

**Family**  
for every child

# Supporting **INTEGRATION**

A Toolkit for Practitioners  
Working with Children and Young People  
on the Move





## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit
2. Definitions
3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
4. Guiding principles for practice
5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
6. Building the dimensions of integration
7. Voices of children and young people
8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex

# Acknowledgements

This toolkit was developed through an extended participatory co-creation process that engaged practitioners from 12 organisations in nine countries. This included a multi-year community of practice, country-level research in three countries, a reference group, a [regional level desk study](#), and a co-creation workshop which generated learning from on-the-ground practice.

Following the development of the first draft of the toolkit extensive consultation took place with practitioners and others across Europe working directly with child migrants. Children and young people in Italy, Greece and Lebanon who had experience of migration were also consulted and asked to provide recommendations to practitioners who were supporting their integration. The feedback from these consultations on the draft was incorporated into this version.

We would like to thank the following organisations for their contribution to this process: Amna; Coram; Legal Services for Children; Lumos; Refugee Youth Service; Save the Children Sweden and Terre des Hommes.

Special thanks to the implementing partners and members of Family for Every Child, Flüchtlingsrat Niedersachsen e.V.; METAdrasi; Naba'a; Programma Integra as well as Zeudi Liew and the 77 practitioners and 71 children and young people involved in the consultations.

This toolkit was written by Claire Whiting and Stephanie Delaney of Proteknon Foundation for Learning and Innovation, with technical support from Jonathan Blagbrough and Anne-Marie Barry of Family for Every Child.

This project has been funded by Comic Relief.  
October 2023.

Design and layout: [Green Communication Design](#)





## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit
2. Definitions
3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
4. Guiding principles for practice
5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
6. Building the dimensions of integration
7. Voices of children and young people
8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>Dimension 3: Personal capacities</b>	<b>35</b>
1. <b>Scope of the toolkit</b>	<b>3</b>	Key actions and considerations for service providers	35
Why this integration toolkit is important	4	Toolbox for practitioners	37
Use of the toolkit	4	<b>Dimension 4: Environment</b>	<b>39</b>
2. <b>Definitions</b>	<b>5</b>	Key actions and considerations for service providers	39
What do we mean by ‘children on the move’?	5	Toolbox for practitioners	43
An uncertain childhood	7	<b>Dimension 5: Social connections</b>	<b>45</b>
What do we mean by integration?	8	Key actions and considerations for service providers	45
3. <b>Legal and policy frameworks</b>	<b>10</b>	Toolbox for practitioners	47
Regional frameworks:	11	<b>Dimension 6: Sustainability</b>	<b>49</b>
A focus on Europe	11	Key actions and considerations for service providers	49
4. <b>Guiding principles for practice</b>	<b>13</b>	Toolbox for practitioners	51
5. <b>Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration</b>	<b>20</b>	7. <b>Voices of children and young people</b>	<b>53</b>
Figure 1: Conceptual model of integration	21	Learning from child migrants	53
6. <b>Building the dimensions of integration</b>	<b>24</b>	Integration in Europe: Perspectives of children on the move in Lebanon	55
<b>Dimension 1: Foundations</b>	<b>25</b>	8. <b>Cross-cutting approaches for practice</b>	<b>57</b>
Key actions and considerations for service providers	25	Guardianship for children on the move	57
Toolbox for practitioners	28	Mentorship	60
Checklist	29	Peer-to-peer support	66
<b>Dimension 2: Autonomy</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>Annex</b>	<b>69</b>
Key actions and considerations for service providers	30	Glossary	69
Toolbox for practitioners	33		





- › [Why this integration toolkit is important](#)
- › [Use of the toolkit](#)

Acknowledgements

## 1. Scope of the toolkit

### 2. Definitions

### 3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

### 4. Guiding principles for practice

### 5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

### 6. Building the dimensions of integration

### 7. Voices of children and young people

### 8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex

# 1. Scope of the toolkit



This toolkit documents and shares good practice for the care, protection and integration support of child migrants. This includes any child or young person (CYP) arriving in a new country; this could be a transit country, a destination country or any third country.

It considers CYP that have the right to remain (refugees) and those that do not yet have the right to remain (undocumented or seeking asylum or other legal permission to stay). It is applicable to CYP that are accompanied by a caregiver as well as to those that are unaccompanied.

While this toolkit is concerned with child **migrants**, it does not consider in-depth the particular support needs of CYP who may have been trafficked.<sup>1</sup>

Overall, the toolkit aims to support practitioners to enhance integration support and services, helping to ensure that CYP remain within caring and protective families or in appropriate alternative care, and provided with support and protection that fosters their development and well-being in a way that is equal and equitable to the way that the development and well-being of children that are citizens of the country are fostered.



<sup>1</sup> Further information for practitioners and policymakers on [working with children who have been trafficked](#) is available from a wide range of sources including the EU.



Acknowledgements

**1. Scope of the toolkit**

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex

## Why this integration toolkit is important



Across many contexts, the increase in child migrants has overwhelmed services and practitioners, with implications for the quality of service provision.

Child welfare and child and youth services play a critical role in supporting CYPs' integration through the provision of equitable care, development and protection for children for the duration of their stay. This means care and protection that is in line with children who are citizens of or who have a legal right to remain in the country.

This toolkit addresses the gap in good practice guidance for practitioners working with child migrants in countries perceived as both transit and destination countries. It also aims to help further inform programme managers, policymakers and donors working in the sector.

## Use of the toolkit

The toolkit is designed to connect people with helpful information. It is a practical resource, based on the experience of the members of the Family for Every Child network, for:

- Practitioners working directly with children and young people;
- Programme managers, policymakers and funders responsible for designing and planning services;
- Capacity development and advocacy practitioners.





- > [An uncertain childhood](#)
- > [What do we mean by integration?](#)

Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

**2. Definitions**

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex

## 2. Definitions



### What do we mean by ‘children on the move’?

Globally, children are moving across borders in record numbers. In 2020, 36 million children were living outside their country of birth; about one-third of these were refugees and asylum seekers. This is the highest number ever recorded, and still does not account for the large numbers of children who have moved across borders due to more recent crises, including in Afghanistan and Ukraine.<sup>2</sup>

Children and young people move across borders for many reasons: to escape conflict, instability, poverty, environmental degradation, discrimination, violence and exploitation, as well as other violations of their rights including lack of access to basic needs and services. They move in search of safety and for opportunities to learn, work and develop – in pursuit of a better life. Many make these life-changing moves without an adult caregiver.



**36 million**

In 2020, 36 million children were **living outside their country of birth.**

**1/3**

About one-third of these children were **refugees** and **asylum seekers.**

<sup>2</sup> [Stronger Data, Brighter Futures](#) International Data Alliance for Children on the Move (IDAC) 2022



## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

## 2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

## Language and terms used



### Children on the move describes:

Girls and boys who have left home for any reason, including conflict, violence, disasters, lack of opportunities or other threats to their well-being. They may be in transit or have reached a destination. They may be alone or with a caregiver or parent. The term includes all child migrants including asylum-seeking and refugee children.

Due to differing legal definitions and perspectives, the language used when discussing children on the move varies. **To avoid repetition this toolkit uses the term 'child migrants'** to mean all children on the move regardless of their status or reason. This does not include children who are trafficked.

Our definition of children is consistent with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and includes anyone below 18 years old. In some settings the terms 'minor' or 'young person' is used. We generally use the term '**children and young people**' (**abbreviated to CYP**) to mean anyone who is under 18 years old, while recognising that the right to care and protection should be extended to at least 21 years old for child migrants who are travelling alone.



# 15%

In Europe, around 15 per cent of CYP who apply for asylum **arrive unaccompanied**<sup>3</sup>



<sup>3</sup> EUROSTAT indicates that from 2011 to 2021, unaccompanied minor applicants accounted for 15.3 per cent on average of the total number of first-time asylum applicants aged less than 18. However, reliable data on the number of unaccompanied minors (UAM) arriving or residing is often unavailable. The number of asylum claims filed by UAM provides an indication but not necessarily an accurate picture due to backloads, onward irregular movement, children choosing not to apply for asylum, etc.



## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

## 2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

## An uncertain childhood

Often movement is not straightforward or direct. Taking the example of the Middle East, while increased security may be found in a neighbouring country such as Lebanon or Turkey, a lack of access to services, protection, or support to meet basic needs may prompt further onward movement towards Europe. The challenging legal environment in many European countries – which frequently extends to CYP – may prompt further cross-border movement based on perceptions of more favourable conditions in another country. Friends and relatives in other countries also influence further cross-border movement, including onward movement as well as return.

Government migration policies often have a strong focus on return to the country of origin.<sup>4</sup> However, for many CYP who cross borders, returning to their country of origin is against their best interests or is otherwise not possible.



[The Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration](#) requires states to ensure that: (i) return involving children is in the best interests of the child; (ii) the child is accompanied throughout the process; and (iii) appropriate arrangements are in place upon return.

Where a child is not voluntarily or forcibly returned, they may remain (often based on some form of temporary permission to stay) and access care and support in accordance with national policy, legislation and systems. While each country has a different policy framework in place, a **general norm is that CYP spend many years of their childhood living with great uncertainty and insecurity**. This is often rooted in lack of clarity on their status or the potential duration of their stay, and can have negative implications for their care, protection and access to services.

This toolkit has been developed as a result of an identified gap in good practice guidance on supporting CYP in a new country from a perspective of integration. As such, it is complementary to the 2016 [Guidelines on Children's Reintegration](#) which focus on good practice for return and reintegration. The guidance contained in this toolkit is based upon the practical experience of the members of the Family for Every Child network working with child migrants who have moved to or plan to move to Europe.

<sup>4</sup> The 2016 Guidelines on Children's Reintegration from the Inter-Agency Group on Reintegration, published by Family for Every Child, focus on return and reintegration of children to countries/communities of origin.





## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

## 2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex



### **Reintegration is defined in the 2016 inter-agency Guidelines on Children's Reintegration as:**

“The process of a separated child making what is anticipated to be a permanent transition back to his or her family and community (usually of origin), in order to receive protection and care and to find a sense of belonging and purpose in all spheres of life.”

## What do we mean by integration?

**integration** is defined in different ways by different actors and contexts.

For the purpose of this toolkit on supporting the integration of migrant children, the following definition is used. It links directly to practitioners and the responsibilities of duty bearers:

“Integration is the two-way process of a child settling in a new country, for an unknown duration, in order to receive protection and care and to develop a sense of well-being, prospects and goals for the future, that is at minimum equal and equitable to children with legal residence in a country.”





Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

## 2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex

Critically, this definition emphasises that the care, protection and support provided should – as far as possible – address the long-term best interests and welfare of the child and enable a child to **gain competencies to serve them, wherever they live, in the future.**

This toolkit focuses on the **social and cultural aspects of integration.** While legal status has a critical bearing on the permanence or potential duration of stay, [legal processes and statutes](#) vary by context and are linked to national policies and processes. Legal status is often temporary or unknown for long periods of time, whereas the care, protection and development needs of a child are immediate and are similar across contexts. This does not disregard the impact of legal status and wider political shifts on integration support, particularly given that in some contexts access to certain state support and services remains tied to legal status. While the toolkit considers integration specifically as it relates to care and protection (because the ability for practitioners to impact structural frameworks is limited) the importance and impact of (the pursuit of) legal status for children is acknowledged.



# integration

/,ɪn(t)ə'grāSH(ə)n/noun

For the purposes of this toolkit, integration means ensuring the care, protection and development of children, in their place of residence, **irrespective of the expected duration of stay or legal status.** For unaccompanied children, this includes integration into care arrangements and the community and services where the child is living as well as pursuit of legal immigration status.





Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

**3. Legal and Policy Frameworks**

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex



## 3. Legal and policy frameworks

The principles and approaches outlined in this toolkit build on existing international and regional legal and policy frameworks for children’s integration which are summarised in this section. The toolkit does not consider country-level legal and policy frameworks.

**Regardless of the individual legal status of a child, planning should be based on a long-term approach, ensuring the child has care, protection, and development opportunities that are equitable to any other child with residence in the country.**

In some country contexts national legislation and policy frameworks may not uphold the rights of migrant children, and/or adequate and appropriate services may not be available. In these contexts advocacy will be required to support CYP’s integration.

Under international frameworks, all children on the move, including asylum seekers, refugees and migrant children (including those with irregular status<sup>5</sup>), whether accompanied or unaccompanied, have the same rights as children with legal residency. This is irrespective of a child’s nationality or legal status. In addition, all children have a right to their identity (Article 8, UNCRC).

Relevant international legal and policy frameworks include:

- [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\) UN \(1989\)](#)
- [The Global Compact for Safe and Regular Migration UN \(2018\)](#)
- [The Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children UN \(2010\)](#)
- [Inter-agency Guiding Principles on Unaccompanied and Separated Children ICRC, IRC, Save the Children, UNICEF, UNHCR and World Vision \(2004\)](#)

<sup>5</sup> Children with irregular migrant status are also referred to as ‘undocumented’ or ‘unregistered’ migrants. These children often live ‘under the radar’ in precarious situations with no or limited access to basic social rights and exposed to poverty, exploitation, social exclusion and violence.



