

# Safe and Caring Schools for Newcomer Students



**A guide for teachers**

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# *Safe and Caring Schools for Newcomer Students—A Guide for Teachers*

Throughout Canada's history, immigrants from around the world have come here seeking religious freedom, economic prosperity and escape from political persecution, civil strife and even war. Regardless of why people are here and whether they are recent newcomers or longtime citizens, their children need to succeed in school. This means providing safe, caring and inclusive environments that build understanding, promote empathy and foster respect for everyone.

While most Canadians appreciate what cultural, ethnic, racial and linguistic groups have to offer, sometimes these differences have been the source of misinformation, misunderstanding and even conflict. It is not uncommon for students who are new to the country to become victims of discrimination, bullying and harassment simply because they are unable to communicate, don't understand cultural conventions or look different. This is far more likely to occur in schools that have not taught and reinforced respect for diversity.

Newcomer<sup>1</sup> families come to Canada representing a broad spectrum of ethnicities, cultures and races. For the children of newcomer families, adjusting to life in Canada can be extremely challenging. Children must often learn a new language, make new friends, learn new cultural norms and sometimes deal with issues related to troubling or traumatic past experiences. As the demographic face of Canada changes, teachers must be proactive in helping all students understand each other's worldviews, cultures, traditions and celebrations so that respect is fostered between all groups and conflict is significantly reduced.

This booklet serves as a guide for teachers in creating safe, caring and inclusive environments that teach all students to respect and value the cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity represented by the newcomer student population. It will help teachers understand the unique circumstances of their newcomer students, offer strategies to assist in dealing with their unique needs and provide resources for gaining more information.

Many of the issues identified in this booklet were collected and documented by the authors in their work with immigrant children. They conducted specific research studies, worked with children in focus-group encounters and gained insights that contributed to their collective experiential knowledge.

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<sup>1</sup> The term *newcomer* refers to people who are classed as immigrant or refugee according to Statistics Canada. Generally, the children of newcomer families are first generation in Canada.

# *The First Day at School*

Ulemu was six years old when she and her family left their home country eight years ago. For five years prior to coming to Canada, her family had lived in a refugee camp. During that time, Ulemu did not go to school. When the family arrived in Canada, 11-year-old Ulemu was placed in a mainstream grade 7 class, despite the fact that she could not read or write in her first language or in English.

On her first day at school, Ulemu and her mother walked down the hallway. She scanned the hallway for someone familiar, but what she saw was an ocean of fair-colored faces. She could feel other students looking at and whispering about her and her mother. When two girls uttered words she didn't understand and pointed at her clothes, she deeply regretted wearing the traditional dress her mother had suggested.

When they arrived at the classroom, Ulemu gestured to her mother to leave. Her mother gave her a hug and walked slowly away. Ulemu's heart pounded as she opened the door and stepped into the classroom. The teacher smiled at her and spoke a few words to the students in the class. Ulemu had no idea what the words meant, but she knew that they were about her.

The teacher turned to her and spoke slowly and somewhat louder than she had anticipated. She gestured for Ulemu to sit in an empty seat several rows away. As Ulemu walked past the other students, she again looked for a friendly face. This time her eyes caught the smile of a girl who appeared to come from her part of the world. She smiled back and hoped that the girl would talk to her after class.

The teacher wrote a sequence of words on the blackboard, and the other students took notes. Ulemu pulled out a pencil and a notepad. She wondered if she should pretend to write on it. Would someone know that she didn't know how to write?

# *What newcomer students have said about their school experiences*

The authors of this book wanted to know firsthand newcomer students' impressions and experiences in school. The following anecdotes tell a powerful story. They were documented by the authors in informal discussions with students.

Students revealed the following:

- Teachers sometimes discredited their efforts. For example, a number of students said that when they did well on assignments or tests, it was not uncommon for teachers to question them and imply that they did not do the work independently. Often, they were given lower or failing grades.
- Teachers failed to recognize or value their prior knowledge, skills and competencies.
- Teachers stereotyped them. For example, they assumed that all students from Africa or Asia would share the same culture, language, common cultural norms and experiences.
- Teachers questioned their parents' child-rearing practices and judged their parents to be backward or abusive. For example, when newcomer students told teachers about their responsibilities at home, such as chores, the teachers suggested that the children were being exploited and denied a normal childhood. The students believed that working along side their parents taught them responsibility.

## *Some Statistics*

With the exception of the First Nations people, all Canadians are immigrants or descendants of immigrants. About 17 percent of Canada's population is foreign-born, a figure that has remained relatively constant since the early 1950s (Fleras and Elliott 2002).

Close to 130,000 immigrants have settled in Alberta (mainly in Edmonton and Calgary) over the last decade, nearly one in five of them children. Almost 70 percent of the children had no knowledge of English when they came (*The ATA News*, February 25, 2003, p.#3).

- ESL students have the highest dropout rates, ranging from 61 to 74 percent. The average provincial dropout rate is approximately 34 percent.
- ESL students in grades 3, 6 and 9 are 13.4 to 32.5 percentage points behind the general student population in language arts. ESL students are also 1.4 to 10.6 percent behind students with severe disabilities.

## ***Factors to consider when newcomer students arrive***

A newcomer student's life experiences can dramatically affect his or her ability to learn and to become part of the school. The following factors should be taken into account when teachers are assessing competencies and determining needs of newcomer students. While some newcomer students adjust to school relatively easily, many experience difficulties based on a number of factors. These factors are as follows:

- ***The country of origin's history/political situation.*** Some students come from countries that have stable regimes while others do not. In countries where extreme political turmoil is commonplace, many children have experienced extreme trauma such as genocidal warfare, civil strife, torture of family members or life in refugee camps. These experiences can leave children withdrawn, distrustful, afraid and sometimes aggressive.
- ***Exposure to prior formal schooling.*** Some students may have had an appropriate level of formal schooling while others may have had little or no education—some may not even be literate in their own language. Some students may have experienced so much disruption in their schooling that their educational attainment is below grade-level. Placing students at the appropriate level is difficult because their chronological age differs from the grade level to which they are assigned.

