

Welcome to Our Schools Curriculum

The CCSD ELL Division is grateful for the generosity of The New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance for providing us the rights to share their *Welcome to Our Schools* curriculum with our teachers. This curriculum was developed for New York Teachers of Refugee students. With this in mind, there are a few lessons that we will be offering adaptation suggestions to address the needs of Newcomer students living in Clark County.

When deciding what modules to teach, keep in mind who your students are and what they need to learn about being in a U.S. school. As they state in their materials, “Instructors should review the Modules and select the materials that would be most relevant to the refugee students (CCSD Newcomers) enrolled in their school system, and most useful when designing lesson plans and classroom activities.” Also, you may have English-speaking students who do not qualify as ELLs who could benefit from the acculturation pieces of this curriculum. A student coming from England speaks a different English and can experience culture shock as they begin living in the U.S. Please use these materials, as they seem appropriate for these students as well.

Please review pages 4-8, Background for Instructors. As you read any of these materials, remember that the authors are in New York, and programs mentioned do not align to CCSD programs. Reading considerations are also attached for you to review before reading each module. We are providing these materials as a starting point for you to be able to develop lessons to meet the acculturation needs of your Newcomer students. Thank you for looking at these materials. The CCSD ELL Division welcomes your feedback on this curriculum as we are offering it to our schools for the first time this year. If you have any questions or need additional supports for your Newcomer students please reach out to our Division at (702) 799-2137. Also, please look at the materials and links specifically provided to address newcomer needs found on our website at ell.ccsd.net. Most schools have an ELL Student Success Advocate. These staff members receive additional training from the ELL Division and can also act as a resource for you.

CCSD CONSIDERATIONS

Module 2: Making Friends

In this reading...

When it says ...	Think...
refugee	newcomer
Refugee Academy	school site
academic coach	mentor

- Videos are not available at this time.
- Pg. 16 mentions children's books in the *Welcome to Our School Kit* is not available at this time. See your ELL Coordinator for purchasing options.

WELCOME TO OUR SCHOOLS



BUREAU OF REFUGEE AND IMMIGRANT ASSISTANCE

**NEW YORK STATE OFFICE
OF TEMPORARY AND DISABILITY ASSISTANCE**

**REVISED 2011
ANDREW M. CUOMO, GOVERNOR**

The Refugee School Impact Grant (RSIG) *Welcome to our Schools*, which includes Refugee Academy and Mini-Academy Curricula, Parent and Professional Development Programs, a Guide to Academic Coaches, a Guide to the Videos, and the videos *Refugee Student Interviews*, *Refugee Parent Interviews*, *A Day in Elementary School*, *A Day in Middle School* and *A Day in High School*, was developed by the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, Bureau of Refugee and Immigrant Assistance (OTDA/BRIA).

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MODULE 2
MAKING FRIENDS

MODULE 2: Making Friends

PURPOSE

The purpose of Module 2 is to assist students in developing new, positive friendships.



OBJECTIVES

Students will:

- Understand the qualities of a positive friendship
- Develop new friendships in the Refugee Academy
- Understand the process of developing friendships in American schools



SUPPLIES

**Handouts 2-1, 2-2:
After-School
Activities**

Beach ball

**5 Sets of building
blocks or LEGOs®**

Pencils

**Crayons, markers,
or colored pencils**

White poster paper

**Spiral notebook/
journals**

**Video
*Refugee Student
Interviews***



MODULE 2: Making Friends

VOCABULARY

Elementary Vocabulary

Friend/friends

Help

Kind

Ask

Club

Smile

Bully

Playground

Recess

Secondary Vocabulary

Friend/friends

Help

Kind

Ask

Smile

Newcomer

Bully

Culture

Sports

Club



Key Points – Making Friends



1. *There are many opportunities to develop friendships in American schools.*

Although students are interested in hearing about their new school and all that it has to offer, they are primarily interested in making new friends. They will undoubtedly be concerned about whether anyone will befriend them. Will they be treated well? Will they be included? How will they make friends if they cannot understand the language, and the environment and activities are so unfamiliar to them?

