



# SETTLEMENT NEEDS OF NEWCOMER CHILDREN

## Research Synthesis Report

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### Table of Contents

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Terminology</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>A Word of Caution</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Maintaining the Home Language</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Acquiring a New Language</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Experiencing Loss</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Developing Social Networks</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Dealing with Change</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Achieving Wellbeing</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Glossary</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Tools and Resources</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>APPENDIX A: Child Development Theories and Implications For Immigrant Children</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>APPENDIX B: Recommendations for ECE Programs Working with Immigrant Families</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>References</b>	<b>31</b>



## Introduction

The objective of this report is to discuss the core settlement needs of newcomer children in order to better understand their experiences. The settlement needs identified in the report were selected through a review of the literature on early childhood education and newcomer children. Emphasis was placed on international research including countries such as Australia, England, Finland, France, Germany, Hong Kong, Hungary, Japan, Macedonia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Romania, Serbia, Switzerland, UK and the U.S.

Research that looks at early childhood education and newcomer children focuses on home language maintenance, second language acquisition, experiences of loss, development of social networks, impact of changes due to migration, and the overall wellbeing of newcomer children.

The following report walks through each of these themes and provides a description of children's needs as well as ideas on how to support newcomer children.

## Methodology

About 40 resources were reviewed to gather the content for this report. Resources were accessed through thematic journal article databases. The databases focused on the following disciplines: education, sociology and psychology. Key search terms included settlement needs, challenges, adaptation, immigrant children, early childhood education, preschool, language, stress, loss, mental health, social skills, and family.

Selection criteria for journal articles also included a date range (2008 – 2015), a geographical preference (countries other than Canada) and a target population (pre-school/kindergarten children). There are only a few articles that date prior to 2008 or that originated in Canada.

## Terminology

The literature review reveals that “settlement” is a Canadian-specific term that in other countries is referred to as adaptation, acculturation or integration. The definition of these and other terms can be found in the glossary at the end of the report.

Canadian literature has broad definitions of settlement. For example, Türegün and Shields (2014) explain that successful settlement can be achieved through formal terms (e.g. citizenship acquisition) and informal terms (e.g. language acquisition). Whereas, Omidvar and Richmond (2005) define settlement through a social inclusion perspective. Their definition highlights the need for newcomers to feel that they belong and that they are accepted and recognized. Omidvar and Richmond (2005) explain that settlement is a “lifetime adjustment” and not a time-limited, concrete outcome.

Another Canadian study on newcomer children defines settlement in terms of health and wellbeing (Simich 2007). Simich looked at how social support (helpful social interactions) between parents/schools/service providers and children positively impact children's health (or settlement).



In terms of generic definitions of “settlement” and “needs”, dictionaries define settlement as the act or state of settling, of making stable or permanent (Dictionary.com, 2015). Needs can be defined as something that is essential or very important rather than just desirable (Oxford Dictionary, 2015) something that a person needs in order to live or succeed or be happy (Merriam-Webster, 2015).

This report uses the term “immigrant” instead of “newcomer” in order to be consistent with the literature’s terminology. The acronym ECE is also used to refer to early childhood education.

## A Word of Caution

It is necessary to acknowledge and understand the interplay of different factors, experiences, and contexts that individually shape the unique experiences of children. Not all immigrant children have the same needs and not all pedagogical methods or settlement supports meet these needs (Chan, 2011 – New Zealand; Ang, 2010 – England).

There is no single story about immigrant children (De Feyter, Winsler, 2009 – U.S.). Their journeys and lives are complex and influenced by many factors (De Feyter, Winsler, 2009 – U.S.). Cultures are not characterized by homogeneity; instead, they are fluid and under constant change (De Feyter, Winsler, 2009 – U.S.; Chan, 2011 – New Zealand). The identities of immigrants and their children are heterogeneous and highly fluid (Chan, 2011, p. 69 – New Zealand; Ang, 2010 – England). Migrant families reinvent cultures and modify their practices (Keat, Strickland, Marinak, 2009 – U.S.).

Early childhood educators must know that settlement supports and best practices in ECE are contingent on the individual situation of the child (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia). Classifying the needs of children based on their culture-only “does not allow teachers to respond...to diverse individual needs within the group” (Chan, 2011, p. 69 – New Zealand).

### ECE Tips: Things to Consider

- Take into account children’s migration status, country of origin, age, cognitive development, context of socialization (De Feyter, Winsler, 2009 – U.S.)
- Design targeted preschool curricula that addresses the unique needs of children from diverse groups (De Feyter, Winsler, 2009 – U.S.).
- There is no best practice. It is better to have a wide range of options that can be adapted to the child’s needs (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia).
- A constructivism approach to pedagogy allows educators to view knowledge as more meaningful when it is constructed not imposed (Tobin, 2010 – Japan, France).
- Children’s beliefs and customs should not be evaluated using the educators’ own cultural criteria. Cultural relativism should be used instead (Tobin, 2010 – Japan, France).
- Assessment tools should be validated within the cultural context and language of the child. Evaluation items can be biased and lead to inaccurate assessments of the child’s development (Hurley, Warren, Habalow, Weber, Tousignant, 2014 – U.S.).

## Maintaining the Home Language

Many studies have shown the cognitive, linguistic, educational, social and emotional benefits of preserving the mother language (Hu, Torr, and Whiteman, 2014 – Australia; Ball, 2011 – UNESCO; Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK). Bilingual children have enhanced literacy skills, listening skills, and increased memory capacity (Tobin, Arzubigiaga, Adair, 2013 – U.S.). They are able to navigate multiple cultural contexts; a skill that is useful in both their present and future lives (Veseley, Ginsberg, 2011 – Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, U.S.).

### Benefits of Retaining the Home Language

Children who speak the mother tongue are more likely to be confident and to feel accepted and secure (Hu, Torr, and Whiteman, 2014 – Australia; Ebbeck, Yim, Lee, 2010 – Hong Kong). Maintaining the home language also strengthens familial bonds since it enables emotional support, family attachment, and the transmission of cultural values (Tobin, Arzubigiaga, Adair, 2013 – U.S.).

Maintaining the home language increases the child's sense of belonging and contributes to his/her social development (Hu, Torr, and Whiteman, 2014 – Australia; Guo, Dalli, 2012 – New Zealand; Ball, 2011 – UNESCO). As a result, children experience greater integration and less stress, which enhances their learning and settlement (Hu, Torr, and Whiteman, 2014 – Australia; Veseley, Ginsberg, 2011 – Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, U.S.).

Making use of the home language in the ECE centre also provides children with continuity between their home and the centre (Ball, 2011 – UNESCO). This continuity helps promote the child's emotional and cognitive stability (Ball, 2011 – UNESCO).

### Valuing the Home Language

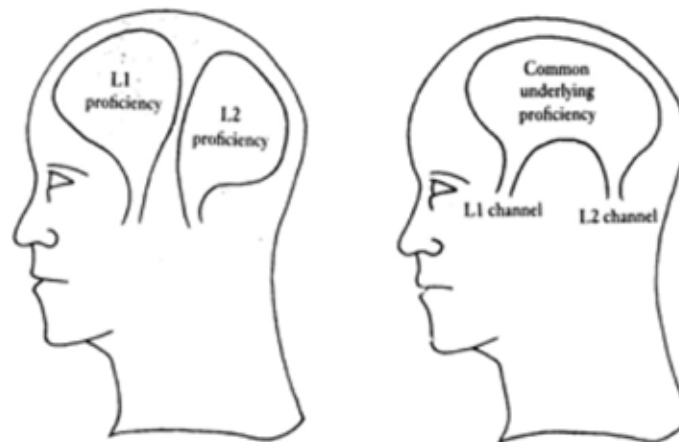
The home language should be of equal value as the dominant language (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK) because even at a young age, children are capable of knowing whether or not their respective languages are valued (Ball, 2011 – UNESCO). Not valuing the home language may affect children's self-esteem and confidence (Ball, 2011 – UNESCO).

