

Settling in Britain



© Photograph by Anna Pantelia courtesy of Save the Children

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About this resource

This resource is aimed at practitioners, students and other professionals working with children and their families who are settling in Britain. Information, guidance, and resources included aim to raise awareness of challenges facing children and families settling in Britain and discuss concerns that practitioners and professionals may have when considering how to ensure children and their families are supported effectively through education and learning.

Introduction

Information, guidance, and resources included within this document aims to raise awareness of the challenges and trauma children and their families may face settling in Britain. Quality provision provides opportunity to children and their families in helping them overcome traumatic events they have experienced. Although it will not erase the scars of trauma, it will provide opportunity to reflect on the support required to overcome adversity and provide an informed insight into the trajectory of children, young people, and families as they settle in Britain.

Supporting children and their families to settle in Britain



© Photograph by Ahmed Bardoui courtesy of Save the Children

The rights of children and their families

Children and young people have a right to access education. This has been encapsulated within various legislations, frameworks, agendas, and policies. These include: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child)), the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Equality Act 2010 which outlines nine specific protected characteristics, one of which is race. Education is a human right and a strength for sustainable development and peace.

Aspirations for education have been captured within Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG4) of the 2030 agenda, aiming to 'ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all'. Local Authorities have a statutory duty to provide suitable full-time education for all children, regardless of their immigration status. Evidentially, education plays a significant role in supporting children who are displaced and experiencing adversity through creating safe and nurturing environments that help to reduce anxiety and offer opportunity to progress.

Information from relevant legislation and guidance

Task



Drawing on information from relevant legislation and guidance, consider the role of educational settings in relation to policies and procedures that support children settling in Britain

Sustainable Development Goal 4

Research task



Using the links provided check out Sustainable Development Goal 4 – Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.



<https://sdgs.un.org/goals/goal4>

(link accessed 12/12/2022)

Check out the targets 4.5 and 4.7 and consider how this aim promotes inclusivity for all those settling in Britain.

What is going on in your local area

Task



Check out your local authority to discover more about what's going on in your area to support families settling in Britain.

What is in a name?

Often the phrases and definitions of words associated with refugees can become confusing. It is vital to have a sound understanding of the correct terms used.

Refugee

This refers to a person who has been forced to flee their own country because they are at risk of persecution, war and violence. The UNHCR (UNHCR - The UN Refugee Agency) describes a refugee as 'persons fleeing armed conflict or persecution'. Those who have applied for asylum and then found to have met the requirements laid out in the Refugee Convention will be granted refugee status.

There may be many reasons why children and their families must flee their own countries. Many are faced with conflict situations such as poverty, climate change, violence, discrimination, and war. They believe that by leaving their own country, family and lives behind it will offer them a better chance of survival and opportunities for the future.

Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, states that when an individual's familiar surroundings disappear and they no longer have a place to call home they need support to recreate their lives, rebuild and repair. So that once again they may feel safe and secure within communities to continue with life's journey.

Fact



There are approximately 26.6 million refugees globally (June 2021). Refugees have the right to international protection.

Asylum-seeker

An asylum -seeker is a person requesting international protection after fleeing war or violence in their own country. Someone is an asylum seeker for so long as their application is pending. So not every asylum seeker will be recognised as a refugee, but every refugee is initially an asylum seeker. Seeking asylum is a human right for everyone entering another country to seek protection from persecution and serious violence.

Fact



There are approximately 4.4 million asylum -seekers globally (June 2021) but not all will be offered refugee status or given the protections provided by refugee status if their application is refused.

Migrant

There is no internationally accepted legal definition of a migrant. However, many organisations understand the term migrant to describe the movement of a person from one place in the world to another. Reasons for this movement may vary from person to person, these could include economic, social, or financial or either, seeking employment or access to studying; natural disasters or those seeking asylum and refugee status.

The human rights of migrants are protected and respected, no matter what their status might be in the country they have moved to. Migrants must never be detained or coerced in to returning to their own countries without a valid reason. Governments should protect all migrants from discriminatory behaviour including being exploited.

Internally Displaced person (IDP)

Internally displaced refers to people who have been forced to flee their homes but remain in their own countries therefore never crossing an international border. IDP seek refuge in neighbouring towns, settlements, internal camps, schools, or nearby forests due to natural disasters and internal conflict in fear of violence or persecution. IDPs (Internally Displaced Person) fall under the protection of their own governments therefore unlike refugees they are not protected by international law even if their own government is the cause of their displacement.

Fact



At the end of 2020 the statistics revealed a staggering 48 million people were displaced globally.

Displaced person

This refers to those who have had to leave or evacuate their own county or region. Due to situations prevailing in that country, people are unable to return in safe and durable conditions therefore leaving them displaced. Indefinite leave to remain refers to an individual's immigration status identified by the Home Office.



© Photograph courtesy of Save the Children – image shows boats traversing the Mediterranean from Libya



© Photograph courtesy of Save the Children

Major Conflicts

Since 2010, major conflicts have tripled around the world leaving over 400 million children living in war zones. Sadly, many of these children have grown up not knowing any different, living in continual fear, experiencing immense violation of their human rights. As a result, many children are left with profound physical and emotional traumas due to horrendous conditions they have experienced.