One of the first goals of the Refugee Academy is to reassure students that there are a number of opportunities in American schools to meet new people and form new friendships. In fact, the Academy will be the place that friendships will start.

Students will need to know that friendships can form under a variety of circumstances. They may have a partner or team in a school project, and will get to know their fellow classmates from sharing ideas and tasks. They may sit near someone who helps them with their studies, or the teacher may assign a partner to show them around the school and introduce them to other students.



American schools have so many different activities that it is difficult to predict when friendships will arise. Friendships can develop on the playground or athletic field, in after-school activities, during classroom discussions, while walking to school, or simply when students have adjacent lockers. Encourage students to keep an open mind about the possibilities of new friendships. They should participate in a lot of different activities so that they increase the chances that a friendship will develop.



2. *Developing friendships can take a long time.*

Students in the Refugee Academy should be told many times that the development of friendship can take a long time, especially if the friendship is to be long-lasting. What is a long time? To primary students it can be a matter of two or three days. An invitation to participate in a game on the playground can constitute an immediate friendship. Working on an art project together with a partner can result in the establishment of a new relationship. But for younger students, if a friendship does not happen in the first few hours, they may get discouraged and withdraw from class participation. Instructors should work to cultivate friendships in the Academy to reassure younger students.



For students in intermediate and high school grades, the development of friendships can be stressful, especially in the middle school years. Often “best friends” have already found each other, groups have been formed, and alliances have been established. Friendships are on and off, often

because of miscommunication or changing interests or temperaments. Students in their preteen and teen years tend to be resistant to anyone who is new (especially if they are considered to be “different”). Not all students will be friendly. Not all students will welcome new students into their small group of intimate friends.

It may be difficult at first for refugee students to be included in existing groups, or to connect with someone new. They may feel ignored or rejected, or confused about the reaction of American students to the way that they speak or dress. They may be struggling with how to maintain their culture while adjusting to a new culture. Pressures from family members to follow cultural traditions may conflict with what is considered stylish in American schools. Students can be confused until they figure out how to balance both worlds. Instructors should point out that this is a typical struggle for students who are new to America, and good friends will accept them, no matter how they choose to live their lives.

Students in the Refugee Academy should be aware that teasing, imitation, and other negative reactions will occur, but most students are interested in welcoming new students. Relationships will form, but it will take patience. Refugee students can find stronger connections if they participate in activities that have mutual interests and goals, and if they keep an open mind about friendship possibilities.

 **3. Be a good friend to build friendships.**

Refugee students will undoubtedly be missing their friends and relatives from their native countries, and may feel certain that they will never be able to form new friendships in American schools. While they are trying to cope with the loss of people who were important to them, they will be worried about how they can create new relationships.



Refugee students will often be scared and worried as they try to navigate through an unfamiliar school day. They may appear aloof when they are actually shy, or unwilling to participate when they are just confused about what is expected of them. Instructors should explain to students that they can reach out with a smile and a greeting to demonstrate an interest in forming a friendship. If they consistently demonstrate kindness, cooperation, and willingness to enjoy their new school activities, they will be demonstrating the qualities of a good friend. It may be difficult at times, but if they try to maintain a positive attitude, they will undoubtedly experience positive reactions. They should also be looking for the same positive qualities when forming new friendships, so that the new relationships are ones of mutual respect.

For some Refugee Academy classes, it may be necessary to raise the issue of conflicts between cultural groups. Some students may have resentment, fear, or anger against other students in the classroom because of past history in their native country. Without dwelling on this sensitive subject, keep stressing that enrolling in a new school in America means the possibility of setting old conflicts aside and developing tolerance and new relationships. Students may be resistant because of memories, pressures

from family members, or fears about repercussions. The instructors can gently suggest that students now have the chance to move on to new types of friendships.

