U.S. COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS

USCRI

Supporting Unaccompanied Immigrant Children in Schools

USCRI Children's Services- Home Study and Post Release Services

USCRI Programs



**Note: USCRI is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)*

- Policy and Advocacy
- Humanitarian Legal Services
- Anti-Trafficking Services
- Refugee Services
- International Programs
- Children's Services

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

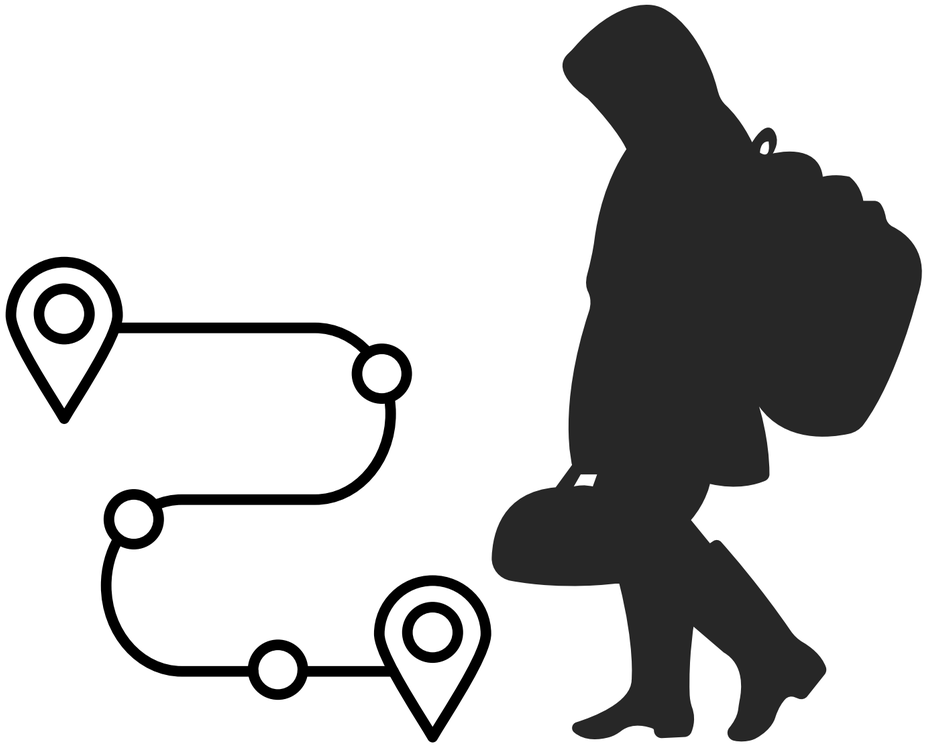
By the end of the webinar, you will be able to...

- **Describe** unaccompanied children (UCs), impacts of trauma across the stages of migration, and the ORR reunification process.
- **Identify** educational rights, common enrollment barriers, and available supports for UC students and their families.
- **Apply** trauma-informed and culturally responsive strategies to support UC students' enrollment, engagement, and integration into the U.S. education system.

PART I

Introduction to Unaccompanied Children (UCs) and the ORR Reunification Process

Who are Unaccompanied Immigrant Children?