Ukraine

Ukraine is the second largest country in Europe and has been in conflict with Russia for over eight years. More recently, at the time of writing, the conflict has become more intense causing over 10 million people to be displaced, leaving their homes and seeking refuge.

In 22 April 2022 it appears that more than 63,000 babies were estimated to have been born into war in Ukraine over a two months period and into conditions that could have a lifelong impact on their mental health, according to Save the Children.

These new-borns join the millions of children put at heightened risk of grave physical harm and lifelong psychological trauma from violence, loss, and displacement. At the time of writing, the escalation has caused the fastest and largest displacement of people in Europe since World War Two, with five million now having fled Ukraine. At least two thirds of the country's 7.5 million children have fled their homes and more than 450 children have been killed or injured.

Syria

Presently the crisis in Syria accounts for the world's largest displacement of our time. Since 2011, 13.5 million Syrian people have been forcibly displaced. Approximately 6.8 million are refugees seeking asylum and 6.7 million are displaced within Syria. Those needing humanitarian assistance stands at 11.1 million and over half of these are children.

Quote



"I have been treated well in Greece, but I don't want to stay here. I left Syria because my house was bombed. I left my family sleeping in a park. I want to go to live in Germany because people tell me that there, I will be able to live in peace and I will be able to go back to school. I can't wait to go to school in Germany. Ever since I have been little I have wanted to go to Europe. I called my mother yesterday. She was so happy to hear from me, to know that I was safe, that she cried of happiness. No one would have every have known if I was alive or dead if I had managed to make the journey by boat safely or if I had drowned. How would they know? Who would tell them?"

© Courtesy of Save the Children – Syrian boy in Greece.

Afghanistan

In 2020, approximately 2.6 million Afghanistan refugees have been registered globally. Sadly, for children in Afghan conflict is all they have known. Before the Taliban invaded, Afghanistan was crippled by poverty assisted by Covid, conflict, drought, and a food crisis. The UK Home Office have announced a new resettlement scheme that aims to resettle around 5,000 Afghan nationals at risk and up to 20,000 in the longer term. Priority is given to women and girls and religious as well as other minorities.

Yemen

The war in Yemen began in 2014, Save the Children reported that more than 4 million people were displaced and 1.5 million of these were children. The war has led to widespread humanitarian crisis leaving many seeking asylum. The Covid pandemic has created a devastating impact on the health system leaving thousands of children and families without medical support.

With two million children in Yemen out of school, vulnerable boys and girls are at risk of exploitation and abuse.



© Photograph by Luca Kleve-Ruud - courtesy of Save The Children, Northern Lebanon

Quote



“The memory of you is always with me – there is no moment when your name is not spoken on my lips.” © Poem from an Afghan child in Greece – courtesy of Save the Children.

True Stories



© Photograph by Mark Kaye - courtesy of Save The Children, France

Task



For each of the true stories below, consider the following:

- Imagine having to leave all your personal belongings behind and having to flee your home with only the clothes on your back.
- Imagine never knowing if you will ever be able to return home.
- Imagine being told you will have to fight for your country.

©True stories courtesy of Save the Children.

Nadir, age 11

"I am travelling with my two sisters and my parents from Afghanistan. My mother is sick and in our country she could not be cured. We did the trip from Turkey to Greece at night with other Afghans. It was cold and the water came up to my knees. My lifejacket was fake. We want to get to Germany. I would like to work as a dentist and help my family."

Awet's story, age 17

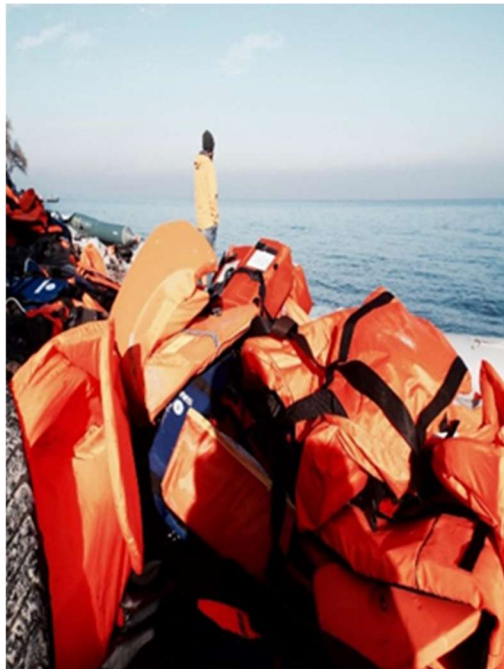
"I was put in prison for two months. The prison was a small room. There were 11 of us in the room, which was made of concrete walls and a small window at the top of the one of the walls. They only fed us once a day and it was a very small amount. We were only allowed to go to the toilet once a day."



© Illustration by David Foldvari - courtesy of Save The Children, Italy

Ismail's journey – age 16

" Luckily the sea condition was good; we sailed for 12 hours until the motor broke down. We couldn't see anyone. I felt very sad because it was a very dangerous boat. Because the boat was made of wood it was like a boat but it was not a boat. And when the engine stopped all the people began to cry. They were thinking that they will die but God helped us. Luckily a boat with Tunisian fishermen arrived and they tugged us for three hours until we reached the boat belonging to the Italian Coast Guard."



