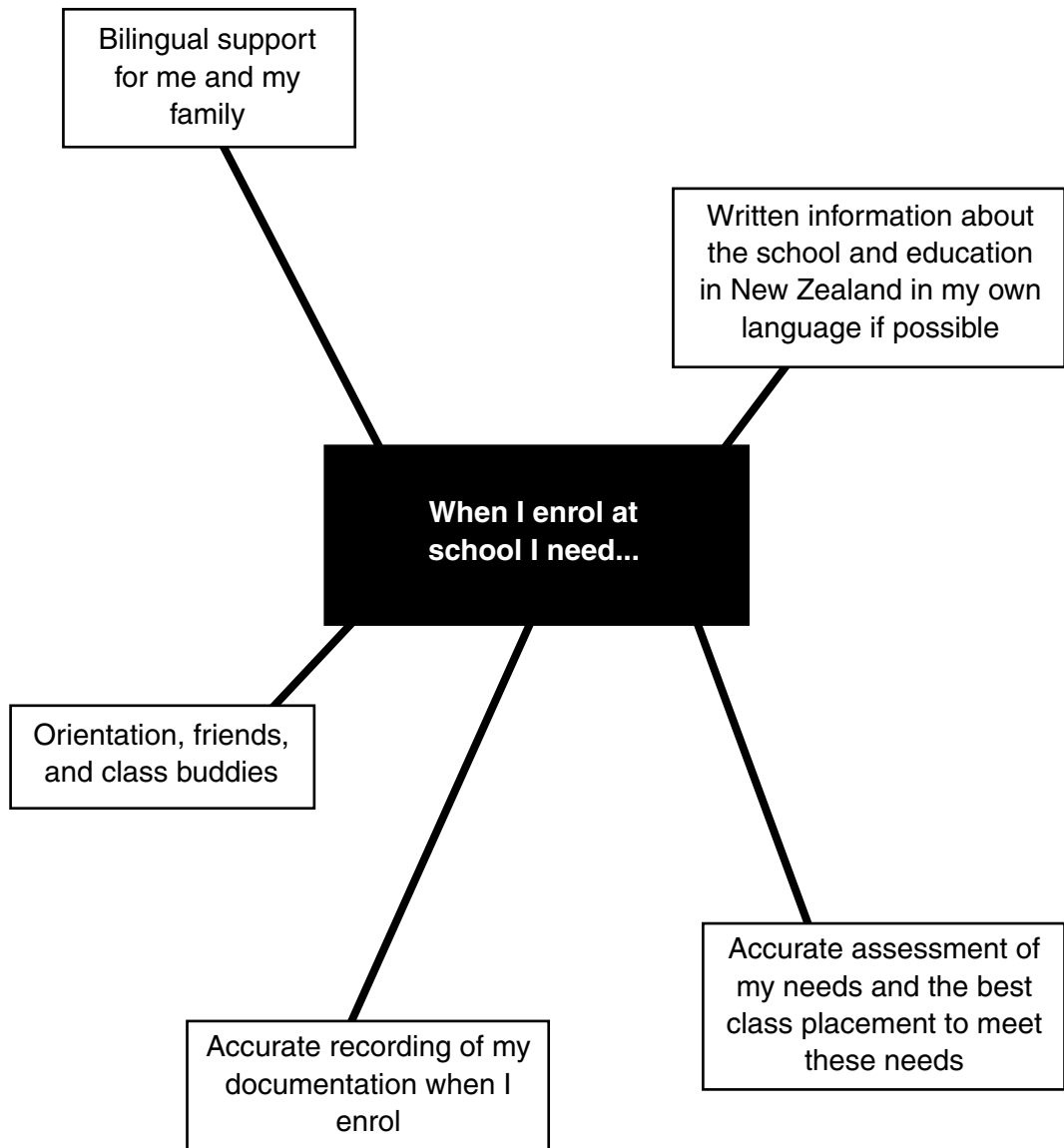


Section 2: On enrolment



Introduction

Effective enrolment and appropriate placement have a crucial role in the future success of students from refugee backgrounds. It is extremely important that schools have thoroughly prepared all staff for enrolment of these students. Placement of students should be flexible, so that there is sufficient time allowed to collect relevant information and conduct assessments.