## Acknowledgements

### 1. Scope of the toolkit

### 2. Definitions

### 3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

### 4. Guiding principles for practice

### 5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

### 6. Building the dimensions of integration

### 7. Voices of children and young people

### 8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

The Committee on the Rights of the Child specifically clarified that “The enjoyment of rights stipulated in the Convention is not limited to children who are nationals of a State Party and must therefore, if not explicitly stated otherwise in the Convention, also be available to all children – including asylum-seeking, refugee and migrant children – irrespective of their nationality, immigration status or statelessness.”<sup>6</sup>

## Regional frameworks: A focus on Europe

In 2016, the Council of the European Union together with member states reaffirmed<sup>7</sup> that children in migration have the right to be protected, in line with the relevant provisions of EU law, including the EU Charter, as well as with international law on the rights of the child. In addition to the [EU Charter](#), relevant European legal and policy frameworks include:

- The [Reception Conditions Directive](#) – aimed at ensuring common standards of reception conditions throughout the EU.<sup>8</sup>
- [The EASO guidance on reception conditions for unaccompanied children](#) – focuses on reception authorities and reception staff. Based on the specific and appropriate protection needed for unaccompanied children.
- [European Directive for Family Reunification](#) – sets out the common rules of law relating to the right to family reunification.
- [Dublin III regulation](#) – determines which EU state is responsible for examining an asylum application – normally the state where the asylum seeker first entered the EU – and aims to ensure that each claim gets a fair examination in one member state. Where a CYP has a family member (parent, brother/sister, uncle/aunt, grandfather/grandmother) with residence in a ‘Dublin III’ state, this country is responsible for the examination of the application.

<sup>6</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, thirty-ninth session, General Comment No. 6 (2005) Treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin.

<sup>7</sup> Committee on the Rights of the Child, thirty-ninth session, General Comment No. 6 (2005) Treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin.

<sup>8</sup> The RCD ensures that a standard level of reception conditions is guaranteed to all children. Article 21 of the RCD defines special categories of vulnerable applicants for international protection (including unaccompanied children) and obliges states to take into account the specific situation of these vulnerable persons. Article 22 of the RCD provides for the assessment of the special reception needs of vulnerable persons. Article 23 of the RCD seeks to ensure the child’s best interests are taken as primary consideration. Article 24 of the RCD establishes rules for the reception and treatment of unaccompanied children.



## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

## 3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

In practice, many migrant CYP arriving in a new country face conflicting treatment due to the tension between immigration control and social welfare and protection. This can impact on the quality of care, protection and development support provided.

**While international and regional legal and policy frameworks may, or may not, be reflected in national legal and policy frameworks, all actors should strive towards good practice in the care and protection of CYP, irrespective of their legal status in a country.** This means, to the greatest extent possible, catering to a child's long-term best interests and welfare and enabling a child to gain competencies to serve them wherever they may live in the future.



Given the rapidly changing policy and legal environment, a point of good practice for all organisations supporting child migrants is ensuring the appointment of a legal and policy focal person responsible for:

- Tracking policy and legal changes
- Following new data
- Analysing implication of changes
- Updating staff on changes.





Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

**4. Guiding principles for practice**

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex

## 4. Guiding principles for practice



The national provision for migrant children varies across contexts. Irrespective of the framework in place, the following principles serve to guide good practice in care, protection and integration support for children and young people who have moved across borders. They are applicable in all contexts where a child or young person has arrived in a new country.



### **EQUITABLE CARE, PROTECTION AND ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR ALL CHILDREN**

Children and young people who move across borders, with or without their parents or caregivers, maintain all their rights and entitlements as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. This means that a child is entitled to a level of care, protection and access to fundamental services that is equitable to that which is provided to children that are nationals in the country where the CYP currently is, regardless of whether or not the child or young person is legally documented.

This includes health (physical and mental), education and social services (care and protection). Discriminating against migrant children and young people by limiting their care and protection contravenes their rights, prevents their integration and limits their future prospects and well-being. Authorities must take all reasonable steps to ensure that child migrants' needs are met, and their rights upheld, providing care, protection and services immediately and holistically, including when the duration of stay is unknown or there is intent to move again. This includes ensuring that interviews are carried out and information is provided in appropriate languages.



Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

**4. Guiding principles for practice**

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex



## PLANNING USING A LONG-TERM LENS

Integration efforts must start from the moment of arrival or reception and take a long-term perspective. The duration of stay for every child migrant that arrives in a new country is unknown. This is due to the wide variety of factors that may result in forced or voluntary cross-border movement in the future. The care, protection and support provided must both meet the immediate needs of the CYP and cater to their long-term best interests and welfare and enable them to gain competencies and skills that will serve them, wherever they live, in the future. This necessitates treating each CYP as if they are staying, even if they may depart via voluntary movement or through forced deportation.



## PROMOTING FAMILY UNITY

For children and young people who move without their parents or legal caregivers, the government is responsible for their care, protection and well-being, as well as for reuniting them with their family members. CYP should not be separated from their parents against their will. Where separation does occur, every effort should be made to reunite separated or unaccompanied children with their families, unless it is established that it is against the [best interests of the child](#).<sup>9</sup> At the very least, children and young people should be supported to remain in contact with significant family members. This may include facilitating lines of communication with family members both inside and outside the country in which a CYP now lives.

Where return or reunification is not in the best interests of the child, or is otherwise not possible, the networks that a CYP has within the country – including siblings and extended family – must be taken into account in decisions on placement.

A further component is the **active prevention of secondary relocation and forced multiple moves within the country**, for example as a result of geographic allocation policies in place in some countries.

<sup>9</sup> It may not always be in the child's best interest to be returned to or reunited with their parents, relatives or other caregivers (due to a history of violence, exploitation or other rights violations, or the current situation for the family). Any potential risk of harm through reunification should be evaluated through a timely referral and best interests assessment procedure before a decision about reunification is made.



Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

**4. Guiding principles for practice**

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex



## CONNECTION TO A CONSISTENT ADULT CAREGIVER/GUARDIAN

Every child or young person needs the care, support and protection provided through a reciprocal relationship with a caring, responsive and trusted adult. For CYP who move without their parents or a legal caregiver, this can be achieved through continuity in age-appropriate [alternative care](#). Based on an individual assessment of a CYP, the most appropriate form of care must be chosen. This may be family-based care, such as kinship care, foster care, community-based care arrangements or – in the case of older adolescents and young adults – supervised independent living. [Guardianship](#) and [mentorship](#) systems also play an important role.

Care arrangements are much more than the provision of accommodation and require a core focus on emotional, social and psychological care and support – including for young people after they turn 18 years old. Alternatives to large-scale institutions, including dormitory-style transit centres, must always be sought, as these cannot provide the individual care and attention that CYP need to develop to their full potential (see [UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care of Children, 2010](#) for further guidance on care arrangements).



## COLLABORATION ACROSS ACTORS FOR CUSTOMISED HOLISTIC CARE

Integration support requires long-term individual work with children, young people, families and caregivers across an array of services and actors. This means viewing each CYP as an individual and responding holistically based on their individual circumstances and needs, taking into account age, gender, sexual orientation and (dis)ability sensitivity. Case work is the key approach, in which the CYP is assigned a caseworker<sup>10</sup> who coordinates customised individual support and may involve engagement across government services, NGOs and civil society organisations, as well as community groups (which may be faith-based) and volunteers.

<sup>10</sup> Depending on the context, the case worker can be called a key worker, social worker, link worker or case manager – their title is not so important as their function, which is to be the main point of contact and focus for the care of the child.





Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

**4. Guiding principles for practice**

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex

Where a context does not have functional or adequately funded child protection services, actors can analyse strengths and opportunities that do exist to support a customised and holistic approach to a child – for example through work with NGOs, schools, community groups and local volunteers.



## **EARLY AND FULL ACCESS TO MAINSTREAM SERVICES AND SYSTEMS**

Integration efforts must start from the moment of arrival. This means early and full access to mainstream services – including education, health care, housing and welfare, as well as adequate interpretation services. While segregation in specialist services and facilities may seem a simpler and possibly more cost-effective approach in the short term, it impedes language and cultural acquisition, limits social and economic opportunities, creates significant impediments to settling in a new community, and has a negative impact on child well-being.

Mainstream services, for example education through the public school system, can be complemented by parallel, tailored non-formal education, such as mother tongue language classes or catch-up classes. Where integrated classrooms are not feasible for an individual CYP – for example where a young person has not attended school in their country of origin and is functionally illiterate – special care and programmes must be in place. These should be co-located in mainstream schools to enable shared access to teachers and classes for subjects such as physical education, life skills, arts and music, as well as access to resources, for example school gyms, science labs, libraries, etc. Discriminating against migrant children by only providing access to segregated services should be the option of last resort and limited to short-term provision while longer-term arrangements are made.

Often children and young people want to combine education with paid work or vocational apprenticeships. For migrant children, permission to work should be in line with that of children that are citizens of the country.



Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

**4. Guiding principles for practice**

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex



## PROVISION OF CARE AND SUPPORT UP TO 21 YEARS OF AGE (OR BEYOND)

‘Ageing out’ refers to the loss of rights that children and young people experience when turning 18 years old, which is linked to the end of care through the child and youth welfare system (typically) as soon as a child turns 18 years old (depending on the relevant legal framework). The protection, education access and services that are consequently lost depend on the laws in place in a country and the specific situation of the child. For unaccompanied CYP (whether documented or undocumented before their 18th birthday), this often means losing access to education, health care, housing, their guardian or legal representative, other psychosocial support and safeguards against deportation. For undocumented children living with their families, this often means losing access to education and health care as they generally have fewer child protection safeguards than unaccompanied children.

Extending care, education access and support to CYP until they are at least 21 years old (and preferably beyond), through the provision of support, services, and funding, is essential for the smooth transition for all young people to adulthood, irrespective of residence status. This means ensuring undocumented young people can also access housing, education, mental health care and specialised support services, based on need. An emphasis on strengthening cooperation between employment offices and care services can facilitate access to the labour market for CYP who have turned 18 years old, supporting their path to financial independence. Supporting the transition out of care as a minor must be a key part of planning for all CYP – this includes a plan for housing, education, employment and a solid support system of adults. This planning should happen in good time as part of the preparatory process for CYP in moving into independence.



## BEST INTERESTS

In all decisions affecting children and young people who have moved across borders, the best interests of the child or young person should be the primary consideration.



Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

**4. Guiding principles for practice**

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex



## MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION

Children and young people have the right to information, freedom of expression and participation in decisions related to their life in line with their age, maturity and evolving capacities. This means that children must be able to meaningfully participate in decisions about their own care, protection and integration, as well as in collective processes related to integration approaches, policies, programmes and services.

Caregivers and service providers have the responsibility of providing accessible information and guidance to ensure children are empowered and supported to meaningfully participate and make informed decisions. This includes access to child-friendly information, in a language that the child or young person understands, on their rights and entitlements, the asylum and residence law processes that affect them, as well as information related to potential onward travel. Awareness and knowledge of their own rights and options can reduce uncertainty and support self-agency. Guardians, cultural mediators, outreach teams and specialised counselling services play an important role in facilitating meaningful participation for migrant CYP.



## INVESTING IN A TRAINED, INFORMED AND UP-TO-DATE WORKFORCE

Professionals, paraprofessionals and volunteers need specific competencies to be able to, in a relatively short space of time, connect with and build trusting relationships with migrant children and young people to support their individual needs and facilitate decisions in their best interests. These include, but are not limited to: understanding a CYP's specific experiences, strengths, challenges and circumstances and the resulting health, education, psychosocial and mental health needs; trauma-informed care approaches; awareness of the impact of racism and discrimination, and processes for workers and volunteers to reflect on their own prejudices and acknowledge experiences of and the impact of discrimination; cultural sensitivity; and remaining continuously up-to-date with the changing legal and policy environment and the range of services on offer as well as timelines for accessing them. A lack of current legal and policy knowledge can have devastating consequences for CYP. This is particularly the case where an adult professional, paraprofessional or volunteer (for example a guardian) is supporting processing or decision making linked to legal status in-country.



Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

**4. Guiding principles for practice**

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex



## ACCOUNTABILITY

Migrant children are at risk of having their rights violated. Independent, safe and easily accessible child-sensitive reporting and complaint mechanisms must be in place within all projects, programmes, organisations and services so that children and young people (either individually or as a group), parents and caregivers can report and seek redress for poor services, malpractice and rights violations.



## MEASURING INTEGRATION SUPPORT, NOT INTEGRATION 'PROGRESS'

Child migrants are first and foremost children. They have the same rights to survival, protection, development and participation as children that have not moved across borders. They have the same needs and entitlements for good health, adequate nutrition, responsive caregiving, safety and security and opportunities for learning and recreation.

Traditionally, integration 'success' has been measured by the 'achievements' or 'progress' of a CYP. Good practice requires a shift in measurement from the child to the system – primarily to the availability and quality of services in the new country and, specifically, to what is offered to a CYP to support their integration in relation to their care, protection, development and sense of well-being.



Integration measurements related to CYP must focus on the availability of, access to and quality of services and systems – not the 'progress' of the child or young person.





Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

**5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration**

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex



## 5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

This toolkit is built around the model of integration developed as part of the Family for Every Child project to support practitioners working with unaccompanied children moving from the Middle East to Europe.

The model, as shown in Figure 1, explores the dimensions and elements that need to be considered when supporting a child or young person's integration in the country where they currently live, recognising that the duration of their stay may be limited and that children may themselves plan to move to another country or return back home at some point – or that decision may be forced upon them.

