

Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth Needs Research Study

FINAL REPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The purpose of this research project is to provide an analysis of the needs of immigrant and refugee children and youth in Alberta by:
 - Developing a profile of immigrant and refugee children and youth in Alberta, including their numbers and location in Alberta.
 - Researching the needs of immigrant and refugee children and youth by reviewing a range of provincial, national, and international secondary data sources; identifying promising practices and programs for these target groups focusing on Canada, the United States, and other OECD countries; and enriching information obtained through eighteen telephone or in-person interviews undertaken with a sample of representatives from Alberta settlement agencies, individuals involved with programs for youth at risk, and ethno cultural leaders.
 - Identifying gaps in research – Findings from interviews have been compared with available secondary data to determine gaps in research.
 - Preparing an inventory of programs available in Alberta – Existing programs have been identified through listings of programs funded by all three levels of government. Telephone interviews were also held with representatives of settlement agencies on sample promising programs operating in Alberta for immigrant and refugee children and youth.

2. According to 2006 Census Data:
 - 22,080 (69%) of the 31,930 immigrant children in Alberta during 2006 arrived to Canada between 2001 and 2006.
 - 15,200 (34%) of the 44,330 immigrant youth in Alberta during 2006 arrived in Canada between 2001 and 2006.
 - 22,080 (69%) of the 31,930 immigrant children in Alberta during 2006 arrived to Canada between 2001 and 2006.
 - 15,200 (34%) of the 44,330 immigrant youth in Alberta during 2006 arrived in Canada between 2001 and 2006.
 - 38,240 (50.1%) of immigrant children and youth in Alberta during 2006 were born in Asia and the Middle East. The next most frequent place of birth was Europe for 15,165 (19.9%) immigrant children and youth in Alberta during 2006.
 - 49% of refugee children and youth landing in Alberta arrived in the City of Calgary during 2007, 38% arrived in the City of Edmonton, and 13% arrived in the remainder of Alberta.

3. The following themes were identified in both the review of the literature and interviews with stakeholders:

Education

- Initial assessment and placement of immigrant and refugee children and youth in academic programs. The limitations of current assessment instruments.

- Challenges faced by immigrant and refugee youth in finding and maintaining satisfying employment that provides a reasonable income. The ongoing challenge of balancing work and schooling.
- The value of homework clubs and in-school mentors.
- Lack of parental involvement in their children's schooling and the barriers and supports that affect the level of parental involvement.
- High parental expectations of education system.
- Immigrant and refugee youth who enter Canadian school system in their teens often do not have sufficient time to reach milestones for high school completion and/or meet entry requirements for postsecondary education.

Cultural Competence

- The need for improved cultural competence in educators and other key human service providers.

Family Dynamics

- Intergenerational conflict between youth and their parents.
- Immigrant and refugee youth act as interpreters or in place of parents (due to parents' limited English language skills).

Acculturation and Healthy Development

- Need for social supports to help immigrant and refugee children and youth succeed in school, maintain their mental health and acculturate.
- Importance of participation in recreational activities and challenges faced in doing so.
- Need for mentoring and leadership opportunities for immigrant and refugee children and youth.
- Immigrant and refugee children and youth experience discrimination, prejudice and racism.
- Need for more culturally appropriate resources, more interpreter services, more first language resources, more bilingual programs and more effective use of cultural brokers.
- Refugee children and youth require counseling support, language services, mental health support (short, medium and long-term), resources to address post traumatic stress, and study skills. Refugee children and youth may have limited literacy in their first language, limited or poor quality experiences with learning, and are living with a sense of loss at separation from family members and key caregivers.

Working Together

- The need to work collaboratively and form partnerships between schools, agencies, levels of government and community groups. The need for alignment and coordination of services provided by various parties.
- Importance of asking immigrant and refugee children and youth about the services they need.

Further Research

- Need for more longitudinal research and sharing of information of immigrant/refugee demographics and best practice evaluations to strengthen programs and services for immigrant and refugee children and youth.

The following themes were **unique to the literature review**:

- Need for wrap-around support services for learners.
- Factors influencing postsecondary achievement and supports for postsecondary success.
- Need for cultural diversity in teaching staff complement.
- Dental health of immigrant and refugee children and youth.

The following items were unique **to the responses of those interviewed for this study**:

- Lack of sufficient programs and other resources including funding for human, resources, programs and physical facilities.
- Stress caused by the need to repay Refugee Transportation Loan and this may result in youth being required to earn income which can interfere with schooling.
- Separation anxiety experienced by some parents as they send their children to school.

4. The following suggestions are offered for further consideration by project sponsors:

Research

Alberta government departments that fund programs and services for immigrants and/or refugees may wish to establish a common data base that collects an array of demographic information on immigrant and refugee children and youth in Alberta. Once such demographic data has been compiled, it is important that this information be shared in a timely, accessible manner with all three levels of government, service providers, ethno cultural organizations, and other interested parties.

Funders of immigrant and refugee children and youth programs and services in Alberta should consider supporting longitudinal research studies of these target groups, particularly in regards to education, health, and employment. A review of current research on the effects of various aspects of health of immigrant and refugee children and youth would be timely.

Linkages with relevant research facilities at Alberta universities should be strengthened so that government departments and service providers are aware of current issues, trends and promising practices.

Working Collaboratively

Alberta government departments that fund programs and services for immigrants and/or refugees should consider establishing a formal, permanent cross-ministry committee focused specifically on immigrant and refugee children and youth.

Funders of services to immigrants and/or refugee children or youth are advised to actively encourage and fund program and service providers in the formation of regional and

provincial intersectoral service models similar to Calgary's Care Strategy for Children and Youth of Immigrant Families. Such a model should develop strategies and implement intersectoral, system-wide coordination of services for immigrant and refugee children and youth.

Funders of programs and services aimed at immigrant and refugee children and youth need to support programs or services that provide wrap-around services through partnerships among program and service providers.

Funders of programs and services aimed at immigrant and refugee children and youth should focus on programs and services that support immigrant and refugee children and youth within the context of family and community.

Cultural Competency

Funders of programs and services for immigrant and refugee children and youth need to consider allocating funding for pre-service and in-service cultural competency training for educators, counsellors and other professionals working with immigrant and refugee children and youth and their families.

Needs of Refugee Children and Youth

Funders of programs and services for immigrant and refugee children and youth are strongly urged to work collaboratively in providing comprehensive, intensive and focused supports and resources to refugee children and youth in recognition of their pre-migration experiences which have frequently been psychologically traumatic and where their quality of education has often been poor or non-existent.

Mental Health Services

Funders of mental health services for immigrant and refugee children and youth are urged to ensure that immediate and ongoing mental health services for refugee and immigrant children and youth are available and accessible throughout Alberta.

Transitions to Schooling and Employment

Funders of employment and school to work transition programs should be looking at the provision of a broad array of comprehensive supports to enable the successful transition of immigrant and refugee children and youth from the K-12 education system to postsecondary studies and/or employment.

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Background and Objectives

In mid-February 2008, the Immigration Policy and Programs Branch of Alberta Employment and Immigration contracted Emerging Directions Consulting Ltd. to undertake a research project focused on the needs of immigrant and refugee children and youth. This project was initiated due to growing concerns and requests directed to Alberta government MLAs and a variety of Alberta government departments from members of various ethno-cultural groups seeking help to address issues facing immigrant and refugee children and youth.

The purpose of the research project is to provide an analysis of the needs of immigrant and refugee children and youth in Alberta by:

- **Developing a profile of immigrant and refugee children and youth in Alberta, including their numbers and location in Alberta**, primarily through data obtained from Statistics Canada and Citizenship and Immigration Canada.
- **Researching the needs of immigrant and refugee children and youth by reviewing a range of provincial, national, and international secondary data sources.** It also looks at promising practices and programs for these target groups focusing on Canada, the United States, and other OECD countries. This information has been enriched by eighteen telephone or in-person interviews undertaken with a sample of representatives from Alberta settlement agencies, individuals involved with programs for youth at risk, and ethno cultural leaders.
- **Identifying gaps in research** – Findings from interviews have been compared with available secondary data to determine gaps in research.
- **Preparing an inventory of programs available in Alberta** – Existing programs have been identified through listings of programs funded by all three levels of government. Telephone interviews were also held with representatives of settlement agencies on sample promising programs operating in Alberta for immigrant and refugee children and youth.

According to the 2006 Census, there were an estimated 31,930 immigrants under age 0-14 and 44,330 immigrants ages 15 to 24 living in Alberta during 2006.

1.2 Organization of Report

This report is organized into eight sections. Section 1 provides background information about this research study. Section 2 provides a description of the research methodology, including instrument design, data collection, and analysis and reporting. In Section 3, the reader is provided with a profile of immigrant and refugee children and youth in Alberta. Section 4 presents the feedback from interviews conducted with key stakeholders on the needs of immigrant and refugee children and youth. Section 5 presents the results of an extensive review

of the literature on immigrant and refugee children and youth needs as well as promising programs and practices to address these needs. In Section 6, the reader is presented with overall study findings and suggestions. Section 7 provides a list of documents reviewed while Section 8 is the Appendices, which includes highlighted promising programs operating in Alberta and an inventory of programs aimed at immigrant and refugee children and youth in Alberta.

1.3 Usage of Terms

A number of terms are used in this report. In order to assist in understanding, the following terms are presented with a definition of their meaning or usage.

Immigrant (Permanent Resident) – People who have been granted permanent residence status in Canada. Permanent residents must live in Canada for at least 730 days (two years) within a five-year period or risk losing their status. Permanent residents have all the rights guaranteed under the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms such as equality rights, legal rights, mobility rights, freedom of religion, freedom of expression and freedom of association. They do not, however, have the right to vote in elections. (Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *Glossary of Terms and Concepts*)

Refugee Claimants – Temporary residents in the humanitarian population category who request refugee protection upon or after arrival in Canada. A refugee claimant receives Canada's protection when he or she is found to be a Convention refugee as defined by the United Nations 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 protocol, or when found to be a person needing protection based on risk to life, risk of cruel and unusual treatment or punishment, or danger of torture as defined in the Convention against Torture. A refugee claimant whose claim is accepted may make an application in Canada for permanent residence. The applicant may include family members in Canada and abroad. (Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *Glossary of Terms and Concepts*)

Refugees (Protected Persons*) – Permanent residents in the refugee category include government-assisted refugees, privately sponsored refugees, refugees landed in Canada and refugee dependants (i.e., dependants of refugees landed in Canada, including spouses and partners living abroad or in Canada). (Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *Glossary of Terms and Concepts*)

Child – for the purposes of this study, a child is defined as someone between the ages of birth and age 14.

Youth – for the purposes of this study, a youth is defined as someone between the ages of 15 and 24 years.

*With federal legislation known as Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (IRPA) coming into effect on June 28, 2002, refugees are referred to as "Protected Persons".

2.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Background of Research Team Members

The primary researchers for this report were Dr. Wendy Doughty and Jim Klinge, partners in Emerging Directions Consulting Ltd. a private, incorporated Alberta-based management consulting firm. Anne Smith an independent consultant who has worked with Emerging Directions on a number of research and evaluation projects for Alberta Immigration and Employment developed the inventory of programs and services.

Dr. Doughty brings 25 years experience in the development of community-based programs, program evaluation and curriculum evaluation as well as 15 years managing an ESL program. Jim Klinge has more than 20 years experience in carrying out successful research projects involving a variety of community organizations. Both have considerable experience in researching and evaluating programs/services for immigrants, refugees and New Canadians. Ann Smith has a solid background in research pertaining to labour market interventions, community-based programs and policy.

2.2 Instrument Design

During the initial meeting with the Project Manager, the interview questions, work plan and schedule were reviewed. The audience(s) and uses of the final report were confirmed.

Following the initial meeting, Emerging Directions Consulting Ltd. developed a draft schedule of interview questions. These questions were reviewed by members of the Working Group and some changes were made. Further discussions about the inventory of programs provided clarity of focus for the research project.

Emerging Directions conducted a pre-test of the interview questions. No significant changes were made to the questions as a result of the pre-test. A copy of the interview questions is provided in Appendix B of this report.

2.3 Use of Secondary Data

A literature review was conducted using ProQuest, Springer Science and ERIC (Educational Research Information Clearinghouse) databases. Search terms included “immigrant”, “youth”, “refugee”, “children”, crossed with “needs”, “families and family life’ “immigration” and “culture”. The focus was on documents published during the past five years. In cases, where earlier publications were referenced as critical (or foundation) research, these documents were also reviewed. Statistics Canada data was electronically accessed. In response to a specific request, a preliminary search of the PubMed database was undertaken using the search terms “dental health” and “immigrant and refugee children and youth”.

A variety of documents that were provided by the Project Manager, members of the Working Group, or interviewees were also reviewed. These included:

- Curriculum syllabi
- Program reports prepared for funders
- Newspaper articles
- PowerPoint presentations and papers submitted at conferences
- Government of Alberta publications
- Statistics Canada data
- Alberta Employment and Immigration data
- Listings of programs/services available to immigrant/refugee youth
- Internet search for Alberta-based programs

2.4 Primary Data Collection

An e-mail explaining the purpose of the research was forwarded to prospective interviewees with a copy of the interview questions. Participation in this research study was on a voluntary basis. Measures were undertaken to guarantee the anonymity of the comments of individual participants as well as organizational perspectives.

