Cultural Orientation for Children with Refugee Backgrounds

By College of Social Work, University of Utah

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CULTURAL ORIENTATION

FOR CHILDREN

WITH REFUGEE backgrounds

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**Introduction**

This project was funded by a grant from the Fieldstone Foundation to Catholic Community Services of Utah (CCS). CCS contracted with the College of Social Work at the University of Utah to create a curriculum to help latency age children (ages 8-14) adjust to U.S. culture.

In creating this curriculum, our team first sought to understand the issues which face children with refugee backgrounds. We interviewed 22 service providers who work with recently arrived children and their parents. These included interviews with staff from CCS, the Utah Office of Refugee Services, Valley Mental Health, Utah Health and Human Rights Project, the International Rescue Committee, the South Salt Lake Police Department, the Salt Lake City Juvenile Justice system, and teachers and various administrators from Granite and Salt Lake School Districts. We also interviewed 21 youth with refugee backgrounds, ranging in age from 10 to 26, and 19 parents, all of whom had been in the United States for at least 12 months. We chose older children to interview because we believed they would have the benefit of hindsight and reflection on their experience as a newly-arrived child.

We then conducted a review of existing curricular materials. Existing materials served as a model for how to design lesson formats. We used some ideas and exercises with permission from the authors. We would like to gratefully acknowledge the International Rescue Committee whose youth program developed a curriculum which served as the basis for several lessons in this work.

Next, we qualitatively analyzed the interview data from our many interviews. Analysis of the interviews yielded themes that became the lesson topics in this
curriculum. Our interview respondents told us it was important to include content on language, communication, social interaction, laws and rules, self-esteem and personal values, safety, and basic life skills, all of which are now lessons in this curriculum. We were told that it is important that activities for children of this age be interactive and active. Interviewees also told us it was important that the group process be utilized and that group members learn from each other. Additionally, we were told that newly arriving children need to be part of a community, need something to be proud of, and need to have fun. We have tried to include these components in this curriculum. And, perhaps more importantly, we have tried to honor the native cultures of resettled children and families. Rather than interpreting American rules and ways as correct and other ways of doing things as incorrect, we have presented U.S. norms as a guide to helping the children make more informed choices and thus be more successful within the American context.

These lessons are intended for groups of children aged 8-14, recently arriving to the United States from a refugee experience. Each lesson can stand on its own or be part of a multi-lesson series. The following guidelines are very important for conducting any part of this curriculum:

- Each lesson is intended to be conducted with a group of children, and the support and camaraderie of the group is an integral element of each lesson.

- Teachers of this curriculum should keep in mind the cognitive abilities of children this age. For example, most latency-aged children are not capable of abstract thought. Thus, lessons should be concrete and focused on skill-building. The use of metaphor or abstraction with this population should be avoided.
• Children this age need to move around, rather than sit still and listen to information in a classroom setting. The exercises are designed to be interactive, as well as active, and to involve all members of the group.

• Find and use pictures and illustrations relevant to lessons if possible to enhance communication and learning.

• Where possible and relevant, teachers should include families of child participants as co-teachers in these lessons. There are some topics, however, where children might communicate more openly if family members are not present.

• Design ongoing activities to include parents beyond this curriculum.

• At the conclusion of each lesson, praise students’ achievements and provide positive feedback on performance or achievement.

• Provide parents with the information covered in each of the lessons. Encourage parents to spend at least 5-10 minutes with their children discussing what they learned.

• Teachers of this curriculum should always relate materials to the culture where children have come from and help children appreciate experiences in their native cultures. Teachers should also seek to learn about children’s native cultures.

• Teachers should be aware that children already have significant skills and talents. Teachers should identify and recognize these assets and build on them.

• When possible, it is recommended that teachers include older children who arrived as refugees several years ago and children without refugee backgrounds to promote cultural sharing, integration and mentorship.

• Introduce vocabulary for each topic area and review throughout the curriculum.
• Lessons can take more or less time than stated.

• The lessons should be fun.

• The lessons should give children skills and projects that they can be proud of.

The curriculum consists of seven topics:

1. *Laws and Safety:* This section includes information to help children understand the role of the police. This section also helps children learn about laws in Utah and the U.S. and consequences for breaking them, and talk about alcohol and drugs.

2. *School Rules and Skills:* This section discusses school rules, such as sitting in your seat, attendance, timeliness, truancy, and consequences for breaking school rules. This section also covers basic functions to help children through a normal school day, including using the bathroom, how cafeteria lunch works, how to use the lockers, hygiene expectations, using the bus, and communicating with adults.

3. *Social Skills:* Included in this section are exercises on peer relationships, how to build friendships, nonverbal language and personal space, fitting in and finding a sense of belonging.

4. *Money and Numbers:* The lesson in this section teaches children how to count and to manage money, in order to avoid being taken advantage of by others.

5. *Emotional and Mental Health:* This section includes lessons on feelings, asking for help when you need it, how to ask for help, talking to a counselor, and coping mechanisms for managing stress.
6. *Claiming Your Culture*: Included in this section are lessons on who I am and how that has changed since coming to the United States, how to balance living in two cultures, and comparing and contrasting cultures from home and the United States.

7. *Family Roles*: This section covers family values, what’s changed in the family since coming to the United States, how to manage conflict in the family, and what changes parents may experience post-resettlement.
1. Laws and Safety

_Purpose:_ Rules, laws, and the roles of police officers in children’s native countries and refugee camps are often different from those in the U.S. For example, in some countries, frequent absences at school are justified if children need to assist families at home, fighting between children is handled by community elders, and police officers may represent the oppressive governments these children have recently fled. In many countries, it is illegal for young people to smoke, drink, and consume drugs. However, some children with refugee backgrounds come to the U.S. thinking these behaviors are acceptable because they may have been in their prior environment. Other children have no previous experience with these substances until they come to the U.S. and are introduced to them by their new peers. The purpose of this section is to teach children about the role of police in the U.S., introduce rules and laws which are likely to affect children of their age and the consequences of breaking them, and to discuss the dangers of drugs.

**Lesson 1A: Laws**

_Objectives:_ At the conclusion of this lesson, students can identify the role of the police, will be familiar with the definitions and consequences of violating curfew, truancy, fighting, underage smoking and drinking, and driving without a license. Students will be able to identify law-breaking behaviors.

**Lesson Time:** 1 hour

**Materials Needed:** White board to write on

**Place:** any quiet place

**Activity 1:**

1. Circle students together. Begin by asking “what was the role of police officers in your country of origin”? If needed, ask further questions, such as “do the police help people?” etc.
2. Discuss how police officers in the U.S. have many roles: they keep drivers safe, identify and lock up people who break laws, help find stolen things and lost people, and they make sure everyone follows the rules to keep us safe.
3. Ask if anyone has had any good experiences with the police in the U.S. Ask if someone would like to share. If necessary, provide your own positive story.
4. Ask if anyone has had any bad experiences with the police in the U.S. Ask if someone would like to share the experience and discuss as a group about what happened.
5. Compare and contrast roles of police in the U.S. and in students’ countries of origin.
Activity 2:
1. Carefully write the laws (listed below) on the white board.
2. Students might have further questions regarding the laws and regulations. Take your time explaining the different laws and explain that police officers are there to protect and do no harm. Ask students feelings about law enforcement personnel. What have been their experiences with police? Let students share their feelings.
3. Then read each scenario (listed below) one at a time. After reading each scenario, ask students to identify which law was violated.
4. Have students discuss their feelings about each law and violation. How are these laws different than laws in the countries where they came from? What do their parents and siblings think about these laws?

Laws:

Curfew: This is a law that requires youth to leave the streets or be at home at a certain hour. Minors under the age of 16 have to be home between the hours of 11 p.m. and 5 a.m. Minors under the age of 18 years have to be home between the hours of 1 a.m. and 5 a.m. Any minor who disobeys this law can be arrested or given a ticket.

Truancy: This means missing school for an unexcused reason. If a student misses school more than 5 times in a year without an excused reason, you can get in trouble with your school. If parents knowingly fail to prevent the student from missing school and do not meet with school officials, they could be charged with a crime. Absences are considered unexcused when a student skips school, works instead of going to school, babysits during school hours, or goes shopping, skiing or hunting during school hours. Examples of excused reasons to miss school are for being sick or having an appointment to see a doctor. Families should talk to the school or send a note explaining why a student was absent.

Fighting: In the U.S, it is a crime to physically cause harm to another person. Even if the other person does not get seriously hurt you could be charged for an assault. Depending on the situation, you can get charged for hitting, stabbing, punching, kicking, biting or even pinching another person. You could be put on probation, sent to youth services, and/or detention.

Under age smoking and consumption of alcohol: The legal age to smoke tobacco is eighteen years old. However, you have to be nineteen to purchase tobacco. If you are not 18, you will get a smoking ticket and will have to pay a fine. You must be 21 to buy and drink alcohol in the U.S. If you are caught possessing or under the influence of alcohol, you will be given a ticket and subjected to a fine and/or community service.