The integration model considers the CYP in a holistic way and with a family focus. It emphasises the child's autonomy and personal capacities together with their environment and social connectedness, while also exploring the influence of the family and the impact this has on the CYP's motivations and decision making. It recognises the importance of connecting children with their families and providing services to support families where appropriate (for example in helping families to cope with changes in their child's behaviour as a result of the uncertainty of movement). The model also emphasises the need to take into account the impact that the child or young person's experiences has on their life – not only their experiences in-country, but also those that are gathered on the move and prior to movement, and which must be considered in all responses.



Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

**5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration**

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex

Figure 1: Conceptual model of integration





## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

**5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration**

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

While all dimensions are interlinked, for ease of use, each dimension of the model is explored in a separate section in the toolkit.

Each section includes:



**Key actions and considerations for service providers** and actors responsible for supporting the integration of child migrants. These might be specific actions to take, issues to explore or other important factors that need to be considered, such as partnership arrangements or the design of activities and programmes.



A **narrative** explaining the dimension, its main elements, and why these are important considerations for supporting integration. This narrative aims to set the key considerations and the associated practice points in context.



**Links** are included in the narrative to resources which provide further information and to tools and resources for practitioners. Since the aim is not to replicate or duplicate good information that is available elsewhere, where possible such resources are signposted. In other cases, there is a gap in existing knowledge and practice and a need for new tools or guidance in the future.



**Practitioner toolbox** containing:



• **Practitioner points** for those working directly with CYP to help them in their daily practice.



• **Key resources** that relate to the dimension.



• **Practice examples** illustrating how one or more issues from the dimension have been translated into action.

Ideally, when supporting the integration process of CYP, all dimensions of the model should be considered; however, depending on the service being provided, it may be that one or two dimensions are a particular focus for action.



## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

**5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration**

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex



Irrespective of the dimension being considered, two particular issues are important to keep in mind and should underpin all actions in line with the key principles (contained in Section 2).

1. The **focus should be on the needs of children and young people, rather than service provision.** Most frequently, services are based on organisations, and needs are based on what CYP require. Assessments of the child or young person and consequent care planning/service provision should be needs-based. As well as more appropriately addressing CYP's needs, working from a needs-based approach gives scope for more creatively identifying how to meet needs. This can help harness other sectors and community members and groups which may not traditionally be considered as service providers.
2. The integration model does not set timeframes for integration, rather **the focus is on systems and service provider approaches and preparedness at all possible points along a child's journey.** That said, of course, there will be particular activities that occur within general timeframes – for example, on arrival and reception, the provision of basic needs, registration and legal documentation and health care, or planning future services before the CYP 'ages out' of the child care system. The importance of providing protection and promoting development and well-being should be focused on both the short and longer term, regardless of possible onward movement.







Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

**6. Building the dimensions of integration**

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex

## 6. Building the dimensions of integration

### › DIMENSION 1: FOUNDATIONS

The child or young person's formative experiences and how these affect the child or young person in their current situation.

### › DIMENSION 2: AUTONOMY

The degree to which the child or young person has choices and can make decisions in their life.

### › DIMENSION 3: PERSONAL CAPACITIES

The strengths and resources of the individual child or young person.

### › DIMENSION 4: ENVIRONMENT

The outside world and the child or young person's living environment.

### › DIMENSION 5: SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

The relationships between the child and young person and the wider community.

### › DIMENSION 6: SUSTAINABILITY

A child or young person's investment in where they are and/or competencies, goals and ideas to serve them wherever they are in the future.





> DIMENSION 1:  
FOUNDATIONS

> DIMENSION 2:  
AUTONOMY

> DIMENSION 3:  
PERSONAL CAPACITIES

> DIMENSION 4:  
ENVIRONMENT

> DIMENSION 5:  
SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

> DIMENSION 6:  
SUSTAINABILITY

Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

**6. Building the dimensions of integration**

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex

## DIMENSION 1: FOUNDATIONS

The child or young person's formative experiences and how these affect the affect the child or young person in their current situation.



### Key actions and considerations for service providers

- Ensure that a range of services are available at the point of reception and after immediate arrival. Along with basic needs and housing/ care provision, these should also include health, education, recreation and psycho-social support services, including specialist mental health services.
- Services provided must be age and developmentally appropriate and CYP should be able to access mainstream services such as education as soon as possible, including language support.
- Individual assessments must be holistic and focus on all dimensions of well-being. Assessments, as far as possible, should be shared to prevent continual reassessment. This may require sharing of information and protocols for joint working.
- Assessments should consider the formative experiences of CYP and their migration journey and the impact this has had on the CYP.
- Specialised training should be given to staff and volunteers to support CYP; this should include identifying and supporting those with underlying emotional and psychological needs or those who may have experienced trauma.
- Cultural mediation and orientation for CYP in their new setting is essential. Information should be translated into first languages.
- The impact of family should be considered, and services should provide families with appropriate support. This includes facilitation of contact between CYP and family members from whom they are separated, if the CYP wishes for this to happen.
- Agencies and service providers need to coordinate to facilitate smooth care planning and the transition from 'immediate support' to appropriate 'longer-term' care arrangements.
- Where possible and safe, and with the consent of CYP, links should be made with agencies and service providers in countries that the CYP has lived in/ travelled through in order to ensure the background and situation of children is comprehensively understood.
- Advocacy may be required to ensure appropriate services are provided. This may involve work with other agencies and service providers to advocate for specific services for CYP as well as for the revision of policies, frameworks and the availability of funding.





## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit
2. Definitions
3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
4. Guiding principles for practice
5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
- 6. Building the dimensions of integration**
7. Voices of children and young people
8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

Since services come into contact with child migrants at some point after they have arrived in a new country, it can be easy to assume that this is when the process of integration begins. However, a child's support needs are profoundly impacted by: (i) their formative experiences; (ii) what happens to them to make them leave their own (or previous) country; and (iii) their experiences on the journey to the new country. This is also linked to [age and development](#) and whether a child or young person travelled alone or with other people.

**Reasons and circumstances for the move** to the new country must be understood as these will directly affect integration. For example, a CYP that has been forced to leave their country due to conflict or war is likely to carry traumatic memories, which can result in long-term [mental health problems](#) including depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). A forced move may also affect the CYP's willingness to engage and their level of commitment to living in a new country, and therefore their response to services. Conversely, a move driven by a desire to seek a better life may lead to more positive feelings towards, and easier adjustment to, the new country. Where CYP are sent abroad by parents to work and are expected to send remittances to their families, additional stress may be placed on children.



The **quality of a child's significant relationships shapes** the way that they see the world and are able to develop to their full potential.

Attachment to a consistent, responsive caregiver is critical in the early years of childhood but remains significant throughout childhood and youth, and a CYP transports the experiences of their relationships with their family, irrespective of whether the child moves with their family, the family remains in their home country, or the family members die. Disrupted attachments, due to separation and loss of family members, or a carer's inability to meet a child's needs, can have a profound impact on the well-being of the child in the present as well as the way in which CYP are able to form relationships in the future.

If **basic needs have been unmet prior** to movement, as well as during the journey – for example where a child has missed out on schooling, opportunities for play, and health and dental care – the child may not only have significant health problems or acquired disabilities, but their cognitive, physical, emotional and social development may all be less than would be expected for the chronological age of that child under normal circumstances.



## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit
2. Definitions
3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
4. Guiding principles for practice
5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
- 6. Building the dimensions of integration**
7. Voices of children and young people
8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

By contrast, CYP who have had to take on great responsibility at a young age, for example by working to provide for family or by travelling alone, may appear much more mature than they are emotionally, and be resistant to allowing a new caregiver, such as a foster carer, to take back some responsibility. Resistance to support can be magnified by cultural factors and cause tension, not only with caregivers but also with laws and processes in the new country. For example, where they are not allowed to be employed, where their movements are more regulated, or when their understanding of [gender roles](#) and other **social norms** are challenged.



Finally, **experiences of abuse, exploitation and neglect**, either in their home country or during the movement itself, may impact the CYP's development and experience in the new country, and as a consequence, the process of their integration. Children and young people who have experienced trafficking or who have entered countries illegally/informally may be less likely to seek help or trust services once they arrive in a new country. They may also have been warned by those involved in facilitating their transport to avoid police and other authorities in order to avoid being detained or returned.





Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex



## Toolbox for practitioners



### Practitioner points

- CYP should be ‘met where they are’<sup>11</sup> and not forced to talk about issues that they find uncomfortable.
- It is important for CYP to be able to interact in their own language. When asking CYP questions, the reasoning behind them should always be clearly explained to the CYP so that they can make an informed decision as to whether to respond.
- Try to identify one person (for example a [mentor](#) or [guardian](#)) who can accompany the child during their integration process and with whom the child can develop a relationship. This should be done as soon as possible.
- Always explore how contact can be established and maintained with family members and other significant people in the CYP’s life.
- When undertaking assessments, remember to stay focused on needs, rather than the services required. This will enable plans to more accurately meet children’s needs.
- Develop a life map or/and a genogram or ecomap with CYP to be able to fully understand their experiences, family circumstances and networks.
- Ensure a CYP’s individual plan documents and is informed by their formative experiences and network and considers both short-term and longer-term needs.
- Remain alert to signs of trauma, and signs and symptoms of possible abuse. CYP may not speak about such issues, but they may be shown through certain behaviours. Specialist services may be needed to provide appropriate support to the CYP.
- Remember that CYP who have the same nationality, culture or faith may have similar experiences, but this does not mean that they are the same. It is better to adopt a ‘not knowing’ position rather than make assumptions.



### Resources

- [Lives across cultures: Cross cultural human development](#) Pearson New International Edition. Gardiner, W. and Kosmitzki, C. (2013)
- [Children on the move: A guide to working with unaccompanied children in Europe](#) European Guardianship Network (2021)
- [Welcome to Germany. A guide for unaccompanied minors](#) Bundesfachverband unbegleitete minderjährige Flüchtlinge e.V (2016)
- [Practical guide on the best interests of the child in asylum](#) European Asylum Support Office (2019)
- [Life maps](#) Leeds Social Services UK (undated)
- [Guide to using ecomaps and genograms](#) (undated)

<sup>11</sup> Start from where the CYP is, seeking to understand and build up from their strengths.



## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit
2. Definitions
3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
4. Guiding principles for practice
5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
- 6. Building the dimensions of integration**
7. Voices of children and young people
8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

## Checklist on reception/arrival

### Immediate support:

- Emergency health care
- Provision of suitable clothing and washing facilities
- Food
- Interview – 24-hour child protection worker to assess immediate safety needs and arrange for appropriate emergency accommodation/place of safety
- Provision of assistance to contact relatives (phone/email etc) to let them know they are safe
- Initial registration for asylum
- Information on next steps provided in appropriate language/format, with opportunity to ask questions
- Provision of support and facilities for practising faith (e.g. place for prayer), if required.

### Short-term support (24–72 hours):

- Identification of key/link worker who can act as point of contact for CYP and coordinate services and support
- Identification of independent guardian who can assist with determination of best interests
- Enrolment with medical services for longer-term health needs assessment
- Registration for education and training, including catch-up
- Provision of access to facilities for religious observance
- Interview with CYP to begin to identify needs for the longer term and map any family/caregivers who the child could be united with/supported to contact
- Identification of best living arrangement for child
- Assessment of any specific needs (disability etc)
- Interview with CYP to ascertain wishes and feelings and to give further information on available options and mandatory processes
- Commencement of best interest assessment to determine care plans – meeting needs as identified.





> DIMENSION 1:  
FOUNDATIONS

> DIMENSION 2:  
AUTONOMY

> DIMENSION 3:  
PERSONAL CAPACITIES

> DIMENSION 4:  
ENVIRONMENT

> DIMENSION 5:  
SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

> DIMENSION 6:  
SUSTAINABILITY

Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex

## DIMENSION 2: AUTONOMY

The degree to which the child or young person has choices and can make decisions in their life.



### Key actions and considerations for service providers

- Orientate services to give the maximum control and choice possible to children. While choices will be limited by policy and legal frameworks, increasing child participation processes in service design, management and evaluation can provide more opportunities for children to have a sense of control and autonomy.
- Provide accurate and comprehensive information in ways that are developmentally appropriate and in relevant languages.
- Develop or link to [mentoring](#) and [peer-to-peer support](#) programmes to empower and increase the resilience of CYP.
- Use cultural mediators in developing and explaining information to increase the transfer and understanding of key information.
- Ensure staff and volunteers access regular training to build skills in supporting CYP and to maintain an up-to-date understanding of legal and policy frameworks.
- Ensure that CYP are able to access appropriate independent legal advice to navigate through asylum, refugee and other legal status processes.



**Autonomy** – the sense of self-agency and the ability to have some control over aspects of one’s life – is vital for a child or young person’s sense of well-being and resilience. CYP who are resilient (who can survive and even thrive under difficult conditions and overcome adversity) have been identified as having specific personal traits, including a sense of self-worth and a belief in their capacity to make a difference in their own lives.