© Photograph by Luca Muzi - courtesy of Save The Children, Greece

Myths surrounding refugees and asylum seekers settling in Britain

Those settling in Britain face an enormous challenge and emotional upset in trying to make a new life for themselves. Social media and individuals' misconceptions regarding refugees and asylum seekers create even more barriers for those seeking refuge in Britain. Listed below are some of these common misconceptions. Have a discussion around each of the following myths.

Myth 1: People choose to seek asylum

Wrong!

Choosing to leave your family, friends and homeland to stay safe isn't a choice some people have. It can be extremely challenging to leave your home and move to another country and start again but it is the only way for some to make a better life for themselves and their families.

Myth 2: It is easy to claim asylum

Absolutely not!

This process is complicated and varies from person to person. It can also take years which means it is challenging for those individuals to plan for the future. Individuals have been trafficked and forced to work face enormous challenges in proving their right to stay in Britain.

Myth 3: Refugees are only here to claim benefits

Ludicrous!

Media may imply that this is the case. Most of those coming to Britain to be with family and friends and hope that society will be welcoming to different cultures.

Myth 4: Asylum seekers are criminals

Ridiculous!

When waiting for refugee status individuals have to report to the Home Office regularly. This process, known as immigration bail, can often leave individuals feeling scared of being deported. As a consequence, many choose to go into hiding which can leave them vulnerable to exploitation.

Myth 5: Refugees just take, take, take

Completely false!

Giving people a safe place to live whilst fleeing war and other issues should not be seen as a transaction. Many refugees, want to help others and have been seen as the strongest, kindest and compassionate people. The youth led commission for separated children (YLCSC) know how challenging it is for unaccompanied and separated children to arrive in the UK alone. This group are campaigning to support these children and young people entering Britain through the asylum process.

What would your response be?

Task



Consider the responses you would offer if you overheard a colleague talking about refugees in this way.

How might you be able to support your colleague to have a better understanding of the reasons why individuals seek asylum or refugee status in Britain?

Principles: Supporting children and their families to settle in Britain

In education we hold a set of fundamental principles to support children and young people to thrive.

The basic principles displayed in the chart below are fundamental aspects of settling **ALL** children into school or an unfamiliar environment. The ultimate aim is to make the child and their family feel welcome, offer support and guidance and build trusting secure relationships in meeting learning and wellbeing needs.

Those starting a new life in Britain having fled their own country may find starting school even more challenging after suffering traumatic experiences. Information should be gathered sensitively without probing or asking direct questions or by making assumptions.

Task

Task

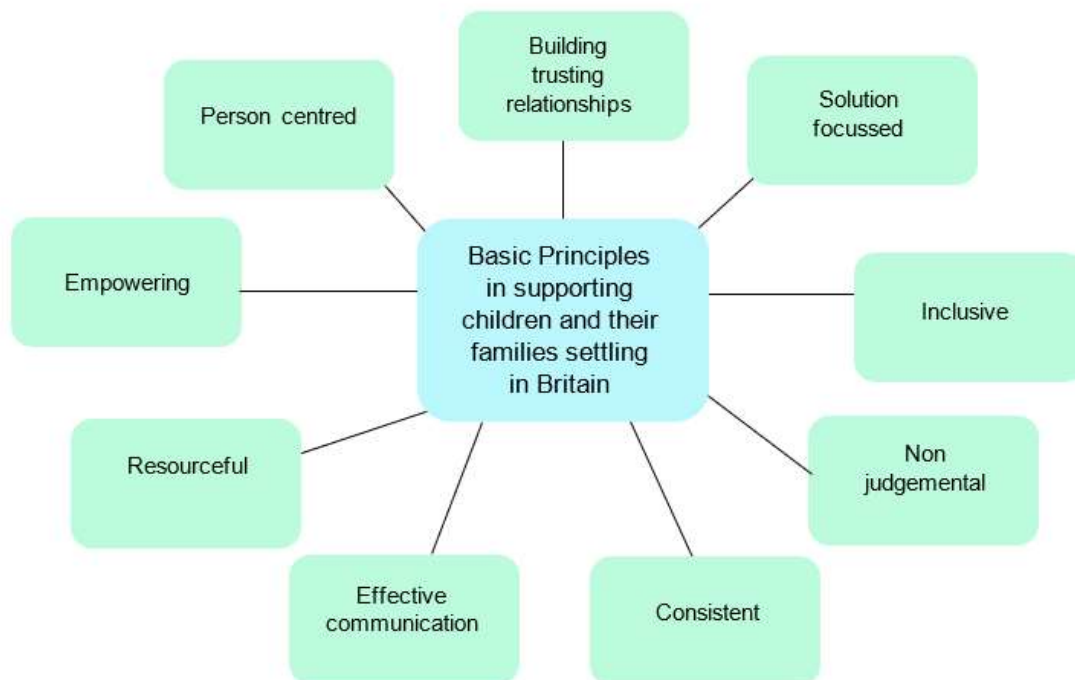


In education we hold a set of fundamental principles to support children and young people to thrive.

Look at the following basic principles shown in the chart below.

These principles remain the same for all children. However, consider how these may be applied around the needs of those settling in Britain.

Basic Principles



Impact on children and their families being displaced

Trauma

Many children and their families who have been subjected to war, violence, torture, or other traumas may suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, PTSD. PTSD is the diagnostic name given to describe a specific profile of symptoms that individuals develop after experiencing a traumatic event or events. These experiences children may lead to increased fears and anxieties or even cause children to re-live their traumatic events through nightmares or dreams.