Driving without a license and without car insurance: You must be 16 years old to drive. You also have to complete driver’s education and pass a test to get a driver’s license. If you drive a car, it is a law that the vehicle has car insurance. Car
insurance will help pay for damages if you or your car is hurt in an accident. If you drive a car without a license and/or car insurance, you can get a ticket and fine and your license may be suspended.

Scenarios:
Grace is on her way to school when she notices a playground with new swings on it. She decides to try the swings out before going to school. Grace loses track of time and forgets about school. After she realizes that school has already started, Grace decides she will just miss the day and play at the park instead. (Violation: Unexcused absence, Grace could get into trouble with truancy)

Mary is 16 years old and is hanging out with her friends having a good time. They just got done seeing a movie in the theatre and they want to get a bite to eat even though it’s 10:30 p.m. They decide to go to the nearby restaurant for some food. The food takes longer than expected and it is now after eleven. (Violation: Curfew, Mary and her friends could get into trouble with police for being out too late)

Tony is 16 years old and just got his driver’s license, and is going out to celebrate. He goes to a party and decides to drink some beer. Tony has to be home at 10 p.m. so he only drinks 2 beers before leaving. On the way home Tony is pulled over for speeding. (Violation: Under age drinking and speeding, Tony could get his driver’s license suspended for driving under the influence and given a fine)

Mac and Hector don’t like each other. One day at school, Mac starts calling Hector names and wants to fight Hector. Hector doesn’t like being called names so he starts punching Mac. The two boys get into a huge fight. Mac ends up with a broken nose and goes home. (Violation: Fighting, the boys could be charged with a minor assault and have to go to court)
1. Laws and Safety

Lesson 1B: Gateway Drugs

Objectives: At the conclusion of this lesson, students will understand the dangers of drugs and their consequences in the U.S.

Lesson Time: 45 minutes

Materials needed: 3 pieces of construction paper with one of the drugs written on each one (the drugs are: Alcohol, Tobacco, Marijuana), a small prize for the winning team.

Place: any quiet place

Activity:
1. This exercise is like a game show: the Gateway Game. Play by first splitting students into two teams.
2. Place the papers with the name of the drugs face up on one table.
3. Have a member from each team come up to the table.
4. Ask the following questions about the drugs to see what each participant knows about the drugs. If a participant knows the answer, he will point to the drug that the question is about, earning a point for his team. Let students know that there may be more than 1 right answer to each question.
5. After each question, new team members will rotate to get an opportunity to answer a question.
6. Questions:
   a. Which drug contains over 400 chemicals, including THC? Marijuana
   b. Which drug contains nicotine? Tobacco
   c. Which drug is nicknamed “pot” “dank” “weed” or “reefer”? Marijuana
   d. Which drug kills over 400,000 Americans each year? Tobacco
   e. Which drug causes lung cancer? Tobacco
   f. Which drug is illegal if you’re eighteen? Tobacco, Marijuana, Alcohol
   g. Which drug can cause drivers to have car crashes? Marijuana and Alcohol
   h. Which drug has a smokeless form that can cause mouth cancer and tooth damage? Tobacco
   i. Which drug has chemicals that can stay in the body for a month after smoking? Marijuana
   j. Which drug is illegal no matter what age you are? Marijuana
   k. Which drug is highly addictive? Tobacco, Alcohol, Marijuana
   l. Which drug might lead you to doing other addictive drugs? Tobacco, Alcohol, Marijuana
   m. Taking this drug can harm an unborn baby. Alcohol, Tobacco, Marijuana
   n. Taking this drug can cause liver damage. Alcohol
7. After a participant answers a question, ask other students what they think about the question asked. Give them a chance to ask questions about drugs and share their thoughts and feelings about drugs.
8. At the end of the game, tally all scores and award a small prize to the winning team.

9. Circle all students up and discuss:
   - What norms are in the U.S. versus in their countries of origin about drugs?
   - What were the laws and norms around drugs in their home country?
   - What is legal and illegal here in the U.S.?
   - What are some ways to say ‘no’ to drugs?

*Note: Information on laws and drugs should be given to parents. Include parents in these lessons if possible.*
1. Laws and Safety

Lesson 1C: Child Safety

Objectives: At the completion of this lesson, students will be able to define the role of the Division of Child and Family Services, identify appropriate times to call 911, and recognize suitable discipline methods.

Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Materials needed: none

Place: any quiet place

Activity 1:
1. Gather students together and explain how the United States takes the safety and health of its children very seriously. It is important that children have a safe place to live, food to eat, and adults to care for them. It is also important that children obey the rules of their families.
2. Ask students: What are some rules in your family? What are the consequences if these rules are broken? Give each student a chance to share responses to these.
3. Explain that although each family has the right to decide its own family rules and punishments for breaking those rules, the United States has rules to keep its children safe. Here are some important rules for you and your family to understand:
   a. Young children should not be left home alone without an adult. Typically, a child should be at least 8-10 years old before being left alone for a few hours during the day time.
   b. It is better if children are at least 11 years old before they are ever left alone in the evening.
   c. Children should be at least 12 years old before babysitting younger children or siblings.
   d. For punishments, some families send children to their rooms (time-out), some families take away privileges such as use of the television or telephone, and other families spank. Punishments are different in each family.
   e. Punishments that are abusive are illegal. Abuse is any injury inflicted on a child with cruel or mean intent and includes things such as punching, burning, kicking, biting, and spanking hard enough to cause bruising or bleeding. Abuse also includes touching in private/inappropriate parts of the body or forcing a child to touch the private/inappropriate parts of another person against their will.
4. Explain that the Division of Child and Family Services (DCFS) is an organization which helps families to have safe and healthy relationships. Sometimes families need help to create better home environments. DCFS can make sure that children are getting enough food and receiving appropriate care. In the United States, it is
illegal to shake children or hit them with objects such as shoes or sticks. It is also not okay to deprive children of food or shelter. Some families need extra help to follow these rules, and DCFS can provide this. They help families if there is a report of abuse.

5. Discuss the idea of child abuse with students: ask them “what is appropriate discipline from parents” and “What isn’t appropriate punishment?” Ask them, “What should you do if you are being abused by a parent or another adult?” Encourage them to talk with their teachers or school counselor about this or to call DCFS.

6. Explain to students that if there is an emergency, you can call 911 on your phone for help. For example, it can be called if someone stops breathing or if there is a fire. Explain that it is very important to only use 911 for emergencies. Never call 911 as a joke or to see what might happen. You can get into trouble for calling 911 for these wrong reasons. Ask students to give examples of times when it is okay to call and times when it is not okay to call 911.

Activity 2:
1. Divide students into 4 groups and instruct them to form a line for each group at one end of the room. Read the following questions out loud. Once the students know the answer, instruct the students at the front of each line run to the wall on the opposite side of the room and shout the answer out loud. Whoever reaches the wall first, and has the correct answer, receives a point for that team. Once a student has completed her turn, she goes to the end of the line.

2. Questions:
   - If your house is on fire, who should you call? (911)
   - How old do you need to be before you can babysit? (12)
   - What agency can come help your parents on finding appropriate punishments? (DCFS)
   - What are examples of privileges that can be taken away if you disobey your parents? (Television, telephone, etc.)
   - How old must you be before you can be left alone during the day? (8-10)
   - When should you call 911? (For emergencies only)
   - What is a parent’s responsibility? (To give you food, shelter, and keep you safe)
   - What is a child’s responsibility? (To obey their family rules, be a good child, etc.)
   - What is the purpose of DCFS? (To help families be safe, create good family environments and healthy relationships)
   - What is an example of an appropriate punishment? (Time-out, loss of privilege, etc.)

Note: Include families in this lesson if possible. Students or parents wanting further information on DCFS or child abuse laws can call (801) 538-4100 or go to www.dcfs.utah.gov. Anyone needing to report child abuse can call (800) 678-9399.
2. School Rules and Skills

Purpose: Children with refugee backgrounds have diverse educational backgrounds. Some attended challenging day-long schools in their countries of origin and others have limited or no formal education. Experiences with school rules, roles and expectations are quite varied. In order to be successful in school, children need to understand the rules and expectations of a typical school day in the U.S. All children need to understand how to use their locker, when to go to lunch, how to take the bus, and which bathroom to use, but for children new to the United States, these may be foreign experiences. Many children also come from cultures in which relationships with teachers were more formal than in the United States, cultures where the student was expected to be very obedient and never question the teacher. Children may also believe that asking for clarification or admitting mistakes is a sign of weakness. Youth will be more successful in American schools if they learn how to ask for help when they need it. The purpose of this section is to teach children what to expect during a typical school day, how to behave in school, to familiarize themselves with school personnel, what are basic tasks needed to move physically through a school day, and what are acceptable ways of communicating with adults in the school setting.