The reality for migrant children is that, despite appearances, many lack control over their lives. Decisions on initial movement are often made by the CYP’s parents, and while in some cases older children and young people do make the decision, their choices of where to move are usually limited to the locations in which they have networks or relatives, or where they believe that they will find better opportunities. If a move involves a third party such as a trafficker or smuggler, even less control is likely. In these cases, CYP may be removed from all support, even education and health care, and possibly also be required to (illegally) work until they have paid off debts. They are at high risk of exploitation.



## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit
2. Definitions
3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
4. Guiding principles for practice
5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
- 6. Building the dimensions of integration**
7. Voices of children and young people
8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex



The amount and quality of **information and support** that a child or young person (and their family) has on the situation in the new country has a significant bearing on the CYP's ability to make informed decisions.

Where CYP are travelling illegally in order to seek asylum in a new country, information is unlikely to be formally available. As a result, there is often a reliance on informal information through others who have already moved to the country, and this information may be patchy or anecdotal.

Ideas about what life may be like in the new country can be formed from misunderstandings gained through the media or other sources. For example, CYP and their families may believe that a child or young person will have money and/or be able to work, or they may anticipate a living environment different to a reality in which that CYP will be considered a child with limited choices regarding their activities and movement.

Decisions such as the location and setting in which CYP live and the services and support they receive are often made, and can be changed, by authorities and service providers. Services are constrained by a lack of funding and legal and by policy frameworks which may be more centred on immigration/migration control issues than on child-centred care. Even in cases where frameworks are holistic and centred on CYP's care and well-being, the inability to accurately anticipate the number of children and families arriving may mean that even if services should be available, in practice they may not be in place.

It is essential that service providers provide CYP with accurate information and choices which allow them to exert control over their lives. This can be done in small but cumulative ways, such as increasing levels of CYP participation in the management of and decisions about programmes, including preferred activities, meal planning and preparation and peer support schemes. This is not a substitute for children and young people having real choice over the big decisions that impact on their lives, but it may help to counter some of the negative impacts by ensuring that they feel that their opinion counts, and they can make a difference.





## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit
2. Definitions
3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
4. Guiding principles for practice
5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
- 6. Building the dimensions of integration**
7. Voices of children and young people
8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex



**Where a CYP has a religious faith, this can also provide a sense of comfort, meaning and control.**

A central concern for all CYP who are in a new country is the legal basis for their presence and what this means in terms of their future plans. For those under 18 years old, permission may be granted to remain until 18, at which time further decisions may be made about their long-term status. Decisions regarding asylum applications or residence status often take time, sometimes years, to process. It is difficult for a CYP to commit to any new environment if the future is uncertain and if the system is confusing.



**Providing CYP with independent, child- and youth-friendly and accurate advice and information** on issues such as immigration or onwards movement is critical in enabling them to understand their rights and negotiate their way around the various systems they will encounter.

Services including **independent legal counsel and guardianship** can be key in providing such information and support. In the case of unaccompanied or separated children, [effective guardianship structures](#) are deemed necessary to protect their rights and best interests.

Just as travel to a new country may be based on uncertainty and a lack of accurate information, so too may decisions regarding moving onwards to another country (for resettlement or reunification with family members) or returning home. CYP may not have lived in their country of birth for a long time, and the situation they remember may have changed. For both moving and return there need to be accurate and accessible information for CYP on what assistance will be available and what networks exist, a clear assessment of children and young people's needs when moving/returning, and a plan for how these needs will be met.



Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

**6. Building the dimensions of integration**

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex



## Toolbox for practitioners



### Practitioner points

- Ensure that CYP understand their entitlements and all processes from the outset so that they are always clear about what will happen next.
- Information needs to be provided in ways that are accessible and child-friendly, and in appropriate languages.
- Regularly follow up with CYP so they are informed of each step and not left wondering what is happening. Knowing what is happening can help CYP feel more in control, even if they are still waiting for decisions to be made.
- Use child-focused participatory planning processes to prepare for any change in location.
- Consider providing a journal to CYP so they can refer to this when they have doubts.
- In environments where CYP have little control and autonomy, choice is still possible and should be provided, even if only in small but meaningful ways, such as choice over clothes or food and opportunities to practise religion.
- Encourage older CYP to help other CYP. This can be through peer support and mentoring schemes, which can increase confidence and a sense of empowerment.



### Resources

- [How to convey child-friendly information to children in migration. A handbook for frontline professionals](#) Council of Europe (2018)
- [Working in partnership with children on the move: Strategies and tools for meaningful participation](#) International Institute for Child Rights and Development in partnership with Destination Unknown (2022)
- [Access to justice for migrant children. Training materials on access to justice for migrants](#) International Commission of Jurists (2021)
- [Guardianship Toolkit](#) ProGuard. Online toolkit
- [Guardianship systems for unaccompanied children in the European Union](#) FRA (2022)
- [Paths to inclusion. Training for community mentors: Communication, intercultural and social skills](#) International Organization for Migration (2021)
- [‘Your rights are always with you’: A storytelling and crafts handbook](#) METAdrasi (2023)



## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

**6. Building the dimensions of integration**

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex



## Toolbox for practitioners (cont'd)



### Practical application examples:

#### Provision of information

- Service providers facilitate the inclusion and informed participation of children in decision making and address barriers to participation by creating spaces and processes for children to engage in. This can be through developing and modifying care and development plans, using interactive child-focused planning tools and providing timely, current information in accessible and child-friendly formats.
- Short vlogs made by former refugees and posted on YouTube, TikTok and other social media platforms in the language of the unaccompanied children.
- Child-friendly booklets for refugee children on different subjects, with quotes and advice from child refugees (Jugendliche ohne Grenzen, 2017).
- Digital platforms that can be accessed by CYP to seek information, ask questions and connect with others. These vary from country to country. For example, in Italy, [Refugee Info](#) provides a WhatsApp number, Facebook page and a link to [UNHCR's online information service](#).



### Practical application example:

#### Cultural mediation and independent counselling

The legal situation is often extremely complex and difficult for CYP to understand. In practice, they often depend on the advice and – importantly – the decisions taken by their guardians and custodians. [Cultural mediators](#) and independent counselling provide them with information about their rights and options and empower them to voice their interests.

It should be remembered that in some contexts intercultural mediators are themselves migrants. While they can act as a bridge between new arrivals and more settled populations, such mediators may not always provide a professional service if they are not properly trained. Furthermore, their role may be limited to only being used as translators.





> DIMENSION 1:  
FOUNDATIONS

> DIMENSION 2:  
AUTONOMY

> DIMENSION 3:  
PERSONAL CAPACITIES

> DIMENSION 4:  
ENVIRONMENT

> DIMENSION 5:  
SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

> DIMENSION 6:  
SUSTAINABILITY

Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

**6. Building the dimensions of integration**

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex

## DIMENSION 3: PERSONAL CAPACITIES

The strengths and resources of the individual child or young person.



### Key actions and considerations for service providers

- Coordinate with other agencies and service providers to ensure there are a range of learning, education, training and recreational opportunities for CYP which are developmentally and age appropriate.
- Incorporate a planned and goal orientated approach to all services and activities provided.
- Adopt a strengths-based approach in any planning with CYP.
- Integrate the promotion of positive identity into all activities and either develop specific programmes which focus on marginalised CYP or collaborate with/refer to other specialised programmes (for example for LGBTQ+, disability etc.).
- Promote learning, recreational activities and opportunities in which CYP can develop their life and social skills and be empowered, including peer-to-peer education/support programmes and meaningful participation opportunities.
- Ensure continuous training, capacity building, supervision and access to mental health support for staff and volunteers to enable them to effectively support CYP, including those who may be experiencing the effects of loss and trauma.
- Ensure CYP have access to services, including psychological, to assist them in dealing with the impact of various traumas, including loss and separation.



The personal capacities of children and young people, and how these are enhanced by and interact with other dimensions of the integration model, have perhaps the strongest impact on CYP's integration. In situations where services are limited or inaccessible due to legal status or location, service providers can often most helpfully support the evolving capacities of the CYP, for example through the provision of informal education and training, safe spaces and life skills. Awareness, understanding and familiarity with new social and cultural norms, including around sex and relationships, are vital as these often vary widely compared to CYP's experiences prior to migration.



## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

**6. Building the dimensions of integration**

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

**Personal capacities** are deeply rooted in a CYP's prior experience as well as the way services are provided and evolve over time. For example, a child's capacity to make decisions (autonomy) and deal with challenges is linked to their education and care environment. Similarly a child's sense of identity and confidence is impacted by their social connections. Children and young people should be enabled to create their own connections and encouraged to make links outside of their normal social circles.



Services and supports should always seek to develop and build upon characteristics that contribute to **resilience**, including a child's sense of control **and ability to make a difference**.

The ability to make a difference in one's life and to have a sense of self confidence is strongly associated with [resilience](#). Characteristics of resilient CYP include having positive relationships with peers and adults, flexibility (in terms of being able to understand and adapt to new situations and deal with challenges) and the ability to access a range of services including education and training. Spirituality, positivity and a hopeful view of the future can also contribute to resilience.

The impact of trauma experienced by both boys and girls before leaving their home country, on the journey and after arrival should not be overlooked. For some CYP, this trauma will naturally dissipate as they become more settled, whereas for others professional mental health care will be required. However, it is important not to regard all children and young people as helpless victims as this can negate the strengths and talents that they possess. Indeed CYPs' independence and ability to travel may in some ways support their resilience, by having given them a sense of achievement and helped them to acquire skills in the process.

Personal capacities are also associated with a positive sense of self-worth and self-esteem. This is an important consideration in relation to identity issues which may be viewed as 'less than' or taboo, such as gender, sexuality and disability.



Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

**6. Building the dimensions of integration**

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex



## Toolbox for practitioners



### Practitioner points

- Work from a resilience perspective – supporting CYPs’ identity, self-worth and ability to make a difference and take control in their lives.
- Explain and provide opportunities for CYP to explore social and cultural norms in the new country, including through provision of [sex and relationship education](#).
- Support CYP to access specialist services to promote identity and well-being, such as those related to sexuality and disability.
- Make sure that plans designed for CYP incorporate opportunities to develop their skills and talents, based on their interests and strengths.



### Resources

- [Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of young people seeking asylum: The case for evidence-based and trauma-informed care and support](#) Refugee Rights Europe (2021)
- [Enable self-learning modules and offline training modules](#) Enable (2019) In Arabic and English for teachers and tutors. Basic attitudes, trauma, inclusion and exclusion, co-empowerment, motivation, self-concept, self-regulated learning.
- [InBrief: Resilience Series](#) Harvard University (2022) Website resources including videos on resilience in children and young people.
- [Peer-to-peer support for volunteer guardians for UASC](#) Documentation of pilot phase (2019)





## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit
2. Definitions
3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
4. Guiding principles for practice
5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
- 6. Building the dimensions of integration**
7. Voices of children and young people
8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex



## Toolbox for practitioners (cont'd)



### Practical application example:

#### Support for LGBT+

- Queer Refugees Deutschland provides advice and information for LGBT+ refugee communities on the asylum process as well as other relevant information. Support can be accessed in a number of ways including online and by phone. Printed information is available which includes QR codes to be able to access additional information.

<https://www.queer-refugees.de/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/short-guide-for-lgbti-refugees-in-germany-englisch.pdf>



### Practical application example:

#### Sex and relationship education on sex, body and health in different languages

Child migrants frequently face challenges in understanding the cultural differences and social norms of a new country, and this is often paired with a lack of sex and relationship education in countries of origin. The Swedish organisation [RFSU](#) developed an approach that combines Swedish language education with sexuality education. It includes curriculum on themes such as safer sex, lust and pleasure, gendered norms, honour-based violence, consent, reproduction and rights.

This is accompanied by a series of videos on 17 sex, body and health themes available in 16 different languages. <https://www.rfsu.se/upos>

<https://sdgs.un.org/partnerships/providing-sex-education-young-migrants-sweden>





Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

**6. Building the dimensions of integration**

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex

## DIMENSION 4: ENVIRONMENT

The outside world and the child or young person’s living environment.



### Key actions and considerations for service providers

- Expedite and advocate for the completion of reception centre/initial settling in-country as quickly as possible so that CYP can be located in long-term living/care arrangements as soon as possible.
- Ensure the care provision is based on the age and development of a CYP with a range of options available, such as independent living for older CYP and foster care for child migrants.
- Support and advocate for integrated education and access to local sports, recreation clubs and groups so that CYP can immediately begin to form links with their environment and peers.
- Develop vocational training schemes that are linked to local employers.
- Support language learning and catch-up classes to facilitate and complement integration in mainstream education.
- Ensure consideration of access to religious communities and opportunities to practise religion.
- Recruit and train [cultural mediators](#) – including volunteers from the community – who can support children’s integration and assist with understanding social norms.
- Consider recruiting volunteers who can support and run activities for children to give them opportunities to develop skills and also their social networks.
- Coordinate with health providers to ensure that children can access medical care, including preventative services and mental health support if required.