Possible signs of trauma

It is vital that those supporting children and their families be well informed about the individual circumstances surrounding the child and their family as many may have already experienced a range of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) across their migration journey. These journeys can often be lengthy, tense and leave children and their families in fear of danger. Increasing an understanding of ACEs and the impact they have in the longer term, enables opportunity to provide support and minimise risks in allowing refugee children and their families to build the resilience they need to adapt and live new, productive, and meaningful lives. The chart below shows how trauma and stresses impact areas of development.

Impact of trauma and stress

Area of Development	Trauma and stresses
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Overwhelmed by sight sound and smells • Ongoing health issues
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear and nervousness • Fear of loud noises • Unpredictable emotions • Excessive crying • Flashbacks leading to panic • Attachment issues
Cognitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developmental delay or regression • Speech problems • Poor concentration
Behavioural	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crying • Increased aggressive behaviour • Bedwetting • Hyperactivity • Act out real life experiences
Social	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Withdrawal • Difficulty trusting others • Insecure attachment • Disinterest in others

Adverse childhood experiences

Task

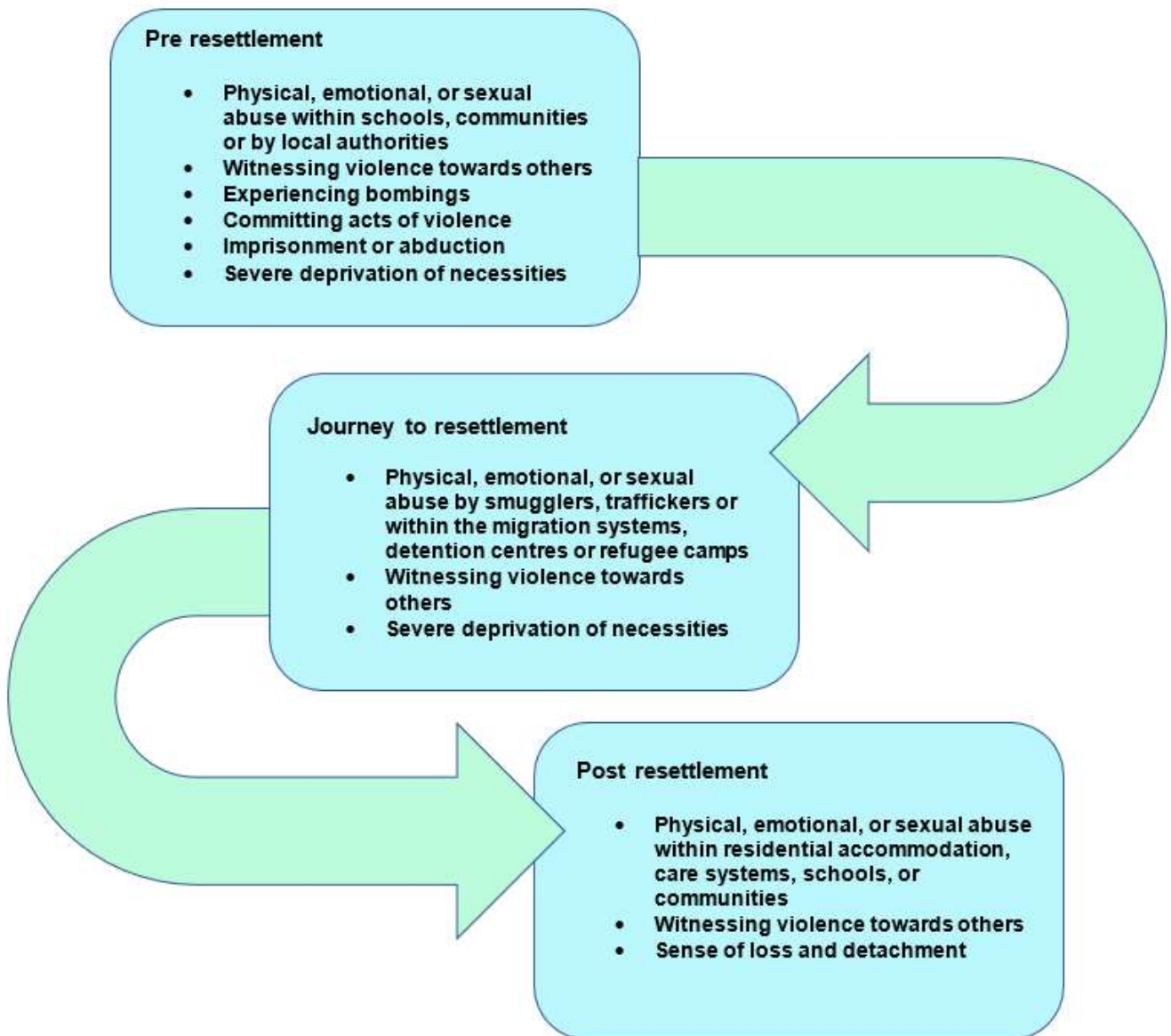


Identify the possible adverse childhood experiences that a child may have experienced across their journey to resettlement.

(Possible answers shown on next page).