 **4. Some “friendships” may not be healthy for newcomers.**

As the Refugee Academy instructors talk to the students about friendship, it is important to discuss the qualities of a good friend. New students may not realize that a fellow student who is paying attention to them is actually mocking them or deliberately making them feel uncomfortable. For refugee students the attention alone may constitute “friendship,” when it is a relationship that is not healthy for newcomers.

Encourage students in the Academy to be friendly and responsive to people who are kind and helpful, but to take their time before forming new alliances. They should observe the dynamics of the classes and after-school activities to see who treats peers with respect. Who stands out in the class for their character and kindness, not for their negative leadership or poor treatment of others?

New students should become acquainted with as many people as possible, without limiting friendships to those who take the initiative, because the initiator may not have the best intentions. Refugee students will be vulnerable because of their limited English and unfamiliarity with their new school. There are, unfortunately, classmates who seek out those who are vulnerable and will mock the clothing, hygiene, eating habits, speaking skills, and other characteristics of refugee students. Some classmates will make it perfectly clear that the refugee students are not welcome in America.

Some refugee students may be so desperate for friends that they will connect with anyone who pays attention to them. This can lead to the development of relationships with peers who are negative influences, sometimes with the refugee student not even realizing that they are participating in activities that are against school policies, or are dangerous or illegal. Inform students in the Academy that good friends do not encourage participation in teasing, bullying, truancy, drug and alcohol abuse, gangs, and other negative activities. (*Modules 4 School Rules and 12 School Safety* address this topic in more detail.)

It is important to warn students that they might encounter individuals who will be unpleasant and unfair. Although the things that those individuals say and do are hurtful, those individuals do not speak for everyone in the school. Inform the students of the Refugee Academy how to avoid responding to negative attacks, and where to get assistance if treatment by fellow classmates interferes with comfort or safety.

ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY #1: QUALITIES OF FRIENDSHIP

Grades K-5, 6-8, 9-12 (45 minutes)

In this activity:



Students will begin discussing the importance of forming friendships that are positive. The exercise will facilitate the development of friendships among students of the Refugee Academy.

Before introducing the **Beach Ball Exercise**, discuss the following questions with the students. After student responses, share the concepts listed under each question, emphasizing the Key Points.

The topic is a sensitive one, but important to address early in the Refugee Academy because it is of utmost importance to the students. Emphasize that most peers will welcome newcomers, and that those classmates who are unwelcoming should be ignored. Encourage students to discuss friendship problems with the Academic Coach.



Discussion Questions



How do you know if someone is a friend?

- Discuss the qualities of a positive friendship.
- Explain how the depth of friendships varies (acquaintance vs. friendship).
- Role-play overcoming shyness and developing friendships (instructors play the roles).

Where have you met new friends in your native country and in America?

- Friends can be made anywhere, including the playground, neighborhood, family, at jobs.

- Address that it was probably difficult to make friends if families were moving and living with conflict and fear, but students will be able to make new friends in their new school.
- Students may not have any friends for a variety of reasons, and are worried about making friends in America. Stress that one of the purposes of the Refugee Academy is to meet new friends.

Can you tell what someone is like just by looking at them?

- Explain the phrase “do not judge a book by its cover.”
- Discuss how peers will judge and friendships will take time. Provide ideas about how to cope with embarrassment, rejection, and poor treatment.
- Stress that actions, especially kindness and friendliness, can outweigh appearance and shyness.
- Raise the issue of the difficulty of maintaining native culture and still “fitting in.” Discuss how to balance different cultures and lifestyles.
- If relevant, point out that past conflicts between groups in native countries can interfere with the development of friendships in American schools. Encourage students to set old stereotypes aside without providing specifics of the history between groups.
- Encourage students to take the initiative to form friendships, but only after observing and determining who will treat them with respect.
- Encourage support of fellow newcomers.



Beach ball exercise: Ask the students to stand in a circle. Arrange the circle so that students are comfortable standing near each other. Keep cultural customs in mind as you establish the location of each student.