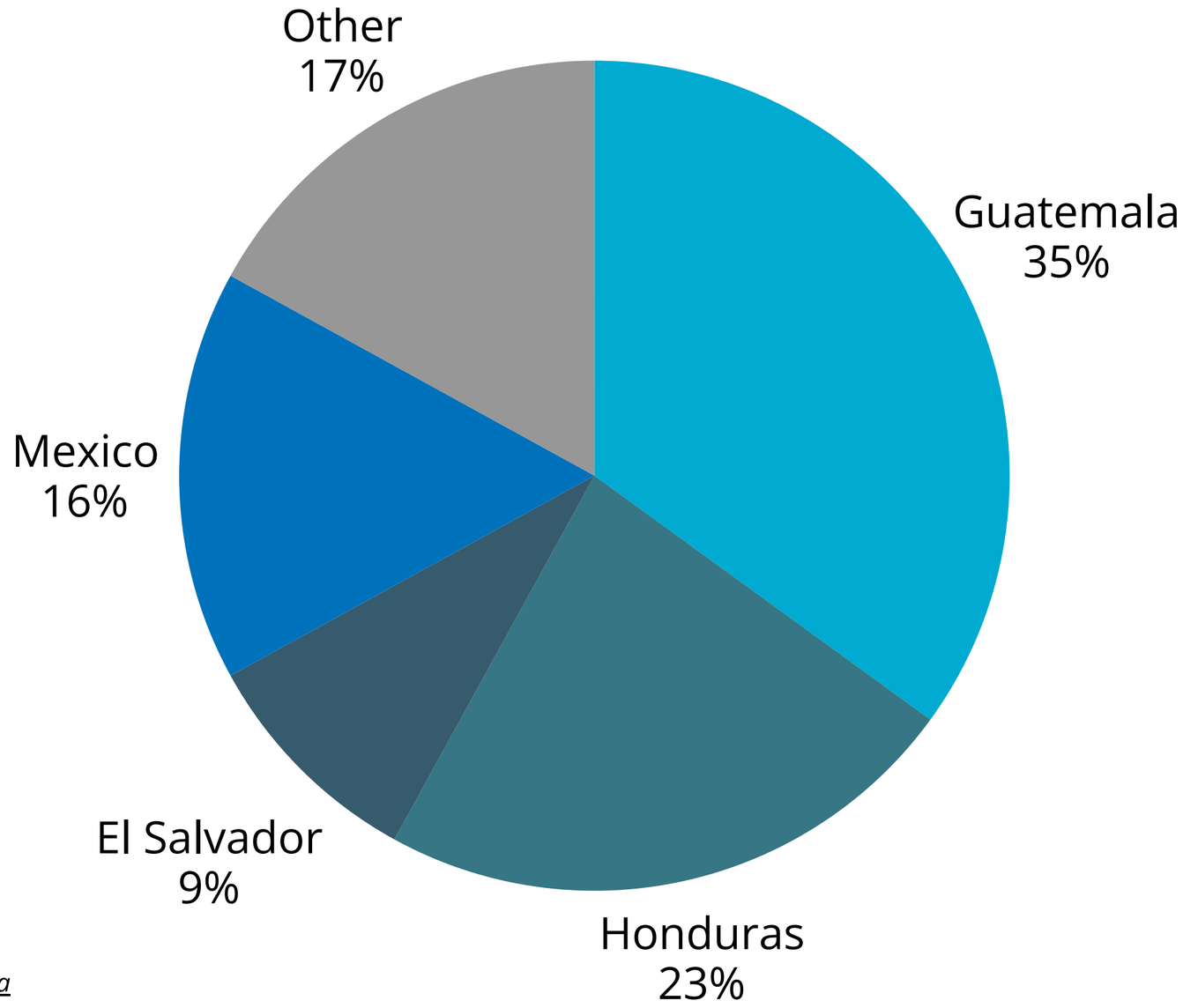
A child under 18 who is apprehended by the Dept. of Homeland Security, either within the U.S. or upon entering the U.S. and who is:

- Without a parent or legal guardian
- Without lawful immigration status

The majority of unaccompanied children are reunited with a parent or other caregiver (sponsor) after release from government custody.

Unaccompanied Children Placed into ORR Custody

FY 2025



Source: Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) *Fact Sheets and Data*

Why are children from Central America and other countries migrating alone?

- Fleeing forced recruitment into gangs or organized crime
- To reunite with parents or family members who migrated before them
- Fleeing abuse and/or community violence
- Extreme poverty and climate change
- Political unrest
- Death or loss of a primary caretaker
- Lack of economic and educational opportunities



ORR Custody, Release, and Reunification



Children are placed in **ORR custody within 72 hours** of their apprehension by the Dept. of Homeland Security



Once in custody, the ORR case manager works with the child and their family to **identify a sponsor in the U.S.**



Sponsor vetting process begins, including a home study



If approved, the child is **released from ORR care** and reunified with their sponsor



After discharge, children qualify for ORR-funded **Post Release Services (PRS)** to support their transition to their new environment

Home Study and Post Release Services



A Home Study is an in-depth evaluation of a potential sponsor and placement to:

- Assess the safety and appropriateness of the proposed placement
- Assess the sponsor's ability to care for the child and meet the child's needs
- Educate sponsor and family for the responsibilities of sponsorship



PRS are case management services provided to UCs and their sponsors after the child is released from ORR care.

<u>The PRS worker supports in the areas of:</u>

- Placement/Family Stability & Child Safety
- Education
- Medical Care
- Legal & Immigration
- Mental & Behavioral Health
- Integration & Independence
- Child Trafficking

Understanding the Educational Journey of UC Students

- UCs may have encountered various educational systems, teaching methods, and technologies
- Access to formal education is often limited
- UCs may endure disruptions in schooling due to inaccessiblity or disrupted education in home country
- Financial burdens often lead to student dropouts
- UCs may not have prior educational records

Triple Trauma Paradigm

Refers to the trauma experienced by immigrants and refugees during the three stages of migration (pre-, during, and post-migration)

In Country of Origin:

- Poverty
- Violence
- Abuse or neglect

En Route to the U.S:

- Unaccompanied
- Relying on smuggler
- Witnessing violence, death, or injury
- Dangerous conditions of journey

Post ORR Release:

- Family separation
- Adapting to new language/culture
- Living with a new caregiver
- Experiencing discrimination, racism, and/or xenophobia
- Abuse or neglect
- Lacking ability to make choices/take control

