

## **Activity 1: New Life in a New Land**

**Time:** 45 minutes

**Materials:** Pen/pencil, “Gustonia” worksheet

**Objective:** To think about the kind of information you would want if you moved to a new country and needed to enrol your children in school.

**Procedure:** In a small group, read over the “Gustonia” scenario and answer the questions that follow.

# Gustonia

Read the scenario. Answer the questions that follow.

You and your family were forced to flee Canada and are now living in Gustonia, where the official language is Gusto, not English. Gustonians are not familiar with western media or the English language. Their script is completely different from English and there is minimal access to bilingual English and Gusto speaking translators. Your two children are both school-aged; your 6-year-old daughter and 14-year-old son need to be enrolled in school.

1. What information would you want to have about your children's new school as you go about the enrolment process?

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2. How would you establish a relationship with your children's teacher?

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3. How would you access information about your children's school?

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4. What would be the most difficult aspect of your adjustment process?

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5. What could your children's teacher or school do to make you feel welcome?

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6. What could your children's teacher or school do to assist you in obtaining information about your child's education?

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7. List 5 strategies that you would employ to successfully access information about your children's school/education.

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## **Activity 2: Planning an Information Night for Newcomer Families**

**Time:** 45–60 minutes

**Materials:** Chart paper, markers

**Objective:** To plan an information night for newcomer families

**Procedures:** In pairs, or groups of no more than three, your task is to plan an information night for newcomer families. Visualize what your night will look like, what information you hope families will receive, your goals and objectives for the night, and how you plan on accomplishing these goals. Present your plan to the other participants. (A sample plan has been provided)

Design your information night with the following questions in mind:

- Who is your intended audience?
- How will you invite them?
- What will your classroom look like?
- What are your goals and objectives for the evening?
- What will be the evening's itinerary?
- What information do you hope to gain from your students' families?
- What information do you hope your students' families will gain from you?
- What handouts and visuals will you include?
- How will you determine whether or not the evening was successful?

## **Sample Information Night for Newcomer Families**

Goal 1: To make newcomer students and their families feel welcome in the classroom.

Goal 2: To establish an open-door policy with my students' families.

An invitation in several different languages will be sent home with students with three different dates and times as options for when this event may be held. Parents will be asked to select a time that best suits their schedule. Babysitting and daycare will be provided at the school for families without access to childcare. All members of the family, including students, are welcome to attend.

Light refreshments will be served, students' work will be displayed on the walls, and translators and interpreters will be present. Parents will be informed of the overall educational goals of the classroom (curriculum) and how to help their child with schoolwork. They will also be informed about how to access information about the school, about their children's education, and about how to become more actively involved in the school through volunteer opportunities. Explicit information regarding how to access me (the teacher) after school hours or when an emergency arises will be given. Students' families will have the option of asking questions throughout the evening or of submitting written questions at the end of the evening.

Parents will be given a questionnaire to convey whether or not they felt such an evening was worthwhile. They will also be provided with a handout (translated if necessary) that outlines the information presented and the evening's itinerary.

I hope to learn more about my students by meeting their families and to develop initial contact with the hope that this will lead to better communication.

### **Activity 3: Personal Reflection**

**Time:** 15 minutes

**Materials:** Pen/pencil, “Personal Reflection” worksheet

**Objective:** To consider past, present, and future experiences that make newcomers feel welcome in your classroom/school.

**Procedure:** On the “Personal Reflection” worksheet, write the strategies you use to make a newcomer family feel welcome in your classroom/school. Is there anything you would change? If a newcomer family were to arrive tomorrow, what strategies would you use to make the family feel welcome?