Enrolment is effective when:

- the school sets aside a specific time for enrolling students from a refugee background so that the refugee liaison person can always be present as the first point of contact
- families have an interpreter or use bilingual support staff to assist with the process
- extra time is allowed for refugee enrolments
- families on arrival are given a school welcome information pack and an interview time
- Schools with significant numbers of refugees appoint a staff member as Refugee Co-ordinator (Enquiries about funding a school refugee co-ordinator can be made to the Ministry of Education's Refugee Education Co-ordinators)

The pack should contain the following checklist:

Please bring back to school	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Passport or identification papers
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Any school reports or Centre for Refugee Education reports
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	A completed bilingual information gathering form
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Any information about your health
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Proof of address e.g. a letter from your landlord, a bill

Refugee Education Co-ordinators from the Ministry of Education are available for advice and support on enrolment. They can also advise schools on how to arrange for interpreters.

Diagnostic assessments – knowing the learner

It is critical that students from a refugee background are given a comprehensive diagnostic assessment before placement. Assessments may reveal that the student, especially if s/he has no prior schooling, will only be able to cope if s/he is placed in a small withdrawal group for intensive English provision and numeracy development for several months. The link between assessment and programme planning is discussed further in Section 3.

Using a checklist such as *Knowing the Learner* can help ensure that the information gathering and assessment is comprehensive.

It is essential that the initial information gathering about each student includes checking to see what schooling (if any) they have had, and how interrupted it was, as well as what language it was in. Students who are pre-literate (have no literacy in first language/s) have much greater learning challenges than those who can read and write in first language/s.

It is essential that schools **check for vision and hearing impairment**, especially for family reunification refugees, who will not have been identified through the health systems that quota refugees have accessed at the Refugee Resettlement Centre in Mangere, Auckland.

It is also important to gather information about the families of the students, as students whose caregivers have no literacy in first or any other language will not be able to get academic learning support from home and will need extra support from school. Conversely, students may come from families whose caregivers have professional backgrounds and who may therefore have special strengths that the school can call on to help the school community.

Once this information, along with other material, has been collected, the school can build up a profile of the students, in order to plan and provide the best possible individual programme plan (section 3) for teaching and learning.

Resources to support diagnostic assessment are listed at the end of this Section.

Knowing the Learner

What should I know about the learner in order to support him/her and facilitate his/her learning?

Information on health issues, social situation and emotional adjustment.

This information should be gathered and checked and shared where appropriate with all teachers of the learner.

Background information

Background information (may need to be gathered through an interpreter)

- Date of birth/age (as recorded by caregivers and learner)
- Country of birth
- Religion (if significant culturally/personally)
- Family situation (caregivers and place in family)
- Significant information on any trauma (physical or emotional)
- First language/s

(What do you know about the first language? Is the script Romanic or non-Romanic?)

- Any significant health issues – sight or hearing impairment, other conditions which may affect learning
- What were the occupations of the caregivers in the country of origin?
- What are the learner's obligations and responsibilities outside the school setting?

Social situation

- Are there other students from the same ethnic or cultural group in the school?
- Has the learner made friends inside this group?
- Has the learner made friends outside this group?
- Does the learner relate to peers outside the classroom?
- What are the learner's interests and strengths outside the classroom?

Emotional adjustment

- How is the learner feeling about him/herself? Is s/he coping at school? (Who has talked to the learner?)
- Is the learner's home situation putting him/her under any pressure?
- What sort of support is available at home? Is the rest of the family (including adults) literate or have they had little or no education in their country of origin?
- Does the learner have access to a tape deck and / or a computer?

Information needs to be gathered sensitively and needs to be based on observations of and discussions with the learner, at different times and in a variety of settings and from the perspectives of a number of people so that a rounded picture of the learner is formed.

Educational needs (affects placement decisions)

- Date of arrival in New Zealand
- Length of time in schooling in country of origin and in other countries/refugee camps prior to entering New Zealand schooling and language of instruction
- Level of oracy, literacy and numeracy in first language/s

- Length of time in New Zealand schooling

- Approximate reading age (How, when and by whom was this assessed?)