If the usage of the mother language is prohibited or not encouraged, children feel frightened, isolated, and learning becomes more difficult (Hu, Torr, and Whiteman, 2014 – Australia). Consequently, children will see no purpose in speaking a language that plays no significant role in their new environment (Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012 – Canada).

## Challenging Myths

Parents might focus on the development of the second language because they believe that second language proficiency helps children to integrate and excel academically (Hu, Torr, and Whiteman, 2014 – Australia; Tobin, Arzubiaga, Adair, 2013 – U.S.; Thomauske, 2011 – France, Germany). Children might also favour the dominant language in an effort to fit in, connect with peers, and overcome isolation (Ren, 2014 – Australia; Lengyel, 2012- Germany; Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK). Nonetheless, parents and children should know that maintaining the home language does not detract from learning a second language (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK; Ball, 2011 – UNESCO). On the contrary, it contributes to their socio-emotional development and settlement (Hu, Torr, and Whiteman, 2014 – Australia; Guo, Dalli, 2012 – New Zealand).

Research has shown that children are capable of learning two or more languages simultaneously (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK; Ball, 2011 – UNESCO). Bilingualism does not confuse children nor does it slow down language development (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK; Ball, 2011 – UNESCO). The common underlying proficiency theory explains that languages are not mentally compartmentalized in separate sections and therefore do not compete for mental space (See Figure 1) (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK; Ball, 2011 – UNESCO).



**FIGURE 1** Separate underlying proficiency versus common underlying proficiency (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK).

## Language Learning and Reinforcement

Acquiring a language at an early age helps children develop better grammar skills, have less of an accent, and be less timid when speaking the new language (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK). An asset in young children is the availability of neural tissue for the take up of new knowledge (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK). Children display flexibility in bilingualism as they code-switch, code-mix and translate (Lengyel, 2012- Germany).

Nonetheless, children need ongoing and appropriate support to continue developing their home and second language (Ball, 2011 – UNESCO). There needs to be a long-term commitment and educational continuity where children have access to adequate resources and exposure to didactic principles (Ball, 2011 – UNESCO). They need to receive instruction and read texts in the first and second language in order to use both languages to construct meaning and establish cognitive concepts (Lengyel, 2012-Germany).

### Other Perspectives on Home Language Maintenance

In countries such as Germany and France, minority languages might occupy a lower place in the hierarchy of languages (Lengyel, 2012 – Germany). This is due to the belief that one language equals one culture and one culture equals one identity (Thomauske, 2011 – France, Germany). In such a context, linguistic uniformity and monolingual identities are preferred (Lengyel, 2012 – Germany; Thomauske, 2011 – France, Germany). Valorizing home languages could be seen as a threat to national unity and a barrier to children's integration (Thomauske, 2011 – France, Germany).

Educators might not see the benefits of using the home language in the ECE centre (Tobin, Arzubigi, Adair, 2013 – U.S.; Thomauske, 2011 – France, Germany). Incorporating the home language in the child's education seems like a huge undertaking because the teachers do not speak the children's language (Tobin, Arzubigi, Adair, 2013 – U.S.; Thomauske, 2011 – France, Germany). These educators view first language development as the parents' responsibility (Thomauske, 2011 – France, Germany).

Even so, parents fail to see the need to transmit the home language and regard English as the language that should be reinforced after German/French (Thomauske, 2011 – France, Germany). These beliefs and practices position minority languages as deficits that impede children from doing well in school and society at large (Thomauske, 2011 – France, Germany).

### Practices in Early Childhood Education

- Pair English-language learners with talkative children or children who speak the child's home language, also known as language mediators. Language mediators help children feel safe and secure in their new environment (Guo, Dalli, 2012 – New Zealand; Veseley, Ginsberg, 2011 – Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, U.S.; Ebbeck, Yim, Lee, 2010 – Hong Kong).
- Parents could volunteer in the ECE centre and participate in its programming to help promote the use of home languages (Chan, 2011 – New Zealand; Veseley, Ginsberg, 2011 – Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, U.S.).
- Explain to parents why bilingualism is an asset and inform them about the benefits of being multi/bilingual (Hu, Torr, and Whiteman, 2014 – Australia; Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK).
- Offer foreign language classes to early childhood educators (Veseley, Ginsberg, 2011 – Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, U.S.).

## Acquiring a New Language

Acquiring a language is not a quick and easy process (Ball, 2011 – UNESCO). In the ECE centre, children cannot understand activities, teacher's instructions, and comments made by peers (Ren, 2014 – Australia; Grünigen, Perren, Nägele, Alsaker, 2010 – Switzerland; Ebbeck, Yim, Lee, 2010 – Hong Kong). As a result, many children become vivid observers who often play alone (Guo, Dalli, 2012 – New Zealand; Ebbeck, Yim, Lee, 2010 – Hong Kong).

In other cases, they might resort to physical ways of communicating such as kicking, screaming, and hitting (Ren, 2014 – Australia; Ebbeck, Yim, Lee, 2010 – Hong Kong). Some might become impatient and find it hard to concentrate (Ebbeck, Yim, Lee, 2010 – Hong Kong). All these responses only accomplish to drive others away, affecting the children's potential to establish social relationships (Guo, Dalli, 2012 – New Zealand; Ebbeck, Yim, Lee, 2010 – Hong Kong; Grünigen, Perren, Nägele, Alsaker, 2010 – Switzerland).

Young children understand the importance of being able to speak the local language (Ren, 2014 – Australia; Lengyel, 2012 – Germany; Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK). They know that they need to speak English in order to interact and communicate with others, which in turn gives them access to warm, interpersonal relationships (Ren, 2014 – Australia; Lengyel, 2012 – Germany; Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK). With second language proficiency, children are also better able to express their feelings, lessening their need to engage in physical behaviours (Ren, 2014 – Australia).

Overall, second language proficiency contributes to the settlement of immigrant children, as it improves the child's adaptability and reduces issues of aggression and lack of attention (Ren, 2014 – Australia).

### Peer's Perception of English Language Learners

Young children might avoid peers who cannot communicate efficiently (Grünigen, Perren, Nägele, Alsaker, 2010 – Switzerland). Even at an early age children are sensitive to the communication skills of other children (Grünigen, Perren, Nägele, Alsaker, 2010 – Switzerland). Research has found associations between poor language skills and low peer acceptance (Guo, Dalli, 2012 – New Zealand; Grünigen, Perren, Nägele, Alsaker, 2010 – Switzerland).

The lack of second language skills can put children in vulnerable situations where they are prone to being bullied and rejected (Guo, Dalli, 2012 – New Zealand; Grünigen, Perren, Nägele, Alsaker, 2010 – Switzerland). Peers might see immigrant children as less competent because immigrant children may not show prosocial behaviour (e.g. they have difficulties understanding the teacher's instructions and cannot respond to conflict or react to peers) (Grünigen, Perren, Nägele, Alsaker, 2010 – Switzerland).

Being rejected or bullied causes children to become shy and to show less initiative, which hampers their integration and participation in everyday social life (Guo, Dalli, 2012 – New Zealand; Ebbeck, Yim, Lee, 2010 – Hong Kong; Grünigen, Perren, Nägele, Alsaker, 2010 – Switzerland). In other cases, rejection might lead children to become more aggressive in an attempt to make their feelings known (Ren, 2014 – Australia; Guo, Dalli, 2012 – New Zealand; Ebbeck, Yim, Lee, 2010 – Hong Kong; Grünigen, Perren, Nägele, Alsaker, 2010 – Switzerland).



