

**Knowledge Mobilization Project:**

Information for agencies working with immigrant and refugee communities

**Did you know that…**

* Racial minority groups continue to be overrepresented in child welfare settings in Canada1.
* Kinship placements function as a protective factor for children and can minimize trauma. Without this, children often present more serious issues after returning from foster care.
* Immigrant and refugee families need clear and transparent information about Canada’s laws in order to prevent entry and re-entry into care. These laws include obligations to report suspected abuse or negligence and laws limiting physical punishment. These laws can differ between Canada and the country of origin.
* Immigrant and refugee families need support for parenting in the Canadian context, using anti-oppression frameworks and culturally appropriate approaches.

**Newcomer families and communities have supports through…**

* Strong intrafamilial bonds, which include participation in activities with all family members, a close relationship with extended family members, and children and youth who are highly committed to their families.
* Strong cultural ties that may also provide access to a religious community, ethno-cultural traditions, and values.

**Intersecting factors that shape the experience of newcomer families include…**

* Gender, race, culture, language, and religion, which intersect in ways that create challenges and barriers to newcomers’ integration2.
* Lack of information about how the Canadian system functions, language barriers, limited access to interpreters, non-recognition of educational/degree equivalencies between countries, and lack of culturally relevant placement opportunities.
* Surveillance of people who are in poverty, particularly racialized people, by institutional authorities or community members.
* Social determinants, such as inadequacy of housing and lack of income security, which may limit the capacity of parents to regain the necessary stability to return children home from provincial care.

**When working with newcomer families and communities, we recommend…**

* Building relationships between organizations and the Department of Community Services (DCS) to coordinate services and improve communication, making it more seamless for families to access resources.
* Setting up a connection with DCS to arrange for an outreach worker that works with community organizations. This role could include facilitating education, direct contact and permanent communication with community organizations, facilitating knowledge exchange, and engaging in additional preventive work.
* Mandatory cultural safety training as part of the orientation process for staff, and ensuring greater consistency in internal training of staff on child abuse.
* Including religious leaders and community leaders in child welfare discussions since these leaders are able to support families in a way that is meaningful and culturally relevant.
* Making efforts to be non-judgemental and better understand immigrants from culturally diverse backgrounds and the values and traditions they bring with them.
* Offering settlement organizations’ workshops to provide newcomers with education about family law, support systems and resources in the community.
* Educating newcomers about child abuse under Canadian law and ensuring that there is transparency about the professional duty to report/DCS processes.
* Considering more culturally diverse families for foster care in order to expand access to culturally relevant placements. This will minimize trauma to children whose connection to their community can be disrupted and who may be traumatized by a placement where the language, customs, and rules are different.
* Expanding services to address structural factors that affect immigrant and refugee families in their interactions with child welfare. For example, providing greater access to interpreters, accompanying families when attending court hearings, and providing early-intervention services to families that are considered high risk.
* Emphasizing the importance of addressing intersectionality when thinking about protective factors and preventative programming.

**Additional Information and Resources:**

For more information please contact us at strongcommunities-families@laurentian.ca or

call: 902-494-6693

**Other communities overrepresented in the child welfare system…**

* Are urban Indigenous and African Nova Scotian communities, which often face similar challenges to newcomer communities here in HRM.
* Have common strengths of culture as well as close family and community ties.

Supports and resources are essential to strengthening and keeping newcomer families together. You can see the list of resources shared with community members accompanying this infographic.

**Source:** Torres, S., Waldron, I., Ross, N., Metallic, N., Grant, W., Guasdal, W., & Moriah, J. (2022)

*Examining Protective Factors for Children’s Welfare: The Case of Indigenous, African Nova Scotian & Immigrant and Refugee Children in the Halifax Regional Municipality*. Laurentian University, Sudbury, Ontario.

**Project Purpose:** To identify support systems and strategies to strengthen the capacity of families from urban Indigenous, African Nova Scotian, immigrant and refugee populations in the Halifax Regional Municipality to mobilize communities to prevent the entry or re-entry of children into provincial care.

1 Nova Scotia Collage of Social Workers (2021)*. Children and Family Services Act: 4-Year Review.* <https://nscsw.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CFSA-Review-Submission-Final.pdf>

2 Waldron, I.R.G. (2013). *The social & policy implications of meaningful community engagement in racialized immigrant communities in Halifax.* Report submitted to Atlantic Metropolis Centre ~ Working Paper Series. Halifax: Dalhousie University.

**Immigrant and Refugee Community Resource List:**

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| **Organization Name**  | **Programming Offered** | **Location** | **Contact** |
| Afghan Society of Halifax | Children’s programming, cultural events, supporting the 265 Afghan newcomers that arrived to Halifax in December, 2021 | 21 Inspector Ct., Halifax | 902-406-0404afghansocietyofhalifax.ns@gmail.com  |
| African Diaspora Association of the Maritimes | Food bank, community connections. | 2625 Joseph Howe Drive, Halifax | info@africandiasporaassociationof-themartitimes.ca  |
| Bayers/Westwood Family Support Services | Drop-in activities, family support, language programs | 3499 McAlpine Ave, Halifax | (902) 454-9444  |
| Canadian Lebanon Society of Halifax | Networking, social events, etc. | 255 Bedford Hwy, Halifax | 902-444-4257info@canadianlebanonsociety.ca |
| Chebucto Family Centre | Parenting support, child programs, etc.  | 3 Sylvia Av, Halifax | (902) 479-3031 |
| Generation 1 Leadership Initiative | Youth leadership opportunities, STEAM education, cultural awareness | n/a | generation1leadership@gmail.com  |
| Immigration Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) | Settlement services, parenting programs, career support  | 6960 Mumford Rd Suite 2120, Halifax | (902) 423-3607Toll free in Nova Scotia: 1-866-431-6472 |
| Korean Association of Halifax | Networking, exploring job opportunities, making connections, forum, etc. | 6249 Quinpool Rd, Halifax | representative.korean.of.ns@gmail.com |
| Latispanica | Cultural events, networking. | n/a | info@latispanica.org |
| Nova Scotia Islamic Community Centre | Different camps, recreational activities, etc. | 2143 Larry Uteck Blvd., Bedford | 902-832-6300info@nsicc.ca |
| Pakistani Canadian Association of Nova Scotia | Cultural events, settlement services, music and recreational programs. | Purdy's Wharf Tower 1100-1959 Upper Water Street, Halifax, NS B3J 3N2 | info@pcans.ca[www.pcans.ca](http://www.pcans.ca)  |
| Ummah Masjid and Community Centre | Youth counselling, family counselling, camps, recreational activities, explore employment opportunities, etc. | 2510 St. Matthias St., Halifax | 902-407-1411info@umcc.ca |
| Veith House | Children’s programming, parenting classes, urban community garden, etc. | 3115 Veith St, Halifax | 902-453-4320 |