



Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services



# Strengthening Services for Refugee Parents: Guidelines and Resources



# I

## **Introduction**



Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services



A joint project of



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Refugees are incredibly resilient people. They face unique, unanticipated challenges they must overcome while grieving the losses of their family, country, possessions, status, and culture. Their remarkable coping skills enable them to survive and establish themselves in a new country.

A major challenge for refugee parents is the task of raising children in their new country. Refugees are often surprised to discover that the rules and expectations handed down through generations not only no longer apply to their life in America but also can be barriers to success for themselves and their children. This discovery can be disillusioning. Usually, it comes in the form of feeling they are “losing their children to America” when their children begin to attend school.

Children learn English quickly in school, but parents often have difficulty learning the language, whether from time constraints, lack of literacy in their first language, or a dearth of ESL programs in the community. As a result, parents may experience a painful role reversal when they must depend on their children for translation and other cultural bridging. The alienation may become more marked when adolescents begin to adopt American social practices in dating, learning styles, and independent thinking. Although this change may bring desired opportunities for their children’s education and employment, it often disturbs the family’s cultural bonds and patterns of authority.

In developing this manual, BRYCS interviewed staff of 28 programs in 13 states that work with refugee parents. They serve parents of many nationalities and families who have been in the United States for periods ranging from a few months to more than a generation. Some are independent programs, and some are part of larger organizations. All have dedicated staff who assist parents and their children with the task of forming a bicultural identity that can enable them to share in a productive life in this country.

The programs provide a wide and ever-evolving range of parent support services, including basic cultural orientation, case management and referral, parenting classes using a formal curriculum, advocacy and leadership development, ESL-based parenting classes, individual counseling, and informal support groups. All services share the goal of empowering newcomer parents to attain positive acculturation that enables them to contribute to their new community and maintain essential cultural values of their homeland. Moreover, the programs all use various degrees of ongoing evaluation and assessment to ensure that services continue to be relevant to the needs of the community as new populations arrive and needs of newcomers change.

This manual contains guidelines and tools that are based on what the interviews revealed about the challenges newcomer parents face, how parenting services can help them, the role of evaluation, and which resources are helpful in planning and carrying out effective services. We found no foolproof formula to fit the needs of all organizations and communities, but we did identify some common themes and approaches in planning and maintaining services for refugee parents.

This manual is divided into four main sections, each of which addresses different aspects of developing and maintaining parent support services.

Section 1, “Guidelines for Organizations Helping Refugee Parents,” describes findings from BRYCS’ interviews with staff of refugee parenting programs. It draws on this information to outline different types of approaches and suggest strategies to meet common challenges. The section also emphasizes the importance of special services for families with adolescents and makes recommendations for program development.

Section 2 “Program Development Guidelines for Parent Support Services,” contains suggestions for developing a new program. It covers topics including needs assessment, program design, funding, and cultural competency.

Section 3, “Guidelines for Functional Evaluation Process,” stresses the importance of incorporating ongoing procedures for planning, evaluating, and revising support services. The section discusses different types of evaluation and provides a step-by-step assessment process.

Section 4, “Services for Refugee Parents of Adolescents,” reviews the unique cultural conflicts that newcomer families experience and suggests ways in which parent support services can build better communication in families and strengthen the parental role.

Finally, Appendix 1 provides a list of helpful resources, including information about refugees and curriculum materials. Appendix 2 consists of profiles of the 28 programs interviewed for this project.

We hope you will find this manual useful in clarifying your own goals and developing the resources and approaches that will best benefit refugee parents in your community.



# ES

## **Executive Summary**



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Communities increasingly are realizing that everyone benefits from offering support services for refugees. Ideally, support services for refugee parents help strengthen refugee families and allow them to benefit more fully from their new life here while helping American cities and towns learn from the strengths, talents, and experiences of the newcomers. Refugees need an ongoing continuum of support services because intergenerational conflicts and reactions to their extreme losses may take two or three generations to develop, especially when children are born in the United States and have no experience of their parents' hardships or joys as they traveled from their homeland to America.

Like all parents, refugee parents face the challenges of passing on their values and seeing their children succeed. However, they must do this under the added stress of raising their children in a strange country, language and culture. Usually, refugee families are recovering from great losses of family, homeland, identity, and possessions and often suffer poor health. Children adapt to the new culture faster than parents do, and are often called upon to translate and negotiate important benefits for the family; this premature position of authority adds to the stress and loss felt by their parents. Many variables contribute to how well families will cope with these challenges and adapt to life in the United States.

This report offers the following recommendations for consideration by organizations which want to develop parent support services:

**1. Clarify your goals and the capacity of your organization.**

Why are you doing this? Do you have the capacity to meet that need: current services for refugees and their trust, ability to fund and staff program, cultural and language capacity, linkages in the community, organizational support? What do you need to do to build and maintain that capacity?

**2. Research the needs and resources of your community.**

Get as much information as you can about the refugees in your community and their unmet needs, both from service providers and from refugees themselves. What long-term trends in the refugee environment are evident in your community?

**3. Consider the total context of refugees' lives.**

Program staff must understand that for refugee parents, issues of housing, employment, and other basic survival needs may take precedence over participating in your parenting program. Recruitment and retention strategies must consider all aspects of refugees' lives. Offering meals, transportation, or child care may be essential.

**4. Recruit and train staff for cultural competency.**

Include ongoing training in cultural competency for staff and organizational decision makers. Ideally, bilingual and bicultural staff will work with refugees in their own language. Staff needs to listen to cultural values and needs to help refugees make the cultural compromises to accomplish comfortable acculturation in America. Staff must resist acting on unexamined assumptions about acculturation which would get in the way of helping refugees to bridge two cultures.

**5. Collaborate with established organizations.**

Collaboration with other agencies can help to avoid duplication, to bring more resources into your program and to impress potential funders. Many long-lasting programs are affiliated with larger groups, and every program interviewed relied on informal collaborations. Mental



health service providers are needed to train staff to recognize symptoms that call for referral and to serve as resources to refugees with mental health needs. Do not overlook potential for collaboration with other services within your own organization.

**6. Make schools essential partners.**

Schools are a primary source of acculturation for children and are often a source of stress for parents as children become “Americanized.” Staff need to be familiar with refugee children’s schools and establish relationships with school personnel. The goal is to facilitate parent-teacher communication and help parents feel they are part of their children’s education.

**7. Include evaluation from the beginning.**

Clearly define your goals from the outset, and decide how you will measure your accomplishments. Evaluate your progress often so that you can adjust the program to better meet community needs and your goals. Often, national curriculum staff and funding sources can help with evaluation design.

**8. Prepare for advocacy.**

Advocacy takes many forms and should be part of any effort to help refugee parents and families, including advocacy for both individual and systemic problems and enabling parents to be advocates.

**9. Ensure administrative support for programs.**

Strong supervision and administrative oversight are essential to help set limits and clarify goals for the long-term health of the services. Close alliance with administration keeps them informed about program progress in relation to the organizational mission and is important for maintaining stable funding.

**10. Include parenting of adolescents.**

Even if your program focuses on families with very young children, it is important to help prepare parents for the special cultural issues that arise as refugee and immigrant children reach adolescence. If possible, offer a continuum of parent support services so that refugees can prepare for new challenges as their children grow up.

**11. Work with voluntary agencies (volags).**

Some of the programs interviewed were unaware of the Reception and Placement (R&P) services that voluntary agencies (volags) provide to refugees when they first arrive in the community. Volags often recruit volunteers through churches and community organizations that help and befriend refugees. This welcoming network can serve both as an important source of referrals and contacts with refugee leaders and as a resource for information about refugee needs, culture, and history in the community.

For this report, BRYCS (Bridging Refugee Youth and Children’s Services) interviewed staff in 28 refugee parent support programs in 13 states and conducted a comprehensive search of literature to study the obstacles newcomer families face and how parenting programs can help them overcome those obstacles. Several national programs offer training and parenting curricula for organizations wishing to provide parenting services. Some of the curricula are translated into refugees’ languages and stress cultural sensitivity in their content and training. Of the local programs interviewed, most use a national curriculum as a basis for developing their own curriculum tailored to local community resources and nationalities served. Program approaches generally

fall into categories of prevention (young children, possibly at risk, but no identified problems), therapeutic intervention (families referred for problems), or support services (usually ongoing and developed to respond to needs identified by participants). Each program seems to work best when it draws on a range of wisdom and experience from refugee services and curriculum materials developed and tested by others, in addition to being sensitive to and knowledgeable about the particular needs and resources of the local community.

Parenting adolescents presents an extra challenge for refugee and immigrant families, especially when parents do not speak English but children do. In such cases, parents often feel they are losing their children to America, a painful irony because they came with high hopes that America would offer possibilities for their children to have a better life, but did not anticipate unintended consequences which disrupt family relationships. Staff in parenting programs recognize this dilemma and try to help parents reclaim their authority by not having to depend so much on their children for access to American systems and by learning to communicate effectively. In this way both parents and children can accomplish “selective acculturation,” which stabilizes parent-child roles and provides a role for both cultures in their lives. Staff find it challenging to help parents accept the need to change and work out new cultural identities, as well as to help adolescents understand their parents’ hopes and struggles and withstand the negative aspects of American adolescent culture, especially in larger cities.

Parents who participate in parenting programs generally benefit by building their own skills and self-esteem and by developing bridges to American culture. They overcome isolation both from their own ethnic community and the mainstream American culture and gain access to American resources and friendships, as well as alliances and advocacy skills.

Many challenges need to be addressed, whatever the program approach:

- Programs need to involve and listen to newcomers they want to serve at every stage of planning and learn all they can about the group’s cultural values, practices and problems in America, with a focus on the strengths of that culture.
- It is also essential to assess the language and literacy levels of potential participants and plan a curriculum that will be appropriately tailored to the audience.
- Recruitment and training of staff for cultural competency is an ongoing need as new populations arrive. Ongoing vigilance about values concerning acculturation and staff’s unexamined assumptions and expectations is also important to assure effective communication.
- Funding is a major challenge both for start-up and maintaining services; grants are often more readily available to organizations that have a track record of managing grants and contracts.
- Whatever the initial focus of parent support, most programs find that it is necessary to develop a continuum of services either inside the program or through collaboration with other agencies.
- Services can become duplicative and/or out-dated if contact and collaboration with other community organizations serving newcomers are not maintained.
- Outreach strategies ranging from focus groups to radio to referral sources need to be revised as community populations and needs change.



- Services can become irrelevant if evaluation and advocacy are not responsive to newcomers' concerns. Attention to these procedures helps to maximize the impact and flexibility of services, and ensure that they remain relevant.



# 1

## **Guidelines for Organizations Helping Refugee Parents**



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A joint project of

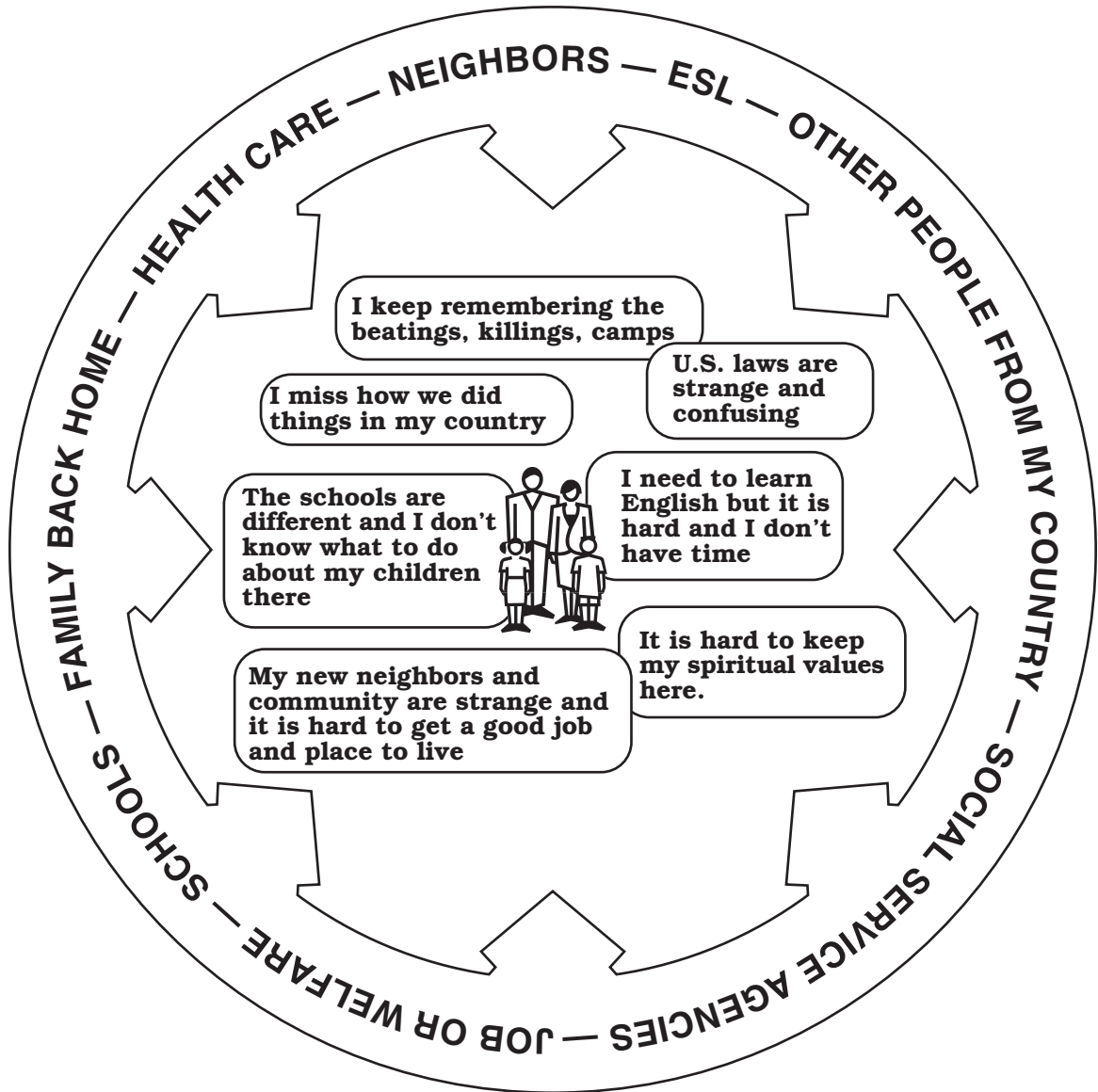


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### A Refugee's Dilemmas

While refugees are coping with the ideas in the boxes, many groups and systems from outside are competing for their attention. What's more, what's happening inside is probably in their first language, but the outside messages are usually in English.



## Acknowledgments

**W**e have found over and over that professionals who work with refugees in various settings are devoted to the goal of helping this group of immigrants fulfill their hopes in the United States and contribute in their own way to our uniquely diverse culture. We are impressed with the numerous service providers who are in the vanguard of developing new ways to help refugee families. Many of these providers have been generous in sharing their ideas and experience and we are grateful for their work and generosity. Many, many thanks to all who talked to us and without whose work and shared experience we could not have put together the information for this manual.

Two different researchers have worked on this report at different times. Although they come from different perspectives with regard to experience with refugees, social services, and research, both contribute significant observations and information from their interviews and research data. This manual draws on information from interviews and other materials gleaned by both researchers.





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**Ensure Administrative Support to Programs  
Include Parenting of Adolescents**

**Notes for references in boxes:**

**45**

# 1. Introduction and Overview

Currently 1 in 10 U.S. residents is a foreign-born immigrant or refugee. Like all parents in America, refugee parents face the challenge of raising their children to embrace and perpetuate the values important to them and to resist what they see as negative peer and mass media pressures. They work hard to build a foundation on which their children can achieve a life they consider to be successful and more comfortable than theirs has been. Like many immigrant parents, refugees are outsiders to the mainstream culture and language and often depend on their children to interpret American language and customs. However, refugee parents face significant additional pressures and challenges than those faced by other immigrants.

Refugee parents' challenges are unique in two fundamental aspects: First, they did not leave their country voluntarily because they wanted a better life or different opportunities. Rather, they were forced to give up what may have been a satisfying and prestigious life, leaving homes, possessions, friends, family, culture, and climate to come to an unknown city, maybe to join relatives they haven't seen in years, maybe to be "resettled" by strangers in a social service agency. In addition, the circumstances that forced them to leave their homeland were fraught with unimaginable trauma, often involving witnessing the torture and death of loved ones or surviving their own torture and imprisonment. Their adjustment may be more complicated when they find life here different and more difficult than they expected, but their cultural traditions do not allow them to recognize the psychological impact of their experiences or accept help for the emotional wounds of their trauma. Refugees are the ultimate survivors—they are exceptionally resourceful, resilient, and strong enough to survive stresses beyond any most Americans could even imagine. However, they may not be prepared to cope with the emotional aftermath of their experiences in the new context of their lives as refugees in a society where their children will grow up in a world unfamiliar to their parents—a world for which their parents may have no map. Refugee parents' very survival may have been motivated by thoughts of their children's future, but that future is suddenly to be formed under new rules that their children often understand better than they do after a just short time in the United States.

When thinking about refugees' needs, one must remember that not only have they lost the material and social environment of their homeland, but they will face other losses in America for which they may not be prepared, even with the extraordinary coping skills they have called on to get here. In America, when their children go to school most parents will start to face the erosion of their traditional authority. Children will be expected to think independently, value friendships and ambition above family, and in other ways think "like Americans." It is a great loss and disappointment for parents to realize that to attain the goals they have set for their children in America, their children will have to adopt values and act in ways that seem disrespectful to them and their culture. This change challenges their identity as parents and puts stress on how they relate to and express caring for their children.

**Refugees' strengths and challenges are unique.** *We need to hear refugee stories; they are more interesting and hopeful than many of the stories we do hear.<sup>1</sup>*

**Services help the whole family.** *[T]he family is perhaps the strategic research site for understanding the dynamics of immigration flows . . . and of immigrant adaptation processes. An additional focus is the diverse family patterns of immigrants and their implications for human, social and political capital.<sup>2</sup>*

Although many sources cited the quality of the family's initial welcome to the United States as an important factor in how well refugees adapt to living here, many also noted that parent-child problems often do not occur until one or two generations after arrival. One facilitator interviewed stated that intergenerational conflict is especially prevalent in families in which children were born after the families have achieved financial stability and become more Americanized and disdainful of parental cultural values. Another said that problems most commonly begin when there are adolescents in the family, whether on arrival or years later. Some evidence indicates that resettlement in dense urban areas, where refugees are more likely to be isolated from the English-speaking population and to live in poorer neighborhoods, delays adaptation, whereas in mid-size cities, interaction with the mainstream population is more likely. However, smaller cities may not provide a strong support community of other families with the same cultural traditions.

Sadly, we are only beginning to gather significant knowledge about the developmental cycles of newcomer populations, although the issue is beginning to get the attention of researchers and service providers who try to sort out the sociocultural variables that determine different outcomes in different settings. Several articles in *Immigration and the Family* (see Resource Appendix) provide data and intriguing discussion on this topic. Support services for parents, particularly those which serve the whole family at different stages of acculturation, are in the forefront of learning just how dynamic the acculturation process is over time and among different ethnic groups. This makes a strong argument for establishing a continuum of services in a multiservice context and for longitudinal research.

Having seen refugees and other immigrants struggle with family life in the United States, social service agencies, schools, and other community organizations try to help by offering parenting groups and other social services. The focus of this manual is on providing parenting services to refugee families, although some of the issues and resources discussed are also relevant to immigrants who are not refugees as well. It is addressed to everyone who has an interest in helping newcomer families build a satisfying and productive life in the United States.

When this manual refers to "parenting support services" or "parenting services," it includes discussion of curriculum development for parenting groups or classes. When developing your agency's program, however, we encourage you to think in terms of a continuum of services for families, including cultural orientation; youth services; referral services for basic needs, such as employment and language, mental health, and life skills; case management; and any other services that your agency offers to refugees, either directly or by referral. Another approach is to think of services to refugee families. Although the focus of this manual is on support services for parents, because they are the most significant factor in the family's adjustment, the decision to migrate and the process of migration involve the total family and its well-being. The family is the primary beneficiary of services to parents.

## What This Manual Will Do

The purpose of this manual is to bring together resources that individuals and organizations can use in developing support services for refugee families in their local community. The manual includes the following materials:

- Discussion of variations and challenges in existing programs, including national curricula
- Challenges and strategies to consider in planning
- Recommendations for your planning process

- Guidelines for developing a new program or reviewing an existing program
- Program evaluation guidelines
- Special considerations for working with families with adolescents
- Appendix 1, which lists useful resources to consult and use in program development and training
- Appendix 2, which consists of profiles of programs contacted.

Each local program is unique in responding to the needs of its own community and group of refugees. It is important to take the time to consider the total context of the changing refugee environment as well as the needs and cultural characteristics of the specific local refugee group to be served when you are deciding if and how to provide parenting services.

## How to Use this Manual

The purpose of this manual is to bring together resources that individuals and organizations can use in developing support services for refugee families in their local community. It includes the following materials:

- Descriptions of 28 programs reviewed for this project, including national curricula
- Discussion of variations and challenges in those existing programs
- Challenges and strategies to consider in planning
- Recommendations for your planning process
- Guidelines for developing a new program or reviewing an existing program
- Program evaluation guidelines
- Special considerations for services to families with adolescents
- List of useful resources to consult and use in program development and training

Each local program reviewed responds in a unique way to the needs of its own community and group of refugees. In planning your program, it is important to take the time to consider the total context of the changing refugee environment as well as the needs and cultural characteristics of the specific local refugee group to be served when you are deciding if and how to provide parenting services. We recommend that you follow a step by step process, using the sections of the manual that are appropriate to each step of your planning process.

1. **First, review this section, which gives an overview of the parenting issues faced by refugees, and program approaches used by the parent support services reviewed.** Discuss this information with staff in your organization who will play roles in designing, supporting and implementing your program. If you first familiarize administrative and direct service staff with general information about refugees you intend to serve and how services can benefit them and your community, you will have a good basis to look at specific program information in this manual with an eye to what is most relevant to your needs. Internal communication in your organization at each step of planning will

ensure that your entire organization has an investment in integrating support services for refugee families into its long-term goals and developing capacity to provide those services.

2. **After you have decided that you will offer parent support services to refugee families, use other sections of the manual to guide your development process.** Refer to the section on program development and use its guidelines for step by step planning to determine the approach your program will take, which groups you will serve and the resources you will need. During this process you will probably find it helpful to refer to the Program Profiles (Appendix 2) to learn more about specific programs that seem most applicable to the type of support services you want to offer. The Resources in Appendix 1 will also be helpful to fill in particular information about refugee groups in your community, curriculum materials, etc. If you plan to focus on families with adolescents, use the section on Adolescents as part of your initial planning.
3. **As you develop the details of your program, we recommend that you plan an evaluation process as an integral part of your program from the start.** The separate section on Evaluation gives guidelines for including evaluation from the beginning in a way that will help in future planning and maintaining relevance and efficiency in your services.

It would be difficult to point to a specific trend or model of programs for refugee parents. Existing refugee parent support services vary and draw on many resources, including personal experience with refugees, particular characteristics of the local community, national curriculum materials, and information about local resources (e.g., schools, social services, health services, law enforcement, libraries, and experts in many fields). Goals and philosophies also vary; it is important to define your goals and program philosophy clearly in order to learn from models of like-minded programs. Sections in this manual about acculturation and cultural competency offer guidance in thinking about overall philosophy and goals.

The experience of programs we interviewed demonstrates that while parent support services strengthen refugee families and allow them to benefit more fully from their new life here, they can also help American cities and towns to learn and benefit from the strengths, talents, and experiences of the newcomers in their community. We suggest that one of your goals be to facilitate the mutual benefits these services can bring to newcomers and your community.

## How Information Was Gathered for This Report

Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services (BRYCS) is a collaboration formed by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops/Migration and Refugee Services (USCCB/MRS) and Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS) to provide technical assistance to organizations addressing the problems faced by refugee youth and children. LIRS and USCCB/MRS are national resettlement agencies with an extensive network of agencies serving thousands of refugees every year when they enter the United States. In 2001, BRYCS conducted a comprehensive nationwide needs assessment that identified a priority need for various kinds of assistance for refugee parents and the professional organizations that work with them and their children. As a result of this assessment, BRYCS has developed this manual.

A first step in this project was to disseminate a request for participation to organizations known to work with refugees, including schools, national curriculum developers, resettlement agencies, mutual assistance associations, law enforcement agencies, and others who could identify programs specifically dedicated to

serving refugee parents. Consultants to BRYCS then conducted phone interviews lasting 1 hour or more with staff in 28 organizations in 13 states. They asked the same questions of each organization and compiled the responses (see Appendix 2).

Another aspect of the project includes ongoing research to identify publicly available resources that contain valuable information about the refugee experience and parenting issues and are available on the Web or in libraries or bookstores. The resources listed in Appendix 1 will also be available through the BRYCS Clearinghouse.

## Who Are Refugees?

Refugees are immigrants who have legal immigration status conferred on them by entering the United States as refugees recognized under U.N. designations and with the sponsorship of a voluntary agency. They have been accepted into the United States, often after waiting years in crowded and unsafe refugee camps, because it has been established that it is not safe for them to return to their own country.

Refugees share certain common characteristics, but they are no more homogeneous than any other people. Nationality groups usually share a common culture, but within that group they come from different socioeconomic backgrounds and have various levels of education, family ties, and conditions of migration along with many individual traits. As individuals, they represent the full range of social and educational backgrounds within their culture of origin—some refugees are urban professionals, but others come from remote rural areas with little or no formal education or community infrastructure as we know it in the United States.

While trying to help refugee parents, you must learn as much as possible about their common culture, but you must also be sensitive to individual experiences and how individuals and families cope with the traumatic displacement involved in the refugee experience.

**Refugees bring their individual strengths.** *[T]here are three types of resources that are central to the outcomes of immigrants and their families: financial and human capital (i.e., social class at entry), political capital (i.e., legal status at entry), and social capital (i.e., social networks and family structure or cohesiveness).<sup>3</sup>*

Refugees migrate from an increasingly diverse range of countries. For many years, most refugees came from Southeast Asia, then from the Former Soviet Union; now, the greatest proportion is arriving from Africa and the Near East. They represent the full range of social backgrounds from their country of origin—some are urban professionals, but others come from remote rural areas with little or no formal education or community infrastructure similar to that in the United States. All refugees are survivors, but some are more resilient and bring more “social capital” to the new culture than others. To date little research has studied the variables that determine successful adaptation to life in the United States, but people who have observed and worked with refugees suggest that significant factors are the circumstances, including trauma, of leaving the home country; time and experiences in the interim (e.g., experiences in refugee camps); age; level of education; how refugees are welcomed into the United States; and certain personality traits of resiliency. Those factors also significantly affect the ability to parent in the new culture.

<sup>3</sup>Programs interviewed are indicated by name and number in Appendix 2



Although refugees face formidable obstacles, and not all emerge contented and successful in America, on the whole their struggles are fruitful, and they and their children exemplify at least as much triumph over poverty and conflict as their American counterparts. As our nation's history demonstrates, immigrants produce strong leaders and develop allies in their American community to build on their own considerable strengths, in some part assisted by the services provided to help them become familiar with Americans and American systems.

**Refugee struggles are fruitful.**

*Refugee students know they are vital to the family's functioning. American kids sometimes feel like they are a drain on family resources.<sup>4</sup>*

Recent reports, however, suggest that newcomers in general are not advancing economically as quickly as their predecessors. To what extent this can be attributed to the different backgrounds of the nationalities arriving, to conditions in the United States, or to other factors will need to be determined by future research. Also, the little statistical data on the problems and progress of refugee and immigrant groups rarely distinguishes between refugees and other immigrants. However, the shifting characteristics of refugees underscore the need to keep up to date with the “big picture” of the environment of refugee resettlement as well as the particular circumstances of the group to be served in your local community.

## Reception and Placement (R&P)

Some of the programs interviewed were unaware of the services that voluntary agencies (volags) provide to refugees at the time they arrive in the community (and just prior to their arrival). Volags are the agencies designated by the U.S. Department of State to resettle refugees. At a minimum, the responsibility of the volag extends through the first 3 or 6 months after arrival, depending on whether the family already has relatives in that community who help them. They have a mandate to provide certain “core services,” such as meeting refugees at the airport, making sure they have access to safe and secure housing, meeting basic immediate needs, providing employment and English language assistance, helping with application for Social Security cards, and making sure health needs are met and children are enrolled in school. They do much more, however. In many cases, volags recruit volunteers through churches and community organizations that introduce refugees to their friends; help with gifts of additional food, furniture, and clothing; come to the home for tutoring; and generally befriend refugees to assure them that they are welcomed and helped to thrive in the community. This welcoming network can both refer parents to parenting classes if they are informed about them and continue as advocates and support to their learning.

One of the things volags do is provide community orientation (CO) for refugees, often inviting guests to talk about certain essential services, such as schools and clinics. You might offer to have a representative of your ongoing parent support services program come to CO sessions to describe the program and invite refugees to participate, or you might partner with a local volag or group of volags to develop a parenting program that could be offered to all new arrivals as part of the initial welcome and orientation. Larger cities have several volags that resettle many different nationalities, and their staff have extensive experience with refugees from diverse cultures and political situations. At a minimum, they are a resource for information about the needs of refugees, their culture and history in the community, and they can provide resources and contacts with refugee leaders.

## 2. Summary of Programs Reviewed

Each program seems to work best when it draws on a range of wisdom and experience from refugee services and curriculum materials developed and tested by others, in addition to being sensitive to and knowledgeable about the particular needs and resources of the local community. Programs were selected for interviews based on recommendations from national networks, including the nine national voluntary agencies that resettle refugees when they first enter the United States, organizations contacted through parenting curriculum developers, mutual assistance associations that provide support services to refugees who have been in the United States for a month to several years, and other organizations that provide services to refugee families. Although we tried to be as inclusive as possible, the list is by no means exhaustive. However, it is representative of the services available to refugee parents at this time.

Of the 28 programs interviewed, we found some common themes and a wealth of evidence of the dedication and resourcefulness of both refugees themselves and the local staff and volunteers who help them. The programs are referred to here by name, location, or the number by which they are listed in Appendix 2.

### National Curricula

Three of the interviewees represent national organizations that publish a comprehensive parenting curriculum and provide training for staff and volunteers wishing to implement that curriculum on the local level. These national programs—Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families (SMEF), Parents as Teachers (PAT), and Meld—provide different approaches to parent education, but all emphasize multiethnic sensitivity, although they were not originally designed specifically for work with refugees.

SMEF offers a technique for creating dialogue in parent classes, which enhances multiethnic understanding and strengthens appreciation for the important role of cultural values in stabilizing the family and larger community. Facilitators are trained for 5 days. This strength-based curriculum is available in English, Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese, Somali, and Russian and is designed for parents of children from ages 3 to 18. Structured groups for both parents and children meet together (usually for a meal), then separately for twelve 3-hour sessions to get information and discuss problems commonly facing parents, including children's exposure to gangs and crime, drugs and alcohol, developmental issues, and self-esteem. Local programs that use this curriculum (usually in combination with other resources) were interviewed in Lowell, Massachusetts (5, 6), Phoenix (7), Seattle (13), and Tucson (23).<sup>1</sup>

PAT is designed for parents of younger children, from the mother's pregnancy to the child's start of kindergarten. Parent educators receive 5 days of training along with follow up. PAT uses monthly home visits in combination with monthly parent support group meetings that emphasize child development and parent-child activities. The goal is to enhance the child's success in school and build parents' confidence in a parent-child relationship that fosters ongoing parental involvement in learning. Programs using PAT were interviewed in Seattle (8) and San Diego (26).

Meld also provides a 5-day initial training for staff with ongoing technical support. The curriculum is available in English and Spanish, and has been adapted for Hmong and East African refugees. Meld's primary focus is on parents of young children, but parents of children of all ages can participate in peer-led groups for up to 2 years. Parents are encouraged to be trained as facilitators to implement the program's philosophy that parents learn best from each other. Meld also publishes *Working with Immigrant/Refugee Families—A Guide for Interested Organizations*, a nuts-and-bolts guide to help organizations understand the challenges refugees face and to address important considerations in deciding whether and how to provide parent support services. The Guide

includes such practical material as a “Cultural Understanding Worksheet” and an “Organizational Assessment Worksheet” along with ideas of how to build and strengthen cultural understanding. Staff were interviewed in MELD programs in St. Paul (4) and Minneapolis (24).

## Local Programs

The three national curricula highlight some of the variations in curriculum models available and the richness of resources that have been used and tested with parents over many years. You may decide to use a national curriculum, to use a mixture of more than one, or to develop your own. Some agencies, such as Seattle’s Refugee Women’s Alliance (13), provide staff training in a national curriculum but find it best to develop and rely primarily on their own curriculum. We recommend that you carefully consider what is best for your organization, given your own assessment of the needs of refugees in your community and the nature of your organization and staffing patterns. Other valuable curricula are listed in Appendix 1 and mentioned in the program profiles (Appendix 2).

Some of the programs we studied evolved through recognition of the inevitable intergenerational cultural conflicts in the refugee experience and were designed to anticipate the challenges parents face. They usually use a structured training curriculum to introduce parents to American child-rearing practices, laws, and communication patterns in order to help prevent major problems developing from parent-child role reversal, discipline, and American school culture. Whether a program uses one of several national curricula, a combination of these, or a curriculum staff design themselves, the primary goal is to impart information early. Success is judged by how well parents are able to work with school personnel and avoid depression and by how successful their children are in school—in short, how well they acculturate and more quickly forge a satisfying life for their family in the United States.

**Intergenerational conflict may be inevitable.** *In cases of intergenerational conflict, parents appear to compromise more on superficial cultural changes such as clothing styles and foods. On the other hand, parents appear to hold the line more on core cultural values such as dating practices and family obligations. There is some evidence that refugee immigrants may experience more intergenerational conflict than economic immigrants. The anticipation of returning to the homeland when political conditions improve may motivate refugee parents to try harder to preserve traditional cultural values...<sup>5</sup>*

Other parenting programs are geared to parents who have been in the United States for a longer period of time and are experiencing difficulty maintaining family cohesion when their children adopt American ways that challenge parental authority and cultural values. These are not necessarily families whose children are in trouble in school or with the law—they may, in fact, be successful in school and the family may be economically successful. But parents and children become increasingly estranged when children want to be independent like American children but their parents want them to respect the traditional authority of elders in cultural practices and choosing friends. These programs are geared to helping parents and children communicate with each other about their conflicts and expectations. The goal is for parents and children to appreciate each others’ values and reach a place where they can preserve and honor their original family values while embracing what they find to be positive in U.S. culture. The ideal result is that parents and children together forge a bi-cultural identity that is functional for them in their new home and maintain mutual respect.