- ***Parents' educational background.*** Some students may have parents who hold degrees and credentials and are well-educated; others' parents have little or no formal education. Parents' personal school experiences can affect their involvement in the school, comfort level in approaching school authorities and confidence in helping their child learn. Parental support is a significant factor in a student's successful integration into school.
- ***Parents' knowledge of English (or French).*** If parents are not literate in English (or French), they may not be able to respond appropriately to official notices, read newsletters or communicate effectively in parent-teacher conferences. Sometimes, teachers and administrators mistakenly assume that parents do not care about their children's education when, in fact, the opposite is true. In some countries, parents see schooling as strictly the responsibility of the teachers and as a result, are reluctant to ask questions, offer suggestions or seek information.
- ***Proficiency in English (or French).*** Some students may already know how to speak, read and write English (or French), while others may have little or no knowledge of Canada's official languages. Fitting in, making friends and learning are especially challenging for students who do not know the language.
- ***Inappropriate placements.*** Sometimes it is difficult to place students with their peer group. Factors such as age, background and competency affect grade placements. When older students are placed in classes that are age-appropriate but too difficult academically, they become frustrated and discouraged and may even drop out. If they are placed with students who are younger, they can feel embarrassed and incompetent. In both cases, student achievement, socialization and self-esteem can be negatively affected.
- ***Lack of knowledge or familiarity with the school's routines and culture.*** Sometimes students enter schools without an adequate orientation to school routines, social customs and traditions, use of school facilities and equipment, and so on. Misunderstandings and faux pas can result in confusion, embarrassment, avoidance and even ridicule.

- ***Experiences with Canadian teaching and learning styles.*** Generally, older students who have had some schooling before they came to Canada find it more difficult to adjust to the teaching and learning styles common here. For example, teaching strategies that use questioning, inquiry, experiential activities and assertive expression may be foreign to them. Students may be accustomed to rote learning or lectures. Conversely, they may be used to cooperative learning and sharing and may find it difficult to relate to the individualistic and highly competitive practices that pervade Canadian classrooms. Younger newcomer children who have not attended school usually adjust more easily.
- ***Classroom behavioral expectations.*** Students may have varying perceptions of the role of the teacher. For example, in some cultures, to voice an opinion or to question the teacher indicates disrespect. As a result, students may not feel comfortable in approaching the teacher to discuss problems or ask for help.
- ***The impact of leaving home.*** Some children and youth come to Canada overwhelmed by the loss of friends, family members and community. In some circumstances, these losses are compounded by loss through trauma. Frequently, it is hard for these students to communicate their losses while being expected to learn a new language, adopt new customs and do well in school.

## *What are the impacts?*

If there are no effective interventions to help students cope with the above circumstances, the following reactions can occur. Students may

- have trouble forming positive relationships with teachers and other students,
- become aggressive and angry,
- present psychological disorders such as depression or post-traumatic stress disorder,
- feel alienated and rejected,
- seek to belong by joining antisocial peer groups such as gangs,
- engage in high-risk behaviors and substance abuse,
- have a very negative view of and attitude toward schooling in general, and
- become overachievers and focus exclusively on studies to the exclusion of other activities.

It is important to understand that not all students will react the same way. While some will have problems, others will be resilient, cope well and adjust with few difficulties.

# *Useful Terms*

## ***Assimilation***

A process resulting in the adoption of the main attributes (such as language, dress, customs, attitudes, values and lifestyle) of the dominant culture. The process results in the loss of one's distinctive ethnic and cultural identity.

## ***Barriers***

Obstacles that prevent newcomer students from actively participating in the school. The most common barriers are language and cultural differences; however, barriers can also include school practices and policies that reflect discriminatory beliefs and attitudes.

## ***Cultural Competence***

A process in which an individual or agency continuously strives to work effectively within the cultural context of an individual, family or community from a different cultural background (Bacote-Camphina1991).

## ***Culturally Competent Teaching Practice***

Pedagogy that fosters respect and empathy to people of all cultures, classes, races, religions and ethnic backgrounds. It recognizes, affirms and values the worth of individuals, families and communities.

## ***Culture***

The unique system of beliefs, attitudes, customs and behaviors that identify a particular group. Cultural norms guide behavior and determine thoughts and actions. Culture contributes to social and physical survival.

## ***Discrimination***

Unjust practice or behavior (intentional or unintentional) based on race, religious beliefs, color, gender, physical and/or mental disability, marital status, family status, source of income, age, ancestry, place of origin or sexual orientation that has a negative effect on an individual or group (Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission 2001).

### ***Ethnocentrism***

The tendency to view reality from one's own perspective. Implies the belief that one's own culture is superior to others'. Ethnocentric attitudes interfere with one's capacity to be empathetic, non-judgmental and understanding. Ethnocentric people tend to judge others by what is considered normal by their own standards. Ethnocentrism fosters *us* and *them* attitudes and can reinforce the dominance of the majority.

### ***Immigrant***

Any person born outside Canada regardless of citizenship or permanent resident status. Immigrants include those who are seeking family reunification or improvement in economic status. Refugees are one category of immigrants.

### ***Integration***

A policy or process that incorporates minorities into the mainstream culture, allowing for their adaptation and acceptance without the loss of their cultural identity. The concept of integration as a technique for managing newcomer and ethnic relations can be used in two ways. First, integration involves a set of policy ideals and practices that oppose the principles of segregation or separation. As policy or process, integration is concerned with incorporating once-excluded minorities into the mainstream as formally equal. Second, integration involves a process of fusion of differences to create a new entity. Unlike assimilation, which involves a one-way process of minority compliance or conformity with majority beliefs and practices, integration allows the adaptation and acceptance of the minority without sacrifice of its cultural identity (Fleras and Elliott 2002, 270).