Source: Jordan Institute For Families, School of Social Work, University of North Carolina

Academic Impacts of Trauma on UC Students



Difficulty focusing, remembering, or processing new information



Hypervigilance or startle responses that disrupt learning



Fatigue from poor sleep/rest that limits attention



Difficulty completing tasks or following multiple instructions



Low confidence or fear of failure that reduces classroom participation



Learning progress that fluctuates day to day

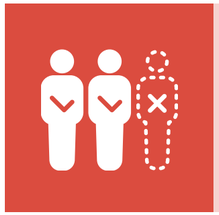
Behavioral and Social Impacts of Trauma on UC Students



Anxiety or withdrawal (may be misread as uninterested or unmotivated)



Dissociating, isolating themselves, or connecting only with peers from the same background



Multiple unexplained or unexcused absences



Struggling to trust peers or adults in school



Avoidance of new or unfamiliar activities, missing out on learning opportunities



Hesitant to ask for help or advocate for oneself

What are other academic, behavioral, or social impacts have you seen in UC students you have interacted with?



Case Example 1: Alex

Alex is a 15-year-old from Guatemala who now lives in Minneapolis with his aunt Rosa. At age 12, Alex stopped attending school because access to education was limited and he needed to help care for his mother, who was ill. Following her passing, he migrated to the United States in hopes of reuniting with family and continuing his education.

During his journey to the United States, Alex experienced dangerous travel conditions and witnessed violence. After spending 120 days in ORR custody, he was released to his aunt Rosa, whom he has never lived with.

Rosa is preparing to enroll Alex in public school. However, Alex has experienced significant interruptions in his education and Rosa is unfamiliar with the U.S. school system.

How might Alex's experiences before, during, and after migration affect his transition into a new school environment?

What strengths or protective factors might help Alex successfully adjust to school?

PART II

Best Practices for Working with UCs in the School Setting

Adjusting our Perceptions

Blame & Shame		**Trauma-Informed Approach**
Power Imbalances		**Strengths-Based Perspectives**

Source: Power with and power over by Yuval Saar-Heiman, Children and Youth Service Review, Vol. 145, February 2023, 106776

Trauma Informed Best Practices for Interacting with UCs in Educational Settings



Ensure that children have access to the specialized educational services they may need, including IEP, 504, and programs for ELs.



Create spaces where children can access fidget spinners, mindfulness tools, and/or some form of self-expression.



Build rapport with students and incorporate assignments that promote relationship-building among peers.



Take restorative (rather than punitive) approach to discipline that allow for reflection and self-regulation.



Communicate with families in their preferred language. Avoid making assumptions about preferred language.



Develop partnerships with school social workers, guidance counselors, and community organizations to provide referrals for additional support.

Culturally Responsive Strategies in the Educational Setting



Support use of heritage language and translation tools



Include projects in the curriculum that celebrate cultural differences



Use visual aids, props, and demonstrations to reinforce language development



Provide cultural sharing opportunities



Decorate the school and showcase different cultures



Engage parents and provide opportunities for their involvement

How is your school/district currently applying culturally responsive strategies and trauma informed best practices?

Orienting UC Students and Families



- Clearly explain what to expect
- Inform UCs and families about services available
  - Transportation
  - Free/reduced lunch
  - Special education
  - After school programs and extracurriculars
- For older youth explain class schedules and changes
- Parent engagement
- Student and parent responsibilities

Supporting Newcomer Students' Safety



Creating a safe and supportive environment *(includes psychological safety)*



Preventing & responding to bullying



Planning for youth's safety at home, in school, and in the community



Staying informed & connected with community resources



Benefits of Building Community Partnerships

- Networking / collaboration with service providers to meet the needs of UCs
- Opportunities for family engagement
- Mentorship / student engagement opportunities
- Ongoing trainings for teachers and administrators

PART III

Laws that Pertain to UCs' Educational Rights

English Learners' (ELs) Rights to a Meaningful Communication

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964; Lau v. Nichols (1974); Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974

Schools must…

- Take appropriate actions to ensure ELs can access the same content as students fluent in English
- Identify potential ELs in a timely and valid manner
- Avoid unnecessary segregation of EL students

Title VI; EEOA; Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015

- All federally funded agencies (and their subgrantees) must provide language access services
- Schools must translate all information they provide to all parents/sponsors
- Schools must notify parents of a student's placement in an EL program, and notices about engagement opportunities

ELs must have **equal opportunities** to meaningfully participate in all curricular and extracurricular activities

Source: US Department of Education Fact Sheet

Reflection

Reflect on these statements and consider how they relate to your school's current policies and practices.

For each statement, select the response that best reflects your understanding or experience: **true, false, sometimes, or not sure.**



- When enrolling in our school, families are not asked about their immigration or citizenship status.

- In our school, English Learners are not unnecessarily segregated from other learners.

- In our school, English Learners are able to access the same content as students fluent in English.