In other variations of program approaches, some agencies serve specific nationalities; combinations of nationalities; or parents of young children or teenagers, or families including children of all ages. Some programs give priority to teaching particular content, others to facilitating peer support, and others to leadership development. Some have a preventive focus, whereas others see themselves as therapeutic for parents whose children have been identified by schools or courts as having problems. You can readily sort out these variables by consulting the profiles in Appendix 2.

No one “right” way of providing services exists, although some components are important to every program’s success, such as cultural sensitivity and providing information and support that refugee parents regard as important for their own use. In fact, something we discovered about programs that have lasted for many years (such as Refugee Women’s Alliance [13], YES [25], YMCA Houston [15]) is that their flexibility has enabled them to adapt their services to respond to changing needs and resources over the years, in some ways mirroring the coping skills that enable refugees themselves to adapt.

To achieve their goals, some agencies use an almost “pure” version of a national curriculum, adapting it only as needed for language and local referral resources. Of those interviewed, La Frontera in Tucson (23) is probably the best example. This program is funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP) and uses the SMEF curriculum; it has a strong research component that includes regular evaluation reports. Participants are Russian refugees and Spanish-speaking immigrants. For ongoing support of the program and future planning after the 3-year initial research period, an active advisory board includes representatives from local community services and refugee and immigrant groups. Also, in Minneapolis-St. Paul the Hmong American Partnership (4) and East African Parents Program (24), collaborate directly with the Meld national center and closely follow the Meld curriculum.

In contrast, most programs interviewed developed their services according to local priorities and strategies, using formal curricula as well as other resources. In most cases, a national curriculum serves as a guide for topics and provides resources on those topics. The curriculum also serves as a framework for structuring the program as appropriate to the ages of children and group structure. However, staff usually tailor the curricula to the language and literacy level of participants and allow greater input from participants about local and cultural needs. Topics are included that teach about U.S. life skills and parenting, such as the American education system, dress, issues of children’s discipline, and independence. Most locally adapted programs have not been formalized and remain fluid and responsive to emerging interests and needs.

The next section highlights themes and approaches that emerged from the interviews. The material offers some considerations that might be helpful in developing a new program. Neither the examples given below nor the agencies interviewed provide an exhaustive list of topics for any one model; they are meant to suggest a means of approaching program development and identifying useful contacts for further exploration. Once again, keep in mind the wide variety of productive approaches as well as the varied needs of refugee groups and local communities. In addition, it is important not to overlook the important variable of the creativity and resourcefulness of the planners and staff involved in every organization. Program qualities such as flexibility, experimentation, professionalism, informality, and sensitivity often reflect the style of the organization’s leaders.

## Preventive Education/Therapeutic Intervention/Support

Your primary focus on preventive education, therapeutic intervention, or support services (the categories overlap a bit) will determine many other aspects of the program, including staffing, recruitment, and curriculum.

## A Preventive Approach

Programs that focus on services for parents of children ages 0 to 5, such as Catholic Charities of San Diego (26) and Meadowbrook Family Center in Seattle (8) are examples of a preventive approach. Both use the PAT curriculum, which features regular home visits and case management to build on parents' strengths and interest in being involved with their children's education. The goal is to ensure children's readiness for

**Prevention builds on parents' strengths.** *For immigrant groups with little human capital trying to adapt under often discriminatory conditions of extreme economic, cultural and social disadvantage, the likelihood of success will hinge to a large extent on the availability of strong family solidarity, centered on a cohesive conjugal and parental bond, and ethnic community support.*<sup>6</sup>

school and success in avoiding later risky behavior and peer relationships. Through the case management aspect of these programs, services are often provided to the whole family, but the emphasis is on preventing problems before they start by strengthening the parents' role while their children are very young.

The program at La Frontera Center in Tucson (23) is funded by the Center for Substance Abuse and Prevention (CSAP) and is designed to help parents in at-risk families. This program uses the SMEF curriculum and gathers data about the effectiveness of parent education in preventing substance abuse by children.

A more abbreviated preventive approach is offered by some resettlement agencies that include parenting modules in their Cultural Orientation and ESL classes for new refugee arrivals.

The sessions provide information about U.S. parenting practices, laws, schools, and resources to contact if help is needed later on. They generally emphasize parenting issues that tend to become problematic for refugee families, such as expectations of school personnel for interaction with parents, active participation of students in class, and laws restricting corporal punishment.

## A Therapeutic Approach

Some programs work closely with courts, protective services, and school counselors or are part of a mental health agency; they serve families whose children have come to the program's attention because they develop problems in school or with law enforcement. Often the parents of at-risk youth are court mandated to attend parenting programs. Examples of such a program are Parents Anonymous of Phoenix (7) and Asian Pacific Family Resource Center in San Jose (14). Such programs will likely be working with a disproportionate number

**Some families need therapeutic services.** *Where the cohesiveness of the marital bond breaks down, the family's social capital begins to evaporate; adaptive gaps, role reversals, and generational conflicts between parents and children become more consequential as parental authority is dissipated and undermined.*<sup>7</sup>

of families who are hard to motivate and have many problems, including child abuse and domestic violence, in an urban environment of poverty and social isolation.

In another form of therapeutic program, trained counselors and therapists specifically address mental health issues and provide therapeutic interventions. For example, Broward County Refugee Services, Ft. Lauderdale (11) follows a 2-hour Family Strengthening session with group and individual therapy sessions. La Frontera Center (23) is a behavioral health and substance abuse treatment center that can also serve identified participants from their preventive refugee parenting program. Because many ethnic groups are resistant to formal therapy involvement, some agencies such as Refugee Services of Wisconsin, Madison (21) refer parents for "consultation" or



try to address individual therapeutic needs in other ways that are sensitive to cultural biases. This difficult area is receiving increased attention as resettlement agencies emphasize training staff to recognize and serve the mental health needs of refugees in ways that are both effective and culturally acceptable. Bilingual and bicultural staff are especially needed and difficult to recruit, particularly in smaller towns and cities. Refugees are frequently identified as suffering from depression and post-traumatic stress disorder; debilitating symptoms sometimes appear long after arrival in the United States. Whatever the approach of your program, you need to identify referral resources in your community for mental health needs of refugees that require professional attention not feasible through your parenting classes. Some resources for trauma and mental health referral and research are listed in Appendix 1.

**American discipline confuses refugees.** *Refugee parents' traditional means of discipline may not be possible. Furthermore, the parents may be dependent on their child's goodwill in order to have a ride to work or even an income...*<sup>8</sup>

### Support Programs

Programs that are characterized as supportive may combine features of both prevention and therapy, depending on the needs of the participants at any given time and the training of staff. Participants determine topics of mutual interest with the primary goal of providing peer support, information, and encouragement. Staff act as facilitators and resource people. Groups take many forms and levels of structure, and they typically serve one nationality or language group. Group members take much of the responsibility for developing curriculum topics and peer leadership. Some, such as African Refugee Service, St. Louis (28) and Newcomer's Network, Clarkston, GA (9), have been ongoing for 2 or more years and have flexible membership and attendance. At Children and Family Services, Springfield, MA (17), Russian and Vietnamese support groups organized by the refugees themselves last for 6 months as part of a larger program of information forums and home visits. Common group topics are intergenerational cultural conflict, parental fear of children's involvement in drugs or gangs, domestic violence, and general understanding of American culture as well as how to access educational, medical, nutritional, and other community services.

Other support groups emphasize parent empowerment and offer extensive opportunities for parents to become peer leaders and develop leadership skills through paraprofessional training and advocacy for refugee needs in the community. Examples include YES, San Jose (25) and Ethiopian Community Association of Missouri, St. Louis (20). Groups include topics and activities to build self-esteem, skills, and confidence in refugees' right and ability to participate fully in American life and to advocate for the needs of their children and community.

**Mental health needs are receiving increasing attention.** *Risk for depression is highest for persons who have less than a high school education, who lack occupational rewards, who have major housing problems, or who are under severe financial strain. Depressed mothers have been found to be less accepting... with little understanding of their[children's] developmental needs.*<sup>9</sup>

Support groups tend to be small and informal and have staff of the same language or ethnicity acting as facilitators and providers of resources. Groups usually meet in homes of refugees or in local community facilities. Staff facilitators are frequently called on to provide other services for families in crisis and to be "friends" who participate in family and community activities, providing a bridge between refugees and their American communities. Staff burnout often results from the on-call and crisis aspects of these programs because it can be difficult to establish clear expectations and boundaries for the program's services. One of the



effective responses to these pressures is to establish clear referral resources and procedures so that program staff are not attempting to provide all services, including counseling and other services for which they are not trained. However, it is often the staff's total dedication to refugee needs that keeps them working in these programs for many years despite the pressures and demands on their time.

### 3. Challenges and Strategies

**P**rograms reported facing many challenges and many strategies for meeting those challenges that enabled their programs to survive and, in most cases, thrive. Most programs reported that they regularly see more needs for refugees than they can meet. In many cases, the parenting services themselves emerged out of a need discovered in the course of providing ESL or youth services to refugees. In fact, a major key to survival seems to be the ability of agencies to look at their existing services and acknowledge that they are not enough or no longer address the need they originally responded to. For instance, the parenting program at YES (25) grew out of youth services. Staff recognized that helping youth often had a limited impact if the youths' home situation did not change or if the parents were not involved in changing the children's behavior and sustaining those changes. At Refugee Women's Alliance (13), parenting modules in ESL classes were not enough; even learning English was not enough unless parents could be helped to communicate effectively around the dilemmas and changes their children were facing. At YMCA Houston (15), original program funding was lost, but the staff's commitment to serving the whole family persisted through a suspension of parent support services while they obtained new funding to initiate their parenting program in a new form. Staff recognize that they still cannot do all that is needed, but they are committed to making parent-child services a priority.

This persistence and vision comes through in the staff of the long-term programs for refugee parents. Staff interviewed in these programs always saw more to do, more changes to be made, and more people to convince of their vision. They were often discouraged, but they were not defeated. Staff patience, insight, competence, and resourcefulness is a critical ingredient for all programs. Their leadership and support from the organization's administration make the difference in surmounting the formidable challenges discussed below.

The following program challenges are listed in rough order of importance or prevalence; they reflect the constant barriers that almost all programs face at one time or another. Some programs have continued to build and outlast their challenges; others are still fairly new, having been in existence for only 1 or 2 years, so it is too soon to tell. But all programs are the result of the vision, knowledge, and dedication of the organization or staff who initiated them and obtained funding.

#### Literacy and Communication

Staff must translate most curriculum material and other resources into the refugees' language. At a minimum the translation effort represents no more than added time required of staff. But often it also presents a technical problem of translating cultural and psychological concepts into terms that are meaningful and useful to refugees whose culture does not have similar concepts. To a large extent this depends on the relative skill and experience of staff and their comfort level with the concepts involved. Many refugees in parenting classes cannot read or write in their first language and do not yet speak English. Many of the concepts about life in America, such as our legal, law enforcement, and health care systems, are alien to refugees and hard to understand and accept. In addition to the need to ensure accurate but culturally sensitive communication of concepts, facilitators often need to tailor their presentations to use visual illustrations and present material in a simplified form. The STEP curriculum publishes a version for participants with a third-grade understanding level. Some curricula provide assistance with adapting the level of presentation. Although most programs hire staff who speak the refugees' language, those who use translators often become frustrated with making sure all information is translated accurately and into a form which refugees find useful.



## Staff and Training

Most agencies hire bilingual and bicultural staff when possible—usually refugees who have been in the United States for some time and have learned to balance their two cultures with insight that makes them helpful to newcomers or those still struggling with acculturation. No uniformly accepted definition of “acculturation” exists; we use the term here to refer to achievement of familiarity, acceptance, and comfort with life in a new culture integrated with what newcomers bring from their own cultural history and practices. Current literature refers to many models and styles of acculturation.

Programs often have difficulty identifying potential staff, especially among new populations still struggling to adapt to basic differences in U.S. life. Some programs mentioned that it is important to ensure that refugees on staff have successfully negotiated their own acculturation, meaning that they have effectively integrated the two cultures and resolved issues related to their losses. Some programs with enough staff to do so resolve this dilemma by teaming refugee leaders with nonimmigrant staff or by providing strong supervision and support from senior staff in the agency. The most commonly cited requirements for staff are cultural sensitivity, flexibility, and language capability; professional skills and training are second. Criteria for recruiting staff usually prove to be the most important expectations to clarify as the program is developed. However, when recruiting staff difficult trade-offs may be required between staff qualifications, budget constraints, and pressure of schedules.

## Funding

Many programs cite obtaining sufficient and ongoing funding as their greatest challenge. However, the interviews showed two interesting findings regarding funding. First, some programs have survived many years with relatively minimal funding, but usually one dedicated staff member who serves a single nationality, often working part-time. Also, many programs identified substantial funding sources, including the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement, United Way, local and state government, substance abuse organizations, Head Start, local and national foundations, and national curriculum organizations. Together, these sources constitute a sizeable pool of possible funding. It is important to become acquainted with all the resources that could be available to your local community or agency. Good places to start are the local United Way and Community Fund or your organization's development staff.

In the case of small organizations with an interest in helping refugee parents, it might be advisable to seek collaboration with a larger organization, such as a family service agency, refugee resettlement agency (volag), YM/WCA, mutual assistance association, or Head Start. Large agencies can sometimes provide additional resources in the form of technical assistance for grant writing, supervision, and credibility with funders because of their expertise and established track record in administering grants. However, small groups are sometimes skeptical of being controlled or swallowed up by a more structured, traditional agency. These pressures must be weighed against the potential benefits to refugees; partnership with a large agency may facilitate refugee access to parent support and other services. Such collaborations can be particularly helpful in small communities, where resources are scarcer and the refugee population is smaller.

The reality is that most funders like to see applications that demonstrate collaboration skills and a continuum of services. Many of the programs studied are involved in collaborations that help recruit participants and provide other services valuable to the family, such as Head Start, YMCA, mental health services, and ESL.

It may seem like a chicken-and-egg dilemma, but if at all possible, it helps to have access to a person who has experience in fundraising or writing grants. In addition to the grant-writing skill required, this person should know how to identify appropriate funding sources and have a network of contacts with key staff in funding

agencies such as United Way, local foundations, and national affinity agencies. Larger agencies are most apt to have such a staff person, but sometimes technical assistance is available through the local United Way or community foundation.

If you can demonstrate a need in your community, your capacity to meet that need, and a good plan for doing so, you can probably find a way to get the funding you need to start, then build on your track record with your first funder. Communities are much more aware of the presence and needs of refugees and immigrants nowadays, so this should help you.

## Cultural Competency

Most programs try to hire staff who are bicultural, but doing so is a complex challenge. As noted above, refugees even from the same country are not a homogeneous group. The SMEF curriculum and training feature a dialogue method to facilitate understanding of cultural values and conflicts, so that staff and participants rely more on communication and reflection on cultural expectations than on didactic information. Keys to Cultural Competency provides extensive guidance on developing and monitoring cultural competency of staff and evaluators. The guide includes sections on customs, migration experience, and sensitive issues for most refugee nationalities as well as sections on trust, meeting participant needs, and subtle communication pitfalls. Programs that have staff from several ethnic backgrounds, such as the Refugee Women's Alliance (13), conduct internal cultural sensitivity sessions to enhance the whole staff's understanding of the different ethnic groups the program serves.

**Cultural competency is a complex challenge.**

*The foundation of cultural competence rests on you and your organization's overall ability to ask, listen, observe, and research and then realize your new understandings in your planning and programming. It is an ongoing process...<sup>10</sup>*

Program developers and those who supervise staff should address some crucial questions about program goals. To what extent is there an implied program goal to Americanize participants or, conversely, to protect them and their families from undue Americanization? If the goal of parenting programs is to promote school success of refugee children, what cultural compromises are implied for families, and how are those to be communicated by the program staff? It is important to address expectations for acculturation discussed elsewhere in this section.

## Needs of New Populations

Refugees arriving in the United States today represent a growing variety of nationalities and ethnic groups. Refugees now arriving often have had less contact with Americans and American culture than earlier refugees had. Some parenting programs are set up to include all refugees who arrive within certain time periods. This structure may mean that Vietnamese, Africans, former Soviet Union, and Near Eastern refugees may be found in the same classes. Some programs try to have a general session to cover the same topic together at the beginning of a class, then break down into smaller groups by ethnicity and language. These arrangements are seldom fully satisfactory either for staff or refugees, but often the various groups are too small to have totally separate classes and staff are not available for such a schedule. In addition, as new groups come it takes a while to become familiar with their needs, gain their trust, and identify leaders to assist with recruitment and facilitation.

Two documents cited in Appendix 1 are useful to consult regarding the varied experiences and cultural practices of different refugee nationalities. The Meld guide includes practical ways to assess the capacity

and needs of your own organization as well as general guidelines for becoming acquainted with your refugee community's culture and needs. "Keys to Cultural Competency" from The Colorado Trust is written for researchers, but the detailed information and strategies for working with various nationalities apply as well to program developers and staff working with refugees.

## Needs of Long-Term Populations

At the same time that communities face the challenge of welcoming new populations, some refugees who have been in the community for a long time—sometimes as long as a whole generation—may develop

**Ambiguity of gender role changes after time in the United States.** *In a real sense, women's contacts outside the home have grown, whereas men's have shrunk...However, the greater equality experienced by these women has not resulted in the restructuring of gender roles in Vietnamese American families.*<sup>11</sup>

delayed reactions to their migration losses. This situation is most commonly precipitated by alienation from the younger generation, particularly when refugee parents have been in the United States for several years without learning English. Their children begin to grow more distant as they adopt American values of independence and materialism, and the older refugees feel more and more marginalized and isolated, particularly when new refugees from their group are no longer arriving. It is therefore still important to develop appropriate services for groups such as Southeast Asian refugees, who arrived in the United States long before the "new" populations from Africa and the Near East.

## Outreach and Recruitment

The kind of group your organization wants to initiate will, to some extent, determine the most useful form of recruitment. The issue of trust is predominant when refugees decide whether or not to accept services offered to them. All refugees have come from societies where their trust of public organizations has been betrayed; they have survived by finding ways to avoid the risk of drawing the attention of political and law enforcement officials. Their experience resulting from a misstep in this practice of caution and invisibility has often been much more disastrous and violent than anything most Americans can comprehend, so a normal and reasonable lack of trust is one of the first things to expect. Organizations must work diligently to earn the trust of the people they want to serve throughout the process of designing services and recruiting participants. It may take some time for a few families to attend and experience the benefits of the program. Most programs acknowledge that word of mouth through the refugee community is, in the end, the secret of success for ensuring refugee parents' participation.

Most refugees who participate in parenting programs do not speak or read English and may not read in their own language. Therefore, the most effective initial recruitment strategies are personal verbal referral by people they trust, such as staff at their resettlement agency (La Frontera, Tucson [23] referrals by Jewish Family Services), medical services (Catholic Charities, San Diego [26]), or mutual assistance associations (Refugee Services of Wisconsin [21]). Some programs have successfully used ethnic radio programs to inform refugees of the program and help them to be comfortable with topics to be discussed. YES, San Jose (25) has introduced topics by having youth talk on radio about issues with parents; Broward Co. Refugee Services (11) also uses radio outreach. In whatever form, person-to-person contact in the refugee's language clearly stating how they will benefit is the most effective recruitment tool for most programs. Personal contact from former participants, trusted professionals and paraprofessionals and members of religious and community associations is usually most persuasive. Initial outreach can be a tedious process that takes great patience and sensitivity.

## Focus Groups

Another recruitment technique that programs often mentioned is the use of focus groups or other direct involvement of parents in suggesting the direction of a new program. Several programs, including YES (25) and the Refugee Women's Alliance (13), use this approach to identify peer leaders and determine the main concerns with which parents would like help as well as what resources they already find useful. Focus groups are also used to determine what new directions a program might take based on the benefits experienced by former participants.

## Collaboration

Of course, the extent and depth of collaboration with other agencies often affects outreach and recruitment. Some agencies, such as Southwest Youth and Family Services, Seattle (10) and Heartland Alliance, Chicago (19), work with Head Start or Even Start and receive direct referrals for many of their families; others work closely with local resettlement agencies, such as Catholic Charities, Lutheran Social Services, and Jewish Family Services, or schools, mutual assistance associations, and health clinics for referrals. These affiliations usually provide an initial base on which to build; word of mouth takes over as the service proves useful to initial participants, especially for support groups. Any new program should become familiar with which agencies in your area work with refugees. Much is to be learned from their staff's experience, and it is important to work together to provide a continuum of services that does not duplicate services already available.

**More understanding is needed about refugees' experiences before and after arrival in the United States. Rarely have they been asked about the 'systems' in their country of origin. More typically they have simply been told what can and cannot be done here. Understanding the differences between their homeland and the United States is critical in determining the services and resources you will provide.<sup>12</sup>**

## Incentives

Several interviewees commented on the difficulties with motivating parents to seek help with understanding how their children are trapped between traditional and American ways so they can make changes needed to bridge the gap and keep their children's respect. Staff in one program reported that refugee parents often feel hopeless when they can't make their children listen and stay at home more. Sometimes this hopelessness indicates a level of depression that requires medical treatment, but often participation in a group of other parents struggling with the same issue can lift the state of hopelessness—but they find it hard to take the step of joining such a group. Many factors contribute to motivating participants, but incentives are a common tool for both recruitment and retention of participants; in fact, they are used by almost all programs interviewed. Although some programs offer a small stipend, more common incentives include help with transportation, child care, and meals or refreshments along with diplomas upon completion. Gift certificates, curriculum books, bus tokens and personal phone calls are also used to encourage attendance. Many of these incentives also help to foster group cohesiveness and communication, and they meet a real need for families for whom the cost of transportation and a meal a week could make a significant difference in their budget.

## Acculturation

It is important for administrative and direct service staff to have clear, shared understanding of their expectations regarding acculturation of refugees. This topic is most vigorously debated in relation to English language education (see Appendix 1), but all who work with refugees need to clarify their biases about acculturation or assimilation if staff is to be culturally appropriate and sensitive in working with

refugee parents. One interviewee said that it is a matter of survival in the United States for refugee parents to understand two cultures. This is a worthy goal but a tightrope for families to negotiate, and is more difficult the

**Acculturation is a complex process.** *[Refugees] often have difficulty communicating because their life experiences and perspectives that were once valid in their country of origin are no longer relevant. Many families may undergo a superficial assimilation during the first and second-generation acculturation process.*<sup>13</sup>

more different the home language and culture are from that in the United States. In the Refugee Families Program in Chicago, chronicled by Daniel Scheinfeld (see Appendix 2), staff explicitly encourage English in parent-child classes and home visits, but they encourage use of the native language by the family at home.

Although we have generally moved from a “melting pot” model, in which cultural differences are submerged, we have yet to articulate a clear alternative model of acculturation that respects and celebrates cultural differences while clarifying a common meaning for being “American”. No one suggests that families should go back to former immigrant practices of changing names and forbidding learning of native languages to disguise ethnic background, but as a country and as service professionals, we have not yet resolved our expectations of acculturation. These

expectations should be openly examined and clarified by everyone concerned with developing programs for parents. Unexamined assumptions and expectations can get in the way of intercultural communication.

## Knowing the Schools in Your Community

The importance of school should never be underestimated. In school, newcomer children learn English, make American friends, and learn the day-to-day behavior of Americans. Most come from cultures in which teachers are held in very high esteem, so refugee children look to teachers to be significant cultural brokers for their tutelage in American life as well as academic subjects. In *The Middle of Everywhere*, Mary Pipher laments that this role of schools in the acculturation process is not always maximized. Your program can make a significant contribution by establishing as much communication as possible with schools attended by refugee children in order to offer cultural orientation to school personnel about refugee cultures, advocate for refugee families when teaching and learning styles get in the way of refugee students’ and parents’ participation, and assist in any other way to facilitate communication and appreciation between refugee families and school personnel. The families have much to offer the school community, and their children need the educational opportunities of American schools.

Both parenting groups and school settings present special challenges with learning and teaching styles. Although American styles of teaching and learning value student participation and experimentation with competing ideas, many cultures expect an authoritarian presentation of unchallenged facts by the teacher and acceptance of those facts by students, with little or any independent discussion. Parents often learn the benefits of active participation best by their own involvement in planning topics for parenting classes. This experience can also help them understand how their children are taught in school.

## Evaluation and Follow Up

Plan to include systematic evaluation in your program. A separate section of this manual offers some guidelines for evaluating effectiveness of services. Evaluation should be explicitly related to program goals and results should be used to make needed changes in services offered. To obtain useful results evaluation procedures must be tailored to the language and literacy levels of the participants.



### Child Abuse and Domestic Violence in Refugee Families

*Many staff we interviewed cited domestic violence as a common problem and sometimes viewed it as linked to the violence and atrocities experienced in the wars at home that led to refugee status. However, no adequate data demonstrate whether the prevalence of violence in refugee families differs from that in the general population. Child abuse in particular becomes entangled in cultural issues, because many refugees come from cultures in which acceptable corporal punishment of children often rises to a level that in America is considered child abuse. Interviewees mentioned that in some countries, physical discipline is even considered a sign of parents' love of their children; to withhold corporal punishment is seen as a sign of weakness and neglect, engendering guilt in the parent. Fear of the American child protective service system (often akin in their minds to the arbitrary police practices they experienced in their country) makes many parents avoid becoming involved in American institutions, such as schools, where they might be accused of harming their children or threatened with losing their children. Some interviewees reported that this problem is further compounded by threats from children to report their parents to authorities, even in the hope of being placed in an American foster home. This is more likely to occur when the children know and exploit American systems through their mastery of English and have much more information than their parents do. A major component of all parenting programs is to help refugee parents deal with this dilemma by teaching them the laws concerning corporal punishment and child abuse in America, then helping them develop alternative ways to meet their goals of understanding and controlling their children.*

Evaluation is most valuable when used to improve program effectiveness and provide data for funding requests. Programs that work directly with a national curriculum usually receive assistance with evaluation as part of the curriculum. Others, such as YES (25), have hired consultants to assist with evaluation. Evaluation is often the most overlooked or difficult element to implement because of the funding and staff training required. It also presents some unique challenges of language and cultural competency. Of the programs interviewed, some include extensive formal evaluation, whereas others include little or none. The Colorado Trust's Keys to Cultural Competency (see Appendix 1) provides a comprehensive guide to issues involved in evaluating programs as well as strategies for designing effective evaluation. The separate Evaluation section of this manual will go into more detail about designing the evaluation component for your program.

Follow up is not systematically included in most of the programs interviewed, although many establish relationships with refugees that encourage them to come back later if they have special needs. A follow-up system would ideally be included in every program, particularly in view of the growing evidence that many problems are delayed even to the second and third generation. Follow up might take several forms, such as phone calls when participants drop out to find out how their needs were not being met and what other services might be needed, systematic contacts at a certain interval after the end of a program, invitations to later program services, and inclusion in focus groups to evaluate the service and help plan for future revisions if needed. Follow up is difficult to implement because of the expense and staff time needed, but it is a valuable tool in planning and evaluation and can help determine services that families might need at a later stage of their family cycle. Follow up can help us learn more about the cycles of acculturation and how to help families in the second third generations as new stresses develop. If your community offers U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement-funded social services, which are available to refugees for 5 years after arrival, you might want



to inform participants of the services that are relevant to their needs and partner with the provider agency to ensure a continuum of service through the various cycles of need.

## 4. Parenting Adolescents

**S**ome of the challenges involved in parenting adolescent children are unique for refugees, and the topic deserves special mention. Program staff as well as the literature say that the cultural conflict that develops when parents feel they are losing their children to America is the most pressing problem for families with adolescents. This problem may begin almost as soon as refugee children enter school, but it can become acute under the added pressures of adolescence. As families live longer in the United States, significant conflicts arise over homework and school achievement, especially when parents do not understand the homework and have work schedules that make it hard for them to supervise it. Parents often endure extreme hardship to provide opportunities for their children to benefit from what America has to offer in education, future job opportunities, and safety from persecution, yet the independent American lifestyle and materialistic expectations that their children adopt threaten parents' traditional authority. In this context, everyday choices, such as friendships with unknown children and time spent away from home (and, later, whom and when to marry or where to live), become battlegrounds and sources of extreme alienation when children choose independently without giving priority to family needs. To some extent, the severity and timing of these conflicts depend on the age of children when they come to the United States; the greatest tension occurs in families in which children are born here and have no memories of the hopes and struggles that were such an important part of their parents' resettlement experience.

### School

Most available research indicates that immigrant and refugee students on the whole perform better in school than native-born students in the first generation but that this level of achievement often declines the longer students are in the United States. Some researchers suggest that variations among nationalities in "familism" (a deeply ingrained sense of obligation and orientation to the family) has significant enduring effects on school achievement as well as educational expectations and family values. Some interviewees describe problems of recent refugees from newer populations who have already fallen far behind their American counterparts in school, due to time in camps or different educational systems in their country of origin. Schools often do not help these students catch up, so they may get discouraged and drop out of school. Most refugee families highly value the educational opportunities they expect for their children in the United States and are baffled when this proves to be an elusive benefit. Community volunteer tutors can make a difference, as can parenting programs that help parents understand why their children are having trouble in school and advocate for help in the schools.

**The American school experience introduces new values.** *[A]t school, like all American teenagers, they learn to think for themselves. In fact, the major identity struggles of refugee teens involve finding the balance between independence and their obligations to family and community. . . . Many parents feel they lose their children to America.*<sup>14</sup>

In addition to inappropriate and self-defeating school placement, other cultural factors affect the stresses of acculturation and school for immigrant children. For instance, people of different nationalities express emotion in significantly different ways, which may seem disrespectful or deceptive to persons of another nationality. American teaching practices are often incompatible with teaching and learning styles in the refugee's home country. Different cultures have different gender role expectations and expectations governing participation of boys and girls in classes and activities together. The American school system's ignorance of these traditional cultural norms often leads to serious misunderstandings and stress for refugee parents and children, which



are compounded by the tradition of not questioning teachers' authority. This complex web of communication problems and cultural misunderstanding presents a serious dilemma for parents and further undermines their authority if they do not understand or accept the culture of their children's schools when their hopes for the future depend on those same schools.

One of the difficult aspects of acculturation is the different way of approaching the world that children learn at school. Compared with other cultures, American classroom behavior is relaxed; often involves a spirited exchange of ideas in which students are expected to participate; is governed by laws against corporal punishment by teachers and principals; and is designed to foster an independent and individualistic approach to thinking and to life. This approach often puts students on a collision course with the traditional cultures of their parents. They bring home behaviors grounded in these precepts and conflict with their parents over the behavior. The underlying shift in worldview needs to be worked out in the family if children are to have the options for further education and careers that their parents want for them.

If parents reject American school culture, many refugee children come to feel that they have to be one person in school and a different person at home; the strain on their functioning both at school and at home can become intolerable. To address these strains, some programs, such as YES (25), provide services separately for youth and their parents, but they bring them together for dialogue at other times. Some program staff intervene directly with parents and children to mediate dialogue between them when problems arise that parents cannot handle alone. All programs include classes about discipline, child protection laws, school, and American cultural practices. For instance, parents are informed of the practice of providing spending money for snacks in school and the expectation that students will speak up in class. Not being encouraged by their parents to participate fully in these ways is particularly alienating for adolescents who are already outsiders by virtue of language and appearance. Without understanding and accepting relevant information, some parents punish their children for behaviors that are necessary for success in school.

## Drugs and Gangs

Hard data on the actual incidence of refugee youth involvement in drugs and gangs is hard to find, although it is certainly a worry to parents and a serious problem in communities no matter who is involved. Although almost all interviewees referred to intergenerational problems with regard to traditional cultural values, only the Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association, Lowell, MA (5) specifically focuses on problems of drug involvement among refugee children. The Lowell program is funded by a Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grant, so its experience probably cannot be extrapolated to the general population of refugees because its target population consists of people at risk of substance abuse.

Many parents, particularly among Southeast Asian refugees, fear their children's involvement in drugs and gangs, but we did not uncover parental reports of extensive actual involvement. Parental fears are compounded because their communication styles and expectations can differ from those of their more independent children. At this point we have to conclude either that the incidence of drug and gang involvement by refugee youth is lower than commonly believed (which seems consistent with most accounts) or that the parents of these youth are not generally coming to the attention of parenting services.

The Refugee Women's Alliance (13) noted that school dropouts are a significant problem. For Americans, dropping out of school is often associated with gang and drug problems, but for refugee children, it is more likely a function of family responsibilities and lack of help with adapting to academic and social requirements. Program staff can help the triad of school, parents, and children understand that most refugees want education for their children but need to accept some of the changes in family expectations that this entails. In addition,

school personnel need to be more sensitive to the reasons that refugee children drop out and how schools could help them.

One long-time worker with Southeast Asian refugees has found that teen violence and gang involvement are not as serious among Vietnamese as in other ethnic groups. Some interviewees said that problems with gangs and drugs have actually declined in recent years and, in any case, are not the most prevalent problem in refugee families with adolescents. Like all crime, drugs and gangs have a disproportionate emotional impact that often obscures other, much more common problems. Again, knowing the local community—its populations and problems—is the first step in planning and recruiting participants for a successful program. As refugee youth become more Americanized over each generation, problems with alcohol and drug use may become a future concern.

## Disciplinary Practices

Disciplinary practices of different groups affect parent-school relations. Adolescents and younger children have reportedly threatened their parents with calling child abuse authorities when parents use traditional physical methods. These parent-child conflicts often become exaggerated in adolescence and are addressed in most programs that focus on parents of adolescents. Some of the programs who mentioned addressing this issue are Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association (5), Concord Youth and Family Services (6), Parents Anonymous Phoenix (7), Newcomer's Network (9), Refugee Women's Alliance (13), Refugee Services of Wisconsin (21), InterChurch Refugee and Immigration Ministries (22), YES (25), and Lutheran Community Services of the Northwest (27). An additional stressor for parental authority and cultural continuity is that both the immediate and the extended family are almost always disrupted during the time of migration; some members of the family arrive years before others. No program claims to have a magic solution to the problems refugee parents have with disciplining their adolescent children, but all agree that the stresses of alienation and lack of communication are often severe at this age, as they are in most families, but are aggravated for refugees by the stresses of acculturation.

It is a paradox of the immigrant experience that one of parents' greatest fears is loss of control and respect of their children if they are denied use of traditional methods of corporal punishment, yet in the United States they lose control if they persist in corporal punishment after their children learn that it may be illegal. Their control and respect may rest more in learning methods of discipline that are more "American," frequently a difficult hurdle when so much else has been lost and their struggle for economic stability deprives them of time and energy for family relationships and shared acculturation efforts.