### ***Marginalization***

Exclusion from the mainstream events, activities and/or decision-making of the dominant culture. Being marginalized may create feelings of alienation, lowered self-esteem and anger. People who are marginalized often lack resources and institutional support.

## ***Multiculturalism***

In Canada, the official policy of living together with differences. Multiculturalism affirms and honors ethnic and cultural diversity.

## ***Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)***

A neuropsychiatric disorder triggered when a memory related to a traumatic event is stimulated. The individual experiences changes in emotional, behavioral and physiological functioning.

## ***Prejudice***

An unfounded opinion, judgment or belief about the *other*. Prejudice is based on unsupported assumptions, stereotypes, inaccurate information or preconceived ideas about individuals or groups. Prejudices are often inflexible and irrational. Prejudicial beliefs and attitudes are used to justify acts of discrimination.

## ***Racism***

The belief that one racial or ethnic group is inferior to another and that unequal treatment is therefore justified. Two perspectives on the meaning of racism are as follows:

- Racism involves practices (legal, social and economic) that put people who are perceived as inferior at a disadvantage while maintaining the power of the race considered superior.  
(Prejudice + Power = Racism)
- Racism is the unequal treatment of people of different colors. Power is not a factor in this definition.

Racism may be expressed individually or institutionally.

## ***Refugee***

A special category of immigrants. A refugee is a person who flees a country to escape danger or persecution. In Canada, the federal Department of Citizenship and Immigration resettles, protects and provides a safe haven for refugees.

***Settlement***

The first stage in the integration process. For students, the first stage is to feel a sense of belonging. The process is two-way in that it requires everyone in the environment to grow and change to create the sense of belonging.

***Xenophobe***

A person who fears outsiders, strangers or anyone considered outside the dominant group. Discriminatory actions, both subtle and overt, are usually founded on xenophobic beliefs.

# *Common Misconceptions*

Based on extensive consultations with newcomer students and their parents and on research, the following common misconceptions were identified.

***Newcomer children from non-European countries will have lower achievement, be less creative and lack literacy skills compared with students of European ancestry.***

Sometimes there are factors that negatively influence newcomer students' success. This misconception is validated when they appear to lag behind their classmates of European ancestry. Inadequate language skills, stress or traumatic experiences, not lack of ability, usually account for lower achievement. The assumption that newcomer students are low achievers and have less potential to learn is simply not true. Evaluations of their potential abilities need to take these factors into account.

***All children respond with similar cultural cues.***

Children's responses may vary according to their culture. To a teacher, the newcomer students' responses may seem inappropriate, rude or disrespectful. For example, some teachers think that non-verbal signals such as not making eye contact indicate lack of respect. However, in some cultures, this indicates a sign of respect for authority figures. *Yes* or *no* responses may be irrelevant in some cultures where the context determines the appropriateness of a yes or no answer. When teachers lack awareness of different cultural cues, they may misunderstand a new student's signals and responses. Sometimes the teacher administers a consequence that is perceived by the student as unfair, confusing and punitive.

***If a student doesn't know English (or French) they are slower.***

Many newcomer students require English or French-as-a-second language programs. Their difficulties with English or French have little to do with their intelligence but a lot to do with their ability to learn. Helping students who are learning both a new language and new subject matter requires patience and empathy.

# *When newcomer students have experienced trauma, torture or war*

While most newcomer students have not experienced torture, oppression or war in their home countries, many who have come as refugees have had these experiences. When individuals or their families have experienced physical and psychological torture, they can become traumatized. This means that they feel intense fear, terror and helplessness.<sup>1</sup> The most disturbing effects of torture occur when it happens directly or indirectly to children. In the 20th century, children have increasingly become the targets of oppressive regimes. It is alarming to comprehend the magnitude of the phenomenon—half the world’s refugee population are children.

Children can be affected by torture in three ways: witnessing or experiencing torture, living with family members who were victims of torture and or living in violent social conditions that have come to seem normal.

**1. *Personal trauma:*** Children are affected directly when they experience or witness kidnapping, rape, forced labor and executions. It is especially traumatic when they see these extreme forms of violence inflicted on their parents.

**2. *Family trauma:*** The traumas resulting from torture can have a variety of effects on the whole family, even when only one person has been the direct victim. Parents who have been victims of torture may be able to hide the outward signs, but often they are affected in other ways. They may feel preoccupied, depressed, anxious and/or mournful. Sometimes traumatic experiences affect their ability to care for their children and help them in school.

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<sup>1</sup>Physical and psychological torture is used to obtain information, punish dissenters, or intimidate or coerce third parties.

**3. Social trauma:** Children and youth can become desensitized when social tension is a constant, such as in situations of war. A climate of ongoing violence often produces generalized feelings of insecurity and uncertainty in children.

## ***Effects of trauma on children***

For any person, a traumatic event such as the torture, murder, rape or disappearance of a loved one is extremely difficult to deal with. Children and youth who have lived in traumatic situations may exhibit a wide range of symptoms. The intensity of the symptoms depends on the nature and duration of the trauma, the child's developmental stage, the child's gender, the family dynamics, the child's personality and the level of support received following the incident. Some possible symptoms experienced by children and youth after trauma are as follows:

- Regression both behaviorally and academically
- Denial that the situation really happened
- Recurring fears, worries or nightmares
- Sleep disturbances
- Eating difficulties
- Regression emotionally or acting younger than their chronological age
- Becoming more clinging, unhappy and needy of parental attention and comfort
- Feelings of irritability, anger, sadness or guilt
- Somatic complaints such as headaches, stomachaches or sweating
- Repeatedly reliving the trauma by acting it out in play or dreams
- Avoiding all reminders of the trauma by withdrawing from others, refusing to discuss their feelings, or avoiding activities that remind them of the people or places associated with the trauma
- Some loss of interest in school, misbehavior and poor concentration

Young children may have recurring nightmares and trouble differentiating reality from fantasy. They may lose their ability to trust others and become anxious, insecure and perceive every aspect of the world as unsafe and frightening.