What is your school/district currently doing well to uphold one of the laws/rights mentioned?

PART IV

Supporting UC Students with the School Enrollment Process and Identifying Potential Engagement Barriers

Case Example 2: Alex



Rosa took the day off to enroll Alex in school. During registration, the school registrar requests a birth certificate, social security card, and proof of address. However, the registrar notices that Rosa's name is not listed on Alex's birth certificate and asks for documentation establishing her legal guardianship. Rosa explained her situation and provided the documents she has and the school asked Rosa and Alex to return once they had proof of relationship and past educational records.

Rosa leaves without completing the enrollment process, and Alex misses additional school days.

What barriers to school enrollment can you identify in Alex and Rosa's situation?

How could the registrar support Rosa and Alex during enrollment?

Common barriers to school engagement for UC students

Barriers for the student:

- Language and literacy
- Interrupted education and academic placement
- Shame or embarrassment
- Unfamiliar school routines and expectations
- Limited support
- Competing responsibilites and priorities

Barriers for the family:

- Fear of immigration enforcement and information sharing
- Limited familiarity with U.S. education system
- Limited awareness of available resources
- Transportation, scheduling, and caregiving challenges
- Missing documentation*
- Lack of guardianship

Barriers for the school:

- Concerns regarding test scores, graduation rates, absences, etc.
- Belief that other programs may be a better fit (GED, adult English classes, etc.)
- Grade placement
- Compulsory school age
- Funding concerns
- Unfamiliar with UC sponsorship

What is required for school enrollment under federal guidance?

Schools may REQUIRE:

- Proof of residency in district/school boundaries*
- Proof of student's age
- Immunizations
- Sponsor's contact information

*Except as applicable for homeless students under McKinney-Vento

Schools may REQUEST:

- Race/Ethnicity**
- Social Security Number (for parents or children)**
- How long the student has attended school in the U.S.
- Student's place (country) of birth
- Languages spoken at home

**Plyler guidance explicitly forbids schools from denying enrollment if parents choose not to share race/ethnicity or social security numbers

Source: Plyer Fact Sheet

Proving Residence Within School District

School districts must apply residency requirements equally to all students. Many newcomer families may lack traditional proof of residence, like a lease or a utility bill. In lieu of those, schools may consider accepting:



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS)
OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT (ORR)
DIVISION OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN OPERATIONS (DUCO)
VERIFICATION OF RELEASE

VERIFICATION OF RELEASE

Name of Minor: NOMBRE DEL MENOR — Aliases (if any):
Minor's Date of Birth: FECHA DE NACIMIENTO — Minor's A#: NUMERO A

The Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) has released the above named minor from Federal custody pursuant to section 462 of the Homeland Security Act of 2002 and section 235 of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act of 2008 to the care of:

FOTO DEL MENOR

Name of Sponsor: NOMBRE DEL PATROCINADOR
Aliases (if any):
Address: DIRECCION
City: CUIDAD
State: ESTADO — Zip Code:
Telephone#: NUMERO DE TELEFONO
Relationship to Child: RELACION AL MENOR

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF THE SPONSOR CARE AGREEMENT

The above named sponsor has agreed to the provisions set forth in the *Sponsor Care Agreement*, pertaining to care, safety, and well-being, and the sponsor's responsibility for ensuring the minor's presence at all future proc before the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Justice/Executive Office for Immigration R (EOIR).

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY

Name ORR care provider Facility: NOMBRE DEL ALBERGUE
Date: FECHA QUE SALIO DEL ALBERGUE

THE PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT OF 1995 (Pub. L. 104-13) Public reporting burden for this collection of information is e average 10/hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respond to, a collection of inf unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Refugee Resettlement

Surname
CAVALLARO-RODRIGUEZ
Given Name
MARIA LUCIA
A# 000-000-000
Date of Birth: 10/21/2007
Issued: 11/15/2023 - Eye Color: BRO
Primary Language: Spanish
Country of Birth: Honduras
Address
1628 Cabrini Boulevard, Apt. 205
New York, NY 10007

SAMPLE

If found, please contact the ORR National Call Center [see back] for instructions on returning this card to HHS.

Issued by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR)

Call/text/WhatsApp the ORR National Call Center (NCC) at 1-800-203-7001 if:
- anyone is denying you access to food, shelter, school, medicine/doctors, interpretation, or other services;
- you need help finding paperwork;
- anyone abuses you, takes advantage of you, or forces you to work or do anything harmful or inappropriate at home, school, work, or anywhere else.

