



## **WELCOME GROUP GUIDE TO EDUCATION SUPPORT FOR NEWCOMER PARENTS AND YOUNG LEARNERS**

One of the most important aspects of newcomer settlement and integration in Canada is ensuring that children are able to fully participate in the education system, and that their parents are able to understand and engage in that process as well. For many newcomer parents, their children’s education is their top priority.

This guide is intended to provide Together Project’s Welcome Group volunteers with basic information about how the school system works for newcomers, what supports exist, and how volunteers can further assist children and their parents with regards to education.

Remember: it’s important for volunteers to avoid duplicating the work of professional settlement, school, and other support staff whenever possible. Newcomer parents may already be connected to many of the supports and resources covered in this guide, but volunteers can still take the time to learn about what they are and how they work. Please try whenever possible to coordinate your support efforts with others who are also helping the family you’re matched with.

While we hope that the entire guide will be useful, volunteers are encouraged to pay specific attention to the sections that are most relevant to their match.

### **1. Understanding School Registration and Existing Supports**

All newcomers to Canada are entitled to register their children in school. Registration is normally organized by the family’s caseworker or other settlement agency staff. This is typically done directly at the school if the child is elementary aged (under 14), or by appointment at a newcomer reception centre if the child is highschool aged (14-20). During the registration process, children are assessed and assigned a school and grade.

Ideally, the family’s settlement worker should connect them with the appropriate Settlement Workers In Schools (SWIS) worker as soon as they are ready to be registered in school. SWIS workers have specific expertise helping newcomers navigate and understand education-related matters, so once families are introduced



to them, other settlement staff (like the family's caseworker) will normally not be very involved in their clients' engagement with the school system.

### **a. Settlement Workers In School (SWIS)**

Some schools have SWIS workers available to specifically help newcomer children and their parents with the school system. SWIS workers may be the main point of contact for parents at their children's school, as they are often multilingual. The SWIS program is delivered by different community agencies around Ontario - information about who delivers the program at a given school might be found on the school board's website, or through the school itself.

SWIS workers can help newcomers address any school issues that come up, navigate parent teacher interviews and course selection, and organize group activities and information sessions for newcomer parents about relevant topics. Given their expertise, SWIS workers are also a great resource for making sure children are receiving the right kind of support for any given situation, especially if special programs exist at their school that can meet their needs.

If the family you're matched with has not yet been connected with a SWIS worker, you can help by finding out who manages the local SWIS program online or through the school and help parents contact them directly (please refer to the 'Resources' section for more information).

### **b. English as a Second Language (ESL)**

Newcomers arrive in Canada from countries around the world at various stages of educational development. English Language Learners are students whose first language is other than English and who may require focused educational support to increase their English language proficiency.

Students will be assessed for English as a Second Language (ESL) or English Literacy Development (ELD) supports as part of their initial school registration and assessment, described above. ESL is for newcomers who are learning to speak English but who have had age-appropriate schooling in their home country, while ELD is for newcomers who are learning to speak English when they have had limited prior schooling in their home country.



In elementary schools, ESL/ELD teachers work with students either in a specific ESL/ELD class or a regular classroom. Programs are developed with the regular classroom teacher based on each student's needs. In designated secondary schools, students can take up to five ESL or ELD courses, in a variety of subjects, towards their diploma. ESL/ELD students typically have at least one mainstream class to promote interaction with English-speaking students. Not all schools have an ESL/ELD teacher, so sometimes families would be working with the classroom teacher instead.

### **c. Changing Addresses**

If a newcomer family changes addresses, children may remain in their existing schools or switch to one that might be closer. If they elect to stay, families need to inform the school of their new address as soon as possible, simply by calling the administration office. This is important so that their Ontario School Record (OSR) may be sent to the new school. This will in turn help them get the support that they need. If children take the school bus the family will also need to inform the school's administration to ensure they can remain on the bus route.

If children are switching schools, they can be re-registered directly at the new school or their parents can call the school's administration office. Parents will need proof of age (a birth certificate or passport), proof of address (bank statement, telephone bill, electricity bill, or apartment lease) and proof of guardianship if the child is under 18 and is not living with a parent. If a child was born outside of Canada, verification of date of arrival is also required. Please note, online registration for the TDSB is only for new students, not for students transferring schools.