Youth's experiences may be even more profound than these anxieties experienced by children. Some as young as 12 may have been coerced into combat roles.

While many students who are new immigrants to Canada share the challenge of learning English or French and adjusting to life in Canada, for those who have escaped violent regimes the struggle to come to terms with past experiences is also daunting. Often, children and youth who have experienced extreme trauma received little attention at the time of the ordeal and have had to deal with the experience on their own. Parents may have been preoccupied with providing for the family's survival and still be dealing with their own traumas. Families often rely on the teenaged children to mediate language and cultural barriers. A student's role as the family's go-between can place tremendous pressure on him or her because traditional family roles are reversed.

Marlinda Freire, chief psychiatrist with the Toronto District School Board and assistant professor in the Department of Psychiatry in the University of Toronto's Faculty of Medicine, argues that refugee children of traumatized parents are at the highest risk of failure in school. She says that schools are ill equipped to deal with refugee children and that many believe that having a good ESL program is enough. "If these children display 'acting behaviors' that disturb the well-being of the classroom situation, they may be referred to social workers, psychologists, or psychiatrists for evaluation. If these children are compliant, apathetic, withdrawn, passive, or depressed, they will likely be referred for evaluation of their emotional difficulties, even though they may not be learning."<sup>3</sup>

However, given the right supports, these challenges can be overcome, enabling the youth to thrive.

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<sup>3</sup> Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture and National Mental Health and Education Center Website.

# *What can I do in the classroom?*

Given the appropriate support, sensitivity and understanding by teachers and other authorities, newcomer children and youth can learn to deal with new and challenging experiences. Recognizing diversity among newcomer students is critical in developing successful strategies for working with them and their families. Seek to develop a caring, safe, inclusive and nurturing environment. For students to achieve academically and adjust socially, it is important to develop a sense of trust and confidence, build their self-esteem and help them deal with anger or other troubling issues.

**1. *Model respect.*** Students take cues from the teacher's reactions to student questions and responses to inappropriate behavior. Students quickly pick up on nuances that suggest respect or disrespect, and they will respond in kind.

**2. *Engage in personal reflection on your own biases that may reinforce stereotypes.*** Overcome your own biases by becoming more sensitive and knowledgeable about puzzling cultural differences. Develop cross-cultural communication skills. Listen carefully to students to indicate that you are responsive and caring. Some newcomer students may have difficulty expressing themselves and being assertive in the classroom. In addition, parents' and children's respect for authority in general and for teachers in particular may inhibit them from voicing or discussing problems.

**3. *Select classroom resources that are culturally relevant*** so that students can construct meaning based on previous experiences. For example, find stories and information relevant to a student's background and integrate these into subject-specific curricula. Parents, community members and students can provide ideas for culturally relevant resources and may even offer suggestions to improve the effectiveness of the instruction.

**4. *Provide opportunities for students to share their own cultural traditions and beliefs.*** Do this in a way that does not single a student out or suggest that he or she is an authority on their home country. Consider peer-teaching opportunities that link similar curriculum outcomes at various levels. For example, provide opportunities for senior high social studies students to prepare resources or to be guest speakers in elementary or junior high classes.

**5. *Use teaching strategies that consider culture.*** Understanding the core beliefs and experiences of the students' cultures not only improves thinking but also positively influences attitudes. Assess students' learning styles to determine which teaching strategies will be most effective. Select teaching strategies that maximize bicultural exchanges.

**6. *Invite parent participation and use community resources for classroom activities.*** Encourage families to get involved in the school so that they can reinforce learning at home. Recognize that many families come from cultures where teachers are accorded great authority and where family involvement in schooling is considered rude and disrespectful. Communicate with families in person but remember that written communication assumes proficiency in English. Increase and encourage opportunities for social networking between the school, home and community.

**7. *Impart a worldview that promotes a positive, self-sufficient future for everyone.*** No group should be denied the right to self-determination.

**8. *Encourage cross-grade mentoring between mainstream and newcomer students in schools and community.*** Recognize that each group has a contribution to make in the mentorship relationship. Ask former newcomer students to help newer ones.

**9. *Support cultural and community connections.*** When students see the benefits of education for themselves and their community, they have an incentive to do well in school.

**10. *Promote a sense of belonging*** by providing meaningful participation in the early stages of the integration process. This involves providing all students with opportunities to work together. This participation builds confidence, establishes a positive self-identity, develops new skills and helps students gain a sense of control. As a result, students feel valued, respected and supported.

**11. *Understand the importance of promoting equity, rather than equality.***

Equity recognizes the need to provide greater attention and guidance to some. Resource allocation may not be equal as a result. The outcome of equity practices is that all students have an equal opportunity to succeed because individual differences have been taken into account.

# ***What Can the School Do?***

**1. *Develop orientation programs*** to help newcomer students and their families become acquainted with the expectations for students and their families and to help them understand the responsibilities of the school with regard to their needs. Ask former newcomer students to assist in the process of designing an orientation program. Ask them to identify aspects of school life that perplexed them when they arrived. Typically, these are procedures, traditions, school routines, social customs, grading systems, use of school facilities and so on. Where possible, involve them in delivering the orientation to the new students.