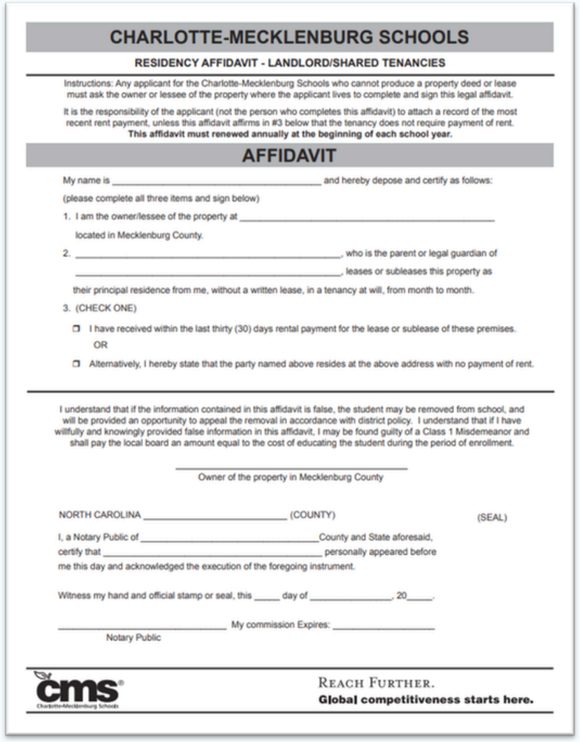
Llama/texta/WhatsApp al Centro Nacional de Atención de Llamadas de ORR al 1-800-203-7001 si:
- alguien le impide ir a la escuela o le niega alimento, hospedaje, medicamentos/médicos, servicios de interpretación u otros servicios;
- necesitas ayuda para encontrar documentos;
- alguien abusa de ti, se aprovecha de ti, te obliga a trabajar o a hacer algo dañino o inapropiado en la casa, la escuela, el trabajo, o cualquier otro lugar.

If you are in immediate danger, call, or text:
Si estás en peligro inmediato, llama o textea:
9-1-1

If you are having a mental health crisis, call or text:
Si tienes una crisis emocional o nerviosa, llama o textea:
9-8-8

This card was generated using ORR's Verification of Release document and verifies that the individual identified herein has been processed through ORR care and custody pursuant to Section 462 of the Homeland Security Act and Section 235 of the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act. If found, please contact the NCC to return the card.

Child's ORR Verification of Release (VOR) form or card



CHARLOTTE-MECKLENBURG SCHOOLS

RESIDENCY AFFIDAVIT - LANDLORD/SHARED TENANCIES

Instructions: Any applicant for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools who cannot produce a property deed or lease must ask the owner or lessee of the property where the applicant lives to complete and sign this legal affidavit.

It is the responsibility of the applicant (not the person who completes this affidavit) to attach a record of the most recent rent payment, unless this affidavit affirms in #3 below that the tenancy does not require payment of rent.
This affidavit must renewed annually at the beginning of each school year.

AFFIDAVIT

My name is _____ and hereby depose and certify as follows:

(please complete all three items and sign below)

1. I am the owner/lessee of the property at _____ located in Mecklenburg County.
2. _____, who is the parent or legal guardian of _____, leases or subleases this property as their principal residence from me, without a written lease, in a tenancy at will, from month to month.
3. (CHECK ONE)
   - ☐ I have received within the last thirty (30) days rental payment for the lease or sublease of these premises.
   - OR
   - ☐ Alternatively, I hereby state that the party named above resides at the above address with no payment of rent.

I understand that if the information contained in this affidavit is false, the student may be removed from school, and will be provided an opportunity to appeal the removal in accordance with district policy. I understand that if I have willfully and knowingly provided false information in this affidavit, I may be found guilty of a Class 1 Misdemeanor and shall pay the local board an amount equal to the cost of educating the student during the period of enrollment.

_____
Owner of the property in Mecklenburg County

NORTH CAROLINA _____ (COUNTY) (SEAL)

I, a Notary Public of _____ County and State aforesaid, certify that _____ personally appeared before me this day and acknowledged the execution of the foregoing instrument.

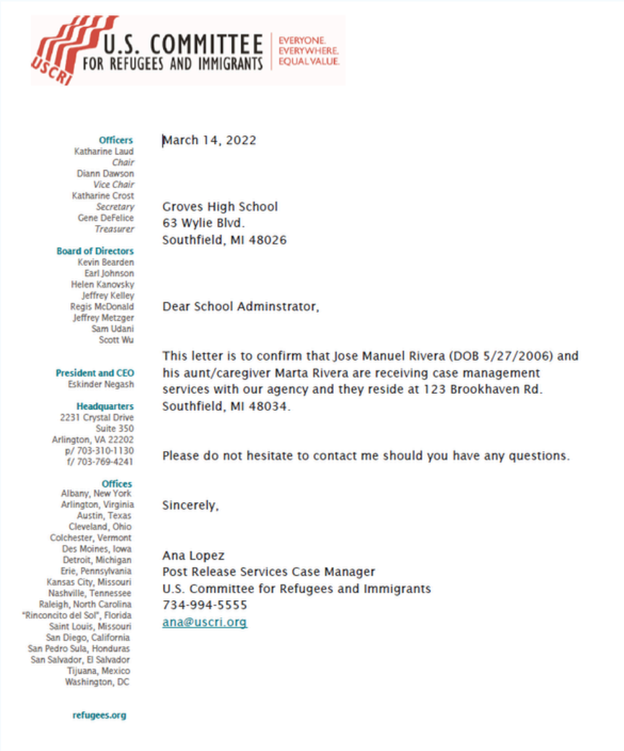
Witness my hand and official stamp or seal, this _____ day of _____, 20____.