## **2. How to Support Parent Engagement**

### **a. Your Role**

Welcome Group volunteers can play an important role in helping newcomer parents understand and engage in their children's education. It is, however, important to respect boundaries and to avoid making assumptions on the parents' behalf. It is not the role of volunteers to tell newcomer parents what is best for their children, what they ought to do as parents, or to admonish them for making choices differently than your Welcome Group advised.



Welcome Group volunteers can be allies, in helping newcomer parents communicate with their children’s school, or guides, in sharing resources and helpful materials to newcomer parents around educational programs. In all of these different roles, it is most important that the parents are always in control of the decision-making process, and that any involvement of Welcome Group volunteers is a collaborative rather than instructive one.

If you are matched with a family that has education priorities, you should have a conversation with the parents early on in the match to understand exactly what type of support they are seeking. You can begin with open-ended questions (“What can we do to help?”), but keep in mind that many newcomers may not be familiar with the degree to which they can engage in their children’s education, and so it might be useful to consider some of the examples under ‘Roles and Activities for Parents’, and review them with the parents to see if they’d be interested in learning more.

Sharing resources (like Settlement.org’s Newcomer’s Guides to Education) can also be very helpful, but asking parents to review too many guidebooks, pamphlets, and websites can be overwhelming. Try to strike a balance between being proactive - keeping an eye out and sharing what you feel might be helpful to the parents - while still being respectful with their time and stated needs or interests.

### **b. Responsible Advocacy and Encouragement**

One of the most common ways that Welcome Group volunteers can support newcomer parent engagement in education is by helping with interpretation and translation. Members of Welcome Groups or Cultural Ambassadors can help newcomer parents understand important documents, assist in making appointments or phone calls, or even interpret in parent-teacher interviews if appropriate.

Volunteers should remember the principle of empowerment when supporting newcomer parents. Some schools may ask you and a parent in the family you’re matched with to sign a permission form that allows you to communicate with the school on the family’s behalf.

You should not be communicating with their children’s school without the parents being present (in person or on the call), unless you have their informed consent to do so. Similarly, when advocating on the parents’ behalf, you should always ensure that



you are keeping them in the loop with regards to any discussion, and that they are in full control of any decisions being discussed.

Note that there can often be cultural differences with regards to the degree to which parents are, or should be, involved in their children's education. Similarly, children themselves can experience culture shock at school, and the cultural differences between their classroom and peers and their home and family can lead to stress as well. With this in mind, you should set reasonable expectations and not assume newcomer parents have the same awareness of how they can get involved in their children's education, nor of what progress newcomer children "should" be making at school. For many parents, depending on their home country, it will be a new experience to be involved at their child's school. It may be helpful to let them know that the Ontario education system actively encourages parent engagement. Being able to advocate, ask questions, and give opinions might also be a new experience for some.

### **c. Roles and Activities for Parents**

Together Project volunteers can support newcomer parent involvement in schools by working with families to identify parent volunteer opportunities, tutoring programs, and avenues to connect with teachers and the school council.

#### **1. Volunteering at School**

Newcomer parents are welcome to volunteer at their child's local school. Volunteers can improve student learning and help build connections between the school and community, as well as develop leadership skills. Newcomer parents can learn about specific volunteer needs at their child's school by contacting the school principal or vice principal. Examples of parent [volunteer opportunities](#) include:

- preparation of arts and crafts supplies and other classroom materials, e.g. laminating, photocopying
- classroom reading buddies
- membership on School Council
- fundraising
- coordination of hot lunch or pizza days
- field trip supervision
- welcoming new families
- providing help with translation/interpretation



- supporting the school's environmental program, e.g. garden planting or recycling
- supporting the student nutrition program
- supporting school sports programs
- speaking to students on Career Day or at Job Fairs

## **2. Membership on School Council**

[School councils](#) provide advice to the principal and the school board. They share information with parents and the community, and seek their input on matters the council is discussing.