A follow-up email was sent to increase response rate and, where no response was forthcoming, a telephone call was placed to the prospective interviewee. Due to the emergent nature of the work of the settlement agency representatives, finalizing a time for a telephone interview was somewhat challenging.

Primary data was collected through in-person or telephone interviews. Interviews ranged from 30 minutes to 60 minutes in length; the average interview length was 40 minutes. Notes were taken by the interviewer and most interviews were tape recorded. In some cases, the interviewees did not wish to be taped and in one case, the interviewee's voice did not record clearly.

Telephone interviews were also conducted with eight persons to provide additional information about the programs/services provided in the inventory. The interview questions were focused on gathering information required to complete the detailed inventory template.

Transcripts were returned to interviewees who expressed an interest in reviewing their comments.

2.5 Sample Characteristics

The sample was developed based on suggestions of members of the Working Group. Interviews were conducted with 15 settlement agency representatives and 3 individuals with expertise in the field of immigrant and settlement issues affecting children and youth. The research sample was intended to reflect a balance of service providers from across the province.

2.6 Approach to Data Analysis

Content analysis was utilized for qualitative data. Through the process of coding, conceptual labels were ascribed to the comments generated through interviews. These concepts were then compared one to another to determine categories of similar responses.

2.7 Research Assumptions

- Those participating in this research were reflective of the diversity of individuals, agencies and organizations involved with immigrant and refugee children and youth issues.
- Respondents chose of their own free will to participate in this research.
- Respondents answered the research questions without concern for consequences as a result of voicing their opinions.

2.8 Limitations of Research

- The study was limited to the responses collected during personal or telephone interviews, observations made during interviews, and the information available in documents during the study period.
- The study was limited to those who chose to participate.
- The findings, conclusions, and recommendations are posited only as they relate to the current study.

3.0 A PROFILE OF IMMIGRANT¹ AND REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH IN ALBERTA

3.1 Immigrant Children and Youth

3.1.1 Immigrant Children and Youth Landing in Alberta, 2007

Table One provides preliminary 2007 Citizenship and Immigration Canada landing data for new immigrant children and youth arriving in Alberta during 2007. As shown in Table One, the majority of immigrant children and youth landing in Alberta (55%) arrived in the City of Calgary during 2007.

Table ONE: Preliminary Landing Data for Immigrant Children and Youth in Alberta, 2007

Location	Age 0 - 14	%	Age 15 - 24	%	Total	%
City of Calgary	2,424	55	1,744	55	4,168	55
City of Edmonton	1,346	30	1,045	33	2,391	31
Remainder of Alberta	670	15	405	12	1,075	14
TOTAL	4,440	100	3,194	100	7,634	100

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Preliminary Data, 2007.

3.1.2 Immigrant Children and Youth by Age Group in Alberta

According to the 2006 Census, there were an estimated 31,930 immigrants under age 0-14 and 44,330 immigrants ages 15 to 24 living in Alberta during 2006. Table Two shows the estimates of immigrants by age group in Alberta during 2006 as well as by Census Metropolitan Areas and Census Agglomerations.²

¹ For the purposes of this study, the term “immigrant” will be synonymous with “permanent resident”.

² The total number of immigrants under age 15 and those aged 15 to 24 does not correspond to the totals in Table One. These differences are attributable to coverage errors, non-response errors, responses errors, or processing/coding errors. Statistics Canada.

<http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/referece/dictionary/app002.cfm>

TABLE TWO: Immigrants by Age Group and Census Metropolitan Area/Census Agglomeration, 2006

Census Metropolitan Area (CMA)/Census Agglomeration	Immigrants Under Age 15	Immigrants Age 15 - 24
Brooks	295	295
Calgary	17,020	22,265
Camrose	35	70
Canmore	95	85
Cold Lake	70	45
Edmonton	9,275	15,390
Grande Prairie	250	370
Lethbridge	470	925
Lloydminster (Alberta section)	15	35
Medicine Hat	290	440
Okotoks	190	95
Red Deer	475	840
Wetaskiwin	30	65
Wood Buffalo	655	480
TOTAL	29,165	41,400

Source: Statistics Canada. 2006 Census.

3.1.3. Immigrant Children and Youth by Gender

According to Statistics Canada, of the 31,930 immigrant children age 0 to 14, in Alberta during 2006, 16,195 (51%) were male and 15,730 (49%) were female.³ Of the 44,330 immigrant youth age 15 to 24 in Alberta during 2006, 22,640 (51%) were male and 21,960 (49%) were female.

According to Statistics Canada Census data, 22,080 (69%) of the 31,930 immigrant children in Alberta during 2006 arrived to Canada between 2001 and 2006. As well, 15,200 (34%) of the 44,330 immigrant youth in Alberta during 2006 arrived in Canada between 2001 and 2006.

3.1.4. Immigrant Children and Youth in Alberta by Place of Birth, 2006

As Table Three shows, 38,240 (50.1%) of immigrant children and youth in Alberta during 2006 were born in Asia and the Middle East. The next most frequent place of birth was Europe for 15,165 (19.9%) immigrant children and youth in Alberta during 2006.

³ As previously noted, the difference between subtotals and totals with 2006 Census data is attributable to coverage errors, non-response errors, responses errors, or processing/coding errors.

TABLE THREE: Immigrant Children and Youth in Alberta by Place of Birth, 2006

Place of Birth	Age 0 - 14	%	Age 15 - 24	%	Total	%
United States	3,120	9.8	2,395	5.4	5,515	7.2
Central America	1,395	4.4	2,755	6.2	4,150	5.4
Caribbean and Bermuda	495	1.6	630	1.4	1,125	1.5
South America	1,685	5.3	1,405	3.2	3,090	4.1
Europe	5,370	16.8	9,795	22.1	15,165	19.9
Africa	3,610	11.3	4,455	10.1	8,065	10.6
Asia and the Middle East	15,990	50.0	22,250	50.1	38,240	50.1
Oceania and Other ⁴	265	.8	650	1.5	915	1.2
TOTAL	31,930	100	44,330	100	76,265	100

Source: Statistics Canada. 2006 Census.

3.2 Refugee Children and Youth

3.2.1. Immigrant Children and Youth Landing in Alberta, 2007

Table Four provides preliminary 2007 Citizenship and Immigration Canada landing data for new refugee (protected persons) children and youth arriving in Alberta during 2007. As shown in Table Four, 49% of refugee children and youth landing in Alberta arrived in the City of Calgary during 2007, 38% arrived in the City of Edmonton, and 13% arrived in the remainder of Alberta.

Table FOUR: Preliminary Landing Data for Refugee (Protected Persons) Children and Youth in Alberta, 2007

Location	Age 0 - 14	%	Age 15 - 24	%	Total	%
City of Calgary	291	44	260	57	551	49
City of Edmonton	282	42	142	31	424	38
Remainder of Alberta	94	14	52	12	146	13
TOTAL	667	100	454	100	1,121	100

Source: Citizenship and Immigration Canada. Preliminary Data, 2007

While the Census differentiates between Canadian-born and immigrant population, it does not break down the immigrant population into categories such as refugees (Protected Persons).

⁴ 'Other' includes Greenland, Saint Pierre and Miquelon, the category 'Other country', as well as immigrants born in Canada.

4.0 KEY STAKEHOLDERS' PERSPECTIVES ON IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH NEEDS

4.1 Challenges Facing Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth in Alberta

As is seen in Table Five, interviewees identified a wide range of challenges facing immigrant and refugee children and youth in Alberta. These challenges are organized in the following categories with the number of interviewees who identified the challenge appearing in brackets:

Educational Challenges

- Inappropriate age and grade placement (five interviewees)
- Lack of educational support (four interviewees)
- Parents often do not understand school system and are not actively involved in their child's education (four interviewees)
- Placement in special education or remedial programs when their real needs are language and literacy (two interviewees)
- Educational process is not long enough for many youth (two interviewees)
- Lack of cultural awareness and cultural competence among teachers (two interviewees)
- Placed at back of classroom or taken out of class and sent to library (two interviewees)
- Children and youth working to help support family, leaving less time for school work (two interviewees)
- Children are changing schools as families move several times a year in search of affordable housing and employment (two interviewees).
- Cultural diversity not reflected in teacher demographics (one interviewee)
- Integration of refugee children and youth into the classroom as they have limited social skills (one interviewee)
- Survival strategies learned in refugee camps result in disciplinary actions in the school environment such as suspension or expulsion (one interviewee)

Family Pressures

- High degree of parental pressure to succeed (five interviewees)
- Intergenerational conflicts from the pressure of fitting into the family, school, and the outside world (four interviewees)
- Power imbalances/tensions created when children or youth speaks on behalf of the family (four interviewees)
- High cost of living, including housing resulting in poverty (five interviewees). As a result, children and youth often working to support family to live (four interviewees)

Language and Literacy Challenges

- Language issues and difficulties may be considerable depending on country of origin (four interviewees)
- Lack of literacy in first language (two interviewees)
- Low literacy skills affects ability to gain employment (one interviewee)

Lack of Social Supports and Social Isolation

- Discrimination and racism (four interviewees)
- Difficulty establishing social networks/lack of social support/social isolation (three interviewees)
- Establishing their identities, who they are, and how they belong here (three interviewees)
- Social isolation increases risk for engaging in criminal activity/gang membership (two interviewees)
- Lack of skills to handle bullying, name calling (two interviewees)
- Culture shock (two interviewees)
- Lack of understanding of Canadian culture, values, and systems (two interviewees)
- Limited attachment to the broader community (one interviewee)
- Limited attachment to their own cultural community (one interviewee)

Employment for Immigrant and Refugee Youth. Four interviewees identified that a major challenge for older youth is obtaining satisfying employment that provides reasonable income.

A complete listing of single challenges identified by individual interviewees may be found in Appendix C1.

TABLE FIVE: Greatest Challenges Facing Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth in Alberta

Theme	Settlement Agencies' Representatives N=15	Non-Settlement Agencies' Representatives N=3	TOTAL RESPONSES
Inappropriate age and grade placement. Emphasis seems to be placing them with age cohort without supports to learn English.	4	1	5
High degree of parental pressure to succeed in school, work, look after siblings, and help family.	4	1	5
Financial pressures, high cost of living, including housing, leads to poverty.	4	1	5
Older youth obtaining employment that provides reasonable income and is satisfying.	4	0	4
Children and youth often working to support family to live.	4	0	4
Power imbalances/tensions created in family when child/youth has the levels of language and literacy and speaks on behalf of family.	3	1	4
Intergenerational conflicts from the pressure of fitting into the family, school, and the outside world.	4	0	4
Lack of educational support leads to higher dropout rate for youth.	4	0	4
Discrimination and racism.	4	0	4
Language issues and difficulties may be considerable depending on country of origin.	3	1	4
Parents often not understand school system and are not actively involved in their child's education	3	1	4
Linguistic, academic and cultural adjustments.	3	0	3
Establishing their identities, who they are, and how they belong here.	3	0	3
Put in special education or remedial programs when their real needs are language and literacy.	2	0	2
Educational process is not long enough for many youth.	2	0	2
Children and youth working to help support family, leaving less time for school work.	2	0	2
Lack of literacy in first language.	1	1	2
Teachers lacking cultural awareness and cultural competence (not part of their education).	1	1	2
Often placed at back of classroom or taken out of class and sent to library.	1	1	2
Children are changing schools as families move several times a year in search of affordable housing and employment.	1	1	2
Lack of skills to handle bullying, name calling.	1	1	2
Lack of access to and funding for organized sports, recreation and social activities.	1	1	2
Social isolation increases risk for engaging in criminal activity/gang membership.	2	0	2
Culture shock.	2	0	2
Lack of understanding of Canadian culture, values, and systems	1	1	2

4.2 How Challenges Differ, Depending on Whether or Not a Child or Youth is a Refugee

As Table Six illustrates, interviewees listed a number of distinct challenges facing refugee children and youth in adapting to life in Alberta. Ten interviewees identified the greater incidence of post traumatic stress among refugee children and youth as a result of past traumas. These may include coping with difficult living conditions in refugee camps, witnessing extreme brutality in times of war or civil unrest, or being recruited as child soldiers.

Six interviewees also noted that education or schooling in a refugee child or youth’s country of origin has likely been sporadic, minimal, and often low quality. As a result, four interviewees point out that refugee children and youth, as well as their parents, often have limited education and minimal literacy in their first language. Since refugees often have little formal education, two interviewees said that age appropriate placement in school is a bigger issue for refugee children and youth.

As refugees arrive in Canada, six interviewees identified that refugee family situations can be stressful as children and youth may come with guardians who are not their parents or with a single parent and a large number of siblings. Once refugees arrive in Canada, six interviewees pointed out that the federal government’s requirement that refugee families repay their Refugee Transportation Loan imposes an additional economic burden on families. This often results in refugee youth having to work to earn income, affecting their school work and health.

