

## Day 5: Supporting the families of refugee children and young people

### Challenges for Families:

Refugee families have often faced similar challenging experiences as their children, and continue to have to manage in difficult circumstances, as well as potentially feeling hopelessness or distrust in those in power or authority due to their previous experiences (Rae, 2023). These may include health, housing, finances, language barriers, and the uncertainty of the asylum process. They may also be processing trauma, loss, and adapting to new cultural norms (Rae, 2023).

### Supporting Parents:

Schools can support parents & families by offering information to help them to support themselves and their child/children, based on advice from United Nations website (<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/prevention/resources-for-caregiving-in-conflict-crisis-or-stressful-settings.html>):

### Supporting Refugee Families: Some key ways schools can help



**Translate Information:** Provide key details in multiple formats (e.g., video, text, or translated materials).



**Offer Additional Support:** Help with form completion and preparation for meetings, with staff getting to know their families to build understanding & trust.



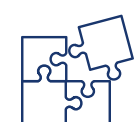
**Provide Access to Resources:** Offer signposting to service who can support with guidance on health, housing, finances, and legal status.



**Encourage Engagement:** Invite families to school events to build belonging to the school community, and offer signposting with local cultural or religious groups, if desired.



**Create Support Networks:** Facilitate parent support groups for shared experiences, learning from and supporting each other, & for learning about the education system.



**Normalise Challenges:** Help families understand that refugee children may experience anxiety, trauma, emotional distress, sleep issues, and difficulty with social relationships and concentration.

#### Supporting parents & families

- Help them to understand their own experiences & emotions
- Support them to seek help for their own needs if required
- Help parents to recognise and normalise emotions and behaviours, and how to seek support if more specialist support is needed
- Help with signposting to further information about ways that they can support their children, such as on the United Nations website

#### Supporting parents & families to help their child/children

- Provide ways to help them feel safe & loved:
  - Keeping family together & reduce risk of separation
  - Be affectionate and provide warmth, care and love
- Support them to feel valued and supported through offering praise and be patient if they need reassurance
- Provide opportunities to spend time together, talking, and encourage play
- Build in routines for regular everyday activities & encourage educational work (reading/writing/maths) where possible

#### Signposting

- Services can support with children and families in Gloucestershire:
  - Gloucestershire Action for Refugees and Asylum Seekers (GARAS)
  - Cheltenham/ Gloucester welcomes refugees
  - Educational Psychology Service (EPS)
  - Advisory Teaching Service (ATS)
  - Gloucestershire Local Offer
  - Children and Families Across Borders
- Information for supporting children and young people:
  - Young minds
  - Anna Freud