

3) Family, Children and Youth

Immigration is a decision that is often taken not simply by an individual but by families. It is an investment in the future, both for the immigrant and for the host society, and often it is the outcomes of the children of immigrants and refugees or newcomer children themselves that are considered to be the best indicators of the success of an immigration or refugee program. Similarly, the outcomes achieved by all minorities – whether children, youth, families or individuals – are strong indicators of broad societal inclusion. This policy-research priority will examine the consequences of migration to Canada for families, children and youth and will develop proposals for enhancing their success in the future.

Policy-research questions could include:

- What factors influence the migration decisions of individuals and families? Do these factors change depending on one's life course? What role do children and youth play in the decision-making process? What are the means through which migrants assemble information upon which to make their migration decisions? How is this done with respect to questions surrounding the recognition of foreign credentials, family reunification, refugee claims and naturalization, among others? Does the Government of Canada, through its policies and programs (e.g., Canadian Orientation Abroad, Immigration Portal), have the ability to significantly alter the migration decisions of migrants?
- What is the sense of identity, attachment and belonging to Canada, as well as to their heritage, among immigrant and refugee children and youth? How are these multiple attachments and belongings reflected in their identities? How are these identities negotiated in various social contexts? Do foreign-born and Canadian-born minority children and youth negotiate these complex identities in the same fashion? If not, what explains the differences? What indicators can be used to ascertain levels of identity, attachment and belonging, whether these levels change over time, and what factors account for this change? How does the education system's accommodation of religious practices and/or celebrations affect feelings of belonging among young people?
- What views do children and youth have of both their culture of origin and their host society in respect to identity? How do children and youth construct an identity for themselves, a sense of home and belonging, and a sense of origin and descent in both contexts? How and what kind of relationship is maintained with the place of origin of children and youth during the migration process, and does such a relationship influence the social interactions among children, between children and parents, and between children and their social environment? Are there gender-specific differences concerning the construction of identity by children and youth in the course of migration?
- What is the role of educational policies and school practices in the formation of multiple and trans-nationalist citizenships among immigrant children and youth, and in their formation of a sense of belonging to Canada?
- What is the role of schools in both official language acquisition, and heritage language maintenance? What is the role of both school-based and non-school-based heritage language programs (i.e. church- and community-based language programs for children) for immigrant children and youth development of multilingual/multicultural belongings and identities? What is the role that "language gap" both in official and heritage languages plays in the change of family dynamics?
- Are there differential outcomes for immigrant, refugee and minority children and youth? What accounts for differential educational aspirations, rates of early school leaving and/or higher levels of educational attainment for some? Are there differences in outcomes for first-, 1.5-, and second-generation children and youth? Are there inter-group differences in immigrant, refugee and minority children and how are these addressed in schools? How does the interplay between the particular cultural background of their society of origin and the integration strategies and practices in a particular host society affect the integration and/or educational achievement of children and youth? To what extent and how do children experience xenophobia, and how do they cope with hostility and lack of acceptance? How do they create social niches where they can feel at home?

- Does participation in school and/or civil society vary among the Canadian-born, immigrant, refugee and minority children and youth? Are there differences in school readiness, in rates of voluntarism, or in rates of civic participation? Are there inter-group differences in immigrant, refugee and minority children and youth in school and/or civil society participation and what accounts for these differences? What is the role of citizenship education in nurturing civic and public engagement in immigrant children and youth?
- What are the key determinants of the mental and emotional well-being of newcomer, second-generation, and/or minority children and youth in Canada? Are there mental and emotional stresses that coincide with migration to Canada, and if so, does this vary by immigration category (e.g., family class, refugee), and/or by length of residence in Canada? How effective are public health interventions and prevention messages at reaching immigrant children and youth? How does the efficacy of programs for marginalized youth in Canada differ for immigrant youth? What pre-migratory conditions and experiences influence post-migratory health across the life course?
- Are there differential mental and physical health effects across the life course on women and men of immigration to Canada? If differences are evident, what are the factors that lead to these disparities?
- What are the implications of the different cultural and religious backgrounds and values of immigrants to Canada for public health services and programs such as immunization, healthy sexuality, etc.
- What services are available for immigrant and minority children and youth and what is the impact of these services on these groups? What role do families – both extended and nuclear – play in facilitating integration? Do immigrants who are accepted through family reunification appear to face fewer, greater or different integration challenges than immigrants and refugees who enter through other streams? What are the service gaps and how should these gaps be addressed? Are immigrant and minority children effectively integrated into daycare services?
- What is the role of both school-based and non-school based creative opportunities in enhancing and nurturing creativity in immigrant and minority children and youth? What non-school based learning opportunities, recreational/sports and creative/artistic programs are available for immigrant, refugee, and minority children and youth. Do they influence their integration into larger communities and into the larger society? What other models of learning and job training (i.e. apprenticeship) are available for them and how can such models be made available in communities, and neighbourhoods where they live?
- How do family dynamics change in the process of integration to the host society? What are the principal intergenerational conflicts faced by immigrant and minority youth? How does their immigration and integration experience differ from that of their parents? How do interactions and tensions between peer group environments and home socialization affect children? What policy and program interventions might most effectively mitigate these impacts?
- Do seniors experience more integration difficulties than other newcomers and/or minorities? Are there mental health problems related to the social isolation of seniors? If so, what factors can help mitigate this risk? What is the role of language acquisition in seniors' integration? What lifelong learning opportunities are provided to immigrant seniors?

4) Housing and Neighbourhoods

The relationship between access to affordable housing and residential concentrations of newcomers and minorities on the one hand, and successful integration and inclusion on the other has become more pronounced in recent years. Housing, and the neighbourhood in which it is found, impacts upon and helps to shape our social networks, access to employment opportunities, participation in and access to public social spaces, the nature and availability of social services, as well as general feelings of safety and security, among others. In this policy priority, we will seek to better understand the relationships between housing, neighbourhoods and integration into Canadian society.