TABLE SIX: How Challenges Differ, Depending on Whether or Not a Child or Youth is a Refugee

Themes	Settlement Agencies Representatives N=15	Non-Settlement Agencies’ Representatives N=3	TOTAL RESPONSES
There is a greater incidence among refugee children and youth experiencing post traumatic stress disorder from past traumas.	8	2	10
Education/schooling has likely been sporadic or non-existent (in homeland during upheaval or refugee camps) and often of low quality.	4	2	6
Refugee families faced the added economic hardship of repaying their refugee transportation loan. Youth often required to work, affecting their school work and health.	3	3	6
Family situations may be stressful as children and youth may come with guardians who are not their parents or with a single parent and many siblings.	3	3	6
Parents may have limited education and not able to/willing to support child/youth with learning.	3	1	4
More likely to have minimal literacy in their first language.	2	1	3
Because of well-honed survival skills, refugees may be at higher risk for engaging in risky behaviors. Some refugee youth who fit in the least well are getting drawn into the wrong types of things.	3	0	3
Age appropriate placement in school is a bigger issue for refugee children and youth because they often have little formal education.	1	1	2
Refugee families are poorer and even less able to provide for the needs of their children.	2	0	2

4.3 Challenges Facing Service Providers When Serving Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth

As shown in Table Seven, settlement service providers identified the following challenges they face when serving immigrant and refugee children and youth:

Responsiveness of systems. One interviewee remarked, “All the systems [educational, health, mental health, children’s services, etc.] underestimate the complexity of the social, cultural and emotional needs of immigrant and refugee children and youth.” Interviewees described the following challenges when working with such systems:

- Systems are not responsive to the needs of a diverse population and this creates real barriers for immigrant and refugee children and youth (six interviewees)
- The various systems do not do well in identifying and providing supports for refugee children with mental health issues (three interviewees)
- Schools, teachers, counselors, and agencies receiving refugees often lack knowledge about who they are and what they have experienced (three interviewees)
- There is a need to align efforts with the education systems to provide support for children of immigrants in schools (two interviewees)
- There are misunderstandings of the complexities involved in running community programs for immigrant and refugee children and youth (two interviewees)
- Families are waiting to access programs because children are on long waiting lists for child care (one interviewee).

Lack of Resources. Four interviewees identified the lack of financial and human resources, and facilities to address the needs of refugee and immigrant children and youth. One interviewee commented that there is a lack of funding particularly for older youth who do not have enough time to complete high school. Another interviewee noted that it is difficult to retain staff in youth programs due to low salaries. One interviewee said that funders can place barriers by only allowing service providers to focus on those clients they are funded to serve. Another interviewee spoke of the challenge of securing adequate funding to provide quality, sustainable programs.

Need for Alignment and Coordination among Service Providers. Two interviewees identified a need for organization, alignment and coordination of services for immigrant and refugee children and youth. Two other interviewees pointed out the need to link to appropriate services as there is not nearly enough capacity to meet the growth of the immigrant population (two interviewees).

Parenting Concerns. The following challenges to service providers were identified:

- Parents not adjusting to new cultural norms, such as the difference between discipline and abuse (two interviewees)
- There is considerable misunderstanding and fear by parents that their children will be taken away, preventing meaningful conversation and communication (two interviewees)
- Children’s mental health issues (one interviewee)
- Parents may be overprotective and view the system as being against their child (one interviewee).

A complete listing of individual interviewees’ suggested challenges facing service providers when serving immigrant and refugee children and youth may be found in Appendix C2.

TABLE SEVEN: Challenges Facing Services Providers When Serving Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth

Theme	Settlement Agencies Representatives N=15	Non-Settlement Workers N=3	TOTAL RESPONSES
Educational, health and other systems are not responsive to the needs of a diverse population and this creates real barriers for immigrant and refugee children and youth.	3	3	6
Just transporting children to activities outside school.	2	2	4
Lack of resources (financial, human, salaries, and space) to address the needs of refugee and immigrant children and youth).	4	0	4
Schools, teachers, counsellors and agencies receiving refugees often lack knowledge about who they are and what they have experienced.	3	0	3
The various systems (educational, health, mental health, children services, etc) do not do well in identifying and providing supports for refugee children with mental health issues. Mental health needs to be a cross-ministry initiative by the Alberta government.	3	0	3
A need for organization, alignment and coordination of services for immigrant and refugee children and youth.	1	1	2
Aligning our efforts with the education systems to provide support for children of immigrants in schools.	1	1	2
Link to appropriate services as there is not nearly enough capacity to meet the growth of the immigrant population.	1	1	2
There are misunderstandings of the complexities involved in running community programs for immigrant and refugee children and youth.	1	1	2
Parents not adjusting to new cultural norms, such as the difference between discipline and abuse.	1	1	2
Very difficult to meet with parents about their children and expectations of the education system due to cultural or language issues, lack of understanding/trust about us and our role, or their lack of availability.	1	1	2
There is considerable misunderstanding and fear of parents that their children will be taken away, preventing meaningful conversation and communication.	1	1	2

4.4 Needs of Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth in Alberta

As demonstrated in Table Eight, the critical needs that interviewees saw for immigrant and refugee children and youth in Alberta were the following:

- After school activities and supports (10 interviewees);
- Support for social and recreational needs (four interviewees);
- Mentoring support (by culturally competent mentors) (four interviewees);
- More ESL programs for immigrant youth (four interviewees);
- Age appropriate placements in schools, accompanied with appropriate supports (three interviewees);
- Access and support for settlement issues (two interviewees);
- Leadership opportunities for youth (two interviewees).

TABLE EIGHT: Greatest Needs of Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth in Alberta

Theme	Settlement Agencies' Representatives N=15	Non-Settlement Representatives N=3	TOTAL RESPONSES
After school activities and supports to help with academic achievements, social support, Canadian culture, and how to avoid potential risky behaviors such as sexual abuse, drugs, gangs, etc.	9	1	10
Support for social and recreational needs.	3	1	4
Mentoring support by culturally competent mentors.	3	1	4
More ESL programs for immigrant youth.	4	0	4
Age appropriate placements in schools accompanied with appropriate supports to learn English.	2	1	3
Access and support for settlement issues.	2	0	2
Leadership opportunities for youth.	1	1	2

4.5 Differing Needs Depending on Whether or Not a Child or Youth is a Refugee

As shown in Table Nine, when interviewees were asked whether the needs listed in the previous table differed depending on whether or not a child or youth is a refugee, four interviewees said that the needs really do not differ. Three other interviewees offered no response. However, six interviewees stated that many refugee children and youth have experiences of violence and war that need to be addressed through counseling. Three interviewees noted that the needs are greater for refugee children and youth because the challenges they face are much greater and intense. Two interviewees saw a greater need for literacy training among refugee children and youth.

TABLE NINE: Differing Needs Depending on Whether or Not a Child or Youth is a Refugee

Theme	Settlement Agencies' Representatives N=15	Non-Settlement Representatives N=3	TOTAL RESPONSES
Many refugee children and youth have experiences of violence and war that need to be addressed through counseling.	4	1	6
Needs really do not differ much.	3	1	4
No response	2	1	3
Needs are greater because the challenges refugee children and youth face are more acute and intense.	2	1	3
Greater need for literacy training among refugee children and youth.	1	1	2

4.6 Gaps in Programs or Resources for Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth in Alberta

As shown in Table Ten, interviewees identified the following gaps in programs and resources for immigrant and refugee children and youth in Alberta:

Psychological counselling. Five interviewees identified psychological counselling for immigrant and refugee children and youth experiencing post traumatic stress and other severe psychological issues. One interviewee pointed out the need for special shelters for refugee children and youth facing mental health issues.

Funding. Three interviewees cited a lack of funding resources to support adjustment and integration services for immigrant and refugee children and youth. Two interviewees saw a gap in more long-term funding to support long-term programming.

Education. Three interviewees identified a gap in needed ESL programs for children and youth. Two interviewees pointed out a gap in education regarding Canadian law and culture. Two interviewees noted that some schools are not properly identifying youth in need of ESL, so they do not receive funding for such services. Two interviewees identified a gap in career counselling that should begin in Grade Six. One interviewee pointed out the lack of teachers with diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Programs. Five interviewees cited a lack of affordable sport and recreational programs. Three interviewees saw a need for more mentoring programs. One interviewee saw a lack of connection between the wide variety of social and recreational programming being provided to immigrant and refugee children and youth. Another interviewee identified the need for homework support programs where children and parents learn together. One interviewee saw a gap in programming in schools about racism that should begin in Grade One.

Services. Three interviewees identified a gap in relevant, culturally appropriate, coordinated, and responsive services for immigrant and refugee children and youth. Two interviewees identified a need for more interpreters and translation services. One interviewee said there was a gap in interpreters and translators who were culturally competent and fluent. Another interviewee noted that there are no services for immigrants and refugees who make Alberta their secondary migration point. One interviewee saw a gap in settlement services in Alberta for immigrant and refugee children and youth.

A complete listing of individual interviewees' suggested gaps in programs or resources for immigrant and refugee children and youth in Alberta may be found in Appendix C3.

TABLE TEN: Gaps in Programs or Resources for Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth in Alberta

Theme	Settlement Agencies Representatives N=15	Non-Settlement Representatives N=3	TOTAL RESPONSES
Affordable sport and recreational programs.	5	0	5
Psychological counselling for immigrant and refugee children and youth experiencing post traumatic stress and other severe psychological issues.	4	1	5
Lack of funding resources to support adjustment and integration services for immigrant and refugee children and youth.	3	0	3
More ESL programs for children and youth.	3	0	3
More mentoring programs.	3	0	3
Relevant, culturally appropriate, coordinated, and responsive services for immigrant and refugee children and youth.	3	0	3
Career counselling beginning in Grade Six.	2	0	2
More long-term funding to support long-term programming.	1	1	2
More interpreters and translation services.	2	0	2
More education about Canadian law and culture.	2	0	2
Some schools not properly identifying youth as in need of ESL, so they do not receive funding for services.	1	1	2

4.7 Potentially Promising Practices that Meet the Needs of Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth in Alberta

In Table Eleven, interviewees presented a number of practices were identified as potentially promising in meeting the needs of immigrant and refugee children and youth in Alberta. The absence of formal evaluations for these practices (lack of evidence) means that the determination of whether the particular practice is promising is subjective. These include the following:

Partnerships and Collaborative Practices

- Edmonton Public School Board has a Diversity Committee that works in informal partnership with immigrant serving agencies.
- Partnerships between settlement providers and schools in various Alberta communities, including fulltime settlement workers in some schools.
- Calgary’s Care Strategy for Children and Youth of Immigrant Families, a 23 member Advisory Committee was established in 2003 to develop strategies and implement intersectoral and system wide coordination of services for immigrant children and youth.
- Alberta Children and Youth Services has contracted the Multicultural Health Care Brokers in Edmonton so that Early Intervention Families Support for Children with Disabilities and Child Intervention can now call upon the Health Brokers for advice or assistance, including utilizing them on family visits to provide cultural interpretation.
- A forum to share best settlement practices.

More Holistic Services

- Holistic family centre approach so whole family receives information on education, law, community resources, etc.
- Participate in programs for their age range that are open to all, in order to support adjustment and transition
- Adapt Host Program to match an immigrant/refugee youth with a Canadian youth in the same school
- Have programs outside of school anchored in the community with academic upgrading, recreational and social elements.

Specific-focus Initiatives

- Focused orientation for youth
- Classes geared to help refugee children and youth with post traumatic stress syndrome
- Art class for refugee youth
- Camp program for immigrant youth (focus on Aboriginal culture, physical activity).

TABLE ELEVEN: Potentially Promising Practices That Meet the Needs of Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth in Alberta

Themes	Settlement Agencies' Representatives N=15	Non-Settlement Representatives N=3	TOTAL RESPONSES
Fulltime settlement workers in schools.	3	0	3
Edmonton Public School Board has a Diversity Committee that works in an informal partnership with immigrant serving agencies.	2	0	2
Partnerships between settlement providers and schools.	2	0	2
Holistic family centre approach so whole family receives information on education, law, community resources, etc.	1	0	1
Focused orientation for youth.	1	0	1
Forum to share best settlement practices.	1	0	1
Classes geared to help those refugee children and youth with post traumatic stress syndrome.	1	0	1
Not aware of any specific to immigrant and refugee children and youth.	1	0	1
Participate in programs for their age range that are open to all, in order to support adjustment and transition.	1	0	1
Multicultural Health Brokers reaching out to leaders of cultural communities to inform them about services they and Children and Youth Services provide in hope that leaders than can communicate information to community members.	0	1	1
Parent and child/youth homework clubs.	1	0	1
Art class for refugee youth.	1	0	1
Adapt Host Program so match an immigrant/refugee youth with a Canadian youth in the same school.	1	0	1
Have programs outside of school anchored in the community with academic upgrading, recreational and social elements.	1	0	1
Calgary's Care Strategy for Children and Youth of Immigrant Families, a 23 member Advisory Committee was established in 2003 to develop strategies and implement intersectoral and system wide coordination of services for immigrant children and youth.	1	0	1
Camp program for immigrant youth (focus on Aboriginal culture, physical activities).	1	0	1

4.8 Evaluations Completed or in Progress Regarding Potentially Promising Practices

Twelve interviewees said that no formal evaluations had been completed or were in progress regarding the potentially promising practices noted above. Another four interviewees did not know if any formal evaluations had been completed or were in progress regarding these promising practices. One interviewee said that their agency undertook informal internal evaluations of their programs. One interviewee noted that an evaluation of Alberta Children and Youth Services' contract with Edmonton's Multicultural Health Brokers delivering cultural support services was to be conducted starting in July 2008.