Every school must have a school council, and members include parents, the principal, a teacher, a student (in high schools), a non-teaching staff member, and a community representative. The chair must be a parent and the majority of members are parents. Parent members are elected annually. Their advice to the principal and school board may touch on issues such as school year calendars, strategies to improve school performance, codes of conduct and dress, curriculum priorities, safe arrival programs, community use of schools and community programs provided at the school, selection criteria for principals and board policies that will affect the school.

Parents can also be involved at the board level through the Parent Involvement Committee (PIC). PIC members include parents, the board's Director of Education, a trustee member, community members and principal, teacher and staff members. The role of the PIC is to support, encourage, and enhance meaningful parent engagement at the board level.

Newcomer parents may feel hesitant to engage in school council due to language barriers. If this is the case, volunteers may ask their matched newcomer household for permission to connect with the school to discuss how to access interpretation support.

## **3. Tutoring support**

Many schools offer peer tutors and homework clubs. Many highschools also offer extra help at lunchtime or after school. If a newcomer family wants to learn more about what type of tutoring or homework assistance their school is offering, it is important that they talk to teachers and/or the school principal.



Please note that some newcomer households may feel pressure to provide their children with external tutoring support to accelerate their children’s learning. It is important to reassure newcomer parents that it is the responsibility of the school to provide children with the educational supports they need to achieve grade level learning.

Your Welcome Group can also offer tutoring support of your own, in case other supports are unavailable or if the parents would like to supplement existing supports. Please refer to the ‘Tutoring Tips’ section below to learn more.

#### **4. Connecting with school teachers and administrators**

Engagement with school teachers and administrators can help parents understand how they can be most helpful in supporting their child’s education. Newcomer parents may face language barriers that make it more difficult to attend parent-teacher meetings.

Volunteers can ask newcomer households for permission to contact the local school to devise an interpretation approach that will facilitate parent-teacher engagement. Parent teacher conferences are an important opportunity for newcomers to gain greater clarity around their child’s strengths and challenges, the school’s approach to supporting their child’s learning and recommended next steps.

#### **5. Learn at Home Portal**

In response to the pandemic, the Ontario Ministry of Education has launched the [Learn at Home portal](#). These resources are organized by grade level and are designed to help parents support students’ learning from home either independently or with the help of a parent or guardian.

### **3. Specialized Supports**

#### **a. Remote Learning**

Public schools in Ontario will continue to offer a remote learning option (in addition to in-person learning) for the 2021-2022 school year. Online learners will be supplied with a device to access remote learning. If a device is needed to support online learning, please inform the school right away. Students who started Grade 9 in



2020-2021 or after will be [required](#) to earn two credits online as part of their graduation requirements. Students who wish to access a device or repair a defective device should contact their local school principal. Please note that families received a request to return student devices at the end of the 2020-2021 school year. Devices that have not been returned will be locked as of July 2, 2021, and can be returned in the fall.

For more information about Student Online Learning, please see TDSB virtual learning resources [here](#) or PDSB resources [here](#). Please also note that at the TDSB a centralized virtual school will not continue to be offered for the fall of 2021-2022, as the format for online learning at the TDSB has yet to be determined.

## **b. Special Education**

Special education is the programs and services provided to students that are different – or special – from the programs and services that are provided to all students. These differences are recorded in the Individual Education Plan (IEP). There are five categories of exceptionalities for exceptional students: behavioural, communicational, intellectual, physical, and multiple. These broad categories are designed to address the wide range of conditions that may affect a student’s ability to learn, and are meant to be inclusive of all medical conditions, whether diagnosed or not, that can lead to particular types of learning difficulties. Some newcomer parents may already be aware of their child’s special education needs. It is important to be aware that for some parents, this is also a new experience. Some newcomers may have experienced stigma in their home country regarding a condition their child may have, for example, autism or developmental delay.

Although schools in Ontario are not mandated to provide professional assessments, many of them do provide this service in some capacity. Schools and school boards have their own internal processes for prioritizing professional assessments. Please note that the absence of a professional assessment does not preclude any student from receiving special education programs or services that may be required to access the curriculum. The determining factor for the provision of special education programs and/or services is not any specific diagnosed or undiagnosed medical condition, but rather the needs of individual students based on the assessment of strengths and needs.