Lesson 2A: Life Skills at School

Objectives: At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be familiar with the school environment, understand and demonstrate acceptable behaviors in bus, school and playground settings. This lesson will teach and model age-appropriate school behaviors for newly-arrived refugee youth so they can be adequately prepared for U.S. culture and norms within the school setting.

Lesson Time: 1 hour for each part (bus norms 1 hour, lunchroom norms 1 hour, etc.)

Materials Needed: school, school bus, school bus driver, school facility (including classroom, cafeteria, playground, etc.), and some lunch food.

Place: School

Bus Norms Activity:
1. Take all students to an unused school bus (if one is not available, be creative).
2. Instruct students how to properly load onto a bus and sit on benches.
3. Instruct students how to keep hands and feet inside the bus.
4. Explain to students how to wait for the bus to stop and the doors to open before standing up.
5. Explain how to walk off the bus appropriately. When loading the bus, the teacher will show the children where to stand in line and safely await the bus. It would be best to practice loading and unloading the bus at least 3-4 times.
6. At the end, circle up students in a seated circle in a quiet place. Ask them to share what is difficult or challenging about riding a bus. Ask them to share stories about what is hard about bus norms. How is transport to school different than where they used to live?
**Lunchroom Norms Activity:**

1. Take all students to a school lunchroom when it is empty and not in use.
2. Ask students to create a line before entering the lunchroom.
3. Then ask students to practice walking in a quiet line behind the teacher.
4. Ask students to enter the lunchroom quietly and appropriately.
5. Show students where and how to collect tray. If the tray is divided into parts, a fun saying to teach how to best hold the tray is “three next to me.”
6. Have students practice collecting their trays.
7. Then have students select milk/juice and place in middle of tray in order to help maintain a balance.
8. Walk with the students as they slide their tray along the line to get their food. Teach them how to say “yes please” or “no thank you” to the food being offered.
9. Students will most likely need to enter some sort of pin number as payment for their food. Model (teach) entering the number on the machine and instruct them to keep the number safe (it would be beneficial prior to going to the lunchroom to teach children how to enter numbers on a calculator).
10. Guide students to a lunch table.
11. Show students how to pick up after themselves and where to dispose of the garbage.
12. Emphasize the following manners: quiet voices, eating only their own food, eating with proper utensils. Explain what gets students in trouble in the lunchroom: loud voices, fighting, pushing, messiness, etc.
13. Circle students up in a group. Ask them to share their stories about what is difficult and what they have learned about eating in U.S. school lunchrooms. Instruct them to ask their teacher or a cafeteria worker for help if they don’t eat certain foods due to religious or other dietary limitations.

**Classroom Norms Activity:**

1. Take all students to an unused classroom.
2. Explain lining up: model the proper way to stand in line and where to stand. Practice this several times.
3. Explain proper conduct for when at a table or desk. Model pushing your chair in. Have students practice. Model the correct way to sit in their chair, and then have children practice.
4. Explain that boys and girls will be in the same classroom together. In the US, students of the opposite sex will be expected to sit next to each other, work in groups together, and go outside for recess together. Explain it is important to not touch another person/sit too close without that person’s permission. Have the kids sit boy/girl/boy/girl or ensure that both sexes are spread throughout the classroom. Tell students if they feel uncomfortable or if their parents have questions, to speak with their teacher or counselor.
5. Explain how to appropriately participate in class. Ask one students to pretend to be the teacher. Model raising your hand and having the teacher acknowledge.
Then have students practice this skills. Teach children the importance of only one child speaking at a time. Explain why this is important.

6. Model walking in class. Explain how this is different than walking outside (slower, no running, watch out for others). Have students practice this.

7. Help students become familiar with the classroom by allowing “free” time to explore. Then circle students up in a seated group. Ask students to tell the group what they found. Discuss the proper use of objects in a classroom, machines, etc (e.g. computers, pencil sharper, sink, etc.). Explain how the school use of these objects might be different from home use (sharing, ownership, etc.).

8. Ask students how these expectations are different from their experiences in prior countries.

Restroom Norms Activity:
1. Take all students to an unused school restroom. Take students on a “tour” of the restroom. Introduce the children to toilets, sink, soap, paper towels and garbage can.

2. Children may be scared by the loud sound of the toilet flushing; make sure they are comfortable using it. Explain also automatic lighting if there is any: explain what triggers an automatic light so that they know there is no magic or spirit triggering the light.

3. Emphasize the importance of washing hands. Have children count to ten while washing.

4. A fun song for using the proper amount of paper towels: “1, 2, 3, save a tree!”

5. Show children the different pictures that represent the boys’ restroom and the girls’ restroom. Optional: provide students with paper and crayons. Then have them draw the boys’ and girls’ restroom signs or design their own signs.

Outside/Recess Norms Activity:
1. Take all students to an outside/recess area at school which is currently empty and unused.

2. Teach students what is appropriate touching during play time in the U.S. Have students practice playing tag for five minutes and appropriately touching one another during the game. Then circle students back up in a seated circle. Explain that, in the U.S., inappropriate touching is anytime the other person doesn’t want to be touched. Explain that inappropriate touching is actually a crime in the U.S. Ask students to share their questions or stories about appropriate or inappropriate touching. Ask if there are times when they are confused about what is okay.

3. Teach children basic phrasing for interacting with other children, e.g. “Can I play with you?” “No, I do not want to play.” Set up four students in a role play where one student wants to join a game that three other students are already playing. Have the students role play and then sit all students down again and debrief the role play: what went well and what didn’t go well? Do the other students have ideas about how to do this better next time?

4. Introduce playground equipment, explain how to use, model use, then have students take 5 minutes to “practice.” Ask which they liked best and why. Explain the importance of sharing playground equipment with others. Optional:
role play someone who doesn’t want to share playground equipment. What do you do?

5. Prepare student for the sounding of the bell. This loud sound may be upsetting for some; help them understand what it means. If possible, arrange with the school to have the bell ring and have students follow you to line up.

Note: We gratefully acknowledge Amelia Self and Janelle Johnson for the development and contribution of the original version of this lesson.
2. School Rules and Skills

Lesson 2B: Learning about School

Objectives: Students will be able to identify school personnel and their roles, understand the differences between unacceptable and acceptable behaviors in classroom settings.

Lesson Time: 1 hour

Materials Needed: maps of the schools the participants will attend, paper and crayons for each student, invited school personnel

Place: any quiet place

Activity 1:
1. Circle students up in a seated circle. Discuss the roles of different people in the school: principal, teacher, counselor, social worker, bus driver, custodian, cafeteria staff, etc.
2. Have 1 or 2 school employees (including a district refugee liaison if possible) come speak to the group about what they do.
3. Then review maps of the school.
4. Ask students to discuss: Who can you ask for help? Also, what happens when the bell rings? What do you do if you get sick before school? At school? Explore each of these at length.

Between these 2 activities (Activity 1 and Activity 2), play an active game such as ‘Simon Says’ while using school-related actions (ex., Simon says sit in your chair, Simon says line up at the door, etc.)

Activity 2:
1. Make sure each student has a few pieces of paper and a pen/pencil. Have students fold their piece of paper in half.
2. Write “-” on one half for unacceptable behaviors and “+” on the other half for acceptable behaviors.
3. Discuss and chart rules for inside and outside behaviors at school. Include teacher and participant suggestions.
4. Cover the following:
   a. Closed campus
      - You cannot leave school (to go home, to the store) until the end of the day
      + Get permission to leave during the school day if you have an excused reason to leave like a doctor’s appointment
   b. Being late for school
      - It is not okay to be late because of sleeping late, babysitting, visiting with friends, or doing chores at home
      + Let school know if you will be late (for an appointment, etc.)
c. **Unexcused versus excused absences**
   - Unexcused: missing more than 10 days in a row, parents not calling/sending a note to school when child returns
   + Excused: missing school because you are sick, have an appointment, religious holiday

d. **Recess**
   - Hitting, fighting, play fighting, any contact sports, using bad language, going inside
   + Playing outside, telling an adult if you see a problem (like someone fighting)

e. **Classroom behaviors**
   - Hitting, touching, yelling, leaving the room without permission
   + Keeping your hands and feet to yourself, sitting quietly, raising your hand before speaking

f. **Dressing for school**
   - No wearing short shorts/skirts, spaghetti straps, low-cut tops, drug/alcohol/gang-related clothing.
   + Shower and wash hair at least every few days, brush teeth twice daily, use deodorant daily, wear clean, comfortable, weather appropriate (coat, jacket, umbrella, etc.) and neat clothing (see individual schools policies regarding clothing or uniforms).

g. **Bringing things to school**
   - No weapons (including guns, knives, matches or lighters) or things that look like weapons (toy guns, sling shots, etc.), cannot use mp3 players, cell phones, radios during school hours
   + Homework, backpack, lunch or lunch money, school supplies (paper, pencils, notebooks, etc.)