Still, most staff interviewed agree that the first step must be parents' willingness to try to understand and accept that their children will be exposed to and embrace many American values and behaviors that are not positive from the point of view of their traditional cultural values. They need support to understand that it helps to find new ways of communicating with their children and participating in their world, such as meeting with teachers and insisting on meeting their friends. It is doubly hard to maintain a positive relationship with adolescent children if children have been delegated adult authority in some aspects of family life due to their use of English and familiarity with American institutions. If they are employed and their income is critical for

**Data indicate that gang and drug problems are less prevalent among refugees. Among the young, data indicate that alcohol, tobacco and other drug use is not as extensive within any Asian group as within the mainstream population or within most other ethnic groups...In the absence of knowledge concerning the inner workings of the major factors that contribute to [drug and alcohol]-using behavior of a particular Asian community, one cannot...come up with an appropriate prevention program...**<sup>15</sup>

the family's goal of self-sufficiency and home ownership, they derive authority that is disproportionate to their maturity and traditional role. Most interviewees observed that the more the parents learn English and are able to participate in American culture, the better their chance of relating positively to their children and keeping their respect. However, a constant challenge in this difficult acculturation process is the intense financial struggle of new refugees, who often work long hours at exhausting, low-paid jobs, thereby creating another paradox: They sacrifice for a better home, clothes, and education for their children, but they end up feeling that the children's growing materialism somehow often defeats the benefits gained.

## Conclusion

The bottom line for most interviewees is that families do best when parents can accept the paradox that the only way for them to maintain the respect and authority they expect is to find a way to acculturate selectively: dealing with the values to which their children are exposed and talking with their children about the dilemmas the family has to resolve. It is a great loss and disappointment to parents to realize that many American values with which they are uncomfortable, such as independent thinking, may be needed to attain the goals they have for their children in America. They must moderate traditional disciplinary practices and strive for a new basis of parental authority. Through the parenting groups and other means, they need help to develop the resources and skills to get accurate information about American systems and manage family life without being dependent on their English-speaking children. Ultimately, that role reversal leads to lack of respect from their children and loss of control as the children take advantage of their own authority, particularly when families live in neighborhoods and attend schools where children are exposed to the worst influences of American adolescent culture. Parents can only guide their children if they have good sources of information and can find ways to get support in the community. When parenting programs can help parents in these ways, they help restore the authority of parents so that the family can function effectively. Parents and children have to resolve disappointments and cultural dilemmas.

**The Dream—Years go by.**  
*The immigrant family adapts here and there. The parents come to the realization that life in America is complicated and difficult, not easier than in their own country...They are proud of some things, but regret others...but going back to their country is unthinkable after all this time. They will be viewed as failures by their relatives...The focus turns to the children. Let them get a good education and satisfying jobs. We came here for them anyway, didn't we? What has happened?*<sup>16</sup>

It is a difficult irony for parents to accept that giving up some of their traditional means of maintaining authority, such as corporal punishment, brings new respect from their children, who need to feel their parents' informed support in adapting to life in the United States. Working together to adapt to American life helps maintain family solidarity and bring credibility to the process of sorting out what to change and what to hold onto in melding the two cultures to function in everyday life. This sorting process becomes even more important as newcomers spread out into the smaller cities of the Midwest and south where the option of remaining separate from the mainstream community is less available.

Appendix 2 provides details on programs that offer services to parents of adolescents. In talking to staff of these programs, something that came through was the very personal involvement of staff with parents, particularly when problems arise. Often this results from both the expertise of staff and the perceived authority and understanding they bring when they come from the same culture as the parents, especially when that culture bestows



high respect on teachers. More about services to adolescents is found in the “Services for Refugee Parents of Adolescents” section of this manual.



## 5. Strengths of Parenting Programs

The greatest strength that comes through in programs surveyed is the high level of commitment of organizations and staff to providing responsive services to refugee families and their great appreciation for the assets refugees themselves bring to the communities in which they resettle, including their cultural values, their resilience, and their loyalty to both their new and original countries. Many staff are themselves refugees who received services when they entered the United States and later got training to “give back” their experience and knowledge to others who come after them.

Other strengths of parenting programs are as follows:

### Reduced Isolation

Groups for refugee parents provide a supportive, safe forum in which they can both meet and get support from others who share their adjustment dilemmas and their immense sense of loss. At the same time, they provide a bridge to the new community through the staff and organization that provides the services. The groups help reduce the isolation experienced when lack of English forces parents to rely heavily on their children for entree into American systems and helps them maintain their authority as parents. Especially in large urban centers, refugees may be isolated both from English-speaking Americans and from the support of others from their own country. When small groups meet in homes where culture is shared, a sense of comfort and familiarity is also generated through the support of others trying to cope with barriers to acculturation in America.

### Access to Information and American Systems

Whether parenting groups use a structured curriculum or an informal format, facilitators are a resource for information about American life and customs. They help connect parents with services through other agencies in the community; sometimes provide interpretation for them in accessing services; help them understand the American school system and discipline; and even help with such everyday issues as clothing customs, coping with weather, and shopping. Parents are able to learn from other adults, including staff and peers, rather than only from their children.

### Increased Self-Esteem and Parental Authority

Although refugees have exhibited remarkable strengths and resiliency in surviving the horrors of upheaval in their country and the migration experience, they often feel defeated by life in America. Many group leaders mentioned parents’ struggle to retain their self-esteem and sense of authority, which are threatened when they are confused by the new independence of their children and discrimination in some communities where they resettle. The lowered self-esteem experienced by refugees is especially strong until they learn English. Support of the group and assistance of staff, including help with advocating for their issues in schools and community, help to rebuild their sense of personal and parental identity. Often the support of staff and group emboldens parents to become involved in their new community.

**Role reversal is a problem for refugee families.**

*[C]hildren in Vietnam were more dependent upon their parents for financial support...Furthermore, parents often noticed a decline in their own social status and a corresponding increase in their children's. This was primarily because children were learning English at a faster rate than parents...This inevitably resulted in children holding a certain degree of power over their parents.<sup>17</sup>*

Some interviewees mentioned that parents do not seek information about American parenting skills as much as they seek support in handling their own process of acculturation, which in turn helps them maintain their authority because they do not have to depend on their children for information and translation. Also, participation in planning classes to meet their own needs and the modeling benefits of peer leadership build self-esteem and cultural pride, which helps refugees believe again in their own strengths and the positive opportunities available to them and their families. As they develop a sense that they have allies, their frustration turns into understanding and strength to change; they can then reclaim their own identity and leadership role in the family. This is an immeasurable improvement in their situation and hopes for the future.

The strengths of the programs surveyed help point the way for more communities to offer groups for refugee parents to help them achieve their family's goals in the U.S. It should not take even a minute of reflection for most native-born Americans to imagine themselves moved to a distant land and trying as an adult to learn the language, make friends, and raise children there; then to realize that they would need some help to make a successful transition. We are a country with the resources to provide this help for people who keep coming to our shores and enriching each American generation. Refugees themselves bring countless strengths. When organizations recognize and build on these strengths, a powerful alliance is created that builds a stronger, richer community from which all can benefit.

## 6. Recommendations for Program Development

The programs interviewed offer fine and well-conceived services that are an asset to their communities and are often a lifeline to the refugees who participate in them. It would be presumptuous for us to suggest specific changes in any of these programs, given the brief interaction we were able to have with them. Also, we recognize that the particular mixture of vision, dedication, skills, and relationships of staff in each organization is critical to program success and cannot be easily duplicated. With these caveats, we offer some general recommendations that may be useful for consideration by any program.

### Clarify the Goals and Capacity of Your Organization

If you are considering parent support services for refugees for the first time, why are you doing this? Is it because you are already serving refugees and see a need? Is it because of anecdotes you have heard that suggest a possible need? What is that need, and is it not being met elsewhere in the community? Do you have the capacity to meet that need: current services to refugees and their trust, ability to fund and staff program, cultural and language capacity, linkages in the community, and organizational support? You should ask the same questions if you are considering changing or expanding an existing program. Keep in mind that the most general, but crucial, consideration is always to know and build on your own strengths, beginning with the staff and mission of your own organization. Then decide how you can set goals that will offer refugee parents at a minimum the strengths discussed above.

Although a curriculum for parenting groups will probably be a significant element of your parent support services, we encourage you to set broad goals to prepare you to assist with other family needs that emerge from the groups. Design your program and evaluation to allow for flexibility to respond to changing needs of the refugees you serve and to be alert to examine any assumptions in your staff or organization about refugee needs. For instance, what attitudes do you bring about expectations for refugees' acculturation styles or their goals for their children? Are you expecting to Americanize refugees or to protect them from stresses of Americanization?

One of the primary considerations in basic program design, developing collaborations, and applying for funding is to determine your target population. That is, you must narrow the group of refugee families you will serve and the kind of parent support services you want to provide. Will it be recent arrivals; parents of preschool children, elementary school children, or adolescents; or families referred by courts? Which ethnic groups will you serve? Answering questions such as these will help you choose your curriculum, service partners, and potential funders.

### Research the Needs and Resources of Your Community

You should get as much information as you can about the refugees in your community and their unmet needs, not only as seen through the eyes of service providers, but also in the eyes of refugees themselves. Several sources for this information are available, beginning with those closest to you—the people in your neighborhood, schools, organizations, and religious groups. These contacts can tell you about the most human side of the needs of refugee parents: incidents of school problems, intergenerational conflict, academic failure, dropouts, problems with police, financial stress, job stress, and interethnic conflict. You need to get a handle on the prevalence of these problems and talk to other service providers and leaders in the group you want to serve. Sometimes the United Way or public planning agencies have statistical data. Your State Refugee Coordinator and elected representatives may also be able to guide you to information about this segment of your community. Find out from other service providers, such as schools, churches, volags, YWCA, Head Start, Welfare



to Work programs, whether they have parent support services for refugee parents or whether a collaboration might be possible.

Next, learn as much as you can about the bigger picture in relation to this group. What are their customs? Why are they refugees? What migration experiences have they likely had before arriving in the United States? What languages do they speak? How many years of formal education are they likely to have had? What is their history of migration to your community? What services have they received since arriving here, and from what agencies? What are their religious and spiritual affiliations and practices? What else is particular to their culture and important to know in order to communicate respectfully and effectively? What long-term trends in the refugee environment are evident in your community—new populations with different strengths and needs, decreasing arrivals, or more arrivals who have no family ties in the United States.

Work directly with representatives of the group you will serve to learn more about their needs and what services they might use. As noted above, focus groups can be helpful if you can recruit a representative group to talk openly with you. Mutual assistance associations may help you identify natural leaders who have the confidence of their ethnic group. This is a tricky proposition, though: The people whom agencies see as leaders may not be the people respected as leaders by the group you want to serve. Find ways to ascertain the standing of the people you consult so that you do not get caught between factions.

## **Consider the Total Context of Refugees' Lives**

If they are recent arrivals, families may be living with their relatives in relatively crowded conditions while they work at low wages to save for their own house or apartment. Employment presents a double hurdle for many refugees. First, they may have held prestigious jobs in their country that do not exist here or for which they do not qualify. Second, whatever their prior experience, in most cases they begin in the United States in relatively low-paying and strenuous jobs. This situation will affect your recruitment and, more important, will be an area that is stressful for the family. It will therefore affect the time and energy refugee parents have for group meetings as well as their priorities. It is essential to identify the strengths and social capital available to help strengthen the family.

## **Recruit and Train Staff for Cultural Competency**

To be an effective and sensitive advocate for refugees, you will need to include ongoing training in cultural competency for staff and organizational decision makers. Ideally, you will have bilingual and bicultural staff who can work with refugees in their own language. They also need to be able to listen to participants' cultural values and needs and sort out appropriate ways to help them make the cultural compromises to accomplish comfortable acculturation in America. They must be able to resist acting on unexamined assumptions about acculturation which would get in the way of helping refugees to bridge two cultures. They are important cultural brokers.

## **Collaborate With Established Organizations**

The material on funding in Section 3 discusses the value of building alliances with established organizations. Doing so can help avoid duplication, bring more resources into your program, and impress potential funders. Many of the longer lasting programs we interviewed were part of or affiliated with larger groups, and all relied on informal collaborations. These collaborations provide referral resources for parents whose needs exceed the limits of the parenting program as well as community cohesiveness for planning and advocacy. You will particularly want to find mental health service providers who can train staff to recognize symptoms that call for referral and who can be a resource to refugees with mental health needs. If your local community does not

have appropriate mental health services for refugees, you will need to consult with one of the national networks listed in Appendix 1. Also, do not overlook the potential for collaboration in your own organization, which may have programs for youth services, counseling, volunteer tutors, and other services that could be offered to refugees.

## **Make the School an Essential Partner**

School is where refugee children meet Americans and gain intense exposure to American values. It often becomes the source of intergenerational cultural conflict in families and a source of stress and disillusionment for parents. To the extent possible, staff need to be familiar with the schools refugee children attend and to establish relationships with school personnel. These relationships will facilitate parental communication with teachers and help parents feel that they are part of their children's education. This effort will often involve advocacy with school personnel to get a hearing for refugee issues; it will also enable staff to interpret school activities and policies for parents.

## **Evaluate From the Beginning**

It can save time in the end if you clearly define what you want to accomplish so that you will be able to measure whether you have accomplished it. If you design evaluation tools from the beginning, it will help you to clarify goals, determine whether they are realistic, and prepare you to assess each program component on the basis of how it contributes to achieving goals. A separate section of this manual gives some guidelines for designing your evaluation and how to use it for planning and with potential funders.

## **Prepare for Advocacy**

Refugees have ongoing needs. New populations arrive, those who have been here for some time may develop delayed reactions to their migration trauma. Advocacy takes many forms and should be part of any effort to help refugee parents and families. Advocacy is needed for public policy, to raise sensitivity and ensure fair treatment in schools, to welcome refugees into the mainstream of a community's events, and to combat discrimination. Who better to stand with refugees and advocate for their interests than those who work with them and know their strengths and aspirations?

At a minimum, advocates can help introduce refugees to school personnel, religious organizations and community services. Advocates help inform the mainstream community of refugees' needs and the contributions they bring to the community. Advocates also help fight discrimination by supporting refugees' efforts to explain their values and behavior to people who do not understand or accept differences of expression and custom. They may also need to get involved in public policy debates or combat blatant discriminatory practices in schools. Advocates can help various groups sympathetic to refugees build alliances to improve services and communication among different factions in the community and invite refugees to bring their perspective to issues that affect the whole community.

## **Ensure Administrative Support to Programs**

Ongoing strong links between administration and program staff must be ensured at every step. Sometimes, particularly in large agencies, refugee services are separated from the rest of the work of the agency, sometimes in detached (often less attractive) facilities and outside everyday communication channels. Administrators sometimes believe that language and culture naturally separate these services or that it is too difficult for mainstream staff to understand their issues. If refugees are invited to speak for themselves and participate

in planning and decision-making, this provides a model for development of refugee peer leadership and acculturation.

In agencies where overinvolvement in crisis management leads to burnout, as suggested by some of our interviewees, strong supervision and administrative oversight are essential to help set limits and clarify goals for the long-term health of the services. One of the functions of supervisory staff should be to define limits of the program's services and staff involvement in crisis management, including help with positive referral techniques and resources. Close alliance with administration will keep administrators informed about program progress and is important for maintaining stable funding. Although long-term service of staff seems to be the norm, sometimes an unattended program with high staff frustration can disintegrate and then be difficult to stabilize or revive.

## Include Parenting of Adolescents

Even if your program focuses on families with very young children, it is important to help prepare parents to face the special cultural issues that arise as their children reach adolescence. As we have seen, the stresses of this transition are compounded for refugees by the different processes of parents' and children's acculturation,

### Expectations of adolescents are different in the United States.

*The barriers faced by immigrant/refugee families not only relate to their personal experiences in their home country but also to the normal life transitions that will be experienced differently than in their country of origin.<sup>18</sup>*

sometimes leading to an extreme level of alienation. For parents of adolescents, it is especially important to be able to build a strong, supportive network of collaborating systems and organizations. Programs need to work closely with schools and help parents develop positive contacts with their children's school. Other organizations involved in the family's life also should be part of this support and education system, such as religious organizations, ESL programs, and mutual assistance associations. Better still, it is helpful to be able to offer a continuum of parent support services so that on arrival refugees would begin to be prepared for the challenges they are likely to face as their children grow up, so they can be linked with helpful associations at each developmental stage.

These are a few recommendations for developing or enriching your services for refugee parents. No doubt you could add many more, and we hope you will share your ideas with others in this work. It is difficult but rewarding work, and it is ever changing and challenging. We hope these suggestions will produce productive reflection and action for you that will make your program even more rewarding for all involved. More on this topic is found in the Program Development section of this manual.

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# 2

## **Program Development Guidelines For Parent Support Services**



Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services



A joint project of



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# 1. Introduction

Refugees from cultures most unlike the United States are especially vulnerable and likely to need parent support services. Their need is further compounded if they are poor or unskilled, do not speak English, or live in urban areas that do not provide opportunities and models for positive acculturation.

The parenting needs of newcomer families are quite varied and change over time. In many cases, their needs will be basic; they may need help, for example, adapting to the weather, accessing health care, understanding local transportation systems and U.S. laws and customs, and enrolling their children in schools. Depending on their experiences in leaving their homeland and becoming refugees, they may also need help to heal depression and personal trauma. They may be feeling isolated and distrustful, particularly if they are without the support of other refugees from their country who could reassure them about U.S. customs and institutions and model a healthy adjustment to life in the new culture.

*The key problem shared by refugee and many other populations is not having the resources, understandings, skills, or accompanying self-concept that allows and encourages individuals and families to enter into effective engagement with the surrounding social/cultural world.<sup>1</sup>*

Parent support services designed to help refugees may vary, but all programs should impart knowledge and skills for successful parenting in a new culture, build parents' self-confidence in their ability to overcome barriers, affect parents' attitudes and behavior in ways favorable to their acculturation, and provide opportunities for community members to learn and be enriched by the refugees' culture. Because the backgrounds and needs of refugees change rapidly as new populations arrive, successful programs will also incorporate assessment and evaluation procedures that will help revise their services as their environment changes. A successful parent support program will help refugees maintain their authoritative role as parents, enabling the whole family to embrace life in the United States while maintaining the strengths and values important to the cultural identity of their birth.

Your approach to developing parent support services for refugees will depend to a large extent on the structure and history of your organization. If you are a family service agency, you might consider integrating parent support services for newcomers into your existing services for families. In that approach, you will need to consider issues of language and culture as well as how newcomer families' needs can be integrated into services that are already being provided to other families. If you are a voluntary refugee resettlement agency (volag) providing reception and placement services to new arrivals, you might initiate basic parent support services as part of your orientation program and provide information about how more extensive parent support services can be accessed if needed later. If you are a mutual assistance association (MAA) or other community organization, you will want to consider how parent support can be offered using your existing social services and referral base.

The guidelines in this manual are designed to assist service providers in various settings by outlining a process for developing parent support services for newcomers in your community. The guidelines include the following information:

- Recommendations for needs assessment and planning
- General considerations that can be applied in various organizational contexts, such as cultural competency, staffing, and funding



- Issues of curriculum selection and development , with focus on a broad continuum of parent support services.

This manual does not present a specific curriculum to fit the needs of all communities; rather, it provides a process by which you can build a program of support services for refugee and immigrant parents and families tailored to serve your local needs.

## 2. Needs Assessment

**B**efore deciding what services your program will offer, a thorough survey of the needs of newcomer parents in your community is necessary to be sure your plans meet current needs. In addition, a needs assessment can help you establish a method for updating your information and response as new populations arrive and the environment for newcomers changes. A good needs assessment will also help build essential alliances with other groups in the community with whom you can collaborate in ongoing recruitment, evaluation, and referral efforts.

We suggest that you use the needs assessment to take a close look at the full range of support services that refugee families may need. The demands of cultural sensitivity have become much more complex for working with refugee and immigrant families. Some organizations have narrowed their approach and offer only a structured orientation on parenting in the United States, focusing on how it might be different from refugees' countries of origin. Such information can ease refugee families' adjustment, but it often is not sufficient to unlock their full potential for parenting in a multicultural setting, particularly when stresses of daily life are magnified for the newcomer family and conflicts develop between parents and their Americanized children.

*Even though there is a tendency for parents to repeat behaviors learned early in life, for many it is a time to redo old patterns and heal old wounds as they nurture their own children. Parents are most successful at making these changes in learned patterns of behavior when they have the support of people they feel they can lean on and trust.<sup>2</sup>*

It is important to examine your organization's reasons for offering parenting services and your staff's assumptions about acculturation. Attitudes and beliefs may be implicit in the way services are being planned and may conflict with the reality of refugees' needs in your community. Planning and administrative staff will need to keep an open mind to the historic shift in population diversity and needs that we have experienced in the United States over the past decade. Keeping this context in mind, we suggest that your needs assessment explore the questions in the following sections.

### **Why are you thinking of offering parent support services for refugees?**

Have you observed problems that refugees are experiencing and want to help? Has another organization approached you and asked for your assistance? Get as much information as you can about the problems or needs that have come to your attention. Do not assume that all the problems rest with the refugee family. Refugee families often face real barriers generated by lack of understanding, discrimination, or unresponsiveness within the mainstream community and its service providers with regard to their needs, cultural values, and assets.

### **Do you want a program that will negotiate a diverse, creative, cultural atmosphere or preserve an idealized homogeneity?**

Your first goal may be to improve services to refugees and provide them with a welcoming atmosphere. Is there also a hidden agenda to encourage them to give up their own cultural values and practices in order to "become American?" Both administrative and direct service staff must articulate what they expect to accomplish both for your organization and for refugee families. As the United States becomes more diverse, it is more and more difficult to define a common American culture with regard to language, customs, values, and daily behavior. The

degree to which your program demonstrates respect for refugees' native culture and their struggle to preserve important cultural values while raising their children to succeed in the United States will determine whether you gain the trust of refugee families. Ultimately, it will affect the success of your program and its positive impact in your community.

## Exactly what problems do you want to address?

The needs you are observing could stem from any number of challenges the families are facing. Perhaps parents and children are acculturating at different paces, straining the parent–child relationship; perhaps the stress and time required to meet basic needs leave little time for parents to interact with their children. Perhaps parents

*Changes in the cultural makeup of communities are challenging long-standing institutional and organizational practices in every aspect of the human services, and child welfare systems are constantly evolving as they struggle to understand the specific needs of these communities and develop appropriate services for them.<sup>3</sup>*

are finding it difficult to balance the demands of their culture against American schools' expectations of their children; perhaps they are disappointed with the cultural side effects of the material success they have gained for their children.

## How will refugee parent support services fit into your organization's mission and structure?

If you are not the director of your organization, consult with him or her to be sure that parent support for refugees fits into your agency's mission. You will need your agency's full support before you use its name in recruitment, seek funding or allocation of staff time and use of agency space. Checking with your director before making plans—and before raising the hopes of staff

and clients that new services will be provided—is critical. Even if providing refugee parenting services seems urgent, your organization may have priorities that make it impossible to introduce at this time. Proceeding without authorization may cause disappointment and embarrassment and could possibly derail future efforts to offer this service at your agency.

## What is an advisory group? Who should be included in one?

As soon as you determine that you have the support of your organization, it will be helpful to put together an advisory group. Such a group can help you assess the needs of newcomer families and determine what community resources are available to support your clients.

The advisory group can be as formal or informal as you want. Often, different service providers have pieces of information that are of value to others who are trying to help the same groups or families. Sharing information allows all members of the advisory board to learn from each other and creates an integrated network of support for refugee families.

If your organization already serves parents, even if they are not refugee parents, you should include a representative from the parent support staff on your advisory board. In addition, include the people who originally approached you about offering services as well as representatives from the following groups: schools; members of the ethnic group or groups you want to serve; health services providers; youth services groups; ethnic, religious, and social organizations; English as a second language (ESL) programs; law enforcement; and any other groups that have significant interaction with newcomers in your community.

An advisory group can become a valuable coalition that serves your community while guiding your new program. Keep in mind that this kind of advisory group really works only if trust is built among the participating organizations and if all members feel that they have valuable information to share—and that they get helpful information in return. Make sure your members know that their advice and time are valued, and that they can gain as much information as they share.. in a noncompetitive atmosphere that is focused on the needs of clients.

### **Is anyone else in your community already providing parenting services to refugee families?**

If so, can you justify using your resources to provide an additional support service? Should you instead collaborate with the agency already providing support and offer a complementary service? You may make the best use of scant resources by augmenting and strengthening an existing service, rather than creating a redundant one.

### **What would your ideal comprehensive refugee parent support program include?**

Before you finalize plans about the support services you will develop, take time to step back and do a little dreaming. Draw together all you have learned from your own explorations and from your advisory group, and lay out the full range of services that would be needed to provide comprehensive family support for refugees. Include even those services you cannot imagine providing at this time. Keep this “wish list” for future reference as you plan your initial services and expand them over time.



### 3. Creating a Continuum of Support Services

**W**hen you have completed your needs assessment and developed your wish list, you should have a clear picture of the full range of potential refugee parent services. Now prioritize the most pressing needs. Determine which ones can be met by your organization, taking into consideration the availability of funding and community support. Then set realistic objectives for getting your parent support services started and set a timeline for developing the various components.

For example, you may envision a continuum of services that includes parent–child school readiness groups, adult ESL, homework groups for teenagers, posttraumatic stress disorder counseling, case management and referral, family advocacy, support groups for newcomer parents with various ages of children, and leadership development. It is unlikely that all of these services are available in your community or that you could begin providing all the missing ones at once. You will probably need to develop a multistage plan and keep in mind that a family cannot focus on more subtle acculturation issues until its basic needs are met.

Remember that not all newcomers from the same ethnic group share the same cultural background. Depending on whether they come from rural or urban areas, whether they have spent time in refugee camps, and whether they share the same religious background, their values and interpretation of life in America may be very different. No single successful model for providing refugee parent support services has been developed, and the ideal program will be tailored to fit an individual community's needs.

*Staff's first priority is to provide whatever assistance is necessary to deal effectively with needs in the here-and-now. . . . Building on the family's strengths, increasing the family's knowledge and skills, and helping to develop a family's self-confidence . . . and connections.<sup>4</sup>*

You now have a plan for proceeding that includes the following information:

- A clear picture of the support that refugee parents need and that you have the capacity to provide
- A profile of the refugees you want to serve, including nationality, ethnicity, language, and other specifics
- Ideas about resources to put together to develop your program
- A plan to focus on parents of young children or adolescents, or provide more general parent support.

At this point, you should review potential collaborations and ensure that you would not be duplicating services already available. If you have developed relationships with other organizations in the community involved in similar work, you may be able to build a coalition of organizations that can provide all the services in your wish list.





## 4. Approaches to Program Design

Approaches to serving newcomers vary with the size, history, and environment of the communities in which newcomers arrive. Below are several scenarios for developing support services. We cannot overemphasize the importance of providing services that reflect the needs and resources of your unique community.

- In one scenario, you might consider integrating case management and counseling services into existing programs in your organization. Which services are already available but are underutilized by refugees? Can existing family or parenting services be adapted for refugees? Could staff in these programs be used to respond to the needs of newcomer families? Could staff in other programs identify resources in the community and help to facilitate appropriate referrals? Could vacancies in the counseling staff be filled by bicultural staff who speak refugees' languages? In your community, if bicultural social service professionals or para-professionals are not available, your role may be primarily coordination of limited interim services and advocacy.
- In another scenario, you might decide to start by offering school readiness groups for refugee parents with preschool children and provide referral services for other family needs that come up in those groups. You could partner with the Head Start program or with a public preschool program. The Refugee Family Program (RFP) in Chicago has published a description of its preschool program, including curriculum materials, that you might find helpful (see Appendix 1). In RFP's model, small groups of refugee parents and children meet together in their apartments to learn social and academic skills that prepare their children for success in the American school system. The RFP program teams native speakers from the refugees' own culture with teaching staff born in the United States.
- In still another scenario, you could develop an integrated program such as the YES program in San Jose. (See Appendix 2.) YES started by offering services only to youth but realized that goals for the youth could not be achieved without addressing barriers experienced by the whole family. YES recruited parents to help design parent support services, and parents now attend structured groups and participate in program planning and advocacy. The program emphasizes leadership development.
- In another scenario, you could select a national curriculum such as Meld or SMEF (see Appendix 1) as the centerpiece of your program and provide staff with curriculum training. Organizations that use a national curriculum typically follow the curriculum's format and philosophy but adapt and add to them as necessary to address the concerns of local participants and their community.

Whatever approach you adopt, you will need to build case management and coalition building into your program. If your plan does not make adequate provision for case management, staff time can be consumed with meeting basic needs. For instance, if a refugee family has pressing medical needs, as is common, your staff will want to be able to refer the family to affordable medical services and help with the family's potential misunderstandings about and suspicion of Western medicine. In the long run, staff may want to connect with an employment service that places refugees in jobs with medical benefits. It is important to make sure that staff understand issues ranging from Medicaid eligibility to school enrollment to basic processes for maintaining visa status—and that they keep up with policy changes.

Decide at this point the approach you want to take. Will you use a formal curriculum as part of your program, or an open-ended, informal structure? Whether or not you provide a formal parenting curriculum as part of your parent support services, you will find certain recurring issues with which most refugee parents need help. At a minimum, you should plan to address the following topics:

- American school culture, including expectations for active participation of parents and children
- Child development
- Health, nutrition, and safety
- American laws regarding discipline and child abuse
- Discrimination
- Intergenerational cultural conflict over Americanization
- Local community resource information
- Other issues arising from the process of acculturation in the United States which are of concern to your participants

*Bureaucratic navigating refers to staff's role in helping families to achieve effective connections with the institutions with which they need to interact...by helping them overcome barriers of lack of English, distrust, not understanding U.S. systems and institutional non-responsiveness.<sup>5</sup>*

Appendix 2 lists the 28 organizations interviewed for this project and gives a brief description of their programs. Included in the appendix are several organizations that publish formal parenting curriculum materials as well as the agencies that use those materials and adapt them for their programs. As you develop your program, we suggest that you explore these resources and identify curriculum materials and program formats that fit your own situation and program goals.

Appendix 1 lists several examples of structured groups and formal curricula. Many curriculum sources provide different curricula for different ages as well as catalogs of supplementary materials. Some offer a package that includes training. One model of a locally developed curriculum is Newcomers Network's

"Parenting in America," a manual that includes excerpts from multiple sources as well as local resource information.

Almost any curriculum model you adopt will require considerable adaptation and translation, according to staff we interviewed. No curriculum can fully anticipate the specific needs of parents or the cultural competence training that your staff will require.

## 5. Other Program Requirements

Staff must be skilled in listening and, possibly, in working with a translator. They must possess general cultural competencies that allow them to work comfortably in a multicultural setting and be knowledgeable about the specific culture(s) of participants. They also need the flexibility to adapt their curriculum to new issues that arise. To address the range of family needs and be effective with changing populations, staff must have the resources and skills to refer parents to other services.

Staff will need help connecting with other resources in the community, or else their time and energy will be consumed with crisis management and their attention will be limited to only a small number of refugees. If staff do not receive this support, they often get burned out trying to do everything for all of their clients—an impossible task.

### Advocacy

Advocacy is important to the success of your program and to strengthening your community's receptivity to diversity and its benefits. For example, if health services do not offer translation, if ESL classes are not accessible to refugees or compatible with their schedules, or if schools are punitive when refugees react in their own cultural patterns, your organization can help. You can act as the "cultural broker" and advocate (and help refugees advocate) for change. When respectful dialogue is initiated by service providers who understand newcomers and have years of experience resolving their dilemmas, institutions do respond. In large and small communities across the country, needed changes are being made.

### Cultural Competence

We have entered a new era of social services in which many of our assumptions about adjustment and acculturation are being reexamined. Cultural diversity, in most communities and in many families, has become more the rule than the exception. But in our social service agencies, we are still learning to respond in ways that are not divisive, but that enrich the families and institutions in our communities. In a sense, we are learning together to build a new, functional acculturation model in which we are all cultural brokers. Those who welcome newcomers and offer social services are in a unique position to provide models and leadership that ensure that both newcomers and the native community take advantage of one another's strengths to build a strong and diverse community.

Development of refugee parent support services requires examining the cultural competence of your agency and its staff. The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA) publishes a self-assessment tool for determining the assets and challenges in cultural competence that you bring to serving newcomer families, along with a brief discussion of the rationale for continuous assessment in view of ongoing changes in the U.S. population. (See Appendix 1.)

After assessing the status of your organization's cultural competence, consider what further training is needed to ensure

*Race and ethnicity are commonly thought to be dominant elements of culture, but a closer look tells us that these general categories fail to identify the substantial variances that are found within the different racial and ethnic groups . . . culture is much broader than race and ethnicity. The larger group may only share common physical characteristics, language, or their faith. We often fail to consider other distinct factors that influence the culture of communities within the larger categories . . . such as age, disability, education, gender, sexual orientation, geographic location, and history.<sup>6</sup>*

culturally sensitive services in your parent support program, and determine criteria for recruiting staff for those services. Do not assume that your level of cultural competence is adequate just because you have been working with refugees for a long time or because you have former refugees on your staff. As we work with increasingly diverse populations, we face much more complicated challenges. We all must continue to learn and enhance our understanding of other cultures.

To work effectively with diverse populations, all levels of staff must adopt open, nonjudgmental attitudes and be knowledgeable about specific cultural values and practices. Organizational attitudes and values are expressed not only in how we offer services but also in how phones are answered, in how we make our services accessible, in the decor of reception areas and offices, and in endless other, subtle ways. In addition, expressions of organizational attitudes are constantly challenged and must be revised as our environment changes.

## Refugee Participation and Involvement

Involving refugee parents from the beginning in your planning process and your needs assessment will enhance your program's relevance. As you plan the specifics of your services, listen to refugees as much as you can. Find out what they already know or believe about parenting in the United States, what strengths they bring, how they learn and communicate, and what they want. Connect with refugees who are new arrivals as well as with refugees who have been in the United States for a while and who might be feeling the stresses of intergenerational conflict with their more Americanized children. Some programs find it helpful to hold focus groups or visit with refugees in faith and ethnic social settings.

Ultimately, you want to empower refugee parents to become actively involved and recognized as valued participants in the community. Getting their input in program planning sends a clear message that their values and ideas are important and opens doors to an ongoing process. In this process, you also begin to identify leaders in each ethnic community and help develop leadership potential in participants in your program. Many programs encourage refugees to participate directly as volunteers and employees and to take on group facilitation, recruitment, advocacy, or other roles. No one pattern works for all programs, but you should have a goal of contributing to your community by developing leadership skills among parents in the newcomer group.

## Funding

It is beyond the scope of this project to suggest specific funding sources or strategies, but below are some useful procedures to follow as you seek funding for your program.

If your program is part of a larger agency, first consult with your agency director and development staff about your plans. You will need to have a clear written description of the goals and plans for your program and a reasonable budget that includes realistic costs for staff and other expenses. The more detailed and realistic these documents are, the more organizational support you will probably get for seeking funding. With your director, you may want to review your program's current related services and decide whether any of your goals for parent support can be achieved by working with other organizations or by shifting the focus of a current program. For example, some agencies integrate parent support services with ESL programs or with other adult education or therapeutic services. If you envision collaborations with local schools or with organizations such as Head Start, you need to outline a strategy for joint funding and know that collaboration with these groups is possible.