Tell them that you are going to play **a game that will help them get to know each other better.**

- Explain to the students that you are going to say your name and the country you are from, and then toss the beach ball to someone else in the circle.
- When the ball is caught, the recipient is to say their name, the country they are from, and the name of the person who threw them the ball.
- Continue tossing the ball, recognizing that the list of names will get longer and more confusing. Do not pressure students to remember the names. Ask everyone in the group to assist when names are forgotten. Ask students to repeat their names many times.

- Reassure students that this is not a game of skill, but for fun. All of the instructors should participate, deliberately missing the ball, bouncing it on their knee, etc. to help the students enjoy the game.
- As the students start to learn the names of their Academy classmates, they will become more relaxed and comfortable, paving the way for the development of friendships.

As an added activity, point out the countries of the students on a world map or globe. Keep in mind that some students will have stereotypes of other countries (or of students from their own country with differing religions or cultural backgrounds). Stress the qualities of good friends. Point out that newcomers will not want to be judged when they enter their new classrooms, so the students in the Refugee Academy should refrain from judging their peers.



ACTIVITY #2: FACILITATING ACADEMY FRIENDSHIPS

Grades K-5 (30 minutes)

In this activity:

The purpose of the **Building Exercise** is to show how small groups of students can work together on a project that requires minimal facility with the English language.



Divide students into groups of 3 or 4, mixing gender and native countries, but maintaining the same general age ranges.



Provide each group with a set of building blocks or LEGOs® and a picture of what they are supposed to build. (Instructors may determine that the exercise would be more effective if the students can build any structure, without a picture as a guide.)

- **Explain that each small group is to work together to build**, even if they speak different languages. (ESL instructors may encourage the students to use English words if they have acquired relevant vocabulary words.)
 - **They are to:**
 - Make sure everyone has a chance to participate.
 - Work together, not separately.
 - Use a variety of ways to communicate including speaking English as much as possible (nonverbal cues, drawings, demonstrations).
 - Use the interpreter only if they are unable to move forward with the task.
 - Make their own structure if they are unable to follow the directions on the picture.
 - Demonstrate the qualities of a good friend.
 - **Circulate amongst the groups, encouraging the involvement of students who are holding back** or letting others dominate the group. Intervene when the group appears to be dysfunctional or unable to accomplish the task.

- **Compliment the students** on their ability to work together even though they do not know each other. Remind them that by working on a project together they have developed a connection that can lead to a friendship.

Grades 6-8, 9-12 (30 minutes)

In this activity:

The purpose of the **Drawing Exercise** is to show how small groups of students can work together on a project that requires minimal facility with the English language.



Divide students into groups of 3 or 4, mixing genders and native countries, but maintaining the same general age ranges.

Provide each group with crayons, colored pencils, or markers, and large sheets of poster paper.

- Explain that the small group is to **work together to draw their favorite foods on one sheet of paper**, even if they speak different languages. (ESL instructors may encourage the students to use English words if they have acquired relevant vocabulary words.)



- **They are to:**

- Make sure everyone has a chance to participate.
 - Work together, not separately; help each other draw and color.
 - Use a variety of ways to communicate, including speaking English as much as possible (nonverbal cues, drawings, demonstrations).
 - Use the interpreter only if they are unable to move forward with the task.
 - Demonstrate the qualities of a good friend.
- **Circulate amongst the groups, encouraging the involvement of students who are holding back** or letting others dominate the group. Intervene when the group appears to be dysfunctional or unable to accomplish the task.

Students may have difficulty drawing, and they may have to explain the ingredients of what they are drawing.

- Remind the students that by **working on a project together** they have developed a connection that **can lead to a friendship**. They may not recognize the different foods, but they all share in their interest in food and the way they feel when they eat a meal that they enjoy. (Demonstrate reactions to a good meal.)



 **Discussion Questions** 

How did you do this activity, even though you speak different languages?

How did you show that you could be a helping friend?

How did others show that they could be helpful?

What new words did you learn, in any language?

If appropriate, discuss American “fast foods” and how newcomers can develop a taste for them, not realizing the fat content and expense.

