

How do school and community resources relate to refugee children’s adjustment?

The issue

- Refugee children are thought to face multiple, intersecting challenges, associated with pre-migration trauma and post-migration adaptation struggles.
- Much of the research pertaining to the well-being of refugees has focused on specific psychiatric symptomatology and challenges.
- *Very few studies have focused on how our communities can support the adjustment needs of refugee children.*

What we did

- We analyzed how school, community, and family resources relate to social-emotional and academic adjustment of 850 grade 4 refugee children in British Columbia, Canada, using self-reported survey data (the Middle Years Development Instrument) linked to immigration and educational records.

Key findings

- Various school, community, and family resources showed a difference regarding refugee children’s adjustment:

Community/family resources

Social-emotional adjustment



Support from adults at home



Peer belonging

School resources



Supportive school climate



Support from teachers/adults at school

Higher Life Satisfaction

Higher Optimism

Higher Self-esteem

Less Sadness

Academic adjustment

Higher literacy scores

Conclusions

Guided by social ecological theories that describe dynamic interactions between multiple contexts in which children grow up, and the developmental importance of access to culturally-meaningful resources, this study points to the importance of social contexts at the neighbourhood-, school-, and family/personal-level for supporting refugee children’s social-emotional adjustment.

* Note. All inferences, opinions, and conclusions drawn in this report are those of the authors, and do not reflect the opinions or policies of the Data Steward(s).