Possible adverse childhood experiences through the resettlement journey

Trauma may impact all areas of development. The chart below indicates the types of trauma and stresses that may create challenges for children in particular areas of their development



Reflection Point to Support Practice

Poem



On Good Days

On good days I laugh
On good days I am kind
On good days I am magical!

On Bad Days

On bad days I feel frightened
On bad days I feel like crying
On bad days I feel sorry
On bad days I feel like hitting

© Poem by a pupil from Neham Teachers Association Refugee Week Poetry Competition
[Welcoming refugee children to your school | NEU \(National Education Union\)](#)
(link accessed 13/12/2022)

Case Studies and Tasks

Case study



Case Study 1: Iman

Iman is 4 years old who lives in one room with a small kitchen area along with her parents and sibling who all speak Arabic. Iman is shy and withdrawn and only speaks a little Arabic and no English. Her mother and father are seeking asylum and are both feeling very anxious. Sadly, there is no outside area to play and both parents struggle to venture out. They spend most of their time together and Iman is very attached to mum.

Task

- How could you help Iman?
- How would you encourage Iman's parents to take her to the park?

Case study



Case Study 2: Amir

Amir is 2 years old and recently lost his father in the Syrian war. His mother then spent a year in a refugee camp in Jordan with Amir and two older brothers. Amir has just started a local day nursery but is finding it difficult to settle. He is not used to having a routine. Staff have witnessed him biting the other children but his mother who observed the incident just laughed.

Task

- What would your reaction be to Amir's mother laughing?
- How could you communicate effectively with Amir's mother taking account of past events?
- Consider ways to support Amir's mother in dealing with the loss of her husband and father to her child.

Case study



Case Study 3: Victor

Victor is 3 years old and recently received hospital treatment for a respiratory infection but has now been discharged. The impact of this condition has led to a weak immune system leaving him prone to infections. Understandably his parents are very protective and don't want to take the risk of him contracting an infection from other children. They have decided to keep him at home and indoors and have decided not for him to attend nursery. Both the parents and Victor have very little English and therefore communication is an issue.

Task

- Create a booklet which communicates ways to emphasize to Victor's parents the value of early education in supporting Victor's journey through to school and beyond.
- Consider both the parents and the child's needs.

Quote



"I find it very difficult because it was a very big school and if you didn't speak the same and if you didn't act the same and if you didn't think the same as other children, they're not going to accept you because you had to act, you had to be exactly the same and obviously I wasn't."

© Experiences from Refugee and Asylum-Seeking Children – courtesy of Save the Children.

Educational settings should champion the voices of children and their families, take a proactive approach in building their resilience, be hypervigilant to any trauma symptoms and provide them with the tools they need in promoting mental and physical health and wellbeing.

It is essential for practitioners and professionals to respect the needs of children and their families arriving in Britain. Understanding their experiences is essential in helping them to settle within their new surroundings. For example, families may be experiencing:

- Feelings of isolation and despair
- Variations in their living standards
- The effects of poverty
- Poor health and well being
- Feeling of loss from being separated from other family members

Children, may find the following aspects of their new life in Britain challenging:

- Unfamiliar surrounding
- Different spoken language
- Variation in food and drink
- Differing weather and climate
- Unfamiliar faces and learning environments

Remember that *not all* refugee children and their families have been traumatised and in need of intervention support. It is essential to remain non-judgemental and focus on offering quality provision that offers a welcoming, safe, and nurturing approach to building positive relationships to both the children and their families.

Benefits and rights to education and care

High quality Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is essential to those families with very young children settling in Britain. The benefits include the social and educational development of individual children as well as the impact on society. Addressing equalities within the early years aims to reduce the need for later intervention allowing children to progress into education and employment. It is essential that support is offered to parents in building confidence to socialize outside of the home, offering opportunities to retrain and gain employment. Early education is a way of supporting families in breaking the cycle of social deprivation. Therefore, our role in welcoming and supporting these families is crucial.

Types of benefits available in the UK for asylum seekers

Within the UK, a majority of asylum seekers rely on the state to support them as they do not hold the right to work. Although asylum seekers are unable to choose where they live they are offered accommodation.

Money

Cash support is available, and at the time of writing the cost was set at £40.85 per person, per week for food, sanitation and clothing. Additional money will be offered for towards buying healthy food if pregnant or a mother of a child under 3 years old.

Health

Free access to the National Health Service (NHS) may also be given to access the following:

- Free prescriptions
- Dental care
- Eye tests, including support towards glasses

Education

Children must attend school if they are aged 5-17 years old. All state schools are free and an asylum seeker may also be able to access free school meals.

