



Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services

Refugee Children in U.S. Schools: A Toolkit for Teachers and School Personnel

In collaboration with the Office of Refugee Resettlement, Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services (BRYCS) has developed [*Refugee Children in U.S. Schools: A Toolkit for Teachers and School Personnel*](#) in order to support and assist schools with large numbers of refugee students. As the Office of Refugee Resettlement's technical assistance provider on child welfare, BRYCS provides expertise to schools in the areas of child welfare, parent involvement, social integration, and other topics related to the well-being of refugee children. BRYCS does not specifically consult on English Language Learning. For questions on these topics, please contact the [Spring Institute](#) or the [Center for Applied Linguistics](#).

This toolkit is a "living" document; in other words, it will be updated on a regular basis to address current issues facing schools serving refugee children. Tools will continue to be developed in response to needs expressed in the field.

The number of refugee children, as a percentage of all refugees resettling to the U.S., has increased over the past decade. For example, in 1998, only 13% of all refugees resettled by the U.S. were children, but in 2008, 37% were children.¹ With approximately 350 refugee resettlement agencies spread throughout nearly all 50 states, refugee children can be found in classrooms throughout the country. Together with immigrants, these newcomer children make up one in five children in the U.S. The education of these newcomers is not only crucial to their own well-being, but to the future of American society.²

Schools, and agencies working with refugees in the schools, typically face similar challenges in accommodating this population. All too often schools problem-solve in isolation, despite the existence of resources and models developed by other districts or states for similar problems. This may be due to a lack of time to research best practices or limited knowledge about how to access such information. BRYCS works to facilitate information-sharing and collaboration among service providers serving refugee children and their families by offering technical assistance and hosting a Clearinghouse of centralized resources.

The purpose of this toolkit is to:

- Facilitate information-sharing among school personnel and others working with refugee children in the schools on a national level
- Provide information on frequently asked questions in the form of brief "tools" that may be used in the professional development of teachers and other school personnel
- To raise awareness of the needs of refugee children in the schools

The topics of the tools in this toolkit were developed in response to common questions posed by Refugee School Impact Grantees (RSIG) and other groups working with refugee children in the schools over the past few years. (To read more about the RSIG, click [here](#).) Nearly all of the lessons learned by these grantees are applicable to schools without RSIG funding.) The information in these "tools" comes from a combination of research and lessons learned through providing technical assistance to those working with refugee children in the schools.

This toolkit may be useful for:

- School social workers or counselors
- Teachers
- School administrators
- School liaisons/cultural brokers
- Refugee resettlement staff
- State Departments of Education
- State Refugee Offices

To suggest a topic or provide feedback on this toolkit, please email info@brycs.org or call (888) 572-6500.

¹ Department of State, Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, Office of Admissions, Refugee Processing Center. Data retrieved April 22, 2009.

² Hernandez, D.J., Denton, N.A., & Macartney, S. (2009). "School-Age Children in Immigrant Families: Challenges and Opportunities for America's Schools." *Teachers College Record*, 111(3), 616-658.