

Family Engagement with Refugee Populations

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- Thank you for participating in this peer exchange and your interest in this topic!
 - This Webinar will be recorded and archived and all participants will receive a follow-up email with a short evaluation.
 - A copy of the slides can be downloaded from the bottom right of the screen.
 - During the Q&A session, please use the chat pod on the right to submit your questions.
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Laura Gardner, MSW

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Objectives

- Acquire fundamental information about the field of family engagement in schools such as the Dual Capacity-Building Framework and the impact of family engagement on student achievement
- Discover family engagement strategies that are linked to learning and are particularly successful with refugee, immigrant, and English Learner families
- Increase knowledge of the main refugee populations being resettled in the U.S. and their educational backgrounds

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Definition of Family Engagement


- A *shared responsibility* of families, schools and communities
- Continuous from birth to young adulthood
- Occurs across multiple settings where children learn



- National Family, School, & Community Engagement Working Group, 2009


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Impact of Family Engagement

- Students exhibit faster rates of literacy acquisition
- Earn higher grades & test scores
- Enroll in higher level programs
- Are promoted more & earn more credits
- Adapt better to school & attend more regularly
- Fewer discipline incidents
- Graduate & go onto higher education



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Extra Important for Immigrant / Refugee Families

- Achievement / Opportunity gap
- Acculturation gap
- Immigrant integration
- Majority of teachers culturally different from students
- Lower expectations / deficits

Acculturation Gap

Parent's level of English and understanding of American culture

Child's level of English and understanding of American culture

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Dual Capacity-Building Framework

SEDL (2013). Partners in Education: A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships.

THE CHALLENGE

- Lack of opportunities for School/Program Staff to build the capacity for partnerships
- Ineffective Family-School Partnerships
- Lack of opportunities for families to build the capacity for partnerships

OPPORTUNITY CONDITIONS

- Process Conditions
 - Linked to learning
 - Relational
 - Development vs. service orientation
 - Collaborative
 - Interactive
- Organizational Conditions
 - Systemic across the organization
 - Integrated; embedded in all programs
 - Sustained; with resources and infrastructure

POLICY AND PROGRAM GOALS

- To build and enhance the capacity of staff/families in the "4 C" areas:
 - Capabilities (skills and knowledge)
 - Connections (networks)
 - Cognition (beliefs, values)
 - Confidence (self-efficacy)

FAMILY AND STAFF CAPACITY OUTCOMES

- School and Program Staff who can:
 - Honor and recognize families' funds of knowledge
 - Connect family engagement to student learning
 - Create welcoming, inviting cultures
- Effective Family-School Partnerships Supporting Student Achievement & School Improvement
- Families who can negotiate multiple roles:
 - Supporters
 - Designers
 - Mentors
 - Advocates
 - Decision Makers
 - Collaborators

<https://www2.ed.gov/documents/family-community-partners-education.pdf>
"A publication of SEDL in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education"
SEDL is now part of AIR (American Institutes for Research)

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Relative Impact of Family Engagement Strategies on Student Learning

Lower impact → **Higher impact**

Strategies (from Lower to Higher impact):

- Celebrations
- Parent help on administrative tasks
- Parent training events
- Goal-setting tasks
- Weekly data-sharing folders
- Fundraisers
- Parent resource rooms
- Back to school night
- Regular, personalized communication
- Home visits
- Pollsters
- Family support services
- Parent teacher conferences
- Positive phone calls home
- Modeling of learning support strategies
- Performances and showcases
- Generic school newsletters
- Interactive homework
- Classroom observations
- Parent help on learning projects

FLAMBOYAN FOUNDATION

Flamboyan Foundation defines family engagement as collaboration between families and educators that accelerates student learning.

Flamboyan Foundation (2018). Analyzing Family Engagement Data (PowerPoint presentation). Retrieved August 2017 from <https://flamboyan.org/sites/default/files/analyzing-family-engagement-data-2017-08-16.pdf>

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Language Access (Interpretation & Translation)

"School districts have the responsibility to adequately notify national origin-minority group parents of school activities which are called to the attention of other parents. Such notice, in order to be adequate, may have to be provided in a language other than English." (1970 Memo)

- Federal Language Access Laws
 - Title VI
 - Executive Order 13166
 - 1970 Memo
- Title III & Title I
- Some states have laws


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Family Engagement Model #1: Home Visits

- 24% few absences
- More likely to read on grade level
- Excellent opportunity for building trust
- Built in "PD" for teachers to learn about other cultures




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Family Engagement Model #2: Home/School Liaisons

- Purpose – bridge the cultural/linguistic gap between home and school
- Usually former refugees; sometimes called "cultural brokers"
- Purposes vary – Academics? Family issues? Case management? Interpretation?
- Could be hired by the refugee resettlement agency or the school district. Could be based out of either.