The environment, which can be considered as the child or young person’s external world and the opportunities that are created as a result, affects both their evolving personal capacities and their social connectedness. For example, in Italy education is compulsory until 16 years old and all children are entitled to access education. However catch-up classes are not compulsory for schools to provide, and this means that in practice CYP may not be able to fully participate in classes.<sup>12</sup> In Sweden, although all children have the right to education, education is not compulsory for asylum-seeking children.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>12</sup> <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/italy/reception-conditions/employment-and-education/access-education/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/sweden/reception-conditions/employment-and-education/access-education/>





## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit
2. Definitions
3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
4. Guiding principles for practice
5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
- 6. Building the dimensions of integration**
7. Voices of children and young people
8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

### Arrival and placement

For all CYP arriving in a new country, a key issue is their placement: where they will live, and how they will be cared for. In most situations there will be some kind of [reception centre](#) in which CYP will be temporarily placed on arrival until they can be processed. Reception centres may not necessarily be physical in nature: they may be an area or location that the CYP remains in until decisions are made (detention centres for CYP are not acceptable and alternatives should be sought, especially for younger children).



The CYP's views and feelings about their situation are strongly impacted by the length of time they remain in reception and the support they receive, as well as the information given to them on arrival about processes and next steps.

Translation services must be carefully and purposefully arranged. After arrival, registration and legal processes may commence, and in some cases, age verification. While some CYP may have a sense of relief at having reached their destination, it is likely to be a time of overwhelm and confusion.

Having specialist services in one place can be practical, but this approach risks creating concentrations of CYP migrants, limiting opportunities to mix and delaying integration. Conversely, where CYP are dispersed to placements without a clear and resourced plan, they may not be able to access services that are specific to their needs. Connections to extended family or friends should always be considered in placement location, since this will have an impact on a CYP's integration.

In principle, decisions about where a CYP is placed should be based on individual needs, but in practice, housing and care choices may be limited due to a lack of capacity in national systems. For example, CYP should ideally be placed in a family-based environment, such as foster care, but recruiting and training suitable foster carers is a challenge and may mean that it is prioritised for younger children, with young people left in less supported accommodation.

Foster care, with appropriately selected and trained foster carers, provides an environment for children in which their individual needs can often be more easily met.



## Acknowledgements

### 1. Scope of the toolkit

### 2. Definitions

### 3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

### 4. Guiding principles for practice

### 5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

### 6. Building the dimensions of integration

### 7. Voices of children and young people

### 8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex



In addition, foster placements can help children to develop strong relationships with significant adults and to make connections both formally and informally with wider support networks.

However, older children who are used to a degree of independence may struggle with being 'parented'.

While independent and supported living schemes may be appropriate for older young people, there must be a structured system to ensure appropriate support and supervision. Care choices may also be at odds with CYP's own wishes, for example they may want to live alone or with friends, which may not be permissible under national frameworks, or not be deemed to be in their best interests.

Appropriate [health care](#) must be provided. This includes ensuring preventative services, including immunisation, dental treatment and eye checks. A lack of documentation must not prevent access to health services. CYP must also have access to psychological support and, where necessary, psychiatric treatment.

Religion plays an important role in the lives of many child migrants. Religious faith and practice can be both a source of continuity and a key support in dealing with challenging circumstances that are faced by many CYP. The religious beliefs of child migrants should be understood and integrated into support, including access to religious communities and opportunities to practise religion.

### Education and training opportunities

Education and training opportunities need to be flexible enough to match the needs and preferences of CYP and prepare them for life as an adult. As with health services, a lack of documentation should not hinder the provision of education and training or access to local sport and recreation activities.



## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit
2. Definitions
3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
4. Guiding principles for practice
5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
- 6. Building the dimensions of integration**
7. Voices of children and young people
8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

Where CYP have missed education, catch-up classes will be essential. For young people aged 16 years old and above who have a strong desire to work, tailored vocational training may be more attractive. Such vocational training schemes must be centred on viable and realistic employment areas that the CYP will want and be able to engage in in the future, either in the new country or when moving on or returning home, and should ideally be accompanied by an allowance or basic payment. Education and vocational training should be provided at the same level, in terms of quality and quantity, as for other children. Placing CYP into mainstream education as early as possible helps them form connections and assists with integration. This must be paired with additional support where required; for example, it is likely that intensive language learning will be required in the initial stages.

It is important to ensure that sufficient time and attention is given to helping children think through and explore what opportunities are available to them and what they would like to do in the future. This may be an evolving conversation that needs revisiting over time as CYP's skills develop and their interests change.

In addition, it is important that CYP are able to continue to learn their own language, to maintain their connection with their heritage and identity. This will also prove essential if a child wishes, or is forced, to return to their home country at some point in the future.

### Social and cultural awareness



Orientation on social norms and expectations is important, and cultural mediators can play a useful role in helping CYP recognise behaviours and attitudes that may be at odds with the new country.

This may range from understanding what is considered good manners and social etiquette to more complex notions around gender, sexuality and relationships between sexes. This should not be interpreted as an attempt to 'assimilate' CYP to the new culture, or to give up their own, but to ensure that they are equipped to function within broader society in positive ways.



Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

**6. Building the dimensions of integration**

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex



## Toolbox for practitioners



### Practitioner points

- Base decisions about location and living arrangements on the age and development of a CYP and not on their migration status.
- Ensure CYP placements consider access to services and maintaining links with extended families, friends and communities.
- Remember the child's biological family may exert influence over the child and this may be at odds with support services. It is important to try to involve families in plans for children wherever possible. This should include involving them in decisions made and communicating plans.
- Work with CYP to develop plans for their education which are both appropriate and also attractive and acceptable to them. Remember that many older CYP may be keen to work and earn money and it may be necessary to explain local laws in relation to employment.
- Understand religious beliefs and support access to religious life and practice, both privately and with others.
- Ensure that CYP have appropriate health care including preventative services such as immunisation programmes and care for pre-existing conditions.



### Resources

- [Safety and dignity for refugee and migrant children: Recommendations for alternatives to detention and appropriate care arrangements in Europe](#) IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF (2022)
- [Standards for out-of-home child care in Europe](#) Quality4Children (2007)
- [Foster care in Islamic contexts](#) Family for Every Child (2019)
- [Rethinking care: Improving support for unaccompanied migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee children](#) Lumos (2020)
- [Working in SIL: A practical guide. A manual for staff working with unaccompanied children living in supported independent living schemes](#) Nidos, METAdrasi, Fundació Idea, Apostoli, CECL, PLAN and Athens Lifelong Learning Institute (2021)
- [A chance for a better future: Supported independent living and the protection of unaccompanied children in Greece](#) International Rescue Committee (2021)
- [Promoting integration of migrants and refugees in and through education: Toolkit](#) Education International (2018)



Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit
2. Definitions
3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
4. Guiding principles for practice
5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
- 6. Building the dimensions of integration**
7. Voices of children and young people
8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex



## Toolbox for practitioners (cont'd)



### Practical application example:

#### Coordinated care and support in Germany

Care and protection and access to services is provided through, or under the coordination of, the national welfare system and not through a parallel system. Actors at all levels work to remove barriers that prevent children from accessing fundamental rights to care, protection, education, health care and other vital services. For example, in Germany, unaccompanied CYP are taken care of by the youth welfare services. Upon their arrival the children and young people are temporarily taken into care by youth welfare offices and are looked after and cared for by the child and youth welfare services. This puts them on an equal legal footing with children and young people without a refugee background who have to be taken into care.

<https://b-umf.de/material/das-asylverfahren-bei-unbegleiteten-minderjaehrigen-fluechtlingen/>



### Practical application example:

#### Supported independent living in Greece

METAdrasi's 'Supported independent living for unaccompanied minors' offers an alternative initiative for the provision of care for unaccompanied children aged 16 to 18 years old, identified as refugees or asylum seekers.

In addition to safe housing, the programme offers a series of services that cover CYP's basic needs (education, health, psychosocial development, legal aid, interpretation etc), along with an appropriate level of care and guardianship. Emphasis is placed on setting goals, boosting self-esteem and self-preservation, developing personal interests, and embracing personal empowerment.

The aim of this programme is to enable participants' smooth coming-of-age and ultimate integration into Greek society. The programme is supervised by an interdisciplinary team, which consists of a social worker, psychologist and other caretakers. This team offers psychosocial support to teens and encourages their gradual independence.

<https://metadrasi.org/en/campaigns/supported-semi-independent-living-for-unaccompanied-minors/>

<https://familyforeverychild.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Briefing-paper-METAdrasi-English.pdf>





> DIMENSION 1:  
FOUNDATIONS

> DIMENSION 2:  
AUTONOMY

> DIMENSION 3:  
PERSONAL CAPACITIES

> DIMENSION 4:  
ENVIRONMENT

> DIMENSION 5:  
SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

> DIMENSION 6:  
SUSTAINABILITY

Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit
2. Definitions
3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
4. Guiding principles for practice
5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
6. Building the dimensions of integration
7. Voices of children and young people
8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex

## DIMENSION 5: SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

The relationships between the child and young person and the wider community.



### Key actions and considerations for service providers

- Coordinate with other service providers to avoid CYP having to make multiple moves and ensure that where moves are necessary these are well-planned and the CYP is prepared.
- Ensure that placements for children prioritise the possibility of maintaining links with community, extended family and friends.
- Establish [mentorship schemes](#) with community members and older CYP to help CYP retain contact with their own identity and communities.
- Create safe places, meeting points, cafes and drop-ins where support can be obtained on an informal and social level and where people have the chance to mix and connect.
- Identify ways to build bridges between the wider community and CYP. For example, by arranging access to mainstream activities and services or by encouraging wider community participation in schemes and activities established for child migrants (such as clubs, cultural days and activities) and sport activities with local communities, and also other activities in which the local/existing population also participate.
- Establish family strengthening activities or support programmes which are focused on meeting the needs of the whole family and not only on the CYP (though individual services and support for the CYP may still be required). This could include adapting national family strengthening programmes for migrant families.
- Involve those working with the child, for example foster carers, in interventions with the CYP to provide more holistic support.



Through the migration process, CYP will often lose contact with people in their home country and be less able to fully draw on existing relationships, including family.



**Establishing meaningful social contacts** in a completely new environment takes time, but is vital to a CYP's protection, development and well-being.

During this gap, staff and volunteers working for agencies and service providers play an important role in providing social contact and helping CYP to develop and expand their social connections. This may be through the way they provide services as well as focused efforts to assist in building connections and networks.



## Acknowledgements

### 1. Scope of the toolkit

### 2. Definitions

### 3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

### 4. Guiding principles for practice

### 5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

## 6. Building the dimensions of integration

### 7. Voices of children and young people

### 8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

It is likely that child migrants will develop new relationships, both as they travel and once they arrive in their new country. There is an important balance between ensuring that CYP can remain connected to those they identify with, such as other children on the move or people from their own communities or religious group, while at the same time facilitating opportunities for them to mix and connect more widely within the new community. The ability and opportunity to make such connections is strongly associated with a child's location, the attitude of the host community (how welcoming they are), and the care and service arrangements and approaches.

**Existing communities** who share a CYP's cultural background, whether that be based on nationality, ethnicity or faith, can provide a sense of continuity and familiarity and help a child to remain rooted and connected to their own identity. This in turn supports children and young people's resilience and helps them to establish and orient themselves within a different context. On a practical level, such communities can support the CYP in accessing and navigating services and learning about the social and cultural norms in the new country. The role of community mediators (either volunteers or staff working with agencies and service providers) can also be key in facilitating local social connections through their role in supporting understanding and managing expectations.

Wherever possible, children and young people should be located near to those they already have connections with, for example extended family or friends of family (and where safe and possible CYP should be supported to live with such). The proximity of friends should also be considered when arranging placements. CYP should experience minimal relocations to enable them to establish and develop connections and roots.

A child or young person's connections in their home country, previous countries that they have lived in, or countries that they may wish to travel to in the future, also impact on integration. Strong links to relatives in their home country may strongly influence decisions either to stay or to return, as family members may actively encourage a child in either direction.

Where a move has been prompted by a desire to seek a better life and opportunities or where families have been involved in paying for transport, there may be an increased intention to remain in the new country. Where there are family members in other countries in Europe, a child may be drawn to move onward to their location.



Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

6. Building the dimensions of integration

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex



## Toolbox for practitioners



### Practitioner points

- When placing CYP, consideration should be given to placement with or near any extended family, friends of family or other existing community networks.
- Relocation and multiple moves should be avoided.
- Establish and maintain contact with family and others supporting CYP informally to ensure that they support plans for the child and that their involvement in the child's life remains helpful.
- Support children to maintain contact with significant people in their lives, for example through the use of technology, or facilitating visits when family members are within the same country.
- Ensure that CYP are clear about the roles of different professionals and others providing support to help manage expectations.
- Work simultaneously with carers, relatives and family members to support them as caregivers and to prevent the breakdown of a placement or relationships.
- Identify CYP role models in the extended family or community to work with in order to help establish ways for them to connect with children in safe and appropriate ways.
- Use tools such as [ecomaps](#) to assess the quality and forms of relationships that a CYP has or wishes to have.
- Seek opportunities, according to the CYP's interests, for involvement in wider community activities and initiatives in order to help them to integrate into the community. For example, sports and social activities.