### **1. Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC)**

The purpose of the Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC) is to decide if a student should be identified as exceptional and, if so, the placement that will best meet the student's needs. Upon receiving a written request from a student's parent(s)/guardian(s), the principal of the school must refer the student to an IPRC. The principal may also, with written notice to the parent, refer the student to an IPRC. The parent(s)/guardian(s), as well as a student who is sixteen years of age or older, have the right to attend the IPRC meeting. The committee will discuss and make recommendations regarding special education programs and services for the student. Parents/guardians and students 16 years old or older are entitled to be present at and participate in the discussions and to be present when the committee's identification and placement decision is made.

### **2. Individualized Education Plan (IEP)**

An [IEP](#) is a written plan describing the special education program and/or services required by a particular student, based on a thorough assessment of the student's strengths and needs that affect the student's ability to learn and demonstrate learning. An IEP *must* be developed for every student who has been identified as an "exceptional pupil" by an Identification, Placement, and Review Committee (IPRC). An IEP may also be developed for a student who has not been identified by an IPRC as exceptional, but who has been deemed by the board to require a special education program or services in order to attend school or to achieve curriculum expectations and/or to demonstrate learning. Educators may recommend accommodations such as specific teaching strategies, preferential seating, assistive technology and/or an education program that is modified from the age appropriate grade level.

### **3. Intensive Support Programs (ISPs)**

The Ministry of Education provides school boards with special education funding and school boards are required to provide special education programs and services to students with special education needs. The types of programs and services boards provide may vary based on local need. Intensive Support Programs is the name some school boards have given to a specific type of special education program they provide. While many newcomer students with special needs can have their learning needs met in the regular classroom with appropriate support, other students require more focused attention. Intensive Support Programs (ISPs) provide special education support for at least 50 percent of the school day. They are staffed with a Special Education teacher and may also have support staff. A student's need for an Intensive Support Program is often limited. After one or more years, a student may be reintegrated into the regular classroom.



### **c. Adult Learning**

There are five adult learning centres in Toronto and one adult learning centre in Peel. Many newcomers age 21 and up (if they are 20 or under they can attend regular highschool), will enrol in an adult highschool to get their Ontario School Secondary School Diploma (OSSD). This may be because they didn't complete highschool in their home country or country of displacement; they want to earn credits in order to apply for university or college; or to receive equivalency for foreign studies.

If the student has prior highschool credits, they can apply for Prior Learning Assessment Recognition to grant credits for past learning, training, languages, work or volunteer experience. Students can be granted up to 26 of the 30 credits needed to graduate. Credits can also be earned for certain life skills, such as leadership positions, parenting, hobbies, and skills.

Adult learning centres within the TDSB operate on a four quadmester schedule; each quadmester students can take up to three courses. Students self-enrol for the centre at the beginning of each quadmester, this is all being done online currently. Most newcomers will automatically be placed into an ESL class as one of their classes each quadmester. Classes are full-time, five days a week; some students will opt to work part-time while in school.

Various settlement support services are available through adult learning centres, including dedicated settlement workers, a school nurse, a social worker, tutoring and academic counselling.

Volunteers can assist with a number of areas for students interested in or enrolled in adult education:

- Helping newcomers register in an adult learning centre online.
- Registering for classes and creating their weekly schedule each semester.
- Assisting with their Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition, using documents from their home country and/or country of displacement.
- Accessing support through the school, including settlement workers, social workers, the school nurse, counsellors and tutoring services.
- Offering additional tutoring support when appropriate.
- Helping newcomers use the TDSB Connect App to see their class schedule and submit assignments.



- Advocating for students who do not understand how to use various systems (i.e. how to enter the Google classrooms, submit assignments, check their schedule, register for classes).

#### **d. Student Health and Well-being**

Together Project volunteers can respond to newcomer parent requests for information about student nutrition programs, student mental health supports and how to report an incident of bullying.