5. Although consequences will vary by school and by rule violation, communicate that not following school rules will result in consequences like detention, suspension, loss of recess privileges, and expulsion from school.

6. **Discuss:**
   a. How are expected behaviors/school policies different in the U.S. from where they came from?
   b. How do you feel about learning these?
   c. Which are the toughest to do?

**Note:** Include families in this lesson when possible. Be sure to inform parents of their expected role in their child’s education: make sure child attends school, inform school when child will be absent, try to schedule appointments before or after school, supervise children while they complete homework, and participate in regular parent/teacher conferences. Ask parents what their expectations of school are.
2. School Rules and Skills

Lesson 2C: Communicating with Adults

Objectives: Students will be able to ask clarification questions, give and receive feedback in a situation with adults in the school setting, ask for assistance, and express concerns or how s/he is feeling (e.g., angry, happy, worried, depressed).

Lesson Time: 1 hour

Materials Needed: 1 copy of the Dialogue Handout for each participant; white board or flip chart; markers.

Place: any quiet place with room for a small group

Activity:
1. Pass out the Dialogue Handout (see below) to two students and ask them to role play. Introduce the situation: this is a conversation between a teacher and her student in the hall, just before class. The student (Ali) is very anxious because he does not have homework. The reason why he does not have homework is that the day before he did not understand the instructions given in class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dialogue Handout</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ali: Good morning Mrs. Lee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Lee: Good morning Ali. Good to see you.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali: Yes, uh… good to see you too.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Lee: Are you going to class? You look a bit concerned – what’s the matter?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ali: Yes… no, no, sorry, you don’t have time?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Ask the group to discuss the following questions, one by one: Was Ali able to talk to the teacher about what worried him? What went wrong and why? Why should he share his concerns with his teacher? Why might it be hard to do this?

3. Divide all students into two groups and have each group work on devising a new plan for Ali. How will he communicate his concerns to Mrs. Lee? Each group will create a new dialogue that will express Ali’s concern and ask for help as well. Ask students to practice in role plays the new dialogue they created. Each group performs their role play in front of the whole group.

4. Then circle the group back up in a seated circle. Ask them to share: what was different about the role plays they created from the original Ali-Mrs. Lee role play? Ask them to share: what’s hard about asking people/teachers for help? Why is it important to ask for help? What’s different about talking with adults in the U.S. from their native culture?

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3. Social Skills

Purpose: The ways in which children make friends varies widely by culture. Children arriving in the United States from a refugee experience may have come from a place where making friends and interacting with peers was very different from what is typical in the United States. Concepts such as non-verbal behaviors and personal space may be different for newly arriving children. The purpose of this section is to teach children how to build friendships, how to fit in and to gain a sense of belonging.

Lesson 3A: Non-Verbal Behavior

Objective: Following this lesson, students will be able to conduct a simple conversation using appropriate verbal and non-verbal language (for example, handshake, eye contact, appropriate touching).

Lesson Time: 1 hour

Materials Needed: none

Place: any quiet place

Activity:
1. Circle all students up in a seated circle.
2. Explain to students: The words we say are important. How we say things (the tone we use) and what we do (body language) is also important.
3. Go over the following vocabulary words and write them out on a white board or flipchart where everyone can see them. Explain definitions if necessary: nervous, relaxed, happy, sad, guilty, concerned/worried, angry.
4. Tell students they will be playing communication charades. Ask a youth to pick one vocabulary word (nervous, relaxed, happy, sad, guilty, concerned/worried, angry), without telling the others, and demonstrate it without saying a word. All the others have to guess how s/he feels.
5. Circle students back up in a seated circle. Discuss with students how they usually express their feelings: do they usually tell others about their feelings? Why or why not? Who is usually able to guess their feelings by the way they behave or their non-verbal behavior? What is important about sharing feelings with words, rather than in a non-verbal way?
6. Then demonstrate some of the following non-verbal behaviors below and discuss with your group:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Body language/ gesture</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Standing with hands on hips</td>
<td>Aggression; readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arms folded</td>
<td>Disagreement, defensiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wave with a hand</td>
<td>Hello, good bye …</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-verbal Behavior</td>
<td>Meaning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head resting in hand, eyes</td>
<td>Boredom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>downcast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nodding the head</td>
<td>Agreement – yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyes closed</td>
<td>Bored or sleepy in the US “I’m listening and concentrating.” in some</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Asian cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye contact</td>
<td>interest, concern, warmth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Smiling</td>
<td>happiness, friendliness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thumbs up</td>
<td>“good job”, agreement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7. Ask students to share some non-verbal behaviors from their cultures and compare their meaning here in the U.S. – for example, girls holding hands is very typical friendship gesture in parts of Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

8. Talk about personal space—personal space is like an invisible bubble surrounding each of us, and we each need different sized bubbles to feel comfortable. Typically, we stand further away from people we do not know very well (people we just met, people of the opposite sex, teachers), and closer to people we feel comfortable with (like friends, family).

9. Ask for six volunteers to form three groups: 2 girls, 2 boys, and 1 boy and 1 girl to talk in front of the rest of the group. Ask the students to observe how close each of the 3 pairs is to each other.

10. Ask students to share their feelings about how non-verbal behaviors are different in the U.S. than from their countries of origin.
3. Social Skills

Lesson 3B: Giving and Receiving Feedback

Objective: At the conclusion of this lesson, students will know how to give and receive a compliment in English, and will demonstrate how to give and receive critical feedback.

Lesson Time: 45 minutes

Materials Needed: Coin or a ring for the game

Place: any quiet place

Activity 1:
1. Begin the lesson by discussing that feedback is the way that others let us know how we are doing, and how our actions impact them in a positive or negative way. It is important to let others know when they are doing something that either makes us happy or upset. This is important because we do not know what is going on in each others’ heads. If someone gives you critical feedback, or tells you they do not like the way you are doing something, this does not mean you are a bad person—they are just sharing how your actions make them feel.
2. Introduce the “feedback sandwich”: say something nice about a person or tell them about an action they are doing well, then tell them what they are doing wrong or what they need to improve, and end with another compliment.
3. Have students practice the “feedback sandwich” with each other while sitting in a circle all together. Give students ideas about what is appropriate feedback: tell students to give feedback which is examples of specific behaviors or specific times.
3. Pair students and read the following:

Scenario #1:

You are in math class and the teacher has given the students math problems to solve. He walks to your desk to check your work but you have made a lot of mistakes.

Have students take turns being the teacher (giving critical feedback) and the student (receiving and responding to the feedback).

Scenario #2:

You are waiting for your friend at the playground, but she is late. When she finally arrives, you are very upset because she does not apologize for keeping you waiting alone for so long.
Have students take turns being each friend and giving feedback about how you felt when the friend showed up late.

4. Discuss with the whole group how they felt giving and receiving critical feedback.
   a. What are good ways to give critical feedback without making the other person feel bad?
   b. What are examples of other times when it is important to know if you are doing something wrong?

Activity 2:
1. Ask the group to think of a compliment (something nice to say about a person). Write all ideas on the white board. Some examples are: You are good at math! I like your smile! I like the way you speak to me when you tell me I’m doing something well!
2. Explain to students that they will be playing a game called Hidden Treasure:
   a. Students stand in a circle facing in. All put their hands together and extend them forward.
   b. The teacher is in the middle, and has a coin/ring in her hands. The teacher goes around the circle, shakes each person’s hand and at the same time says a compliment to each student. She will secretly drop the coin/ring in one of the youth’s hands.
   c. When the teacher has gone around the whole circle, she picks one person who has to guess where the ring is.
   d. That person has to use the compliments written on the board and say: Ali/Fatima [name of person they think has the coin/ring], you are good at math! Ali/Fatima then has to open his/her hands and show if s/he has the ring. Each person has 3 guesses

2. Discuss:
   a. What was it like to hear compliments?
   b. Who gives you compliments the most?
   c. What makes compliments meaningful or important to you?
   d. Who should you give compliments to?
3. Social Skills

Lesson 3C: Acceptable vs. Unacceptable Social Behaviors

Objectives: Following this lesson, students will be able to identify unacceptable behaviors and provide acceptable alternatives and discuss how to replace them with acceptable alternatives. Students will also be able to explain how their actions affect others.

