

Childcare Promising Practices: Newcomer Children/Their Families

Developed by the Regina Region Local Immigration Partnership, in
collaboration with members from Regina's childcare community

March 2018

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Childcare Promising Practices: Newcomer Children/Their Families

About the RRLIP:

The Regina Region Local Immigration Partnership (RRLIP) is a local initiative that supports the community by strengthening their ability to welcome, integrate and settle newcomers. The RRLIP **connects, informs** and **supports** those stakeholders presently engaged and community members that have yet to engage, in newcomer settlement and integration.

Local Context:

For the purposes of the RRLIP Project, **newcomer** is defined as a foreign-born individual, currently residing in Regina, Saskatchewan.

Why a Promising Practices Guide?

Regina newcomers and other community stakeholders identified **childcare** as a key local priority to successful settlement and integration outcomes for newcomer families. This guide is intended to assist childcare providers in learning more about promising practices for working with newcomer children and their families. **It provides knowledge and insights from Regina's childcare provider community and is not intended to replace Early Childhood Education principles, but to compliment them.**

The Process:

Early in 2018, RRLIP staff met with a total of 13 local childcare providers to develop major themes and identify promising practices within each theme. The RRLIP recognizes the commitment of all service providers involved and would like to invite other providers and practitioners to continue building upon this promising practices guide. **To contribute additional themes and/or promising practices, contact the RRLIP office at 306-791-6846 or by email info@rrlip.ca**

Promising Practices:

General:

- Don't be difficult on yourself, we can all learn from each other
- Be patient and **flexible (can't stress enough the importance of being flexible)**
- Use positive reinforcement/care-giving practices
- Avoid making assumptions about cultural groups. Take the time to learn directly from them and understand their circumstances.
- Remember success means something different for each child/family
- Allow the child/family TIME to adjust

Family Involvement:

- Encourage parents/caregivers to share their culture with the other daycare families (e.g. a day of cultures with food and music)
- When preparing to receive a newcomer family in your daycare, read about their country of origin. This will help you understand their circumstances.
- Educate yourself about other supports in the Regina community. Offer the family this information when appropriate.
- Create an environment that the family feels comfortable in immediately (e.g. books, toys, calming activities)
- Include and invite parents/caregivers on special days (e.g. visit to the museum, visit from a local support like the police or fire department).

- Be forthright with parents/caregivers. If the challenges are becoming overwhelming, discuss it with them and develop solutions together.

Creating a Positive Learning Environment:

- Being able to communicate in the child's own language is best but that's not always possible. Think about other ways to communicate – body language, pictures, simple language, hand signals, etc. It is also important to learn about common gestures and their meaning in different cultures.
- Take the time to learn simple phrases in the child's own language.
- If your daycare has more than one staff member, consider hiring with diversity in mind.
- Develop programming/activities based on the child's **developmental stage**, not chronological age (very important when caring for refugee children that may have been traumatized).
- Observe the children's learning patterns/styles, adjust to meet their needs.
- Create calm areas in the daycare where newcomer children can go to relax and engage in quiet activities (e.g. reading books, solo activities). Overstimulation can be very stressful to newcomer children and can trigger difficult memories.
- Language barriers can be difficult to overcome but don't give up – it is always worth the effort!
- Incorporating outdoor activities into the daycare's programming is very important. Connecting to nature helps all children grow and learn, and is especially calming to most children.
- Celebrate diversity in your daycare. Recognize the importance and value of many cultures coming together (e.g. create a mini mosaic activity in your daycare, hold a 'cultures day', etc).

Discipline:

- Newcomer children may have been exposed to discipline methods that are different or not acceptable in Canada. Establish trust with newcomer families and create opportunities to model positive child-caregiver interactions.
- Listen to the family/caregiver's perspective. Understand how cultural differences can shape a family's child-rearing approach.
- Teach your daycare's rules early on. Involve the caregivers in this process, so they understand what is expected of all the children in the daycare.
- Use visual reminders of positive behavior in the daycare (e.g. respect, kindness, understanding, listening – focus on positive rather than negative behaviour). Pictures demonstrating positive behaviour can be a helpful tool in communicating with newcomer families.
- Talk to the families about their child's routines and habits at home. This information will help you understand the situation from the newcomer family perspective.