## Language Acquisition

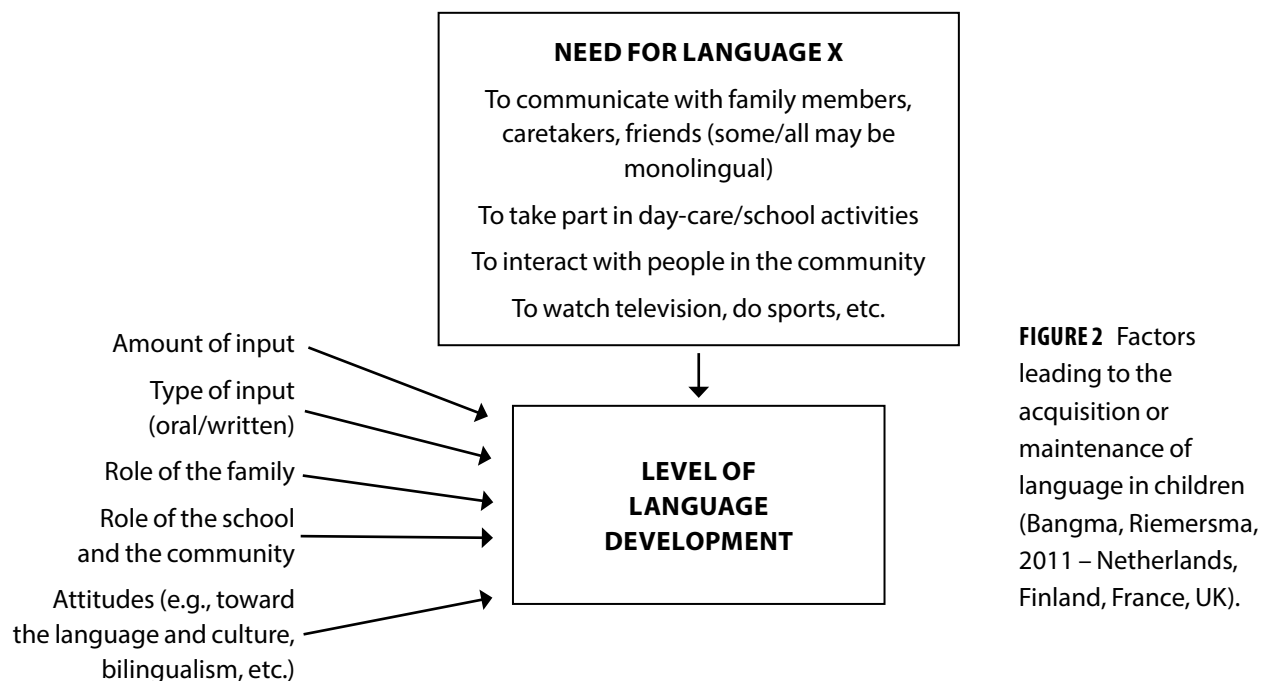
Children acquire language for two purposes: a) interpersonal communication, and b) academic development (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK). The former is quite important given that this type of communication enables children to navigate day-to-day situations (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK).

Bilingual children go through the same stages of language development as monolingual children, but they experience language acquisition either simultaneously or sequential (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK). Simultaneous acquisition is when language development takes place simultaneously in several languages (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK). This does not slow down normal language development (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK). Sequential Acquisition takes place when a second language is learnt after a first language has been established (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK). This process is common among immigrant children who attend an ECE centre (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK).

The level of language development in children is dependent on the a) amount of input, b) type of input, c) role of the family, d) role of school/community, and e) attitudes toward the language (See Figure 2) (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK).

Usually, as children commence formal education, the input of the home language is reduced and their home language development diminishes (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK). This leads to subtractive bilingualism where the second language is prioritized and there is little or no reinforcement for the child’s home language (Ball, 2011 – UNESCO).

On the other hand, it is also important to know that though early childhood education lays the foundations for learning a second language, once children enter the school system they continue to require support in the second language (Ball, 2011 – UNESCO).



**FIGURE 2** Factors leading to the acquisition or maintenance of language in children (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK).

## Language as a Cultural Tool

Home language can act as a cultural tool that mediates children's learning in ECE centres (Guo, Dalli, 2011 – New Zealand). This is particularly true in settings where there is more than one child who speaks the same home language. Same-language peers become language mediators who help new children understand and integrate into their new environment (Guo, Dalli, 2011 – New Zealand). They do so in the following ways:

- **Bridging Culture:** Home language is used as a bridge for involvement in the learning practices of the ECE centre. The mediator or boundary object – a social partner who shares the same cultural tool – translates/explains to the new child what is going on in the centre. Mediators also answer questions posed by the new child (Guo, Dalli, 2011 – New Zealand).
- **Converging Cultures:** Children mix cultural tools from both their home and local culture. Children move between languages and are aware of the coexistence of two linguistic codes. They recognize the utility of both languages and mix them to expand their opportunities to play, express feelings and communicate with others (Guo, Dalli, 2011 – New Zealand).
- **Claiming Group Identity:** Sharing a language in common provides children with an identity marker that can be used to achieve a sense of belonging. Shared group identity can be used by children to set themselves apart from the centre's mainstream culture. Doing so helps them feel accepted in an environment that is unfamiliar to them (Guo, Dalli, 2011 – New Zealand).
- **Battling Constraints:** The absence of same-language peers can make initial settlement more difficult. Children lack the assistance of mediators who help them interact with others and facilitate access to resources within the ECE centre. Immigrant children find it difficult to join in activities and instead play alone or observe others play. This lack of participation hampers the child's learning and integration (Guo, Dalli, 2011 – New Zealand).

The scenarios above illustrate how language mediators help immigrant children overcome barriers in intercultural relations. However, it is necessary to note that for this to work, the ECE environment must be receptive and responsive to children's utilization of their language/cultural tools (Guo, Dalli, 2011 – New Zealand).

## Practices in Early Childhood Education

- Engage children in activities where they talk about what is important to them. If children lead the conversation, they feel comfortable using their second language skills (Keat, Strickland, Marinak, 2009 – U.S.).
- Educators who speak the same language could translate for English-language learners (Vesely, Ginsberg, 2011 – Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, U.S.).
- Communicate clearly and enhance the communication skills of children. Acknowledge that learning a new language is a difficult and complex process (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.).
- Reassure parents of their children's progress in the second language (e.g. have children use their English skills in front of their parents) (Hu, Torr, and Whiteman, 2014 – Australia).
- Adapt teaching strategies to the proper stage of second language acquisition (See Table 1) (Lake, and Pappamihel, 2003 – U.S.).

STAGES OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION			
Preproduction	Early Production	Speech Emergence	Intermediate Fluency
Characteristics	Characteristics	Characteristics	Characteristics
1) Listening	1) Continued listening	1) Sight vocabulary (older learners)	1) May seem fluent, but needs to expand vocabulary and CALP
2) Student responds nonverbally	2) Student responds with 1 or 2 words, or nonverbally	2) Students speak in phrases or sentences	2) Engages in dialogue
3) 10 hours per month of exposure to English	3) 3-6 months to 1 year exposure to English	3) 1-3 years exposure to English	3) 3-4 years exposure to English
Teaching Strategies	Teaching Strategies	Teaching Strategies	Teaching Strategies
1) 90% teacher talk	1) 50-60% teacher talk	1) 40% teacher talk	1) 10% teacher talk
2) Total Physical Response (TPR)	2) TPR with responses – verbal and nonverbal	2) Scaffolding and expansion	2) Essay writing
3) Modeling	3) Answering who, what, where and either/ or questions with one-word answers	3) Poetry, songs, and chants	3) Analyzing charts and graphs
4) Active student involvement	4) Role-playing	4) Predicting	4) More complex problem solving and evaluating
5) Yes/No questions	5) Completing sentences	5) Comparing	5) Continuing with how and why questions; students must research and support their answers
6) Use of pictures	6) Questions to be answered with phrases (Where ...? in the house)	6) Describing	6) Pre-writing activities – writing process, peer critiquing, etc.
7) Use of props and hands-on activities	7) Labeling (older learners)	7) Social interaction (cooperative learning with information gaps)	7) Literary analysis
8) Simplified language		8) How and why questions	
		9) Language experience approach	
		10) Problem solving	
		11) Group discussion	
		12) Labeling	
		13) Listening, charting, graphing	

**TABLE 1** Strategies to Facilitate Language Development without Stressing the Child (Lake,Pappamihiel, 2003 – U.S.)



## Experiencing Loss

When children migrate they experience many different types of loss, such as the loss of a familiar language or environment (Pumariega, Rothe, 2010 – U.S.; Orozco and Orozco, 2009 – U.S.; Bonovitz, 2004 – U.S.). The younger the children the more sensitive they are to the separation and losses that come with migration (Bonovitz, 2004 – U.S.).