Interviewees identified three possible sources for evaluation of promising practices for immigrant and refugee children and youth. These were:

- The Prairie Metropolis Institute
- Society for Intercultural Education and Training
- The Maytree Foundation

5.0 FINDINGS FROM LITERATURE REVIEW

5.1 State of the Research Literature

This literature review draws upon content from government publications, evaluation reports written by external consultants, conference presentations, newspaper articles and articles from refereed academic journals. The journal articles were retrieved through an electronic data base search with a focus on publications dated from 2003 onwards.

One in every five children living in Canada was born outside of Canada or born into an immigrant or refugee family (Armstrong et al, 2005). Yet, “the literature about immigrant and refugee children is riddled with paradoxes, inconsistent results and unanswered questions” (Armstrong et al 2005, 21). Many researchers will echo the sentiment there is a need for “longitudinal research, employing sufficiently large samples of children in different situations, living in different regions of the country, and using culturally and situation-sensitive measures” (Armstrong et al. 2005, 21).

Through the process of conducting this literature review, four publications were located that warrant a fuller review by the reader. These are:

Review of General Issues Affecting Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth

Cooper, Merrill. (2008). *Overcoming barriers to the positive development and engagement of ethno-racial minority youth in Canada*. Heritage Canada, Alberta Division: Author.

Anisef, P., Poteet, M., Anisef, D., Farr, G., Poirier, C. & Wang, H. (June 2005). *Issues confronting newcomer youth in Canada: Alternative models for the national Youth Host Program*. CERIS –The Ontario Metropolis Centre, Working Paper No. 39.

Specific Focus on Educational Issues Affecting Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth

Anisef, P., Brown, R.S., Phythian, K., Sweet, R. & Walters, D. (June 2008). *Early school leaving among immigrants in Toronto secondary schools*. CERIS –The Ontario Metropolis Centre, Working Paper No. 67.

Lund, D. (2006). *Fostering acceptance and integration of immigrant students: Examining effective school-based approaches in prairie schools*. Prairie Metropolis Centre Working Paper No. WP03-06.

5.2 Clarification of Terminology

5.2.1 Generational Status

Research pertaining to immigrant and refugee youth and children considers generational status. Research in Canada has used the following definitions: 1.0 generation are those born outside of Canada arriving before age 10 (child immigrants); 1.5 generation are born outside of Canada arriving after age 10 (teen immigrants) and 2.0 generation are born in Canada to immigrant parents (Wilkinson, 2008). In contrast, research conducted in the United States defines immigration status as first generation (born in another country) and second generation (born in the United States, but one of the parents was born outside of the United States). Generation 1.5 students are those who have completed some of their secondary schooling in the United States (Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008).

5.2.2 Emerging Adulthood

Walsh and colleagues (2005) studied the impact of immigration on youth ages 19 to 25 who were in the phase of “emerging adulthood” a time when the individual is preparing her/himself for adulthood through exploration and experimentation. They concluded that the immigration process may upset youth by threatening their sense of belonging and competence at a time when the individual is trying to establish his/her competence and sense of mastery. They found that immigrant emerging adults had “both higher levels of autonomy (independent decision-making, assertiveness) together with higher levels of relatedness (caring for parents, admiration/identification)” (p. 423). Furthermore, the researchers discovered that immigrant emerging adults had a “more mature relationship with parents and higher incidence of being involved in a romantic relationship... [this] seems to suggest that these adults move through the transition to adulthood at a faster pace than non-immigrant emerging adults” (p. 423).

5.3 Major Issues Facing Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth

Building upon a previous literature review that was prepared in 2002 for *Managing Two Worlds: The Needs and Concern of Immigrant Youth in Ontario* (Anisef and Kilbride, 2002 as cited in Anisef et al, 2005) a further review of the literature in 2005 confirmed that “relatively little real attention has been paid to this age group in North America, and particularly in Canada. Their needs, whether the youth came as very young children or as adolescents, have not been systematically documented, nor have services for them been systematically identified. The 2005 literature review did contribute a sense of the major issues confronting this age group, which include:

- Identity development confounded by dual sources of identity, when home and peer groups come from different cultures;
- Language issues that arise, particularly in school;
- Lack of recognition, especially for older youth, of prior learning experience;

- Conflicts in values beyond those characteristic of many adolescents, namely those between home and peer group, as well as clashes between the values of institutions, especially those of the family and those of the school as representative of the larger community;
- Differences in issues for male and female youth that are not necessarily found in all youth experiences, but are characteristic of some cultures in particular; and
- Recent increases in poverty among immigrants relative to non-immigrant groups” (p. 10).

Ngo and Schleifer (2005) drew upon two multi-stakeholder participatory action initiatives in Calgary – *Conversations for Change: An overview of services for immigrant children and youth in Calgary* and *Immigrant Children in Focus: A Map of Needs Strategies and Resources* along with the work of other Canadian researchers to identify the needs of immigrant youth in regards to social services, health, education, and justice. Table Twelve on the following page (Ngo & Schleifer 2005, 31) provides a summary of the major issues facing immigrant youth and children and presents for the reader a sense of the complexity and diversity of these issues. The content of this table has been used as a framework to organize this literature review.

Table Twelve – Summary of Major Issues Facing Immigrant Children and Youth (Ngo & Schleifer, 2005)

INDIVIDUAL ISSUES	SOCIAL SERVICES	HEALTH	EDUCATION	JUSTICE
	Cultural adjustment Social support and belonging Cultural identity Sexual identity Gender roles Internalized racism Employment	Nutrition Communicable diseases Sexual and reproductive health Chronic health conditions Mental health problems Pre-migration and migration trauma	Unfamiliarity with schooling in Canada Appropriate assessments ESL instruction Support in content classrooms Support for students with special needs Support for heritage languages	Transitions Criminal gangs and violence Substance abuse Prostitution Issues in youth justice process
HOME ENVIRONMENT	Basic needs Employment Language and adult literacy Family literacy Social networks and support Incongruent views of acculturation Family violence Civic participation			
SCHOOL COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT	Access to systemic, culturally competent support Parental involvement Belonging and participation in school activities Interaction with peers and school staff Racism and discrimination			
COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENT	Belonging and community participation Racism and discrimination Socioeconomic conditions Negative influences			

5.3.1 Home Environment

Family Context

Anisef et al (2005) concluded that “the healthy development and integration of newcomer youth into all spheres of Canadian society is dependent on numerous, often interrelated, factors. A primary determinant of the physical, social, and emotional well-being of a younger person is the overall family environment, but several other components characteristic of the newcomer experience can influence the future health status of immigrant youth. The literature confirmed the fundamental importance of newcomer youth being part of a strong and loving family. In addition, studies have shown that a stable family income improves the likelihood of living in safe neighbourhoods and attending good schools. As well, the absence of some or all of these elements in newcomer households often makes it difficult for parents to create a supportive environment that could enhance the future well-being of their children” (p. 11).

Research indicates that the extent to which immigrant children and youth experience language, cultural and other barriers is highly dependent upon the ability of their parents to access both formal and informal support networks and receive needed support (McCalen, 1996 as cited in Grant and Wong, 2001). As well, intergenerational conflict can occur when children adapt more quickly to the new culture than other family members and wish to abandon their cultural heritage.

Researchers have noted that while immigrant families possess many strengths which can include “healthy, intact families, strong work ethic and aspirations, and for many, a cohesive community of fellow immigrants from the same country of origin” which can ease the transition to life in Canada, these strengths do not necessarily keep immigrant children and youth on the path to success (Synergy 2007, 8). The major risk factors facing immigrant families are “poverty, isolation, acculturation stressors, mental health issues and family violence” (Synergy 2007, 8).

Language Development

Haneda (2006) cautions that while academic literacy in English is important to academic success, out-of school literacy practices in multiple languages are important in the overall development of students’ identities. Children’s out-of-school literacy practices are affected by parents, siblings and extended family or community members. Students may find themselves in the role of language broker assisting parents with English oral and written communication which is necessary for the family’s survival. It is important that teachers value and build upon students’ first language literacy patterns and encourage their development in the target language (English). Haneda (2006) further stresses the importance of teachers creating safe learning environments where students can develop their English literacy in a developmentally appropriate manner within the context of real-life issues.

While the Howard Research (2006) study looked at school level indicators of improved student achievement by students enrolled in K-12 ESL education in Alberta, the data was determined by the researchers as “too unstable to warrant discussion” (p. 7).

Nevertheless, the findings from this research do shed some light on the school environment. These key findings with respect to learners improving their English language skills were:

- ESL students in schools with larger student populations (at the elementary and junior high levels) showed great improvements in academic achievement.
- ESL teachers with more training, credentials and specialization are more effective in supporting ESL student achievement.
- Access to interpreters/translators, additional teaching and support staff, and ESL resource materials benefit ESL students at the later elementary and junior high levels. ESL students in later elementary grades also benefit from access to a Reception Centre, ESL consultants and other professionals; junior high ESL students benefit from access to tutor supports.
- One particular method of class organization (instructional model) did not offer consistent results across grade levels or subject areas.
- Grouping ESL students by age showed improved achievement levels (later elementary grades and junior high). Grouping students by English language proficiency appeared to positively affect achievement while grouping students by first language proficiency appeared to have a negative effect (later elementary grades).
- A structured timetabling approach on achievement in subject area as well as by grade level appeared beneficial.
- The benefit of mentoring instructional approaches appeared more effective at later elementary grade levels while specialized programs (i.e. Balanced Literacy, Integrated Language, etc.) yielded better results at the junior high grade level.
- Generally, the diagnostic and assessment instruments applied to ESL students were predictive of improved achievement in both English and math across different grade cohorts.
- Provision of student achievement information to parents in first language or Plain English is predictive of improved English achievement of ESL students at the junior high level.

Recommendations arising from an external review of K-12 ESL education in Alberta (Howard Research, 2006) included:

- Adopt a more flexible funding structure for K-12 ESL students that reflects proficiency in English, socioeconomic status, years of prior formal schooling, and proficiency in first language.
- Develop a recommended list of diagnostic and assessment instruments for use with ESL students.

- Develop K-12 ESL proficiency standards and guidelines for instructional strategies which fit with the Alberta Program of Studies.
- Ensure that K-12 ESL students have sufficient supports and time (5-7 years) to learn English and subject matter content.
- Provide more professional development opportunities for practicing teachers and teacher assistants that are developed collaboratively with appropriate postsecondary institutes and lead to certification in ESL (e.g. second language acquisition, cultural competence, diagnosis and assessment) using varied delivery options with potential financial support (bursaries).
- Create more opportunity for ESL-related courses in teacher education programs and increase student teacher placement opportunities in schools with large numbers of ESL students.
- Develop a research agenda that addresses ESL students in Alberta.
- Explore options for ESL students beyond the age of 20 to complete diploma requirements.

5.3.2 Health

Mental Health

Achenbach and Rescorla (2007) completed an extensive review of the literature with a specific focus on mental health assessment from a multicultural perspective. They noted the significance of a youth's sociocultural context in understanding the origins and nature of behaviour problems and how this broader environment influences the outcomes of such behaviour.

Using data from the 1994-95 Statistics Canada and Department of Human Resource Development's National Longitudinal Study of Children and Youth, Beiser and colleagues (2002) investigated the relation between family poverty and emotional and behavioural problems among immigrant children, children born in Canada of immigrant parents, and children of non-immigrant parents as well as the role of family environment and social context in explaining the relationship between poverty and mental health. The researchers found that poverty was more common among single-parent families as were higher levels of depression and family dysfunction. Poor immigrant families were less disadvantaged by single-parent status and thus their status was not found to result in ineffective parenting (as was the case with non-immigrant parents). Single-parent status did not affect the relationship between poverty and mental health of immigrant children or Canadian children born of immigrant parents. The authors recommended further study of the apparent association between increased length of stay in Canada and increased risk of developing mental health problems.

The Alberta Mental Health Research Partnership Program has recently released two reports (published in 2007) which stress the importance of access to mental health services by disadvantaged populations, including immigrant youth. The reports suggest that “there is a need to build communities of practice where all parties value the research underway and where results are seen to help the community. Communities requiring particular attention include Aboriginals and immigrants/refugees....” (Alberta Mental Health Partnership Program 2007, 8).

A recent study (Montgomery and Foldspang, 2008) looked at the association between discrimination, mental health problems and social adaptation in young refugees. The researchers found these three variables to be strongly, mutually associated, regardless of gender.

Oral Health

A study conducted in the Valencia region of Spain (Almerich-Silla & Montiel-Company, 2007) investigated the effect of immigration on caries prevalence and experience in 12- and 15-yr-old children related to other socio-economic and oral hygiene-related variables. Of all the predictive variables, the one that made the highest contribution to the model was immigration status. An earlier study (Paredes, Paredes & Mir, 2006) conducted in this same region found the prevalence of dental caries was higher in immigrant children and recommended that pediatricians and/or dentists should aim to improve knowledge of good dental health care and habits among immigrant children and their parents. Similarly, Cote and colleagues (2004), in a study of 224 immigrants newly arrived in the United States, found that refugee children are more likely to establish primary medical care before seeking dental treatment thus increasing the risk of oral diseases among refugee children.

