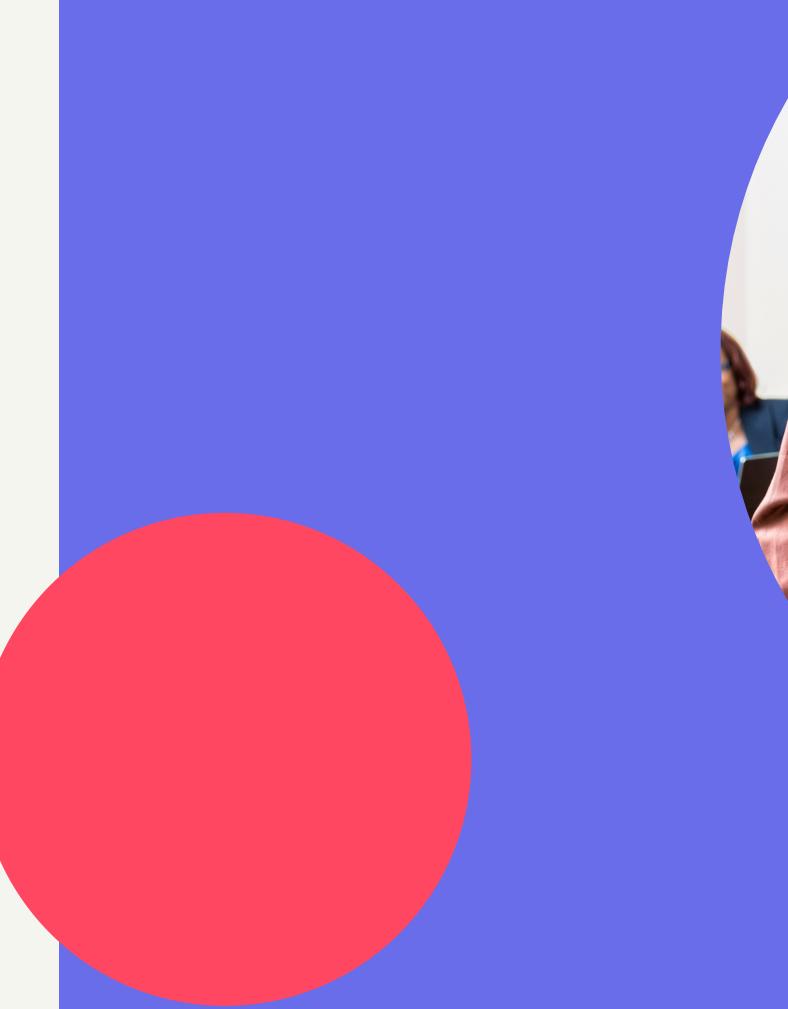




Canada is increasingly becoming home to more newcomer families each year. For newcomer youth, integrating into a new school system can be challenging and isolating. Schools can be places of support for these students but school staff may experience challenges meeting their complex and diverse needs.



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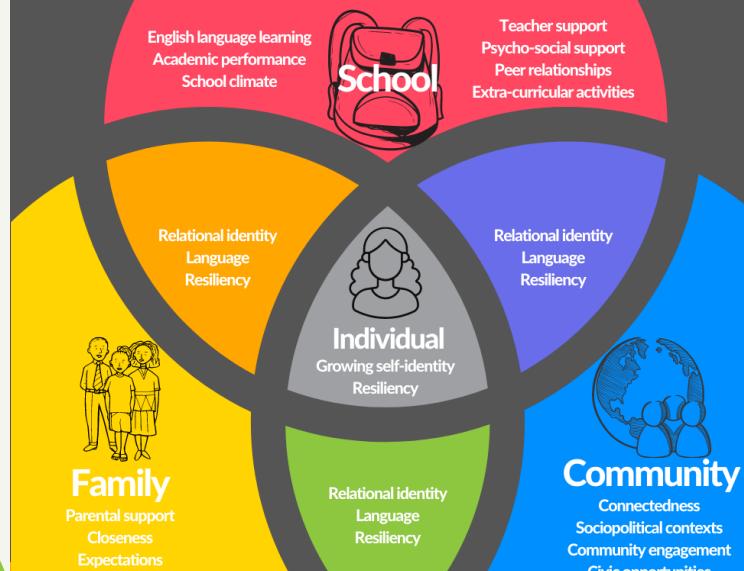
Supporting Newcomer Students at School

Resources for Administrators

Our Research

Newcomer youth are between the ages of 12 to 24, who have immigrated to Canada as first generation immigrants or refugees. We talked to 8 high school newcomer students and 10 university newcomer students over two years about their experiences integrating into the Canadian school system. They shared their stories using cultural probes, such as maps, journals, and photographs, as well as speaking to us in interviews and focus groups. This process is called Arts Based Ethnography. We also used a social justice framework which addressed issues of inequity, power and oppression to challenge the systems that limit newcomers.

Students shared that they were more engaged and connected with their school and community when they received direct support from school staff, and this led to increased academic success and social-emotional well-being. We've taken the experiences they shared with us and created this resource to support administrators in their ongoing work with newcomer students.



This graphic represents the ways in which newcomer youth experience school integration.

Supporting Newcomer Students in Your School

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Newcomer students told us that building strong relationships with trusted school staff early in the process of school integration provided important support, academically and socially. They found that staff who had empathy for their situation allowed them to feel comfortable reaching out for assistance.

NAVIGATING PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS

Bridging the gap between school culture and parental expectations is a challenge. Administrators who are empathetic to the values held by newcomer parents and approach them in supportive, non-threatening ways help students navigate these conflicting values. Translation services for written documents and meetings should also be arranged to approach these relationships.

Creating Supportive Schools

INCORPORATING DIVERSITY PROGRAMMING

Ethnic identity promotion in schools can foster a sense of acceptance and foster representation. This includes offering diversity clubs, ethnic studies courses, peer mentorship programs and school wide implementation of multicultural materials in curricula.

TRAINING FOR SCHOOL STAFF

Administrators can support their staff members working with newcomer youth by providing cultural sensitivity and awareness training to increase empathy and understanding of newcomer experiences, as well as making school-based supports easier to navigate.

HIRING DIVERSE SCHOOL STAFF

Diversifying staff members who are also newcomers, or who are bi- or multilingual can provide more opportunities for connection, support and diversity within the school for newcomers.

"Educational systems have a cultural and social responsibility to create welcoming and engaging spaces for newcomer youth in order to maximize their academic success and civic potential."

DR. ANUSHA KASSAN
University of British Columbia