

Enhanced On-Site Activities: Teacher and Leadership Checklist

Schools that offer on-site activities can increase their effectiveness as a vital protective factor for students with refugee backgrounds. This broad checklist offers a sample of additional school-based services that support students with refugee backgrounds. Notably these services will also benefit other students seeking a sense of belonging and needing additional support in skill development.

Most of the services originate on-site, and some bridge into other learning settings. As you review this, ask “What does our school already do? What could we do? What can be done in the future?”

✓ We have → We could × Not Now	Strategy / Intervention	Description	Why? What can this offer or develop?
	Lunch clubs	Create groups formed by interest (e.g., chess, computers, soccer, crafts)	Social language, connections with other students, build on learner strengths and interests
	Extra-curricular recreational activities	Sports that include familiar activities for diverse students (e.g., soccer, drumming)	Builds on learner strengths and interests, increase participation of diverse learners, use competitive and non-competitive models
	Academic homework clubs	Create groups with academic focus, access to computers for research	Academic skills to address gaps and new skills, connections with other students, increased exposure to English for conversation and academic language
	Literacy clubs	Small group that focuses on basic literacy or targeted literacy (e.g., academic science words)	Enhanced support for students having challenges with early literacy skills; addresses gaps and new skills, connections with other students, increased exposure to English for conversation and academic language
	Special interest clubs	Create groups formed by interest (e.g., chess, computer, baby-sitting class, work preparation, resume writing, etc.)	Develops social support networks, friendship groups, decreases isolation, programming for students whose parents work late, build on learner strengths and interests
	Literature clubs	Group focusing on pleasure reading, and can include children	Increased explicit language instruction, build social groups, teaches to gaps

		from multiple cultures and contexts	
	Prayer Spaces	Offer quiet prayer rooms for students from all religious traditions	Increased acknowledgement of importance of prayer within religious traditions; increase understanding of importance of spiritual elements in resilience and recovery from forced exile and traumas
	School Festivals	Use accepted festivals, or create new ones. Include parents, use parent volunteers, celebrate diversity (e.g., diverse foods fair, etc.)	Connecting parents with other parents; connecting teachers and parents outside of academic content; builds rapport; increases sense of school as parent-friendly; invites parents into schooling process
	Family Pot Luck	Use lunches and suppertimes for family gatherings at school	Connect parents, connect parents with school staff, decrease isolation and increase resiliency
	Cafeteria Food	Increase the variety of food to include a variety of cultures	Increases exposure to diversity within school, familiar comforting food to new Canadians, possibility of incorporating new Canadians into the cafeteria staff for work and learn programs
	Peer Coach	Pair new student with other students of the same age; use students who have had a similar history and are further into the transition; provide supervision /coaching to coach	Increases self-esteem of mentor; offers path to success for new Canadian; increases “scaffolding” for learning; includes both an invitation as well as freedom to refuse participation
	Parent Meet and Greet	Focus on getting to know parents and the home living and economic situation; strengths and resilience; what the parents can offer to the school; how the parents can contribute	Messages of valuing parents and their connection to their children; makes school familiar ground; builds rapport; builds positive interaction prior to any crisis; recommend linguistically similar communities with interpreters
	Community Reader Programs	Involve diverse language readers from the community to read in	Increases the value of the first language for learners; models path to knowing two or more languages; dual language books; can

		their home language as well as English	tap into public library's resources and programs
	Poster Boards; "Did you know?"	Gather and Offer accurate cultural information to students, teachers and other parents	Decreases misinformation; establishes cultural value of diversity; enhances social awareness of world events and issues; builds compassion; creates opportunities for action and advocacy
	Professional Learning Communities	Provide opportunities to discuss refugee student needs, "multifaceted teaching goals and beliefs about the subject matter and students"	Builds networks between teachers; decreases isolation of teachers who have segregated classrooms; offers strategies for intervention; builds understanding; creates awareness of common issues; deepen understanding of when to refer
	Breakfast Programs	Healthy meals at school	Practical intervention; increases motivation for students to attend school; ideas for economical and healthy meals for home; compassionate response to common issues of poverty among students with refugee backgrounds; places value on school attendance
	Clothing and Furniture Programs	Could be done in conjunction with agencies	Practical intervention; responds to the needs of students living in poverty whose bodies are growing; creates goodwill on part of parents and students; creates opportunities for staff not involved with students with refugee backgrounds to contribute; increases a sense of belonging and being cared for
	Newcomer Welcome Kits	Create practical resources to assist new students: Hygiene kits, school supplies	Practical interventions; respond to the educational and developmental needs of students; offers support around basic hygiene that might reflect poverty, cultural diversity and developmental changes
	Volunteer Opportunities in Schools	Create in-school opportunities for meaningful contribution at student's English proficiency level; create opportunities across the student body (English and non-English speakers)	Creates a sense of belonging; offers meaningful contributions to school; can build on strengths; creates networks; creates work experience within a Canadian context

	Family Literacy Program	On-site space and opportunity for parents to learn English alongside of their children	Increases parent-child interactions; models value of new language learning; increases comfort and familiarity with school
	Community Fair at School	Multiple service providers showing services to students and families	Creates a “one-stop-information session” for parents, students and service providers; celebrates diversity of services and community members
	Leadership Opportunities	Create venues for students to connect inside and outside of the school in leadership roles (e.g., volunteer at school event; visit adult education classes and discuss experience of being student in Alberta school; liaise with feeder schools; ambassador for new students to school)	Builds experience of leadership; builds on student strengths; increases connection to community; gives meaningful contribution
	Older Students: Personal Portfolios	Create “portfolios” for students that include strengths, interests, activities, sample achievements, resumes, visions for future, contact information with future employers, reflections on interviews, etc.)	Increases self-esteem and self-identity; creates support documents for future job interviews; builds upon strengths; focus of future work is relevant to stage of life of schooling and the student; creates a sense of life in the present
	Expert Venue	Create opportunities for each student to become an “expert” at something and then venues for sharing that expertise (e.g., find interest, increase knowledge through projects, share with others)	Increases self-esteem; nurtures interests into competencies; offers meaningful contribution; builds on strengths; builds a sense of self in the present
	Partner with mentoring adult	Create connections with adults within the school and within the community	Builds self-esteem; increases the circle of attachment figures; increases student vision of self in the future

	Partner with the elementary school	Create venues for students to share their knowledge and expertise with younger students (e.g., after-school homework club volunteer, guide for parents at the school's open house).	Allows older students to see personal gains; increases sense of belonging and personal contribution; builds Canadian work experience in a relatively non-threatening Canadian venue; highlights personal strengths; builds self-esteem and strengthens identity
	Partner with colleges and universities	Access tutors, speakers and mentors; arrange for tours or for attending events as ways to familiarize students with the facility.	Paces future possibilities for education; builds personal links to schooling; creates dialogue with colleges and universities regarding student needs for advanced education
	Partner with continuing education	Partner classes with adult classes for special projects or events; arrange innovative after-school or summer programs to address needs of the community.	Paces possibilities for education; builds personal links for schooling; addresses relevant needs of student population; offers connections with older adult students
	Agency Supports in Schools	Space and opportunity for local agencies to provide services on school grounds. Sample services include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical, mental and sexual health outreach services (including one-to-one counselling, educational materials, etc.) • employment and financial management • settlement services • recreational services 	Creates easy access for students to services; decreases transportation issues; decreases duplication of services

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