Many foundations and local funding sources strongly favor nonduplicative collaborative endeavors. Working with other organizations to provide a continuum of services will strengthen your proposal and make it much more competitive for funding.

Funders encourage collaboration because when agencies and services work together, communicate effectively, and share referrals, refugees are truly served more fully. When refugees are forced to work with multiple, separate agencies, the messages and services they receive can be fragmented and conflicting. Parenting, whether for refugees or others, involves complex management of resources. Families need to draw support from many different sources and meet the requirements of many external institutions. This process is particularly mystifying and frustrating for parents from cultures that function in less structured, more personalized ways. . . Effective collaboration among agencies reduces stress for parents and makes services more accessible.

To discover potential funding sources, you will need to do a lot of homework. Get acquainted with the priorities and level of support available from local foundations and the United Way and search the Internet for other foundation and government sources. Many government entities fund social services for families or minorities—find out whether your program meets the criteria for these funds. Do not overlook traditional funding sources for refugees, such as the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement.

Remember, do not approach funders directly without first consulting your director and development staff. Most organizations frown on receiving independent applications from a program within a larger agency. In addition, your agency probably has centralized funding priorities and strategies that encompass all the programs it sponsors.

## Evaluation and Updating

Regular evaluations are an important way to keep your program updated. Topics of concern change, and populations with new needs will present themselves for your services. A functional evaluation process not only will give you feedback on the effectiveness of your current services, but also will indicate ways in which you should revise your program to keep it relevant. The separate Evaluation section of this manual describes ways in which you can incorporate ongoing evaluation into your program.



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# 3

## **Guidelines for Functional Evaluation Process**



Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services



A joint project of



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# I. Role of Evaluation in Your Program

## Introduction

**M**any people believe that building evaluations into social service programs is too time-consuming, expensive, and tedious to bother with. Before you make this conclusion, take time to consider these long-term benefits that evaluations can bring to your organization:

- Ongoing evaluation procedures can become an integral part of your planning and program development process. This will give you valuable information that will help you keep your program current and respond quickly to the changing needs of your client population.
- Regular evaluations can strengthen your program's role and presence within your agency—and help make your program's mission a priority for the agency.
- The information and insight you gain in evaluations can be included in your proposals, making them more attractive to potential funders.
- Evaluations provide an ongoing and up-to-date fund of information to use in public relations efforts, in recruiting volunteers and participants, and for other needs and opportunities that may come up.

Remember that you are providing a valuable service to your participants, but they have much to offer to you as well. They have important information about how your service helps them, how it could be improved, and to whom they would recommend it. Your clients are your single most important source of information about what works in your organization—and what does not.

This manual does not provide a one-size-fits-all evaluation tool that will somehow guarantee the success of your program—there isn't one. Instead, it outlines a process that you can use to develop evaluation tools that will keep your program flexible, fundable, and responsive to the changing needs of your refugee community. This manual suggests evaluation methods and resources, discusses some special considerations for refugees, and describes how you can use the information gleaned from your evaluation activities and findings. A successful evaluation process should help you get the information you need to ensure the ongoing health of your program and fine-tune how you will offer services in the future.<sup>1</sup> Your evaluation results can also be used to demonstrate your accountability, which enhances your credibility within your organization and to funders.

Like any change in procedure, especially one that adds new steps to a familiar process, you will probably find evaluation to be cumbersome at first. In most cases, however, both program and administrative staff find it to be useful once the basic procedures are integrated into the regular cycle of program planning and services.

*"Many people believe evaluation is a useless activity that generates lots of boring data with useless conclusions. This was a problem with evaluations in the past when program evaluation methods were chosen largely on the basis of achieving complete scientific accuracy, reliability and validity."<sup>1</sup>*

<sup>1</sup> Some evaluation is conducted under strict scientific rules for research purposes. One program we interviewed (La Frontera Center) is involved in research evaluation. The BRYCS project does not provide guidelines for technical research evaluation. See Appendix 1 for other materials on evaluation methods and reports.

## Not an Event, but a Cycle.

We use the term “evaluation” to refer not to an event, such as when you collect and read feedback questionnaires at the end of a program, but to a cycle. Ideally, this cycle runs continuously, beginning when you gather information about what needs you will address and how you will address them, continuing in several forms throughout your program, then being used to determine what you will change for the next program cycle.

*“Outcome measurement is not a passing fad. In the years ahead, collecting data on benefits for program participants will be as common as collecting data on the number of program participants is today.”<sup>2</sup>*

At some agencies, you may need to fit your evaluation for refugee parent support services into a broad evaluation process required for your organization, such as Council on Accreditation standards or United Way of America outcomes procedures. At other agencies, outside consultants are hired to design evaluation tools, perform an evaluation, and compile results. This is not an affordable option for most programs, and this manual assumes that you will be designing and implementing your program’s evaluation on your own.

## Getting Started

The first step is to consider what you want to learn in your evaluation and what kinds of procedures you will use. At a minimum, your evaluation process should

- clarify and quantify the differences you expect to make in your clients’ lives,
- measure how well you meet those goals,
- provide information to your organization’s leadership and funders,
- help you decide what you need to change for the next program cycle, and
- provide information that can be used for other purposes, such as publicity and recruiting.

An evaluation should tell you what impact your services have both on individual participants in your program and on the larger community. It should also reveal which of your methods work best to accomplish the outcomes you seek and what approaches you need to change or improve in your program.

If your organization is accredited through a national body, such as the Council on Accreditation, or has a staff person assigned to oversee continuous quality improvement, get as much guidance as you can about resources available through the national organizations and learn how evaluation of your program can be integrated into your agency’s evaluation process. This integration will help strengthen your program’s role in the agency, familiarize agency planning staff with your program needs, and lead to assistance with grant writing and other funding opportunities.

## Involve Your Organization’s Leadership

It is important to keep your organization’s administration informed about and supportive of your program. Interviews for this project and independent observations revealed that refugee and immigration services are often isolated from their parent organization. This isolation originated when U.S. communities were on the whole unaware of, indifferent to, or hostile toward immigrants. Social service funding for refugees was received primarily from traditional agencies (e.g., the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement and the U.S. Department of State) and fees for immigration services, but was not easily obtained through other funders. Now newcomers

are becoming recognized as an integral part of local communities and as deserving of inclusion in mainstream resources and services.

One way to get the support you need from your organization's leadership to demonstrate how refugee parent support services fit into the organization's mission and meet a critical need. By sharing your knowledge about the changing needs of refugees and how you can serve them, you can bring your program more solidly into the mainstream of your organization's planning and continuum of services. A good evaluation will help you demonstrate how your program complements your agency's other services.

## Educate Funders

Many of the staff we interviewed expressed frustration concerning their ability to fund support services for refugee parents. Potential funders need to be educated about newcomers' needs and about the difference your services make in their lives and in the total community. A strong evaluation program can demonstrate your impact and is one way to strengthen your program's funding prospects.

As more and more communities become aware of newcomers and their needs, more newcomer support services are receiving funding from local United Ways, local or national foundations, and other national social service and educational organizations. If you want to get new funding for your program, you need to learn the interests of potential financial supporters and tailor your evaluation procedures to demonstrate the community's need for services and your ability to meet these needs.





## 2. Using Your Evaluation Data

**E**valuation data have many uses. Most organizations use evaluations in three areas: program updating and revision, internal communication, and applications and reports to funding sources.

### Program Updating and Revision

No program can remain effective unless it makes regular revisions to meet the changing needs of the people it serves. This requirement is especially true for refugee programs. In the past several years, refugee programs have been challenged by an influx of new nationalities and cultures and by demands for greater accountability. Bosnian refugees' strengths and culture differ in many ways from those of the Vietnamese; likewise, the social capital of the Sudanese differs from that of the Bosnians. The native U.S. community responds differently to each immigrant group. Over the years the ethnic composition of communities changes, and the general environment becomes more or less knowledgeable about and welcoming toward newcomers. Sometimes these changes are felt immediately and dramatically; other times they are more subtle and depend partly on how familiar your community already is with new ethnic groups who are arriving.

Your evaluation process provides a systematic way of keeping your finger on the pulse of these changes and adjusting your parent support services accordingly. Getting regular and specific feedback about your process and outcomes will help you know, for example, when you need to change the way you recruit and train staff, change the topics covered in your curriculum, or tailor your approach to different learning styles.

If the information you learn from an evaluation is left in a file or sent out and forgotten, you will not have gotten the most you could from your efforts. Performing an evaluation should be part of a cycle that is not complete until what you learn is fed back into planning the next phase of your program. For example, the refugees currently coming to you for assistance might need more case management or advocacy services than you had provided for. If your evaluation exposes and quantifies this gap in service, you will have a good basis for requesting resources in staff time and funding to meet these needs. Your request is particularly persuasive when you can demonstrate how the additional changes will benefit the whole community by strengthening refugee families to contribute their unique strengths to the community and avoiding costly services later if newcomers are not able to adapt positively. Some of what you will learn through an evaluation will be a formal validation of what you already knew or sensed, but you will probably get one or two useful surprises or new perspectives that will stimulate new ideas or suggest alternative ways to develop your program. Use this information to make changes that will make your program even stronger.

### Internal Communication

Most organizations periodically go through a long-range planning process in which they decide priorities for the next 3 to 5 years and allocate resources toward staff time, fundraising, and publicity. At this time, you will want to demonstrate to your supervisor, administrative staff, and board that your program is important to the organization. Both the outcomes evaluation and process evaluation discussed later in this section will help. Showing that you are looking carefully at what works in your program will lead evaluators to respect your openness and ideas about changing and improving.

You might think that if you just keep doing your job quietly, you will always get the same allocations of organizational resources. That is seldom the case. Even if you get along well with your colleagues or have been providing the program for a long time, your program could be vulnerable. You should consider raising awareness within your organization of the needs of newcomers, how agency services might be expanded to meet emerging needs, and how support for the program might continue (or not) if you took a job elsewhere or

retired. The best way to maintain and strengthen awareness of your program is to show that it gets results—to call attention to real needs for which you provide real solutions. Evaluation results communicate this information more clearly than almost anything else you can do.

In some ways it is easier to evaluate parent support services that use a formal curriculum, but we are assuming in this manual that you will evaluate all the parent support services you provide. If your services include case management, counseling, or other services to newcomer parents, you can adapt the same evaluation procedures to use with each component of your program, whether services are offered to groups or individual parents and families. If your agency is accredited by the Council on Accreditation, you will already have some evaluation guidelines and appropriate procedures in place.

## Funding Sources

If your program already receives funding from a source that requires evaluation, you will need to use the procedures the funder provides or recommends. If the funder does not provide evaluation procedures, find out what outcomes data they want to see in order to continue and, ideally, increase your allocation.

If you do not yet receive outside funding but plan to apply for some, you will find the results of your evaluation to be a valuable asset to your application. Your results will demonstrate that you have a professional and accountable approach to services, that your program is well planned, and that you have the flexibility to learn from your clients how to improve your program.

Does this mean that your funding appeals should no longer contain poignant stories about the strengths of refugees that enable them to overcome seemingly insurmountable hardships and achieve success in America? Of course not: those stories touch people and help put a human face on the people you serve for residents in the community who still have limited contact with newcomers. Increasingly, however, funders do not just want to hear poignant stories—they want to see measurable results as well. Your evaluation can give them both.

### 3. Types of Evaluation

**Y**ou can use several types of evaluation, depending on the complexity of your program, your organization, and your budget. This guide focuses on the two most common types of evaluation—process evaluation and outcomes evaluation—both of which should be included in any new or existing programs you operate.

#### Process Evaluation

A process evaluation is a way to analyze the activities involved in your services, what resources are required, and how you might change your procedures to obtain results in keeping with your goals and client needs. Although this type of evaluation is primarily intended for internal audiences, some of the information you gather will also be helpful to share with collaborating organizations and funders.

A process evaluation may be helpful if you are offering new services or if your current activities—such as outreach, group discussion, or case management—have not been formally reviewed for some time. It can help you figure out, for example, why it is getting more difficult to attract new participants to your program or generate new progress in long-term participants. Process evaluation will help you see what works for your participants—and what doesn't.

Some basic questions and a suggested format for evaluating your program's procedures are shown in the chart which follows. You will want to tailor the questions to address the specifics of your program.

**Figure 1. Sample Evaluation Questions**

Process Evaluation for _____ Program		Date:	
Name(s) of Staff:			
QUESTION	ANSWER	CHANGES TO CONSIDER	WHAT RESOURCES WOULD IT TAKE?
<b>Over the past year . . .</b>			
How did we recruit and train staff?			
What outreach to participants and recruitment methods did we use? Which ones worked? Which ones produced minimal results in relation to the resources required?			
What services did our program offer? Structured parenting groups? Individual referrals? Other?			
Did the time and place the program was offered work for participants?			
Did staff speak in the participants' language or use an interpreter?			
What incentives did we offer to participants? Food, transportation, or other? Which ones worked?			
What recommendations or complaints did we get from participants and staff? From the community?			
What specific topics or techniques of the program design/curriculum seemed to work best? Least? Why?			
Were important topics or services omitted? If so, which ones?			
Was our evaluation process functional? Can we state our outcomes clearly?			
How did we do each of these things compared to how we planned to do them? What did we learn?			

Of course, the boxes in the form above cannot possibly contain all you do or all you will learn from your process evaluation. You may need a whole page to answer some questions, so use this chart as an example to be adapted to your own requirements and style. Be sure to include considerable detail in your answers, particularly any facet of your process with which you were uncomfortable.

The questions listed in this form are particularly useful in making your program more efficient and in helping staff analyze your process and plan your next cycle. The questions can also help you describe your program's resource needs and activities to administrative staff and justify needed changes that might require more funding or administrative support.

As part of your process evaluation, you will want to keep records of some basic information about the participants in your program, such as nationality, language, time in the United States, and number of sessions

attended, beginning when you register participants in your program. You will probably need to gather and record information during the course of your service to have available when you put it together in your process evaluation. You can then determine with a good level of accuracy whether you are meeting your target goals for participation and service delivery.

## Outcomes Evaluation

This type of evaluation measures benefits to participants. Outcomes evaluation should be tied directly to the goals and objectives of your program. Ideally, you will have more than one way to measure outcomes—for example, from the point of view of participants as well as staff. It is important to choose evaluation components that will be most helpful for your program planning. You might start with only one or two basic components using a few essential questions, then build on those as the program progresses in new cycles and you decide you need more information. For instance, at first you might only administer a simple questionnaire to participants at the end of your program, designed to find out which behaviors and attitudes they report changing as a result of your service. Later you might administer more questionnaires about specific interventions or curriculum content at various points during the service to refine your understanding of the process of change and most effective program interventions. This would give you a sense of what makes a strong impression when a topic is addressed, but may not turn out to be retained by the end of the service.

*“One clear and compelling answer to the question of ‘Why measure outcomes?’ is: To see if programs really make a difference in the lives of people.... outcome measurement provides a learning loop that feeds information back into programs... This dividend doesn’t take years to occur.”<sup>3</sup>*

Any evaluation plan will necessarily involve trade-offs. Keep in mind how you will use the information you get and what function each element of your procedure will serve in planning and maintaining the quality of your program. Start with a few questions related to what you consider to be the most important differences you want to make in participants’ lives. This approach may not produce an exhaustive report of the benefits of your program, but it will measure the ones you and your clients consider primary.

Outcomes evaluation is always based on the goals and objectives you set for the program, but the terminology, complexity, and format of evaluation reports will vary depending on your audience (board, supervisors, public, funders, etc.) and on how you collect your data. A sample format for a simple outcomes evaluation process, in which the facilitator reviews the questions with the participants and elicits either oral or written answers, is shown in the box below. At a minimum, you will want to get answers from participants who have received services from each of the components of your program. The specific questions will be based on your stated objectives for each service.

**Figure 2. Sample Outcomes Evaluation Questions**

Have participants answer the following questions. After each question, ask: "Can you give me an example of how the service has helped you with this?" or "Can you give an example of what you do differently now from what you did before you came here?" Some of the questions are designed for groups and others for services to individuals.

1. Would you say the parenting class has helped you

— a little, quite a bit, a lot—

- a. ... to understand what your child can be expected to do at his age?
- b. ... to understand what the school expects of your child?
- c. ... to listen to your child?
- d. ... to discipline your child?

2. Has this support group helped you

— a little, quite a bit, a lot—

- a. ... to get help with problems you have with your children?
- b. ... to feel more comfortable talking to your children's teachers?
- c. ... to make friends with people you can talk to?

3. Has the family service staff helped you

— a little, quite a bit, a lot—

- a. ... to find good health care for your family?
- b. ... to handle problems in your family?
- c. ... to feel better about how you can help your children?

What was the best thing you got from this service?

What would you suggest we not do in the next class?

Is there anything we did we not talk about that you wish we had talked about?

Would you suggest that one of your friends come to this program?

The last four questions in the sample evaluation are examples of ways you can get helpful information about how the service was useful in coping with their problems in addition to specific content. These questions also show your respect for the experience of your participants and validate the importance of their opinion in helping your staff and other refugees.

A brief question-and-answer dialogue is the most basic form of outcomes evaluation. It allows you to find out whether participants feel that they received help in the areas that your program addresses. Participants' answers will also demonstrate their retention and use of content, and some questions (asking them about "the best part of the service," for example) will reveal their priorities.

### Other Helpful Outcomes Procedures

As you develop your program evaluation process, your outcomes will become more credible and useful if you can capture more detailed measures of changes in attitude and behavior. You can obtain this information by giving a brief questionnaire to participants before and after they participate in your services. The following are examples of areas in which your evaluation procedures should measure outcomes:

- Parents' self-esteem and coping styles (e.g., "I think my children respect me a lot/not enough/not at all.")

- Attitudes and values that you want to inform and influence (e.g., “True or false: When my child talks back to me, I think the best thing to do is slap him.”)
- Changes in behavior (e.g., “What do you usually do when you feel discouraged about life in America?”)
- Knowledge about child development and other information (e.g., “True or false: Young children learn by playing; it is good to go to the doctor before I get too sick.”)

If you administer questionnaires or interviews before and after program activities (pre/post instruments), you will get a clearer measurement of changes parents make that can be attributed to discussion and information included in your curriculum or other services. Questions should be clearly tied to the material covered in your sessions. If some topics seem to effect more change than others, you can turn to your process evaluation to consider whether the way these topics were presented affected outcomes.

It is also helpful to include an assessment of participants’ needs and expectations in your evaluation process. This could take the form of asking potential participants what they would like to get out of coming to a parenting group or participating in other services your program offers. You could use a checklist or ask open-ended questions. In a support group, parenting class, or parent empowerment meeting, this would occur in the first session, when the group would spend time coming to a consensus about what members want to get out of the group. The facilitator would list all the expectations on newsprint and save the list. At the end of the program, he or she would ask participants how and in what ways they were helped to change their behavior in each area named. Some programs use this process for each session, using two or three questions to ask participants what they learned. If you are using a pretest–posttest approach, topics identified by participants should also be included in the questionnaires or interviews. If you are using a structured curriculum, questionnaires may be included in the curriculum materials.

Building an assessment of your participant’s expectations for the service into your evaluation process helps to stress the importance of their contribution to your program and ensures that you provide the services most relevant to their needs. This process also helps you determine whether individuals require referrals to other service providers to meet needs not addressed by your services.

Your goal in outcomes evaluation is to be able to measure how much participants actually benefited from each topic covered. To do this, you must be clear about the specific benefits individual participants are expected to get from the program. You will then be able to report to supervisors, funders, and potential participants, for example, that 90% of your participants feel more respected by their children after the class and 85% think it is better not to hit their children.

In preparing these guidelines, we have drawn on the practices of several programs that conduct outcomes evaluations (see Appendix 2). In addition, “Strengthening Refugee Families” and other resource materials listed in Appendix 1 contain descriptions of various evaluation procedures. The timing and content of questionnaires and interviews used in evaluation vary widely among programs; they depend on the program’s resources and the way the information collected will be used. Each component of your evaluation process should have a role in your program’s planning, reporting, fundraising or another purpose that you determine.

### **Special Considerations for Refugee Parent Support Services**

In developing an evaluation process, refugee parent support services need to take into account cultural factors, language, confidentiality issues, and demands on staff.



### Cultural Sensitivity.

Your evaluation procedures will need to consider some issues unique to evaluating newcomer and multicultural programs. Your program design should address general issues of cultural sensitivity, and the way you conduct evaluations should reflect the specific ethnic population you are serving.

*"Awareness of cultural relevance and significance of various beliefs and behaviors is critical for accurate problem definition and solving...Lack of awareness and appreciation for cultural differences will also lead to inaccurate assumptions about service program functioning and outcomes."*<sup>4</sup>

All staff need to be particularly sensitive to the experience many refugees have had with people in authority requesting and recording sensitive personal information about them. In addition to trauma refugees may have experienced in these situations, people from many ethnic groups are more reticent about sharing personal information outside the family than Americans tend to be. In addition, certain types of personal information—such as information about health or sexuality—are more sensitive topics in some ethnic groups than others. Communication styles vary across cultures, and customs dictate, for example, whether questions should be posed directly or indirectly, who should be addressed first in a family, and whether eye contact should be made. The document "Keys to Cultural Competency" (see Appendix 1) discusses some of the variations in communication

styles and sensitivities among specific nationalities in the United States. Note that many subtle communication signals are often not evident to outsiders but are critical in establishing trust and getting accurate information.

Through each of your interactions with participants, you will get a sense of their cultural strengths and preferred learning styles, which will be important to consider when you set program goals and evaluate progress and benefits. For instance, if members of your group value strong loyalty to family, you want to help them build on that value rather than insist that they foster extreme independence in their children. Group members can support each other in finding ways to maintain this value but still benefit from the flexibility offered by the American style of independence. Negotiating the cultural compromises that foster success for both individuals and the family in a new environment is the overriding task of acculturation. This process is a delicate balancing act for both refugees and the native-born Americans who try to help them. It takes careful listening, attention to strengths and values, and patience to build trust between individuals and between newcomer and host cultural groups.

To obtain greater objectivity, some programs use outside consultants to conduct evaluation interviews. If someone outside the regular program staff is assisting with evaluation, you need to ensure that this person is familiar with the unique cultural values and understandings of the group concerning family, parenting, and related topics. You will also need to consider whether the consultant will have to communicate through an interpreter and the implications of that for getting comfortable interaction and accurate information. Since you have worked hard to gain the trust of your participants, you need to weigh carefully the value of getting an objective perspective against the possible intrusiveness of outsiders.

### Language.

Most programs we interviewed reported that they need to make accommodations in their evaluation procedures regarding language. Many participants are more comfortable responding to questions in their native language, and doing so may produce more accurate results. However, many refugee parents are not able to read or write in their language, so questions and answers must be given orally. Oral question-and-answer sessions must be kept relatively brief and simple, take more time than written sessions do, and preclude anonymity. In

addition, limited physical space may make it difficult for the dialogue to be conducted privately. If the program is conducted with the use of interpreters, the process is further complicated. You may have to experiment through two or three cycles to arrive at the procedure that gets the results you need, respects the language needs of participants, and produces accurate information.

### **Confidentiality.**

It is important to explain to your clients that participating in the evaluation phase of the program will help future refugee families strengthen their family life in the United States. However, knowing this may make them wonder whether you will share their personal information with others. You must assure them that no individual information gained in any phase of the program will be used in any way or with any other persons without their express written permission (except when necessary as a mandated reporter of suspected child abuse). Participants must know that you will protect their privacy, that you will report only the number of people who give each answer, and that you may share anonymous comments, but will never disclose their name. If you plan to identify a participant publicly or use his or her personal information in any way, you must get his or her signed informed consent to protect both your participants' privacy and your organization's liability.

### **Staff Time.**

Staff time is required to design, administer, and analyze evaluations, and apply the information gained into future plans. Constraints on staff time will probably limit your ability to find out all you would like to know about program outcomes. You will need to prioritize what you want to know and keep your questions concise and directly related to your program activities.

*"The '20-80' rule applies here, that 20% of effort generates 80% of the needed results. It's better to do what might turn out to be an average effort at evaluation than to do no evaluation at all."<sup>5</sup>*



## 4. Steps to Designing a Functional Evaluation Cycle

**F**our steps are involved in designing an evaluation cycle: defining functional objectives, designing the evaluation format, developing tools, reporting results, improving services and returning to (or possibly redefining) objectives for the next offering of services.

### Step 1: Defining Functional Objectives.

Your evaluation process starts when you plan your program. (Section XX discusses curriculum development and planning.) However, in some stages, your program's curriculum development and evaluation methods will run concurrently.

In preparation for designing your actual evaluation procedures, state the benefits you want to accomplish for clients in clear, measurable terms. You have a purpose for offering help to refugee parents. That purpose can be stated in terms of your goals. For each goal (e.g., "to strengthen refugee parents' relationship to their children through the acculturation process"), list several measurable objectives to meet as you work toward this goal (e.g., "to increase parents' involvement in their children's education", "to increase parent's ability to communicate with their children"). The objectives describe specific activities and skills which can be developed through your program to achieve the goal of strengthening the parent-child relationship through a mutual acculturation process

You will probably use at least three sources of information to establish and fine-tune the objectives of your program:

- **Past experience.** You may have some idea of the needs of refugee parents from your prior work with them or information you have received from schools or other agencies.
- **Set curriculum.** If you are planning a curriculum-based group, you will know what topics are covered by the curriculum developer.
- **Parents.** You should invite refugee parents and, possibly, their children to tell you what they think is important. You can discover what parents already know and what they want to learn using structured interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires.

### Step 2: Designing the Evaluation Format.

Keep in mind that different nationalities will have widely different beliefs and practices about parenting, expectations from teachers (including you), and learning styles. You can use information from your previous experience and from the community to predict what will be important for the group of parents you plan to serve. You can then test your prediction of what your participants need by checking with them through some form of needs assessment, either at the first session or (preferably) earlier, in a focus group, in an interview, or through a questionnaire before the program starts. If you only conduct a needs assessment as part of the first session, with questions based on curriculum content that has already been determined, the assessment would be used to prioritize topics and allocate time to each topic depending on the expressed needs of the group.

There are several ways to gather information about the needs and priorities of your client group, and each has pros and cons. Focus groups give you a fairly quick way of determining interests, but they are time-consuming and are complicated to set up. In addition, you need a skilled facilitator who can gain the trust of the group,

draw information from participants in an unbiased manner, and bring satisfactory closure to any personal issues or conflicts that arise. A written questionnaire is inexpensive and quick to administer, but it may not be practical because of participants' language and literacy constraints. Personal interviews may be your best choice. For consistency, you can conduct personal interviews with each participant using the same questions for each interview. You might ask some specific questions that are based on proposed curriculum content or more general questions about needs and interests, such as "What would you like to learn about the school your child attends?" "What would you like to learn about healthy food for your child?" or "What else would you like to learn about America?"

Through this interaction you will become familiar with the needs and strengths of your population and can decide on the basic format you will use for your evaluation process.

To prepare your evaluation instruments, draft questions about parents' knowledge, attitudes, and behavior related to the objectives of your program. You can ask these questions both before your sessions start and after they end (pre/post test format) or only at the end of the service (most basic format). If you are using a formal curriculum which includes questionnaires about parents' knowledge, attitudes and behavior regarding topics to be covered in your curriculum, you can follow the evaluation procedures included in the curriculum. Depending on the language skills of your participants, you can use a written questionnaire or have a staff person or outside consultant conduct an interview. Some programs simplify the procedure by asking true–false questions about child development, child safety, and community knowledge.

Your format could involve teacher observation and progressive rating scales. An example of this approach is outlined by Scheinfeld and Wallach in "Strengthening Refugee Families" (see 1). This format used alone has the drawback of minimal input of parents' perspective and possible lack of objectivity if teachers are essentially rating themselves.

Once you have decided on the format of your evaluation program, you are ready to design your evaluation tools.

### Step 3: Developing Evaluation Tools.

With the information you have gleaned from your own experience and from working with the community and potential participants, you can now design your evaluation methods and questions. Choose questions based

*"Many people believe that evaluation is about proving the success or failure of a program. This myth assumes that success is implementing the perfect program and never having to hear from employees, customers or clients again...Success is remaining open to continuing feedback and adjusting the program accordingly. Evaluation gives you this continuing feedback."*<sup>6</sup>

on the material you will cover to meet your objectives. If you are using a predeveloped curriculum, you may decide that the evaluation tools provided with it meet your needs. More likely you will want to adjust the curriculum, evaluation questions, or methods to fit the specific refugee group you are working with, or simply develop your own questionnaire.

If your evaluation process includes pretest–posttest assessment, [at the first session administer an interview or questionnaire using a series of approximately 10 to 20 questions about parenting information, attitudes, and behavior. You will ask these same questions at the last session to determine specifically which information, attitudes, and behavior have changed in the time the parent has been attending the program. You may also want to ask two or three questions at the end of each session, such as "What

did you learn about 2-year-olds today?” or “Is it OK for teachers to slap students when they do something wrong?” to determine which topics have an immediate result.

By comparing answers you received at the beginning of the program with answers you received at the end, you will be able to say, for example, how many parents understand the school system better, practice healthier nutrition, feel they get along better with their children, have more respect from their children, or have learned new ways of disciplining their children or helping them with homework. If you ask questions midway through your program, you will learn more about which topics result in longer-lasting change. Participants may indicate a strong response to some interventions right after the session in which they are presented, but responses at the end of the program may indicate that this material is not retained. This will be useful information for your process evaluation as well.

If your program integrates youth and parent services, you may also want to get feedback from youth about changes they observe in their family life. If school personnel have referred parents to the program, you may want to speak with them about changes they see in youth and parental behavior and attitudes—if you have the parents’ permission to talk to them. Two or three questions would probably be enough to determine how much change is perceived by schools and by children. Older children who have been participating in parallel programs could receive more questions, such as “Do you notice any change in the behavior of [this child in school]/[in your parents] since they have participated in this program? If so, what changes?” or “Do your parents help/talk to you more about your homework?” “Has there been any change in the foods you eat at home? If so, what has changed?” Keep in mind what function this information will have in your program reporting and planning so you can be concise and efficient in gathering useful information that demonstrates how your program makes a difference in the areas that families and the community care about.

#### **Step 4: Reporting Results.**

Compile the information you get at the end of your program into one or more reports that tell the story of how the program makes a difference in the lives of your participants. If this difference is significant, it probably also has an impact on your organization and on the wider community. For example, if refugee parents are pleased with the services they receive and their family life has become less conflicted, this reflects well on your whole organization. By the same token, if the community recognizes that you are helping refugee children be more productive in school, you will have strengthened your community. Your program will become recognized as a reliable service partner, eligible for future collaboration and referral. You may design different report formats to be useful to people and organizations outside your program, such as your organization’s administration, funders, or interested segments of the public.

#### **Step 5: Using Evaluation to Improve Your Services.**

This last step brings you back to the beginning of your planning cycle. You have given reports to decision makers outside your program; now you want to use the results inside the program to make changes suggested by the feedback you have received. Your outcomes evaluation will tell you whether you achieved the results you wanted, and your process evaluation will tell you what you did that worked or did not work toward achieving positive outcomes. Together, these tools will provide you with significant information about the strengths and weaknesses of your services and the benefits gained by your participants as well as pointers for improving your program.



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# 4

## **Services for Refugee Parents of Adolescents**



Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services



A joint project of



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Immigration &  
Refugee Service  
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# 1. Introduction

**P**arenting adolescents is difficult under the best of circumstances. No recipe for certain success exists, but the more positive the relationship between parents and children in the early formative years, the better a family can usually navigate the pressures of adolescence. Prevention is probably the most effective way to ensure successful passage through adolescence: It includes building strong family relationships, positive peer support, and family and community role models. It also includes the parents' own successful acculturation and self-confidence in their bi-cultural parenting role. The family has more strength to navigate this period of parenting when they have healed the trauma and loss from their migration. All adolescents face the formidable task of forming their adult identity. They must decide which values from their family and culture they accept—and which values do not fit into their emerging adult selves. Usually this process takes place in the context of decisions about education, work, and relationships, including dating and marriage. Family and community culture are important, but during adolescence, peer culture has an increasing influence.

The development of parent support services for refugee families reflects a growing recognition that acculturation issues need to be addressed with both parents and children and identified as an essential part of their conflict during the stressful period of identity development. Many programs for refugee parents stress one-on-one interventions involving a bicultural mediator with parents and children together.

Although refugee parents usually see America as a good place to achieve a better life for their children, they often have difficulty accepting that the behaviors they regard as negative and sometimes divisive aspects of American culture are part of the recipe for their children's success. Children are confused by their parents' expectation that they can be successful in the United States without adopting some of the U.S. behaviors that their parents find objectionable.

It is no easy task to sort out and accept what is useful and necessary in American culture for their children's success and what parts of their own culture can be maintained or modified for life in America. Parents usually can make these judgments and compromises best if they have the support of others from their own culture who have succeeded. Parents also need a solid bridge to the positive aspects of American culture. Learning English, attaining self-sufficiency through employment, and becoming acquainted with Americans are usually key tools for overcoming these barriers for parents. These supports, which refugee services programs often provide, help parents and children negotiate a positive, shared acculturation process.



## 2. Adjusting to a New Culture

Most researchers agree that parallel acculturation, in which parents and children adapt to the new culture at a similar rate, best minimizes intergenerational conflict during adolescence. More often, however, parents and children experience the refugee transition differently and have different resources for coping with the new environment.

### Parents' Adjustment

Like their children, parents must struggle with difficult adjustments to their new culture; however, children are immersed in U.S. school culture, which is often very different from what parents experienced in their home country, where formal schooling may have ended at a much earlier age. In the U.S. refugee and immigrant parents often feel cut off from school and community leaders and unsure of their role. Children's exposure to school and better understanding of the dominant English language can lead to intense intergenerational conflict in newcomer families: Parents are rooted in the family's old culture, but their children are embracing the new.

Parenting in a new culture. A critical factor in parents' adjustment is the degree to which they are still resolving the challenges of their own trauma and loss while learning to be parents in their new home. Parents who were confident and successful using the parenting style of their own culture find themselves in a culture that may seem threatening or mystifying and for which they may be largely unprepared. American dating customs, the amount of time spent with friends away from home, the focus on individual decision making, and the independent thinking encouraged in schools involve behavior that newcomer parents may find disrespectful. Consequently, parents often find it difficult to achieve common ground with their children.

New opportunities for children. Parental difficulties are compounded by their hopes for their children to gain good opportunities through life in America. It is hard for them to accept that access to those opportunities might depend on cultural practices that they distrust or do not understand. Parents' sense of control over their children's development is challenged further when they do not learn English as fast as their children and must give their children authority in translation and cultural interpretation.

