

# MIGRANT AND IMMIGRANT STUDENTS



Migrant and immigrant students face a variety of challenges. The following information highlights these difficulties and provides information and interventions that can be used to provide students with meaningful educational, social, and emotional instruction.

## Who Are Migrant Students?

*Adapted from the KSDE Kansas Migrant Education Program.<sup>1</sup>*

According to Part C of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, a child is defined as a migrant if all of the following conditions are met:

- The child is not older than 21 years of age;
- The child is entitled to a free public education under state law;
- The child is a migrant agricultural worker or has a parent, spouse, or guardian who is a migrant agricultural worker; and
- The child has moved within the preceding 36 months in order to seek or obtain work, or to accompany or join the migratory agricultural worker who moved within the preceding 36 months in order to seek or obtain qualifying work.

## Concerns or Challenges

- School attendance may be brief or inconsistent due to frequent moving.
- English may not be the student's or family's primary language, which may hinder communication within the classroom and between home and school.
- Health concerns or lack of resources may be present due to frequent traveling or low income.
- Moving can be traumatic for students (particularly if immigration occurred due to unrest and violence in a student's former location).
- Students may struggle with forming relationships, particularly if cultural and social differences exist and family support is limited.
- Families may not know where to find or how to access resources and supports.

## What Schools Can Do

Schools should consider developing a plan and resources to assist students and their families before the need occurs. Migration can occur at unexpected times, and having a plan can provide students and their families with resources and supports to quickly deliver the most benefit. Following are some general practices for schools to consider:

- Foster community by providing a welcome atmosphere for all students.
- If comfortable, ask students to educate others on their culture or customs.
- Integrate the family into the school community. Offer a tour of the school (even if student is beginning mid-year), and identify other parents or families that can serve as resources can assist students and their families in building relationships.
- Within the classroom, provide materials or support in alternate languages, if needed.
- Consider the language or reading capabilities of family members when communicating with parents or guardians, sending notes home, etc.
- Be mindful of cultural norms when communicating with the family.
- Within the classroom, implement appropriate interventions to assist students in learning as much as possible, even if their time at the school will be brief.
- Create peer groups for students to meet and make connections with other students.
- Modify work as needed, considering language and access to resources. Student may not have knowledge of or access at home to certain technologies or basic supplies such as paper.
- Identify the student's strengths and interests. Take time to get to know the student, what she likes to do and what successes she has experienced prior to joining the school.
- Be mindful of any difficulties the student has faced. The process of migrating or immigrating is often filled with challenges and traumatic experiences. Students may experience symptoms of PTSD, fear of abandonment, or culture shock.

## References

- <sup>1</sup> Kansas State Department of Education: Early Childhood, Special Education and Title Services. (n.d.) *Title I Part C education of migratory children fact sheet*. Retrieved from <http://www.ksde.org/Portals/0/ECSETS/FactSheets/FactSheet-Migrant.pdf>

## Resources

### Migrant

- **Kansas State Department of Education**  
<http://www.ksde.org/Default.aspx?tabid=576>
- **Kansas Migrant Education Program**  
<http://ksmigrant.org/index.html>
- **National Child Traumatic Stress Network: Guidance for Working with Unaccompanied Migrant Children**  
<http://www.nctsn.org/trauma-types/refugee-trauma/guidance-unaccompanied%20>
- **Education World: Meeting the Educational Needs of Migrant Children**  
[http://www.educationworld.com/a\\_curr/curr347.shtml](http://www.educationworld.com/a_curr/curr347.shtml)
- **National Association of Elementary School Principals: Working with Migrant Students**  
<https://www.naesp.org/resources/2/DLCT/2009/DLCT2009v1n3a1.pdf>
- **SEDL: Reading and the Migrant Student**  
<http://www.sedl.org/pubs/sedl-letter/v14n03/4.html>
- **¡Colorín colorado!: Migrant Farmworker Families: Books for Kids**  
<http://www.colorincolorado.org/booklist/migrant-farmworker-families-books-kids>

### Immigrant

- **U.S. Department of Education**  
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/focus/immigration-resources.html>
- **National Child Traumatic Stress Network: Working with Unaccompanied and Immigrant Minors**  
<http://www.nctsn.org/content/working-unaccompanied-and-immigrant-minors>
- **The Center for Health and Health Care in Schools**  
<http://www.healthinschools.org/Immigrant-and-Refugee-Children.aspx>
- **Center for Mental Health in Schools: Immigrant Students and Mental Health Resource List**  
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/immigrantkids.htm>
- **Scholastic**  
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/immigration/>