Lesson Time: 45 minutes

Materials: white board/chalk board, 2 sets of dominoes (distinguishable from each other)

Activity 1:
1. Circle all students up in a seated circle. Read the following:

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Fatima runs into her classroom. She is late but does not have a note from home. Fatima sits down at her desk and talks to the student next to her. The teacher asks her to please be quiet but Fatima continues to talk. Omar, another student, says something Fatima does not like. She hits him. Fatima does not understand what the teacher is talking about so she gets out of her chair and walks over to the window. Later during recess, Fatima sees her friend Mary. She is mad that Mary did not call her yesterday. Fatima decides to ignore Mary and to say mean things about her to others.
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2. Ask group members to identify unacceptable behaviors in this story.
3. Then ask students to name what some acceptable behaviors would be in this situation. List the acceptable behaviors (write them on the board if the children have sufficient English skills).
4. Reread the story with the alternative behaviors substituted in.
5. Then ask students: what are examples of other unacceptable and acceptable social behavior? How do friends influence our behaviors?
Activity 2:

1. Gather students together. Begin by stating that our actions (both good and bad) affect other people. Tell the following story:

   Ron is having a bad day. He loves to play soccer in gym class, but he hurt his ankle last week and has to wear a cast and use crutches. Now, he has to sit on the benches alone and watch all the other kids play. At lunchtime, Ron had difficulty balancing his lunch tray and dropped his milk on the floor. Paul is in line behind Ron and sees him drop his milk. Instead of helping him, Anthony ignores him and walks by. Later during recess, Mary notices him sitting alone, looking sad. She goes over to him and begins to talk with him. She stays with him until recess is over and offers to carry his backpack to their next class. Other students notice Mary talking to Ron and they come over. Soon, Ron is laughing and having a good time. His classmates help him on and off the school bus and make sure he gets home okay.

3. Ask students:
   a. How did Paul’s actions affect Ron?
   b. How did Mary’s actions affect him?
   c. Tell students that an important part of belonging to a community (at school, within our own families, etc.) is to help each other and to consider how our actions affect the feelings of others.

Activity 3:

1. Divide students into 2 groups and give each group a set of dominos. Demonstrate how to construct a maze. Instruct each group to construct a maze that overlaps with the other groups’ maze.

2. When the mazes are complete, repeat how our actions influence others. Select one person to begin the domino knockdown.

3. Circle students back up: ask them “how are the dominos like the people in your family and school?” Discuss with them how everything we do impacts other people. Ask students to give an example of a time when something they did impacted someone else, either positively or negatively.

4. Assign the students to commit an act of random kindness (doing something nice for someone without being asked to), preferably towards a classmate they do not know well. Ask them to report back their experiences at the next group meeting.
3. Social Skills

Lesson 3D: Friendships

Objectives: Following this lesson, students will be aware of positive friendship attributes, gain English social vocabulary, define friendship, and gain an understanding that people can be friends with others who may seem different.

Lesson Time: 1 hour

Materials Needed: white board/chalk board, markers, paper, pens, newspapers or magazines, scissors, tape or glue, string or yarn

Place: any quiet place

Activity 1:
1. Distribute paper and coloring materials to each student. Instruct them to draw a picture of themselves on one side and a picture of what they think the typical American kid looks like on the other side.
2. As a group, discuss the pictures:
   a. How are the 2 sides different?
   b. How are they the same?
   c. What are ways in which you think you are like “typical American kids”? What are ways in which you think you are different?
   d. How do the similarities/differences impact how we make friends with people? Do you tend to be friends with people who are mostly like you or unlike you?
   e. How did you make friends before coming to the U.S.?
   f. How can you make friends with others? What are things you do to make friends with people you don’t know?
   g. Is it easy or hard to make friends with youth from the U.S.? Why?

Activity 2:
1. Have each group member write “friendship” on a piece of paper
2. Distribute magazines and drawing materials. Instruct students to create a collage depicting acts of friendship and what friendship looks like to them.
3. Have members sit in a circle and take turns sharing their collages.
4. Write simple social/introductory sentences such as “My name is”, “How are you?”, “What is your name?”, “I am from” on a whiteboard. Practice saying each sentence as a group.
5. Pair kids up and have them practice the following interactions: Make eye contact with your partner and take turns introducing him/her with the sentences covered in #4.
6. Circle students back up in a seated circle. Discuss:
   a. What does it mean to be a friend?
   b. Why are friendships important?
c. How can you be a good friend?
d. What kind of things do you look for in a friend?
e. How do friends help each other?

Activity 3:
1. Begin the activity by explaining that we are social beings and we enjoy spending time with other people who have similar interests. Sometimes we don't take the time to get to know others who may seem different than us, but we may be surprised by how much in common we have.
2. Have participants make a kite (diamond) shape on 8.5x11 paper:

3. Ask students to divide the kite shape into 6 sections and number them.
4. Give instructions for coloring the individual sections.
   - Color section 1 red if you are a girl, and green if you are a boy.
   - Color section 2 yellow if you have an older brother and blue if you have a younger brother.
   - Color section 3 pink if you like math and black if you like writing.
   - Color section 4 brown if you like reading and purple if you like singing.
   - Color section 5 orange if you like soccer and white if you like swimming.
   - Color section 6 light green if you are shy and gray if you are talkative.
   - If both colors apply, color that section with a design that uses both colors.
5. Decorate the back with a design using your name. Add a string tail that has a paper or fabric bow for each person in your family.
6. Divide into small groups and discuss similarities and differences in each others’ kites.
7. Return together as a whole group. End the lesson by pointing out similarities in kites and that although there are differences, all of our kites also have similarities, just like people. When we meet people who at first seem different than us, it is important to get to know them, we may actually have many things in common,
4. Money Management

*Purpose:* This section will encourage students to become familiar with U.S. money. Many refugee children have responsibilities in their families for purchasing food, school supplies and basic household needs. Thus, it is critically important for them to understand U.S. money in order to accurately recognize and count it. New residents of the U.S. are at risk of being victims of fraud and deceit while buying good. This curriculum encourages kids with refugee backgrounds to gain familiarity and comfort with U.S. money to avoid being victims of fraud. After completing this curriculum, students should know the names of U.S. currency and correctly identify all U.S. coins and bills.

*Objectives:* After completing this curriculum, students will know the names of U.S. currency. Students will also be able to correctly identify all U.S. coins and bills.

*Lesson Time:* 45 minutes

*Materials Needed:* some U.S. bills and coins, enough for every student to have a full set of coins and $1 bill, jar full of real or fake coins of various denominations

*Place:* any quiet place

*Activity 1:*
1. Hand out to each student a complete set of coins (penny, nickel, dime, quarter) and a $1 bill.
2. Go over each denomination of U.S. money. Have the kids repeat after you the names and values.
3. Demonstrate how differing combinations of change and bills can come out to the same total.
4. Put youth into teams of 2 and pass out a handful of coins and fake dollars (Monopoly money will work) to each team.
5. Write a value on the board, for example: $2.50, $12.68, $73.99…etc.
6. Instruct teams to assemble the correct amount with their fake money as quickly as possible. The first team to put together the right amount and raise their hand is the winner. (*For advance players, tell them they don’t have to give you the exact amount as long as they can tell you how much change they should receive in return.*) Winner gets to write the next amount on the board for the next round.

*Activity 2: Money Guessing Game*
1. Circle students together and blindly pull out a small handful of coins from a jar full of coins. Keep the amount hidden from view.
2. Count the total value and the total amount of coins in your hand and announce to the group. For example: I have 5 coins and they total 35 cents.
3. Instruct students to come up with a combination of coins that have the same result. The winner is the first student to put together the exact same collection of coins that you hold in your hand.
4. As a group, discuss:
   a. Who decides what money gets spent on what at your house?
   b. Do you ever purchase items with money? If so, what?
   c. How do you keep from someone taking money from you or taking advantage of the fact that you are new with U.S. money?

Note: We would like to acknowledge with gratitude the International Rescue Committee of Salt Lake City whose Youth Program created the original version of this curriculum.
5. Emotional Health

*Purpose:* Life in the United States can be very stressful for newly arriving children. Children with refugee backgrounds face very different routines from what they are used to. They must adjust to new food, new modes of transportation, and a different school structure. Additionally, their families may be going through great stress and children may feel worried or sad about their parents and siblings. The purpose of this section is to encourage kids to share with one another. Feeling comfortable with each other is critically important before sharing of emotional information can occur. This section encourages collaboration and cooperation among students. It also teaches kids a feeling vocabulary and offers instruction on when to express feelings and how to communicate feelings to other people, to deal with stressful feelings, avoid fighting and conflicts and to recognize feelings in others.

*Lesson 5A: Getting to Know Each Other*

*Objectives:* Following this lesson, students will begin to share with one another, identify new information learned about other participants, and develop collaboration and cooperation necessary for future deeper sharing activities.

*Lesson Time:* about 30 minutes for each activity

*Materials needed:* paper and pencil for each student (for Activity 4 only), world map (for Activity 2 only).