Sometimes parents are too overwhelmed and isolated to understand and help their children sort out the pressures of the American culture, particularly when parents are working long hours in exhausting jobs—while trying to learn English, get a driver's license and learn unfamiliar American shopping and everyday living practices. Moreover, the family may be living in poverty but may have enjoyed high social status at home, a difficult situation for any family.

### Children's Adjustment

Any event that affects an entire family can interfere with an adolescent's process of forming an adult identity that integrates various influences in a positive way. Immigrants and refugees must surmount additional challenges to those faced by children who are native to the United States. The little research that is available about the long-term effects of refugee trauma on children suggests that many factors affect future adaptation to the new country. Some determining factors include the child's age when the family leaves the home country, experiences in refugee camps, education of parents, degree of family separation and loss, poverty and discrimination in the United States, and parents' ability to speak English.

Even very young children share the trauma and displacement their parents experience. Children who were adolescents at the time of emigrating, however, most likely experience that trauma at a greater level of intensity



than young children do. Adolescents have neither the emotional protection afforded younger children nor the developmental capacity of an adult that would enable them to understand and take control of their situation.

**Peer Influences.** In school, children must learn English and American educational practices to catch up with their native-born classmates, who have been exposed to these practices for many years. If newcomer children arrive in this system as adolescents, their lack of social context puts them at an added disadvantage. In the United States, formation of peer relationships is a major developmental task, and peer groups often are well formed by adolescence. Frequently, the groups are tightly knit and do not readily welcome newcomers, particularly those who are different and whom they do not understand. The American children may be unwelcoming, or the most welcoming classmates could turn out to be negative influences.

**Need for Parental Support.** Parental support is particularly important for adolescents as they struggle with basic values and life decisions. If parents are unavailable or under such stress that they cannot help guide their adolescent children through this time, intergenerational conflicts can become particularly strong. Some refugee parents discover that they are having so much difficulty finding their own place in American society and that so much of the culture seems to conflict with their own values that they do not have the resources to respond to their children's needs. Adolescents need the support and positive guidance of their parents to sort out ways to belong in the new culture and make positive peer friendships.

### 3. Challenges to Successful Parenting

To gain a better understanding of the challenges involved for refugee parents of adolescents, BRYCS interviewed staff from 28 organizations, in 13 states, that provide support services to refugee parents. They serve families of many ethnic groups ranging from recent arrivals to those who have been here for more than a generation. Every effort was made to include programs reflecting the wide range of services available but it was not possible to include all programs or to interview more than one staff member involved in most programs. Moreover, the information is a snapshot of the program's services at the time of the interview. Services continue to change and evolve.

#### Intergenerational Conflict

Many staff noted the frequency of intergenerational conflict among newcomer families as they adjust to their lives here. Often, parents feel that all the "rules" they knew shifted without warning or explanation and thus lessened their sense of control. Many institutions of American society threaten or destroy traditional sources of support, particularly for refugees who arrive from clan-based societies, such as the Hmong or Sudanese. Moreover, as noted earlier, refugee children generally learn English more quickly than their parent(s) do and thus may have an advantage in understanding U.S. culture. They are still children, however, and they often learn to manipulate their parents through their greater—albeit rudimentary—understanding of the strange culture. Some staff described incidents in which children reported their parents to authorities for child abuse when the parents used traditional physical disciplinary measures to prevent their children from adopting American habits. These children hoped that placement in a foster home would help them gain entree to American cultural benefits. These and other situations can bring about a sense of alienation between parents and children, which only adds to the losses the whole family has suffered. In addition to the loss of their home, belongings and familiar social supports, they now face a loss of some of their optimism about hoped-for opportunities in America.

#### Exposure to Violence

Some of the program staff we interviewed expressed concern about the effects of early exposure to extreme violence in the home country and its effects on adolescent values and choices of friends and activities. Refugee children may have a distorted view of the role of violence in normal American life, particularly if they find themselves living in poverty in congested urban areas. Some refugee teenagers have lived in war-torn cultures in which violence was considered necessary for survival. They may not understand that violence plays a different role in American society and that association with friends who value it as a means of gaining control and solving problems will not lead to the positive outcomes they expect. If they do not have positive social and parental supports, they may lack good judgment in making friends and choosing social activities. If parents have no bridge to American culture so that they can help their children develop mature judgment in choosing friends, children can easily gravitate to alternative social supports among peers who disdain family ties and engage in negative activities and school failure. This ultimately cuts newcomer youth off from their family and the culture of their birth.

However, program staff interviewed by BRYCS said that, contrary to some common beliefs, newcomer adolescents are no more involved in gangs and drugs than other adolescents. Still, the threat of such involvement is a worry to their parents, and the prevalence of cultural misunderstandings and prejudice can lead to increased stress and conflict for newcomer families.

## Parental Isolation

At whatever age children arrive in the United States, they may prematurely take on an authoritative role in the family if their parents are isolated. Children are often called on to translate and to be the primary cultural broker for the family. In such cases, children are given a decision-making function that results in a damaging role reversal of parent-child responsibilities. Parents' isolation from American life and dependence on their children often increases if they do not find employment and learn to speak English. Even though a child may be given a disproportionate role in adult decision making, parents may disapprove of the ways in which he or she is becoming "Americanized" and punish the child. To children, the parents seem hypocritical: The child's understanding and acceptance of the culture is appropriate when it suits the parents' purposes, but not when the child participates in the culture. This dynamic exacerbates the normal environment of parent-child conflict in adolescence. Without intervention, the situation can lead to a deadlock that fosters increasingly dysfunctional relationships in the family. The Journey of Hope curriculum (see Appendix 1) uses the image of two trees' overlapping roots and branches to help parents develop an image of bi-cultural identity which is formed from traits of two cultures that remain distinct while lending definition and strength to a functional new identity.

U.S.-born youth whose families are refugees have not directly experienced the cultural losses of their parents; nevertheless, they seem to be especially at risk when their parents do not speak English and are isolated from the mainstream American community. In these families parents do not like the habits of American culture adopted by their children, and the youth are embarrassed and frustrated by their parents' imposition of traditional cultural values.

## Resistance to American Culture

Aspects of American culture that often meet parental disapproval range from clothing and food preferences to other customs regarded as distinctly disrespectful in their native culture. For example, children may adopt American dating practices and reject the parents' cultural holidays and family traditions. The idea of arranged marriage horrifies many Americans, but in some cultures it is a practice which parents regard as a positive benefit to their children, so they do not understand why their children reject this practice in the U.S. In addition, a goal of the school system is to teach children to think independently and to speak up in dialogue with adults, a sign of disrespect in many non-American cultures. Such cultural conflicts heighten the usual parent-child stress of adolescence for newcomer families.

## Cultural Barriers to Mediation and Counseling

A major challenge for service providers who want to help is that the very methods of mediation and counseling that are commonly used to resolve problems in American families conflict with the cultural values of many refugee parents. Because maintaining their culture of origin is a primary goal for the parents, and separating from it is often a goal for the children, it is difficult to find common ground in America.

## 4. Keys to Success

No formula can guarantee successful parenting of newcomer adolescents. Challenges to service providers are becoming more complex as new populations arrive who have had little exposure to Western culture. Several elements of successful programs, however, can be identified and emulated.

### Skilled, Experienced Staff

The key factor for successful and durable programs BRYCS surveyed was flexible staff who have the bicultural skills and cultural competence needed to work with both parents and children. It is beyond the scope of this project to study in depth the characteristics of staff in any specific program, but those we interviewed suggested the following requirements for staff providing support services for refugee parents:

- Skills and cultural competence to adapt curricula and other resources to particular ethnic groups
- A strong commitment to listening to families in order to understand their needs
- Ability to understand and work with both parents and children
- Flexibility to respond to changing needs as new populations arrive and as parents face new dilemmas at various stages of their acculturation (e.g., as their children pass through different stages)
- Patience with some newcomers' resistance to making the compromises required for successful acculturation
- Cultural knowledge and sensitivity
- Ability to play the role of "cultural broker" for their parent participants in a way that promotes their self-sufficiency.

We found that in most cases, staff who have experienced similar challenges and have managed to achieve a comfortable and functional bicultural identity and lifestyle for themselves are best able to act as role models for parents. Such staff give credibility to the principles they teach about how to thrive in America. Staff must overcome their own resistance to cultural compromises and be sympathetic to parents' dilemmas; otherwise, they will not be able offer constructive and realistic solutions or guide parents in exploring the many positive but bewildering options available to them. For instance, parents must understand and accept the value of independent thinking in children and the need for open communication to solve problems. Staff need the skills to help parents and children communicate, but they also have to help parents appreciate and develop communication skills, which may go against the model of parental authority of their culture.

### Informal, Respectful Setting

Often staff provide services informally in a manner that reflects parents' native culture as well as an understanding of the struggles and aspirations of newcomer youth. Part of the secret to such relatively informal services seems to be the degree to which they replicate the social structure of the native culture. For example, in many cultures, people turn to trusted leaders, rather than outsiders, for advice and help when problems occur in preference to attending a group meeting with strangers.

Staff also need to know how to demonstrate respect in their clients' cultures, such as addressing the oldest male family member first. It is often easier and more natural for staff to follow cultural practices when they are members of the same ethnic group and have achieved their own bicultural identity in America. Staff sometimes are trained in one of the national curricula, but conduct their program informally, drawing on many resources relevant to the ethnic community they serve. Lutheran Community Services in Portland, Oregon, and African Refugee Service in St. Louis, Missouri, are examples of programs that seem to revolve around a dynamic and resourceful leader of the same ethnic group the program serves.

## Well-Defined Goals

Successful programs share similar goals, such as:

- Rebuild parental authority and self-esteem by reducing parents' isolation and building bridges to mainstream U.S. cultural institutions.
- Help parents learn English or find other alternatives to relying on their children for translation.
- Help parents understand and relate to American schools that their children attend.
- Teach parents skills for effective communication with their children.
- Help parents and children build bridges together to American culture in an environment that respects parents' own cultural practices and values.
- Make available a continuum of services to connect families with resources that address multiple needs affecting parenting.

The above are goals for parenting at all stages, but they are particularly critical for newcomer parents of adolescents. In those families, a high level of conflict is common, and parents are likely to need assistance in mending parent-child relationships.

## Culturally Adapted Curriculum

Of the programs we surveyed, only a few focus explicitly on parenting adolescents. However, several of the curriculum materials listed in the appendix include modules for parenting adolescents. Topics covered include U.S. school culture, gangs, drug and alcohol prevention, discipline, health and sexuality, and communication skills as well as basic information about U.S. institutions and customs. Some curricula also publish supplemental guides with information about specific ethnic groups, such as the "Multicultural Parenting Educational Guide" from Nurturing Parenting Programs. (See Appendix 1.)

Intergenerational conflict in newcomer families is more complex than it is for other families because it involves parental allegiance to the culture of origin with which their children have little identification and experience, and which is often incompatible with the mainstream American culture to which they are exposed in school. The curricula included in Appendix 1 generally are compendia of principles and rules for U.S.-style parenting. Staff must adapt the curriculum materials to address the dilemmas of different ethnic groups and cultures. Most curriculum materials have limited effectiveness in bridging the intergenerational cultural gap that divides refugee adolescents and their parents.

## Support Group Offering

In addition to personal intervention to facilitate parent–child communication, many successful programs offer support groups with agendas developed by the participants. Sometimes, support groups take place in participants' homes and/or include adolescent children. Common concerns reflected in support group agendas include information about daily life in the United States, how to relate to American schools, health care, adolescent sexuality, drug abuse, and laws regarding discipline and child abuse.

In helping parents understand and use their strengths, the support group leader is regarded as a combined teacher, mentor, advocate, and role model for both parents and adolescents. Sometimes a structured curriculum is modified and drawn upon as needed, but the strength of support groups lies in the leader's ability both to provide individual guidance and referral as a friend, and to be available to respond to crisis situations and accompany clients to hospitals, schools, and other places as needed. Often the leader is a member of the same ethnic group and provides translation as well.



## 5. Examples of Successful Program Approaches

The programs mentioned below vary greatly. Some are stand-alone organizations; others operate out of existing larger organizations. All have been effective in helping parents and adolescent children bridge intergenerational gaps and successfully acculturate to life in the United States.

### Community Partnerships

Some organizations have entered into partnerships to find ways to respond more formally to the needs of newcomer families who have adolescent children. In Seattle, the International Rescue Committee (IRC) partnered with the University of Washington to develop a program for parents of Vietnamese teens. After extensive input from parents, teens, schools, and other service providers, the IRC started Communication about Health between Adults and Teens (CHAT), an 8-week program to help parents communicate more effectively with their teenagers. One session includes a panel of youth describing their experience as bicultural teens in the United States. The program continues to evolve; one of the goals is to develop a parallel program for teens themselves, which will be integrated with the parents' program.

### English Language as a Bridge

A recurring theme that program leaders stress is the importance of parents learning English; doing so enables them to establish their own bridges to American culture, reduce their isolation, and reduce the hazards of role reversal with their children. Refugee Services of Wisconsin (Madison) offers monthly workshops for Southeast Asian parents of adolescents who attend ESL classes. Parents and children attend monthly meetings together. Staff speak the languages of participants and are available for consultation and mediation with family issues including cultural conflict, problems with the school system, and difficulties with employment and child care. Children are supported with tutoring and other services to encourage success in school.

### Schools and Communities

InterChurch Refugee and Immigration Ministries in Chicago offers a parenting module as part of an orientation program for refugees. Program staff have found that parents become more involved in the youth program as problems arise with children in school. The program, which has bilingual staff, trains high school students as volunteer tutors and assistants in its summer youth program. The agency also offers parent groups that are based on the Parents as Educational Partners (PEP) curriculum of the Illinois Adult Learning Resource Center for refugee parents. The PEP curriculum is specifically designed for newcomer parents and addresses common issues about school expectations and structure, and intergenerational cultural conflict.

The Youth Empowered for Success (YES) parent support services of Catholic Charities in San Jose, California, grew out of its program for at-risk youth. Program staff found that gains with youth were minimal if relationships with parents and the family environment were not also improved to support the youth's progress. The program has developed curricula in Vietnamese and Spanish that cover topics relevant to adolescent development and conflict, with focus on building parents' self-esteem and assisting with their own difficult acculturation process. The program promotes leadership opportunities for parents and encourages them to become involved in advocacy efforts to address cultural needs and provide a healthy environment for their family. Advocacy includes efforts to make schools more responsive to needs of newcomer families.



## **Integrative Research**

The program offered by the La Frontera behavioral health center in Tucson, Arizona, serves Russian refugees and Latin American immigrants. It uses the Strengthening Multi Ethnic Families (SMEF) curriculum in a research project funded by the Center for Substance Abuse Prevention. In this program, participants from the ethnic community and professional staff are trained in the curriculum and share leadership responsibilities. Entire families, including children of all ages, participate in 12 sessions together, but the research focuses especially on 9- to 12-year-olds, who are believed to be at increased risk. The program is in the first year of a 3-year research grant and will no doubt produce useful data. Staff there see a need to develop specialized services for adolescents.

## **Informal Programs**

Youth programs that do not explicitly offer parent support services often serve parents informally. Such programs include homework clubs in ethnic community centers or churches, sports teams, ethnic Scout troops, and individual tutoring. The MELD program in Minneapolis provides group support for teen mothers. In some youth programs, parents of youth participants sometimes turn to program leaders for help with the conflicts they are having with their adolescent children.

## **Mandated Participants**

Most of the programs BRYCS interviewed serve voluntary participants recruited from the community. Some programs, however, such as Concord Youth and Family Services in Lowell, Massachusetts, also serve parents whose program participation is mandated by courts as a result of abuse and neglect; such programs have a particular emphasis on the problems of adolescent girls. Staff in the Lowell program find that training in the SMEF curriculum effectively helps staff understand how cultural issues affect newcomer parents.

## 6. Summary

Intergenerational cultural conflict is the most common problem between newcomer parents and their children. It most commonly arises when teens adopt attitudes and behaviors that conflict with their parents' cultural traditions. Common sources of conflict are American dating practices, independent thinking, and the role of peer relationships. The following ingredients appear to be needed for effective services to parents of adolescents and should be included in any plan:

- Skilled, flexible staff who can adapt resources and concepts to the needs and strengths of their participants
- Cultural competence of everyone involved in the organization
- Recognition of ways in which the identity conflicts of all youth in America are magnified by the special cultural dilemmas of adolescents in newcomer families
- Staff who are able to work with all cultures served and with both parents and youth
- Commitment of staff and the entire organization to helping both parents and youth toward successful acculturation as well as advocating for their needs
- Encouragement for parents to learn English and participate in their U.S. community
- Flexibility to respond to changing newcomer populations and environment
- Focus on helping parents use their strengths and realize ways in which they share struggles with other American families with adolescent children.

This report highlights several effective approaches to providing support services for refugee parents of adolescents. We encourage you to explore those approaches and other resources in determining how best to meet the needs of your newcomer community.





# A1

## **Appendix 1** **Refugee Parenting Resources**



Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services



A joint project of



Lutheran  
Immigration &  
Refugee Service  
700 Light Street  
Baltimore, MD 21230  
[www.lirs.org](http://www.lirs.org)



U.S. Conference of  
Catholic Bishops  
Migration &  
Refugee Services  
3211 4th Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20017  
[www.usccb.org/mrs](http://www.usccb.org/mrs)

**888.572.6500**  
**[info@brycs.org](mailto:info@brycs.org)**  
**[www.brycs.org](http://www.brycs.org)**

# Refugee Parenting Resources

## I. Parenting Curricula

Title/Name	Contact Information	Description
Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP)	American Guidance Services 4201 Woodland Road Circle Pines, MN 55014 1-800-328-2560 www.ags.org	7-session positive parenting skills training for parents of young children. Translated in Spanish and adapted for 3rd grade English level. Has been used effectively with migrant parents.
Nurturing Parenting Program	www.nurturingparenting.com Family Development Resources 3070 Rasmussen Rd. Park City UT 84098 1-800-688-5822	Several versions of program available for various ages 0-18 and ethnic groups (Hispanic, South East Asian, African American), includes parents and children, with group and home visit curricula. Extensive evaluation materials. NIMH research evaluation results available on website. Leader training available by tape or facilitators.
Strengthening Families Program (SFP)	Karol L. Kumpfer, Ph.D University of Utah 250 So. 1850 E. Rm. 215 Salt Lake City, UT 84112 801-581-8498 karol.kumpfer@health.utah.edu	Research-tested 14-session family skill-building program to reduce children=s at-risk behavior. Includes children=s curriculum. Has been used and tested with Asian/Pacific Islander, Hispanic and American Indian families, including families with early teens.

## III. Parent Education Resources On The Web

Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights (PACER)	<a href="http://www.pacer.org">http://www.pacer.org</a>	Lists resources and links to support for parents of children with disabilities. Includes materials translated into Spanish, Hmong and Somalian, including Family Strengths Series (0-5).
Colorado Parent Information and Resource Center	<a href="http://www.cpirc.org">http://www.cpirc.org</a>	Multi-cultural resources for parents, including some in Hmong, Haitian, Spanish, Chinese. Children=s books translated into Hmong.
Cultural Orientation Resource Center	<a href="http://www.cal.org/corc/links.html">http://www.cal.org/corc/links.html</a>	Site contains links to domestic and international organizations serving refugees, education resources, cultural information for refugee nationalities and specific sites for many ethnic groups.
CYFERnet: Children, Youth and Families Education and Research Network	<a href="http://www.cyfernet.org">http://www.cyfernet.org</a>	Website with various useful categories, including many evaluation aids. For Parent education section, go to <a href="http://twosocks.ces.ncsu.edu/cyfdb">http://twosocks.ces.ncsu.edu/cyfdb</a>
Refugee Health/Immigrant Health: Issues in Refugee Health and Resettlement	<a href="http://www3.baylor.edu/~Charles_Kemp/refugees.html">http://www3.baylor.edu/~Charles_Kemp/refugees.html</a>	Website with many resources concerning refugee health, spiritual and religious dimensions of refugee experience, mental health, and more; links for 18 ethnic groups.

Refugee Web: Multilingual Job Application Tutor	<a href="http://www.jvs-boston.org">http://www.jvs-boston.org</a>	Practical information in Bosnian, English, Russian, Somali and Vietnamese to give refugees an actual sample application to prepare for job interview and application. Other information also on site.
Children's Health Information Network	<a href="http://www.tchin.org/resources/resorm/c-resorm.htm">http://www.tchin.org/resources/resorm/c-resorm.htm</a>	Health information recommended for Kurdish and Arabic families

#### IV. Program Evaluation And Relevant Research Publications

Keys to Cultural Competency: A Literature Review for Evaluators of Recent Immigrant and Refugee Service Programs in Colorado, prepared for the Colorado Trust by REFT Institute, Inc., March 2002	<a href="http://www.coloradotrust.org/pageinpage/publications.cfm">http://www.coloradotrust.org/pageinpage/publications.cfm</a>	Practical information about how to evaluate programs, which gives guidelines also relevant to designing programs and program evaluation. Addresses considerations for groups from Europe/Middle East, Americas, Asia, Africa.
Measuring Program Outcomes: A Practical Approach, United Way of America	United Way of America Alexandria, VA 1996.	Handbook widely used in UW agencies to design evaluation outcomes procedures. Practical basic information, plus extensive bibliography.
Basic Guide to Program Evaluation, by Carter McNamara	<a href="http://www.mapnp.org/library/evaluatn">http://www.mapnp.org/library/evaluatn</a>	Brief guidelines for evaluation in non-profit agencies, with links to other resources.
Grantstech.com	<a href="http://www.grantstech.com/articles/programevaluation.html">www.grantstech.com/articles/programevaluation.html</a>	Website provides links to practical articles on rationale and design of evaluation tools.
Cultural Competence Agency Self-Assessment Instrument, CWLA Press	Child Welfare League of America 440 First Street NW, Third Floor Washington DC 20001-2085 202-638-2952 <a href="http://www.cwla.org">www.cwla.org</a>	Definitions, procedures and tools to evaluate cultural competence of organizational, staff and board.

#### V. Other Helpful Resources

The Middle of Everywhere, by Mary Pipher (NY:Harcourt, Inc., 2002)	available in libraries and bookstores	Vignettes and discussion of intergenerational and other issues for refugees in Lincoln, NE school, from the point of view of a cultural broker/psychologist working with students and families of several nationalities.
Cam Nang Gia Dinh: The Family Relationship Guide	Y.E.S., Catholic Charities of San Jose, 645 Wool Creek Dr., San Jose, CA 95112	Bi-lingual family values discussion guide developed by collaborative committee of Vietnamese refugees in San Jose, CA
IRC (International Rescue Committee)	122 E. 42nd St. New York, NY 10168 212-551-3079 <a href="mailto:Heidic@theIRC.org">Heidic@theIRC.org</a>	Extensive on-site needs assessment of refugee parenting and family needs in context of comprehensive review of community resources and over-all refugee services. Clearinghouse list of resources also available.

ERIC Digests: Southeast Asian adolescent and developmental identity issues	ERIC Digests <a href="http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests">http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests</a>	Three articles concerning impact of refugee/immigrant experience on children of different ages, and challenges for parenting and educational systems, by Carol Ascher #ED306329 and #ED252638, and Jianhua Feng #ED369577. Bibliography.
ERIC Digests: Family Literacy	ERIC Digests <a href="http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests">http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests</a>	Two articles concerning importance and examples of family literacy programs in relation to parenting programs and role of literacy in dynamics of parent-child relationships in refugee and immigrant families, by Wendy Schwartz #ED431063, #ED431064. Includes references.
ERIC Digest: Immigrants and Their Educational Attainment	ERIC Digests <a href="http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests">http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests</a>	Summary of demographic and socio-economic information from 1990 Census and other sources, by Wendy Schwartz, #ED402398.
Family Literacy for Language Minority Families: Issues for Program Implementation@, by Margaret Mulhern, et.al. NCBE Program Information Guide Series, summer 1994	<a href="http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/ncbepubs/pigs/pig17.htm">http://www.ncbe.gwu.edu/ncbepubs/pigs/pig17.htm</a>	Report and analysis of Project FLAME, Parents as Teachers/Parents as Learners program for Latino families. Includes guidelines for program development and Model Lesson Plan.
Truy Tim Ung Thu Co Tu Cung@ (Cervical Cancer Screening: What Vietnamese Women Should Know)	National Cancer Institute 1-800-332-8615	Illustrated booklet in Vietnamese containing health information for Vietnamese women.
A Conceptual Model for Studying Parenting Behaviors in Immigrant Populations@, by Gwendolyn F. Foss	Advances in Nursing Science, Vol 19(2), December 1996.	Discussion of cultural variations in parenting behavior and impact of double transition for new mothers who are also new immigrants; implications for nursing practice could also apply to others working with immigrant/refugee parents.
Drug Abuse Prevention with Multiethnic Youth, ed. by Gilbert J. Botvin, et.al. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1995)	Available through publisher, bookstores and university libraries	Many articles are technical research reports, but several include descriptions of community-based prevention programs with useful information about dynamics in immigrant and refugee families.
Strengthening Refugee Families, by Daniel Scheinfeld and Lorraine Wallach (Chicago: Lyceum Books, 1997)	Lyceum Books, Inc. 5758 S. Blackstone Ave Chicago, IL 60637 773-643-1902	Detailed account of Refugee Families Program serving South East Asian, Afghan and East African families over 6 years. Provides details of in-home group and individual family support for children and parents together to promote school success, plus theoretical guidelines.
LEP Parent Involvement Project: A guide for Connecting Immigrant Parents and Schools, ed. Diane Peacoraro.	Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning.ERIC #ED458831 <a href="http://ericir.syr.edu/plweb-cgi">http://ericir.syr.edu/plweb-cgi</a>	Guide to help immigrant parents understand and interact productively with children=s schools. Available in 7 languages.
Nutrition Education for New Americans Project	Georgia State University One University Plaza Atlanta, GA 30303 404-651-0428 <a href="http://monarch.gsu.edu/nutrition">http://monarch.gsu.edu/nutrition</a>	Nutrition information in handout and video form, in English, Spanish, Haitian Creole, Russian, Korean, and Vietnamese. CD ROM in 37 languages.



You Can Talk to Your Child's School Videotape	Minnesota State Dept. Of Children, Families and Learning ERIC #ED458833 <a href="http://ericir.syr.edu">http://ericir.syr.edu</a>	Video models conversations between school personnel and parents in English, Hmong, Russian, Somali, Spanish and other languages.
Multicultural Parenting Educational guide: Understanding Cultural Parenting Values, Traditions and Practices, ed. by Stephen J. Bavolek	Family Development Resources, Inc. <a href="http://www.nurturingparenting.com">http://www.nurturingparenting.com</a> 1-800-688-5822	Resource book describing family and cultural traditions of 14 ethnic groups.
The Book of Canh: Memoirs of a Vietnamese Woman..., by Canh Tran and Lani Hayduk (Milford, CT: 1996)	c/o Hayduk, 56 Snowapple Lane, Milford, CT 06460	Autobiographical account of life of Vietnamese physician in Vietnam and refugee camp before coming to America
Torture Treatment Centers in the United States	<a href="http://www.phrusa.org/campaigns/asylum_network/treatment.html">www.phrusa.org/campaigns/asylum_network/treatment.html</a> .	Physicians for Human Rights lists over 20 centers and links to other resources.
Immigration and the Family--Research and Policy on U.S. Immigrants, ed. by Alan Booth, et.al. (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997)	Lawrence Erlbaum Assoc., Inc. 10 Industrial Avenue Mahwah, NJ 07430	Excellent compilation of articles by leading experts on family dynamics over generations, child development, and public policy. Includes useful statistics and section on adolescents.
The Slowing Progress of Immigrants, by Steven A. Camarota	Center for Immigration Studies ( <a href="http://www.cis.org/articles/2001/back401.html">http://www.cis.org/articles/2001/back401.html</a> ), March 2001.	Statistics on changes in economic progress of various immigrant and refugee groups.
Working with Immigrant/Refugee Families: A Guide for Interested Organizations@	Meld 219 N. Second St. Suite 200 Minneapolis, MN 55401 612-332-7563 <a href="mailto:info@meld.org">info@meld.org</a> <a href="http://www.meld.org">www.meld.org</a>	Practical guide for organizations considering refugee parent support services. Includes checklists for assessing organizational readiness and Cultural Understanding Worksheet.







# A2

## **Appendix 2** **Agency Profiles**



Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services



A joint project of



Lutheran  
Immigration &  
Refugee Service  
700 Light Street  
Baltimore, MD 21230  
[www.lirs.org](http://www.lirs.org)



U.S. Conference of  
Catholic Bishops  
Migration &  
Refugee Services  
3211 4th Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20017  
[www.usccb.org/mrs](http://www.usccb.org/mrs)

**888.572.6500**  
**[info@brycs.org](mailto:info@brycs.org)**  
**[www.brycs.org](http://www.brycs.org)**

## (28) African Refugee Service

**Date of Interview:** May 3, 2002  
**Interviewee:** Zed Minale, Executive Director  
**Organization Name:** African Refugee Service  
**Address:**  
**Telephone:** 314-577-6880  
**Fax:** 314-577-6874  
**Email:** africanrs@aol.com  
**Website:**  
**Type of Organization:** Mutual Assistance Association  
**Program Type:** General needs-based services for African refugees  
**Parent Program Staff:** one full-time for all services, plus one full-time volunteer  
**Funding:** collaborate with ECDC ORR grant, private funding, fund-raising events

**Parenting Program Description:** Program provides staff support for individual needs of families, support groups which address parenting issues, assistance to parents with school relationships as needed.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	Refugees from Ethiopia, Congo, Sierra Leone, Liberia, Somalia, Eritrea
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	Intergenerational conflict, especially in families who have achieved financial stability, but children have adopted American materialistic values. Program encourages new arrivals to maintain traditional family values. Problems with lack of understanding and support of mainstream agencies.
<b>Staff</b>	One full-time speaks languages of participants and English, plus one full-time volunteer. Also volunteers who tutor, provide transportation and expertise.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	Understand and relate to culture, available without rigid schedule, help to negotiate American institutional procedures.
<b>Child and Family Involvement</b>	Parents are involved support groups and staff makes home visits. Children are frequently present with parents. Program is planning summer program for teens.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	Works in collaborative ORR grant with ECDC. Maintains referral relationships for mental health needs, works with schools, courts on behalf of families, but has had some negative experiences with collaboration. Many volunteers assist program in various activities, including transportation, fund-raising and offering expertise.
<b>Program History</b>	Program is in second year.
<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	Informal personalized program does not use formal written curriculum but responds to needs that arise through individual requests or from support groups for men and women. Goal is to help Africans have a better life, be fruitful citizens, and help their children do well in school.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	Parents are encouraged to develop their strengths and are helped to reduce misunderstandings with mainstream culture and become more self-sufficient.
<b>Curriculum</b>	Program does not use a formal curriculum but has ongoing groups, including a men's group, support and sewing groups for women, and ESL classes; plans are under way for a summer group for teens.
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	Staff can communicate with parents and children in their first language, including French, Amharic and English. Refugee leaders help interpret other languages if needed.

<b>Class Logistics</b>	Agency staff and volunteers help with transportation and children stay in same room with parents during group meetings. 12 to 24 adults participate in each group.
<b>Funding</b>	Funding is received from ORR for collaborative project with ECDC. Other funding comes from private donations and fund-raisers. Funding is cited as a major problem for program.
<b>Evaluation and Follow-Up</b>	No evaluation developed at this time. Personal follow-up is provided as needed or requested.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	Personal understanding of staff of refugee experience and African cultures. Ability to bridge cultural understanding with mainstream.
<b>Challenges</b>	Would like to have an African social center and more stable funding.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	None given.

## (14) Asian Pacific Family Resource Center

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	November 2001
<b>Interviewee:</b>	Social worker/parenting teacher
<b>Organization Name:</b>	Asian Pacific Family Resource Center
<b>Address:</b>	625 Wool Creek Dr., Suite F, San Jose, CA 95112
<b>Telephone:</b>	408 299 1500
<b>Fax:</b>	408 298 2482
<b>Type of Organization:</b>	County-based urban agency serving immigrants and refugees
<b>Program Type:</b>	Formal, county-developed curriculum
<b>Parent Program Staff:</b>	One parenting teacher with another teacher assisting
<b>Funding:</b>	From Santa Clara County

**Parenting Program Description:** This program features a formal, county-based curriculum primarily serving Cambodian parents whose participation is ordered by the court. Classes consist of weekly, 2- or 3-hour sessions for 10 or 12 weeks. Extensive collaboration occurs among the four family resource centers in the county. One indication of program success is when parents are not mandated to retake the class and improved communication between parents and children. Additional materials in the Khmer language are needed. Program staff face a challenge in being effective with so many additional work demands.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	Participants are primarily Cambodian parents whose participation is ordered by the court. Other immigrant groups attend classes as well.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	Parents do not see corporal punishment as a problem. They do not know how to access basic services, such as taking a bus, and may remain at home, afraid to go anywhere. Program staff state that when children come to the United States, they see other children receiving more affection from their parents than they receive, and they come to expect more from their own parents.
<b>Staff</b>	Teachers co-facilitate classes. This county-based parenting program trains teachers in four initial sessions and has follow-up sessions throughout the year.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	A good teacher does not have high expectations of students, is patient, and shows students respect.
<b>Child and Parent Involvement</b>	The program has no parent involvement component.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	Collaboration occurs among the four county-based family resource centers. The teacher is the only Cambodian social worker in the county and works with many other agencies and programs assisting Cambodian families.
<b>Program History</b>	No specific comments in this category.
<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	Each class combines lectures, exercises, role plays, and class discussions and includes refreshments and a short break.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	No specific comments in this category.
<b>Curriculum</b>	The sequence of classes begins with self-esteem, communication skills, and anger management and continues with an array of topics, including discipline, child-abuse, nutrition, child safety, and the legal aspects of parent responsibilities.
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	Many parents cannot read or write in English or in Khmer; as a result, parents have particular problems understanding legal documents that are sent home with their children.



<b>Class Logistics</b>	The program offers a 12-week, 2.5-hour class session and a 10-week, 3-hour class. One class taught in English has mixed ethnicities and approximately 13 students; another class taught in Khmer usually has about 3 students. The class finishes with a graduation celebration, and often parents have a potluck dinner. Transportation is provided.
<b>Funding</b>	The program is sustained through funding from Santa Clara County.
<b>Evaluation and Follow Up</b>	Pretests and posttests assess how well each class met its goals. No formal planning or evaluation takes place, and no follow up occurs. Classes are planned after weekly staff reflection sessions about how well each class went.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	One indication of success is when parents are not mandated to retake the class. Program strengths are that parents learn how to communicate with their children and understand the rules and regulations related to parenting in the United States.
<b>Challenges</b>	One challenge involves locating adequate materials in Khmer. Another is that the services of the teacher interviewed are in constant demand, limiting the time available for the parenting program.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	Additional materials for Cambodian parents need to be available on a national level. Funds should be provided for paraprofessionals who can assist individual Cambodian families with improving their language skills, getting help with legal issues, obtaining basic services, and advocating for their involvement in school.