One of the most profound losses children experience is the loss of the attachment figure (Arnold, 2014 – UK). Being stripped of significant relationships causes anxiety, disorientation and a keen sense of loss in children (Orozco and Orozco, 2009 – U.S.). Children can fall into a perpetual mourning of a lost attachment to a significant member of their extended family (Orozco and Orozco, 2009 – U.S.). This is not only painful, but also stressful (Pumariega, Rothe, 2010 – U.S.; Bonovitz, 2004).

### The Effects of Loss on the Child

In the country of origin, extended family members such as grandparents and aunts, are often a great source of support and guidance for children and their parents (Dachyshyn, 2014 – Canada; Conn, Marks, Coyne, 2013 – U.S.). Losing this level of support in the midst of settlement can lead to psychological distress and create a void in the child's internal landscape (Pumariega, Rothe, 2010 – U.S.; Bonovitz, 2004 – U.S.). Children then feel disoriented, anxious, sad and even depressed (Orozco, Orozco, 2009- U.S.).

Maslow's needs hierarchy theory (See Figure 3) explains that leaving family and friends in the country of origin affects the child's sense of love and belonging (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.). It also affects children's self-esteem because when they lose family connections they are more likely to feel lonely (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.).

In turn, when children feel lonely they feel less confident and that hinders their settlement (Arnold, 2014 – UK). If the attachment figure is no longer available they feel insecure and more fearful (Arnold, 2014 – UK). The loss of the attachment figure/s can have long-term psychological effects on the child (Arnold, 2014 – UK) such as behavioural problems and depression (Pumariega, Rothe, 2010 – U.S.).

### Parental Support

Immigrant children need support to grieve and mourn the loss of those left behind (Arnold, 2014 – UK). They need support because loss and separation can cause a lot of pain and anguish, which affects their ability to develop new relationships (Arnold, 2014 – UK).

The family's way of negotiating separation and dealing with loss affects the child's settlement experience (Dachyshyn, 2014 – Canada; Bonovitz, 2004 – U.S.). For instance, it is harder for parents to sympathize with children's pain when they themselves are struggling with loss and burdened with the challenges of settlement (Dachyshyn, 2014 – Canada; Bonovitz, 2004 – U.S.). In this case, children have to develop their own defenses to endure and manage pain, which interferes with their settlement and development (Bonovitz, 2004 – U.S.).

## The Role of the Extended Family

Even during daily activities in the ECE centre immigrant children express how significant the extended family is to them (Keat, Strickland, Marinak, 2009 – U.S.). Children use arts or story telling to share information about the relationships they have with extended family members (Keat, Strickland, Marinak, 2009 – U.S.).

The presence of extended family can be a valuable asset to migrant families and their children (De Feyter, Winsler, 2009 – U.S.). Some research attributes the socio-emotional competency of immigrant children to the child's family structure and family influences (De Feyter, Winsler, 2009 – U.S.). Children in immigrant families tend to have closer ties with adults who transmit to children a range of self-control strategies (De Feyter, Winsler, 2009 – U.S.).

Moreover, the extended family is believed to help increase the social capital of children and to contribute to the immigrant advantage (De Feyter, Winsler, 2009 – U.S.) where children show higher behavioral and social competence than natives (Veseley, Ginsberg, 2011 – Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, U.S.; De Feyter, Winsler, 2009 – U.S.).

Extended family members in immigrant families can support the child and parents in dealing with multiple moves, pressure, racism, and new customs (Conn, Marks, Coyne, 2013 – U.S.; Tingvold, Middelthon, Allen, Hauff, 2012 – Norway; Pumariega, Rothe, 2010 – U.S.). The extended family acts as a resource that helps immigrant children and their families adapt and deal with acculturative stress (Conn, Marks, Coyne, 2013 – U.S.; Tingvold, Middelthon, Allen, Hauff, 2012 – Norway). They provide emotional, social, and structural support in the new context and can play crucial roles in moments of crisis (Conn, Marks, Coyne, 2013 – U.S.; Tingvold, Middelthon, Allen, Hauff, 2012 – Norway).

## Co-parenting Practices

In most cases, families of minority backgrounds view extended family members as close and significant people (Tingvold, Middelthon, Allen, Hauff, 2012 – Norway). In this type of family structure co-parenting is a common practice (Conn, Marks, Coyne, 2013 – U.S.). Family members such as grandparents share childrearing responsibilities with the child's parents and they could even have the primary role for raising the child (Conn, Marks, Coyne, 2013 – U.S.).

This arrangement gives parents time to work and access to “free” child care (Conn, Marks, Coyne, U.S. – 2013). Though this would be great help for parents during settlement, this is not always the case, especially in families who left behind the extended family (Bernhard 2012 – Canada).

## Developing Social Networks

Social skills are often developed at the ECE centre where children receive support in developing social competence and functional communication skills (Ren, 2014 – Australia). Social competence facilitates integration and integration contributes to children's happiness and health (Ren, 2014 – Australia). Higher language competency helps children feel less anxious and eases their transition to a new environment (Ren, 2014 – Australia). Studies have found that social skills in English language learners are negatively associated with anxiety, insecurity and withdrawal (Ren, 2014 – Australia).

### Social Relationships, Belonging and Self-esteem

Children can better adjust to the new environment when they have the ability to establish connections, relationships and social networks (Colbert, 2013 – Canada; Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.). This is especially true for immigrant children who feel a great need to achieve a sense of belonging in their new context (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.). Young immigrant children desire love and attention, both in the home and outside the home (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.). When they do not receive any of these two they cannot build a secure base at home and/or outside the home (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.).

Relationships that are genuine, warm, and meaningful (Froehlich-Gildhoff, Roennau-Boese, 2012 – Germany; Veseley, Ginsberg, 2011 – Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, U.S.; Grünigen, Perren, Nägele, Alsaker, 2010 – Switzerland) promote children's development and their sense of belonging and security (Veseley, Ginsberg, 2011 – Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, U.S.). Meaningful relationships allow children to develop a strong identity and to grow more confident (Colbert, 2013 – Canada). On the other hand, when children lack social connections they feel lonely and develop an inferior self-concept, affecting their self-esteem (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.).

### Secure Attachments and Settlement

Close relationships provide children with a secure base (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.). Feeling secure and having strong forms of attachment help children gain self-confidence and trust (Froehlich-Gildhoff, Roennau-Boese, 2012 – Germany; Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.), which facilitates immigrant children's integration in their new context (Hu, Torr, and Whiteman, 2014 – Australia; Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.). Secure attachments lead to a healthy, congruent development of the child's self-concept and serve as a coping mechanism for dealing with crisis (Froehlich-Gildhoff, Roennau-Boese, 2012 – Germany).

If immigrant children develop trust during infancy, prior to migrating, they will find it easier to develop trusting relationships in the new country (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.). Otherwise, they will feel detached and insecure in the new environment and settlement becomes more difficult (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.).

## Barriers to Becoming Social

Though socializing is important for children, many find it challenging due to language barriers. They cannot communicate with peers or understand what is being said in the classroom (Ebbeck, Yim, Lee, 2010 – Hong Kong). Some respond aggressively or withdraw from social activities, which hamper their ability to form social relationships (Ebbeck, Yim, Lee, 2010 – Hong Kong; Grünigen, Perren, Nägele, Alsaker, 2010 – Switzerland).

Researchers have observed that preschool children feel more secure in an environment where peers speak the same language (Ebbeck, Yim, Lee, 2010 – Hong Kong). Same language peers become boundary objects or cultural mediators that provide a means of connection to different social worlds (Guo, Dalli, 2012 – New Zealand).

## Navigating the Social Context

Children sometimes create a hybrid of practices to participate in cultural communities different from their own (Guo, Dalli, 2012 – New Zealand). They combine aspects of different cultures in their cognitive and behavioral repertoire (Pumariega, Rothe, 2010 – U.S.) to produce practices that help them participate and navigate unknown contexts (Guo, Dalli, 2012 – New Zealand).