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Family Engagement Model #3: Workshops



- Usually focused on orienting parents to schools or to teach reading/math strategies, but may include other topics
- Who to partner with?
- Where will you have them? Time of day?
- Large group or small groups by language? By grade?
- How often?
- Provide child care, transportation, and food if possible


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Family Engagement Model #4: English Classes for Parents

- Parents' confidence in their own intellectual abilities affects their involvement in their children's education
- Parent as first teacher
- Can incorporate cultural orientation and info on how to help children in school
- Can incorporate computer literacy



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Family Engagement Model #5: Refugee/Immigrant Family Field Trips

- Purpose is to educate the whole family about history and culture
- Typically held during the weekend so parents can attend
- Staff supported but parents are responsible for their children
- Family strengthening



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Family Engagement Model #6: Family Literacy Programs



- Activities that involve parents and children engaged in reading and/or writing together
- Role of language and literacy in changing intergenerational relationships
- Reduce acculturation/language gap

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Family Engagement Model #7: Community Schools

- Both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and community resources
- Integrated focus on academics, health and social services, youth and community development
- Stronger families and healthier communities = improved student learning
- Schools are the center of the community and open to everyone




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Family Engagement Model #8: Parent Panels



- Purpose is for parents to share information about their background and culture
- An opportunity for them to be the teacher/expert

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Word of Caution:
International Nights & Multicultural Fairs



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How to Encourage Attendance of Refugee Parents at School Events

- Spend time fist building relationships and trust
- Involve resettlement agencies, ethnic community based organizations, and refugee community leaders
- Have the parents choose the topics to be discussed
- Utilize home/school liaisons
- Provide interpretation/translation (for outreach, too!)
- Provide transportation and child care
- Consider occasional events specifically for ELL/refugee parents

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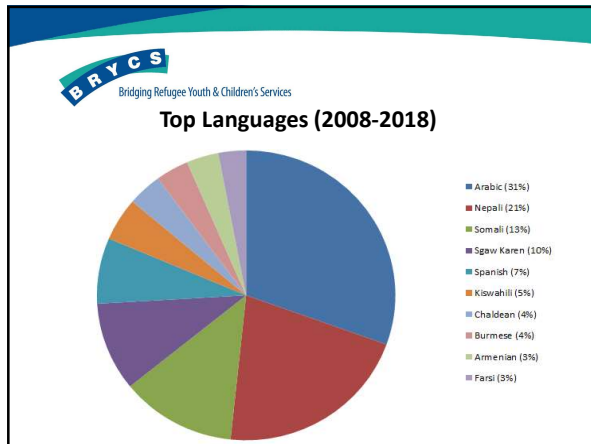
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Top 10 Countries of Origin

FY 2017		FY 2018	
Dem. Rep. Congo	9,377	Dem. Rep. Congo	4,187
Iraq	6,886	Burma	2,466
Syria	6,557	Bhutan	2,109
Somalia	6,130	Ukraine	1,447
Burma	5,078	Eritrea	984
Ukraine	4,264	Afghanistan	504
Bhutan	3,550	El Salvador	386
Iran	2,577	Russia	318
Eritrea	1,917	Pakistan	280
Afghanistan	1,311	Somalia	250


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Info for Educators on Congolese



- In refugee camps there is free primary education, but lack of previous education is #1 issue for U.S. schools
- Many 18+ with some formal schooling cannot read/write
- Top languages: Kinyarwanda, Kiswahili, & Kinyamulenge
- Major parenting differences with discipline & supervision
- Need orientation to U.S. schools

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Info for Educators on Bhutanese


- Bhutanese – Free education through 9th grade in the refugee camps in Nepal. Used Nepal's curriculum.
- Bhutanese Refugees (includes virtual tour of the refugee camp and a section on education)
<http://bhutanese-refugees.com>

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Info for Educators on Syrians




- Before the conflict, free public education for all
- Most Syrians have attended at least primary school and have basic literacy skills in Arabic
- Before the conflict, the adult basic literacy rate was 90% for men & 77% for women
- Syrians parent their children closely, helping children with schoolwork and monitoring all activities as best they can

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Info for Educators on Burma




- Refugees are not legally permitted to attend public school in Malaysia but the "Chin Student Organization" fills the gap
- Most camps on Thai/Burma border have primary school and some have middle schools
- "Refugees from Burma in the United States" on Youtube

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Info for Educators on Iraq




- One of the best educational systems in the Middle East before Gulf War. High rates of literacy.
- Before war, higher education was free, & many people highly educated
- Many schools damaged by bombing
- Education in countries of first asylum (Jordan, Lebanon, etc.) varies

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Info for Educators on Somalia



- Rich oral tradition
- Somali language did not have written form until 1972
- Due to civil war (since 1991) and limited education in refugee camps, this group comes with limited formal education

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Questions?



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Contact Us

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*Models are used for illustrative purposes

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