**2. *Make provision for individual academic support.*** Some newcomer students have experienced disrupted schooling and, as a result their educational attainment is below grade-level. This is especially true for older students. Tutoring or mentorship programs can make a big difference. Irena Struk, originally from Bosnia, experienced loneliness and academic challenges when she came to Alberta 10 years ago. She has now established a homework club for immigrant children in Edmonton. The club offers two types of programs based on age groupings. The program is run by volunteers and student teachers. It is effective in providing the one-on-one attention that teachers with large classes simply can't provide.

**3. *Invite members of the various communities who are not necessarily parents to become involved in the school as translators, cultural interpreters or brokers.*** This will help both teachers and students develop better understanding of the different communities and their cultures.

**4. *Maintain qualified English-and French-as-a-second-language (ESL or FSL) teachers*** who have formal training and know how to adequately address the complex learning needs of ESL/FSL students. Avoid replacing teacher with teacher's assistants or school aides. Where possible use the latter to assist ESL/FSL teachers.

***5. Promote and encourage opportunities for social networking and meaningful connections between the school, home and community.***

For example, arrange to have the school choir sing in an important community celebration. This experience offers cross-cultural learning for everyone.

***6. Ensure that administrative support is available.*** Consider establishing policies to accommodate varying family needs, maintain a welcoming and participatory atmosphere, and support staff-development programs with appropriate resources and adequate funding. Support families by promoting and recommending literacy programs, vocational training, language programs and medical, legal and other social services information.

***7. Hire teachers from diverse backgrounds.*** It is important for students to see people from their own cultures integrated into mainstream institutions. These teachers serve as positive role models and can provide special assistance.

***8. Recruit people from newcomer communities to become part of the certified staff or serve as volunteers.*** Their presence increases the potential positive influence of adult role models. Ideally, the staff and volunteers should reflect the diversity in the student population.

***9. Conduct staff training in cultural awareness and cultural competency.*** Provide professional development opportunities for teachers to learn more about their students' cultures. Encourage participation in processes for teachers to develop self-awareness, sensitivity, attitudes, knowledge and skills needed to work effectively with and on behalf of students, parents and communities representing diverse ethnic and cultural groups.

***10. Conduct a short, on-site microworkshop that examines case studies featuring the school experiences of newcomer students.*** Go to [www.teachers.ab.ca/safe/index.html](http://www.teachers.ab.ca/safe/index.html). Click on Secondary Lesson Plans and Strategies, then Workshops to find Micro-Workshop 6: Newcomer Student's School Experiences: Examining Case Studies.

***11. Support curriculum changes and revisions that foster respect for, appreciation of and understanding of all cultures, races, religions and so on.***

These formal curriculum supports help students understand that their perspectives are valued.

***12. Support policies to secure adequate funding*** so that newcomer students receive adequate support in adjusting to and integrating meaningfully into Canadian society.

***13. Assess and monitor academic progress.*** Implement policies and practices that provide regular assessment of newcomer students' progress. Use diagnostic tools to identify areas for improvement.

***14. Ensure that your school counsellor and librarian*** are familiar with community resources and services available for new families. This enables them to provide information on services and resources that new families can access to facilitate their integration into the community.

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Fleras, A. and J. L. Elliott. (2002). *Engaging diversity: Multiculturalism in Canada*. Toronto, Ont.: Nelson Thomson Learning.

# Resources for teachers

## Websites

### **Citizenship and Immigration Canada**

[www.cic.gc.ca/](http://www.cic.gc.ca/)

Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) was established in 1994 to link immigration services with citizenship registration, to promote the unique ideals all Canadians share and to help build a stronger Canada.

### **Cool Planet for Kids/Teachers**

[www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/index.html](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet/index.html)

Provides high-quality educational packages, including homework ideas, activities and educational resources for teaching world issues.

### **Map of the World's Refugees**

[www.unhrc.ch/world/world.htm](http://www.unhrc.ch/world/world.htm)

A United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees site that illustrates where the world's refugees are located.

### **National Forum 2000–War-Affected Children**

[www.swil.ocdsb.edu.on.ca/warandchildren/](http://www.swil.ocdsb.edu.on.ca/warandchildren/)

A high school teacher’s guide to teaching about war-affected children that includes activities to introduce the topic, test students’ newly acquired knowledge and facilitate teaching new concepts and data, as well as a link to student projects.

### **UNHCR–For Teachers**

[www.unhcr.ch/teach/teach.htm](http://www.unhcr.ch/teach/teach.htm)

A site that helps teachers introduce refugee-related issues. Provides links to some of the major international and regional websites and databases in the field of child welfare and children’s rights.

### **United Nations CyberSchoolBus**

[www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/](http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/)

A global teaching and learning site, offering project, curriculum and resource material, information on events, activities and more.

### **Voices of Youth–The Teachers’ Place**

[www.unicef.org/voy/research/reshome.html](http://www.unicef.org/voy/research/reshome.html)

Provides resources, discussion forums and networking opportunities for those involved in education for development (EDEV).

### **Coalition for Equal Access to Education**

[www.eslaction.com/concerns\\_cbe.htm](http://www.eslaction.com/concerns_cbe.htm)

Formed in the 1990s, the coalition consists of individuals, community groups and organizations who share a collective vision of “an accountable, culturally competent public education system with quality, equitable education for all children regardless of cultural background, first language or color.”

## ***Books and Tapes***

*Support from the Heart.* (video and discussion guide) (22 minutes)–  
Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op.

Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission. (2001). *Information sheets on specific human rights topics.* Edmonton: Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission.

Fleras, A. and J. L. Elliott. (2002). *Engaging diversity: Multiculturalism in Canada.* Toronto, Ont.: Nelson Thomson Learning.