## (11) Broward County Refugee Service

**Date of Interview:** October 2001  
**Interviewee:** Marriage and family counselor  
**Organization Name:** Broward County Refugee Services  
**Address:** 2995 North Dixie Hwy., Fort Lauderdale, FL 33334  
**Telephone:** 954 537 2929  
**Fax:** 954 537 2833  
**Type of Organization:** County Department of Human Services  
**Program Type:** Formal curriculum based on the S.T.E.P. program (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting).  
**Parent Program Staff:** One marriage and family counselor working with interns and guest speakers  
**Funding:** Two grants from the U.S. Office of refugee Services administered through the Florida Department of Children and Family Services

**Parenting Program Description:** The Family Strengthening Program consists of one 2-hour session with the family therapist with occasionally guest speakers or social work intern. Many parents continue to meet in groups with the family counselor (often held in their homes) to discuss issues raised in the class. The agency collaborates with other county agencies and the school board. The strength of the program is its support and useful information for parents. Staff are concerned that a 2-hour class cannot effectively teach good parenting skills.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	Refugees, asylees and Cuban/Haitian entrants. The largest population served includes Colombian, Cuban, Haitian and Eastern European.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	Parents of adolescents are in a dilemma: They want their children to have liberties, yet they are afraid that they will become too Americanized. Corporal punishment is also a problem.
<b>Staff</b>	The program has only one staff person, but social work interns and guest speakers assist with class topics.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	A good teacher recognizes the knowledge that parents already have, is culturally competent, is a good listener, is open minded and sensitive, and helps parents talk openly with each other.
<b>Child and Parent Involvement</b>	Parent/child issues that come up in therapy or other group activities with parents and their children are incorporated into the parenting skills classes. The topics also are incorporated into classes, which are often held in homes.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	The program collaborates with the school board, police department, child protective services, and other organizations that provide guest speakers and handouts for parents.
<b>Program History</b>	No specific comments in this category.
<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	Topics often are geared toward the interests that parents and adolescents mention in counseling sessions and when the class begins.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	No specific comments in this category.
<b>Curriculum</b>	The main purpose of the class is to teach parents about laws regarding child abuse and neglect, and appropriate disciplinary practices. Materials from the S.T.E.P. program (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting) and other materials are utilized. Topics have included parenting styles, child development, discipline, child abuse and neglect, the Child Labor Law, school issues and parenting problems and coping strategies for immigrant parents.

<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	Spanish-speaking parents appear to be the most eager to participate. This is attributed to cultural issues (Haitian and Eastern Europeans are not used to group therapy sessions) and to the fact that the coordinator speaks Spanish.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	Outreach is through churches, advertisements, Hispanic radio stations, and newspapers. Support for parents to attend classes includes bus passes, child care, refreshments, and phone calls. The class consists of one 2-hour session.
<b>Funding</b>	The program is funded by a 3-year grant from the State of Florida. The agency has a full-time grant writer to gain future funding.
<b>Evaluation and Follow Up</b>	Participants do a post test to assess how well they understood the material presented. Follow-up is provided as requested and needed by parents. A recent university partnership was established to use an evaluation instrument called The Parent as A Teacher Inventory.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	The strengths of the program are the support and useful information it provides to parents.
<b>Challenges</b>	A 2-hour class cannot effectively teach good parenting skills. Another challenge is to become more effective at outreach.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	Staff show interest in finding other tools to help parents express their interests and concerns. There is an interest in providing art therapy for parents.

## (12) Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	November 2001
<b>Interviewee:</b>	Executive director
<b>Organization Name:</b>	Cambodian Association of Greater Philadelphia
<b>Address:</b>	5412 5th St., Philadelphia, PA 19120
<b>Telephone:</b>	215 324 4070
<b>Type of Organization:</b>	Small, urban, mutual assistance association (MAA) serving refugees
<b>Program Type:</b>	Formal quarterly workshops
<b>Parent Program Staff:</b>	Four bilingual and bicultural staff
<b>Funding:</b>	U.S. Department of Refugee Resettlement; private foundations

**Parenting Program Descriptions:** This program features 2-hour workshops every 3 months in which guest speakers address topics in which parents express interest. The program has a close relationship with the Cambodian community and provides frequent home visits. This agency is the only one working with Cambodian refugees in Philadelphia. A strength of the program is the positive interaction it fosters between parents. The program needs to hire a parent training specialist, and staff suggest that parenting topics be integrated into other refugee programs.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	The program serves Cambodian refugees.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	Issues include problems with corporal punishment and school truancy. Parents state that they are losing control of their adolescent children.
<b>Staff</b>	Four bicultural and bilingual staff members work together on parenting topics.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	No specific comments in this category.
<b>Child and Parent Involvement</b>	Staff members visit homes when a crisis arises.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	The agency has a good relationship with the Cambodian community. A case management program at the agency works closely with parents.
<b>Program History</b>	No specific comments in this category.
<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	Guest speakers address topics in which parents have expressed interest. The focus is on providing parents with useful information.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	No specific comments in this category.
<b>Curriculum</b>	Workshop topics include drug and alcohol prevention, community safety, insurance, taxes, and problems with adolescents who leave home.
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	School programs for parents lack Khmer interpreters.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	Outreach is through fliers and phone calls. Single-session, 2-hour workshops are offered quarterly. Thirty to 40 people attend, and refreshments are provided.
<b>Funding</b>	Funding is from the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement and private foundations.
<b>Evaluation and Follow Up</b>	A survey at the end of each class asks parents to grade the workshop. Parents also provide informal written feedback.



<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	The program's strength is the degree of interaction it fosters among parents. A positive outcome for parents is that they learn how to obtain information.
<b>Challenges</b>	The program needs funding for ongoing classes as well as for a parent training specialist.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	Staff would like to locate a guest speaker with skills in domestic violence issues. A guidebook of what has worked in other programs and assistance in locating grants could be helpful, too. Parent training should be a required topic in refugee orientations, and teachers of English as a Second Language to refugee parents should receive training in parenting topics.

## (5) Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association

**Date of Interview:** November 2001  
**Interviewee:** Project director  
**Organization Name:** Cambodian Mutual Assistance Association  
**Address:** 165 Jackson St., Lowell, MA 01852  
**Telephone:** 978 454 4286 x374  
**Fax:** 978 454 1806  
**Type of Organization:** Medium-sized urban mutual assistance association (MAA) serving refugees  
**Program Type:** Based on the Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families curriculum (SMEF: see profile #1)  
**Parent Program Staff:** Project director and three staff  
**Funding:** Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

**Parenting Program Description:** The curriculum emphasizes spiritual and cultural values, discipline, parenting roles, and relationships. Classes consist of 3-hour sessions once per week for 13 weeks. Staff rely on home visits to address specific issues because of the sensitive nature of the families' experiences. The greatest benefit to parents is the sense of trust that is developed; the greatest challenge is to find funding to sustain the program. Staff are interested in creating programs that combine prevention and intervention.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	Participants are Cambodian refugees who have children of all ages.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	Many parents were tortured in their home country, and children have flashbacks from traumatic wartime experiences. Parents have a difficult time trusting others. Their values often conflict with American values: Refugees prefer arranged marriages, want their children to avoid bathing in public, and have concerns about their adolescents dating. Children often are addicted to drugs and are abusive because their parents have been abusive toward them. Parents also encounter discrimination at work.
<b>Staff</b>	Three staff members have been trained in the SMEF curriculum.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	Sensitivity to cultural backgrounds.
<b>Child and Family Involvement</b>	Parenting staff and staff members who work with children often communicate with one another to keep each other informed about issues that arise. Staff also visit homes. The director notes that parents express their problems in their homes rather than in formal classes. Parent involvement is encouraged, but parents have little time to volunteer because of work responsibilities.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Program</b>	Staff share knowledge about parenting programs with Hispanic agencies in the city, and they collaborate with Concord Youth and Family Services (see profile #6), which also uses the SMEF curriculum.
<b>Program History</b>	No specific comments in this category.
<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	Cambodian cultural activities (e.g., potlucks and discussions of daily life) are integrated into the Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families curriculum. Staff must refrain from mentioning the traumatic experiences of parents. Parents decide topics for each class, which feature role plays and group discussions.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	Parents gradually become a family with other parents in the class and build on positive experiences.
<b>Curriculum</b>	The curriculum is built on five principles: spiritual and cultural values, parents as role models, clear instruction, enhancing relationships, and positive discipline.

<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	The program needs interpreters, and it is difficult to recruit bilingual staff. Outreach takes place through television and radio announcements as well as through word of mouth from former participants. Most parents cannot read or write.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	Classes consist of 3-hour sessions once per week for 13 weeks. Staff assist with transportation and child care and often call to remind parents to attend. Parents who successfully complete the program receive a certificate.
<b>Funding</b>	Current funding is from a 2-year SAMHSA grant. The agency is experiencing a funding crisis, which the director believes is a result of federal priorities changing after the September 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center as well as a faltering economy.
<b>Evaluation and Follow-Up</b>	Staff conducted an initial needs assessment; a video is documenting the program and its benefits to parents.
<b>Program Strength and Outcomes</b>	The greatest benefit to parents is the sense of trust that is developed.
<b>Challenges</b>	Finding funding to keep current staff employed.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	Staff are interested in programs that combine prevention and intervention as well as training in cultural sensitivity and outreach methods.

## (26) Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego

**Date of Interview:** May 29, 2002  
**Interviewee:** Michael J. McKay, S.T.D., Department Director for Refugee and Immigrant Services  
**Organization Name:** Catholic Charities Diocese of San Diego  
**Address:** 4575 Mission Gorge Place, Suite A, San Diego, CA 92120  
**Telephone:** 619-287-9454  
**Fax:** 619-287-6328  
**Email:** mmckay@ccdsd.org  
**Website:** http://www.ccdsd.org  
**Type of Organization:** Community services ministry of the Diocese of San Diego  
**Program Type:** Parents as Teachers (PAT)  
**Parent Program Staff:** Program manager, three parent educators, and 0.5 FTE administrative support  
**Funding:** San Diego County Children and Families Commission

**Parenting Program Description:** Parents as Teachers East County uses the PAT curriculum, which serves parents of children ages 0 to 5 to prepare them for school. Their case management approach includes monthly home visits and referrals for other services needed by the family or older children.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	The program serves refugee families in the East County section of the city, including Iraqis, Chaldeans, Kurds, Assyrians, and Somalis. Families participate on the basis of the age of their children, not because of referral for specific problems.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	Participants are recruited through a medical screening clinic, reception and placement programs, the Red Cross, and other social agencies. The families were underserved because of their language and cultural problems. Middle Eastern families were feeling particularly isolated after the events of September 11, 2001.
<b>Staff</b>	The program manager and parent educators were hired for language capacity and "aptitude" (i.e., background as parents and experience in child care or social services). Staff are trained in PAT and topics of particular relevance to refugee parents, such as safety, hygiene, and literacy issues. They are also trained to use the Denver developmental assessment tool. In addition, the program manager has a medical background from his home in Afghanistan.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	Teachers need to be able to recognize basic issues of parents and to win the trust of the community they are serving.
<b>Child and Family Involvement</b>	Parents attend monthly PAT meetings, which focus on topics drawn from the PAT curriculum that are identified by participants as being of particular relevance. Each family also receives a home visit from a parent educator once a month, in which parents and children all participate. A detailed case file is kept for each family, and referrals are made to address other family needs.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	The program collaborates with faith groups and other social service agencies through the El Cajon Social Services Collaborative; the medical screening clinic; the parenting and adoption program; and counseling services of Catholic Charities, the Red Cross, and other voluntary agencies.
<b>Program History</b>	The Catholic Charities agency has other parenting services, but PAT East County began in July 2001 when county funding was obtained. Through word of mouth, the program now has a waiting list of 10 families. Staff hope to double the capacity in the next funding cycle and include immigrant families.



<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	Lessons on topical issues are taught at 1.5-hour parent group meetings once a month. Guest speakers are often invited to the group to provide information on specific topics, such as safety, hygiene, and nutrition. Parent educators visit families for 1 hour each month in their homes and interact with parents and their children around specific age and developmental issues. The PAT program is based on the belief that parents are the best teachers of their children and the ones who are most important in preparing them for school. The purpose is to get information to families, not to provide social services. Parent educators refer clients to other programs when they encounter family and marital problems, medical problems, or teen issues.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	Parents can be in the program from the third trimester of pregnancy until the child is 5 years old. Most refugee parents at first need very basic information about parenting, such as safety, nutrition, and health care.
<b>Curriculum</b>	The program uses the PAT curriculum but modifies it for refugees. They are not allowed to translate the program, so they use the basic meeting and home visit structure and philosophy but have a stronger case management emphasis. They also bring in information from local experts and use a website in Arabic to make the program more relevant and accessible to refugees.
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	Most parents require translation into Farsi and Arabic. Many are not literate in their first language.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	Child care is provided by volunteers, refreshments are served, and limited transportation is provided. Whenever possible, meetings are accessible to the neighborhood where the refugees live.
<b>Funding</b>	The San Diego County Children and Families Commission funds the program. Staff are optimistic that continuing funding can be obtained after the initial 3-year funding period.
<b>Evaluation and Follow Up</b>	The program has an extensive evaluation component consisting of a parent knowledge oral survey instrument, which is administered at enrollment and again at the end of the year. In addition, the program manager calls to ask specific questions about what participants enjoy, recommend changing, etc. The parent educators ask the same questions about the home visits. Staff would like to have anonymous written evaluations, but many participants are not literate in their first language.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	The program is practical and gives parents someone to communicate with who knows about services to benefit their children. The curriculum is tied to school readiness and demonstrates respect for parents, which gives them good motivation to participate. It also reduces parents' isolation.
<b>Challenges</b>	The main challenge is that the program is relatively labor intensive and therefore expensive.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	Staff would like to see the program expanded to include immigrants and refugees throughout the city and involve schools and child care centers as well as other agencies.

## (25) Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County

**Date of Interview:** April 23, 2002  
**Interviewees:** Buu Thai, division director, Youth Empowered for Success; Miguel A. Garibay, Wellness Village program lead; Julie Amato, program manager, Positive Parental Impact on Pre-Teens Project  
**Organization Name:** Catholic Charities of Santa Clara County  
**Address:** 645 Wool Creek Drive, San Jose, CA 95112  
**Telephone:** 408-283-6150  
**Fax:** 408-283-6152  
**Email:** bthai@ccsj.org  
**Website:** http://www.ccsj.org  
**Type of Organization:** Large, nonprofit family services agency  
**Program Type:** Parenting component of Youth Empowered for Success (YES)  
**Parent Program Staff:** Six bilingual direct service staff, a supervisor, and 12 peer volunteers who are paid a small stipend  
**Funding:** U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR), County Family and Community Resource grant, the Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health, California Wellness Foundation

**Parenting Program Description:** The program provides parent education, support, and advocacy to empower Vietnamese and Spanish-speaking parents to participate more fully in the community and their children's lives.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	Vietnamese refugees and Spanish-speaking immigrant parents of young children through teens. Some grandparents are involved. Most families have been in the United States for several years.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	Most refugees and immigrants in the program are initially hesitant to become involved. At first they were recruited through radio programs addressing topics of interest to them. An advisory group was formed for each nationality, which developed the issues important to address, and then helped recruit participants. The program emphasizes helping parents become involved in the schools and community to strengthen their confidence in their adult parental role.
<b>Staff</b>	Staff are bilingual and work with parents to help organize services in ways they see helpful.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	Good teachers can listen to parents and motivate them to participate in the program, identify and train peer leaders, and find appropriate resources and make them accessible to immigrants and refugees.
<b>Child and Family Involvement</b>	YES, a division of Catholic Charities, was created in 1993 to provide services for youth. It soon became evident that to change the behavior of at-risk youth, the whole family needed to be helped. Youth assisted in the original radio outreach, speaking about their own intergenerational issues. Focus groups continue to determine new needs and the relevance of services. Advisory Councils have been formed for each nationality served.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	The program works with schools, the Department of Public Health, and behavioral health and other staff in the Catholic Charities agency. Parent volunteers are involved in every level of the planning and group leadership.
<b>Program History</b>	Since 1997, in response to needs identified by focus groups and parent advisory groups, the program has increasingly moved in the direction of parent-led community organization projects to strengthen refugees' role in their community and make community institutions more responsive to their needs.

<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	The Family Values and Principles Development Committee has developed The Family Relationship Guide in Vietnamese and English, which is used as a group discussion guide. Parental involvement in cultural preservation and bridging are strong values in the program.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	Parents first attend general information meetings in which they are encouraged to state their interests and concerns. Leaders are identified and trained to lead subsequent groups that are structured around identified needs. Parents are also recruited through incentives offered to their children to get their parents to attend.
<b>Curriculum</b>	The Spanish curriculum is developed with an advisory committee that draws primarily from the focus groups and feedback of parents themselves. The Vietnamese curriculum uses relevant material from the Second Systematic Training for Effective Parenting (STEP) curriculum, the University of Minnesota Extension Vietnamese curriculum, and Positive Parenting as well as some state resources.
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	Staff are bilingual and encourage parents to learn English, but many parents do not speak English.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	The program provides child care, peer stipends, and refreshments. Meetings are scheduled in neighborhoods where participants live.
<b>Funding</b>	Funding has changed over time, and staff continue to seek new funding. The program has been funded by ORR, the Lucille Packard Foundation for Children's Health, the California Wellness Foundation, the California Endowment, and other foundations.
<b>Evaluation and Follow Up</b>	The program has hired a consultant to provide a strong evaluation component, which includes focus groups, pre- and posttests, and other feedback.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	Strengths include empowering parents to solve family problems and make changes in their home, group support, and participation in cross-cultural training. Staff would like to see greater case management capacity and more flexible grants.
<b>Challenges</b>	Major challenges are to keep the program funded and to meet the broad needs of families.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	Parent services need to be flexible and empowering.

## (16) Catholic Family Service, Inc.

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	November 2001
<b>Interviewee:</b>	Supervisor, Refugee and Citizenship Division
<b>Organization Name:</b>	Catholic Family Service, Inc.
<b>Address:</b>	PO Box 15127, Amarillo, TX 79105-5127
<b>Telephone:</b>	806 376 8282 x 264
<b>Fax:</b>	806 345 7947
<b>Email:</b>	cfsrc@amaonline.com
<b>Web site:</b>	www.catholicfamilyservice.org
<b>Type of Organization:</b>	Large non-profit organization and refugee resettlement agency.
<b>Program Type:</b>	Formal Children and Adolescents Reaching Excellence (CARE) program
<b>Parent Program Staff:</b>	Two CARE staff
<b>Funding:</b>	State of Texas and the U.S. Office of Refugee Services.

**Parenting Program Description:** Parenting programs include a formalized CARE program, which integrates court-mandated parenting training with activities in which adolescents and parents work together, and a refugee orientation program, in which parenting topics are part of the curriculum. The program has extensive involvement from volunteers, who often sponsor families, and participates in a refugee forum comprising agencies and schools. Program strengths are the extensive volunteer program, the dedication of staff, and the extensive support that community members offer to refugee families. One challenge is the need for a curriculum focused on the specific needs of refugee parents.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	Parent participants are primarily refugees from Bosnia, Kosovo, Burma, Iran, Iraq, Afghanistan, Somalia, Sudan, Liberia, and Mauritania. Parents in the program have children of all ages. The CARE program focuses on adolescents.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	The main problem parents mention is how to discipline children. Another concern of staff is marriage between minors. Some cultures do not believe in sending girls to school. Parents lack access to resources, such as transportation, and lack basic problem-solving skills. Effects of children's past experiences of trauma (e.g., children will crouch in corners during fire alarms because they are reminded of wartime experiences in their home countries) are of concern to staff, too.
<b>Staff</b>	The director has extensive knowledge of the local community. Two CARE staff members teach parenting classes, and the refugee program has several case managers and interpreters.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	Qualities of a good teacher include the need to be long-suffering and highly committed; a teacher should be dedicated, patient, and nonbiased.
<b>Child and Parent Involvement</b>	Extensive family home visits are incorporated into the refugee program. They are complemented by visits from other agency staff to provide family services and crisis intervention. CARE integrates adolescent and parenting programs together at school sites. Parents and agency staff work cooperatively. When refugees first visit the agency, parent volunteerism and involvement are encouraged.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	The program participates in a citywide refugee forum, which is an advisory committee comprising the school superintendent, school principals, the mayor, and health department officials. Volunteers come from the International Friends Committee adopt-a-family program. Churches and local corporations often adopt families.
<b>Program History</b>	No specific comments in this category.
<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	During parenting classes, parents bring up problems to be addressed, and parent participation is encouraged. Police and school representatives have been guest speakers. Refugee staff members must put aside differences with people with whom they might have been in conflict in their home countries.

<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	No specific comments in this category.
<b>Curriculum</b>	The parenting curriculum has relied on "Teaching Parenting the Positive Discipline Way," by Lot and Nelson, and "PS I Love You," by Irene Course Newton. Curriculum from "Rainbow Days" (a national parenting organization) is also incorporated. Parenting is first addressed in the orientation each month. Topics include child abuse, school enrollment, school attendance laws, family violence in general, and discipline techniques. The CARE program has classes specifically for Middle Eastern and Bosnian/Kosovan children and their parents. Classes incorporate open discussions with children and parents as well as separate discussion groups with parents.
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	Parenting classes often have as many as five languages being interpreted at one time. Attempts are made not to have more than one or two groups needing interpretation per class.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	Parents find out about classes through court referrals for the CARE program and from agency referrals for other programs. Refugee orientations are held for 3 hours for up to 40 people. To encourage parents to attend classes, the agency offers child care, transportation, refreshments, and extensive phone calling.
<b>Funding</b>	Funding comes from the state.
<b>Evaluation and Follow Up</b>	An assessment form, the Goal Attainment Scale (GAS), looks at what skills parents are gaining. A client satisfaction survey focuses on health and how well parents are able to respond to emergencies.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	Outcomes include the increased competencies that are noted on evaluation forms (e.g., improvement in the ability to discipline children or the ability to get children to school on time). Program strengths are the extensive volunteer program, the dedication of staff, and the extensive support that community members offer to refugee families.
<b>Challenges</b>	The program needs a curriculum focused on the specific needs of refugee parents.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	Program staff are interested in locating other curricula for parenting programs.

## (17) Children and Family Services

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	November 2001
<b>Interviewee:</b>	Trauma service coordinator
<b>Organization Name:</b>	Children and Family Services
<b>Address:</b>	367 Pine St., Springfield, MA 01105
<b>Telephone:</b>	413 737 1426
<b>Fax:</b>	413 739 9988
<b>Type of Organization:</b>	Medium-sized agency within the Massachusetts Department of Social Services
<b>Program Type:</b>	Parenting programs serving refugees that include an informal women's group and refugee forums
<b>Parent Program Staff:</b>	Trauma service coordinator with three bilingual caseworkers.
<b>Funding:</b>	Massachusetts Department of Social Services, Women's fund and two federal grants

**Parenting Program Description:** Parenting programs include a women's support group, a public forum for Vietnamese refugees, and the integration of parenting topics into orientation programs. The program has existed for 5 years. Children and Family Services helps train staff in other agencies and collaborates with county and nonprofit agencies. Strengths include cooperation with other agencies and programs and the trainings offered to other agencies. Challenges include a lack of trust from the community and worker stress from being overworked.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	Participants are Russian and Vietnamese refugees.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	Problems include issues of corporal punishment and lack of knowledge of U.S. parenting laws or expectations about parenting in America. One concern is that parents have difficulty letting their children acculturate to the United States because they want to preserve their cultural traditions; they feel that adopting U.S. parenting values will not help them solve their problems. Parents fear that their children will be taken away by the Department of Social Services.
<b>Staff</b>	The coordinator has a Ph.D. in clinical psychology. Staff are bilingual and bicultural Vietnamese, Russian, and Bosnian caseworkers that are recruited through newspapers and informal networks.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	Qualities mentioned for a good teacher include being bicultural and being part of the community, the ability to set aside one's own issues, and not insisting that parents discuss their personal issues.
<b>Child and Parent Involvement</b>	Home visits occur in association with case management. Women help organize support groups.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	Collaborations include reciprocal trainings with a local management corporation and partnerships with the Department of Early Childhood Education, the Vietnamese Association, Lutheran Social Services and Department of Social Services.
<b>Program History (where known), Teaching Process and Values</b>	The program has existed for 5 years; it emphasizes building on the needs of parents and having open discussions.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	No specific comments in this category.

<b>Curriculum</b>	Parenting topics are incorporated into the women's group and monthly Vietnamese refugee forums. Topics are developed through discussions with parents and include domestic violence, employment, health, hygiene, life skills, and expectations in the United States. Curriculum materials include booklets, handouts, and leaflets from various agencies.
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	In the Russian class, instruction is in Russian. The Vietnamese forum is in Vietnamese.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	Participants are referred by the Department of Social Services, are self-referred, or are referred by case managers. Fliers are distributed in the community. The support group meets once per week for 6 months. The newcomer training is a one-time, 2-hour session that takes place every month. Parents are offered occasional transportation.
<b>Funding</b>	Funding comes from a domestic violence prevention grant from the Massachusetts Department of Social Services.
<b>Evaluation and Follow Up</b>	An internal evaluation is required for each grant. An evaluation of what parents have learned and how their parenting skills have improved is conducted every 6 months.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	Strengths include cooperation with other agencies and programs and the trainings offered to other agencies. Parents say that they enjoy the program and want to continue participating.
<b>Challenges</b>	Problems with the program include a lack of trust from the community and worker stress from being overworked. The agency is limited in the number of clients it can serve because of insufficient of funding.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	Staff are interested in starting programs with schools. They want to know what other programs are experiencing and what the best format is for parent training. They also are concerned that few materials are available in Russian and Vietnamese.

## (6) Concord Youth and Family Services

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	November 2001
<b>Interviewee:</b>	Program Director
<b>Organization Name:</b>	Concord Youth and Family Services
<b>Address:</b>	126 Phoenix Ave., Lowell, MA 01852
<b>Telephone:</b>	978 263 3006
<b>Fax:</b>	978 263 3088
<b>Type of Organization:</b>	Small, urban, nonprofit organization serving immigrants and refugees
<b>Program Type:</b>	This formal program is based on the Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families model (SMEF: see profile #1)
<b>Parent Program Staff:</b>	Twenty trained staff; only two or three currently teaching
<b>Funding:</b>	Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

**Parenting Program Description:** The focus on parenting arose from a concern over issues involving adolescent girls. The Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families curriculum lasts up to 7 weeks and builds on parents' cultural backgrounds and spiritual values. A strength of the program is the way in which stakeholder involvement in the Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families curriculum helped "heal" the organization: The process of developing the program and training to implement the curriculum helped the agency become a healthier organization because staff began to appreciate their own cultural differences. Challenges include the lack of continued funding and difficulty locating an evaluation process that matches the strengths-based process.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	Participants include Anglo, Southeast Asian, Latin, Portuguese, East German, and East African immigrants and refugees.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	Abuse and neglect of children are common; several parents are court-mandated to attend the program. Children have acculturation issues as well as mental health issues including ADD and bipolar disorder. Parents mention disability issues, discrimination at work, and the need to find employment. Parents want to understand American cultural values.
<b>Staff</b>	Although 20 people went through a week-long training to become facilitators, only 2 or 3 have volunteered to become trainers.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	Qualities of good teachers include credibility with the refugee community, generosity, and flexibility as well as the ability to admit that they are not experts and to see themselves as "vessels," or carriers, of parenting knowledge.
<b>Child and Parent Involvement</b>	Parents participated in choosing the curriculum model. Four parents were trained as facilitators, and one facilitated a class; however, having a parent facilitate the class presented challenges.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	The parenting program began as a collaboration of community stakeholders. The program has an ongoing partnership with the University of Massachusetts and Head Start.
<b>Program History</b>	The focus on parenting arose from a concern over issues involving adolescent girls. Staff then trained in the SMEF model together.
<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	The SMEF model focuses on cultural sharing helped staff develop a greater appreciation for each other. Classes combine role plays, sharing, arts and crafts, and presentations.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	Group cohesion develops in session 4; parents then begin to see how the program is helping their family. At about session 8, they realize that they have gained something lasting, such as new, more effective methods of discipline.
<b>Curriculum</b>	The sequence follows that of the original Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families model. Guest speakers are invited, and teachers often bring in newspaper articles about issues



<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	To support those with low literacy levels, overheads are read out loud. A volunteer interprets for a deaf participant.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	There are between five and eight class sessions that have 20 or fewer participants in each class. Phone calls, refreshments, child care, weekly raffles, and gift certificates help ensure attendance. Some parents are recruited through court-mandated programs. Other participants come from an initial orientation dinner. Outreach also occurs at Head Start activities and a family fun day. Several participants have come because they knew the staff.
<b>Funding</b>	Funding is from a 2-year SAMHSA grant. Funds are now being received from various community sources to continue the program, and Head Start is considering contributing funding for the program at their site.
<b>Evaluation and Follow Up</b>	Each class has one supervisor, who meets with the facilitator to review classes and plan for the next class. The program has completed several evaluation forms from the government [from SAMHSA?]. Staff would prefer that the forms focus on strengths, rather than on deficits and problems. A strengths-based form was recently located, from which relevant questions are being used.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	The strength of the program is illustrated in the way that stakeholder involvement in the Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families program helped "heal" their organization.
<b>Challenges</b>	Additional funds are needed to continue the program. Court-mandated parents pay \$20, but those fees fall far short of what is required to fund the program.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	Other agencies should adopt a strengths-based approach.

## (20) Ethiopian Community Association of Missouri

**Date of Interview:** November 2001  
**Interviewee:** Executive director  
**Organization Name:** Ethiopian Community Association of Missouri  
**Address:** 2348 Tennessee Ave., St Louis, MO 63104  
**Telephone:** 314 776 7464  
**Fax:** 314 776 0401  
**Email:** ecan1@swbell.net  
**Type of Organization:** Small, urban, nonprofit organization  
**Program Type:** Informal women's support group  
**Parent Program Staff:** One parent volunteer is the facilitator for the women's support group  
**Funding:** U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement through the State of Missouri

**Parenting Program Description:** The agency was established in 1983. The parenting program is an informal women's group focusing on social adjustment. Parents are encouraged to become paraprofessionals within the community. The director affirms that community leaders are far more effective than outsider professionals, and through grass roots organizing the organization has gained credibility in the community. The director would like to develop a community center that provides support for children and parents, focusing on the teaching of moral principles and providing mentors for children. Strengths of the program are the degree of support from the community and challenges are that foundations do not fund organizations run by immigrants.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	Clients include Somali and Ethiopian refugees, although other refugees are interested in participating.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	The main issues include support for women, who may often remain at home, parenting issues, corporal punishment, and releasing stress. Other issues include domestic discord, and the reluctance women have to disclose these experiences without a trusted parent facilitator, discrimination in the work place, intergenerational conflicts between women and their daughters and young men with both parents (caused by a gap between parents' traditional values and adolescent preferences for American values).
<b>Staff</b>	A parent volunteer facilitates the women's group.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	A good teacher is a paraprofessional who is part of the community and therefore knows about the culture and learning styles of clients.
<b>Children and Parent Involvement</b>	Staff help children reconcile differences with their parents by going to court in the family's behalf and by counseling parents in their homes. The women's support group is held in various homes. The program focuses on helping parents become facilitators and community leaders and would like to develop a paraprofessional training program.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	Staff participate in a coalition of refugee agencies that exchange services and share resources. The agency arranges conferences, for example on conflict resolution. Volunteers help with transportation, interpretation, and assisting families when someone is sick. The agency is said to work like "a family" and is involved in the community.
<b>Program History</b>	Volunteers started the agency in 1983 and now there are 6 bilingual staff.
<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	Participants in the women's support group discuss their experiences and share advice. The director believes that hiring professionals with doctorates in small community-based organizations is not a solution. There is a belief in combining professional expertise in administration with paraprofessionals who know their communities. The director also believes that spiritual support is essential to uplift people.

<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	Refugees and immigrants improve through networks of support, where they receive beneficial information: "knowledge is power."
<b>Curriculum</b>	Parenting topics focus on social adjustment skills, crisis intervention, health education, and effective parenting and advocacy skills.
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	Staff and volunteers assist with interpreters, who are trained by professionals in legal, ethical and technical aspects of interpretation.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	Support groups are held in agency or in the homes of participants and are ongoing.
<b>Funding</b>	U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement through the State of Missouri.
<b>Evaluation</b>	The funder visits approximately every quarter and reviews case files. Reports provide information about overall services at the agency.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	Program strengths is the degree of cooperation with other agencies, a strong board of directors, and the supportive services provided to the African community.
<b>Challenges</b>	Private faith-based organizations do not fund organizations run by immigrants.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	Staff would like a center where families could come on the weekends, where they would work with children and their parents to build their sense of morality in a relaxed atmosphere of community.

## (19) Heartland Alliance

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	November 2001
<b>Interviewee:</b>	Refugee Family Literacy program coordinator
<b>Organization Name:</b>	Heartland Alliance
<b>Address:</b>	4750 N. Sheridan #300, Chicago, IL 61640
<b>Telephone:</b>	773 251 4046
<b>Fax:</b>	773 751 4181
<b>Type of Organization:</b>	Large urban social service agency with a refugee services department
<b>Program Type:</b>	Based on the Strengthening Families program (a national parenting organization)
<b>Parent Program Staff:</b>	Part-time coordinator, full-time teacher and part-time caseworker.
<b>Funding:</b>	Federal Even Start program

**Parenting Program Profile:** The current program developed from informal, home-based meetings and English as a second language (ESL) classes. The program integrates parenting topics with home-based preliteracy activities for parents and children. Strengths of the program include the support and sense of safety for parents and strengthened connections with school. Having enough resources to meet the increasing demand for services and support presents a challenge. Staff recommend that programs need a long-term commitment to parents to become truly effective.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	The program began by serving Southeast Asian refugee families; it now includes refugees from Somalia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Congo, Sudan, Sierra Leone, and Bosnia. The focus of the program is preschool-age children, but issues involving adolescents are also integrated into the service provision.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	Many refugees have witnessed serious violence; their experiences are reflected in the violence they inflict on their children. Children often have not had formal education, so they have difficulty following directions in class. Other issues for parents include corporal punishment and the ability to structure time for their children. Another problem is housing: Many families live in cramped conditions.
<b>Staff</b>	The literacy coordinator has worked in the community for more than 20 years and in the agency for 11 years. The teacher is full time and a case manager is part-time. Some staff have worked with other refugee organizations. Staff are recruited through word of mouth and advertisements in newspapers.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	A good teacher has a passion for learning about people from different cultures, flexibility, an interest in working in homes, and a love of children, patience, organized thinking, and clear presentation skills.
<b>Child and Parent Involvement</b>	Staff visit homes and teach preliteracy skills to children with parents' assistance. The coordinator visits homes when crises arise and mentors parents one-on-one. Staff also accompany parents and their children to parent-teacher conferences and school events.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	As the coordinator processes new refugee families, their stories are shared with staff members. Constant communication takes place among staff members at the agency, and extensive collaboration occurs with other health agencies. Volunteers come from clubs at universities (students are sometimes offered a small stipend, which is reimbursed to the agency from a federal fund). Several volunteers are tutors from Amnesty International clubs and others are professionals, looking for an experience different from their work.
<b>Program History</b>	The program began with preschool classes with mothers in their homes, then ESL classes were offered in apartment complexes. Parenting issues also were addressed in those classes.