##### **1. Nutrition Programs**

Newcomer parents may wish to inquire whether their local school has a Student Nutrition Program. Student Nutrition Programs offer school-age children and youth nutritious food through breakfast, lunch, and snack programs to support learning and healthy development. The program is open to all children and youth at each program site and there is no cost to participate. For more information about Student Nutrition Programs please see the following [webpage](#) or contact your local school.

##### **2. Student Mental Health**

Schools are an ideal place for mental health promotion, prevention and early intervention services. Good mental health is foundational for student achievement and belonging. Students who report feeling mentally well, are more ready to learn, feel a stronger sense of belonging at school, and perform better academically. Approximately 1 in 5 Ontario students between the ages of 4-17 years, meet the criteria for at least one mental health disorder. Educators and other school staff are knowledgeable about the importance of mental health for all learners - from kindergarten to Grade 12 - as mental health is embedded in many parts of the Ontario curriculum. Ensuring culturally relevant and responsive mental health literacy, promotion, and supports are delivered and accessible for children and youth in the classroom is an ideal way to normalize conversations about mental health and have opportunities for positive dialogue with parents/families about their child. Child and youth support staff can offer caring mental health promotion support in schools, and regulated school mental health professionals; like school social workers, psychologists and psychological associates, are available to provide evidence-informed prevention and early intervention services when students need more assistance. Newcomer parents may be reluctant to discuss their child's mental health challenges due to language and cultural barriers. If a request for information



arises in a match, volunteers can help guide newcomer parents to school and community services through the PDSB [here](#), the TDSB [here](#), and the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) [here](#).

### **3. Bullying**

If a newcomer parent or guardian suspects that their child or youth is a victim of bullying at school, newcomers are encouraged to [report bullying](#) first through the student's teacher and second through the school principal. Student bullying, including cyber-bullying, typically involves repeated behaviour (physical, verbal, electronic, social or written means) that may intentionally or unintentionally cause harm, fear or distress to another student. Often this [behaviour occurs when](#) there is a perceived power imbalance between the student and the individual based on factors like size, strength, age, gender identity, race, religion, ethnic background, etc. When one or more incidents of bullying are reported, boards are required to provide programs, interventions, and other supports for students who have been bullied, students who have witnessed incidents of bullying, and students who have engaged in bullying.

Volunteers can help parents who suspect their child is being bullied understand what they can do to help resolve the issue through their school. Please note that within the TDSB, students can anonymously report bullying via the Student Safety line [here](#). For more information about bullying, please see the Safe Caring Schools tip sheet [here](#).

### **e. Early Learning and Child Care**

Together Project volunteers can help newcomer parents research child care and early learning programs in their local school and surrounding community. As well, volunteers can help newcomers access subsidized child care for parents who meet the fee subsidy eligibility criteria.

For newcomer children ages 0-4, child care programs are often the child's first introduction to the school community. These early learning opportunities are designed to promote gross and fine motor skills and language, cognitive, social and emotional development of infant, toddler, and preschool age children. Over two thousand independently operated child care centres operate within Ontario schools. Families who access a fee subsidy through the City of Toronto will be able to [apply this subsidy](#) at most school-based child care centres.



Please note that families looking for an early childhood program for their child with special needs can visit the [CITYKIDS website](#) or call 416-920-6543.

Some schools offer an in-school before and after school program. If so, it is recommended that newcomer parents/guardians connect directly with the program for more information, including details about registration, days and hours of operation, as well as program fees. Fee subsidies through the City of Toronto can typically be applied to licensed child care and extended day programs. Please refer to the [City of Toronto's Child Care & Before-After School Program Locator](#) for community-based programs.

### **1. Toronto Child Care Fee Subsidy**

This subsidy helps families with the cost of licensed child care for children up to 12 years old. There is a lengthy waitlist for this program so it is important to get on the waitlist as early as possible. Newcomers can apply for the subsidy as soon as they know they are pregnant or expecting a child through adoption.

To be eligible each parent must be either employed or in school and have submitted their most recent income tax return. However, if the newcomer recently arrived in Canada they do not need to have submitted a tax return to apply.