- What subjects is the learner studying and how and why were these chosen? At what year level is the learner placed in each subject and on what basis was this decision made?

(Were the placement decisions made with the agreement of all parties – school, learner and family – or was there some disagreement about placement? If the placement is found to be unsuitable after a period of time, is it possible to review and alter it?)

- What are the learner's perceptions of him/herself in relation to the cohort? Are these accurate?
- What does the learner understand about the schooling system in New Zealand and how long it takes to learn to read and write and be mathematically successful?
- Is the learner putting any time outside school hours into learning, and if so, how?
- What are the learner's goals? Is s/he aware of and informed about learning pathways and employment options and possibilities, including levels of education needed to meet entry requirements? Has s/he considered a range of options for future education, training and employment?

Effective placement

Arrival at school	<p>A refugee family arrives at school</p> <p>An appointment is made for enrolment interview</p> <p>Enrolment interview - information gathering</p> <p>Diagnostic assessment</p>
Essential factors in effective placement	<p>Orientation and buddying</p> <p>Long term placement in reception class for low literacy students</p> <p>Partial mainstreaming for Phase 2 learners</p>
On-going support	<p>Placement may need to be reviewed after feedback from teachers</p> <p>Social adjustment</p> <p>Emotional adjustment</p>
Programme options	<p>Programmes must be carefully planned; it is desirable to make an Individual Programme Plan for each student, and review it regularly</p>

Class placement

Placement options will vary at different levels of schooling and with different school settings. One variable in placement decisions may be the number of similar students at the school. If there are several or a large number, then the option of small intensive curriculum (eg English and Maths) classes is more likely. If there are very few similar students, teacher aide time may have to be used for initial intensive literacy and numeracy provision in small group/individual/pair withdrawal. These students must be taught the basics to start with. They will not “catch on” if just left in mainstream classes.

In the upper levels of schooling (Year 7-13), students are particularly at risk of educational failure, especially if they are likely to have more than one teacher each day for different subject areas. **Students may legally remain at intermediate or full primary schools until the end of the school year in which they turn 14.** This means that some students may be able to spend more than two years at intermediate school levels, which may give them time to establish foundation learning skills before they start secondary school.

Secondary school placement decisions have to be made very carefully, especially for senior secondary students. The needs of the student have to be balanced in relation to many complex variables and factors, including optimum class sizes, contact with age level peers, availability of appropriate staff and teaching space, and possible variations in the strengths of the students which may allow for multi-level placement in secondary schools.

Involving families

The expectations and fears of students and their families, who often have little knowledge of the school system in New Zealand must also be carefully considered and responded to. **Students may legally stay at secondary school until the end of the year in which they turn 19**, or if designated as students with special learning needs by Special Education personnel, until they are 21.

There are three important questions to ask when identifying ways to meet the needs of these students and making placement decisions.

1. What is in the best interests of the student?
2. How can we best meet the needs of the student, by using or modifying our current resources and by thinking creatively where necessary?
3. Have we accessed all the support to which we are entitled, and have we allocated general and targeted funding appropriately?

Senior secondary students

Educational qualifications and training pathways have to be carefully planned for senior secondary students (See Section 5)

Students with no to very low literacy and numeracy skills need to remain in intensive English classes for most of a school week for at least a year, and often two years.

However, once they have some foundation learning established (such as reading and writing at Levels 2-3 of the New Zealand curriculum) they can be partially mainstreamed, and their educational pathways can include some mainstream placement, although they will still need modified programmes in the senior secondary school.

Training and qualifications pathways may include components from any combination of the following:

- NCEA – unit standards and achievement standards
- NCES – (National Certificate in Employment Skills) unit standards – ESOL, Communications English, Maths Applied and a number of vocational unit standards in a range of curriculum areas
- Courses available through careers education structures such as STAR and Gateway.