5.3.3 Education

Assessment Tools

Multiple research studies Anisef and colleagues completed in Canada have “demonstrated the importance of attending to what newcomer youth tell us they need. Among the things most consistently requested by these youth have been counselling and support services, welcoming and reception centres, mentoring and peer tutoring programs to prevent isolation and the possibility of dropping out, and assessment services to determine appropriate school placement” (Anisef et al 2005, 38).

A review of K-12 ESL education in Alberta (Howard Research, 2006) reported that schools were using over 60 different assessment tools to assess English language proficiency of ESL students and that; generally, school personnel were dissatisfied with these instruments. In light of the research showing the positive influence that proficiency in one's first language has upon ESL students' ability to learn English, the value of instructional leadership understanding second language acquisition and instruction and supporting teachers in developing capacities in this regard was stressed. Finally, the level of pre-service and in-service education for teachers instructing ESL students was identified as limited.

School Performance

In reviewing the literature (Anisef et al, 2005) there were various and complex findings with respect to educational achievement among immigrant youth. While some findings suggested there were many barriers to educational achievement for immigrant youth, others demonstrated that immigrant youth performed better than native-born youth and were more likely to advance to post-secondary studies. These researchers concluded that for newcomer youth academic progress is a significant component of healthy integration. They suggested that "schools can act as agents of academic and social growth, if they adopt appropriate practices designed to help children at risk. Newcomer youth need academic support, parental and community involvement, and cross-cultural understanding of their unique circumstances and experiences" (Anisef et al 2005, 21).

Anisef (2008) and colleagues reported that "recent OECD overviews of school achievement and immigrant adjustment suggest several school and community practices designed to facilitate the integration of immigrant children and youth. These include early intervention with pre-schoolers to develop language skills, programs designed to promote the social adjustment of youth, and opposition to the uncritical use of streaming policies. Many of these programs note differences in the school performance and needs of first and second-generation students" (OECD 2007 as cited in Anisef 2008, 21).

Worswick (2001) performed an analysis of the school performance of the children (attending school and up to age 15) of immigrants in the Canadian school system using data from the first three waves (1994/95, 1996/97, 1998/99) of the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NSLCY). Based on measures of reading, writing, mathematics and overall aptitude it was found, on average, that immigrant children scored as well as children of Canadian-born parents on these dimensions of performance. While children of immigrant parents whose first language was not English or French had lower performance in reading, writing and composition their performance in mathematics was comparable to children of Canadian-born parents. It was observed that with more years in the Canadian education system, by age 13, the performance of children of immigrants in reading, writing and mathematics was equal or greater than that of children of Canadian-born parents. Based on the results of this study, the author concluded that children of

immigrants in Canada are, on average, performing very well in school and show a strong ability to adapt to the Canadian school system.

In contrast, a study by Howard Research (2006) also addressed predictors of student success of improved achievement at both the individual level and school level. In general, the study found that non-ESL students, who tend to maintain enrolment in the Alberta Education system are more likely to advance grade levels with their age peers, are more likely to complete Provincial Achievement Tests (PATs) and Diploma Exams (DEs) and achieve at higher levels than ESL students at most grade levels (p.4). Furthermore, “relative to non-ESL students, ESL students are, in general, at a disadvantage when it comes to success outcomes regardless of individual and school characteristics” (Howard Research 2006, 4).

Individual level predictors of success were looked at and included “four success outcomes: a) remaining within the Alberta Education system, b) moving forward in the system with age peers, c) PAT/DE completion rates, and d) PAT/DE achievement rates” (Howard Research 2006, 5). Canadian-born ESL students were found at greater disadvantage than foreign-born ESL students in terms of remaining within the Alberta Education system, completing PATs and achievement on PATs, especially at the junior and senior high levels. The longer students are coded as foreign-born ESL students (code 301) the more likely they are to remain in the Alberta education system and advance with their peers, particularly in the later grades (Howard Research 2006, 6). The longer the period since the ESL students had their funding terminated, the less likely they are to remain in the Alberta Education system and advance with their age peers. The longer the delay in identification of ESL status the less likely students will remain in Alberta Education system and complete their PATs and the lower their achievement levels (particularly at the junior and senior high levels). Students entering the system at an older age and/or admitted at a more advanced grade level are more likely to remain in the Alberta Education system, advance with their peers however are less likely to complete their PATs/DEs than those entering at a younger age; these students achieve higher levels in math but lower levels in English. This study also suggested that, “Generally speaking, ESL students with a higher probability of having limited first language proficiency, special needs, lower English proficiency levels, or refugee status experience more deficits across one or more achievement outcomes (i.e. remaining in the school system, moving forward with their age peers, completing PATs/DEs, achieving on PATs/DEs) and/or across one or more grade cohorts” (Howard Research 2006, 7).

Supports for Student Success (K-12)

The important role of the school system in supporting the settlement and integration of children and youth has been confirmed by many researchers (Anisef, 2005). Anisef (2005) suggests that “given appropriate resources, schools could be used as venues for disseminating information; gaining access to families, and consequently inviting greater participation in their children’s education; referring newcomers to services; and assisting mainstream society to become more culturally sensitive to the needs and experiences of

newcomers” (p. 26). A report by Yau (1995 as cited in Anisef, 2005) proposed “the development of a Public Information Office in schools in collaboration with community, government, and ethno-cultural groups. Such an office would provide comprehensive packages in a variety of languages which could include legal, health care, housing, and citizenship information, as well as information about the school system, community services, and other pertinent material. In addition the office could act as a referral service for students and families” (p. 26).

Shields and Behrman (2004) offered several recommendations pertaining to the education of immigrant and refugee youth in the K-12 system in the United States which further reinforce the potential for schools to be a core resource for immigrant and refugee youth and their families:

- “Federal, state and local education agencies should expand the availability of quality programs and strengthen outreach efforts to encourage more children of immigrants to attend preschool and kindergarten, and to access special education resources when appropriate.
- Community-based organizations in immigrant communities should expand efforts to provide after-school activities that reinforce the children’s cultural values and heritage, while at the same time improving their English language skills by working with children and parents together in family literacy programs.
- Schools should promote the formation of parent support groups for those families with limited English skills to facilitate communication between parents, teachers and students, and ensure all parents understand the requirements for students to transition from K-12 to postsecondary education” (p. 13).

Johnson and Peters (1994 as cited in Anisef, 2005) further reinforce the view of the school as a critical resource in the lives of immigrant and refugee youth and their families. These researchers propose “there is a need for a more student-based, participatory, educational program aimed at accommodating diversity and change. Four principal themes were emphasized in their report:

- the need to address and eliminate race, ethnic, gender, and class bias from the school system;
- the need for a fully-integrated educational system to accommodate the diverse needs of all young adult learners;
- the need to build strong linkages between schools and various sectors of the community; and
- the need for greater parental involvement” (Johnson and Peters 1994, 441-455).

Parental Influence on School Achievement

For immigrant children, school serves as “the primary point of sustained and close contact to a crucial institution of the society their parents have chosen to join. For many immigrant children, it is the only point of systematic and meaningful contact with the new society” (Suarez-Orozco 2001, 345).

Suarez-Orozco (2001) in reviewing studies of the adaptation of immigrant children in school found a tri-modal pattern of school adaptation: some students surpassed the achievements of native-born children, others matched the achievements of native-born children while others achieved below their native-born peers. Generally children of highly educated immigrants tended to perform better than those whose parents were less educated.

Similarly, Suarez-Orozco found diversity in studies investigating patterns that led to school success: some viewed the “ideologies of opportunity” and “cultures of optimism” that led parents to migrate as key factors; others looked at patterns of cultural, social and economic capital; others pointed to “cultural values” that promote educational success; some focused on strategies that parents used to help inoculate their children against hostility and discrimination they might face; and others found that parents successfully used their cultural practices and beliefs to maintain control and keep their children away from negative aspects of the host culture.

Veder and colleagues (2005) studied the construct of social support (social assets, social resources and social networks that persons can use when requiring assistance, advice, approval, support or comfort) in relation to 10-13 year-old students whose families had immigrated to the Netherlands. He found that in learning situations “students’ need for social support affects the significance they attach to the perceived availability of social support” (p. 270). He concluded that while Dutch students relied more on their parents to assist with problems in learning situations, immigrant youngsters were “more dependent on instructional support from the teacher, whereas emotional support was perceived as more available from parents” (p. 273). Veder (2005) proposed that we invest more in programs designed to support immigrant parents’ involvement in their children’s learning to further strengthen the available sources of social support.

An evaluation of a program offered by Calgary Immigrant Aid illustrated the importance of fathers/male caregivers, together with other family members, in supporting children for school success. By continuing to work with families over a three-year period, families came to be more actively involved in their children’s education and share this knowledge within their communities.

Immigrant and refugee parents often experience multiple barriers to active involvement with their children’s schooling including lack of time due to employment commitments, limited English language skills and limited understanding of Canadian schooling methods (Grant and Wong, 2004). Cole (1998) reminds us that immigrant and refugee parents maintain the cultural background and values of

their native country which may place teachers in a position where parents are not viewed as equal partners in their children's learning. Epstein (1995 as cited in Grant and Wong, 2004) revealed six ways for parents to successfully become involved in their children's schooling including parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with community. The question to be further investigated is how to enable parents, with limited English language skills, to perform these myriad functions.

Asking Immigrant Youth about School-Based Services

Yanisef (2005) points out that while much of the existing research on immigrant youth service providers has pointed to the existence of a variety of services to deal with the proper settlement of immigrant youth, many researchers have stressed that future services should be planned on the basis of the needs identified by the youth themselves.

Of note, a number of recommendations for better facilitating the integration of newcomer youth were expressed by students across several studies conducted on first generation immigrant youth (Yanisef 2005, 30). These recommendations focus on the school and include:

- Some of the immigrant youth indicated that it would be useful for them to have mentoring programs in schools whereby more established immigrant youth could be paired up with newcomers;
- Newcomer youth identified the need to have more accurate ways for assessing their knowledge and skill levels. They felt that schools should develop aptitude tests that would be less discriminating;
- Newcomer youth identified a need for promotion of both anti-discrimination and greater cultural sensitivity. They felt that cross-cultural training for all members of the school community was necessary;
- Some newcomer youth felt that there should be more partnerships between community organizations and schools, expressing the thought that this would allow other youth to better appreciate their cultures and communities;
- Newcomer youth identified the need to have better links between parents and schools in that this would allow parents to better understand what is expected of them in the school system, especially if the expectations were different from their previous country;
- Some newcomer youth felt that it was important that they be able to practice their faith at school. By having designated prayer areas, it would be less difficult for them to practice their faith, and would reduce some of the stress that they experienced;

- Various newcomer youth found it difficult to understand the curriculum because it was too focused on North American content, and recommended greater cultural representation. This, they felt, would improve the ‘fit’ among diverse groups of youth; and
- Some newcomer youth cited the need for more social interaction which would allow them to obtain help with their studies. Homework clubs was one option mentioned that would allow newcomer youth to keep up with their schoolwork while meeting new friends. These youth also identified the need for greater co-op opportunities whereby they could learn more about the Canadian work place, and get job experience at the same time” (p. 30-31).

Postsecondary Aspirations

A range of factors appear to shape educational aspirations, including: gender; parents’ socioeconomic status, investment in educational resources, work values, aspirations for their child, and involvement and/or supervision; family structure; community size; grades and other indicators of student performance; student self-perceptions and attitudes toward school; and social support networks (Dinovitzer, Hagan, & Parker, 2003; Garg, Kauppi, Lewko, & Urajnik, 2002; Kao & Tienda, 1998; Lowe et al., 1997; Perron, 1997; Trusty, 1998). Specific to the educational aspirations of immigrants and ethnic and/or racialized groups, Perron (1997) and Dinovitzer et al. (2003) focus on, respectively, ethnic identity and age at immigration as influential factors (as cited in Krahn & Taylor 2005, 407).

Studies of English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) students in Alberta found that high school completion rates are much lower for this group than for other students (Derwing, DeCorby, Ichikawa, & Jamieson, 1999), and that ESL learners disappear from the system in the early years of high school at triple the rate of the general population (Watt & Roessingh, 2001). These studies would lead us to predict that the aspirations of visible-minority and ESL students (who are usually immigrants) would be lower than average (as cited in Krahn & Taylor 2005, 410).

Using multivariate analysis to factor out the effects of gender, family structure, region, community size, socioeconomic status, academic performance, and first language it was discovered that higher parental education and aspirations (for their children), and higher grades and school engagement of visible minority immigrant youth, largely explain the “visible-minority immigrant” effect on postsecondary aspirations. Even so, after controlling on as many predictor variables as possible, the visible minority immigrant status variable still had a small independent effect on postsecondary aspirations (Krahn & Taylor 2005, 428). Krahn found that “79% of visible-minority immigrant youth aspired to obtain at least one university degree compared with 57% of Canadian-born non-visible

minority students. Furthermore, about 88% of visible minority immigrant parents hoped their children would acquire a university education compared to 59% of Canadian born non-visible minority parents” (Krahn 2005, 430).