To apply, newcomers will need to provide a proof of income or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) Statement and the names of [licensed child care programs](#) they are interested in. Families are encouraged to visit each child care program prior to submitting an application to ensure it meets their children's needs. If a family is receiving Ontario Works, they can contact their Ontario Works caseworker to apply for the child care fee subsidy. If they are not receiving Ontario Works, they can apply [online](#) or call 311 to apply.

After applying, an email confirmation will be sent to the family. This email is important to keep as it has the waitlist date and client file number. Families also need to inform the child care programs they are interested in that they are on the waitlist for a child care fee subsidy.

When a family's name comes to the top of the waitlist a caseworker will contact them to discuss their child care options. If a family is eligible to receive the subsidy they are given a period of time to enrol their children in child care. The family will be given a *My Child Care Account* to view and update personal information, upload supporting documents, contact their assigned caseworker and receive notifications.



To maintain the subsidy the family must pay any fees to the child care program, report any changes of personal information, attend an annual eligibility meeting to renew the subsidy and file income tax returns on time.

## **2. Peel Child Care Subsidy**

A child care subsidy in Peel region is available to reduce the cost of licensed child care for children age 12 and under. The average processing time for applications is 2 weeks, but can be longer during peak times.

In order to be eligible, parents need to be employed or attending school and have filed the previous year's income tax return. New families can provide their Canada Child Benefit notice instead.

If a family is receiving Ontario Works, they need to contact their Ontario Works caseworker to apply for the child care fee subsidy. If they are not receiving Ontario Works they can apply [online](#) or by phone at 905-793-9200.

After an application is submitted the family will receive an email confirming next steps. Once the subsidy is approved, families can enrol their children in a [licensed child care program](#) in Peel.

## **4. Tutoring Tips**

Many newcomer parents appreciate direct help with their children's learning, most commonly in the form of tutoring. As with tutoring English, we advise a learner-centric approach to volunteer tutoring support - focusing on what children are specifically finding challenging, and trying to engage them using the style of learning they are most receptive to.

As mentioned earlier in this guide, before beginning tutoring sessions, it's worth investigating whether there are other tutoring services or homework clubs available to newcomers at their school or in their community, to provide the family with as many options as possible.

### **a. How to Start**

What your match's tutoring experience may look like can naturally vary depending on the number and age of children, as well as what kind of support they respond to, and



what they need support with. When starting out, you may find it useful to have an education-focused meeting with the children and parents to learn more about their goals (Try asking: “Is there something you’re finding especially difficult?” or “Is there something you’d like to learn more about?”).

It’s important to also note that oftentimes, when a young learner is struggling with their studies, the root cause may lie somewhere other than simply the difficulty of the material itself. If they are having trouble paying attention in class, not handing in homework on time, or seem to be unhappy, there might be other factors at play, like a lack of sufficient rest, hunger or other sources of stress and distraction.

Sometimes the solution may lie at the school itself, in terms of additional support tailored to a young learner’s needs. This is why it’s important to encourage parents to connect with their children’s teachers, guidance counselors, and SWIS workers to best understand the challenge. This is also a good way for you and the parents to learn from the student’s teachers about where to focus attention when tutoring.

When determining what your actual tutoring sessions will look like, try to find out if the youth you’ll be tutoring are interested in regular tutoring sessions (“Let’s review this week’s math homework every Sunday afternoon.”), or ad hoc tutoring (“Is there anything you found difficult this week that you’d like some help with?”) If they are interested in a tutoring routine - like a weekly hour-long video call - try to ensure that your group and the family stick to it; structure can be very helpful to ensure learners remain focused. Sometimes a match can include a mix of both approaches, if different children have different needs or are at different levels.

### **b. Children’s Literacy**

Your group can also support the reading skills of newcomer children in your match if they are interested. Starting a “book club” is a great way to encourage children to read for pleasure, develop their vocabulary, and practice speaking English.