Checklist for placement decisions for senior secondary students

- Have the appropriate personnel (e.g. the school's refugee coordinator, the reception class teacher) been involved with the placement decision?
- Is the student placed appropriately, on the basis of informed diagnostic assessment?
- Has the possibility of multilevel placement been considered where it might be appropriate?
- Is the student's programme coherent? (i.e. Is there some sense of integration and direction in the programme, rather than a mixture of unrelated, unfocused subjects which just happen to fit a timetable or a student whim?)
- Is the student getting sufficient learning support?
- Has the curriculum committee reviewed what is on offer at the school to see if all the student needs are being catered for?

Family and community involvement in education

Parents from refugee backgrounds often believe that education is the responsibility of the school and not an area for family involvement. Even families with a strong desire for their children to succeed in education may not discuss school activities at home.

Some families may lack confidence in supporting their children in education because of their own minimal education and poor literacy skills. They need a lot of encouragement to become involved.

There are many strategies to encourage involvement but most importantly schools can establish clear channels of communication with refugee families and communities.

The presence of bilingual staff within schools, or ready access to bilingual community members, greatly facilitates communication as well as the development of common perspectives between home and school.

Children may find opportunities at school to interact and gain self-esteem, for example school camps. This may involve some compromise of traditional culture. Conflict can arise as the older generation, without similar opportunities, clings to and exaggerates traditional culture. Families may perceive the integration of their children through school activities as a cultural threat. Inclusion of family members in children's school activities can preserve family cohesion as involvement reduces the sense of threat.

Parent education programmes which help families to become aware of educationally supportive behaviour are an area in which schools and refugee communities can co-operate.

Schools should:

- suggest specific ways families can help – they feel more comfortable when expectations and roles are made explicit
- utilise refugee community members as resource people or "experts" to contribute to lessons in specialist subject areas
- notify families about homework centres and encourage their participation as assistants
- help families understand how school works
- ensure warm outreach – be prepared to make an extra effort
- be patient – many refugee parents are shy and passive at first
- stress the reciprocal process of an effective relationship in which both parties have strengths and weaknesses
- ensure notification of family/teacher/school community events,
 - meet the teacher evenings
 - report evenings
 - informal social gatherings
 - forums for: cultural information
 - curriculum information
 - general discussion
- make use of Ministry resources such as *Families Learning Together*

- invite participation as parent-help to assist teachers/other staff/students in a variety of ways
- have a bilingual support person available whenever possible
- introduce school's bilingual support person to families as soon as possible and ensure repeated contact in first 2-3 months
- become familiar with family makeup - identify any extended family members with NZ education – use them to facilitate communication
- ensure where possible that written communications to families are translated into first languages - however poor family literacy may mean that anything in written form is ineffective, and direct bilingual assistance is necessary
- extend invitations to attend:
 - open days
 - special events involving whole school
 - sporting events
- organise shared multicultural meals
- seek family assistance with cultural celebration days

Refer: *Families Learning Together*, Ministry of Education publication, available in several languages of groups from refugee and migrant backgrounds.

Ministry of Education support for students from a refugee background

Details on MOE support for students from a refugee background can be found in the ESOL Information for Schools folder from the Ministry of Education.

Further details can be found on the Ministry of Education website www.minedu.govt.nz/goto/esol.

Schools can also contact Advisory Services at the University Schools/Colleges of Education and the Refugee Education Coordinators at the Ministry of Education for information about additional support and advice, at no cost to the school. Contact details for these personnel can be found in the ESOL Resourcing Information section of the folder.

References for assessment

Assessment - Policy to Practice (1995). Wellington: Ministry of Education.

Assessment Procedures for New Settlers (1997). TEAM Solutions, Auckland.

English in the New Zealand Curriculum (1994). Wellington: Ministry of Education.

Planning and Assessment in English (1997). Wellington: Ministry of Education.

Reading and Speaking Assessment Results (1997). Wellington: Ministry of Education.

Diagnostic Assessment for Oracy and Literacy. Jannie van Hees, Kohia Teachers' Centre, Auckland.

ESOL Funding Assessment Guidelines (2004), Ministry of Education

ESOL Progress Assessment Guidelines (2005), Ministry of Education

Te Kete Ipurangi, www.tki.org.nz, in the "assessment community" kete

<p>Further guidance in assessment can be obtained from ESOL / Literacy Advisers at School Support Services (Colleges / Faculties of Education)</p>
