

## WHAT CAN YOU DO TO SUPPORT REFUGEE CHILDREN AND YOUTH?

We all have an important role to play in the ensuring that refugee children and youth (and their families) have positive first experiences in Canada, feel supported and like they belong. A few ways you can support refugee children and youth to adjust and feel included in activities and programs you offer are provided below.

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### LEARN MORE AND REACH OUT!

- Do some background research to understand more about the refugee children and youth who are in your community (Where do they come from? Why have they moved to Canada? What are their needs, interests?)
- Get to know specific children and youth attending your programs/schools; learn more about their background and experiences, challenges, strengths.
- Think about the refugee children and youth who may not know about the programs or support you can offer. How can you get information out to their families and make sure that your programs are accessible and inclusive?

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### CREATE SAFE, WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE SPACES!

- Think about the existing programs and activities you offer and whether they could make refugee children and youth feel excluded or create barriers to their participation (e.g., language, cost, scheduling).
- Try to offer regular structured activities where refugee children and youth start to know what to expect and can trust those around them.
- Create quiet safe spaces for refugee children and youth to take time out when needed.
- Encourage refugee children and youth to give feedback and ideas on how to make the space more welcoming and inclusive.
- Think of ways to build confidence, skills, connection and belonging among refugee children and youth participating in your programs.
- Think of how to do activities so that refugee children and youth can express their ideas and emotions in different ways and find common understanding.
- Think of ways to highlight what refugee children and youth bring and contribute to existing programs and in their communities.
- Think about your own reactions, practices, and how you might be unintentionally excluding refugee children and youth through your words and actions. Try to model respectful, inclusive, supportive attitudes and behaviors that the children and youth you work with can follow.

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**ENGAGE THE BROADER COMMUNITY!**

- Think about how to engage non-refugee children and youth in promoting respect, acceptance, inclusion, while building a sense of responsibility that they have a role to play in making their communities to ensure that everyone belongs.
- Teach children and youth how to build healthy relationships based on human rights values; how to promote respect for diversity and use peaceful conflict resolution. Pair up children and youth with diverse backgrounds to help them learn and teach each other about new ways of doing things that they may be less familiar with.
- Think of ways to include families and engage the broader community in the activities you do to create more understanding and dialogue about cultural diversity.

**Discover more tools and resources on our website: [www.equitas.org](http://www.equitas.org)**