One successful model of a “book club” is having weekly half hour to one hour sessions with the newcomer children whereby each child brings a book (or comic, article, poem, etc.) they would like to read aloud. Ideally this book would be one they are reading outside of school to encourage them to read for pleasure and find books that interest them. Each child can read aloud for 10-15 minutes, stopping at any words, phrases, or concepts they are unfamiliar with to discuss. After each child has had a chance to read, the volunteers can ask the children questions about their readings to ensure they are understanding the themes and vocabulary discussed. This



is also a great way to help kids talk about larger issues they might be experiencing at school by reading books that talk about bullying, diversity, disability, or acceptance.

If the children do not have access to books at home or from their school library, your group can help them get library cards and show them how to pick up books at their local neighbourhood library or access e-books from the library.

### **c. Empowerment**

Rather than simply supplying correct answers, take the time to ensure that the learner you're tutoring understands how to arrive at that answer themselves. This might mean skipping to another question they can answer more easily; building up confidence in a subject can help them return to more difficult questions later to piece together what they've already learnt.

### **d. Having fun**

Volunteers should aim to be patient, positive, and understanding when tutoring. Young learners should feel comfortable stopping you if they don't understand something and asking questions, and shouldn't feel as though you're teaching a class - tutoring should feel more like a conversation, and it's worth making the effort to ensure the learner feels heard.

Younger learners may find an adult tutor intimidating; try to connect what they're learning with something they like - e.g. a TV show, their favourite sports - or using learning games and apps to get them more engaged and excited. It's easier said than done, but try to keep tutoring sessions fun and light-hearted.

### **e. Safety and Collaboration**

It's important for volunteers to remember the principles of trauma-informed care when it comes to tutoring youth. Whether in-person or online, volunteers should tutor youth in pairs when possible, and/or ensure that a parent or guardian is present in the home as well. You should also ensure that parents feel sufficiently involved in and informed about their child's learning progress - try setting aside some time to update them regularly. If difficult topics, such as bullying, come up when tutoring children, be sure to connect with the children's parents to keep them informed. As with other priorities in your match, it's a good idea to check in to see how the family feels things are going, what's working and what isn't.



## 5. Resources

### Resources for Parents

- Settlement.org has many educational resources for students and parents:  
<https://settlement.org/ontario/education/>
- Settlement.org's 'Newcomer's Guides to Education' is a fantastic resource that covers many of the topics explained above in much more detail, is geared towards newcomer parents, and is available in Arabic, English, and French:  
<https://settlement.org/ontario/education/elementary-and-secondary-school/newcomers-guides-to-education/the-newcomer-s-guide-to-elementary-school-in-ontario/>
- Settlement.org Special Education Tipsheet (available in multiple languages):  
<https://settlement.org/ontario/education/elementary-and-secondary-school/special-education/special-education/>
- Infographic on Ontario's School System:  
<https://settlement.org/ontario/education/elementary-and-secondary-school/school-systems-in-ontario/infographic-on-ontario-s-school-system/>
- Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) Program pamphlet:  
[https://www.culturelink.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/final-Flyer\\_8th-Feb\\_SWIS.pdf](https://www.culturelink.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/final-Flyer_8th-Feb_SWIS.pdf)
- How does the public education system work in Ontario?  
<https://peopleforeducation.ca/public-education-in-ontario/>

### Tutoring Resources

- Ontario Learn at Home  
<https://www.ontario.ca/page/learn-at-home>
- Kids At Home Resource Bank  
<https://kidsupfront.com/kidsathome/#resource-bank>
- Virtual Storytelling  
[https://www.weareteachers.com/virtual-author-activities/?utm\\_content=1584565321&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_source=facebook](https://www.weareteachers.com/virtual-author-activities/?utm_content=1584565321&utm_medium=social&utm_source=facebook)
- BrainPop Learning Guides  
<https://www.brainpop.com>
- English Practice Materials  
[https://engoo.com/app/materials/en?utm\\_source=Together+Project&utm\\_campaign=6e8ea2a18d-EMAIL\\_CAMPAIGN\\_2020\\_04\\_22\\_03\\_46\\_COPY\\_01&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_666cea611d-6e8ea2a18d-135980916&mc\\_cid=6e8ea2a18d&mc\\_eid=431d6853ad](https://engoo.com/app/materials/en?utm_source=Together+Project&utm_campaign=6e8ea2a18d-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2020_04_22_03_46_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_666cea611d-6e8ea2a18d-135980916&mc_cid=6e8ea2a18d&mc_eid=431d6853ad)



