use modeling? Role playing? Other ideas?
- ✓ **Handouts:** If possible, include visual/translated handouts that can be taken home.
- ✓ **Invite and Listen:** Invite parents to share their experiences with schools/parenting in their home countries. Validate their experiences. Build off of their experiences.
- ✓ **Parental Authority:** Does content and approach affirm parents as partners? Is information being presented in way that reinforces parental authority? Do workshop interactions positively and respectfully affirm parental authority? Are parents listened to? Are they treated as experts? Are their perspectives validated?
- ✓ **Explain:** Explain everything but keep it simple for translation – avoid technical terms and jargon.
- ✓ **Questions:** Leave plenty of time for questions at the end and throughout.

XII. WEBSITES FOR RESOURCES

Primary Resources

- ▣ **Cultural Orientation Resource Center (COR) Activities: All Lesson Plans**
<http://www.culturalorientation.net/library/all-lesson-plans/education>
- ▣ **Cultural Orientation Resource Center (COR) Extended and Enhanced Orientation Curriculum**
<http://www.culturalorientation.net/providing-orientation/toolkit/extended-and-enhanced-orientation-curriculum>
- ▣ **Educational Handbook for Refugee Parents - IRC Handbook**
<http://www.brycs.org/documents/upload/Educational-Handbook-English.pdf>
- ▣ **Family Talk Time: A Curriculum for Refugee and Immigrant Parents – Refugee Women’s Alliance**
<http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED359833.pdf>
- ▣ **Getting School Ready – Foundation for Early Learning**
<http://www.brycs.org/documents/upload/Educational-Handbook-English.pdf>
- ▣ **A Guide to Your Children’s Schools: A Parent Handbook – Illinois Handbook**
<http://www.isbe.net/bilingual/pdfs/parentguide.pdf>
- ▣ **Journey of Hope: Module II: Parenting – USCRI**
http://www.uscritefugees.org/2010Website/5_Resources/5_1_For_Refugees_Immigrants/5_1_4_Cultural_Orientation/5_1_4_1_Journey_of_Hope_Modules/Module_II_Parenting.pdf
- ▣ **LEP Parent Involvement Project: A Guide for Connecting Immigrant Parents and Schools**
<http://www.brycs.org/documents/upload/LEP-Parent-Involvement-Project-User-Guide.pdf>
- ▣ **Neighborhood House Resources**
<http://www.nhwa.org/gethelp/community-resources.php>
- ▣ **Office of Education Ombudsman (OEO) Discipline Manual**
http://www.governor.wa.gov/oeo/publications/manual_discipline_public_schools.pdf
- ▣ **Office of Education Ombudsman (OEO) brochures for parents**
<http://www.governor.wa.gov/oeo/publications/#resources>
- ▣ **Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) Grad Toolkit**
<http://www.k12.wa.us/graduationrequirements/pubdocs/GraduationToolkit.pdf>
- ▣ **OSPI: Earning a Diploma**
<http://www.k12.wa.us/Resources/pubdocs/EarningDiploma.pdf>
- ▣ **OSPI Let’s Talk About It Handbook**
<http://www.k12.wa.us/cisl/LetsTalk/index.htm>
- ▣ **PIE (Parent Involvement in Education) Reader**
<http://www.reftrans.org/esl-teaching-links-old/>
- ▣ **Raising Children in a New Country: An Illustrated Handbook**
<http://www.brycs.org/documents/upload/RaisingChildren-Handbook.pdf>
- ▣ **Refugee Youth and Bullying Workshop Materials – Catholic Charities of Atlanta**
<http://www.brycs.org/documents/upload/bullyingAtlanta.pdf>
- ▣ **Talk’s In: Families of refugee backgrounds and schools in dialogue – Foundation House**
http://www.foundationhouse.org.au/resources/publications_and_resources.htm
- ▣ **Tukwila School District Parent Handbook**
http://www.schoolsoutwashington.org/959_203/RefugeeSchoolImpactGrantProducts.htm

Additional Websites

- ▣ **College Board**
<http://www.collegeboard.org/>
- ▣ **FAFSA**
<http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/>
- ▣ **Stop Bullying Now**
<http://www.stopbullying.gov/>
- ▣ **Washboard Scholarships**
<http://www.thewashboard.org/login.aspx>
- ▣ **Washington State Children's Administration DSHS**
<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/ca/general/index.asp>

Supporting Resources

- ▣ **Raising Children in a New Country: A Toolkit for Working with Newcomer Parents**
http://www.brycs.org/documents/upload/raisingchildreninnewcountry_web.pdf
- ▣ **Refugees and the U.S. Child Welfare System: Background Information for Service Providers**
<http://www.brycs.org/documents/upload/Refugee-and-the-US-Child-Welfare-System.pdf>
- ▣ **Strengthening Services for Refugee Parents: Guidelines and Resources**
http://www.brycs.org/documents/upload/parenting_manual.pdf
- ▣ **Involving Immigrant and Refugee Families in their Children's Schools: Barriers, Challenges and Successful Strategies**
http://www.isbe.state.il.us/bilingual/pdfs/involving_families.pdf
- ▣ **Involving Refugee Parents in Their Children's Education – BRYCS Spotlight**
http://www.brycs.org/documents/upload/brycs_spotspring2007-2.pdf

Additional Parent Handbooks for Reference

- ▣ **Michigan – Refugee School Impact Program: Parent Curriculum**
<http://www.brycs.org/documents/upload/lssmparentorientationmanual.pdf>
- ▣ **Boise Schools – A Guide to Your Children's Schools: A Parent Handbook**
http://www.boiseschools.org/ell/parent_handbooken/index.html
- ▣ **How to Navigate the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD): A Handbook for Refugee and Asylee Families, Service Providers and Support People**
<http://www.reftrans.org/community-resources/>
- ▣ **Houston Independent School District Guidebook for Parents of English Language Learners**
<http://www.houstonisd.org/portal/site/Multilingual/menuitem.048a2bcc8aa72ba27300dc10e041f76a/?vgnextoid=0a2b57ebf04ef010VgnVCM10000028147fa6RCRD&vgnextfmt=default>