When children feel isolated and left out they prioritize the use of the local language in an effort to fit in and connect with others (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK; Ebbeck, Yim, Lee, 2010 – Hong Kong). They view the local language as a tool that enables them to communicate and interact with one another (Lengyel, 2012 – Germany).

## Supporting Children's Socialization

To facilitate children's settlement, early childhood educators should implement an inclusive pedagogical approach that focuses on interpersonal and inter-group relationships (Ang, 2010 – England). Educators can expand social norms in settings where children interact (Colbert, 2013 – Canada). They can help children make friends, encourage teamwork, and build on the connections and skills children already have (Colbert, 2013 – Canada).

Individualized programming can be designed in order to enhance children's social and language development (e.g. creative drama activities) (Szecsi, 2008 – Hungary). Activities such as this enable children to express their thoughts, feelings, concerns, and provide teachers with a deeper understanding of the child's needs (Szecsi, 2008 – Hungary). With this knowledge teachers can better guide children's social, emotional, and cognitive development (Keat, Strickland, Marinak, 2009 – U.S.).

Educators can build on the social function of ECE classrooms to encourage children to socialize with diverse groups (Veseley, Ginsberg, 2011 – Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, U.S.; Chan, 2011 – New Zealand). They should also explain to children that cultural differences are not deficits (Tobin, 2010 – France, Japan). This is important because even in the ECE centre, young children are exposed to discrimination and inequality (Ang, 2010 – England).

From an early age, children start to categorize their peers as “others” based on visible attributes (Pumariega, Rothe, 2010 – U.S.). This could be disadvantageous to immigrant children who often experience greater social rejection and low peer acceptance (Grünigen, Perren, Nägele, Alsaker, 2010 – Switzerland). To address these issues, educators should help children feel accepted and not require them to assimilate to the local culture (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.).

Educators can also contribute to children’s socialization by establishing meaningful connections with children. For instance they could break away from the teacher-dominated interaction and actively seek and listen to children’s expression of their feelings and experiences (Keat, Strickland, Marinak, 2009 – U.S.). A study found that photo-narration activities gave children an opportunity to talk about what is important to them when they met one-on-one with the teacher (Keat, Strickland, Marinak, 2009 – U.S.). This exercise made children more assertive, articulate, and confident (Keat, Strickland, Marinak, 2009 – U.S.).

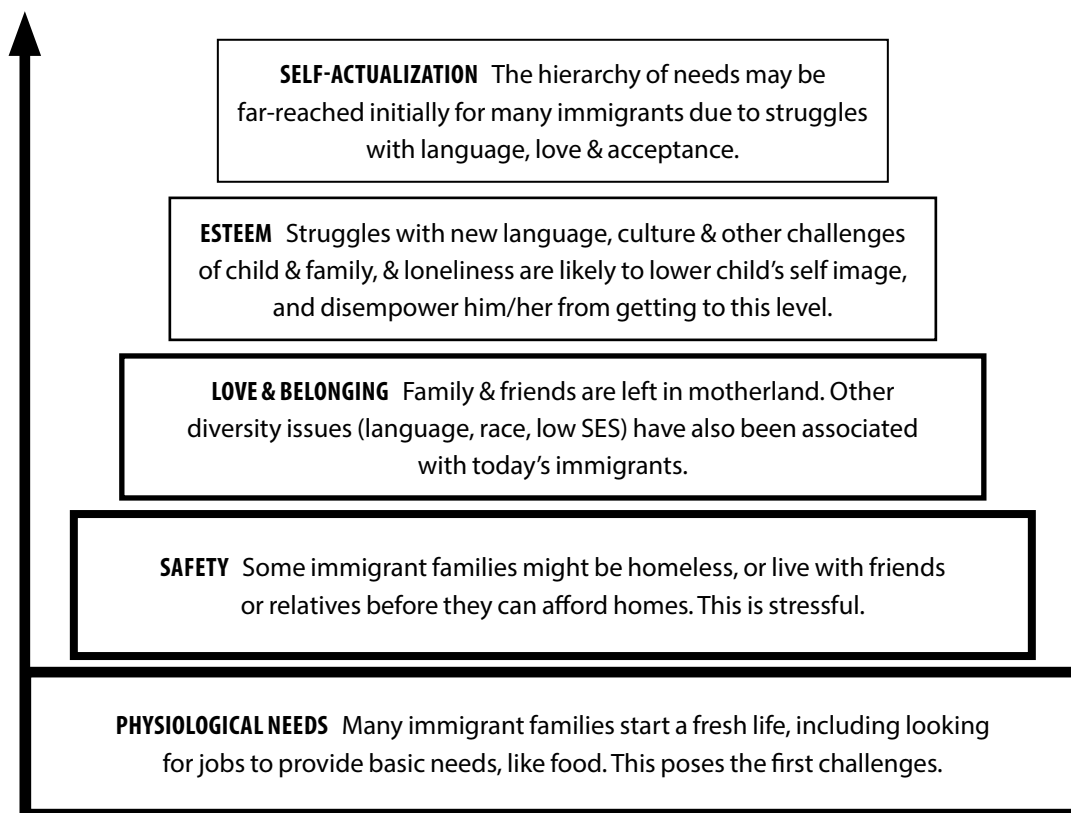
### Practices in Early Childhood Education

- Focus on the children’s socio-emotional development (Hu, Torr, and Whiteman, 2014 – Australia).
- Show a keen interest in learning about the child, and form genuine relationships with him/her (Veseley, Ginsberg, 2011 – Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, U.S.).
- Provide extra support and time to immigrant/minority/marginalized children (Chan, 2011 – New Zealand).
- Explain to other children the customs of immigrant children. In this way, children will better understand the behaviours and experiences of immigrant children (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.).
- Show children how to enter existing play or initiate play. They can be taught action-driven phrases and language that encourages socialization or the expression of their needs (Dostch, 2013 – Canada).
- Constantly gain knowledge about children’s contexts and lives (Veseley, Ginsberg, 2011 – Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, U.S.).
- Include personalized positive stories and narratives about the child or his/her country of origin (Chan, 2011 – New Zealand).
- Reflect on own values and understanding of diversity, reflect on biases, take into account differences within groups, approach culture in all its complexities (Ang, 2010 – England).
- Engage and challenge power relations, deconstruct cultural essentialism, acknowledge privilege, use diverse perspectives that differ from mainstream ideologies (Chan, 2011 – New Zealand; Ang, 2010 – England).
- Reflect diversity at every level of program delivery and administration – diversity should be representative of children’s values, beliefs and needs (Veseley, Ginsberg, 2011 – Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, U.S.).



## Dealing with Change

When children move from one country to another country they face many changes. They are exposed to a new language, environment, socio-economic situation, and cultural system (Ren, 2014 – Australia; Veseley, Ginsberg, 2011 – Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, U.S.; Pumariega, Rothe, 2010 – U.S.; De Feyter, Winsler, 2009 – U.S.; Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.). Some families might experience discrimination, poverty, and issues with their migration status (Veseley, Ginsberg, 2011 – Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, U.S.; De Feyter, Winsler, 2009 – U.S.; Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.), which make changes even more overwhelming. Maslow's needs hierarchy theory (See Figure 3) helps to explain how immigrant children have to overcome added barriers in order to have access to what other children can easily access (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.).



**FIGURE 3** Maslow's needs hierarchy and the immigrant child (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.)

Changes to social norms also affect children. New forms of communication and social expectations make it difficult for children to navigate the new social context (Ren, 2014 – Australia; Grünigen, Perren, Nägele, Alsaker, 2010 – Switzerland). Peers might be offended or scared by the way immigrant children act (e.g. hugging/kissing) (Guo, Dalli, 2012 – New Zealand). When immigrant children struggle in adapting their behaviours to different norms they feel rejected and isolated (Guo, Dalli, 2012 – New Zealand; Grünigen, Perren, Nägele, Alsaker, 2010 – Switzerland).