*Place:* any quiet place

**Activity 1: Everyone Up**
1. Instruct all students stand in a circle. Then have two people sit in the middle of the circle with their backs touching. (Students should ideally be similar heights and weights).
2. The two participants must lock their arms together, sit on their bottoms, and have their legs stretched out in front of them. Together, they must figure out a way to stand up without touching the ground with their hands or unlocking their arms.
3. Once everyone has had a chance to go, turn it into a race or just congratulate everyone on their excellent communication skills in solving the problem.

**Activity 2: Human Map**
1. Ask students to create a human map, by standing to indicate where they consider home. Display a world map for students to study if needed. Indicate North, East, South & West, then allow participants to position themselves to create a map.
2. Ask the person who is the furthest what their name is and where they come from. Proceed to ask each major cluster where they come from. In this process, participants may refine or improve their map. Then ask participants to create a human map to show:
a. where their mother/father was born;
b. where they would ideally like to live;
c. the farthest place you've travelled;
d. where most of their family members live.

3. Then sit students down in a circle and ask them how it felt to map out where they come from and where they want to live. Ask open-ended questions (e.g. “what was that like for you?”) in order to elicit students’ responses.

Activity 3: The Story of Your Name

1. Ask students to turn to a partner and explain what your name means (if anything) and where it comes from. Give students about 5 minutes for each of them to share.
2. Circle students back up into one big group and ask any students who want to share to explain what his/her name means and where it comes from.

Activity 4: Everything You Ever Wanted to Know About One Another

1. Circle students up in one big group. Instruct them to partner up with a person sitting next to them.
2. Ask them to share the answers to the questions below with their partner (instruct students to write down answers if able):
   a. If you were to choose a new name for yourself, what would it be?
   b. If you were given an extra $10 in change at Wal-Mart, what would you do with it and why?
   c. Who is one of the most important people in your world and why?
   d. What’s one of your worst habits?
   e. What was the best day of the past week for you - why?
   f. What are you wearing today which best explains who you are?
   g. Choose a special item from your school bag/backpack and explain why you carry it around.
   h. If you could change one thing about your physical appearance what would it be and why?
   i. Share one of your most embarrassing moments.
   j. If you were given a million dollars and 24 hours to spend it in, (no depositing it in the bank) what would you do with it?
3. Instruct students to change partners and share with someone else.
4. After changing a few times, circle students up and discuss the following:
   a. How did students feel sharing these things about them?
   b. What’s one question they think should be included in this exercise next time around?
   c. What’s one thing they always wanted to know about someone else?
5. Emotional Health

Lesson 5B: Sharing

Objectives: Following this lesson, students will have gained a greater sense of group cohesion through sharing, and articulated goals and wishes for the future.

Lesson Time: 1 hour

Materials Needed: poster board for each student, coloring/drawing materials

Place: any quiet place

Activity 1: What’s in My Pockets?
1. Circle students into a group (no more than 10 per group – break into multiple groups if needed). Instruct students to take turns emptying their pockets (or school bags, backpacks, etc.) to show their group what they are carrying with them. No one is required to show anything that they would prefer NOT to show.
2. Instruct each group to discuss what the objects say about the person. Does it reveal something about one’s personality and life? Is there any one object that stands out as a reflection of some aspect of that person? Sometimes what is missing also says something about the person.

Activity 2: Personal Timelines
1. This is a personal timeline exercise. It helps students to begin to share about their complex life histories. This exercise can generate good discussions with students about their pasts and what they want in their futures. First, hand out 1 poster board per student. Put lots of colored markers/crayons/pencils where everyone can reach them.
2. Ask students to draw a line horizontally across the middle of the poster board. Tell students to draw pictures and write words about their lives from birth to now. Tell them to leave room along the end of the life for what they want to come next. Tell them to draw/write their future: where do they want to live, what do they want to be doing in the future, who do they want to be with, etc. Tell students that no one knows about their lives except for them – encourage them only to write down what they are comfortable sharing with the group.
3. After about 20 minutes of drawing, circle students back up. Ask them to share only what they are comfortable sharing. Ask students to share one at a time. Ask the following:
   a. What did you create and why?
   b. What do you wish you could change or add to the timeline, and how would that affect your life?
5. Emotional Health

Lesson 5C: Emotions

Objectives: At the completion of this lesson, students will have identified feelings and appropriate coping behaviors.

Lesson Time: 60 minutes

Materials Needed: 10 pieces of blank paper for each student, coloring/drawing utensils, hat or box

Place: any quiet place

Activity 1: Learning about Emotions

1. Hand out 10 pieces of blank, unlined paper to each student. Each student should have access to plenty of crayons or colored pencils, as well.
2. Read the first word (“happy”) and ask students to draw a picture for this word. Give them 2 to 3 minutes for each picture. Give them a new word every few minutes until every student has completed a picture for all 10 words.
   a. Happy
   b. Sad
   c. Angry
   d. Shy
   e. Scared
   f. Excited
   g. Embarrassed
   h. Sick
   i. Hurt
   j. Lonely
3. Instruct students to form a circle. Ask each student to share his/her picture for “happy.” Have each student talk about why this is the picture he/she created for this word. Continue the exercise through all ten words. Encourage all students to share not just what they created, but why. Encourage students to talk about what they do when they are experiencing each of these words: what do they say, what do they do, and who do they tell?
4. Encourage students to share all of these emotions with family members and good friends. Give students an example of a time when you (the teacher) did this and it went well.
5. As a group, discuss:
   a. Are there right and wrong feelings?
   b. How did you cope with sad or bad feelings in your country of origin?
   c. How do you deal with those feelings now?
   d. How does your family express feelings?
   e. What is hard about sharing feelings with others?
   f. When is it okay to tell a grown-up about problems at home?
Optional: split group into pairs and ask each pair to share with each other a time when they each felt embarrassed (or lonely or angry, etc.). Pairs do not need to report back what they shared. After pairs-sharing, circle the group back up and ask students to talk about what it was like to tell someone about their emotions.

Activity 2: Fear in a Hat

Note: This activity can bring up a lot of emotional material for students, so be sure that you set an appropriate tone prior to beginning this activity. The tone you want to set is settled, attentive, caring and serious.

1. Introduce the topic of fear and explain how it is normal and natural: all people experience many types of anxieties, worries and fears about what might happen. A good way of starting to deal with these fears is have them openly acknowledged - lay them on the table, without being subject to ridicule. Having one's fears expressed and heard almost immediately cuts them in half.

2. Ask everyone, including the group leaders, to complete this sentence on a piece of paper (anonymously):
   “What I am most scared of is….”

3. Collect the pieces of paper in a hat or a box, mix them around, then invite each person to a piece of paper and read about someone's fear. Instruct students that if they pick up their own piece of paper, then they should put it back and pick another one.

4. Instruct each student to read out the fear of another group member. Have each student talk about what it would be like for them if they had that fear. Students should be instructed not to make fun of the fear, but just to talk about what they would feel like if that was their fear.

5. When all the fears have been read out and elaborated on, then discuss what people felt and noticed.

Variations on Fear in a Hat include: Worry in a Hat, Complaints in a Hat, Wishes in a Hat, and Dreams in a Hat. You do the exact same activity, but with a different focus.
5. Emotional Health

Lesson 5D: Asking for Help

Objectives: Following this lesson, students will gain a greater understanding of stressors and coping mechanisms to handle new stressors, and identify solutions to common problematic situations.

Lesson Time: 60 minutes

Materials Needed: paper and pen/pencil for each student, drawing materials (crayons, colored pencils or markers), and chalk/white board to write on.

Place: any quiet place

Activity 1: Common Stressors in Early Resettlement
1. Circle everyone up into one big group. Ask students the following and write answers on the board: and ask students:
   a. What is stress?
   b. What kinds of stress did you have in your home country? (Examples may include fleeing from fighting, separating from family, etc.)
   c. What new stresses do you have in this country?
   Group different types of stressors together as you write them on the board (for example, money problems, identity issues, separation from loved ones, language issues, school problems). These sets of issues will vary depending on the group.
   d. Which of the old stresses have you left behind? (Cross off answers from list made in b).
   e. What do you know about how to cope with stress?
   f. How do you usually cope with stress? (Provide examples if necessary: talk to a friend, pray, play soccer, etc.)
   g. How is stress in the United States different from stress in your home country? (Possible answers: I have to work harder; I don’t have friends or family to talk to; I can’t talk yet to others in English; there aren’t any of my countrymen around.)
   h. How do you feel about asking others for help?
2. Distribute paper and pens, pencils, markers or crayons. Ask students to draw one or more stressors that they currently are experiencing or expect to experience. Then, next to each stressor (perhaps using an arrow linking stressor and solution), ask them to write or draw what they could do to address each stressor listed. Give students about 10-20 minutes to do this.
3. Circle students back into one big group. Ask students to share only what they are comfortable sharing about what they have written or drawn. After they share, highlighting those solutions that you think are appropriate. Ask open-ended, follow-up questions when more exploration is needed (for example, “how do you
usually deal with that stress?”). Affirm students’ healthy responses to stressors and appropriate solutions.

