



## SPECIAL FEATURE INTRODUCTION FOR FEBRUARY 2006:

### Promising Practices for Refugee-Serving Programs

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#### Illinois RCSIG Resources

As noted in this month's [BRYCS Spotlight](#), the [Illinois state School Aged Refugee and Immigrant Services](#) has developed an impressive array of resources under RCSIG funding. Although these resources were developed specifically for Illinois, they are helpful to anyone serving refugee children and may also provide models for developing more locally-relevant resources. Following are highlights of resources available from the ISBE's School Aged Refugee and Immigrant Services program:<sup>[1]</sup>

#### For Teachers and School Administrators:

##### [Illinois State Board of Education's ekit](#)

The ESL & bilingual teachers' toolkit was developed by the Illinois State Board of Education and the IRC with the Illinois educator in mind. Find teaching tips, information about methodology and assessment, recommended classroom materials, and much more in this searchable database of teaching resources. [description from [http://www.thecenterweb.org/irc/pages/f\\_resources.html](http://www.thecenterweb.org/irc/pages/f_resources.html)]

Award-winning Videos (available in streaming video below or from the [School Aged Refugee and Immigrant Services office](#))

- [Welcoming New Learners: A Professional Development Tool](#) [HIGH 56K](#)
- [In Our Country: Educating Newcomers in America](#) [HIGH 56K](#)
- [Study Guide for Use with Video Stream](#)

#### Regarding Parents:

- [Involving Immigrant and Refugee Families in Their Children's School's: Barriers, Challenges, and Successful Strategies](#)
- [A Guide to Your Children's Schools: A Parent Handbook](#)  
The guide to Illinois schools for newcomer parents can be downloaded in various languages: Arabic, Bosnian, Russian, Vietnamese, and Spanish.

#### Regarding Policy:

The Illinois Immigrant Policy Project has released several papers on the education of immigrants and refugees, including:

- [Improving Education for Immigrants and Refugees in Illinois: A Summary](#) Prepared by Christina M. Kappaz, Millennia Consulting, L.L.C.
- [Improving Education for Immigrants and Refugees in Illinois: Final Report](#) Prepared by Christina M. Kappaz, Millennia Consulting, L.L.C.

#### Illinois RCSIG Conferences

In addition to resource development, the Illinois Department of Human Services (specifically the State Refugee Coordinator's office), ISBE, Chicago Public Schools, and the Adult Learning Resource Center have collaborated on holding annual conferences for the past two years. Just this past October, the 2005 Illinois RCSIG Conference, titled

“Challenges and Opportunities in Educating Refugee Children”, offered thirty workshops providing cutting-edge training and resources aimed at improving the overall quality of education for refugee students.

## Illinois and Kentucky: Local School District Programming

### Illinois

Through RCSIG funding, the IDHS (Illinois Department of Human Services ) supports refugee social service agencies to help integrate refugee children into Illinois schools (see [their site](#) for a complete list of projects recently funded through the state RCSIG program). [World Relief DuPage/Aurora \(WRDA\)'s Refugee Youth Program](#) is one such project. In order to help refugee children and youth succeed in their new community, WRDA project staff have worked to bridge the cultural and linguistic gaps that exist between refugee families and the schools and have successfully involved the local community in providing extra-curricular activities to refugee students. Since 1999, the project has helped refugee students and their families adjust to American schools and has provided supportive services to school staff through on-going consultations and trainings. This project recently expanded its after-school programs for refugee children in grades K-12 to five tutoring clubs, a soccer club, and an art club. In addition to teaching basic skills for success, these weekly after-school clubs provide a nurturing environment where students can learn and grow through on-going relationships with adult volunteers and mentors from the community. BRYCS is featuring this project as “promising” due to its strong track record of involving the larger community in these school-related services to refugee youth and children, and its increasing ability to evaluate and demonstrate the project’s success through objective measures. See the [Program Description](#) for more information about WRDA's Refugee Youth Services.

### Kentucky

The [Transitional Schooling Program](#) of Catholic Charities' Migration and Refugee Services of Louisville and the Jefferson County Public Schools in Kentucky is another example of “promising” programming aimed to support the transition of refugee children into local schools funded through the RCSIG program. This project is geared specifically to assisting the growing population of non-English-speaking refugee children who have had little-to-no formal school experience or who have had their schooling interrupted by the events of their refugee experience. This project not only provides these students with the extra training and support they need to move into regular ESL classes, but it also involves the refugee students' families and the larger community in its services, promoting mutual education and integration for all involved. See the [Program Description](#) for more information about the Louisville-based Transitional Schooling Program.

**Footnote 1:** Contact Sherry Johnson at [sjohnson@isbe.net](mailto:sjohnson@isbe.net) to order these resources or for more information on school aged refugee children. Descriptions of these resources are from the Web site at [http://www.isbe.state.il.us/bilingual/htmls/refugee\\_services.htm](http://www.isbe.state.il.us/bilingual/htmls/refugee_services.htm).