## Children's Response to Change

According to Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological model, changes to cultural expectations and experiences take place in immediate and distant systems (e.g. microsystem/family, macrosystem/policies) (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.). Changes to the systems children are part of make children feel confused and conflicted, making it hard for them to adjust (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.).

Many of the changes immigrant children face cause them pain and stress (Pumariega, Rothe, 2010 – U.S.; Bonovitz, 2004 – U.S.). In order to deal with the overwhelming changes, children draw on their defense mechanisms to protect themselves (Bonovitz, 2004 – U.S.). However, younger children are more dependant on the way their parents experience and cope with pain (Bonovitz, 2004 – U.S.).

The abundance of change might cause children to experience difficulty trusting their parents since the parents could be seen as the ones responsible for bringing so much change into their lives (Ebbeck, Yim, Lee, 2010 – Hong Kong). This makes it hard for the child to connect with the family and could lead to emotional instability (Ebbeck, Yim, Lee, 2010 – Hong Kong).

## Connecting Learning to Changes and Experiences

Implementing teaching methodologies that accord with children's experiences lead to higher ECE quality. In turn, good ECE reduces the impact of multiple risk factors by helping the child improve his/her literacy, numeracy, and socioemotional skills (Veseley, Ginsberg, 2011 – Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, U.S.).

Jean Piaget's cognitive theory helps to explain the connection between the experiences of children and their cognitive levels (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.). Immigrant children have different experiences and perspectives for understanding the world. They might recognize a passion fruit but not an apple. This does not mean that they cannot classify fruits; instead, it calls attention to the disequilibrium and confusion the child faces when assimilating new knowledge and concepts (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.).

ECE staff have to be careful to not mislabel children as being cognitively behind (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.). A wrong diagnosis can lead to cognitive and emotional repercussions for the child (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.). What children do need is proper care and support to overcome this stage of disequilibrium (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.).

Lev Vygotsky's sociocultural theory also provides a framework to assess children and the changes they encounter (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.). This theory emphasizes the importance of past experiences in the child's learning process. Educators must understand the beliefs, customs, and skills of the child in order to meet children at their cultural and cognitive levels (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.). This strategy helps educators build on the child's pre-existing knowledge. For instance, instead of selecting the word "bear" to teach the letter "B", educators can find out about animals the child is familiar with (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.).

## Developmental Assessments

There are certain assessment practices educators can use to properly assess children:

- Educators can observe the child in a number of contexts such as play or in interactions with family members (Hurley, Warren, Habalow, Weber, Tousignant, 2014 – U.S.).
- Parents can be consulted to learn about children’s skills in their native language (Hurley, Warren, Habalow, Weber, Tousignant, 2014 – U.S.).
- The child’s performance could be compared to a sibling or child of a similar background (Hurley, Warren, Habalow, Weber, Tousignant, 2014 – U.S.).
- Different domains can be assessed such as physical, communication, cognitive, social, and emotional (Hurley, Warren, Habalow, Weber, Tousignant, 2014 – U.S.).

In terms of specific activities, educators can have children describe the same pictures three times a year to assess their linguistic progress (Keat, Strickland, Marinak, 2009 – U.S.). The family can also be involved in the assessment process. They can fill out a log that tracks children’s daily routines and their levels of engagement (Hurley, Warren, Habalow, Weber, Tousignant, 2014 – U.S.).

## Practices in Early Childhood Education

- Be sensitive to the struggles and changes the child encounters during settlement (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.).
- Learn about children’s culture, accommodate new concepts, and acknowledge the disequilibrium children go through (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.).
- Create opportunities to connect with the child. Spend one-on-one time with the child to talk with him/her individually (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.).
- Use assessment tools and methods that are culturally appropriate to accurately and fairly assess the child. Tools have to accommodate for the child’s linguistic ability and cultural knowledge (Banerjee, Luckner, 2014 – U.S.).
- Assess children using their native language using tools that have been properly translated. Assessment administrators should speak the child’s home language (Hurley, Warren, Habalow, Weber, Tousignant, 2014 – U.S.).
- Connect with parents to learn and understand the changes that the family and the child are going through (Hurley, Warren, Habalow, Weber, Tousignant, 2014 – U.S.).
- Provide support and settlement information to the whole family by building strong relationships with parents, holding orientations and info-sessions, and connecting parents with resources (Veseley, Ginsberg, 2011 – Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, U.S.).

## Achieving Wellbeing

Immigration is “a complex, multifaceted, ongoing process that has profound effects on the inner and interpersonal worlds” of the child (Bonovitz, 2004 – U.S., p. 130). These effects are driven by the changes and challenges of migration, which ultimately affect children’s wellbeing (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.). Paying attention to the issues children face early in life is important (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia) because their wellbeing is key to their cognitive, social, and emotional development (Froehlich-Gildhoff, Roennau-Boese, 2012 – Germany). Addressing issues in early childhood reduces the likelihood that children will need therapy or intervention later in life (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia).

Sometimes children’s needs go unmet because those around them are not aware of their needs. According to Sigmund Freud’s psychosexual theory, (immigrant) children have the need for acceptance and recognition (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.). However, they might manifest these needs in a way that is unconventional in the new context, and instead they face rejection, failing to satisfy their needs (Chan, 2011 – New Zealand; Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.).

### Stress, Anxiety and Resilience

The settlement process is filled with stressors that could have an adverse long-term psychological impact on children, affecting their adaptation and acculturation (Pumariega, Rothe, 2010 – U.S.). This is often referred to as acculturation stress, a term used to describe the adverse effects of psychological conflict resulting from the adaptation process (Pumariega, Rothe, 2010 – U.S.). Stressors and emotional trauma during early development have the potential to shape the brain circuits that are involved in the regulation of stress and emotion (Bonovitz, 2004 – U.S.). For instance, anxiety in early childhood can lead to depression, externalizing behaviours and psychiatric disorders later in life (Ren, 2014 – Australia).

Nonetheless, the hardships and joys of settlement can also lead to the formation of strong coping mechanisms (De Feyter, Winsler, 2009 – U.S.). Research has found that the second and 1.5 generation have higher risks of mental health problems and are also less resilient than immigrant children (Pumariega, Rothe, 2010 – U.S.). Immigrant children are more resilient thanks to the coping skills they develop when managing crisis and difficult situations (Froehlich-Gildhoff, Roennau-Boese, 2012 – Germany).

### Supporting Children

It is important for parents to provide a secure environment that is adapted to the particular settlement needs of the child (Bonovitz, 2004 – U.S.). When the support of parents is absent, young children become more vulnerable to the adverse effects of postmigration (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.; Bonovitz, 2004 – U.S.). Moreover, when parents do not cope well and experience mental health issues, or depression children’s settlement is negatively affected (Dachyshyn, 2014 – Canada). Parents become less responsive, attentive, and supportive, causing newcomer children to feel isolated, insecure, and abandoned (Dostch, 2013 – Canada). Having parents’ emotional support means children can build a secure base at home, which helps to counteract the hardships children face outside the home (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.).

In the ECE context, it is very useful to assess a child's level of emotional security and self-esteem because it provides educators with information about how to promote the child's sense of belonging (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.). When children feel confident in who they are they gain confidence in their abilities and are more likely to express their ideas and initiate play (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.).

Educators can implement a resource-oriented approach that focuses on children's strengths and existing skills (Froehlich-Gildhoff, Roennau-Boese, 2012 – Germany). Building on children's own resources increases their self-esteem and promotes mental health and resilience in children (Froehlich-Gildhoff, Roennau-Boese, 2012 – Germany). Parents and educators can also help to build children's perception of themselves by upholding positive views of the children (Froehlich-Gildhoff, Roennau-Boese, 2012 – Germany). In doing so, the child's need for "esteem" is met, which is one of the needs identified in Maslow's hierarchy (See Figure 3) (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.).

In the case of refugee children, not having the right supports could lead to higher risks of developing post-traumatic disorders and mental health problems (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia). Thus, it is key to develop children's confidence and establish connections with the child's family (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia). Trust should also be built through the formation of secure attachments and emphatic understanding (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia). Most importantly, educators should draw from a range of practices and strategies that meet the child's unique needs (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia).