_____ My commission Expires: _____
Notary Public

cms Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools

REACH FURTHER.
Global competitiveness starts here.

Residency Affidavit from school district



U.S. COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES AND IMMIGRANTS
EVERYONE. EVERYWHERE. EQUAL VALUE.

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Katharine Crost
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2231 Crystal Drive
Suite 350
Arlington, VA 22202
p/ 703-310-1130
f/ 703-769-4241

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Saint Louis, Missouri
San Diego, California
San Pedro Sula, Honduras
San Salvador, El Salvador
Tijuana, Mexico
Washington, DC

refugees.org

March 14, 2022

Groves High School
63 Wylie Blvd.
Southfield, MI 48026

Dear School Adminstrator,

This letter is to confirm that Jose Manuel Rivera (DOB 5/27/2006) and his aunt/caregiver Marta Rivera are receiving case management services with our agency and they reside at 123 Brookhaven Rd. Southfield, MI 48034.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Ana Lopez
Post Release Services Case Manager
U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants
734-994-5555
ana@uscri.org

A letter from a social or legal services organization where the student is a client

Proof of Guardianship*

**Note: Sponsorship ≠ legal guardianship. However, these documents can help show that the sponsor is the child's approved caregiver in the U.S.*



CARTA PODER

PRESENTE

En este acto otorgo a _____ un poder especial, pero tan amplio como en derecho proceda, para que en mi nombre y representación lleve a cabo todos los actos y trámites necesarios para _____, incluyendo presentar, entregar y recibir cualquier tipo de documento que se requiera para dichos fines.

El poder especial otorgado mediante la presente faculta al apoderado a realizar los actos y trámites mencionados ante _____.

Ratifico expresamente desde ahora todos y cada uno de los actos que realice el apoderado en el ejercicio del presente mandato.

_____

Por su propio derecho

_____

Acepto el poder:

Firma: _____

_____

TESTIGOS

"Letter of Designation of Care" or "Carta Poder" from child's parent(s) in home country



OMB Control No: 0970-0552
Expiration Date: 03/31/2022

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES (HHS)
OFFICE OF REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT (ORR)
DIVISION OF UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN OPERATIONS (DUCO)
VERIFICATION OF RELEASE

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Aliases (if any):
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City: CUIDAD
State: ESTADO
Telephone#: NUMERO DE TELEFONO
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care, safety, and well-being, and the sponsor's responsibility for ensuring the minor's prese
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Date: FECHA QUE SALIO DEL ALBERGUE

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average .10hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining
collection of information. An agency may not conduct or sponsor, and a person is not required to respor
unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Refugee Resettlement

Surname
CAVALLARO RODRIGUEZ
Given Name
MARIA LUCIA
A# 000-000-000
Date of Birth: 10/21/2007
Issued: 11/15/2023 Eye Color: BRO
Primary Language: Spanish
Country of Birth: Honduras
Address
1620 Cabrini Boulevard, Apt. 205
New York, NY 10007

SAMPLE

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- anyone is denying you access to food, shelter, school, medicine, doctors, interpretation, or other services;
- you need help finding paperwork;
- anyone abuses you, takes advantage of you, or forces you to work or do anything harmful or inappropriate at home, school, work, or anywhere else.

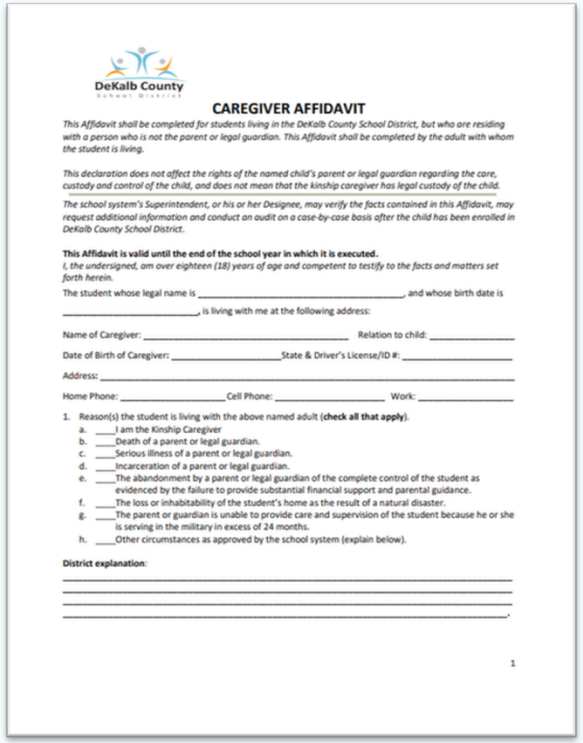
Llama/Escribe/WhatsApp al Centro Nacional de Atención de Llamadas de ORR al 1-800-203-7001 si:
- alguien le impide ir a la escuela o le niega alimento, hospedaje, medicamentos/médicos, servicios de interpretación u otros servicios;
- necesitas ayuda para encontrar documentos;
- alguien abusa o se aprovecha de ti, te obliga a trabajar o a hacer algo dañino o inapropiado en la casa, la escuela, el trabajo, o cualquier otro lugar.