Postsecondary Achievement

Fuligni and Witkow (2004) in a longitudinal study of 650 youth from immigrant families found that these youth demonstrated the same level of postsecondary education progress as their peers from American-born families across a wide range of indicators (enrolment, type of degree pursued, grade point average, persistence, progress towards degree). Moreover, these immigrant youth, while pursuing their postsecondary studies, were also more likely to live with and financially support their families. The success of immigrant students in their postsecondary studies seemed to be associated with the high value placed on the importance of education to the youth’s future occupational and economic success. This research also identified the relationship between postsecondary progress and immigrant youth’s academic performance and aspirations at 12th grade.

There is some evidence (Gurin et al, 2002) that affirmative action and diversity efforts by postsecondary institutions serve not only to increase student access but also foster student academic and social growth. Gurin and colleagues further suggested that the impact of diversity on learning and democracy outcomes is critical at the late adolescent development stage. Postsecondary institutions that diversify their student population and implement policies that promote interaction across race and ethnicity provide an opportunity for students to learn about different cultures, values and experiences. Thus, students can develop the human relations and analytical skills they need to survive in a diverse workplace.

Postsecondary Support

Ortmeirer-Hooper (2008) found that labelling students as English as a Second Language (ESL) learners can have a significant effect on their writing proficiency and how they view themselves as learners. There is some evidence that the perception of being deficit in English can discourage students from seeking academic support. In the case of Generation 1.5 students, several studies have shown that students wish to move beyond the label of ESL learner particularly as they enter postsecondary education.

A 2003 World University Service of Canada study found that refugee students who were sponsored by this organization, upon completion of their postsecondary studies, achieved a 92 percent employment rate with just over 50 percent of these graduates stating they found employment appropriate to their degree. These students attributed their success to socializing primarily with Canadian-born students while maintaining contact with people from their country of origin and other persons with different immigrant backgrounds.

Since 1999, the Maytree Foundation has provided a scholarship program that has helped more than 140 financially stressed young refugees pursue postsecondary studies. One scholarship recipient, a 27-year-old female Rwandan refugee commented, “Education gives you a chance to take back your dignity. It empowers you and opens doors for you” (Toronto Star, March 19, 2008 p. A-14).

Culturally Competent Educators

Educators and the school environment have been found to be key in the successful socialization and acculturation of refugee and immigrant children (Hones and Cha, 1999). Unfortunately, teachers who are not sufficiently trained to understand the difficulties and experiences of these children can misinterpret the students’ and their families’ culturally inappropriate actions as they adjust to their new home (Hones, 2002).

Baffoe (2006) further stressed the need for educators (and social services professionals) working with refugee youth to understand the different needs, history and cultural context of the country of origin of these refugees. He concluded that teachers needed to be both culturally responsive and culturally competent.

5.3.4 Social Services

Economic Integration

Research has shown an ever widening gap in earning and low-income rates between recent immigrants to Canada and native-born Canadians (Palameta, 2007). Studies in Europe and the United States have surfaced the relationship between low educational attainment and low socioeconomic status of parents on their children both in terms of educational attainment and employment outcomes.

A Statistics Canada study (October 2005) using data from the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics from a six-year period (either 1999 to 2001 or 1999 to 2004) compared the earnings of second-generation Canadians with a strong labour force attachment with those of peers with Canadian-born parents. It also looked at the two groups’ family characteristics, educational attainment, geographic distribution and the degree to which these factors might cause differences in earnings. The study focused on second-generation Canadians born between 1967 and 1982, many of whose parents came from non-traditional source countries, primarily Asia.

It was found (Statistics Canada, October 2005) that compared to youth with two native-born parents, second-generation youth (between 23 and 24 years of age), who were interviewed were:

- more likely to live in Ontario or British Columbia in large urban centres
- more likely to be living with their parents
- more likely to delay marriage and having children
- less likely to drop out of high school
- completed more years of schooling.

Differences in earnings existed between young men and young women born of immigrant parents. With education accounted for, young women of immigrant parents had significantly higher hourly and annual earnings than their peers with native-born parents. This could partly be a product of geographic clustering of the data but, overall, women of immigrant parents were less likely to be married or have children. In contrast, young men with immigrant parents showed significantly lower earnings than their peers of native-born parents. These lower earnings were particularly evident for visible minority men. While this study did not address the explanation for this discrepancy, it was suggested that cultural barriers, job networks and systemic discrimination may be contributing factors.

Wilkinson (2008) reviewed the labour market integration of 35 Generation 1.0, 1.5 and 2.0 Asian youth (age 17 to 30 years) in Western Canada in terms of job search strategies, support that influenced job search strategies and their perception of the advantages and disadvantages of being born to immigrant parents. She determined that finding good quality employment was a marker of integration and that among youth, immigrants are most likely to be unemployed. Factors found to hinder the job search process included English language proficiency or accent, age at immigration, and perceived standing in the host culture. Steps taken in finding employment included family/friendship networks, just submitting an application and attending job banks/career fairs. Using family and friends were overwhelming reported as the best method in the job search strategy (used nearly equally by Generations 1.0, 1.5, 2.0) followed by church contacts, posting resume on-line and referral from a former employer. Friends, family, the Internet and placement agencies were found helpful in the job search process. These youth named several perceived barriers in finding employment including age, education/experience, racism, language, and culture. As a child of immigrant parents, the ability to speak more than one language and understand different cultures were perceived as benefits in finding employment while challenges included perceptions that even the youth born in Canada were not fluent in English or understood Canadian culture.

In contrast, an analysis of the data from the first wave of the Equality, Security and Community Survey conducted by the Institute for Social Research at York University in 1999, shows that the children of immigrant parents are not performing as well as previous research has indicated (Halli-Vedanand, 2007). Performance appears to vary based on whether one or both parents are foreign-born - native-born children and second generation children with one immigrant parent seem to have similar educational and economic

experiences. Also, immigrant children from developed and developing countries have clearly different educational and labour market experiences and income levels.

A feasibility study undertaken in 2008 by the Edmonton Mennonite Center for Newcomers surfaced similar responses from immigrant youth, community leaders, service providers and employers. These youth faced challenges due to “lack of certification, few jobs with adequate pay, lack of necessary education/skills, limited English language skills, and lack of work experience” (p. 2). Community leaders identified a significant drop-out rate among high school-aged youth due to “challenges with age-appropriate grade placement, inappropriate academic and ESL support, and difficulties adjusting to curriculum and the learning environment” (p. 3). Service providers also commented that refugee and immigrant youth might also face “poverty, language barriers, unemployment, unstable housing, mental health problems, drug use, domestic violence and crime, and lack of family and community support” (p. 4).

Cultural Identity and Acculturation

The benefit of a strong ethnic and racial identity to adolescent mental health and academic success has become evident (Wakefield & Hudley, 2007). Racial and ethnic identity is “the sense of belonging that an adolescent feels toward a racial or ethnic group as well as the significance and qualitative meaning that the adolescent assigns to that group membership” (p. 148). Adolescents with an achieved ethnic identity have “a working knowledge of their ethnic heritage, a clear idea of the meaning of their ethnic group membership, and a commitment to their ethnicity and the role it plays in their lives” (p. 149). A strong racial or ethnic identity has been found to protect adolescents from substance use and/or engaging in antisocial or violent behaviour even when living in poverty (Choi, Harachi, Gilmore & Catalano, 2006 as cited in Wakefield and Hudley, 2007).

Ngo (2008) cautions that the culture and [racial] identities of immigrant and students and their families cannot be viewed as static and passing from one generation to the next. Fixed perceptions of cultural identity result in simplistic understandings of immigrant youth and can adversely affect the youth’s construction of his/her identity. For many youth, their identity becomes one of ‘in between’ that of their culture by birth and culture by immigration. Asher (2008) found further support for this “state of flux” and concluded that youth from immigrant families “negotiate a range of hybrid identities at the dynamic, context-specific intersections of race, culture, class and gender” (p. 17).

Cultural identity and heritage language are closely connected. Cummins (2001) suggests that compensatory and bilingual education efforts for minority students have been unsuccessful “because they have not altered significantly the relationships between educators and minority students and between schools and minority communities” (p. 649). He adds that “groups that experience the most disproportionate school failure in North America have been on the receiving end of a pattern of devaluation of [cultural] identity for

generations, both in schools and society” (p. 650). When educators discourage or prohibit students from using their heritage language in the school, it sends a message that devalues their cultural identity.

Acculturation is the change in an individual or cultural group that results from contact with a different culture (McBrien, 2005). Ogbu (1982) noted differences between the acculturation of immigrants based on whether they viewed themselves as voluntary or involuntary immigrants. He concluded that voluntary immigrants considered learning a new language and new ways of life as a way to succeed whereas involuntary immigrants viewed these acts of conformity as disaffiliating from their own culture.

Portes and Rumbaut (1996) argue that the question is not whether children adapt to the new society but rather what aspects of that society will they acculturate. Fuligni (2001) recommends that research on the process of acculturation shift from cross-sectional designs to longitudinal studies that can study actual change over time. By studying groups of children longitudinally, one can study the effects of acculturation on both the level and developmental progression of children’s adjustment, determine which aspects of society the children are acculturating and determine possible sources of acculturation (Fuligni, 2001).

Cole (1998) observed that the acculturation process is impacted by several factors including: “a) pre-migration stressors, b) circumstances surrounding the relocation, c) individual characteristics, d) post-migration stressors related to racism, poverty or health care, e) personal resources (e.g. language skills), f) social supports and family stability, and g) the particular culture of the host society and its acceptance of diversity.

Building on his earlier researcher, Sonderegger (Sonderegger et al, 2004) investigated a number of single risk factors that had been linked to acculturative stress in immigrant and refugee youth. The study looked at measures of cultural adjustment, self-concept, social support, self-esteem, anxiety, trauma and hopelessness. Findings did not identify a consistent structure of risk and protective factors associated with cultural adjustment with social support being a divergent variable. Furthermore, identification with one’s ethnic heritage appeared to play a lesser role in acculturation than hypothesized. The researcher concluded that cultural groups have unique migrational experiences and specific needs to support their acculturation.

Baffoe (2006) in studying the social integration and educational experiences of teenage immigrant and refugee youth in their first few years in the Quebec educational system found that culture and cultural adaptation were significant in the social and educational integration of these learners. In particular, acculturation difficulties resulted in many of these children losing motivation to study, losing interest in their studies and dropping out of school. Baffoe (2006) further stressed the need for longitudinal studies of these

youth over time to examine the evolution of their ethnic identity, bicultural development, cultural values, educational attainment and the challenges they face as adults.

5.3.5 Community Environment

Prejudice and Discrimination

Immigrant and refugee children and youth face the challenge of developing friendships and social networks in their new home. The ability to form such social networks is influenced by sociocultural context (Hsin-Chun Tsai, 2006). Friendships and other social networks influence a youth's psychosocial development and mental health.

Cultural misunderstandings can lead to prejudice and discrimination. Rumbaut (2001) found discrimination to be the greatest barrier to adaptation for immigrant and refugee children.

Phan (2003) in studying Vietnamese students in the British Columbia school system found that academic scholarship was evidence of their resiliency in the face of racism. Despite their criticism of certain teachers and classes, they attended school daily and were strongly committed to their educational goals. Many of the students in this study volunteered to help other Vietnamese students develop their academic skills and help them cope with the trauma of racism.

Enrolment in an English as a Second Language program can perpetuate a sense of "otherness" and increase the chances of the student experiencing discrimination (Hsin-Chun Tsai, 2006). Racism has been identified as one significant contextual factor for first and second generation immigrant youth's friendship formation. Hsin-Chun Tsai (2006) stressed the important role school personnel can play in raising awareness of the effects racism and xenophobia and monitoring the consequences for ESL students. While this researcher found racism and xenophobia to be risk factors for youth's marginalization, ethnic communities were identified as a protective factor during the early resettlement phase for immigrant youth.

5.4 Specific Concerns of Refugee Children

Cole (1998, 37) cautions that "immigrants and refugees often differ in their pre-migration, migration and post-migration experiences". Ajdukovic and Ajdukovic (1993, 847) further comment that "refugee children's development histories often include information about disrupted lives, malnutrition, deprivation, significant losses, and gaps in education".

Once settled, refugee children tend to acquire target language conversational skills faster than their parents (Zhou, 2001). These children often serve as translators for their parents in school meetings, medical appointments and may also be responsible for paying bills and conducting banking services (Zhou, 2001).

McBrien (2005) investigated what refugee students needed to succeed in U.S. schools; what were the obstacles to their success; and what could be done to help them overcome these obstacles. In her review of the literature she found that refugee students need to have a sense of psycho-social adjustment and language acquisition both of which are affected by trauma and the availability of parental and social support. Obstacles that could affect student success included parental acculturation and acceptance of new norms and practices, sense of welcoming or rejection by community and school, the extent to which refugee students experience prejudice, discrimination and stereotypes. Providing social services to facilitate the refugee student's and family's adjustment, providing ESL instruction for students and parents, combating discrimination in the school environment, informing parents about the education system and their rights, and having culturally competent teachers and educational administrators were found to support the success of refugee students.

In settlement work with refugee youth, partnering bilingual and bicultural paraprofessionals with professional social workers has been quite effective (Owen & English, 2001). Based on their collaborative case work experience, the researchers found that talking therapies which acknowledged individual traumatic experiences and surfaced sources of emotional distress were helpful for some refugee youth following extended language training, development of relationships, and acculturation experience. Cultural brokers could bridge the expectations of the youth and the case workers by acting as interpreters and mediating between the parties for youth access to sustained, appropriate, relevant and culturally sensitive services. The researchers cautioned that the cultural context of service delivery continues to evolve with the arrival of new groups of refugees.