# *Connections and Support in the Community*

## *Edmonton*

ASSIST Community Services Centre  
9653 105A Avenue  
Edmonton, AB  
T5H 0M3  
Phone: (780) 429-3111

Canadian Heritage Citizenship and  
Canadian Identity, Multiculturalism  
Programs  
1630, 9700 Jasper Avenue  
Edmonton, AB  
T5J 4C4  
Phone: (780) 495-6994

Catholic Social Services  
8815 99 Street  
Edmonton, AB  
T6E 303  
Phone: (780) 432-1137

Catholic Social Services  
Community and Immigration  
Language Assessment  
Referral and Counseling Centre  
10709 105 Street  
Edmonton, AB  
T5H 2X3  
Phone: (780) 424-0175

Centralized Interpreter Services  
20, 9912 106 Street  
Edmonton, AB  
T5K 1C5  
Phone: (780) 448-2627

Changing Together—A Centre for  
Immigrant Women  
103, 10010 107A Avenue  
Edmonton, AB  
T5H 4H8  
Phone: (780) 421-0175

Edmonton Immigrant Services  
Association  
Cromdate School  
11240 79 Street  
Edmonton, AB  
T5B 2K1  
Phone: (780) 474-8445

Edmonton Viets Association  
102, 10534 109 Street  
Edmonton, AB  
T5H 3B2

Jewish Family Services  
502, 10339 124 Street  
Edmonton, AB  
T5N 3W1  
Phone: (780) 454-1194

Mennonite Centre for Newcomers  
101, 10010 107A Avenue  
Edmonton, AB  
T5H 4H8  
Phone: (780) 424-7709

Millwoods Welcome Centre for  
Immigrants  
201, 8704 51 Avenue  
Edmonton AB  
T6H 5E8  
Phone: (780) 462-6924  
Phone: (780) 471-4477

Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op  
10867 97 Street  
Edmonton, AB  
T5H 2M6  
Phone: (780) 430-6253

## ***Calgary***

Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youths  
4112 4 Street NW  
Calgary, AB  
T2K 1A2  
Phone: (703) 230-7745

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society  
12th Floor, 910 7 Avenue SW  
Calgary, AB  
T2P 3N8  
Phone: (403) 265-1120

Calgary Chinese Community Service  
Association (CCCSA)  
108, 197 1 Street SW  
Calgary, AB  
T2P 4M4  
Phone: (403) 265-8446

Calgary Immigrant Women's  
Association  
300, 750 11 Street SW  
Calgary, AB  
T2P 3N7  
Phone: (403) 263-4414

Calgary Mennonite Centre for  
Newcomers  
200, 3517 17 Avenue SE  
Calgary, AB  
T2A 0R5  
Phone: (403) 569-0409

Calgary Vietnamese Canadian  
Association  
Bay 317, 4909 17 Avenue SE  
Calgary, AB  
T2A 0V5  
Phone: (403) 272-4668

Jewish Family Services  
200, 4014 Macleod Trail South  
Calgary, AB  
T2G 2R7  
Phone: (403) 287-3510

## ***Red Deer***

Catholic Social Services Immigration  
and Settlement Programs  
202, 5000 Gaetz Avenue  
Red Deer, AB  
T4N 6C2

Central Alberta Immigrant Women's  
Association  
208, 4836 Ross Street  
Red Deer, AB  
T4N 1X4  
Phone: (403) 341-3553

Central Alberta Refugee Effort  
(CARE) Committee  
202, 5000 Gaetz Avenue  
Red Deer, AB  
T4N 6C2  
Phone: (403) 346-8818

Language and Employment Programs  
Phone: (403) 347-8844

Settlement Program  
Phone: (403) 346-7055

## ***Grande Prairie***

Immigrant Settlement Services  
(The Reading Network)  
Grande Prairie Regional College  
9920 100 Avenue (Lower Level)  
Grande Prairie, AB  
T8V 0T9  
Phone: (780) 538-4363

## ***Fort McMurray***

YMCA—Immigrant Settlement Office  
200, 9913 Biggs Avenue  
Fort McMurray, AB  
T9H 1S2  
Phone: (780) 743-2970

## ***Government of Canada—Canada Immigration Centres Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)***

1-800-465-7735

Ask for phone numbers in your region  
Re: Multiculturalism, Programming  
and Heritage

### **Canadian Heritage**

Citizenship and Canadian Identity,  
Multiculturalism  
1630, Canada Place  
9700 Jasper Avenue  
Edmonton, AB  
T5J 4C3  
Phone: (780) 495-5622

### **Canadian Heritage Calgary**

520, Harry Hays Building  
220 4 Avenue SE  
Calgary, AB  
T2G 4X3  
Phone: (403) 292-4950

### **Edmonton**

Phone: 1-888-242-2100  
Fax: (780) 890-7899  
Edmonton International Airport  
Phone: (780) 890-4355

### **Calgary**

Phone: 1-888-242-2100  
Fax: (403) 292-6843  
Calgary International Airport  
Phone: (403) 292-5724  
Fax: (403) 292-6844

### **Lethbridge**

Phone: 1-888-242-2100  
Fax: (403) 382-3163

# The ATA's Safe and Caring Schools (SACS) Resources



The ATA's Safe and Caring Schools Project's resources and materials are available through Alberta Learning's Resources Centre (LRC), 12360 142 St. NW, Edmonton, Alberta, T5L 4X9. Tel: 427-5775 in Edmonton. Elsewhere in Alberta call 310-0000 and ask for the LRC or fax (780) 422-9750. To place Internet orders, visit [www.lrc.learning.gov.ab.ca](http://www.lrc.learning.gov.ab.ca) \*These materials are eligible for the Learning Resources Credit Allocation (25% discount). Contact the LRC for details.

The ATA's SACS Project has four program areas and an inventory of promotional items:

## I. SUPPORTING A SAFE AND CARING SCHOOL

This program area helps build a SACS culture. It includes information about SACS, an assessment tool to aid in planning and quick, easy-to-read booklets that review current research on SACS topics and successful programs.