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9-1-1

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Si tienes una crisis emocional o nerviosa, llama o textea:
9-8-8

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Child's ORR Verification of Release (VOR) form or card



DeKalb County School District

CAREGIVER AFFIDAVIT

This Affidavit shall be completed for students living in the DeKalb County School District, but who are residing with a person who is not the parent or legal guardian. This Affidavit shall be completed by the adult with whom the student is living.

This declaration does not affect the rights of the named child's parent or legal guardian regarding the care, custody and control of the child, and does not mean that the kinship caregiver has legal custody of the child.

The school system's Superintendent, or his or her Designee, may verify the facts contained in this Affidavit, may request additional information and conduct an audit on a case-by-case basis after the child has been enrolled in DeKalb County School District.

This Affidavit is valid until the end of the school year in which it is executed.
I, the undersigned, am over eighteen (18) years of age and competent to testify to the facts and matters set forth herein.

The student whose legal name is _____, and whose birth date is _____, is living with me at the following address:

Name of Caregiver: _____ Relation to child: _____

Date of Birth of Caregiver: _____ State & Driver's License/ID #: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____ Work: _____

1. Reason(s) the student is living with the above named adult **(check all that apply)**.
   a. ____I am the Kinship Caregiver
   b. ____Death of a parent or legal guardian.
   c. ____Serious illness of a parent or legal guardian.
   d. ____Incarceration of a parent or legal guardian.
   e. ____The abandonment by a parent or legal guardian of the complete control of the student as evidenced by the failure to provide substantial financial support and parental guidance.
   f. ____The loss or inhabitability of the student's home as the result of a natural disaster.
   g. ____The parent or guardian is unable to provide care and supervision of the student because he or she is serving in the military in excess of 24 months.
   h. ____Other circumstances as approved by the school system (explain below).

District explanation:

_____
_____
_____
_____

1

Caregiver Affidavit from school district

Immunizations and Physical Exams

UCs receive a physical exam and vaccines while in ORR care



How to assist UCs:

- If the child is missing their medical documents, the family can contact the ORR National Call Center **(1-800-203-7001)** to request missing documents
- Provide information for local clinics that provide free/low-cost vaccines and physicals if the child is missing vaccines or doesn't have a copy of their medical documents
- Request conditional or temporary enrollment if a child’s vaccine/physical appointment is pending



Case Example 3: Alex

Alex has been attending school for several weeks. His teachers notice that he rarely participates in class, eats lunch alone, and has not joined any extracurricular activities. He struggles to complete assignments and appears hesitant to ask for help.

At home, Aunt Rosa's husband has stopped working due to concerns about increased immigration enforcement in the area and creating financial difficulties for the family.

During a parent-teacher conference, one teacher describes Alex as unmotivated, while another expresses concerns about his frequent tardiness and difficulty connecting with peers. Rosa remains quiet throughout much of the meeting and is hesistant to share information about the family's circumstances.

Rosa mentions that Alex was assigned a Post-Release Service (PRS) worker who has been assisting the family with Alex's adjustment. With consent, the school counselor and PRS case worker begin collaborating to identify opportunities to better support Alex's academic, social, and emotional needs.

What opportunities could the school offer to help Alex build connections and increase participation?

How could the school build trust with Rosa and better support the family's needs?

Resources

ucresourcecenter.org



refugees.org

Resources - Toolkits



refugees.org

Resources

¡Colorín colorado!

A bilingual site for educators and families of English language learners

ELL Basics | School Support | Teaching ELLs | For Families | Books & Authors | Videos | Audience | Resource Library

Home › How to Support Immigrant Students and Families: Strategies for Schools and Early Childhood Programs

How to Support Immigrant Students and Families: Strategies for Schools and Early Childhood Programs

This comprehensive guide includes dozens of strategies that educators, staff, and administrators can use to support immigrant students and their families. It also highlights some of the partnerships and collaborative efforts that can best support families facing or navigating uncertainty. See our one-page flyer for a printable list of highlights.

