Supporting Unaccompanied Immigrant Students

The Immigrant Learning Center
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#1: The time to prepare is now.
Processing Unaccompanied Children

You can read about the types of ORR facilities [here](#) and more about the process and criteria for family reunification [here](#).

#2: The Office of Refugee Resettlement’s (ORR) definition of “unaccompanied minor” is NOT the same as McKinney Vento’s but there is overlap in the two populations.
Definition of “Unaccompanied Alien Child”

A child who:
• Has no lawful immigration status in the United States,
• Has not attained 18 years of age, and
• Without a parent or legal guardian in the United States at the time of apprehension by U.S. immigration authorities

Click here for a graphic explainer

WHAT’S THE DIFFERENCE?

Just Unaccompanied per ORR: Child who crosses the border without parent or guardian, but gets released to a parent in U.S.

Unaccompanied under both laws: Child who crosses the border w/o parent and gets released to sponsor who does not have guardianship

Just unaccompanied per MV: Child crosses border (with a parent or guardian or isn’t apprehended by DHS) and then lives alone or with someone other than parent or guardian
#3: Youth from Guatemala make up the largest percentage of unaccompanied minors (almost half) and many of these youth have indigenous/Maya roots.

INDIGENOUS MAYA FROM GUATEMALA

- 22 Maya Nations / languages
- Many don’t speak Spanish
- Native Americans – NOT Hispanic
- 36 year civil war devastated Maya communities
- Historical trauma and persecution
- History of surviving by hiding identity
- Currently many conflicts over land and natural resources and this is one of the main reasons they leave
#4: Teachers (not just school counselors, etc.) play an incredibly important role in the mental health and social-emotional support of unaccompanied minors.

RISK & PROTECTIVE FACTORS

Most evidence-based protective factors:
- School connectedness
- Peer support
- Integrative acculturation style
- Family cohesion

#5: Some of these students will receive “Post Release Services” and it’s important to partner with these providers.

Who provides Post Release Services?

- U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops and their network
- Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Services and their network
- U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants and their network
- BCFS
- Bethany Christian Services
- Southwest Key Programs
- About 10 organizations overall
How to determine if a student is receiving post-release services?

• **Ask the student / sponsor:**
  - Is there any type of social worker helping you right now? What are they helping you with?
  - Do you know their name and number?
  - Is it okay if I call them so we can collaborate on services? (Sign paperwork to share information)

• **No overall database of providers (trafficking risk)**
  - Some agencies post theirs (see resources)

• **Ask refugee resettlement agencies if they provide such services**

• **Google searches**

SYNCHRONOUS WORKSHOPS

Supporting Unaccompanied Immigrant Youth in U.S. Schools

Two workshops:
July 20, 2021; 9am - 12pm ET
July 27, 2021; 1pm - 4pm ET

[www.immigrantsrefugeesandschools.org](http://www.immigrantsrefugeesandschools.org)
ASYNCHRONOUS COURSE

Module 1: Who are Unaccompanied Youth?
- Intro (3:00)
- Lesson 1: Who is coming? (8:38)
- Lesson 2: Why are they coming? (21:40)
- Lesson 3: What are their journeys typically like? (9:10)
- Review 2 resources and respond to questions in participant reflection guide (40 minutes)

Module 2: From the Border to Locating a Sponsor
- Intro (3:30)
- Lesson 1: The Flores Agreement, Department of Homeland Security, and Office of Refugee Resettlement (23:30)
- Lesson 2: Education Inside ORR Facilities (7:10)
- Lesson 3: Locating a Sponsor (15:20)
- Optional: Special Unit on COVID-19
- Review 2 resources and respond to questions in participant reflection guide (40 minutes)

Module 3: Family Reunification and Community Integration
- Intro (1:30)
- Lesson 1: Family reunification (25:34)
- Lesson 2: Trauma and Social-Emotional Wellness (19:30)
- Lesson 3: Education in Public Schools (11:05)
- Lesson 4: Legal Issues (11:30)
- Review 2 resources and respond to questions in participant reflection guide (40 minutes)

Next Section starts 9/20: https://englrnportal.samcart.com/products/unaccompanied/

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