

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

Higher Life Satisfaction

Higher Optimism

Higher Self-esteem

Less Sadness



Peer belonging

School resources

Academic adjustment



Supportive school climate

Higher literacy scores



Support from teachers/adults at school

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).