Further reading activity

Task

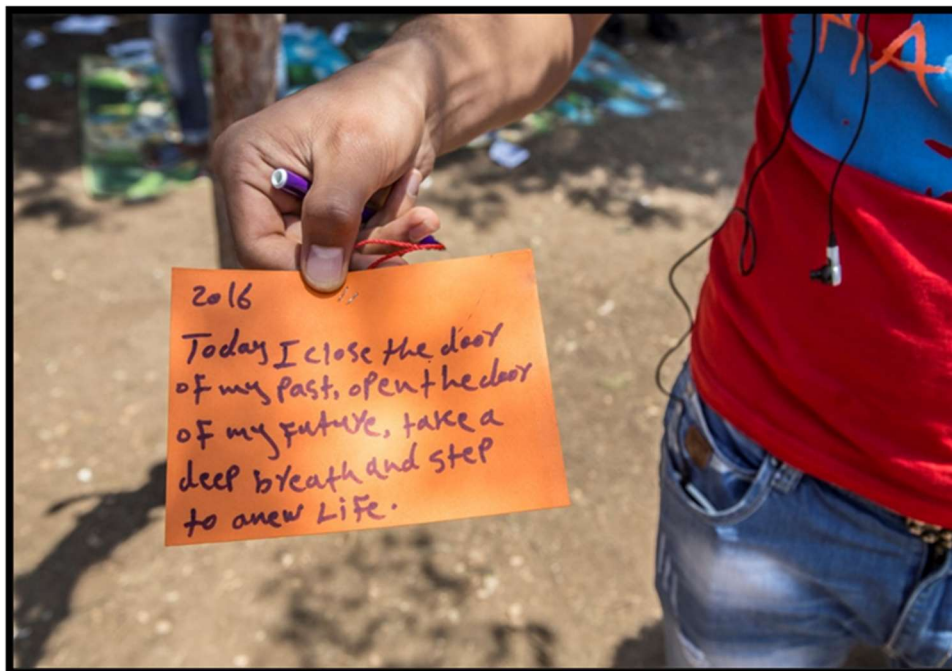


Discover what the Refugee Council UK offers in ways of supporting new arrivals from the airport. Web address can be found at the end of this resource.

Research your local authority to discover the types of support available for families looking for:

- Education support
- Job opportunities
- Community support groups
- Financial support and advice

Welcoming refugee children and their families to your setting



© Photograph by Anna Pantelia- courtesy of Save The Children

Mother tongue

It is essential that refugee families and their children are welcomed into your setting. Being approachable, understanding, and considerate to their needs is key in creating a supportive and engaging environment for both the children and their families. One aspect of this is recognising the importance of the *mother tongue*.

Reflection



Consider for a moment the first time you entered your new school or started a new job – was it daunting?

Now imagine not being able to speak the same language. The fear of being misunderstood in unfamiliar surroundings with people you have never met?

In a recent poll carried out by info migrants, (2019) the poll looked at whether host country language or mother tongue was more important. The results showed that those that took part thought that children should learn both. One Arabic respondent stated, “it was valuable for children to learn the new language as they would use it more than their mother tongue.”

On the other side of the discussion one person who responded in English stated that “the mother tongue is ineffective for communicating” and yet another commented that it was vital in staying true to their roots. Overall, the results showed that knowing both languages was useful.

The schools census 2021 recorded 975,238 children in primary schools in England as speaking English as an additional language (EAL). Children in England that fall within this category are more likely to be those who are refugees and asylum seekers from:

- Afghanistan
- Somalia
- Democratic Republic of Congo
- Guinea Bissau
- Romanian
- Czech Republic
- Slovakia

Did you know?

Task



In the chart below can you name the mother tongue used for each of the following countries? Answers are shown on the next page.

Country	Country's main language (s)
Syria	
Kosovo	
Pakistan	
Eritrea	
Afghanistan	
Sri Lanka	
Sudan	
Nigeria	
Albania	
Somalia	
Ukraine	

How many did you get correct?

Country	Country's main language (s)
Syria	Arabic
Kosovo	Albanian
Pakistan	Urdu
Eritrea	Tigrinya
Afghanistan	Pashto/Dari
Sri Lanka	Sinhalese/Tamil
Sudan	Arabic
Nigeria	Yoruba
Albania	Albanian
Somalia	Somali
Ukraine	Ukraine/Russian

Effective communication, building positive relationships



© Photograph courtesy of Save The Children

Offering support to families is essential in building positive relationships to meet the needs of the children. Considering the needs of the parents/carers is a crucial starting point, the examples below may be some of the areas of need:

- understanding the English language
- understanding the education system
- dealing with bureaucracy
- issues around social isolation

Providing opportunities for children to learn a new language as well as develop their own home language through play and learning is key in supporting communication and language skills that will enable children to thrive and achieve their potential.

Discussion point



In a group discussion, suggest ways you might support children's language through using a range of effective communication strategies.

Mental health and well being



© Photograph by Hedinn Halldorsson courtesy of Save The Children

Educational settings and local communities play a significant role in promoting children's mental health and wellbeing following trauma caused by fleeing their home countries and supporting them towards a better future.

Those settling in Britain will make new positive developments following their experiences of adversity through promoting hope and resilience. Through an awareness of the stresses children and families may be experiencing it is possible to develop an enhanced understanding of their behaviour to apply appropriate intervention strategies to support their mental health and wellbeing.

As you have learnt earlier the stresses that refugees face may be divided into three areas:

- Pre-flight - Direct physical and emotional trauma from witnessing horrific scenes as well as the social upheaval of fleeing their home.
- Flight - Emotional anxiety from the journey and the arduous travelling. Staying in refugee camps and separation from families.
- Resettlement – Challenges may include the sense of a lost culture and community, language barriers and adapting to change.

Being aware of these experiences may help in the acquisition, or protection from mental health issues. Practitioners' roles are significant in offering encouragement through building positive and trusted relationships that contribute to the wellbeing of refugee children and their families.

Activity



Read the following scenarios as to how refugee children felt leaving their home country.