## Refugee Children and Trauma

The psychological impact of migration is more acute in refugee children due to sudden separations and the uncertainty surrounding their place of residency (Pumariega, Rothe, 2010 – U.S.). Refugee children might struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety and depression (Pumariega, Rothe, 2010 – U.S.), and some might require mental health supports, counseling and other services (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.; Bonovitz, 2004 – U.S.).

If children experienced traumatic events prior/during migration, they develop difficulties trusting adults and could act aggressively (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia). They could find it hard to relax, be hyper-vigilant and close down emotional senses (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia). Some withdraw from social interactions and stay in corners while observing others play (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia). They could be fearful of certain objects or people and might experience difficulty falling asleep (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia). In addition, children's moods might change frequently and they become easily irritable or depressed (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia).

ECE staff should be careful about diagnosing these children as shy, aggressive, or maladaptive (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia). Portraying them as "bad", "different" or a "victim" only helps them feel worst (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia). Perhaps, children do not know how to cope with feelings of rejection, danger, and hostility so they act that way (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia).

## Practices in Early Childhood Education

- Implement a multi-level approach to promote the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children – i.e. engage parents through different venues, work closely with children, form partnerships with external service providers (Froehlich-Gildhoff, Roennau-Boese, 2012 – Germany).
- Develop and reinforce a positive image of the child and his/her strengths (Froehlich-Gildhoff, Roennau-Boese, 2012 – Germany)
- Facilitate culturally-based interventions to improve self-esteem and reduce anxiety symptoms (Pumariega, Rothe, 2010 – U.S.).
- Acknowledge children’s fears and help them overcome them (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.).
- Assign a person to care and comfort the child when s/he is fearful (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia).
- Be aware of what scares the child or triggers a traumatic memory. If s/he is fearful of an object, introduce the object gradually (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia).
- Find a handle of attachment – a ritual/common experience that the educator can share with the child whenever the educator wants to engage the child (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia).
- Engage in a one-on-one activity with the child and eventually invite others to join in. Once the child feels comfortable the educator can leave (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia).
- If the child hides, the educator can approach the child with the toys s/he likes (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia).
- Give children the option of breaking away from group activities so that they could have their own space and time (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia).
- If the child often plays with guns, knives, or sticks address him/her and have a group brainstorming session about what other objects the child could play with. Praise the child when s/he plays with other types of toys (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia).
- During naptime, educators can place the child next to a sibling or remain near by (Sims, Hayden, Palmer, Hutchins, 2000 – Australia).
- Promote children’s development and wellbeing through parental support (e.g. facilitate the strengthening of the mother-child interaction) (Pumariega, Rothe, 2010 – U.S.).
- Meet with parents one-on-one to talk about the child’s emotional state (Froehlich-Gildhoff, Roennau-Boese, 2012 – Germany).
- Raise awareness about children’s wellbeing by hosting workshops for parents (Froehlich-Gildhoff, Roennau-Boese, 2012 – Germany).

## Conclusion

The immigrant experience of children is characterized by change and challenges. Like adults, children also have to manage, negotiate, and deal with a new physical and social context. Navigating a new context can be an overwhelming process where children are required to respond, adapt, or overcome change. Often, these demands cause children to feel lost, stressed, anxious, sad, rejected, and isolated.

Children's feelings and struggles cannot be undermined or ignored. On the contrary, children's settlement brings attention to their unique needs and the supports they require. As part of the settlement experience, early childhood educators play a key role in how well children adjust to their new environment. ECE staff can develop and implement many different strategies and practices to provide children with proper and timely support. Through quality programming educators can address children's needs and support their settlement.

Supporting immigrant children is crucial to their cognitive and socio-emotional development. Healthy development in children ensures school readiness, which includes competencies such as physical wellbeing, emotional maturity, social confidence, cognitive skills, language richness, and general knowledge (De Feyter, Winsler, 2009 – U.S.). This set of skills gives immigrant children the tools they need not only to succeed in school but more importantly to lead fulfilling lives.

## Glossary

**ACCULTURATION** Process of learning about and adapting to a new culture. The ideal outcome of this adaptation is integration (Pumariiega, Rothe, 2010 – U.S.). The process of cultural and individual psychological change resulting from the meeting of two cultures (Tingvold, Middelthon, Allen, Hauff, 2012 – Norway)

**ACCULTURATION STRESS** The adverse effect of psychological conflict resulting from the process of acculturation (Pumariiega, Rothe, 2010 – U.S.). A stress response to life events rooted in the experience of acculturation. Acculturation stress is the result of cultural differences found between the host culture and the person's culture of origin, which can impact the adaptation of individuals or groups undergoing acculturation (Tingvold, Middelthon, Allen, Hauff, 2012 – Norway).

**ADAPTATION** A consequence of acculturation determining subjective well-being and sociocultural competence (Tingvold, Middelthon, Allen, Hauff, 2012 – Norway)

**BOUNDARY OBJECTS** A practical object that provides a means of connection to different social worlds (Guo, Dalli, 2012 – New Zealand).

**COMMON UNDERLYING PROFICIENCY** Depending on the language or the languages which are spoken to the child, the child will acquire and learn one, two, three or more languages, either parallel and at the same time or the one after the other, sequentially. Common features of languages are stored together and common knowledge is linked and can interact (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK).

**CONSTRUCTIVISM** Pedagogical approach that presents knowledge as most meaningfully acquired when it is constructed rather than received (Tobin, 2010 – France, Japan).

**CULTURAL RELATIVISM** A culture's beliefs and practices cannot be meaningfully evaluated using the criteria of another culture (Tobin, 2010 – France, Japan).

**INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH** A curriculum that facilitates children's experiences and understanding of other ethnic groups, focusing on interpersonal and inter-group relationships, and nurturing a growing sensitivity towards these differences (Ang, 2010 – England).

**INTEGRATION** Immigrant maintains his/her identity rooted in the culture of origin, and learns to navigate the host cultural environment by combining aspects of the host culture along with aspects of the culture of origin in their cognitive and behavioral repertoire (Pumariiega, Rothe, 2010 – U.S.).

**PEER ACCEPTANCE** Denotes a child's position or prestige within the peer group, and represents the peer group's view of an individual (Grünigen, Perren, Nägele, Alsaker, 2010 – Switzerland).

**RESILIENCE** The ability to manage crises, difficult situations and developmental tasks. It develops as one manages difficult situations and overcomes crises (Froehlich-Gildhoff, Roennau-Boese, 2012 – Germany).

**SCHOOL READINESS** Refers to a set of skills and competencies that relate to a child's preparedness for kindergarten. These generally include aspects such as physical well-being, emotional maturity, social confidence, cognitive skills, language richness, and general knowledge (De Feyter, Winsler, 2009 – U.S.).



**SEQUENTIAL ACQUISITION** When children learn a second or third language at a later age after the first language is already established. The contact with the second language often takes place when a child goes to (pre-)school (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK).

**SIMULTANEOUS ACQUISITION** When children learn two languages from birth. The simultaneous acquisition process is similar to monolingual development, both languages are acquired as first languages, with the child facing the additional task of distinguishing between the two language systems (Bangma, Riemersma, 2011 – Netherlands, Finland, France, UK).

**SOCIAL COMPETENCE** Refers to a child's abilities to respond flexibly to social challenges and is found to be associated with cognitive and academic development (Ren, 2014 – Australia).

**SUBTRACTIVE BILINGUALISM** Weakening of first language in favour of second language learning. Subtractive bilingualism usually results in monolingual proficiency in the majority language (Ball, 2011 – UNESCO).