Since 2003, about one-third of British Columbia's refugee population has settled in Burnaby. Rumbaut (2001) found discrimination to be the greatest barrier to adaptation for these immigrant and refugee children. Lynn Archer, principal of Byrne Creek High School in Burnaby commented, "The young people who arrive at 16, 17, 18, or 19 years lack in terms of reading, writing and mathematical skills; there is just no way we are ever going to get them caught up in the amount of time they are going to be in our educational system." In response to the lower academic achievements of these refugee youth, the province has allocated additional funds to help train teachers working with refugee children. Instruction for refugee students addresses basic English comprehension skills as well as provides counselling support services with class cohorts of approximately 10 students.

Phan (2003) examined Vietnamese refugees' self-reported experience of racism in schools in British Columbia. These students described experiencing or witnessing racial conflict, harassment or unfair treatment with the boys reporting more experience of racism. Interestingly, these students generally did not think that racism would adversely affect them in the future.

Yau (1995, as cited in Cole, 1998) identified the need for clear, continuous communication between teachers and families of refugee students. She found that the frustrations experienced by refugee students were associated with "frequent relocations, cultural disorientation, problems understanding teacher instructions and gaps in basic skills. Resiliency, on the other hand, was associated with nurturing caregivers, physical security, stable personalities and a positive school climate" (p. 39).

Reakes (2007, 98) reminds us that refugees vary in the reason and process of immigration however they do have some common issues including "emotional needs and trauma resulting from their experience of conflict and violence, isolation due to limited language skills, and limited or no schooling experience". Based on the data from five case studies of Local Education Authorities or LEAs (three in Wales, one in Scotland and one in England) he concluded that the most frequent deficiencies in provision of services to refugee (and asylum seeking) children were "incomplete or inconsistent transfer of information on these families between different departments and agencies, shortage of interpreters to assist in screening procedures, problems in funding mechanisms and gaps in supports received by LEAs and schools" (p. 102).

Concerns of refugee youth identified in Alberta studies included:

- Safety of friends or relatives back home (PCERII, 1999)
- Finding or keeping a job (PCERII, 1999)
- Their future in Canada (PCERII, 1999)
- Personal and family income (PCERII, 1999)
- Learning English (PCERII, 1999; Howard Research, 2001)
- Personal health (PCERII, 1999)
- "Fitting in" in Canadian society (PCERII, 1999; Howard Research, 2001)
- Making friends (Howard Research, 2001)
- Career counselling (Howard Research, 2001)
- Help with homework (Howard Research, 2001)
- Learning to deal with prejudice and violence (Howard Research, 2001)

- Acculturative stress (Alberta Mental Health Board, 2006)
- Conflict in development of identity (Alberta Mental Health Board, 2006)
- Intergenerational stress and conflict (Alberta Mental Health Board, 2006)
- High parental expectations (Alberta Mental Health Board, 2006)

Spencer and Le (2006) interviewed 329 Chinese and Southeast Asian adolescents with refugee parents to assess the effects of parents' experience of trauma on youth violence. The researchers recognized that the process of refugee immigration results in different forms of stress than voluntary immigration. They hypothesized that parents' refugee experience and stressors related to immigration indirectly increase youth violent behaviour by pushing youth to associate with delinquent peers and to become estranged from their parents (p. 361). They concluded that "parental life experiences can be important risk factors for youth violence....Other traumatic experiences of parents, such as past incarcerations, racial and ethnic profiling, the need to make quick and significant cultural reorientations, the unexpected loss of an entire community, or other experiences that challenge individuals' ability to find order, meaning and coherence in life likely limit parents' ability to socialize and nurture their children" (p.367).

5.5 Ways of Working and Policy Directions

An evaluation of a Calgary-based program for immigrant children age 0 to 6 years at risk of not succeeding in school (Synergy, October 2007) identified several policy considerations that are appropriate for the provision of services for immigrant and refugee children and youth:

- "Enter into discussion with other ministries to determine their interest in developing a ministerial "home" for immigrant and refugee families.
- Provide a continuum of services for highly barriered immigrant and refugee families.
- Develop and fund effective family-based early intervention programs, such as school readiness and family literacy programs, for highly barriered immigrant and refugee families.
- Ensure that programs for immigrant and refugee families use evidence-based approaches in program design and delivery and include an ongoing, manageable evaluation process that produces information useful for program development and accountability.

- Agencies should build partnerships with specific ethno-cultural communities to provide family literacy and school readiness programs for highly barriered immigrant and refugee families within those specific communities” (p. viii).

Calgary’s *CARE Strategy for Children and Youth of Immigrant Families* started with a 23-member advisory committee which supported the development of *Conversations for Change: An overview of services for immigrant children and youth*. The six key recommendations from this report offer direction for a coordinated response to the needs of these children and youth. These include:

- Develop a strategy to attend to the priority areas and gaps that been identified through the report.
- Implement inter-sectoral and system-wide coordination of services for immigrant children and youth.
- Develop and integrate core cultural competencies into all social services, education and health delivery practices.
- Identify and share existing research about immigrant children and youth.
- Strengthen relationships with schools to further promote the educational, social and cultural development of immigrant children and youth.
- Develop effective partnership strategies to support immigrant children and youth.

The Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Initiative in Red Deer, Alberta has worked with community stakeholders to focus on international newcomers to better understand their experience and plan, resource and coordinate the delivery of services that will support their integration into the community. The initiative has three major areas of activity – research, coordination and communication. It focuses on overseas activities, needs assessment, resettlement, service bridging, language and/or skills development, and social engagement.

5.6 Promising Practice

The following promised practice initiatives have been formally evaluated and the findings published in refereed academic journals.

5.6.1 Interagency Collaboration

Earner (2007, p. 77) identified three barriers for immigrant parents accessing child welfare services – the caseworker’s lack of knowledge about immigration status, mutual cultural misunderstandings and language access issues. He identified five themes that described the immigrant parent’s feelings about interactions with child welfare workers and barriers to accessing services. These included: a) fear (about immigration status being discovered and possible deportation), b) sense of powerlessness (lack of resources,

support and networks), c) feeling silenced (due to language differences and ineffective translators), d) vulnerability (lack of knowledge of their rights or just feeling different), and e) loss (of children, family support, culture, hope). Earner also identified implications for practice including interventions “at policy, program and practice levels....and advocacy for immigrant policies, training and technical assistance to service providers, language access policies, and collaborative relationships between community-based organizations and public child welfare agencies” (p. 85).

In 2002, a public-private sector partnership was undertaken in St. Louis, Missouri to develop a replicable model of interagency collaboration that would bridge the gap between public child welfare, refugee-serving agencies and refugee communities. One and two-day cross-service training forums and the establishment of a clearinghouse with resources for professionals are key elements of this model. Selected recommendations arising from this initiative were as follows:

Practice - Ensure that daily social work practice incorporates principles of cultural competence; be familiar with and establish work relationships with colleagues across service systems; always use an interpreter when interviewing newcomers whose first language is not English.

Programs – Ensure all direct service providers are culturally competent and approaches are family-centred, community-centred, and strengths based; recruit staff members from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Policy – Public agencies and policy makers should collect data that will inform the community about newcomer population demographics; public agencies and funders should consider broadening the range and types of services they contract to ensure adequate access to linguistically and culturally appropriate programs/services; public agencies and policy makers should build relationships and increase coordination and collaboration amongst those serving refugees. (p. 808-810)

5.6.2 Addressing Post–Traumatic Stress

Post-traumatic stress disorder can present in immigrants living in high-crime neighbourhoods where children are victims of or witness violence (Zehr, 2007). Many immigrant children become anxious or depressed after leaving behind relatives who raised them while their parents establish themselves in the new country. The Princeton, New Jersey based Robert Wood Johnson Foundation has awarded \$4.5 million to school-based programs in the area of mental health care. The decision to support school-based programs was based on a perception that the school setting may be more approachable for some immigrant parents. Strategies used by these

programs included “connecting school personnel with immigrant-run organizations, co-facilitating therapy groups with members of the ethnic group being served, using ethnic media to communicate about mental health issues, and training school social workers to be culturally sensitive” (Zehr, 2007, p. 1).

5.6.3 From Adaptation to Integration

A case study of the Roskilde Integration Project in Denmark (Virtue, 2006) revealed some “underlying processes of learning, culture, and political activity within the [program] implementation process and how programs for language minority immigrant and refugee students may be designed to work ‘with’ rather than ‘against’ processes” (p. 133). Implementation of this initiative required moving beyond that integration could be equated with Danish language acquisition towards “mutual adaptation involving respectful dialogue among adults, collaboration and cooperation across ethnic lines, and a multicultural vision for society” (p. 134). The adoption of a community of practice philosophy brought together stakeholders who were actively involved in the process of integrating immigrants and refugees including local politicians, preschool workers, parents and members of the community. The unintended positive outcomes achieved through this approach were ‘increased parent involvement and changing attitudes toward marginalized minority groups on the part of preschool staff members, local politicians and Danish parents’ (p. 134).

5.6.4 Focusing on Mental Health Issues

Using a mental health framework and reflective practice approach, the *Changing Cultures Project* is a partnership between the education, health and settlement sectors in Melbourne, Australia which provides a program and system response to the health, settlement, education and vocational issues facing refugee youth. The key determinants of mental health were defined as social connectedness, economic participation and freedom from discrimination. While previously curriculum had focused on language, literacy and basic education, the adoption of a mental health perspective enabled teachers to provide a key role in providing support to the health and settlement needs of refugee youth. The curriculum provided opportunities for: increased access to recreation, co-delivery of content by health care and settlement workers, increased exposure to realistic vocational options (both youth and their families), connections to employers, life skills training, and counselling.

5.6.5 School Mentoring Initiative

Mentoring can support the development of social relationships and enhance the psychological well-being of students which may result in greater academic achievement and fewer behaviour problems (Yeh et al, 2007). A culturally based mentoring program for recent Chinese immigrant youth in an urban high school in New York City used same culture youth mentors to address issues of language, social support, acculturation and adjustment to school. Mentors met with their mentees individually once a week during school, in a small group once a week after school, and engaged in weekly lunch table discussions and monthly or bimonthly social events. Individual and group meetings were conducted in the mentee's preferred language. Standardized tests were used to measure change in several variables including college and career self-efficacy, academic self-efficacy, social connectedness, peer attachment-trust and peer attachment-need for closeness. Findings showed that students developed an increased sense of trust in their peers after eight weeks and felt a stronger need for closeness with their peers. The researchers concluded that schools should consider increased opportunities for peer counselling, peer support and social activity.

5.6.6 Transition to College

One-fifth of the freshmen cohort at Penn State College in Delaware County is immigrant students. In 2003, the institution implemented an Academic Studies Course Cluster that is a one-semester, core curriculum of developmental, research and technology-based courses along with individualized academic support services to build language skills and examine the American cultural norms. Subsequently, a 30-hour summer program and a second semester of support-related courses were added. Finally, a one-week Introduction to College class was added to be offered just before students commence their postsecondary studies. The Introduction to College class exposes students to the college education experience, provides opportunities to review syllabi and meet faculty, as well as addressing other key aspects of success – time management, writing, grammar, reading, pronunciation, and provides students with donated computers. An evaluation of this program has shown that students have also learned the need to manage their finances and are more comfortable accessing counselling and other student services.

5.6.7 Facilitating Quicker Target Language Development

The Richmond School District in British Columbia provides specific ESL support through classes for 'beginners' who are pulled out of their regular classroom during Language Arts. Working with an ESL specialist, these learners work on language acquisition. These

students are integrated with other students in all other subject areas and the ESL specialist teachers work collaboratively with the classroom teacher planning lessons together, team teaching or working with small groups within the class. This model has increased language development with the students achieving fluency within a five year period as opposed to the typical seven year period.

5.6.8 Developing Resiliency in Immigrant and Refugee Children

Many schools face restricted or diminishing resources that make responding to the individual needs of students impractical. Many immigrant and refugee parents view education as the key to success and may hold unrealistic expectations for their children's academic achievement. Others may expect school to be a disciplined, structured environment where learning is not 'fun' and gender equity is not the norm. These parents often feel uncomfortable in the school environment. Using translators for parent teacher interviews, parent meetings and translation of key school documents to improve communication can help more actively engage parents in their children's education.

The International Institute's "Building Bridges" program combines whole school initiatives and classroom activities focusing on children's self-expression. The program is designed to provide teachers with knowledge and skills to support children who have experienced traumatic events. Key to the success of this program is ensuring that children have opportunities for self-expression; they see themselves reflected in the curriculum, school celebrations recognize the diversity of learners as does the demographic profile of teachers, support staff, clerical staff and volunteers.

6.0 STUDY FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER CONSIDERATION

6.1 Comparison of Literature Review and Key Stakeholders' Interviews

The following themes were identified in **both the review of the literature and interviews with stakeholders**:

Education

- Initial assessment and placement of immigrant and refugee children and youth in academic programs. The limitations of current assessment instruments.
- Challenges faced by immigrant and refugee youth in finding and maintaining satisfying employment that provides a reasonable income. The ongoing challenge of balancing work and schooling.
- The value of homework clubs and in-school mentors.
- Lack of parental involvement in their children's schooling and the barriers and supports that affect the level of parental involvement.
- High parental expectations of education system.
- Immigrant and refugee youth who enter Canadian school system in their teens often do not have sufficient time to reach milestones for high school completion and/or meet entry requirements for postsecondary education.