Foods:

- Talk with the families about their expectations. Understand what the needs/restrictions/special requests are. Determine if you can meet those needs.
- Learn about cultural foods and how to prepare them.
- Don't force newcomer children to eat all Canadian foods. They may never become accustomed to/develop a taste for some common foods served in Canada, and that is okay.
- If you have agreed you will provide cultural foods, prepare them in the way that is respectful to that culture.
- If you do not feel comfortable providing culturally specific foods, negotiate that in your contract with the family (e.g. suggest that they pack their own snacks and lunch each day for their child). This may be an opportunity for the family to pay less for their childcare because of this accommodation.

- Ask a family member to share recipes with you and/or to demonstrate how to cook the cultural foods (easier to do in a small daycare setting).
- “Think and act from your heart, not your head.” Accommodate the newcomer children and their families whenever possible.

Professional Development for Childcare Providers:

- Always look for training opportunities that will help you be the best daycare provider you can be. Understanding how to best serve newcomer children and their families will benefit them and the community and also benefit the reputation of your business.
- “If your personal biases are getting in the way, take a step back and look for training sessions that will help you better understand yourself and your young clients.”
- If you cannot attend professional development opportunities in person, sign-up for relevant webinars (many are free or reasonably priced). Search the internet for early childhood resources and training.
- Learn from other childcare providers. “This promising practices information is so helpful because it gets us talking about the challenges and opportunities involved in caring for newcomer children.”

Final Notes from the RRLIP Project:

In listening to local childcare providers sharing their promising practices, it became very apparent they wanted only the best outcomes for newcomer children/their families.

After sharing and discussing promising practices, childcare providers were then posed these and other questions:

Thinking about the promising practices information, what will you now do differently in your daycare setting? *Answers included (direct quotes):*

- My takeaway is encouraging families to share their culture with other families (e.g. I love the ‘day of cultures’ idea).
- I will use pictures and simple language posters around the daycare. I have been having difficulty communicating basic things and I think this will really help the two newcomer families I serve.
- When we discussed the importance of developing programming to suit the newcomer child’s developmental stage instead of chronological stage, the light bulb went off for me! I know this from an ECE perspective but I had not thought about how important it really would be with the newcomer children.
- Because of this day, I now feel comfortable to reach out to other providers to talk about the challenges I’m having. I think now I don’t have to feel so isolated.
- I found the Google Translate App information really helpful. I am going to take the training as soon as possible.
- I know I will go back to my business on Monday and talk to the newcomer families about showing me how to cook their foods. I owe it to their children to put in my best effort.
- I already have a quiet area in the daycare but I think it is time to create a few more. I have noticed the children getting stressed when too much activity is going on around them. A few extra reading or quiet play areas should help. It’s a simple idea but I think it will help the newcomer children so much.
- I want to take the time to devote to professional development whenever possible. If the RRLIP can let us know when there is free or lower cost trainings available, that would be helpful. As a small home daycare, I don’t have the resources for high training costs.
- I liked the way we all shared our knowledge and experiences. I think what I will do differently is I will talk with others about issues as they come up. I have been letting things get out of control because I didn’t know how to handle them. Right now my confidence level is high. Thank you.

- When the one provider talked about how she uses hand signals to communicate sometimes, I was encouraged. I know I will think about different ways to communicate with the children and families. Unless you have a chance to talk with others about these challenges, you think your methods aren't right.

Your Local Immigration Partnership is an initiative that supports the community by strengthening their ability to welcome, integrate and settle newcomers. **What information, connections or resources would be helpful to you as a local childcare provider?**

Answers included (direct quotes):

- Connect us with local training opportunities (e.g. cultural awareness and sensitivity training), so we can do our jobs better.
- On-line training opportunities are helpful so we can complete them when we have time.
- Invite all childcare providers together to talk about the challenges and promising practices, so everyone can learn from each other at the same time. It would probably have to be a weekend time because we don't have time during the weekdays.
- Add to this Guide by talking to as many providers as possible (more extensive information will help us all).
- Tell us about other supports for newcomer families in Regina. I have been asked about this but I don't know all the programs and services available.
- Small home daycares don't have the resources that larger ones do. Think about ways to support not only larger centres, but small home daycares (e.g. **free** and **low cost** training opportunities that can be flexible to meet busy schedules).
- We work in isolation at times, can anything be done about that?