## Tools and Resources

- *Culturally and Linguistically Responsive Express Checkout* – Tool designed to help educators select resources that are culturally and linguistically suitable for children – <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/fcp/docs/express-checkout-worksheet.pdf> (U.S.)
- *Screening Dual Language Learners in Early Head Start and Head Start: A Guide for Program Leaders* – <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic/fcp/docs/Screening-dual-language-learners.pdf> (U.S.)
- *The National Quality Standard* – A national rating and assessment framework for early childhood education and care services – <http://acecqa.gov.au/national-quality-framework/the-national-quality-standard> (Australia)
- *The Early Years Learning Framework* – A national curriculum to guide the learning of children aged from birth to five years old- [http://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/belonging\\_being\\_and\\_becoming\\_the\\_early\\_years\\_learning\\_framework\\_for\\_australia.pdf](http://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/belonging_being_and_becoming_the_early_years_learning_framework_for_australia.pdf) (Australia)
- *Early Years Foundation Stage* – A framework that sets standards for the learning, development and care of children from birth to five years old – [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/335504/EYFS\\_framework\\_from\\_1\\_September\\_2014\\_\\_\\_with\\_clarification\\_note.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/335504/EYFS_framework_from_1_September_2014___with_clarification_note.pdf) (England)
- *Steps to Engaging young Children in Research* – <http://www.bernardvanleer.org/files/Steps-to-Engaging-Young-Children-in-Research-vol-1.pdf> (UK)
- *National Centre on Cultural and Linguistic and Cultural Responsiveness* – <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic> (U.S.)
- *National Association for the Education of Young Children* – <http://www.naeyc.org> (U.S.)
- *Association for Childhood Education International* – <http://acei.org/> (U.S.)

## APPENDIX A: Child Development Theories and Implications For Immigrant Children

Theory	Main Ideas	Implication to Immigrant Child
Freud's theory	<p>Innate needs of acceptance and other basic needs influence behaviour.</p> <p>The unconscious egoistic needs may cause unexpected, often inappropriate behaviours.</p>	<p>Some children may be challenged with establishing new friendships and acceptance; some may be withdrawn; may try to fit in, may use attention-seeking behaviours like aggression; may not articulate needs of acceptance because needs are in the unconscious. It is normal for children to be initially quiet and isolated as they master their new environment. Many feel safer observing from a distance and with support may soon jump in.</p>
Erik Erikson's theory	<p>Universal stages of development: trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus doubt, initiative versus shame and doubt, industry versus inferiority. These traits are developed early in life but become lifetime traits.</p>	<p>Past environments that encouraged trust, autonomy, initiative, etc. make it easier to adjust in new environment. Autonomy, initiative and industry developed in different cultures might be depicted hence measured in different ways and forms from the American culture (e.g., passivity is not lack of confidence in many cultures).</p>
Piaget	<p>Cognitive stages are universal.</p> <p>Concepts of accommodation, assimilation, adaptation, and disequilibrium.</p>	<p>Cultural and language barriers underrepresent immigrant children's cognitive capabilities. They go through a period of disequilibrium as they assimilate their new culture. Use of differentiated assessment is helpful in ascertaining actual cognitive capabilities.</p>

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Theory	Main Ideas	Implication to Immigrant Child
Vygotsky	<p>Learning occurs within a socio-cultural setting through social interaction. Beliefs, values, experiences are part of the learning package.</p> <p>The ZPD: the teacher and peer’s role is critical.</p> <p>Language precedes thought.</p>	<p>Immigrant children have different experiences that need to be put into account/built onto in school. Use of people from child’s culture (parents, older peers, and community people), and use of peers in general is helpful in helping them make connections between new culture and own culture.</p> <p>Learning language of new land is critical for the continued cognitive development.</p> <p>Teach children skills that are essential for their survival in new land.</p>
Bronfenbrenner	<p>Children live in a complex environment within which there are systems that affect one another (e.g., home, school, parents’ workplace, policies, etc.).</p>	<p>There is often conflict between microsystems (school and home). This may cause confusion and slow adjustment. An understanding of systems unique to these immigrants and the situation of parents, their cultures, etc., is critical. It is very important to establish rapport with parents.</p>
Maslow	<p>Human beings’ needs are hierarchical (starting with physiological – through self-actualization). If basic needs are not met the individual strives to meet them before moving to the next hierarchy.</p>	<p>Initially many immigrant families struggle to meet basic needs (food and shelter). Many children may take time to form friendships and feel accepted in classroom. This may affect their academic performance. Sufficient support from teachers and other students in their classrooms would help these children move up Maslow’s hierarchy of needs.</p>

**TABLE 2** Child Development Theories and Implications For Immigrant Children (Onchwari, Onchwari, Keengwe, 2008 – U.S.)

## APPENDIX B: Recommendations for ECE Programs Working with Immigrant Families

	PRINCIPLE 1: Strengthening quality of and increasing access to ECE	PRINCIPLE 2: Building relationships with parents and families	PRINCIPLE 3: Parents' identity development and community representation	PRINCIPLE 4: Ongoing staff development and well-being
A Classroom	<p>Teachers and care providers of immigrant children understand what high quality ECE and DAP are.</p> <p>Teachers of immigrant children consistently consider how their classroom quality may be improved.</p> <p>Teachers of immigrant children utilize current resources to improve quality.</p>	<p>Teachers and family service workers have daily interactions with individual parents.</p> <p>Teachers incorporate artifacts provided by families into the classroom décor and curriculum.</p>	<p>Parents and family are encouraged to observe and/or help in classroom.</p> <p>Staff meet with parents about goals for themselves and their children.</p> <p>Teachers and staff take time to learn about parents' everyday lives, including employment, economic situation, assets and constraints, social networks, and political participation.</p>	<p>In-classroom mentoring and coaching using a master teacher.</p> <p>Co-teaching among teachers of diverse backgrounds.</p>
B Program	<p>Outreach and education of parents of young children.</p> <p>Teachers across all classrooms in a program are convened to discuss best developmentally appropriate practices for working with immigrant families.</p>	<p>Program has family service workers on staff.</p> <p>Home visits are conducted by both teachers and family service workers.</p> <p>Materials for families are translated.</p> <p>Staff diversity in terms of understanding the linguistic and cultural needs of parents.</p>	<p>Provide a structure whereby teachers and staff can come to understand each family's unique situation (e.g., through home visits, regular conferences focusing on the whole family).</p>	<p>Program provides all staff/teachers with adequate time away from children for reflection.</p> <p>Teachers receive trainings on various issues, including race, implementing curriculum with ELL children, 2nd-language acquisition utilizing the local social welfare system, understanding what different documentation statuses mean for immigrant families.</p> <p>Provide language, communication skills, and cultural competence training for staff.</p>

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	PRINCIPLE 1: Strengthening quality of and increasing access to ECE	PRINCIPLE 2: Building relationships with parents and families	PRINCIPLE 3: Parents' identity development and community representation	PRINCIPLE 4: Ongoing staff development and well-being
C Community	<p>High-quality programs (center- or home-based) available in all communities.</p> <p>Programs and local public schools develop relationships.</p> <p>Partner with immigrant-serving organizations to and roll families in programs.</p>	<p>Programs are centrally located in immigrant neighbourhoods.</p> <p>Individuals from the neighbourhood are hired and trained to work in the program.</p> <p>Teachers are encouraged to participate in community activities (e.g., cultural festivals).</p>	<p>Programs create links with or house other community programs (healthcare, social services) to provide services to immigrant families.</p>	<p>Other community programs collaborate with ECE programs to teach staff how to find local services for families.</p> <p>Local universities and colleges collaborate with ECE programs on pre- and in-services, as well as ongoing evaluative research of programs.</p>
D Policy	<p>Increase funding for building and accrediting ECE centres and improving quality of existing centres.</p> <p>Funding is designated by governments to conduct outreach regarding ECE to immigrant communities.</p>	<p>Centres receive increased funding for hiring family service workers.</p> <p>Family and parent component is required.</p>	<p>Programs facilitate immigrant families' participation in advocacy activities.</p> <p>Increase funding to programs to focus on providing parents with services, including adult education.</p> <p>Policy to support links between ECE and community.</p>	<p>Increase funding to individual ECE programs, colleges and universities to provide in-service and pre-service training to programs working with immigrant families.</p>

**TABLE 3** Recommendations for ECE programs working with immigrant families (Veseley, Ginsberg, 2011 – Serbia, Macedonia, Romania, U.S.)

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