**Safe and Caring Schools in Alberta Presentation:** video, overheads and 30 brochures

Q # 455297 \$15.00

**The ATA's Safe and Caring Schools Project: An Overview (K-12)** (Pkg of 30) Describes the origin and objectives of the project (2001, 4 pp.)

Q # 445298 \$ 6.80

**Attributes of a Safe and Caring School (K-12)** (Pkg of 30) A brochure for elementary, junior and senior high schools, describing the characteristics of a safe and caring school (1999)

Q # 445313 \$ 6.80

**The ATA's Safe and Caring Schools Project: Elementary Booklet Series (16 booklets)** (K-6) (see LRC website)

Q # 445610 \$11.50

**The ATA's Safe and Caring Schools Project: Secondary Booklet Series (15 booklets)** (7-12) (see LRC website)

Q # 445628 \$10.80

**Preschool Bullying: What You Can Do About It—A Guide for Parents and Caregivers (1-6)** Provides advice on what parents can do if their child is being bullied or is bullying others (2000, 24 pp.)

Q # 445347 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

**Bullying: What You Can Do About It—A Guide for Primary Level Students (K-3)** Contains stories and exercises to help children deal with bullies and to stop bullying others (1999, 28 pp.)

Q # 445397 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

**Bullying: What You Can Do About It—A Guide for Parents and Teachers of Primary Level Students** Contains tips to help teachers and parents identify and respond to children who are involved in bullying (2000, 12 pp.)

Q # 445454 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

**Bullying: What You Can Do About It—A Guide for Upper-Elementary Students and Their Parents** Directed at students who are the victims, witnesses or perpetrators of bullying, and their parents (2000, 16 pp.)

Q # 445321 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

**Bullying in Schools: What You Can Do About It—A Teacher's Guide** (1–6) Describes strategies that teachers can follow to stop bullying in schools (1997, 10 pp.)

Q # 445339 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

**Beyond Bullying: A Booklet for Junior High Students** (7–9) Explains what students should do if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied (2000, 12 pp.)

Q #445470 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

**Beyond Bullying: What You Can Do To Help—A Handbook for Parents and Teachers of Junior High Students** (7–9) Defines bullying behaviors and suggests strategies that parents and teachers can follow to deal with it (1999, 16 pp.)

Q # 445488 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

**Bullying is Everybody's Problem: Do You Have the Courage to Stop It?** (Pkg of 30) (7–12) A guide for senior high students, defines bullying and provides advice on how to respond to it (1999)

Q # 445305 \$4.76 for 10 or more pkgs \$6.80/pkg

**Bullying and Harassment: Everybody's Problem—A Senior High Staff and Parent Resource** (10–12) Provides advice for parents and teachers of high school students on how to deal with bullying (2000, 12 pp.)

Q # 445496 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

**Class Meetings for Safe and Caring Schools** (K–12) Explains how regular class meetings can help teachers and students work out conflicts before they become major problems (1998, 20 pp)

Q # 445587 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

**Expecting Respect: The Peer Education Project—A School-Based Learning Model** (K–12) Provides an overview of Expecting Respect, a project that trains junior and senior high students to make classroom presentations on establishing healthy social relationships (1999, 16 pp.)

Q # 445462 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

**Safe and Caring Schools: Havens for the Mind** (K–12) Reviews the role of SACS in healthy brain development and learning

Q # 445503 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

**Media Violence: The Children Are Watching—A Guide for Parents and Teachers** (K-12) Contains tips for parents and teachers in countering the effects on children of media violence (1999, 12 pp.)

Q # 445511 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

**Peer Support and Student Leadership Programs** (K-12) Describes a number of programs that have been used successfully at various grade levels to encourage students to help their fellow students (2000, 30 pp.)

Q # 445503 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

**Niska News** (K–12) A collection of articles about SACS reprinted from *The ATA News* (1999, 36 pp.)

Q # 445529 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

**Principals' Best** (K–12) Describes activities that various schools in the province have undertaken to create a safe and caring environment for students (1999, 16 pp.) See website.

Q # 445545 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

**Volunteer Mentorship Programs:** (K–12) Describes a number of successful programs in which adult volunteers were assigned to serve as mentors to school-aged children (2000, 28 pp.)

Q # 445579 \$1.33 ea for 10 or more \$2.65 ea

**Volunteer Mentorship Program:** (K–12) A video portrays programs in which adults from the community work with children to help them develop various skills (1999, 9 ½ minutes)

Q # 445602 \$ 7.00

**Volunteer Mentorship Program: A Practical Handbook** (includes 3.5" disk) (K–12) Explains how to set up programs in which adults serve as mentors to school-aged children (1999, 44 pp. plus a computer disk containing sample documents used in the program)

Q # 445595 \$10.00

## CHECK LRC FOR NEW TITLES

## II. TOWARD A SAFE AND CARING CURRICULUM—RESOURCES FOR INTEGRATION

These resources are recommended and approved by Alberta Learning. They integrate violence prevention into all subjects K–6 and are divided into five topics: (approximately 85 pp.)

1. Building a Safe and Caring Classroom/Living Respectfully
2. Developing Self-Esteem
3. Respecting Diversity and Preventing Prejudice
4. Managing Anger and Dealing with Bullying and Harassment
5. Working It Out Together/Resolving Conflicts Peacefully

Student resource sheets are available in French. To order, check (F).