Thank You to the Regina's childcare community for your knowledge and insights!

The RRLIP would also like to thank its project partners



Funded by:

Financé par :



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

Childcare Promising Practices Impact Survey

Instructions:

- Use a scale of 1 to 4, where:
Strongly Disagree = 1
Disagree = 2
Agree = 3
Strongly Agree = 4
- Please put an "X" in the box that best represents your thoughts.

		1	2	3	4
1	By sharing promising practices, childcare providers are achieving more together than they could alone.				
2	Promising practices information has increased my awareness of newcomer challenges and opportunities.				
3	Promising practices information will add value to my work with newcomer children and their families.				

Thinking about the promising practices information, what will you do differently in your daycare setting as a result?

Your Local Immigration Partnership is an initiative that supports the community by strengthening their ability to welcome, integrate and settle newcomers. What information, connections or resources would be helpful to you as a local childcare provider?

Thank you for your feedback!

Appendix 1:

Relevant Training Opportunities

Cultural Awareness/Sensitivity Training:

- 1) Multicultural Council of Saskatchewan (MCoS)
Contact Information: <http://mcos.ca/request-for-educational-services/>
- 2) Regina Open Door Society (RODS)
Contact Information: <http://rods.sk.ca/pages/community-connections>

Cultural Competency Training:

- 3) Sights on Success Consulting
Contact Information: angeline.chia@myaccess.ca

Google Translate App Training:

- 4) Contact Information: <http://www.icavictoria.org/community/we-speak-translate/>

Are you aware of any relevant local or on-line training opportunities that can be shared with the childcare provider community? If so, please contact the RRLIP office at 306-791-6846 or email info@rrlip.ca

General Community Resources

Healthy Eating Toolkit for Newcomers

<http://rrlip.ca/userdata/files/201/Community%20Resources/EAL-Healthy-Eating-Toolkit.pdf>

Cultural Orientation Website <http://www.culturalorientation.net/library/all-lesson-plans/youth>
www.culturalorientation.net/library/all-lesson-plans/youth

Cultural Profile Website <http://www.intercultures.ca/cil-cai/countryinsights-apercuspays-eng.asp>

Websites for Kids Activities in Regina <http://rrlip.ca/blogs/post/websites-with-kids-activities-in-regina-and-area>

SAISIA Settlement Services Map <http://rrlip.ca/blogs/post/regina-settlement-services-map-developed-by-saisia>

Refugee Children Mental Health Resource http://www.surrey.ca/files/Resource_Guide_-_Supporting_Children_with_Refugee_Experience.pdf

Family Violence Information (in various languages) <http://www.justice.gc.ca/eng/rp-pr/cj-jp/fv-vf/fe-fa/index.html>

Mackenzie Art Gallery Program for Immigrant/Refugee Women and Children

<http://rrlip.ca/blogs/post/free-for-immigrant-women-and-children-saturdays-at-the-mackenzie-art-gallery>

Parenting Tip Sheet (English and Arabic Translation)

<http://www.reachinginreachingout.com/documents/PARENTTIPSHEET-UnderstandingFeelings-ARABIC-8-5-16.pdf>

<http://www.reachinginreachingout.com/resources-parentprofessionals.htm>

Making Sport and Physical Activity Inclusive to Newcomers

http://www.caaws.ca/onthemove/e/newcomer/documents/NOTM_Resource-Eng.pdf

Fire Safety Videos <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2GdT5GkeAf1r-5LgvNKg1SkT6aMNuchb>

Caring for Kids New to Canada <https://www.kidsnewtocanada.ca/>

Caring for Syrian Refugee Children [https://cmascanada.ca/wp-](https://cmascanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Supporting_Refugees/Caring%20for%20Syrian%20Refugee%20Children-final.pdf)

[content/uploads/2015/12/Supporting_Refugees/Caring%20for%20Syrian%20Refugee%20Children-final.pdf](https://cmascanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Supporting_Refugees/Caring%20for%20Syrian%20Refugee%20Children-final.pdf)

The Resilience Guide <https://cmascanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/resiliencguide.pdf>

www.welcomehere.ca

<http://www.welcomehere.ca/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.viewpage&pageid=939>