Cultural Competence

- The need for improved cultural competence in educators and other key human service providers.

Family Dynamics

- Intergenerational conflict between youth and their parents.
- Immigrant and refugee youth act as interpreters or in place of parents (due to parents' limited English language skills).

Acculturation and Healthy Development

- Need for social supports to help immigrant and refugee children and youth succeed in school, maintain their mental health and acculturate.
- Importance of participation in recreational activities and challenges faced in doing so.

- Need for mentoring and leadership opportunities for immigrant and refugee children and youth.
- Immigrant and refugee children and youth experience discrimination, prejudice and racism.
- Need for more culturally appropriate resources, more interpreter services, more first language resources, more bilingual programs and more effective use of cultural brokers.
- Refugee children and youth require counseling support, language services, mental health support (short, medium and long-term), resources to address post traumatic stress, and study skills. Refugee children and youth may have limited literacy in their first language, limited or poor quality experiences with learning, and are living with a sense of loss at separation from family members and key caregivers.

Working Together

- The need to work collaboratively and form partnerships between schools, agencies, levels of government and community groups. The need for alignment and coordination of services provided by various parties.
- Importance of asking immigrant and refugee children and youth about the services they need.

Further Research

- Need for more longitudinal research and sharing of information of immigrant/refugee demographics and best practice evaluations to strengthen programs and services for immigrant and refugee children and youth.

The following themes were **unique to the literature review**:

- Need for wrap-around support services for learners.
- Factors influencing postsecondary achievement and supports for postsecondary success.
- Need for cultural diversity in teaching staff complement.
- Dental health of immigrant and refugee children and youth.

The following items were **unique to the responses of those interviewed for this study**:

- Lack of sufficient programs and other resources including funding for human, resources, programs and physical facilities.
- Stress caused by the need to repay Refugee Transportation Loan and this may result in youth being required to earn income which can interfere with schooling.
- Separation anxiety experienced by some parents as they send their children to school.

6.2 Suggestions for Further Consideration

Research

Alberta government departments that fund programs and services for immigrants and/or refugees may wish to establish a common data base that collects an array of demographic information on immigrant and refugee children and youth in Alberta. Once such demographic data has been compiled, it is important that this information be shared in a timely, accessible manner with all three levels of government, service providers, ethno cultural organizations, and other interested parties.

Funders of immigrant and refugee children and youth programs and services in Alberta should consider supporting longitudinal research studies of these target groups, particularly in regards to education, health, and employment. A review of current research on the effects of various aspects of health of immigrant and refugee children and youth would be timely.

Linkages with relevant research facilities at Alberta universities should be strengthened so that government departments and service providers are aware of current issues, trends and promising practices.

Working Collaboratively

Alberta government departments that fund programs and services for immigrants and/or refugees should consider establishing a formal, permanent cross-ministry committee focused specifically on immigrant and refugee children and youth.

Funders of services to immigrants and/or refugee children or youth are advised to actively encourage and fund program and service providers in the formation of regional and provincial intersectoral service models similar to Calgary's Care Strategy for Children and Youth of Immigrant Families. Such a model should develop strategies and implement intersectoral, system-wide coordination of services for immigrant and refugee children and youth.

Funders of programs and services aimed at immigrant and refugee children and youth need to support programs or services that provide wrap-around services through partnerships among program and service providers.

Funders of programs and services aimed at immigrant and refugee children and youth should focus on programs and services that support immigrant and refugee children and youth within the context of family and community.

Cultural Competency

Funders of programs and services for immigrant and refugee children and youth need to consider allocating funding for pre-service and in-service cultural competency training for educators, counsellors and other professionals working with immigrant and refugee children and youth and their families.

Needs of Refugee Children and Youth

Funders of programs and services for immigrant and refugee children and youth are strongly urged to work collaboratively in providing comprehensive, intensive and focused supports and resources to refugee children and youth in recognition of their pre-migration experiences which have frequently been psychologically traumatic and where their quality of education has often been poor or non-existent.

Mental Health Services

Funders of mental health services for immigrant and refugee children and youth are urged to ensure that immediate and ongoing mental health services for refugee and immigrant children and youth are available and accessible throughout Alberta.

Transitions to Schooling and Employment

Funders of employment and school to work transition programs should be looking at the provision of a broad array of comprehensive supports to enable the successful transition of immigrant and refugee children and youth from the K-12 education system to postsecondary studies and/or employment.

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8.0 APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

List of Interviewees

Name	Organization
Marijana Agicic	SAAMIS Immigration Services Association
Sarah Aimes	Lethbridge Family Services-Settlement
Lena Bengtsson	Immigrant Settlement Services
Alice Colak	Catholic Social Services – Edmonton
Roxanne Felix	Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers*
Donna Mae Ford	Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
Karen Gabert	Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
Hafsa Goma	Council for the Advancement of African Canadians
Jim Gurnett	Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
Patti Johnston	Alberta Children and Youth Services
Din Ladak	Immigrant Services Calgary
Joseph Luri	Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
Doreen Medway	Global Friendship Immigration Centre
Christina Nsaliwa	Edmonton Immigrant Services Association
Marian Rossiter	Department of Educational Psychology, University of Alberta
Carol Simpson	Centre for Newcomers
Beba Svirig	Calgary Immigrant Women's Association
Rispah Tremblay	Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers

*Based on availability and interest, a two hour focus group was held with Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers staff on June 11, 2008.

Appendix B

Interview Guide - Immigrant/Refugee Children and Youth Research Study

Alberta Employment and Immigration has contracted Emerging Directions Consulting Ltd. to conduct a research study on the challenges and needs facing immigrant and refugee children and youth in Alberta. The audience for the resultant research report includes senior managers at Alberta Employment and Immigration and other Alberta government ministries with an involvement and interest in immigration and related issues. Your participation in this research study is voluntary and will not affect your relationship with Alberta Employment and Immigration. Data collected will be aggregated for the purposes of analysis and your comments will be anonymous.

If you have further questions, please contact Shauna Summers, Manager, Settlement and Community Support, Alberta Employment and Immigration by e-mail at shauna.summers@gov.ab.ca or by phone at (780) 427-0004.

1. What do you see as the greatest challenges facing immigrant and refugee children and youth in Alberta?
 - 1a. Of the challenges you've identified, describe how these challenges differ, depending on whether or not a child or youth is a refugee.
2. What challenges are you experiencing when serving immigrant and refugee children and youth?
3. What do you think are the greatest needs of immigrant and refugee children and youth in Alberta?
 - 3a. Of the needs you've identified, describe how these needs differ, depending on whether or not a child or youth is a refugee.
4. What do you think are the major gaps in programs or resources for immigrant and refugee children and youth in Alberta?
5. What promising practices and programs do you know of that meet the needs of immigrant and refugee children and youth in Alberta?
6. Are you aware of any evaluations completed or in progress regarding these promising practices or programs? If so, who might we contact to obtain these evaluation studies?

7. What innovative solutions have you put into practice to meet the needs of immigrant and refugee children and youth?
8. Any final comments?

Appendix C1

Greatest Challenges Facing Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth in Alberta (Individual Responses)

Theme	Settlement Agencies' Representatives N=15	Non-Settlement Representatives N=3	TOTAL RESPONSES
Rural area and small towns do not have activities for immigrant and refugee children and youth outside school	1	0	1
Lack of services that support school activities.	1	0	1
Large cohorts of common ethnic/cultural origin can lead to isolation from mainstream culture.	1	0	1
Cultural diversity not reflected in teacher demographics.	1	0	1
Placed in ESL classes, even if they don't need them. It always occurs if they are visible minorities	1	0	1
Some need psychological assessments	1	0	1
Increase in single-parent, female-led households dues to marital breakdown/family violence	1	0	1
Parents and youth not understand justice system.	0	1	1
Parents lack time or means to transport children to organized events.	0	1	1
Families are afraid of what social services will do.	1	0	1
Strong peer pressure can lead to youth engaging in risky behaviors like drug/alcohol use, gangs	1	0	1
Low self esteem	0	1	1
Understanding the world of work	0	1	1
Low literacy skills affecting ability to gain employment.	1	0	1
Being involved in a positive manner with the broader community	1	0	1
Limited attachment to the broader community	1	0	1
Limited attachment to their own cultural community	1	0	1
Stressors that go with the migration and immigration process, including lack of extended family, family separation, culture shock, lack of social support, etc.	1	0	1
Refugee parents fear psychological assessment may create further challenges for their children (labelling, streaming out of programs, etc.)	0	1	1
Greater challenge integrating refugee children and youth into the classroom as have limited social skills.	1	0	1
Survival strategies learned in refugee camps (fighting, stealing, etc.) result in disciplinary actions in the school environment (suspension and/ or expulsion).	0	1	1
Crime related issues are coming almost completely from communities that are largely refugee population.	1	0	1

APPENDIX C2

Challenges that Service Providers Experience When Serving Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth (Individual Responses)

Theme	Settlement Agencies Reps N=15	Non-Settlement N=3	TOTAL RESPONSES
Parents may be overprotective and view the system as being against their child when there is trouble at school or elsewhere.	0	1	1
Mental health issues of parents.	1	0	1
Supports and services for both the children and their parents on issues like bullying, anger management, life skills, etc.	1	0	1
Staff needs training and support to communicate in culturally appropriate ways.	1	0	1
Hard to retain staff in youth programs due to low salaries.	1	0	1
Providing resources for activities, field trips and after school snacks	1	0	1
There is lack of funding particularly for older youth without enough time to complete high school.	1	0	1
Families waiting to access programs because children are on long waiting lists for child care.	1	0	1
Trust issues – it is important for them to work overtime with someone they trust and are familiar with	1	0	1
Funders can place barriers on serving immigrants as service providers can only focus on those they are funded for.	1	0	1
A need to make our programs more seamless for immigrant and refugee children and youth to access.	1	0	1
Securing adequate funding to provide quality, sustainable programs supporting children and youth to adapt to a new society.	1	0	1
More time is needed beyond three years to support the settlement process. It is an ongoing issue.	1	0	1
Balancing solutions that may work for all cultures with those that may only work best for one.	1	0	1
The need for increased professional development training of settlement workers to inform those lost to attrition and keep those who remain current.	1	0	1

APPENDIX C3

Gaps in Programs or Resources for Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth in Alberta (Individual Responses)

Theme	Settlement Agencies Reps N=15	Non-Settlement N=3	TOTAL RESPONSES
Settlement services in Alberta are adult oriented and we need to ensure children and youth are also supported.	1	0	1
Children and youth developmental assets need to be better recognized.	1	0	1
Translators who are not always culturally competent and vary in their fluency.	1	0	1
Lack of understanding about laws as well as common rules of conduct.	1	0	1
Schools and television teach children about their individual rights and this can cause tensions with their parents.	1	0	1
There is a wide variety of social and recreational programming going on in the city but is unconnected.	1	0	1
Meeting and interacting with others their own age outside of school.	1	0	1
Access to flexible and responsive education – better assessment and fast track options for youth.	1	0	1
Education	1	0	1
A sense of belonging	1	0	1
A sense of hope	1	0	1
Seeing positive role models	1	0	1
Employment	1	0	1
For older youth it is decent employment that provides reasonable income and that is satisfying.	1	0	1
Counselling and psychological services	1	0	1
More funding for current programs	1	0	1
Literacy support	1	0	1
More culturally responsive approach to substance abuse education	1	0	1
Life skills programs	1	0	1
Culturally appropriate support for pregnant immigrant and refugee teens	1	0	1
Supportive counselling for immigrant and refugee children and youth	1	0	1
Lack of funding for youth in transition from school to work.	1	0	1
Supportive services that entire families can access	1	0	1
Special shelters for refugee children and youth facing mental health issues.	1	0	1
Transportation to and from activities	1	0	1
Inconsistency in service provision	1	0	1
Lack of data collection and research on adjustment factors and outcomes for immigrant and refugee children and youth	1	0	1

APPENDIX C3 (cont.)

Gaps in Programs or Resources for Immigrant and Refugee Children and Youth in Alberta (Individual Responses)

Theme	Settlement Agencies Reps N=15	Non-Settlement N=3	TOTAL RESPONSES
Welcoming support initiatives.			
Find ways of celebrating immigrant/refugee youth and providing them for leadership opportunities and to develop self esteem	1	0	1
Website so that front line service providers know what programs and services are available for immigrant and refugee children and youth	1	0	1
A period of time for refugee youth to spend in settlement immersion, providing them a solid foundation in Canadian culture, society, values, how things are done here, etc.	1	0	1
A research institute focused on immigrant and refugee settlement.	1	0	1
Homework support programs with children and their parents learning together	1	0	1
Leadership training geared to immigrant youth.	0	1	1
Education programs about racism that begin in Grade One	1	0	1
Need for more teachers with diverse backgrounds and cultures	1	0	1
Access to flexible and responsive education	1	0	1
No services for immigrants and refugees who make Alberta their secondary migration point.	1	0	1
Prevention and basic services for children of temporary foreign workers	0	1	1