**Activity 2: Asking for Help**

1. Circle students up into one big group. Explain that you will be giving students scenarios to work on in small groups (2-3 students per group). Tell them that they need to decide what to do in each scenario and then report back to the whole group on what they decided. They will have about 10-15 minutes to work in small groups.

2. Give each small student group a different scenario. Here are five different ones that you can use or you can make up your own or ask students to make some up:
   a. A girl at school is being bullied: other students in her grade often push her when they pass her in the hallway, make mean comments, trip her or steal her lunch money. What should she do?
   b. A boy at school is very, very sad. He thinks about hurting himself all the time. He doesn’t tell his friends or his family how he feels. What should he do?
   c. A girl at school worries about her grades. She doesn’t think that her grades are good enough and she has a hard time sleeping at night because she is so worried. What should she do?
   d. A boy sees a counselor to talk about his feelings. But his brothers and sisters find out about this and make fun of him. What should he do?
   e. A boy at school feels angry all the time. He gets in a lot of physical fights with his brothers at home and with kids at school. He often gets in trouble at school for fighting. What should he do?

3. Circle students back up into one big group. Ask students to share the solutions that they came up with. Make sure that you affirm students for trying to form solutions, make positive comments about their efforts, whatever they came up with, but also make sure that you correct any problematic notions. Make sure to communicate to students that it is healthy to share your feelings, particularly when you are having a difficult time managing these on your own. Explain also what a counselor in the United States does and when a student should see a counselor. Explain some healthy skills for dealing with stress (sharing feelings with loved ones, taking a walk, exercising, playing outside, writing in a journal, taking a bath, etc.)

4. Ask students to share how they deal with stress and what coping mechanisms they use.

5. Ask students what their family members, friends and teachers should do to support them when they are experiencing stressful times.

*Note: We would like to acknowledge with gratitude the International Rescue Committee of Salt Lake City whose Youth Program created the original version of some of this material.*
6. Claiming Your Culture

**Purpose:** It is important that children arriving from a refugee experience feel proud of the culture they came from. Youth and families often report that their native culture and their language are what make them who they are. Some may mourn many parts of their culture which are not practiced in the United States. On the other hand, some youth may embrace everything American and put aside established traditions, feeling they are not valuable or relevant in the American context. This often leads to a gap between youth and their parents. Newly arriving youth are also bombarded with media in the U.S. Some youth may get a distorted view of what it is to be American by watching certain content. They may be watching content which their parents would not approve of. As children adapt to American culture, it is important that they build a way to integrate their old and new cultures. Youth should be allowed to express their cultural practices, values and beliefs in their homes and in the broader community. The purpose of this section is to help kids recognize, express and appreciate their own and others’ cultures, and to clarify the context of media in relation to everyday living.

**Lesson 6A: A Typical Day for Me Before I Came to the U.S.**

**Objectives:** Following this lesson, students will be able to communicate clearly what activities they enjoyed doing in their past, share things they enjoy doing in the present, recognize and identify things they have in common, and things that are unique and different; and articulate a plan to continue specific activities. Students will connect their past with their present and build relationships through sharing, recognizing and discussing what they have in common and in difference. Teachers or facilitators can learn if there are activities/routines that students would like to continue in the U.S. and help them continue them.

**Lesson Time:** 1 hour

**Materials Needed:** Paper, pencil and crayons/markers for all students

**Place:** A place to draw or write first, and then big space for sharing circle

**Activity:**

1. On a piece of paper, have students write or draw all the things they used to do in their former country. You could ask them to make a list of all the activities of a typical day from when they wake up to when they go to sleep (perhaps a timeline with the sun on one end and the moon on the other end).
2. Form a sitting circle and ask each participant to take turns reading one thing from their list. Ask other students to listen and stand up if they have done this activity before too.
3. Once everyone is finished sharing, turn it into the moving game “The Wind Blows” (similar to musical chairs): One participant stands in the middle as the IT person. All other students can sit or stand in a circle. The IT person can say “The Wind Blows for anyone who has played soccer?” The IT person can fill in the
blank with activities from his/her list. Then everyone who has done this activity before, including the IT person has to move and find another space or seat. The person without a space or seat becomes the next IT person.

4. After the game, ask students to mark activities that they don’t do anymore, but would like to. Discuss reasons for this change.

5. Ask students to identify an activity and make a plan to participate in that activity at least once in the next week. Follow up with this assignment the next session by asking if students were able to complete their plan and why or why not.

**Optional:** Have students write down a typical day in the U.S, and compare and contrast this to what a typical day was like before arriving here.

**Note:** *This is a good activity to do with youth of diverse cultures, including youth native to the U.S. to build relationships and promote cultural sharing.*
6. Claiming Your Culture

Lesson 6B: A Game I Play

Objectives: Following this lesson, students will have identified and taught games played in their native culture, and can demonstrate knowledge of games from other cultures.

Lesson Time: 1 hour; may take 2 sessions

Materials Needed: Paper/construction paper; markers

Place: A place to draw or write first, and then wherever appropriate for the game.

Activity:
1. On a piece of paper, have students write or draw instructions about games that they learned and played in their native countries. You may provide a blank sheet with the structure and cue words like: Material Needed; Place to Play; How Do You Play? (List steps 1. 2. 3. ); Rules.
2. Form a circle and ask each student to share his/her games. Another variation is to first ask students to pair up with one partner and share their games, then afterwards in a circle, have the partner talk about the new game that he/she just learned. If there are materials available, they can demonstrate how to play the game.
3. Plan with group to gather materials to play some of the games at the next session or throughout later group sessions.
4. Discuss with students: What do you like about these games? Do you have games that you share in common? Do you still play these games? Why or why not? What are similarities and differences among these games? Do young people in the U.S. play these games?

Note: This is a good activity to do with youth of diverse cultures, including youth native to the U.S. to build relationships and cultural appreciation.
6. Claiming Your Culture

Lesson 6C: Sharing My Culture

Objectives: At the completion of this lesson, students will share something from their own native cultures and will increase the cultural knowledge of each other, the facilitators, and other interested parties.

Lesson Time: 1 hour or more (can last several sessions)

Materials Needed: None

Place: Any indoor space

Activity:

1. In a prior session, ask students to bring an item from home that is from their native culture to share with the group. In that prior session, brainstorm with students possible objects they could bring and encourage them to talk to family members and invite them to come to help present. Some examples of what they could bring: photos/albums, food, clothes, books, music, a dance, flag, religious items, short videos/films. It is important to discuss a schedule for presentations to make sure each child will have time to share what they brought and answer questions from the group.

2. Depending on the group size, this activity may need to be done over several sessions to allow enough time for each child and his/her family to share and answer questions. Optional: begin each lesson with one student sharing his/her culture.

3. During the actual sessions of sharing, ask students and their family members if they came to take turns teaching or explaining about the item they brought.

4. After each student has shared, encourage the other students to ask questions and learn about each other. You can ask the following questions to promote discussion: Are these cultural practices still continued here in the U.S.? If not, why? And what has it been replaced with? For example, if it’s a dance that they talked about, do they still do this dance here in the U.S.?

Note: This exercise is a great opportunity to invite family members and other stakeholders such as other students, teachers, or counselors if in a school setting. They can participate in this exercise as well.
6. Claiming Your Culture

Lesson 6D: Culture & Media

Objectives: Students will gain an increased understanding of cultural media they are consuming, develop an increased awareness of cultural images and perceptions, and clarify myths and truths about cultures.

Lesson Time: 1 hour

Materials Needed: Computer with DVD-capability. Clips of popular music videos, television shows, magazines, websites, computer games

Place: Inside space with computers

Activity:
1. In prior sessions, ask students to identify a favorite American movie, TV show, song, music video. Ask students to see if they can access any of these media items online or if they could draw or write about it.
2. In this class session, show clips if available through YouTube, DVD, CD, etc.
3. Ask students to talk about their selection. Include a discussion of what they like and what do they not like and why. Discuss: what is good and bad about the website, song, video from different perspectives?
4. Ask other students for their reactions, thoughts and feelings.
5. If family members are present, ask them for their reactions.
6. Discuss with students: What do media sources teach about U.S. culture or being American? For example, American music videos may teach a certain way to dress in the U.S.—is that similar or different to what the student is taught by his/her native culture and family? If it is a media source from that student’s native culture, then what is different from American culture?
6. Claiming Your Culture

Lesson 6E: Multicultural Awareness

Objectives: By the end of this lesson, students will be aware of different cultures within American society, identify and address cultural assumptions and stereotypes, and learn skills to build relationships with peers of different cultures.

