The Committee on Refugee and Immigrant Children and Trauma (RIC) is part of the Illinois Childhood Trauma Coalition (ICTC). RIC was founded in 2015 to address the growing needs of children and families from refugee and immigrant communities.

For more information, please visit: lookthroughtheireyes.org

You can find more help through:

- your child's doctor
- your child's school
- therapists
- community agencies

For a list of reliable resources, please call ICIRR Family Support Hotline

1-855-HELP-MY-FAMILY (1-855-435-7693)

For mental health emergencies, please bring your child to your local emergency room or call 911.
Dear Parents and Caregivers,

We know that messages in the media and from some US leaders often make refugees and immigrants feel unwelcome and unsafe. In solidarity, we have put together this brochure with things you can do to help support your family through this time.

Take care of yourself in order to take care of your family

- Physical: Sleep well, eat well, exercise, dance, see a doctor for health issues
- Emotional: Connect with friends and loved ones, do healthy things to relax, do things you enjoy
- Personal/ Spiritual: Make time for yourself, remember it’s okay to say ‘no’, find time to reflect or pray, do yoga
- Connection: Reach out and be a support to others, join in community activities or groups supporting immigrant/refugee rights
- Information Gaining: Seek reputable legal counsel, attend a Know Your Rights presentation. See immigrantjustice.org

Recognize signs of stress in children

Young Children (5 and younger)
- Has headaches, stomachaches, and tiredness
- Seems scared
- Has trouble calming down
- Acts younger than actual age (i.e., bedwetting, thumb sucking, tantrums)
- Has trouble separating from caregivers
- Plays less

Elementary School Age (6-12 years)
- Complains of headaches, stomachaches, and tiredness
- Seems afraid and cries more often
- Spends more time alone at home or in school
- Gets in trouble at home or in school
- Can’t pay attention at school, teacher reports problems
- Eats more or less

Teenagers (13 – 18 years)
- Complains of headaches, stomachaches, and tiredness
- Spends more time alone than with friends or family
- Doesn’t follow rules
- Uses drugs and/or alcohol
- Runs away from home

Support your children by:

- Communication
  - Be patient with your children and let them know that it’s normal to be upset
  - Help children talk about their feelings when stressed
  - Remind your children that you are open to talk even if you don’t have all the answers
  - Be honest and avoid making unrealistic promises you cannot guarantee, like “Everything will be okay”

- Safety
  - Keep predictable routines and traditions
  - Make a family emergency plan and share it with your children. Find an example here: www.ilrc.org/family-preparedness-plan

- Comfort
  - Reassure your children that you love them
  - Make time for relaxation and fun
  - Limit media exposure of upsetting news
  - Help your children express their feelings in healthy ways e.g., drawing, journaling, exercising

- Hope
  - Remind your children that your family is strong
  - Remind your children that there are people fighting to help immigrants and refugees

- Support
  - Encourage children to participate in community based activities and cultural traditions
  - Spend quality time with friends and family and avoid isolation
  - Turn the page to see who else can help your children