Note: An archived version of this guide from 2017 is available online for reference.

Getting Started



Ten Strategies for Supporting Immigrant Students and Families



Tip Sheet: Mental Health Support for Immigrant Students



Tip Sheet: How Schools Can Partner with Immigrant Families



Tip Sheet: Supporting Young Children in Immigrant Families



Supporting Immigrant Students During Uncertain Times: Tips for ELL Educators

switchboard
connecting resettlement experts



Strategies to Increase Newcomer Youth and Family Participation in Programs and Services

Guidance for service providers, foster parents, volunteer mentors, and school professionals

This info guide provides strategies to encourage newcomer youth and families to participate in programs and services. These strategies can be applied in both mandatory programs (e.g., school attendance, foster care requirements) and voluntary programs (e.g., after-school activities, recreational programs). This guide is especially relevant to support youth participating in the Unaccompanied Refugee Minor (URM) program.

Engagement strategies should consider youth age and autonomy—those under 18 may be required to participate and benefit from caregiver support, while older youth often engage voluntarily.

Why is participation and engagement a common challenge?

Service providers and foster parents work hard to help newcomer youth access services. Still, they may encounter resistance.

Trauma can make it hard to trust adults or new environments. Cultural and social differences also play a role: many youth are not familiar with structured programs, required attendance, or expectations around school, therapy, and independent living (IL) skills.

Additionally, youth often juggle competing priorities, such as coping with concerns about loved ones in their country of origin, sending money to family, and managing responsibilities in their new home or program. Language barriers can make participation feel even more overwhelming. And many teens may just feel uninterested or disengaged.

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ImmSchools



Educator Resource Guide

Supporting Immigrant Students & Families

Best Practices Educators Can Do

1 **ENGAGE WITH AN OPEN MIND**
Don't make assumptions and work with students to find out answers

2 **CREATE A SAFE SPACE**
use inclusive language, post safe-space visuals, and share resources with all students

Inclusive Language	Words to Avoid
Undocumented	Illegal
Immigrant	Illegal Aliens
Mixed-Status Families	

3 **LEARN ABOUT RELEVANT INSTITUTIONAL POLICIES & LEGISLATION**
Understand local, state and federal policies that impact K-12 students and their families. Visit: informedimmigrant.com

4 **FIND AND ADVOCATE FOR SCHOLARSHIPS & FINANCIAL SUPPORT**
Keep track share scholarships that don't require citizenship or residency status with students. Visit: higheredimmigrationportal.org

5 **BUILD YOUR OWN EDUCATOR NETWORK**
Build relationships and collaborate with other educators who are supportive of undocumented students at your school or district

6 **CONNECT STUDENTS TO IMMIGRANT LEADERS & ROLE MODELS**
Attend immigration related events and build a network of immigrant student leaders

7 **INVOLVE PARENTS**
Share information and resources with parents by distributing Know Your Rights card , emergency plans and college-access information.Visit: ilrc.org

8 **ACCESS REPUTABLE LEGAL INFORMATION & ASSISTANCE**
Find reputable, affordable legal service providers in your area. Visit: immigrationadvocates.org/legaldirectory

9 **BUILD AGENCY & POWER**
Inform students about their rights and share how other immigrant groups have organizing and changing the status quo

10 **CREATE SPACES FOR STORYTELLING & CREATIVE EXPRESSSION**
Encourage students to build their own meaning and sense of identity that is different from the negative stigma and stereotypes about undocumented immigrants

immschools.org

Resources

- Welcoming Immigrant Students in School - Infographic |International Development Research Association
- Progression of Language Proficiency - Teacher Moves | Hudson Valley Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network
- Classroom Practices for Multilingual Learners and English Language Learners and The Next Generation English Language Arts Learning Standards | New York State Education Department
- Education & English Learning Resources | Switchboard
- Communities of Practices | Switchboard
- FAQ for Educators on Immigrant Students in Public Schools | American Civil Liberties Union
- Supporting Students from Immigrant Families | Learning for Justice
- English Language Learners | Edutopia
- ELL Support Slides | Hudson Valley Regional Bilingual Education Resource Network
- English with Newcomers | SIL Global
- Promoting Cultural Competency in Teaching | University of Delaware
- Beyond Teaching English: Supporting High School Completion by Immigrant and Refugee Student | Migration Policy Institute

Key Takeaways

Lead with a trauma-informed approach.

Recognize how experiences before, during, and after migration can impact UC students. Prioritize safety, trust, and positive connections rather than making assumptions about a student's needs or abilities.

Remove barriers and protect every student's right to education.

Understand the educational rights of immigrant and unaccompanied children. Be flexible and proactive when addressing enrollment barriers related to documentation and language access.

Build supportive, culturally responsive school environments.

Promote meaningful engagement, connect students with available resources, and collaborate with community partners to support UC students' success.