### Resources for Students

- Tynker Coding for Kids  
<https://www.tynker.com>
- OutSchool Free Online Classes  
<https://outschool.com>
- Khan Academy Tutoring and Courses  
<https://www.khanacademy.org>
- Bookboon: Free e-Textbooks  
<https://bookboon.com>
- Harvard's Free Online Classes  
[https://online-learning.harvard.edu/catalog/free?gclid=CjwKCAjwsMzzBRACEiwAx4LLG\\_Lwk4mwJV14U8d94tRsdOT36CPE\\_MvBvqD7Yp9nQ6nSTEIKilBzoBoCSkEQAvD\\_BwE](https://online-learning.harvard.edu/catalog/free?gclid=CjwKCAjwsMzzBRACEiwAx4LLG_Lwk4mwJV14U8d94tRsdOT36CPE_MvBvqD7Yp9nQ6nSTEIKilBzoBoCSkEQAvD_BwE)
- Arts at Home  
<https://www.artsathome.ca>
- Varsity Tutors: Free Online Classes for all ages  
[https://www.varsitytutors.com/classes/search?f\\_grades=6th-grade&f\\_grades=7th-grade&f\\_grades=8th-grade&f\\_price\\_cents=free](https://www.varsitytutors.com/classes/search?f_grades=6th-grade&f_grades=7th-grade&f_grades=8th-grade&f_price_cents=free)

### **TDSB**

- School Year Calendar  
<https://tdsb.on.ca/About-Us/School-Year-Calendar>
- Newcomer Reception Centres (for registering newcomers ages 14-20 in highschool):  
<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/New-to-Canada/Students/Registration-Reception-Centres>
- Adult highschools:  
<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Adult-Learners/Adult-Credit-Programs/Adult-High-Schools>
- List of Settlement Workers In Schools (SWIS):  
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1fVH504eSePEAC12WX9ZEgjaDgKJoktgA6OfmrKJmTDQ/edit#gid=0>
- Virtual Library (e-books, computer programs, and more):  
<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/library/>
- Digital Learning Tools:  
<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/High-School/Your-School-Day/Technology/Digital-Learning-Tools>
- School Bus Registration and Times: <https://www.torontoschoolbus.org>



- Before and After School programs for children 4-12:  
<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/EarlyYears/Before-and-After-School-Program-4-to-12-Years>
- Child Care Fee Subsidy:  
<https://www.toronto.ca/community-people/employment-social-support/child-family-support/child-care-support/>
- Extended Day Program:  
<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/EarlyYears/Extended-Day-Program/Registration-Information>
- Kindergarten Registration:  
<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/EarlyYears/KindergartenMonth>
- International Languages and African Heritage Classes for JK to Grade 8:  
<https://www.tdsb.on.ca/Elementary-School/Beyond-the-Classroom/International-Languages-Elementary-and-African-Heritage>
- SWIS at TDSB: <https://www.tdsb.on.ca/New-to-Canada/Settlement-Workers>

**PDSB:**

- Registration Information:  
<https://www.peelschools.org/elementary/new-to-peel/welcome-centres/pages/default.aspx>
- Multicultural Settlement and Education Partnership:  
<https://www.peelschools.org/elementary/new-to-peel/settlement-services/Pages/default.aspx>
- ParentConnect, online portal for Peel parents:  
<https://www.peelschools.org/elementary/parentconnect/Pages/default.aspx>
- Kindergarten registration:  
<https://www.peelschools.org/elementary/kindergarten/Pages/default.aspx>
- Extended Day and Before and After-School Programs:  
[https://www.peelschools.org/elementary/child\\_care/Pages/default.aspx](https://www.peelschools.org/elementary/child_care/Pages/default.aspx)
- Transportation:  
<https://www.peelschools.org/elementary/transportation/Pages/default.aspx>
- SWIS:  
<http://www.polycultural.org/what-we-do/connecting-to-community/settlement-workers-in-schools>