### Resources

- [Child's right to identity in alternative care: Policy brief 2](#) Child Identity Protection (2022)
- [Parent/carer group sessions for secondary schools](#) Including Children Affected by Migration (ICAM) (2022)
- [Supporting refugee families: Adapting family strengthening programs that build on assets](#) Bridging Refugee and Youth Services
- [Migrant family toolbox](#) IOM





Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

**6. Building the dimensions of integration**

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex



## Toolbox for practitioners (cont'd)



### Practical application example:

#### Connecting CYP with their local community

As part of the first steps to making links with the wider community and establishing networks within the local communities where CYP live, METAdrasi have initiated a number of actions depending on CYP's interests, including:

- Enrolment of children in the local swimming pool and in a football team, as well as other sports and social clubs such as Scouts and theatre groups.
- Taking part in volunteer tree planting scheduled by the municipality and the forestry department.
- Cleaning beaches together with environmental organisations and Scouts.
- Participating in a parade for the national day and a music festival together with opportunities to learn national (Greek) dance.
- Attending the celebration of the Christmas tree lighting in the Central Square, helping with a stand at the Christmas market, making Christmas handicrafts to be offered to institutions and individuals who support METAdrasi, and taking part in Christmas and New Year celebrations.
- A birthday party, to which neighbours and Greek classmates were invited.
- Visiting an animal shelter and providing volunteer work, including helping with saving, caring for and watering animals caught up in forest fires during the summer.

[www.metadrasi.org](http://www.metadrasi.org)



### Practical application example:

#### Providing a safe space to explore and establish relationships

The Civico Zero Daily Centre in Rome was established to 'give a house number to those who do not have a house number' and provide a place for children and young people who are too often placed in contexts which force them to grow up prematurely.

Meetings between peers with different origins and experiences are fundamental to develop the knowledge essential to build an active dialogue and positive relational dynamics free from prejudice. For this reason, discussion is central to the daily life of the centre, which hosts young foreigners and Italians, promoting authentic and constant inclusion.

The centre uses individual plans aimed at real social inclusion, through pedagogical, legal and psychological assistance aimed at all young people who find themselves in situations of social marginality, deviance and subjected to the risk of exploitation. This assistance includes educational support services (Italian school, legal information, skills development, scholastic support), psychological support (individual and group support), legal support and work and housing services.

<https://civicozero.eu/chi-siamo/>





> DIMENSION 1:  
FOUNDATIONS

> DIMENSION 2:  
AUTONOMY

> DIMENSION 3:  
PERSONAL CAPACITIES

> DIMENSION 4:  
ENVIRONMENT

> DIMENSION 5:  
SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

> DIMENSION 6:  
SUSTAINABILITY

Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

**6. Building the dimensions of integration**

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex

## DIMENSION 6: SUSTAINABILITY

A child or young person’s investment in where they are and/or competencies, goals and ideas to serve them wherever they are in the future.

This dimension does not relate to the sustainability of the placement or remaining in the country. This is uncertain for many CYP who may not be aware of their longer-term plans or where plans

might change over time. Instead it is geared towards well-being, prospects and goals for the future and connections with the community.



### Key actions and considerations for service providers

- Ensure that services and supports are in place for dimensions 1–5 of the model, even if all services are not provided or coordinated by your own agency or organisation.
- In the case of initial refusal, a full range of services should be regularly re-offered to CYP. Review and feedback loops need to be included in programming to ensure that this happens.
- Ensure services and supports remain until a child transitions to adulthood – to at least 21 years old, or later, equivalent to whatever provisions exist for supporting children in state care in the country.
- Ensure that the transition out of state care as a minor is a key part of planning (transition planning) for all CYP – this includes a plan for housing, education, employment, legal status, and a solid support system of adults.
- Commence transition planning early, as soon after a CYP turns 16 years old as possible.
- Liaise with appropriate adult services to ensure continuity of support once CYP transition from support as a minor.
- Map other services and resources in order to identify and thus maximise available supports.





## Acknowledgements

### 1. Scope of the toolkit

### 2. Definitions

### 3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

### 4. Guiding principles for practice

### 5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

## 6. Building the dimensions of integration

### 7. Voices of children and young people

### 8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

The future location of every child migrant is uncertain. Multiple factors contribute to this: legal status, family ties, employment opportunities, a young person's own ideas about where they would move or settle in the future.



**The care, protection and support provided should enable a child to gain competencies to be able to live safely and independently in the future, irrespective of how long or why they remain.**

Another way that sustainability can be considered is around the extent to which the situation for the CYP is durable in the present. This does not mean that the CYP does not have ideas about the future which may include moving, and is not preparing for these, but that they are also living fully in their current situation.



A definition of solutions for migrant children can be found in the Joint General Comment of the Committee on the Rights of the Child:

“A ‘comprehensive, secure and sustainable solution’ is one that, to the greatest extent possible, caters to the long-term best interests and welfare of the child and is sustainable and secure from that perspective. The outcome should aim to ensure that the child is able to develop into adulthood, in an environment that will meet his or her needs and fulfil his or her rights...”

The focus of sustainability in this context is on CYP accessing services and resources that will help them to develop competencies which will be useful for them wherever they are in the future and in promoting their overall well-being and development. This includes the more tangible and obvious services and resources such as education and training, self-care skills and health care as well as ‘softer skills’ and less obvious traits such as confidence, resilience and the ability to socialise and make friends. These are based upon the effective provision of services and supports across the other dimensions of the integration model.



Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

**6. Building the dimensions of integration**

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex



## Toolbox for practitioners



### Practitioner points

- Consider the independence of CYP and their ability to be able to manage in the community without support. This does not mean that they do not need services, but that they are accessing mainstream services as any CYP resident in the country would be able.
- Review with CYP their plans and wishes for the future, and work with them on a plan on how to achieve these objectives/next steps. This includes ensuring that CYP's views are included in decisions made.
- Work with CYP to develop personal safety plans to avoid risky migration and to ensure safeguarding. This involves helping CYP to identify safe and unsafe behaviours and situations, and where they can access support/report concerns.
- Make referrals for any ongoing support that may be required, such as specialised mental health services, in a timely way to ensure there is no gap in services when CYP age out.



### Resources

- [Durable solutions for children toolkit](#) Save the Children (2019)
- [Turning 18 and undocumented: Supporting children in their transition into adulthood](#) PICUM (2022)
- [Implementation guide to dynamic integration](#) FOCUS (2022)



Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

**6. Building the dimensions of integration**

7. Voices of children and young people

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex



## Toolbox for practitioners (cont'd)



### Practical application example:

#### Zampa Law, Italy

In March 2017, Italy became the first European country to legislate a comprehensive framework protecting unaccompanied children, the 'Provisions on protective measures for unaccompanied foreign minors', referred to as the 'Zampa' law.

Hailed by UNICEF as a model for other European countries and described by Save the Children as the "most elaborate system for child protection in Europe", the Zampa law articles create and amend various procedures relating to the reception and treatment of unaccompanied children in Italy, and guarantee them a minimum level of care. Importantly, the law reflects several fundamental rights from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, including rights to health care and education, legal representation, and to be heard during judicial and administrative proceedings. It also incorporates the best interests of the child principle.

The law recognises the special vulnerabilities of unaccompanied children and guarantees them the same rights and protection afforded to Italian and other European children.

It introduces an absolute prohibition on the return or removal of any unaccompanied child from Italy, unless ordered by a court in exceptional circumstances. Facilities must meet minimum standards to ensure the child is adequately accommodated and their fundamental rights protected. After 30 days children should be transferred to secondary centres within Italy's System for the Protection of Asylum Seekers and Refugees (SPRAR).

Additionally, the law provides that unaccompanied children must have access to the Italian National Health Service during their time in Italy, and be admitted to educational institutions. They also have a right to be informed about legal representation, which should be provided free of charge, funded by the state. Other articles of the Zampa law amend or introduce procedures regarding family reunification, the provision of residency permits, access to foster care, the training and appointment of guardians, and assistance for victims of human trafficking.

<https://www.unicef.org/eca/press-releases/italian-law-protect-refugee-children>





Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

6. Building the dimensions of integration

**7. Voices of children and young people**

8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex

## 7. Voices of children and young people



As part of the consultation and feedback process, CYP were asked for their views on what are the most important ways in which practitioners can support them and their integration. These recommendations have been reflected in the above sections of the toolkit and are also summarised here.

### Learning from child migrants

#### Top tips for practitioners from children and young people

Child and youth migrants in Italy and Greece collaboratively developed guidance to help practitioners in their work to support integration. **Here you can find their top tips!**





## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit
2. Definitions
3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
4. Guiding principles for practice
5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
6. Building the dimensions of integration
- 7. Voices of children and young people**
8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

1. Give us the knowledge we need as soon as possible, to adjust to life in a new country and society. Provide guidance and explain things that we do not understand.

2. Treat us as equal to every other child in the country and respect our fundamental rights.

3. Listen to us carefully, paying attention to what we have to say.

4. Provide us with protection, safety and security. Help provide us with longer-term stability as soon as possible.

5. Do not discriminate against us or undermine us based on where we come from, our gender, religion or beliefs. We want to be accepted for who we are. Help us to go to school and make local friends. Educate the professionals who work with us to accept us and not discriminate.

6. Treat us with kindness and empathy. Give us warmth, love, care and affection.

7. Treat us with respect, and like you would your own children.

8. Be honest with us and tell us the truth.

9. Support us in developing as people. Give us time and motivation to develop our own skills and interests, hobbies and sports. Make us aware of what options we have; we want to be able to support ourselves in the future.

10. Provide us with food, clothing and medical support when we arrive in the country, and connect us to a psychologist for longer-term support.

11. Respect our culture and do not force us to adapt to yours. Teach us what is and what is not acceptable, and support us with (cultural) mediators and tutors (including after we have turned 18).

12. Provide us with constant communication from you on the different matters we are dealing with.

13. Help us to understand that we can continue our lives in your country. Help us to maintain contact with our families.

14. Support interpreters in all languages to facilitate communication.

15. Spend (more) time with us, for example accompany us when we are speaking with the doctor or legal consultant.



## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit
2. Definitions
3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
4. Guiding principles for practice
5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
6. Building the dimensions of integration
- 7. Voices of children and young people**
8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

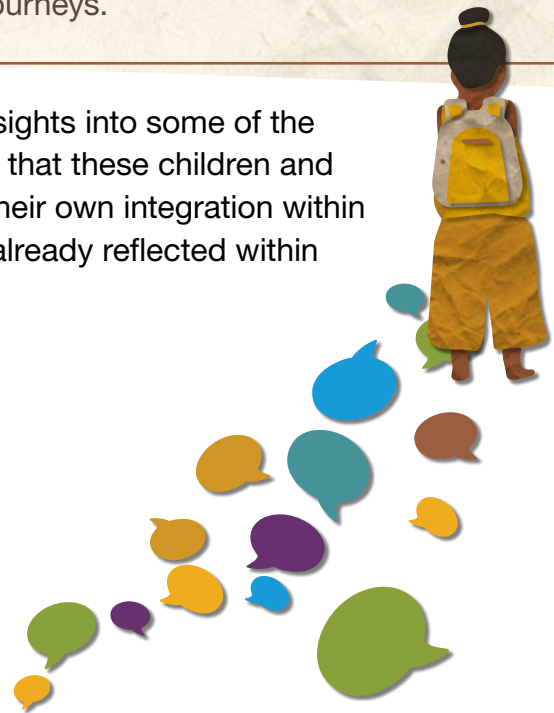
# Integration in Europe: Perspectives of children on the move in Lebanon

As part of the toolkit development process, 18 children and young people currently residing in Lebanon took part in two workshops facilitated by [Naba'a](#).

**The first workshop** was with children and young people who had plans to migrate to Europe in the future, either alone or with family members. During this session the young people spoke of their reasons for deciding to make the journey to Europe, as well as what they anticipated would be the most significant issues for them in relation to their integration into their destination countries.

**The second workshop** was with those who had already made the trip to Europe but had returned to Lebanon for various reasons. This discussion centred on their opinions of how practitioners in Europe could best support children on the move from the Middle East, based on the positive and negative experiences that the children and young people had already had during their migration journeys.

Both workshops provided important insights into some of the main preoccupations and expectations that these children and young people have when considering their own integration within Europe. Many of the issues raised are already reflected within the guidance in this toolkit.