<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	The current program develops parents' literacy skills when the teachers work with the children and discuss parenting topics with parents. The program emphasizes improving the health of family members, cultural awareness and understanding education curriculum standards.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	No specific comments in this category.
<b>Curriculum</b>	The sequence of classes matches the needs of each group, and the classes have no set end. The parenting curriculum is taken from the Strengthening Families program (a national parenting organization).
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	Parents with low literacy levels are supported through an emphasis on teaching verbally rather than through written materials.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	Parents are recruited from families the director has known for a long time as well as from health clinics, MAAs, and other departments in the agency. In the formal literacy program, staff members work with groups of five mothers and their children.
<b>Funding</b>	Funding comes from the federal Even Start program.
<b>Evaluation and Follow Up</b>	Focus groups determine curriculum needs. No formal follow-up takes place; the program continues indefinitely. The evaluation asks about tasks that parents are able to do (e.g., whether they assemble puzzles with their children). The director would prefer evaluations that survey what parents learn, rather than tasks they can perform. Evaluation should include qualitative information related to family stories impacting the learning process.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	The greatest benefit is the help children get with homework and the way parents increase their understanding of the school system. A strength reported by parents is the support they feel and an increased sense of safety with their children. Another strength is the continuity of relationships with staff and social service support.
<b>Challenges</b>	The major challenge is that the demand for services far outstrips staff resources. Inner-city poverty and lack of housing create additional problems that the agency is not able to address satisfactorily.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	The director recommends that programs have a connection with families for several years. Staff are interested in gathering more information about family issues that are prevalent in each culture.

#### (4) Hmong American Partnership

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	November 2001.
<b>Interviewee:</b>	Meld coordinator
<b>Organization</b>	Name: Hmong American Partnership
<b>Address:</b>	1075 Arcade, St. Paul, MN 55100
<b>Telephone:</b>	651 495 9160
<b>Fax:</b>	651 495 1699
<b>Type of Organization:</b>	Large, urban, nonprofit organization serving refugees
<b>Program Type:</b>	Implements Meld for Hmong curriculum (see profile #3)
<b>Parent Program Staff:</b>	Coordinator and six teachers
<b>Funding:</b>	United Way

**Parenting Program Description:** The parenting program is based on the Meld curriculum for Hmong refugees (see profile #3) and lasts for 2 years. Many parents of at-risk youth who are involved in youth programs at the agency participate in the program. The agency participates in a local Hmong advisory committee, which discusses common issues. The program builds on parent needs, and staff often research issues and develop their own curriculum materials. Parents become volunteer facilitators to teach the parenting classes, and all paid staff members are Hmong refugees themselves. Program strengths are that parents reduce anger, improve their communication with their children, and access resources. The primary challenge is informing parents about American culture.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	Participants are exclusively Hmong refugees.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	Hmong families are scared and worried as a result of a war with terrorists in their home country. They often shut out the outside world and are not welcoming to guests. Parents believe that corporal punishment demonstrates affection for their children. Children say they do not have to go to school if they do not want to; in addition, a gap between parents and children is growing because children learn English rapidly, whereas parents do not. Respect for elders is eroding. Families need clothing and food, and divorce rates are high.
<b>Staff</b>	The coordinator supervises six teachers. Each class has two teachers, usually one man and one woman. All staff members are Hmong refugees. The training for Meld program coordinators teaches them how to organize and facilitate classes and how to advise parents on finding solutions to their problems.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	Good teachers are literate in both Hmong and English and understand how to communicate with Hmong parents.
<b>Child and Parent Involvement</b>	A separate family support program assists families with individual needs and problems. Often children accompany their parents to parent classes. Grandparents also attend. Several parents have become teachers.
<b>Collaboration</b>	A community advisory committee comprising agencies, schools, a legal center, and parents discusses common issues, such as health care, education, and legal issues. The program collaborates with the Meld national center in Minneapolis as well as with faculty at St. Thomas University. Within the agency, the three staff members who run a family support program collaborate with each other.
<b>Program History</b>	In 1987 the Hmong Women's Association started the current program. It arose from parents' desire to learn how to adapt to U.S. culture. Meld classes feature group discussions, role plays, and group games.
<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	Meld classes feature group discussions, role plays, and group games.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	No specific comments in this category.

<b>Curriculum</b>	Parents help decide which topics are taught. Topics include health and nutrition, family relationships, communication, accessing resources, crime and drug prevention, gang involvement, and helping parents set limits. Meld staff often research topics and develop their own curriculum materials.
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	The Hmong curriculum is in English; all Hmong parents read and write in Hmong.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	Parents are referred to the program by the court system (although participation is not court-mandated) and by schools. Courts may require children to attend youth programs; in those cases staff members involve their parents in parenting classes. Child care, refreshments, phone calls, and transportation are offered to encourage parents to attend classes. Classes are divided into three groups according to the age of the parents' children (i.e., 12 to 14, 14 to 18, and 18 to 21).
<b>Funding</b>	Funding comes primarily from the United Way.
<b>Evaluation and Follow-up</b>	The facilitators evaluate each family before the class begins.
<b>Strengths</b>	The Meld program helps parents reduce anger, improve their communication with their children, and access resources. One example of a positive outcome is when parents open their curtains, signaling their openness to the world outside their homes.
<b>Challenges</b>	The primary challenge is helping parents understand American culture.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	No specific comments in this category.

## (22) InterChurch Refugee and Immigration Ministries

**Date of Interview:** May 10, 2002  
**Interviewee:** Mariah Neuroth, Youth Program Coordinator  
**Organization Name:** InterChurch Refugee and Immigration Ministries  
**Address:** 4753 N. Broadway, Suite 401, Chicago IL 60640  
**Telephone:** 773-989-5647  
**Fax:** 773-989-0484  
**Email:** mneuroth@irim.org  
**Website:** http://www.irim.org  
**Type of Organization:** Refugee services agency affiliated with Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), EMM, and CWS  
**Program Type:** Parent support extended to families beginning with orientation  
**Parent Program Staff:** Youth program coordinator and two bilingual caseworkers  
**Funding:** U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement

**Parenting Program Description:** The parenting module is part of the refugee orientation; parents are linked to the youth program coordinator for support with school and intercultural issues of parenting. The program uses the Beginning Parents as Educational Partners series for parents of teens. It also provides advocacy and education for school faculty and other service providers.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	Refugees of all ethnicities participate in the parenting module of the group orientation on arrival. Refugees are also referred by local school registrars and mediators.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	Refugees' exposure to violence dulls children's defense mechanisms when exposed to gang violence in U.S. schools. They may not see violence in the U.S. context as dangerous or as something they have the option of avoiding. An intercultural, interfaith teen group is planned because conflicts are based on their faith on some level and they need to understand and get support for U.S. interfaith relationships. Parents and children especially need training in conflict resolution.
<b>Staff</b>	Staff consists of the youth program coordinator and two bilingual refugee caseworkers, one Arabic and one Bosnian.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	Leaders need understanding of refugee culture and the ability to relate one-on-one to respond to individual family needs. Staff are expected to be reflective, to use a holistic approach to engage families, and to function as mentors. Refugees who have not yet resolved their own refugee issues have limitations in staff role.
<b>Child and Family Involvement</b>	Parents participate in parenting sessions in orientation, but they become more involved as problems arise with their children, particularly in school and with intergenerational conflicts.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	High school students work as volunteer tutors and assistants in the summer program. Program is part of a collaborative agency of three voluntary agencies (CWS, EMM, LIRS). The program also collaborates with schools and the Department of Human Services and Alternatives, an Uptown area youth organization.
<b>Program History</b>	The youth programs began 5 years ago and have always included work with parents.
<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	Formal teaching includes the orientation session and the Parents as Educational Partners seven-unit series. The focus is on parents' involvement in children's education because "refugees are more interested in education than Americans."
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	All refugees attend orientation sessions that focus on U.S. parenting practices, particularly school procedures and expectations. They are encouraged to contact staff when parent-child problems arise and are contacted by staff when they are informed of problems in school. Parents are also invited to the Parents as Educational Partners series, which is just beginning.



<b>Curriculum</b>	Parents as Educational Partners is a program of the Illinois Adult Learning Resource Center. It will be adapted to address the parent-child role shift that often occurs in refugee families.
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	Staff are bilingual. Many parents require services in their native language.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	Transportation assistance and child care are offered.
<b>Funding</b>	U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement and some private donations
<b>Evaluation and Follow Up</b>	No written evaluation is done for the orientation, but Parents as Educational Partners includes written evaluation. Evaluation of other interventions comes from anecdotal information provided by teachers and through caseworker home visits.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	Program support for youth and families gives parents peace of mind and assurance of having a resource to help children stay safe and get a good education. The program also helps parents find employment, child care, counseling, and other resources.
<b>Challenges</b>	The biggest challenge is to obtain funding for enough staff to produce networking, training, and formal parenting programs.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	None given

## (23) La Frontera Center, Inc

**Date of Interview:** May 23, 2002  
**Interviewee:** Jeannine Chapelle, Supervisor, Prevention Services  
**Organization Name:** La Frontera Center, Inc.  
**Address:** 502 W. 29th Street, Tucson, AZ 85713  
**Telephone:** 520-594-6309  
**Fax:** 520-622-3395  
**Email:** jchapelle@lafrontera.org  
**Website:** http://www.lafrontera.org  
**Type of Organization:** Behavioral health: continuum of services for substance abuse treatment and prevention and mental health  
**Program Type:** Prevention services for at-risk refugee families  
**Parent Program Staff:** Supervisor and bilingual Russian- and Spanish-speaking group leaders  
**Funding:** Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP)

**Parenting Program Description:** The program uses the Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families (SMEF) curriculum translated into Russian and Spanish. Funded by CSAP for 3 years, the program has a strong research component. The orientation session and series of twelve 3-hour sessions include dinner for parents and children, structured discussion groups for parents, and parallel activity groups for children. Follow up takes place at 6 months.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	Russian refugees who have been in the United States for 6 months to 5 years and Spanish-speaking immigrants from Guatemala, Chiapas, and Colombia.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	Russian refugees have been very isolated in the United States and fearful of involvement with other refugees or the U.S. government. Staff find that Central American immigrants share many characteristics of refugees but have a better network among themselves. Schools have had difficulty connecting with both groups, and services are fragmented.
<b>Staff</b>	The supervisor has many years of experience working with refugees and wrote the CSAP grant proposal. Group leaders are Russian refugees and Mexican immigrants. All receive 1-week SMEF training as well as special workshops on topics such as working with youth, dealing with difficult people, and basic facilitation skills, which are provided by the State of Arizona, Jeannine Chapelle, and Jewish Family and Children Services (JFCS).
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	Staff share refugee and immigrant experiences, language, and culture and are able to work within the constraints of the research model. They are dedicated to providing high-quality services and committed to strengthening collaboration with a network of service providers.
<b>Child and Family Involvement</b>	The SMEF program is designed to serve the whole family. Sessions begin with dinner for parents and children together, followed by structured groups for parents and for children, grouped by age.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	One of the program's goals is to strengthen community collaboration to make services more accessible to refugees. An advisory group actively evaluates group activities and assesses ways to close gaps in services to meet refugee and immigrant needs. The advisory group includes members from other voluntary agencies, an MAA representing a variety of ethnic groups, and JFCS as well as the Tucson Unified School District. A goal of the group is to develop written guidelines for more effective collaboration. The program plans to use volunteers in the follow-up phase as refugee peer leaders.
<b>Program History</b>	The program for refugees is in its 7th month of operation under a 3-year CSAP grant. The agency also offers comprehensive parenting services through its mental health and substance abuse prevention programs.

<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	As conditions of its CSAP grant, the program tests the effectiveness of the SMEF program and adheres strictly to its curriculum.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	Parents are recruited to the program by JFCS and through outreach within the Spanish-speaking communities. In most cases participants have received services from another agency.
<b>Curriculum</b>	Only the SMEF curriculum materials are used, although some of the translation into Russian is modified. Role plays and cultural sharing are strong elements of program design.
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	No groups are given in English. Most parents are not fluent in English and appreciate the opportunity to share in their native language. Spanish-speaking parents may complete the research data questionnaires verbally, and about half do so. All written material used in the curriculum is also read to the class.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	Dinner is an important part of each session. Bus passes and child care are also provided as well as a parent manual for each family. Wal-Mart certificates are given as incentives for data collection and referrals.
<b>Funding</b>	The program is funded by a 3-year CSAP grant and will seek other funding when it ends.
<b>Evaluation and Follow Up</b>	Extensive written evaluation is built into the program as part of the CSAP data collection and takes place at three points in the 12 sessions are made for each family. In addition, the agency has devised a "Fidelity Form" to test the efficacy of each session. The research design includes control and treatment groups; the control group consists of the families on the waiting list for the next group. The program includes a 6-month follow-up support group.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	The purpose of the CSAP grant is to test the effectiveness of the SMEF curriculum. Staff also hope to increase effectiveness and accessibility of services for refugee and immigrant families throughout the service provider network. For refugees, benefits include reducing isolation, especially for Russian families; reducing pressures of role reversal in families; and increasing interaction between schools and families. A weakness is that distrust of government-funded programs reduces participation.
<b>Challenges</b>	The program works to overcome the barrier of lack of trust and develop effective collaboration among agencies and provider systems. The goal is for communities to find the service valuable enough to provide it with technical assistance only from agency.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	Two books have been particularly helpful resources: Drug Abuse Prevention with Multiethnic Youth, edited by Gilbert Botvin et al., and Mental Health Services for Refugees, from the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement, both of which include valuable information about refugee family issues. Staff also recommend the SMEF program for its fully developed parallel children's curriculum.

## (8) Meadowbrook Family Center, a program of the Children's Home Society of Washington

**Date of Interview:** November 2001  
**Interviewee:** Family advocate/parent educator  
**Organization Name:** Meadowbrook Family Center, a program of the Children's Home Society of Washington  
**Address:** 10517 35th Ave NE, Seattle, WA 98125  
**Telephone:** 206 366 9256  
**Fax:** 206 366 9259  
**Email:** ksidione@hotmail.com  
**Type of Organization:** Small, urban family resource center serving all community members, including immigrants and refugees  
**Program Type:** Parents as Teachers (PAT; see profile #2) program, and two formal parenting classes.  
**Parent Program Staff:** One teacher  
**Funding:** U.S. Department of Education; City of Seattle; United Way of King County.

**Parenting Program Description:** This agency has three parenting programs. The PAT program provides monthly home visits beginning prenatally until the child is three years old as well as monthly meetings. The other two are formal parenting classes and include Families in a New Culture, an eleven-week class, and a seven-week class based on S.T.E.P. (Systematic Training for Effective Parenting). A strength of the PAT program is that it builds on parents' strengths and is flexible; however, staff feel isolated from other PAT teachers.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	Participants are predominantly middle-class refugees and immigrants from Europe, China, Taiwan, Korea, Japan, Morocco, Kenya, Ivory Coast, Eritrea, East Africa, Russia, Afghanistan, and Southeast Asia. The program emphasizes child development and parenting skills for parents of children ages birth to 3 years.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	Refugee parents mention traumas they experienced in their home countries (e.g., prisoner of war camps and bombing raids). Some parents mention fears that their children will join gangs (Some Vietnamese parents believe that gang initiation is much like the brainwashing sessions of the communist government in Vietnam, where people lost their identities). Issues of corporal punishment and the value that refugee cultures place on parents and teachers as authority figures conflict with the U.S. cultural value of individual independence. Parents place their dreams and expectations of success on their children, which may cause tension between them. Parents feel it is not culturally acceptable to go to counseling in their neighborhood.
<b>Staff</b>	Staff took an intensive PAT parenting training that focused on child development. To continue to qualify as a PAT educator, staff must take 20 hours of professional development coursework each year. A regional PAT mentor provides occasional support.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	A good parent educator teachers to the needs of parents; is caring, knowledgeable about program content, and resourceful; and models good parenting skills to parents.
<b>Child and Parent Involvement</b>	PAT sessions are held in homes and there are planned parent/child activities for each visit. Parents plan and organize monthly meetings of all families participating in the program.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	The Meadowbrook Family Center is a program of Children's Home Society of Washington, a non-profit social service agency, providing family support services. The center has partnerships with a community college and several other organizations. There is extensive volunteer involvement from students in English as a Second Language classes and other programs, and community volunteers who help with homework, computer tutoring, special events, and office tasks.
<b>Program History</b>	No specific comments in this category.

<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	The PAT program builds on parents' existing strengths. Parents are encouraged to notice positive changes in their children. In-home sessions begin with asking parents about issues that have come up since the last visit and how past issues have been resolved.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	Parents mention that they feel uncertain about their parenting skills when they begin the program and feel less afraid and less alone toward the end of the program.
<b>Curriculum</b>	The PAT curriculum focuses on the stages of child development, including social, physical, intellectual, and emotional skills. Parents are taught what to look for as their children develop and to engage in activities with their children that encourage their development. The formal parenting class integrates curriculum from the S.T.E.P. program.
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	The STEP program has curriculum materials in Spanish. Assistance is offered to parents with low levels of literacy to help them understand leaflets and notes their children bring home from school.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	The PAT program provides monthly visits to 14 families. Monthly meetings have about 10 participants. Families in a New Culture lasts 11 weeks, meeting weekly for 2 hours, with up to 17 participants (4-5 classes are held each year). S.T.E.P. classes are for 2 hours for 7 weeks with up to 15 students.
<b>Funding</b>	The program receives funding from the U.S. Department of Education, the City of Seattle, United Way of King County and from donations.
<b>Evaluation and Follow Up</b>	The center reports the number of parents and children served to the PAT national office. The formal parenting classes include an initial assessment of parents' needs and goals and a final evaluation of the skills that parents have gained. Staff at the agency spend time sharing and reflecting on their work.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	The strength of the PAT program is that it does not limit who can participate and is strengths based, respectful of cultural backgrounds, and flexible.
<b>Challenges</b>	Not enough time is available to involve all the parents who want to participate in the PAT program. Staff feels isolated from other PAT teachers.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	Other agencies should be encouraged to use the PAT program.

## (24) Minnesota Early Learning Design (Meld)

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	May 23, 2002
<b>Interviewee:</b>	Yeshi Lemu, East African Parents Program Coordinator
<b>Organization Name:</b>	Minnesota Early Learning Design (Meld)
<b>Address:</b>	219 N. Second Street, Suite 200, Minneapolis, MN 55401
<b>Telephone:</b>	612-332-7563, ext. 118
<b>Fax:</b>	612-344-1959
<b>Email:</b>	ylemu@meld.org
<b>Website:</b>	http://www.meld.org
<b>Type of Organization:</b>	Curriculum development and training
<b>Program Type:</b>	Local East African application of Meld parenting curriculum
<b>Parent Program Staff:</b>	Part-time coordinator and volunteers
<b>Funding:</b>	Meld

**Parenting Program Description:** Facilitators are trained in Meld curriculum and use Meld principles. Parenting groups are provided in three East African languages, but the curriculum is not yet translated into those languages. Participants request assistance with many issues of life in the United States, including coping with the weather and help with enrolling their children in school, which are incorporated into the group process.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	Groups work with Somalis, Oromos, and East African teen mothers. Although the Meld curriculum was originally designed for parents of children ages 0 to 5, groups include parents of children of all ages as well as grandparents who are primary caretakers. Participants are recruited by the coordinator through her work as a medical interpreter and through Habitat for Humanity and Central Community Housing Trust (CCHT), a Somali organization.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	The East African community includes three language groups, who must be served in separate groups. Most are dealing with basic issues about adjustment to U.S. culture, which take priority over their specific parenting concerns.
<b>Staff</b>	The part-time coordinator was hired by Meld in November 2000 to begin the program. She is East African and is assisted by volunteer East African facilitators who receive a small stipend. All receive the 3-day Meld training and conduct the classes in the language of the participants. The coordinator conducts only the teen parent class is conducted partially in English.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	Teachers must speak the language of the participants and be flexible in responding to basic needs and concerns of the parents.
<b>Child and Family Involvement</b>	Children often accompany parents to groups. Staff assist families with many other needs, such as court involvement and neighborhood expectations and dynamics when they move to a new house (through Habitat for Humanity). For teen parents and parents of teens, the program emphasizes ways to avoid drug and alcohol problems.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	Volunteers assist as facilitators, and the program has a volunteer advisory board. The program has strong collaboration with Habitat for Humanity, health professionals, the Oromo Community of Minnesota and CCHT, which originally approached Meld to offer a group for Somali parents. Two organizations give space for the programs to meet and provide referrals.
<b>Program History</b>	The program is in its second year; it serves about 30 families per year. It draws on the experience of Meld's Hmong curriculum, which more than 6 years old.
<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	Teaching uses Meld techniques but responds informally to concerns of parents, which focus on many other basic issues of living in the United States. Groups meet for 3 hours every other week, but teen parents meet weekly. Guest speakers and field trips are used to respond to specific interests of parents.

<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	Group meetings were reduced to twice a month to accommodate working parents and transportation difficulties. As parents get more involved, they develop their own agenda for support and learning about the community. They are encouraged to stay in the group for 2 years, but situations change and some parents move.
<b>Curriculum</b>	Although the groups are based on the Meld model, they include many other topics and activities of interest to parents. No written curriculum is available in East African languages.
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	Parents speak little or no English, and classes must be conducted in their language. Many have requested that ESL be made available through the program.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	Transportation is provided if needed, but staff try to arrange for groups to meet in neighborhoods close to where refugees live. Food is provided at meetings, and children attend with their parents; older children often look after the younger ones.
<b>Funding</b>	Meld funds the program.
<b>Evaluation and Follow Up</b>	No written evaluations take place because most participants are not literate. Facilitators ask participants questions about what they like about the groups and what else they would like the groups to cover. Follow-up calls and home visits are made, and one-on-one assistance is offered for referrals and other requests for support.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	The program gives parents support, helps them learn "what is right and wrong in U.S. parent-child relationships," and helps them understand their rights and options in disciplining their children and keeping their culture and language. It also helps parents understand that their children need education, which was not available in their country of origin.
<b>Challenges</b>	To provide all that the parents need when the coordinator position is only part time and to help parents access other services, such as ESL and employment assistance. Staff want to develop an East African curriculum.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	None were made.

## (9) Newcomer's Network

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	October 2001
<b>Interviewee:</b>	Parent trainer
<b>Organization Name:</b>	Newcomer's Network
<b>Address:</b>	3547 Market St., Clarkston, GA 30021
<b>Telephone:</b>	404 299 6217
<b>Fax:</b>	404 299 6218
<b>Type of Organization:</b>	Medium-sized, urban, nonprofit organization assisting immigrant and refugee families through education, economic opportunities, and direct support
<b>Program Type:</b>	Self-developed formal parenting class
<b>Parent Program Staff:</b>	Parent trainer with paid and volunteer guest speakers
<b>Funding:</b>	United Way

**Parenting Program Description:** This program features a self-developed curriculum organized into one hour monthly sessions that are ongoing. Classes focus on the interests of parents, parent participation, and use of examples. Parents have also been trained as teachers and there is also a parent support group that addresses problems children face in school. The program was started because agency staff heard from schools that parents did not know what to do about school-related problems. A program strength is that parents know about issues and how to get support. A challenge is to find funds to pay guest speakers.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	Participants are Somalian, Bosnian, Vietnamese, Kurd, and Sudanese refugees. Their children are school age, primarily adolescents.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	Refugee adolescents fight with other ethnic groups, and parents fear their children's involvement in gangs. Other issues include problems with corporal punishment, lack of knowledge about how to use medications, discipline problems of youth in school, and school absences. Women from some ethnic groups do not drive or leave their homes.
<b>Staff</b>	The parent trainer is the sole paid staff and is a nurse. Volunteer and paid guest speakers have included doctors, lawyers, psychologists, and teachers.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	A good teacher is professional, experienced, a good listener, and a community authority and has a good reputation, is not offensive, and is not critical of cultural practices.
<b>Children and Parent Involvement</b>	Youth workers inform staff about the personal issues of adolescents, information that helps inform what is taught in parenting classes. Parents have been trained to give parenting classes.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	The parent trainer works with teachers, administrators, and school-based social workers to improve services to her clients. Many guest speakers are volunteers.
<b>Program History</b>	The program was started because agency staff heard from schools that parents did not know what to do about school-related problems.
<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	Classes focus on the interests of parents, parent participation, and use of examples.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	No specific comments in this category.
<b>Curriculum</b>	The parent trainer has compiled a curriculum manual. Class topics include school attendance laws and educational policies, health, anger management, and child development. Handouts and videos on child abuse have been acquired from the public library, and curriculum materials have been downloaded from the Internet.



<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	The parent trainer interprets for parent conferences and school meetings when Albanian is required.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	Outreach is accomplished through fliers and school referrals. Classes meet 1 per month and are ongoing and average 10 participants. There may be as many as five different classes (according to their ethnicities) at one time. There is also a monthly parent support group with the same number of participants. Graduation features gift packages and certificates for parents who attend at least three sessions. Parent supports for attendance include extensive phone calling, transportation, child care, and snacks during classes.
<b>Funding</b>	Sustained funding comes from the United Way.
<b>Evaluation</b>	An initial survey assesses client knowledge about health. Oral questions are asked at the end of the session to gauge what was learned. Quarterly and yearly reports for the United Way mention data from class attendance. United Way staff also interview the staff regarding details of the program.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	The program is considered successful when school staff report that parents are attending parent-teacher conferences and that children's school attendance is improving. A program strength is that parents know about educational issues and how to get support.
<b>Challenges</b>	It is difficult to get funds to pay guest speakers.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	The coordinator would like more gifts to give parents as incentives to attend classes.

## (7) Parents Anonymous of Phoenix

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	December 2001
<b>Interviewee:</b>	Program coordinator
<b>Organization Name:</b>	Parents Anonymous of Phoenix
<b>Address:</b>	6741 N. 7th St., Phoenix, AZ 85014
<b>Telephone:</b>	602 248 0428 x232
<b>Fax:</b>	602 248 0496
<b>Type of Organization:</b>	City and state affiliate of a national parent training organization (i.e., Parents Anonymous) serving immigrants
<b>Program Type:</b>	Informal support group and a formal parenting class, which integrates curriculum from the Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families program (see profile #1) and a variety of other curriculums.
<b>Parent Program Staff:</b>	One coordinator with local support group facilitators
<b>Funding:</b>	Arizona Department of Economic Security; donations

**Parenting Program Description:** This agency serves as the Parents Anonymous office for both Phoenix and the state of Arizona. Programs include parent support groups that are ongoing and parenting classes last for twelve to fifteen weekly sessions. The clientele are Hispanic immigrants (although Parents Anonymous serves all ethnicities); the program coordinator began as a parent in the program. Many parents are court-mandated to attend classes. The program's strength is its focus on prevention, rather than crisis management; the program coordinator believes that spiritual values are especially important to Hispanic parents. A challenge is that programs often lack funding to serve undocumented residents.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	Participants in this program (Parents Anonymous serves all ethnicities) are Spanish-speaking immigrants from Mexico, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	Issues of poverty, lack of education, and language barriers generate problems for immigrants. Clients generally lack understanding of U.S. laws. Parents are prosecuted for child neglect when they go to native healers rather than doctors. Other issues include corporal punishment, stress, and the inability to help children with schoolwork because of language differences. Parents say that their children were happier in Mexico, whereas in the United States, they never seem to have enough material goods. Divorce among immigrants in Phoenix is especially high due to the high mobility of families.
<b>Staff</b>	Parents Anonymous trains parents to become volunteer group facilitators. The coordinator's job is to locate facilitators, to make sure programs are well organized, and to co-facilitate groups as needed. Training for facilitators lasts 4 to 5 hours and focuses on facilitation skills. The program coordinator received training from a program called "Nurturing," which considers the needs of children and the personal needs of parents and teaches positive discipline. Other trainings have covered cultural competency, facilitation methods, ethics, and preventative methods as well as the facilitator training for Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	A good teacher is motivated and compassionate, is a good facilitator, provides opportunities for parents to think, and has parenting skills.
<b>Child and Parent Involvement</b>	Staff conduct extensive home visits in crisis situations when referred by Child Protective Services.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	The program has a multicultural advisory board of Hispanic and Native American community members; however the board is not currently meeting because of limited funding. The program collaborates with the Boys and Girls Club and with an agency that provides training for staff. Volunteers take a general training and then undergo specific training as a crisis-line worker, children's program worker, or support group facilitator.

<b>Program History</b>	No specific comments in this category.
<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	The coordinator integrates features of the Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families curriculum into parenting classes and parent support groups, especially aspects of cultural appreciation, sharing spiritual values, and child discipline techniques. It is important to offer parents a place where they are listened to and can find solutions to their problems.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	Parents are challenged to improve on a specific issue each week.
<b>Curriculum</b>	The program is based on the national model for Parents Anonymous. Key topics are children's behavior, communication skills, anger management, and resource information. Guest speakers present various topics.
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	The program coordinator believes that parents who lack literacy skills may feel insecure and therefore makes a point of boosting their self-esteem by reinforcing the values and skills that they have.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	Outreach includes presentations and workshops in schools, libraries, community centers, parks, and churches. Some parents are court-mandated to attend. The ongoing support group meets once per week for two hours and is ongoing; 10 to 20 parents attend each session. The formal parenting class takes place for twelve to fifteen weeks held once per week for 2 hours; 7 to 20 parents attend. Locations are offered close to neighborhoods as an incentive for parents to attend. Parents are also called before the class starts.
<b>Funding</b>	Funding comes from donations and the Arizona Department of Economic Security; donations.
<b>Evaluation and Follow Up</b>	The formal parenting class assesses participants' parenting skills at the outset; after the classes parent skills are rated in five areas: empathy, appropriate expectations, role reversal, discipline techniques, and empowerment. Follow up is meant to occur every 6 months, but the coordinator is unsure if that really occurs.
<b>Program Strength and Outcomes</b>	One program outcome is the skills and information provided parents. A strength is that the program focuses on prevention rather than crisis management.
<b>Challenges</b>	A challenge is that programs often lack funding to serve undocumented residents.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	Agencies should find the means to support undocumented immigrants.

## (21) Refugee Services of Wisconsin

**Date of Interview:** May 14, 2002  
**Interviewee:** Thaj Ying Lee, Executive Director  
**Organization Name:** Refugee Services of Wisconsin  
**Address:** 312 N. Third Street, Madison, WI 53704  
**Telephone:** 608-256-6400  
**Fax:** 608-256-6501  
**Email:** thajyinglee@tds.net  
**Website:** <http://www.ursw.org>  
**Type of Organization:** Mutual assistance association (MAA) since 1983  
**Program Type:** Youth Services program with parenting component  
**Parent Program Staff:** Thirteen bilingual staff who understand parents' and U.S. cultures and have the ability to work with both children and parents  
**Funding:** United Way, city and county government foundations

**Parenting Program Description:** The program focuses on at-risk children and youth and their school performance. Parents are involved in one-to-one relationships with staff as well as workshops and the FAST program. Parents are also involved in the agency around other needs, such as employment, ESL, and preschool. Staff work with parents to mobilize support from their own ethnic group to help them cope with their children's changes following exposure to U.S. values at school and to use U.S. systems to strengthen their family and role as parents.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	The program serves at-risk middle school and high school youth and their families, including Hmong, Lao, Cambodian, Vietnamese, Tibetan, Albanian, and Kosovar refugees.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	A major issue is intergenerational conflict, especially in families where children are born in the United States. The program finds conflict more prevalent in families who have been here for several years and have achieved financial stability.
<b>Staff</b>	Thirteen staff speak the languages of participants along with English. Volunteers include tutors and experts in various fields, such as health care, who are guest speakers at workshops.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	Language capacity is important, but staff also need to be flexible enough to work with both parents and youth and to understand and accept both cultures.
<b>Child and Family Involvement</b>	Parents are involved in ESL classes, attend monthly workshops, and meet regularly with staff for "consultation" concerning their children's problems and the parent-child relationship, particularly when issues of cultural conflict are involved. Staff also support parents in school involvement on behalf of their children and in learning how to use U.S. systems. Children and parents attend monthly meetings together.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	The program has strong relationships with schools. Staff also work with the United Way, city commissions, and committees of other refugee-serving agencies.
<b>Program History</b>	The Youth and Family Program has been in existence for 5 years; the FAST program is 2 years old.
<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	The foundation of services is the one-on-one relationship around children's school behavior and performance. Parents are offered workshops with topical presentations, and parents of young children (grades 1 and 2) are offered participation in FAST classes. All classes try to strengthen the parental role in helping children achieve success in school.

<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	Parents of youth are contacted and supported one-on-one when their children are receiving tutoring and other school support. Parents are then encouraged to attend workshops on topics of interest and to work closely with staff in "consultations" to help their children. Staff do not refer to these relationships as counseling because that would not be acceptable to parents. Parents with children of any age may receive parenting services through involvement in other agency services.
<b>Curriculum</b>	The curriculum for parents is informal, and workshops focus on topics of interest to participants. The FAST curriculum uses the national curriculum, which consists of an 8-week cycle for 10 parents; leadership is drawn from schools and the ethnic community as well as staff. Follow-up meetings take place monthly.
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	Staff who can communicate with parents and children in their first language are recruited. Few of the parents speak English well.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	The agency helps with transportation and child care as needed, and stipends occasionally are provided. Food is often served.
<b>Funding</b>	Funding comes from the United Way, the city and county, and local foundations. The program has recently hired a grant writer to assist with maintaining and increasing funding.
<b>Evaluation and Follow Up</b>	Evaluation is usually tied to the goals of funding proposals. Most participant evaluation is oral, although some is written. Evaluation includes oral feedback from children's teachers.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	Strengths include improved school performance of children and support for parents in learning how to understand and use U.S. systems
<b>Challenges</b>	Staff would like to see the program evolve into community center with less need for services now provided
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	Ideally, the community would provide its own support without formal services from the agency.