Lesson Time: 1 hour

Materials Needed: paper, pencils and crayons for all students

Place: any quiet place

Activity:
1. Discuss how the U.S. is a society with many cultures. Ask students to name all the cultural groups that they know of in their school or current neighborhood and make a list on the board.
2. Ask each student to identify a culture that they would like to learn more about and explain why.
3. Ask students to make a list by drawing or writing what they already know about the culture and what questions they have.
4. Ask students in the group to share the list they made in #3 and see if anyone in the group, including the group teacher, has any knowledge to share or questions to add to the list.
5. Optional: the group facilitator can ask the students to select one or two cultures to learn more about. Students can then do project before the next class on a culture, either individually or in small groups. Another option: the group facilitator can invite guest speakers (adults and/or youth) to come and share about these chosen cultures.
6. Assign students to do their own research, either by talking to people, looking online or in their books, talking to their teachers to learn about a different culture. Present and discuss their findings in the subsequent sessions.
7. Discuss with students: What are things you have in common with these other cultures? What is different? What are your experiences with people from these different cultures? Do you know of anyone? Would you like to?

Note: This lesson can take up to several sessions. It is also good to invite families. If resources are available, children can be taken to different cultural events or perhaps attend cultural events available at their schools and in their communities, and then use session time to discuss their experience.
7. Family Roles

*Purpose:* It is very common for families arriving in the United States from a refugee situation to experience major changes in family roles. Children are likely to learn English faster and to adapt to American culture more quickly. Thus, they may take on responsibility to act as go-between for their parents and the community, for example negotiating with the landlord. Although families may have limited options to change these circumstances, this may lead to additional stress placed on the child, and the decrease in respect and power once held by the parent. The difference in language and cultural acquisition also leads to a cultural gap and challenges between children and parents. Additionally, decreased access to extended family and community support may also lead to stress within the family. Parents reported not knowing their parental rights or how to discipline and parent in this new culture. The purpose of this section is to encourage children to explore what’s changed in the family, family values, how to manage family conflict, and how to deal with parental stress.

*Lesson 7A: Managing Conflict in the Family*

*Objective:* At the conclusion of this lesson, students will be able to recognize situations that potentially cause conflict (in the family context), identify strategies to deal with conflict in the family, describe situations that may produce feelings of anger within oneself and others, and to recognize the signs and feelings of anger within oneself and others.

*Lesson Time:* 30 minutes

*Materials Needed:* paper, crayons or markers

*Place:* any quiet place

*Activity 1:*
1. Begin the lesson by asking all students the following questions:
   a. What makes you angry?
   b. What makes your parents angry?
   c. How do you handle anger? *Be sure to add suggestions to ensure healthy anger management skills are addressed (ex., telling someone how you feel, taking a walk to calm down, etc.)*
2. Explain to students that when we get angry, there is hurt or fear or embarrassment underneath. The hurt and fear come first when people do not feel valued, respected, or loved. Some people stay feeling hurt and others handle it by getting angry.
3. Discuss with students:
   a. When have you gotten angry?
   b. How might you handle a situation in the future when you are angry?
4. Ask students to brainstorm a list of suggestions (for example, say how I feel before I get angry, tell my friends if they are doing something I don’t like or something that makes me uncomfortable, tell my sister/brother I need to study (or whatever I am doing) and ask them to be quiet or play somewhere else, tell my parents I do not understand what I did wrong or why they are asking me to do something, etc.).

5. Discuss with students:
   a. What do their parents or siblings do when they are angry?
   b. What have they learned from these about how to handle anger?

Activity 2:
1. Gather the students together in a circle and ask the following questions
   a. What is conflict?
   b. What things/situations cause conflict in your family?
   c. How do you handle conflict?
   d. How do other people in your family handle conflict?
2. As a group, brainstorm good ways to deal with conflict (include tactics such as taking deep breaths before speaking, asking another family member to mediate, going for a walk outside, etc.). Keep a list.
3. Give each student a piece of paper and distribute drawing utensils. Instruct them to draw or write about a recent conflict they experienced at home they feel comfortable sharing with others.
4. Divide students into small groups or pairs to discuss their pictures. If students think they used bad or unhelpful ways to deal with the situation, ask them to identify what new strategy they will try in the future.
5. Return together. End the activity by reviewing the list of good coping techniques, note that families often experience more conflicts when they experience something stressful such as leaving their old home and coming to a new one.
7. Family Roles

*Lesson 7B: Family Roles*

**Objectives:** At the conclusion of the lesson, students will be able to identify own role in the family as well as the roles of other immediate and extended family members, become aware that roles of all family members are changing (before resettlement and in the U.S.), gain an understanding of the importance of family, and identify appropriate helping behaviors.

**Lesson Time:** 1 hour

**Materials Needed:** Multiple blank sheets of paper, for each student, markers/crayons for all students, scissors, magazines (such as National Geographic, etc.), tape or glue.

**Place:** any quiet place

**Activity 1: My Family**

1. Hand out blank sheets of paper to each student and distribute magazines that students can use and cut out things to represent their home life – for example, National Geographic magazine or other magazines that have things related to students’ culture/country of origin. *Optional: you can also just bring paper and markers or crayons and let the kids draw each family member.*

2. Ask children to create/draw a picture of each member of their immediate family (those they currently live with) on separate pieces of paper. Instruct them to divide each family member’s page by folding the paper in half to create a crease.

3. On one side, list (or draw) the responsibilities or roles each family member had in their country of origin (things like specific chores the person did, meal preparation, tending children, going to school, etc.)

4. On the other side, students should list (or draw) the roles/responsibilities held by that person now in the U.S (translating, looking for a job, attending class or school, etc.).

5. Give students about 20 minutes to work on their drawings. Then circle students back up in a seated circle. Tell students that they will be sharing some of what they created. Encourage them only to share what they are comfortable sharing. Ask each student to take a turn sharing about their pictures. Start with easy and non-threatening questions:
   - Tell us about you in this picture (for example, what are some things you do in your family)
   - What did your mom/dad do before you came to America? How about now?

6. Introduce the idea that change is difficult for the whole family. Explain that family roles normally change for families who migrate to another country. Ask students:
   a. What are the different strengths that each family member has?
   b. How have these strengths changed over time?
   c. What are some things that your parent(s) do well?
   d. What are some things that your siblings do well?
e. What difficult things must your parent(s) now deal with in the U.S. (learning a new language, leaving behind their home and other family members, trying to find a job, etc.)?
f. How do you think these challenges affect your parents? How do you think the changes make them feel?

7. End the activity by noting that although the roles of some family members might be different now than before, the person is still a valued and important part of the family: the parents are still their parents, and students should still treat them with the same respect as before.

Activity 2: Ways of Helping
1. Discuss with students the difficult/new roles their parents now have in the U.S. compared to their roles in home countries. As a group, brainstorm ideas of helpful things students can do for their parents (including assisting with dinner, helping with English homework, watching younger siblings, cleaning the bathroom, going along to the grocery store, etc.).

2. Discuss that although it is important to help your family in as many ways as you can, it is also important to fulfill other responsibilities like completing homework and attending school.

3. Direct students to available resources such as: Catholic Community Services (www.ccsutah.org, 801-977-9119), the International Rescue Committee (www.theirc.org, 801-328-1091), the Asian Association (www.aau-slc.org, 801-467-6060) and the Utah Health & Human Rights Project (www.uhhhr.org, 801-363-4596 for those children who themselves or whose parents are torture survivors). Explain to students that these agencies have lots of resources to help families adjust and that many healthcare providers have access to over-the-phone interpretation/translation services and children can help parents ask for this option.

3. Hand out 1 piece of paper to each student. Instruct them to divide it into 4-6 squares.

4. Instruct students to either draw or write about an appropriate helping behavior in each square. If time permits, pair or group students to share their drawings. Tell students to share the helping chart they’ve created with their parents and to display it in their home.

Note: You can provide parents with list of translating resources to minimize the use of children as translators.
7. Family Roles

Lesson 7C: My Family Values

Objective 1: At the conclusion of the lesson, students will be able to identify important values in their family and why they are important, plan and execute a family activity.

Lesson Time: 30-45 minutes

Materials Needed: Paper for each student, glue or tape, scissors, newspaper or magazines (such as National Geographic and those with a family theme or focus)

Place: any quiet place

Activity:
1. Gather students together and discuss:
   a. What is important to your family?
   b. What traditions/activities do you like to do with your family?
   c. What behaviors are important to your family? Why are they important?
      Note: provide examples from your own family.
2. Distribute paper and magazines. Instruct students to create a collage depicting one or more of their family activities.
3. Circle student back up into a seated circle. Ask student to share whatever they are comfortable sharing about their collage. Encourage students to ask each other questions about what they created.
4. Assign students to sit down with their parents and plan a family activity in the next week. Instruct the students to consider what materials are needed for the activity (for example, ingredients if cooking a meal, etc.).

Note: Provide parents with a list of free or low-cost activities in the Salt Lake area. You can create this by looking at the Salt Lake Tribune, City Weekly or other community publications