

You can find more help through:



your child's doctor



your child's school



therapists



community agencies

FOR A LIST OF RELIABLE RESOURCES,
PLEASE CALL ICIRR
FAMILY SUPPORT HOTLINE

1-855-HELP-MY-FAMILY (1-855-435-7693)

For mental health emergencies, please bring your
child to your local emergency room or call 911.



ICTC
REFUGEE AND
IMMIGRANT
COMMITTEE

The Committee on Refugee and Immigrant Children and Trauma (RIC) is part of the Illinois Childhood Trauma Coalition (ICTC). RIC was founded in 2015 to address the growing needs of children and families from refugee and immigrant communities.

FOR MORE INFORMATION,
PLEASE VISIT:

lookthroughtheireyes.org

Supporting Immigrant and Refugee Children

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND CAREGIVERS

You are not alone and you are welcome in this country!

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

We know that messages in the media and from some US leaders often make refugees and immigrants feel unwelcome and unsafe. In solidarity, we have put together this brochure with things you can do to help support your family through this time.

1 Take care of yourself in order to take care of your family

PHYSICAL

Sleep well, eat well, exercise, dance, see a doctor for health issues

EMOTIONAL

Connect with friends and loved ones, do healthy things to relax, do things you enjoy

PERSONAL / SPIRITUAL

Make time for yourself, remember it's okay to say "no", find time to reflect or pray, do yoga

CONNECTION

Reach out and be a support to others, join in community activities or groups supporting immigrant/refugee rights

INFORMATION GATHERING

Seek reputable legal counsel, attend a Know Your Rights presentation. See immigrantjustice.org

What works for you?
(Write down here)

2

Recognize signs of stress in children¹

Young Children (5 and younger)



Has headaches, stomachaches, and tiredness
Seems scared



Has trouble calming down
Acts younger than actual age (i.e., bedwetting, thumb sucking, tantrums)
Has trouble separating from caregivers
Plays less

Elementary School Age (6-12 years)



Complains of headaches, stomachaches, and tiredness



Seems afraid and cries more often
Spends more time alone at home or in school
Gets in trouble at home or in school
Can't pay attention at school, teacher reports problems
Eats more or less

Teenagers (13 – 18 years)



Complains of headaches, stomachaches, and tiredness



Spends more time alone than with friends or family
Doesn't follow rules
Uses drugs and/or alcohol
Runs away from home

3

Support your children by:

Communication

Be patient with your children and let them know that it's normal to be upset

Help children talk about their feelings when stressed

Remind your children that you are open to talk even if you don't have all the answers

Be honest and avoid making unrealistic promises you cannot guarantee, like "Everything will be okay"



Safety

Keep predictable routines and traditions

Make a family emergency plan and share it with your children. Find an example here: www.ilrc.org/family-preparedness-plan



Comfort

Reassure your children that you love them

Make time for relaxation and fun

Limit media exposure of upsetting news

Help your children express their feelings in healthy ways e.g., drawing, journaling, exercising



Hope

Remind your children that your family is strong

Remind your children that there are people fighting to help immigrants and refugees



Support

Encourage children to participate in community based activities and cultural traditions

Spend quality time with friends and family and avoid isolation

Turn the page to see who else can help your children



¹ Safe Start and Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (2011, September 19). *Trauma-Informed Care for Children Exposed to Violence: Tips for Early Childhood Providers*. Retrieved from <https://www.justice.gov/sites/default/files/defendingchildhood/legacy/2011/09/19/tips-early-childhood.pdf>