## Acknowledgements

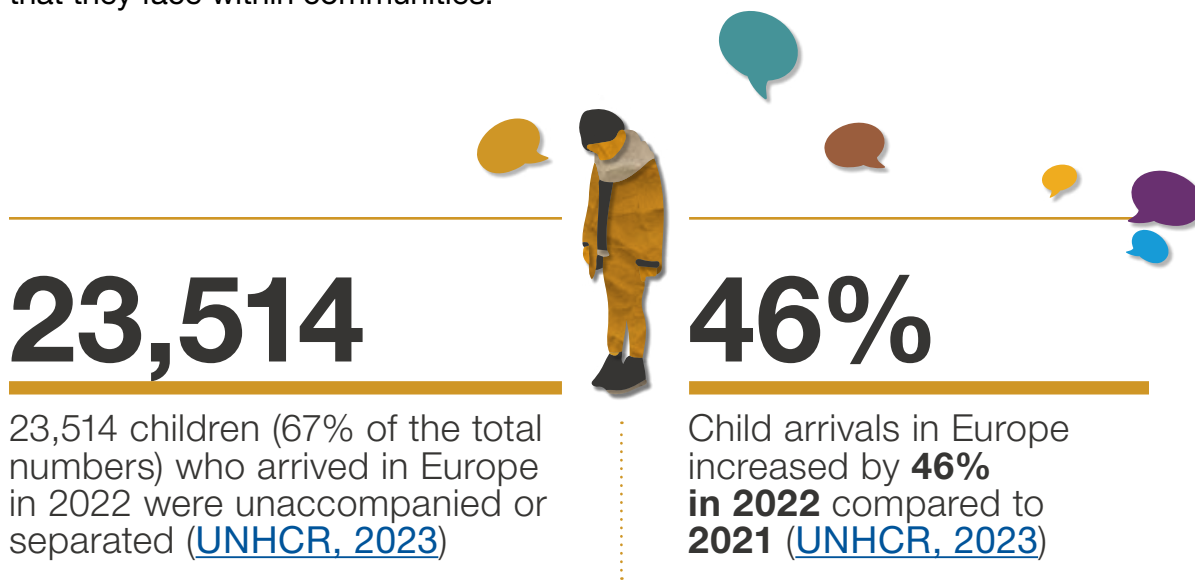
1. Scope of the toolkit
2. Definitions
3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
4. Guiding principles for practice
5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
6. Building the dimensions of integration
- 7. Voices of children and young people**
8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

### Hopes, fears and expectations

Several of the priority areas that were identified by the children and young people consulted in Italy and Greece were similar to those focused upon by the children and young people in Lebanon who were planning to move to Europe. These included the desire for safety and security, full access to their rights, opportunities that were equal to those experienced by other children within the countries in which they would reside, and treatment by practitioners that was without discrimination. Their biggest fears about integrating were of losing their own identities and traditions, breaking family connections, and of not being able to adapt to new societies and cultures. Many children and young people also anticipated the psychological pressures that they would feel as a result of their situations and statuses as refugee and asylum-seeking children. The psychological impact of missing their home and families was identified as a barrier to integration for the children and young people who had already experienced migration to Europe. The other major barriers that this group identified – quite apart from the practical difficulties related to gaining legal status – were related to language difficulties, experiences of discrimination and racism, and feelings of loneliness.

In reflecting on what the young people had said, workshop facilitators noted the importance of understanding and nurturing the cultures, traditions and habits of young migrants from the Middle East. The psychological impact of their circumstances also needs to be acknowledged and prioritised by practitioners. Such circumstances include the loss of community and separation from family, the often protracted nature of the asylum process and the precarious situation in which many young people are left as a result, and the racism and discrimination that they face within communities.





- > [Mentorship](#)
- > [Peer-to-peer support](#)

Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit
2. Definitions
3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
4. Guiding principles for practice
5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
6. Building the dimensions of integration
7. Voices of children and young people

## 8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

Annex



# 8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

This section outlines examples of good practice in supporting the integration of children on the move. Each cross-cutting approach supports a child across multiple dimensions of integration.

## GUARDIANSHIP

> **DIMENSION 1:  
FOUNDATIONS**

> **DIMENSION 2:  
AUTONOMY**

> **DIMENSION 3:  
PERSONAL CAPACITIES**

> **DIMENSION 4:  
ENVIRONMENT**

> **DIMENSION 5:  
SOCIAL CONNECTIONS**

> **DIMENSION 6:  
SUSTAINABILITY**



A guardian is an independent person who safeguards the child's best interests and general well-being. Guardians play an important role in different life situations for migrant children, particularly for CYP that are unaccompanied or separated from their families. The guardian is in addition to, but does not substitute, the figure of a lawyer. Each unaccompanied or separated child should have a guardian appointed as soon as possible regardless of their care situation (i.e. irrespective of whether they are in a first reception centre, foster care, supported independent living etc.). This should be underpinned by a legal framework in each country.



## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit
2. Definitions
3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
4. Guiding principles for practice
5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
6. Building the dimensions of integration
7. Voices of children and young people

## 8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

### Guardians must:

Have had and continue to receive appropriate professional training.

Be appointed as soon as an unaccompanied or separated child is identified.

Maintain guardianship arrangements until the young person has reached 21 or has permanently left the country.

Be consulted and informed regarding all actions taken in relation to the CYP.

Have the authority to be present in all planning and decision-making processes, including immigration and appeal hearings, care arrangements, service decisions, and all efforts towards a durable solution for a CYP.

Have the necessary and up-to-date expertise, so as to ensure the best interests of the child are safeguarded and that the child's legal, social, health, psychological, material and educational needs are met.

Be familiar with the CYP's background and competent to represent their best interests.

Where possible and appropriate, develop contacts with the family or other relatives of the child or young person – this may be family or relatives living in the country of origin, the country the CYP is in, or a third country.

Have no conflict of interests with the interests of the child or young person. For example, non-related adults whose primary relationship to the child is that of an employer should be excluded from a guardianship role.



### Guardianship in practice

#### → • An example of guardianship in the Netherlands:

[Nidos](#) is the certified youth care organisation that is responsible for guardianship and is part of the reception of all unaccompanied and separated children in the Netherlands.

All minors in the Netherlands must be under authority – either parental authority or guardianship. For children who apply for asylum without a parent in the Netherlands, Nidos provides (temporary) guardianship.



## Acknowledgements

### 1. Scope of the toolkit

### 2. Definitions

### 3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

### 4. Guiding principles for practice

### 5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

### 6. Building the dimensions of integration

### 7. Voices of children and young people

## 8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

In the absence of the parent, the guardian fulfils the role of the parent and ensures that the child is being cared for properly. The guardian intervenes if their care is not adequate. The guardian can provide recommendations, which must result in improvements. If these improvements are not implemented adequately or do not offer a solution, the guardian can transfer the child to a different form of care.

### → • An example of guardianship in Italy:

In Italy, a group of NGOs in partnership with authorities in selected regions enacted a [volunteer guardianship programme](#) for unaccompanied children. The voluntary guardian is a private citizen, selected via a rigorous recruitment process, who acts on a voluntary basis as the legal representative of an unaccompanied child. The guardian receives specific training.

Two challenges encountered by the programme are that not all provinces or municipalities have NGOs or local CBOs who are part of the initiative, and that a CYP can only benefit from the programme if they are located in cities where the programme is ongoing. The programme is also not nationalised, or fully structured.

## Guardianship: Useful tools and resources

- [Guiding principles and implementing guidelines for effective guardianship for unaccompanied and separated children in the context of migration](#) Appendix to Recommendation CM/Rec(2019)11, Council of Europe (2022)
- [Guardianship for children deprived of parental care](#) FRA – European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (2015)
- [Guardianship toolkit](#) ProGuard. Online toolkit.
- [Guardianship systems for unaccompanied children in the European Union](#) FRA (2022)



## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit
2. Definitions
3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
4. Guiding principles for practice
5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
6. Building the dimensions of integration
7. Voices of children and young people

## 8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

# MENTORSHIP

> DIMENSION 2:  
AUTONOMY

> DIMENSION 3:  
PERSONAL CAPACITIES

> DIMENSION 4:  
ENVIRONMENT

> DIMENSION 5:  
SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

> DIMENSION 6:  
SUSTAINABILITY



Mentoring is a key element in supporting the complex social, psychological, and practical challenges many migrant CYP face when arriving, settling and living in new communities. It is a process in which a competent individual offers guidance, support and advice to encourage someone to develop additional competencies and become equipped with more life skills for improved outcomes. It is one of the most common practices in providing informal support to migrant CYP by involving local residents. While mentoring can be child-child, here the focus is on mentors that are 18 years and over.

Mentoring can provide a number of benefits for migrant CYP. It has been shown to help support CYP to reach their full potential as it can support development of independence skills, more diverse social networks, support networks, local language acquisition and confidence. It has also been found to help CYP foster a sense of belonging to the place where they live, reduce school drop-out, increase school achievements and assist in securing work.

**A two-way benefit:** A mentor can: help adaptation to and understanding of local culture, and local language development; provide emotional support and reduce feelings of isolation and loneliness; serve as a source of practical advice and problem solving assistance, including for basic activities such as using public transportation, libraries or looking for a job; help a CYP maintain cultural links to their country of origin and maintain their own culture; provide academic support; develop workforce preparedness skills; provide opportunities for social action and support; and serve as a catalyst for fun activities. In return, mentors obtain the satisfaction of helping young people, acquire new skills and learn about refugee issues as well as about other cultures.

**Timing and who to reach:** Mentoring can be critical not only in the first year after arrival, but also in the longer term. The socio-emotional support extended via mentoring is beneficial for both CYP living with their families as well as those living in alternative care arrangements. Due to the time it can take to establish and draw benefits from a mentor-mentee relationship, six months is recommended as a minimum duration. A critical aspect of successful mentoring is an ongoing personal relationship between the mentor and mentee.



## Acknowledgements

### 1. Scope of the toolkit

### 2. Definitions

### 3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

### 4. Guiding principles for practice

### 5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

### 6. Building the dimensions of integration

### 7. Voices of children and young people

### 8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

**Establishing and operating effective mentorship programmes for migrant CYP:** While many different forms of mentoring programmes exist worldwide, research has identified some key areas as critical to establishing and operating an effective mentorship programme for migrant CYP; for example:

- Having a clear strategy for mentor recruitment and matching mentors and mentees.
- Mentors (and ideally parents/guardians and mentees) each participate in extensive training before matching.
- Mentors receive training in trauma-informed care.
- Strong and consistent support is essential for mentors, with clear explanations of roles and boundaries and flexible approaches to problem solving.
- Clear guidelines for the roles and responsibilities of mentors, mentees and the lead organisation.
- Mentors and mentees meet for at least two hours per week for a minimum of six months but ideally at least one year. The longer the duration of the match the greater the impact as it takes time and persistence to develop trust, become familiar with each other and establish a strong connection.
- Mentors and mentees spend time identifying and working toward agreed-on goals that are documented and updated.
- Programme staff provide regular check-ins and support to parents/guardians, mentees, and mentors.
- Programme staff provide referrals for further assistance for mentees and their parents/guardians as needed.
- Mentors focus on relationship building – they take the time to develop trust, get to know their mentees and create a nurturing environment.
- Mentors take responsibility for the relationship, are consistent, persistent and dependable.
- Mentorship programmes have a clear inbuilt process for monitoring, learning and evaluation.
- Utilising bicultural-bilingual mentors may enhance mental health and well-being outcomes for CYP.



## Acknowledgements

### 1. Scope of the toolkit

### 2. Definitions

### 3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

### 4. Guiding principles for practice

### 5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

### 6. Building the dimensions of integration

### 7. Voices of children and young people

## 8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

- Longer-term funding is needed for community organisations to be capable of providing long-lasting programmes that can create long-term change for CYP.

### A spotlight on safeguarding

Every mentoring programme for migrant CYP must prioritise the safety and well-being of participants. Strong safeguarding policies must be in place and activated in practice. This requires clear and practical codes of conduct that are monitored, and accessible and transparent reporting and response mechanisms. In practice this means that:

- Potential safeguarding risks are identified, and mitigation strategies developed.
- Mentors and mentees understand acceptable conduct and know how to seek support in case of any concerns.
- Safeguarding focal points know how to receive and respond to concerns and disclosures.

### Mentoring in practice

#### **Mentoring for integration of children affected by migration (MINT):**

The MINT project, delivered by Terre des Hommes (TdH) and partners in Europe, aims to empower refugee and migrant children, as well as European youth, to engage in new integration activities. Through support from [Child to Child](#), an innovative and replicable mentoring model was developed with the goal of ensuring that children and young people residing in the targeted host countries in Europe are successfully integrated in their host societies. As part of this EU-funded project, partners work in Romania, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovenia to support and facilitate the integration of children, enhance social relations, and empower both local youth and child migrants.

Migrants – especially migrant children – can face a myriad of risks before, during and after the journey. It is daunting to have to adjust to a new country when you are traumatised, homesick, alone and scared. Recognising those needs and challenges, the MINT project aims to contribute to the successful integration of child migrants in the EU, by enabling them to fulfil their full potential in their host countries.



## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit
2. Definitions
3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
4. Guiding principles for practice
5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
6. Building the dimensions of integration
7. Voices of children and young people

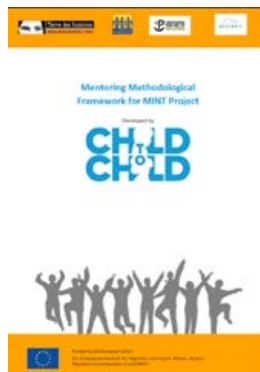
## 8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

Mentoring has proven to be an effective way to share knowledge, increase children's social and emotional skills, and promote integration, giving young people the tools and support that they need. One component of the MINT project involves matching recently arrived children with youth volunteers with the aim of providing support, advice, and mentorship in order to facilitate easier integration.

The mentoring methodological framework developed draws upon existing good practices and guidelines to provide information about:

- Mentoring as a process, and different possible approaches.
- How to design a mentoring programme, including setting parameters and selecting participants.
- How to implement mentoring in practice, including guidelines for mentors.
- Relevant cross-cutting considerations such as facilitating meaningful child participation, ensuring gender equity and embedding cultural sensitivity.
- Useful links to more resources and sample forms to use in projects.



Access the full resource for mentoring migrant children here: <http://www.childtochild.org.uk/news/mentoring-for-migrant-children-a-resource/>

Real time learning: The MINT programme created a community of practice where project partners shared learning throughout the design, implementation and evaluation phases of the mentorship programme. Monthly meetings were held in which partners were able to share implementation experiences, as well as the challenges that were outlined at the mid-term review stage.





Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit

2. Definitions

3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

4. Guiding principles for practice

5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

6. Building the dimensions of integration

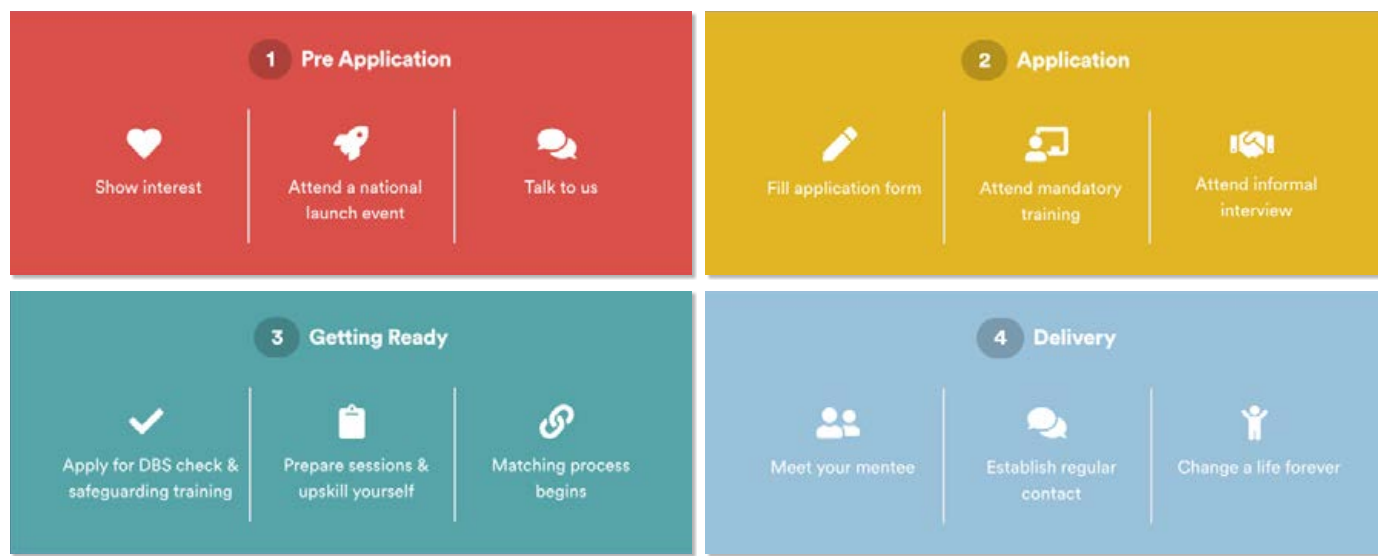
7. Voices of children and young people

**8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice**

Annex

### Explore other mentoring projects for migrant CYP:

[Arise Refugees](#), a UK-based organisation, runs a mentoring programme focused on building relationships between approved individuals and refugee children. It aims to give children a better start by providing direct mentoring support. Its mentoring process is documented in the following visual:



**Defence for Children International Italia: RoAD to adulthood mentorship programme** for migrant and refugee unaccompanied children is implemented in Italy as part of a wider European initiative. <https://www.defenceforchildren.it/en/news-329/road-road-to-adulthood>

**IRC with ICEI: “Mentors make the difference” – Mentors for integration** is a one-to-one mentoring programme in Italy that aims to connect young asylum seekers, refugees, and migrants with volunteer mentors from the local community. The project focuses on helping young migrants to develop skills and build a network of relationships to orientate themselves in the labour market. <https://icei.it/progetti/mentors-make-the-difference-mentors-for-integration/?lang=en>



## Acknowledgements

### 1. Scope of the toolkit

### 2. Definitions

### 3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

### 4. Guiding principles for practice

### 5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

### 6. Building the dimensions of integration

### 7. Voices of children and young people

## 8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

Set up in 2016 in the UK, the Mentoring Programme trains volunteer mentors to provide weekly one-to-one support and advice to young refugees and asylum seekers in line with their goals and aspirations. <https://hopefortheyoung.org.uk/mentoring/>

## Mentoring: Useful tools and resources

- MEET: A compendium to design migrant mentoring programs. [CESVI](#).
- Guidelines on designing and setting up a mentoring programme – including for example, selection, recruitment, training etc. [https://www.cesvi.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/meet\\_DEF.pdf](https://www.cesvi.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/meet_DEF.pdf)
- Mentoring migrant children and youth, regardless of residence status. University of Gerona (2021) Guidance. <https://www.compas.ox.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/Mentoring-migrant-children-and-youth-the-Nightingale-projects.pdf>
- Guidelines: Piloting mentorship schemes. IOM (2021) [https://eea.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl666/files/documents/Guidelines\\_Piloting%20Mentorship%20Schemes%20%281%29.pdf](https://eea.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl666/files/documents/Guidelines_Piloting%20Mentorship%20Schemes%20%281%29.pdf)
- Mentoring methodological framework for MINT project. Child to Child/MINT Project (2021) A resource for mentoring migrant children that includes guidance and tools for mentoring in practice. <http://www.childtochild.org.uk/news/mentoring-for-migrant-children-a-resource>
- [https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/mint-project-mentoring-methodological-framework\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/library-document/mint-project-mentoring-methodological-framework_en)



## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit
2. Definitions
3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
4. Guiding principles for practice
5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
6. Building the dimensions of integration
7. Voices of children and young people

## 8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

# PEER-TO-PEER SUPPORT

> DIMENSION 1:  
FOUNDATIONS

> DIMENSION 4:  
ENVIRONMENT

> DIMENSION 2:  
AUTONOMY

> DIMENSION 5:  
SOCIAL CONNECTIONS

> DIMENSION 3:  
PERSONAL CAPACITIES

> DIMENSION 6:  
SUSTAINABILITY



Peer-to-peer programmes are a methodology used to provide support and assistance to a CYP, where other CYP are actively engaged in providing assistance to their peers. This can be around a single issue, such as education or awareness raising on a specific topic, or more generalised, for example, providing emotional support and friendship.

Peer-to-peer support differs from peer relationships in that it is a structured approach, not something that develops organically. Peer supporters can have direct experience of the issue themselves – for example, refugee CYP supporting other child migrants – but this need not be the case. CYP who are not refugees can also play a role in supporting children who are migrants, for example in relation to integration and understanding of the host community, and can foster links within the community.

Peer-to-peer programmes are helpful both for CYP who provide the ‘support’ (in whatever form that takes) and for those being supported. For those being supported, the programme can provide a valuable route to addressing their complex needs and also begin the process of establishing links within the community. For the CYP who is supporting, peer-to-peer can help children gain additional skills, increase confidence and sense of self-worth, and give them a feeling of being able to make a difference. These are all factors which contribute to enhancing resilience.

The strength of peer-to-peer lies particularly in CYP’s ability to relate to another CYP who they may feel has a greater understanding of their situation and feelings. Specifically in relation to abuse, it is known that children often disclose first to their friends and peers, and, further, that children are initially more likely to confide in those who are of their own age.

### Ways in which peer-to-peer programmes support migrant children may include:

- Education and awareness on specific topics – for example safety and cultural norms.



## Acknowledgements

### 1. Scope of the toolkit

### 2. Definitions

### 3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

### 4. Guiding principles for practice

### 5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

### 6. Building the dimensions of integration

### 7. Voices of children and young people

## 8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

- Non-formal education and support around language development and schooling/training.
- Providing emotional support.
- Helping CYP to develop friendship networks.
- Supporting CYP in raising concerns and reporting abuse.

The nature and type of activity included in any peer-to-peer programme depends on its purpose. Some schemes may be looser (enabling CYP to access as and when required on an ad hoc basis) and others more structured. Some may consider only one topic, others may be more open and reflexive according to the needs of the specific CYP who is being supported. Some schemes may use a one-to-one approach (one supporter for each CYP being supported) while others may prefer a group approach where two or three supporters are involved per child or young person supported.

Another difference between peer-to-peer programmes is the extent to which CYP are involved in the programme beyond providing assistance. For example, are they involved in setting the parameters for the programme and its working practices, and participate in or are responsible for managing and reviewing? Involving CYP in broader aspects of the peer-to-peer programme takes considerable skill, thought and planning, but can lead to programmes which are more targeted and appropriate because CYP understand the needs of other (migrant) children and can therefore ensure that programmes meet those needs.

### Good practice for peer-to-peer programmes

- A clear strategy for recruitment of supporters. This will depend on each programme, but it is important to ensure safeguards are in place so that CYP are not harmed. For example, in a programme providing emotional support, consideration needs to be given to the emotional and psychological health of the supporter. It may be too soon for CYP who are still dealing with their own experiences to help others.
- Establish parameters for the purpose and extent of the programme – what its aims are and what it will not do.
- Training and ongoing support for peer supporters. They need to be prepared for their role, but also need to know how to access support for themselves and to feel that they are also being looked after. A framework for supervision and support should be in place to monitor their activities.



## Acknowledgements

### 1. Scope of the toolkit

### 2. Definitions

### 3. Legal and Policy Frameworks

### 4. Guiding principles for practice

### 5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration

### 6. Building the dimensions of integration

### 7. Voices of children and young people

## 8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

## Annex

- Clear guidance on confidentiality and the limits to this. Peer supporters may be confided in, but they need to know what issues must be referred.
- Robust safeguarding procedures with rules regarding where support can take place, when, and what issues can be covered.
- Identified route for those who have been supported who wish to become peer supporters.
- Longer-term funding for organisations to ensure that peer-to-peer programmes can continue and capitalise on investment made.

Working appropriately and safely is critical in peer-to-peer programmes. In every peer-to-peer scenario, there are at least two CYP engaged in the process. It is essential that both children are safeguarded and that the best interests of both are considered and promoted.

### Peer-to-peer in practice

The Swedish Association for Unaccompanied Minors (SEF) is a non-profit youth organisation that was founded in 2015. It is a member-led association and the members and the board consist of young people between age 12 and 26 who are new to Sweden. The main goal of the organisation is to promote children and young people's establishment in society by offering community support through meeting places and leisure activities. It works actively to broaden young people's networks in Sweden to promote integration in Swedish society.

Ensamkommandes Förbund [www.ensamkommandesforbund.se](http://www.ensamkommandesforbund.se)

### Peer-to-peer: Useful tools and resources

- Peer support for young migrants and refugees. Children and Young People Now (2019) <https://www.cypnow.co.uk/best%20practice/article/peer-support-for-young-migrants-and-refugees>
- TdH MINT project: The peer-to-peer mentoring project. <https://destination-unknown.org/knowledge-hub/peer-to-peer-mentoring-for-integration-in-europe/>
- Peer-to-peer support for volunteer guardians for UASC. UNICEF, UNHCR, CIR and Penc Center (2019) Peer-to-peer support as a methodology for those supporting UASC: support groups focused on facilitating the sharing of participants' experiences. [https://www.unhcr.org/it/wp-content/uploads/sites/97/2020/08/Peertopeer\\_Summary.pdf](https://www.unhcr.org/it/wp-content/uploads/sites/97/2020/08/Peertopeer_Summary.pdf)



Acknowledgements

- 1. Scope of the toolkit
- 2. Definitions
- 3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
- 4. Guiding principles for practice
- 5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
- 6. Building the dimensions of integration
- 7. Voices of children and young people
- 8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice

# Annex

## Glossary

<b>Alternative care</b>	The provision of accommodation and other care (including basic needs and emotional support) for a child/young person where it is not possible for them to live with their own family.
<b>Case management</b>	A process for the identification, assessment, planning and review of care and support arrangements for a child and young person (and their family). This may be shared within agencies and/or established as part of state/national procedures.
<b>Child migrant</b>	Any child or young person who has crossed national boundaries, irrespective of the reasons for their travel and their legal status. For the purposes of this toolkit, children and young people who are trafficked are not included within the term child migrant.
<b>CYP/children and young people</b>	Anyone aged under 18 years old.
<b>Extended family</b>	Members of the child’s family in addition to immediate family (parents and siblings) such as grandparents, aunts and uncles. Who is considered as extended family and the importance of these relationships may vary according to culture.
<b>Family</b>	Those who are related to the child or young person by birth (such as parents) or who have the customary care of the child and with whom the child or young person has a familial relationship.





## Acknowledgements

1. Scope of the toolkit
2. Definitions
3. Legal and Policy Frameworks
4. Guiding principles for practice
5. Introducing the Family for Every Child model of integration
6. Building the dimensions of integration
7. Voices of children and young people
8. Cross-cutting approaches for practice



### Integration

For the purpose of this toolkit on supporting the integration of migrant children, the following definition is used. It links directly to practitioners and the responsibilities of duty bearers: “Integration is the two-way process of a child settling in a new country, for an unknown duration, in order to receive protection and care and to develop a sense of well-being, prospects and goals for the future, that is at a minimum equal and equitable to children with legal residence in a country.”

### Reintegration

Defined in the 2016 inter-agency [Guidelines on Children’s Reintegration](#) as: “The process of a separated child making what is anticipated to be a permanent transition back to his or her family and community (usually of origin), in order to receive protection and care and to find a sense of belonging and purpose in all spheres of life.”

### Sustainability

For the purpose of this toolkit, sustainability refers to a child or young person’s investment in where they are and/or competencies, goals and ideas to serve them wherever they are in the future.

### Transition/ transition planning

The move or ageing out of CYP from services for under 18 years old to adulthood, and the planning and identification of support after 18 years old.



**Family**  
for every child