### (13) Refugee Women's Alliance

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	October 2001
<b>Interviewee:</b>	Parent education coordinator
<b>Organization Name:</b>	Refugee Women's Alliance
<b>Address:</b>	3004 S. Alaska, Seattle, WA 98108
<b>Telephone:</b>	206 721 0243
<b>Fax:</b>	206 721 0282
<b>Email:</b>	Tsege@rewa.org
<b>Type of Organization:</b>	Medium-sized, urban, nonprofit organization serving refugees
<b>Program Type:</b>	Staff-developed topics integrated with the Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families curriculum (see profile #1)
<b>Parent Program Staff:</b>	Coordinator and three bilingual staff
<b>Funding:</b>	City of Seattle, United Way of King County, and the U.S. Office of Refugee and Refugee Resettlement

**Parenting Program Description:** This agency has a formal, 8- to 9-week curriculum that the staff developed; it integrates topics from the Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families curriculum (see profile #1). The program emphasizes vocabulary lessons and the sharing of experiences. One strength is the program's emphasis on sharing personal issues within language groups. A challenge is that parents often come for help when they are in a crisis, and often too late to assist them.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	Participants are Vietnamese, Cambodian, Lao, Ethiopian, Eritrean, and Somali refugees.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	East Africans lack extended families in the United States, and children often end up in spending a long time in child care because their parents work. Refugee youth drop out of high school at a high rate. Corporal punishment and communication between parents and adolescents are also problems. Parents need to learn more about healthy nutrition and immunization. The coordinator believes that parents feel hopeless.
<b>Staff</b>	The parent education coordinator is an Ethiopian refugee who has worked in this capacity for more than 4 years. Other staff consist of bilingual community members from Southeast Asia, Eastern Europe, and East Africa, all of whom have received training in the Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families program (see profile #1) and have attended a variety of national conferences.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	A good teacher is sensitive and respectful to all cultures.
<b>Child and Parent Involvement</b>	A fund for home visits was established in 2001. Previously, homes were visited only for crisis intervention. In planning the classes, focus groups were held with children and parents together. This process helped ensure that parents knew what children were feeling and that children could hear what parents were experiencing.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	The program collaborates with a refugee and immigrant parenting network comprising primarily mutual assistance associations. Volunteers come from local universities and help develop the curriculum.
<b>Program History</b>	No specific comments in this category.
<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	It is important for teachers who were refugees to model their own experiences. Parents set ground rules when the class begins.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	Parents often begin the program in emotional crisis. They improve and feel more confident as they share experiences and build tools.

<b>Curriculum</b>	Agency staff developed their own curriculum, which covers gang prevention, discipline, communication, the American school system, homework, law enforcement, maintaining healthy families, and domestic violence. Classes often incorporate videos. Topics are integrated from the Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families curriculum.
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	Class topics are given first in English and then interpreted into several languages. Participants discuss the topics in their respective language groups.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	Classes are held for 8 or 9 weeks. Parents may attend a one 2-hour session taking place during the day or a 3-hour session taking place in the evenings for 3 hours. Each class has 10 to 15 students. The program provides child care, refreshments, and bus tickets. Participants have a graduation ceremony and receive gift certificates at the end; almost everyone graduates.
<b>Funding</b>	Funding is from the City of Seattle, United Way of King County, and the U.S. Office of Refugee and Refugee Resettlement
<b>Evaluation and Follow Up</b>	A community needs assessment and focus groups are being conducted to understand parent needs. A preclass survey asks what kind of help people need. When the class begins, parents discuss what topics they are interested in individually with staff and then together. Before classes start, staff meet to plan the class; after each class, teachers reflect on how it went.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	The program's greatest strength is that it provides information in the various languages of refugees. Vocabulary in home languages is taught through handouts. Another strength is the program's emphasis on sharing personal issues within language groups. Manifestations of program success include parents using a new discipline technique and attending parent-teacher conferences at school.
<b>Challenges</b>	Parents often come for help when they are in a crisis, often too late for assistance. The program has a need for more funding.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	Staff would like more training opportunities, especially in facilitation skills. They are interested in knowing about research on effective high school dropout prevention. Other topics of interest include communication skills, how to help prevent crisis situations, and gang issues.

## (27) Lutheran Community Services of the Northwest

**Date of Interview:** June 1, 2002  
**Interviewee:** William Vuong, Lead Facilitator for Nurturing Program  
**Organization Name:** Lutheran Community Services of the Northwest  
**Address:** 605 SE 39th Avenue, Portland, OR 97214  
**Fax:** 503-236-8815  
**Email:** vuonghanh41@html.com  
**Website:** <http://www.lcsnw.org>  
**Type of Organization:** Nonprofit multi-service organization  
**Program Type:** Nurturing Parenting for Vietnamese families  
**Parent Program Staff:** William Vuong (part-time), Lead Facilitator, and a part-time children's group leader  
**Funding:** U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement

**Parenting Program Description:** This parenting program for Vietnamese families began in 1995. It uses the Nurturing Parenting curriculum supplemented by additional resources from local organizations in response to the needs of participants. Parents and children attend 3-hour sessions one evening per week for 3 months.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	Participants range from Vietnamese families who have just arrived to those who have been in the United States for as long as 25 years; children's ages range from infants to teenagers. At age 15, children may attend classes with their parents; younger children go to a children's class that meets at the same time. Some families are referred by the court, but most come in response to radio announcements or referrals from resettlement agencies and faith groups.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	Families have many difficulties with American culture, from the different sense of time to expectations for children. Parents are proud of their children's English and acculturation, but become threatened and angry at losing their traditional role of authority and control in family matters.
<b>Staff</b>	The lead facilitator runs the groups on Thursday nights. Another part-time staff person leads the children's groups.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	Teachers must understand and appreciate the values of both cultures and be able to model positive ways of integrating them. They also must be flexible in responding to the needs of parents. Teachers in Vietnam have the authority to advise families and maintain a similar role here.
<b>Child and Family Involvement</b>	Parents and children attend sessions together; both parents attend if possible. They also receive home visits, at which the entire family is present and works together on issues presented in the group and arising in their day-to-day family life. It is important that parents and children discuss the value conflicts that arise from their experiences here.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	The program receives referrals from Lutheran and Catholic resettlement agencies and from Buddhist and Christian faith groups. The lead facilitator is also a Boy Scout leader and gets many of the Vietnamese children involved in scouting.
<b>Program History</b>	The program has continued for almost 8 years. At one point, it tried to involve Laotian families, but they did not seem interested.
<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	Sessions begin with a family meal of food brought from a local restaurant. Each class begins with asking parents to bring up any problems they have; the group discusses solutions and resources. Facilitators bring in representatives of community resources, such as realtors, life and health insurance representatives, police, and juvenile court personnel. The program stresses the need to become familiar with American culture and to be able to discuss cultural values with children.



<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	Parents are recruited for the 3-month program, which includes home visits, then contact the leader if they need help. If necessary, they are referred to one of the counselors in the agency for follow up.
<b>Curriculum</b>	The program uses the Nurturing Parenting program supplemented by resources for helping parents learn basic information about American institutions.
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	Children learn English within 1 or 2 years, but parents often do not learn English and have to use their children to translate. ESL classes are not available for adults beyond the survival level, and parents often do not work in jobs where they interact in English.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	A meal is provided for the family, and transportation is provided if needed. About 16 people are in the group; at times there have been as many as 46. The size of the groups is decreasing as new arrivals diminish.
<b>Funding</b>	The program is funded by ORR.
<b>Evaluation and Follow Up</b>	Group success is measured by attendance and by group leaders' sense of how well families are working out their biggest problems. If they are able to change so that they can discuss problems in the family and continue to function positively as a family by acculturating in their new environment, the program is considered a success.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	The program helps parents and children work out the conflicts that develop as children adopt American values in school. It is hard for adults to participate in American culture and to accept new ways of communicating with their children.
<b>Challenges</b>	Parents are reluctant to learn English, and good ESL resources are not available to them beyond the survival-level classes.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	A program for Russian and Mexican families is needed.

## (18) Saint Anselm's Cross-Cultural Community Center

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	October 2001
<b>Interviewee:</b>	Coordinator of refugee Integration Program
<b>Organization Name:</b>	Saint Anselm's Cross-Cultural Community Center
<b>Address:</b>	13091 Galway St., Garden Grove, CA 92844-1633
<b>Telephone:</b>	714 537 0608
<b>Fax:</b>	714 537 7606
<b>Type of Organization:</b>	Large, urban, voluntary agency (VOLAG) serving refugees
<b>Parent Program Staff:</b>	Coordinator with teachers to teach individual classes
<b>Program Type:</b>	Formal classes integrated into citizenship program
<b>Funding:</b>	U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement

**Parenting Program Description:** The Southeast Asian Culture and Education Foundation (SEACAEF) is contracted to teach up to 10 parenting classes as part of a Parent Institute. Classes are held weekly for 1 1/2 hours, or every two weeks for 3 hours and may be integrated into an existing citizenship program. Classes improve the way parents treat their children at home, and parents become more involved at school. The greatest challenges are getting parents to attend all the sessions and lack of follow-up with the parents. Staff would like the program to help parents become critical thinkers about other issues in the U.S.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	In the past, Vietnamese refugees are the primary clientele, but the program is extended to all refugees and asylees regardless of their country of origin.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	The coordinator believes that many parents were uncomfortable upon their arrival in the U.S., because the American reality did not match the image they had in their minds. Parents would like schools to teach morality, as schools did in Vietnam before 1975. They believe that they would have had fewer problems with their adolescents if they had remained in Vietnam; whereas in the U.S. adolescents have too much independence, which is an underlying cause of problems at home and at school. Improving relations between parents and teachers is a program goal as is addressing problems with the use of corporal punishment.
<b>Staff</b>	One parent coordinator was an English as a Foreign Language teacher in Vietnam; the agency subcontracts with (SEACAEF) to teach classes. Most teachers are professors at nearby colleges, and all are former Vietnamese refugees.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	Good teachers create a "comfort zone" and encourage open discussion.
<b>Child and Parent Involvement</b>	Out reach and referral counselors visit homes and collaborate with parenting programs.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	The agency is affiliated with three national volunteer agencies – Church World Service Immigration and refugee Program (CWS), Lutheran Immigration and refugee Services, and Episcopal Migration Ministries – and collaborates with Camp Fire USA, SEACAEF, and 4 family resources centers in nearby cities.
<b>Program History</b>	No specific comments in this category.
<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	The agency developed a survey for clients that asked about problems. From this survey, a list of 10 parenting topics was generated. Classes are integrated into an existing citizenship program, and presenters often form panels of experts to address specific issues.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	The program is too short-term to notice how parents improve or develop.
<b>Curriculum</b>	Topics include discipline, educational issues, health, and parenting skills.

<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	Class are taught in the Vietnamese language.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	Fliers are developed for each parenting topic. Students are recruited through visits to homes, temples, churches, community events, and other community centers. Classes last up to ten sessions and are held weekly for 1 1/2 hours, or every two weeks for 3 hours and may be integrated into an existing citizenship program. Attendance averages 20 for parenting topics (there are 60 citizenship students). Gifts from local businesses are offered as an incentive to attend. Parents are asked to sign a commitment form to attend all the sessions.
<b>Funding</b>	The program is in the first year of a 3-year grant from the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement.
<b>Evaluation and Follow Up</b>	Participants complete evaluation sheets following each session, and the partnership team of teachers and agency staff meets each month to review the classes. The group discusses the style of teaching and makes recommendations on how to make subsequent classes more interesting.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	The classes improve the way parents treat their children at home, and parents becomes more involved at school.
<b>Challenges</b>	The greatest challenges are getting parents to attend all the sessions of the institute and the lack of follow up with participants.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	Vietnamese parents need practical publications in Vietnamese about children in the American environment. Staff would like the program to have a greater long-term impact on parents and to help parents become critical thinkers about other issues in the United States and active citizens.

## (10) Southwest Youth and Family Services

**Date of Interview:** November 2001  
**Interviewee:** Family advocate  
**Organization Name:** Southwest Youth and Family Services  
**Address:** 4555 Delridge West, Seattle, WA 98106  
**Telephone:** 206 937 7680  
**Fax:** 206 935 9987  
**Type of Organization:** Small, urban, family resource center serving immigrants and all ethnicities from the surrounding community  
**Program Type:** Self-developed formal Spanish curriculum  
**Parent Program Staff:** One family advocate in the Hispanic program (other staff focus on other ethnic groups) who has assistance from parents who have become facilitators  
**Funding:** City of Seattle; several small grants

**Parenting Program Description:** The curriculum features discussions of parents' cultural backgrounds and gives special attention to help parents move from initial anger to effective communication with their children. Classes are held once per week for 10 to 12 weeks. Parents have become facilitators, and staff conduct extensive home visits. Positive outcomes include children improving their behavior in child care programs.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	Participants are immigrants from Mexico, Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Colombia. The program targets parents of children ages 6 and 7, but involves parents of children ages birth to 18.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	Corporal punishment is a major issue, as is the widening gap between parents and their children as children learn English. Children are told to call 911 if their parents use physical punishment, so parents are afraid to discipline them. Also mentioned are housing problems as well as challenges in finding adequate employment and locating day care facilities. Parents express the need to develop better communication with their adolescents about sexual issues and drug use.
<b>Staff</b>	The agency offers parenting programs for several ethnic communities and has one staff person in charge of each program. The person interviewed has been with the program for 4.5 years. Staff training includes several parent-training programs as well as a class in cultural sensitivity.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	A good teacher speaks the language of parents, understands their culture, and is not judgmental.
<b>Child and Parent Involvement</b>	Home visits are conducted to address parents' basic needs. Several parents have attended city-sponsored leadership training. Parents help with phone calling and transportation, and several parents teach parenting classes. Several parents have been hired to work in the agency.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	The program collaborates extensively with Head Start programs, child care programs, and local schools. Every 2 weeks meetings take place so that staff members within the agency can share their experiences.
<b>Program History</b>	The program began after a community needs survey determined that the need for parenting classes was the highest priority.
<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	There is extensive parent participation in classes. Group games and video presentations are incorporated into the classes, along with participation activities. Parents discuss how the way they were raised differs from child rearing in the United States.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	Parents first come with anger about their issues. They then become aware of the cause of their anger and learn to manage it. Later, they are able to communicate effectively and resolve family issues.

<b>Curriculum</b>	The curriculum begins with a focus on improving communication, then a discussion of cultural backgrounds. Other topics include child development, communication with children at various stages of development, discipline, self-esteem, and how to help children improve in school. Guest speakers have addressed nutrition, sexual issues, teen years, and alcohol and drug problems.
<b>Language and Literacy</b>	The curriculum is in Spanish, with videos and handouts also in Spanish. To support parents with low literacy levels, the content is reviewed at the end of each class and handouts have illustrations.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	Classes are held once per week for 10 to 12 weeks. Ten to 15 parents attend each class, and three classes are held simultaneously. Outreach includes fliers posted in laundromats, video stores, and Head Start programs. Classes are held at the family center as well as in schools, community centers, and Head Start agencies. Parents are offered dinner, bus tokens, and child care and are called before and during the sessions.
<b>Funding</b>	Funding comes from the city. Several small grants also have been received.
<b>Evaluation and Follow Up</b>	A weekly evaluation gauges what parents are learning. After the class, facilitators ask six or seven questions about what parents learned and how effective they felt the teachers were.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	Positive outcomes include children improving their behavior in child care programs. Parents also discuss how their children's behavior is improving. One program strength is the way in which parents have become teachers themselves.
<b>Challenges</b>	A challenge is the difficulty addressing new challenges that keep arising for parents that staff may be unfamiliar with.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	Trainers are interested in learning new teaching techniques and locating additional curriculum materials in Spanish, especially those that cover nutrition and child development.

## (15) YMCA International Services

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	November 2001
<b>Interviewee:</b>	Youth outreach coordinator
<b>Organization Name:</b>	YMCA International Services
<b>Address:</b>	6300 West Park, Houston, TX 77057
<b>Telephone:</b>	713 339 9015
<b>Fax:</b>	713 339 1159
<b>Email:</b>	Jwatkins@ymcahouston.org
<b>Type of Organization:</b>	Medium-sized, urban, voluntary agency (VOLAG) serving refugees associated with IRSA (Immigration and Refugee Services of America)
<b>Program Type:</b>	Families and Schools Together (FAST) curriculum (a national parenting program) integrated with other materials
<b>Parent Program Staff:</b>	Youth outreach coordinator and volunteers
<b>Funding:</b>	U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement; in-kind donations

**Parenting Program Description:** This program is formal and uses a YMCA team-building approach. Parents often choose topics in which they are interested. Classes consist of weekly 1-hour sessions for 8 weeks. The program is a division of Immigration and Refugee Services of America (IRSA). Successes include parents being more diligent with their children and children being calmer. Funding for the program was recently cut.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Participant Profile</b>	The program serves mainly refugees from Sudan, West Africa, the Middle East, and Afghanistan along with a few Cubans. The children are primarily adolescents.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	The major problem is parents' lack of knowledge of appropriate discipline techniques for the United States. Other issues identified include gang prevention, lack of access to resources, and values-based conflicts with adolescents. Parents express interest in getting their high school diplomas, college preparation for their children, and home ownership.
<b>Staff</b>	The youth outreach coordinator is the primary teacher. The educational coordinator also assists with classes. Through IRSA, staff have been trained in cross-cultural communication and immigration and legal issues. Training also is available through the YMCA on a national level. Staff are recruited primarily through the YMCA web site. Parenting staff have previously been involved in the creation of the "Journey of New Hope," a refugee parenting curriculum developed in collaboration with IRSA. That curriculum, however, is currently not taught in parenting programs.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	A good teacher needs to be aware of the community and to communicate with concepts that refugees will understand; he or she is not condescending, is patient and creative, and acts as a good friend to participants.
<b>Child and Parent Involvement</b>	Parents and children attend classes together.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	Staff collaborate with each other on common issues and problems. The agency is part of a local youth development collaborative. Volunteers, who include retired teachers and members of the Amnesty International Club at Rice University, must complete an application process and attend a volunteer training program. They help organize field trips, photocopy materials, interpret classes, and often work one-on-one with parents.
<b>Program History</b>	No specific comments in this category.

<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	The teaching style is a YMCA team-building approach. It begins with “icebreakers” and moves to creating teams that include a recorder and a reporter; everyone on the team is given a role. Parents select topics in which they are interested. Participants demonstrate their knowledge through skits and role plays; according to staff, a lecture style does not work with this population of refugees. The general refugee orientation and counseling sessions with caseworkers address parenting topics.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	Parents come to the program frustrated, then gain skills and become more confident. They use their skills to improve their relationships with their children and to advocate for improved services for their families. They often begin to mentor other parents.
<b>Curriculum</b>	Topics include assisting with homework, accessing free community services, gang prevention, mental health, parenting skills, and substance abuse. Other topics include hygiene, first aid, health, nutrition, fitness, community networking, and school issues. Classes do not follow a regular sequence, and staff have taken ideas for the curriculum from a publication called “By Design.” Other curriculum materials are from a program called “Assets Development” and are available from YMCA bookstores.
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	Interpretation is offered by an alliance focusing on multicultural awareness; interpreters are certified, and their services are contracted to agencies.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	The class meets 1 hour per week for 8 weeks. Graduation requires attendance at least five sessions and features songs, skits, and certificates. Classes are held in the agency and in other community locations. Outreach takes place through a network of agencies; school counselors, as well as parents, also refer participants. Monthly newsletters promoting the class are sent to a list of contacts, and classes are promoted to parents participating in other YMCA activities. Child care is offered at the main site. Parents are offered rides home and refreshments.
<b>Funding</b>	The program is funded through matching federal dollars for refugee programs and in-kind donations. However, funding for parenting programs was recently lost when the agency began to face funding shortages.
<b>Evaluation and Follow Up</b>	Focus groups with parents help prepare them for classes. A reunion of participants takes place every 2 months, and participants discuss issues they have in common/
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	A strength of the program is its team-building approach. Success is reflected in parents being more diligent with their children and children being calmer. It is also believed that when families begin attending other activities at the YMCA, they are becoming more active in improving their families.
<b>Challenges</b>	The agency is looking for additional grants in order to serve a greater number of parents.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	The program has a need for additional staff trainings and relevant parenting publications.

## (1) Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families and Communities Program Consulting & Clinical Services

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	November 2001
<b>Interviewee:</b>	Executive Director/Program Developer
<b>Organization Name:</b>	Strengthening Multi-Ethnic Families and Communities Program Consulting & Clinical Services
<b>Address:</b>	1220 S. Sierra Bonita Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90019-2552
<b>Telephone:</b>	323 936 7130
<b>Fax:</b>	323 936 7130
<b>Email:</b>	dr_mis@earthlink.net
<b>Type of Organization:</b>	National parent training model serving all ethnicities
<b>Program Type:</b>	Formal parenting curriculum
<b>Parent Program Staff:</b>	Three national trainers and support staff
<b>Funding:</b>	Fees from local agencies to national trainers for trainings

**Parenting Program Description:** This culturally sensitive program builds on parent strengths and encourages parents to identify and celebrate spiritual and cultural values in the prevention/intervention of violence against the self (drugs/alcohol, depression/suicide), the family (child abuse, domestic violence), and violence in the community (gangs and crime). Anger management techniques and child development information is also integrated. Parents of 3 - 18 year olds meet once a week for 12 three-hour sessions where they learn strategies to enhance child self-esteem, self-discipline and social competence. The program is translated into five languages. Program strengths include the fact that the program is strengths based and builds on parents' spiritual values. Challenges include enhancing facilitator training skills and acquiring funding for expansion and research.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Organizational System</b>	Along with two other national trainers, the executive director provides a five-day facilitator training workshop across the country, and program materials and technical assistance to groups implementing the program. These include drug/alcohol prevention programs, family support groups, child protective services, the Office of Juvenile Delinquency Prevention, and school districts, for example.
<b>Training System</b>	Facilitators are required to attend a five-day facilitator training workshop where they explore and experience the program's content and facilitation process and receive all the materials needed to teach the program. Several organizations are now contracting for follow-up and advanced training for previously trained facilitators. A trainer of trainer model is established for facilitators with several years of experience.
<b>Participant Profile</b>	The program serves parents of different ethnic/cultural backgrounds with children 3-18 years of age. It is currently being adapted for teen parents and parents with children less than 3 years of age.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	To address issues of mistrust and lack of motivation among different ethnic groups, the program promotes discussion in order to raise parent level of consciousness and enhance parent sense of competence. Asian families are culturally more familiar with a directed teaching model and may take a little longer to open up to the facilitation approach.
<b>Staff</b>	Executive director, two national trainers and support staff. Parent training facilitators come from all professions and include parents who have also completed the parent program.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	Good group process and facilitation skills, a non-judgmental and supportive attitude, the personality to connect with people and the vision that providing parents with information and opportunities to learn and grow will enhance families, communities and the world.



<b>Child and Parent Involvement</b>	Parents are often trained as facilitators; in addition, a strong community involvement program encourages parents to become volunteers. The program provides a child activities supplement for those working with the children to enhance the effectiveness of the parent curriculum. Although there is no formal parent/child interaction segment, some groups conducting the program bring parents and children together, especially for meals.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	The program and program developer participate in a national parent education network and work with several local and national groups.
<b>Program History</b>	This program was originally developed in 1991 as part of a California community violence prevention project and is the result of four program developers coming together. The curriculum was revised in 1994 and updated 1999.
<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	This facilitative approach is based on the belief that true learning comes from within and that parents will take responsibility for making good choices when given information on the consequences of different parenting strategies and techniques.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	The program first validates the feelings and experiences parents bring to class. Parents then open up and assess how their actions impact their child's behaviors. Curriculum informs and increases access and utilization of community resources and enhances parent ability to model and teach their children the tools and skills they will need to function effectively and successfully as adults in the 21st, century.
<b>Curriculum</b>	The program consists of five components: culture/spiritual, enhancing relationships, positive discipline, rites of passage, and community involvement.
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	Parent materials have been translated into Spanish, Korean, Vietnamese, Chinese, Somali, and Russian. Khamir, Ukrainian and Bengali translations will be completed in 2002. Translations result from local facilitators volunteering to translate parent materials. Facilitator Materials are currently available in English and Spanish.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	Local agencies develop outreach programs. The curriculum is structured for 12 weekly, 3-hour training sessions for a class size of 8-20 participants. The program can also be delivered using a workshop format. Different agencies have adapted the program format in a variety of ways to meet their individual needs. According to the program developer, research indicates that parents need from 35-45 hours of training in order to make significant changes in their child-rearing approaches.
<b>Funding</b>	Agencies pay fees for facilitator training. Agencies send individuals to national trainings or contract to have 15-20 people trained at their agency.
<b>Evaluation and Follow-up</b>	The program has a built-in pre and post parent assessment that assesses parent/child behaviors, parent sense of competence, and includes a parent report of child behaviors. Facilitators submit parent evaluation data to obtain their facilitator certification. Since several university groups are currently utilizing the program, it is anticipated that more research-oriented reports will be available in 2002.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	The program is strengths based and builds on parents' spiritual values. When parents share their values and experiences, they become more open to discussing their problems and needs.
<b>Challenges</b>	Facilitators need more support and training in general when working with parents from different ethnic/cultural backgrounds. The organization is seeking to increase the number of national facilitators available to provide facilitator training. In addition, this program will need more documented research to continue to compete with other programs for federal and state funding.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	A suggestion is that funding should be made available for program evaluation and research.

## (2) Parents as Teachers National Center (PAT)

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	November 2001
<b>Interviewee:</b>	Curriculum coordinator
<b>Organization Name:</b>	Parents as Teachers National Center (PAT)
<b>Address:</b>	10176 Corporate Square Dr., Suite 230, St., Louis, MO 63132
<b>Telephone:</b>	314 432 4330
<b>Fax:</b>	314 432 8963
<b>Email:</b>	info@patnc.org
<b>Web site:</b>	www.patnc.org
<b>Type of Organization:</b>	National parent educator model serving all ethnicities
<b>Program Type:</b>	Strengths-based home visiting model.
<b>Parent Program Staff:</b>	Sixty-five staff at National Center
<b>Funding:</b>	Includes funding from sales of training and curriculum, federal grants and major foundations

**Parenting Program Description:** PAT is a national nonprofit parent education organization designed to support all families from before the birth of their child until kindergarten entry. Through a network of local programs, the National Center develops curriculum, and trains and certifies parent educators to work with parents to provide them with parenting support and information on their developing child. The program's core components consist of personal visits, group meetings, developmental screenings and linkages to a network of community resources. Challenges include funding, recruiting qualified parent educators, and providing support and consistent messages to local agencies implementing the curriculum.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Organizational System</b>	The organization has a national headquarters, a system of state affiliates, and more than 2,800 programs worldwide.
<b>Training System</b>	Working with a supervisor from their agencies, new parent educators develop a preliminary implementation plan, which is reviewed by a national center planning consultant before the parent educator is sent to training. Participants attend the training institute and complete daily assessments to demonstrate an understanding of the program materials and to become certified. To maintain certification, parent educators complete 20 hours of professional development each year. Core training lasts five days with a one-day follow-up after three months.
<b>Participant Profile</b>	PAT serves all families throughout pregnancy until their children starts kindergarten, usually at age 5
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	Cultural diversity is written into the curricula at the national level, but specific applications are part of local implementation plans. Trainers are encouraged to develop cultural competencies by learning from other agencies.
<b>Staff</b>	Experts in early childhood education, research, training curriculum and development, finance and marketing staff the National Center. Most parent educators hold college degrees in early childhood education or a related field and experience working in the early childhood field.  The national office is interested in attracting paraprofessionals, such as parents who have attended programs, for the trainings.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	Qualities of good teachers include knowledge of child development, college-level education, knowledge of parenting skills, the ability to work independently, time management skills, and observational skills.

<b>Child and Parent Involvement</b>	Monthly personal visits to homes are the major service delivery component. Most often the parent educator will use an observation of the child to provide the context for the information and make it relevant to parents. Parent group meetings provide opportunities for parents to learn from each other, observe their children with other children and practice parenting skills. Parents often recruit other parents.
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	The PAT National Center collaborates with other organizations with a complementary vision, mission and goals. Staff participate in national parenting and early childhood conferences. Local programs are encouraged to collaborate with community agencies and institutions.
<b>Program History</b>	PAT began in 1981 in Missouri as a pilot project for first-time parents of newborns. In 1985 Missouri mandated all public schools to offer the PAT program. Today, there are more than 2,800 programs in all 50 states and internationally.
<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	PAT is a strengths-based model, and works with different adult learning styles as well as being culturally sensitive.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	So far, the program has emphasized stages of child development, but interest in the concept of parent development is growing.
<b>Curriculum</b>	The curriculum offers a holistic approach, covering four domains of development (cognitive, motor, social-emotional, and language), emphasizes increasing parents' knowledge of child development, and focuses on sharing parent-child activities that foster that development and parent-child interaction.
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	Curricula, trainer's manuals, videos and parent handouts have been translated into Spanish. Parent educators emphasize the child's emerging literacy skills by bringing books to every visit from infancy on and showing parents how to read with their children.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	The number of personal visits each family receives is dictated by local program funding. The National Center recommends a minimum of monthly visits, and more for families with children with special needs of facing critical issues. Parents groups usually occur monthly. Visits may last from pregnancy to age five.
<b>Funding</b>	Programs must have funding for at least three years before sending participants for training. The National Center may offer guidance in obtaining funding. Funding for the National Center includes funding from sales of training and curriculum, federal grants and major foundations
<b>Evaluation and Follow-up</b>	The National Center is developing standards for the implementation of quality programs, as well as for program improvement. Sixteen sites are piloting a self-assessment process utilizing these standards. In addition, consultants are helping local staff to create self-improvement plans.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	<p>Independent evaluations demonstrate positive outcomes for young children and their families in 3 areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Children are developmentally advanced and ready to succeed in kindergarten. They perform high on standardized tests in first through fourth grades.</li> <li>(2) Parents understand how to promote child development and are involved in their child's schooling.</li> <li>(3) Parents are more likely to promote literacy and numeracy and interact positively with their children.</li> </ol>
<b>Challenges</b>	Challenges include funding, recruiting qualified parent educators, as well as local families, and providing consistent messages and support for local programs.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	Communities should recognize the critical role of parents, especially in the early years, and increase support for that role. Parent involvement should be a critical component of all early childhood initiatives.

### (3) Meld Central

<b>Date of Interview:</b>	December 2001
<b>Interviewee:</b>	Director of Programs, Products and Services
<b>Organization Name:</b>	Meld Central
<b>Address:</b>	219 North 2nd St., Suite 200, Minneapolis, MN 55401
<b>Telephone:</b>	612 332 7563
<b>Fax:</b>	612 344 1959
<b>Email:</b>	info@meld.org
<b>Web site:</b>	www.Meld.org
<b>Type of Organization:</b>	National nonprofit parent training model serving all ethnicities
<b>Program Type:</b>	Formal peer-led self-help model (parents learning from each other)
<b>Parent Program Staff:</b>	Twenty-four employees
<b>Funding:</b>	United Way, public sources, foundation and corporate giving and earned income

**Parenting Program Description:** Meld has offered parenting programs since 1973. Programs focus on helping families to nurture connections between parents and children by building skills, knowledge, support and confidence. The organization trains and certifies staff in agencies or statewide networks to launch and deliver programs. These staff in turn train volunteer parents to facilitate parent groups. Groups may meet up to 2 years. Curriculum is translated into Spanish and has been adapted for Hmong refugees. Meld started adapting curriculum for East African refugees in 2001. The program's strength is the "way it brings parents out of isolation for a time of strength and joy. Challenges include staff turnover and locating qualified consultants to develop new curriculum.

CATEGORY	DESCRIPTION
<b>Organizational System</b>	Meld and a potential affiliate together assess if the Meld model is right for them. Meld contracts with affiliate state organizations that designate site coordinators to replicate programs. The Meld national office provides training, resources and technical support.
<b>Training System</b>	Replication typically starts with a 5-day coordinator training where affiliate staff learn how to train parent group facilitators, how to administer programs and facilitate Meld training. This begins their certification process.
<b>Participant Profile</b>	Meld serves parents of all ages and ethnicities. The typical participant is the parent of young children.
<b>Refugee and Immigrant Issues</b>	Hmong, East African and Latin families are dealing with language barriers, a variety of losses experienced from leaving their homelands, and finding ways to successfully parent in a new culture while retaining valued traditions from the home culture.
<b>Staff</b>	The interviewee has worked at Meld for 12 years and with parenting programs for the past 4 years. The 24 staff members all assist in the development and implementation of the parenting programs. Some coordinate local groups, other train and provide technical assistance to local affiliates.
<b>Qualities of a Good Teacher</b>	Respect, inclusiveness and acceptance of each individual and having a positive approach to parenting.
<b>Children and Parent Involvement</b>	Parents are encouraged to become group facilitators. Meld is finishing a research project to understand how group facilitators become effective leaders in their communities
<b>Collaboration and Volunteer Involvement</b>	Meld has a partnership with PAT (see profile #2) and collaborates with state-based agencies in 7 states. Extensive collaboration takes with community partners takes place in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area.
<b>Program History</b>	Meld has offered parenting programs since 1973.

<b>Teaching Process and Values</b>	Facilitators are taught to help parents learn from one another and to emphasize parents' strengths. Trainers incorporate concepts about different learning styles into training.
<b>Stages of Parent Development</b>	Outcomes-based evaluation tracks parent and child changes.
<b>Curriculum</b>	Curriculum is tested in the local community near the national office before it is adopted for affiliates. Curriculum addresses child development, child guidance, health, family management, and parent development.
<b>Language and Literacy Issues</b>	A Spanish curriculum called Meld Para La Nueva Familia and materials in Hmong are available. Coordinators are encouraged to translate materials to fit their local populations. Curriculum literacy level is consistent with the needs of readers whose first language is not English.
<b>Class Logistics</b>	Group meetings may be offered weekly for up to 2 years. A group size of 20 or less is recommended.
<b>Funding</b>	Funding comes from the United Way, public sources, foundations, corporate giving, and earned income.
<b>Evaluation and Follow-up</b>	Meld contracts with an evaluator on a project-consulting basis to determine program impact. Evaluation tools have been developed for diverse parenting and child outcomes. Coordinators and group facilitators may gather self-report information from parents or record observations of parent/child interactions. Affiliates are encouraged to use or adapt these tools in their community. National annual attendance and demographic information is analyzed and shared with affiliates.
<b>Program Strengths and Outcomes</b>	Meld is skilled in helping organizations install and adapt programs to meet community needs. Its groups are peer-led to maximize the strengths of parents' shared knowledge and skills.
<b>Challenges</b>	Challenges include locating qualified individuals to assist with culturally appropriate curriculum, capturing information about program successes and providing effective service in a high turnover business; and continuously finding effective ways to make programming accessible to more affiliates.
<b>Suggestions and Recommendations</b>	Parents could benefit from increased collaboration on a national level.