<b>Kindergarten</b>	Q # 445446	F Q	(Out of Province \$69.00)	\$49.00
<b>Grade 1</b>	Q # 445371	F Q	(Out of Province \$69.00)	\$49.00
<b>Grade 2</b>	Q # 445389	F Q	(Out of Province \$69.00)	\$49.00
<b>Grade 3</b>	Q # 445404	F Q	(Out of Province \$69.00)	\$49.00
<b>Grade 4</b>	Q # 445412	F Q	(Out of Province \$69.00)	\$49.00
<b>Grade 5</b>	Q # 445420	F Q	(Out of Province \$69.00)	\$49.00
<b>Grade 6</b>	Q # 445438	F Q	(Out of Province \$69.00)	\$49.00

**Anti-Bullying Curriculum Materials: Social Studies Grades 10, 11, 12** Developed by Project Ploughshares Calgary, this booklet contains a series of exercises that teachers can use to incorporate the topic of bullying into the high school social studies curriculum (1999, 81 pp.)

Q # 445563 \$10.00

**Classroom Management: A Thinking and Caring Approach** Written by Barrie Bennett and Peter Smilanich, this manual outlines numerous strategies that teachers can use to cope with misbehavior in the classroom and create a learning environment that encourages student learning (1994, 342 pp.)

Q # 445660 \$31.60

**SACS series of six full-color posters** A series of six full-color posters highlighting the Project's key concepts.

Q # 444836 \$ 9.00

### PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

### III. TOWARD A SAFE AND CARING PROFESSION

The ATA's SACS Project trains inservice leaders and workshop facilitators. The following workshops are designed to help teachers implement the curriculum resources.

#### **Toward a Safe and Caring Curriculum—ATA Resources for Integration: Kindergarten to Grade 6\***

#### **Toward a Safe and Caring Secondary Curriculum—Approaches for Integration\***

A series of short sessions focused on strengthening SACS teaching strategies is also available.

### IV. TOWARD A SAFE AND CARING COMMUNITY

This program area is designed to help all adults who work with children—parents, teachers, coaches, youth group leaders, music instructors—model and reinforce positive social behavior, whether at school, at home or in the community. The community program includes a series of 2-2½ hour workshops for adults and older teens.

#### **Living Respectfully\***

#### **Developing Self-Esteem\***

#### **Respecting Diversity and Preventing Prejudice\***

#### **Managing Anger\***

#### **Dealing with Bullying\***

#### **Working It Out Together - Resolving Conflicts Peacefully\***

**Who Cares? brochures** (Pkg of 30) Provides background on the Safe and Caring Communities Project, a collaborative effort between the ATA and Lions Clubs of Alberta (1998)

Q # 444654

\$ 9.80

**Who Cares? CD-ROM and brochure** Describes the Safe and Caring Communities Project, a collaborative effort between the ATA and the Lions Clubs of Alberta (1998)

Q # 444646

\$ 4.35

**Who Cares? video and brochure** Describes the Safe and Caring Communities Project, a collaborative effort between the ATA and the Lions Clubs of Alberta (1997, 11 minutes)

Q # 444638

\$ 5.95

**Toward a Safe and Caring Community Workshops Action Handbook: A Guide to Implementation** Provides specific information about how to implement the ATA's Safe and Caring Schools Project—Toward a Safe and Caring Community Program. In addition, the handbook provides suggested activities and strategies to help communities continue to work on issues related to enhancing respect and responsibility among children and teens.

Q # 455304

\$ 7.00

**Violence-Prevention Catalogue of Alberta Agencies' Resources** Compilation of the information that was gathered from over 200 organizations and community groups who work in the area of violence prevention, and with children and youth in character development through community leadership.

Q # 455312

\$ 7.00

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## SACS PROMOTIONAL ITEMS

<b>SACS cards with color logo and envelopes</b> (Pkg of 40) Blank card and envelope, featuring the SACS logo	☐ # 444547	\$10.00
<b>Niska hand puppet</b> Featuring the Niska mascot.	☐ # 444555	\$14.00
<b>Niska labels</b> (800 peel & stick labels per pkg) Featuring the Niska mascot.	☐ # 444571	\$ 4.00
<b>Niska mouse pad</b> 8 ½" by 9 ½" featuring the Niska mascot.	☐ # 444563	\$ 6.00
<b>Niska tattoos</b> (125 per pkg) A 1½" by 1½" temporary tattoo featuring Niska	☐ # 444597	\$23.40
<b>Niska water bottles</b> (5 per pkg) 5 white plastic water bottles featuring the Niska logo.	☐ # 444612	\$ 8.50
<b>Niska zipper pulls</b> (5 per pkg) Bronze, featuring the Safe and Caring Schools Logo.	☐ # 444589	\$ 7.75
<b>SACS award buttons</b> (Pkg of 30–2 ¼" white buttons)	☐ # 444620	\$10.00
<b>Safe and Caring Schools coffee mug</b>	☐ # 444604	\$ 5.45
<b>Safe and Caring Schools pencils</b> (Pkg of 30) Inscribed with "Toward a Safe & Caring Community."	☐ # 444662	\$10.70
<b>Niska T-Shirt</b> (white, featuring the Niska mascot front and back)	☐ # 444745 adult X-large; ☐ # 444737 adult large; ☐ # 444729 adult medium; ☐ # 444711 adult small; ☐ # 444703 youth X-large; ☐ # 444696 youth large; ☐ # 444688 youth medium; ☐ # 444670 youth small	\$10.50
<b>SACS men's golf shirt</b> (white, featuring the Niska mascot)	☐ # 444787 X-large; ☐ # 444779 large; ☐ # 444761 medium; ☐ # 444753 small	\$24.95
<b>SACS women's golf shirt</b> (white, sleeveless, featuring the Niska mascot)	☐ # 444828 X-large; ☐ # 444810 large; ☐ # 444802 medium; ☐ # 444795 small	\$24.45

**\*All workshop materials can be ordered from the SACS office by inservice leaders and workshop facilitators who have successfully completed the training: e-mail <[sacs@teachers.ab.ca](mailto:sacs@teachers.ab.ca)> fax (780) 455-6481 or phone (780) 447-9487.**