- **Child from Somalia** – “I feel afraid and alone, nobody wants to play with me. They ask me questions that I do not know the answer to.”
- **Child from Iraq** – “I feel so sad leaving my country not knowing when you will see your family and friends again. I had to leave everything behind.”
- **Child from Zanzibar** – “I had no choice but to come here, I knew nobody, felt so alone having to stay in all the time just mixing with other refugees.”
- **Child from Afghanistan** – “At first I was scared, but my teachers were so friendly and helpful it made me want to stay.”

Task

In small groups, discuss the impact of these situations on the children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing.

Resilience



© Photograph courtesy of Save The Children

Welcoming refugee children and their families requires schools and settings to develop a culture that aims to build upon their resilience in creating a safe nurturing environment to develop a sense of belonging, forming a basis for learning. This involves a balance of internal strength and an opportunity to access support from agencies outside of the setting.

The UNHCR, 2019, states that education and learning play a key role in developing security and consistency for refugee children and their families. Adopting a whole school approach within this process allows opportunity to challenge racial and other forms of discriminatory behaviours through developing valuable skills such as respect, empathy, and an understanding as to the reasons why they have had to flee their own country of origin.

In early years and educational settings, it is vital to support children to deal with their emotions and manage their behaviours within a positive environment through creative, sensory, and physical activities. This enables the capacity to strengthen resilience and recovery that may have been experienced by those settling in Britain. Refugees are survivors!

Building a resilience framework

Resilience is the capability to maintain reasonable stability and wellbeing in the face of traumatic events. As previously discussed, addressing mental health issues is important however it is also important to be respectful of an individual's capacity for resilience.

A well-known Kurdish saying is that: ***'I have crossed so many rivers, I no longer get wet'*** which identifies the persistent traumatic experiences and the resilience that refugees display. Therefore, it is essential that we foster positive adaptation through supporting them to obtain and protect internal and environmental resources. Numerous factors have been identified as influences towards a person being resilient, these include:

- Psychological needs being met
- Sense of belonging
- Empathetic
- Learn from mistakes

Myths around resilience

Myth: Resilience is permanent.

They may not always be able to face adversity, despite surviving the journey, Children may build resilience with the right support.

Myth: Resilience is not a characteristic that some have, and others don't.

Everyone has the ability to build resilience.

Educational Needs



© Photograph by Jonathan Hyams - courtesy of Save The Children: Lebanon

It is evident that education has the potential of unlocking opportunities for the next generation, increasing inclusivity, antiracism, reconciliation, and a safe environment. Refugee children are at a higher risk of missing education, girls more so than boys.

Early Years

The overarching principles of the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage 2021) aims to ensure **ALL** children feel included, safe, and secure within an enabling environment that stimulates play and learning opportunities. This is no different for refugees, asylum seekers or migrants settling into Britain.

Being in tune with children's sensory experiences is key in enabling them to make sense of the new world around them. Below are a few examples of connecting children to their senses.

- **Touch**
 - Provide a range of different textures in various contexts to allow children to explore in a way they feel comfortable in expressing how they feel through touch.
- **Smell**
 - Having a recognisable scent that brings comfort to children will help them feel a sense of security – this could be a soft toy or even a piece of clothing from their parent or carer.
- **Sight**
 - Children need to visually see themselves as part of the setting giving them a sense of belonging – perhaps a photo from their own family, drawing or other images they have created. Plus having story books in their own mother tongue or books about everyday life.
- **Hearing**
 - Respect their home language – learn around 20 or more familiar words that can be used throughout the day. Use a calm and caring tone if speaking in English.
- **Taste**
 - Create social environments during mealtimes, offering simple meals that allows them to eat with fingers if necessary. Gradually introduce new flavours within a range of meals.

Play Opportunities



© Photograph by Mohamed Alasmari - courtesy of Save The Children: Lebanon

Ensure a calm enabling environment that allows children to feel comfortable within their new surroundings. Consider the following aspects during play opportunities:

- Allow children to explore the environment independently – child led
- Provide activities that allows for parallel play – offering opportunities to engage with other children to build up vocabulary skills
- Offer a range of materials and resources to ignite their interests as well as increasing their physical skills
- Offer a range of role play opportunities to allow children to express their feelings through imaginative play

Building children’s confidence and creating opportunities to enhance their new beginnings through a caring and supportive role will support children and their families settle into their new surroundings.

Adapting the curriculum

Although every child under 16 has an entitlement to the National Curriculum, refugees and asylum seekers may find attending formal education challenging. Therefore, adaptations to the curriculum may be required to meet the specific needs of these children. The purpose and goals need to be effectively communicated to support the language barriers. Providing a range of techniques and resources that are less language based provide opportunity for achievement in certain subjects, for example: maths, science, English language and literacy. This may be achieved through:

- Drama
- Creative art
- Visual materials, such as photos, charts, diagrams, story boards,
- ICT (Information and Communication Technology), that includes media clips, web links and translator apps
- Range of bilingual resources such as dictionaries and textbooks
- PSHE lessons that give a focus on families and relationships, this may include reference to bereavement and adverse experiences

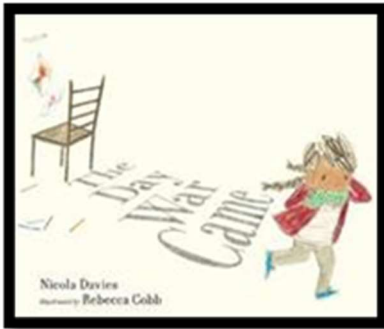
Consideration needs to be given towards the learning environments to ensure it is inclusive. These may include:

- Grouping children with others as role models will enable positive relationships to form with their peers
- Allowing children, young people and their families settling in Britain to share stories of their experiences, interests and culture through encouraging them to share objects such as artefacts and photographs
- Activities that involve collaborative working to support language and build relationships.
 - For most, developing skills in English will be a priority – providing EAL support should be structured into lessons and the school day

Children and young people arriving in a new school or setting should not be placed in either a low ability group or offered special education provision unless assessment has suggested otherwise. Children and young people tend to learn best when learning alongside their peers who can provide suitable linguistic and behavioural models. Creating a whole school ethos in the understanding that children and families settling in Britain are beneficial to the community and bring a range of strengths through their cultural knowledge into the learning environment.

Literacy resources

The Day War Came



This story describes the experiences of those who are displaced. It focusses on the trauma faced by children and their families having to leave their homes. The illustrations are emotive and help to convey the impact of the day war came.

© Copyright by Nicola Davies

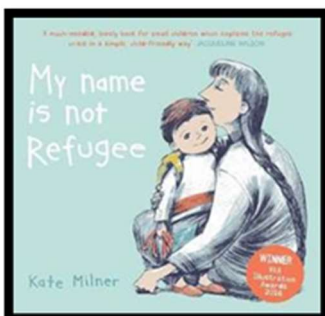
Wisp: A Story of Hope



This story portrays the life of Idris and his life within a refugee camp. The illustrations are perfect in describing the feelings of hope felt from the darkest of days to the jewelled seas and sunny forests.

© Copyright by Zana Fraillon

My Name is not Refugee



This book allows the readers to ask questions at various stages of the little boy's journey as a refugee, allowing an understanding about the challenges faced by displaced children.

© Copyright by Kate Milner

Range of books available

Activity



Check out the range of books that are available. Here is an example listed on the Book Trust website.



[Books about refugees and asylum seekers \(younger children\) | BookTrust](#)

The website also has a list for older children and teenagers.

World Refugee Day



Every year on June the 20th the world celebrates the ultimate courage and resilience of those who have had to flee their home of origin to escape war and conflict.

This day is an opportunity to support the lives of refugees in education, health and care so that they are able to resettle or return home once safe to do so.

A programme of events and activities aims to connect children and their families of different backgrounds to increase a better understanding between communities.

UNHCR and World Refugee Day

Activity



Check out the UNHCR and World Refugee Day and discover a range of useful resources to promote and celebrate the courage and resilience of all those who have had to flee their home countries due to conflict and war.



© Photograph by Anna Pantelia - courtesy of Save The Children: Greece

“Every human has many wishes. I only have one wish and that’s to have peace in Afghanistan so that I can get rid of this refugee name. When we were escaping, I thought Europe would have sympathy for us. But no, they have closed their borders and left us in these tents.”

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Further reading and signposting

Below are a range of useful resources that are aimed at assisting you in your role whilst supporting children and their families settling in Britain. Links accessed 22/12/2022.

<https://www.gov.uk/asylum-support/what-youll-get>

Information includes:

- Money
- Health
- Education support

<https://www.local.gov.uk/topics/communities/refugees-and-asylum-seekers/refugees-and-unaccompanied-children>

Local government information site that offers ways support is being delivered through various programmes for refugees and asylum seekers.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/helping-ukrainian-students-in-schools>

Information includes support on:

- Learning English as additional language
- Using creativity
- Supporting mental health

<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/article/children-on-the-move/>

Useful resources about children on the move.

<https://www.unhcr.org/uk/>

UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees).

<https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/>

Information on welcoming new arrivals.

References and Additional Resources for Further Reading

All links accessed 22/12/2022

<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/document/action-towards-increased-quality-education-internally-displaced-children-recommendations/>

<https://www.booktrust.org.uk/booklists/b/books-about-refugees-and-asylum-seekers-younger-children/>

<https://www.languagesciences.cam.ac.uk/>

<https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/early-words-together-MLL-programme-resources/>

<http://www.lucid.ac.uk/steppingstones>

<https://www.bristol.ac.uk/policybristol/policy-briefings/improving-outcomes-refugee-families/>

<https://niesr.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/MigrantChildrenIntegrationFinalReport.pdf>

<https://www.coram.org.uk/how-we-do-it/upholding-childrens-rights/migrant-childrens-project>

<https://www.unicef.org/migrant-refugee-internally-displaced-children>

<https://neu.org.uk/>

<https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/risks-and-protective-factors/vulnerable-children/refugee-asylum-seeker-children/>

<https://refugeehealthta.org/physical-mental-health/mental-health/adult-mental-health/resilience-and-coping/>

<https://www.family.co/blog/refugee-children-early-education>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/helping-ukrainian-students-in-schools/resources-to-help-support-children-and-young-people-arriving-from-ukraine>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-families-2021-to-2022-and-beyond>

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/>

<https://www.unhcr.org/43ce1cff2.pdf>

Document information

Owner: Product and Content (Learning Resources)

Change history record

This section summarises the changes to this document since the last version.

Version	Description of change	Date of issue
1.0	Final version	October 2022
2.0	Updated version	December 2022