ACTIVITY #3: VIDEO

Grades K-5, 6-8, 9-12 (30 minutes)



Show the video *Refugee Student Interviews*.

- Use the *Guide to the Videos* for introducing the video and for follow-up discussion.
- Discuss sharing contact information with peers:
 - Gaining permission to exchange phone numbers
 - Privacy (not sharing personal information)
 - Communication systems such as e-mail and cell phones

ACTIVITY #4: JOURNALS

Grades K-5 (15 minutes)

During the Refugee Academy the students will have the opportunity to write or draw in daily journals. They will be assigned topics, but can write about any subject or draw a picture of anything that relates to adjusting to American schools.



Distribute the journals (spiral notebooks, pencils, and crayons) and discuss:



- The purpose of the journals is for the students to record things that they want to remember, topics that interest them, and reactions to what they have learned in the Academy. The journals are private and will not be shared with the class. (Instructors will have to determine in advance if students will be expected to bring in the journals daily and show their entries to the instructors. This process may be necessary to determine if the students are completing the task, and to identify students who need additional support or counseling.)
- Students may write in their own language or draw pictures of their thoughts. Discuss how a journal is for expression of personal feelings. For many students this will be a novel concept and it may take them awhile to feel comfortable talking about how they feel.
- For the first journal entry, ask students:
 - Grades K-3: Draw a picture of a good friend
 - Grades 4-5: How can I make new friends?



Grades 6-8, 9-12 (15 minutes)

During the Refugee Academy the students will have the opportunity to write or draw in daily journals. They will be assigned topics, but can write about or draw a picture of any subject.



Distribute the journals (spiral notebooks, pencils, and crayons) and discuss:



- The purpose of the journals is for the students to record things that they want to remember, topics that interest them, and reactions to what they have learned in the Academy. The journals are private and will not be shared

with the class. (Instructors will have to determine in advance if students will be expected to bring in the journals daily and show their entries to the instructors. This process may be necessary to determine if the students are completing the task. Middle school and high school students may be particularly sensitive about the contents of their journals. They may insist on privacy, especially if they are concerned that their journals will be shared with their parents. Instructors may establish privacy policies, but should understand that there may be occasions when the contents of the journals may be a signal that students need additional support or counseling.

- Students may write in their own language or draw pictures of their thoughts. Discuss how a journal is for expression of personal feelings. For many students this will be a novel concept and it may take them awhile to feel comfortable talking about how they feel.
- For the first journal entry, ask students to:
 - Write or draw pictures about making friends in America.



ACTIVITY #5: AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Grades K-5, 6-8, 9-12 (10 minutes)

**Distribute *Handouts 2-1: After-School Activities (K-5)*
*2-2: After-School Activities (6-12)***

- Discuss opportunities for meeting new friends.
- Discuss the clubs and other after-school activities represented by the pictures.
- Add information about local activities.
- Discuss local community programs such as the Boys/Girls Club or the YMCA.
- Explain that school activities are free, but most community activities will charge a fee. Fees are often based on need, and when students sign up, a fee will be determined for them. The School Nurse and Academic Coaches can also arrange for coverage of fees. Students should not eliminate an activity because they cannot afford to pay for the fee or equipment. They should talk to Academic Coaches if there is an interest in an after-school activity.
- Provide flyers and brochures about specific programs. Ask interpreters to translate the information.
- Repeat the information throughout the Academy because the students may have difficulty absorbing all of the information early in the Academy.



JOURNAL TOPIC

- (Discussed in Activity #4)



SUGGESTED ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Invite students from the school district to visit for snacks, introductions, and the beach ball game.
- Establish students as mentors for refugee students and invite them to discuss the mentoring process.
- Invite speakers from school clubs and local community organizations to greet the students and describe activities; bring uniforms, games, projects; demonstrate what they have learned in after-school activities (karate, baseball, art, theater, etc.).
- Using the children's books included in the ***Welcome to Our Schools Kit***, discuss what the main characters might write or draw in their journals.
- Rather than sending the students outside for disorganized free time, organize games and activities that facilitate the development of new friendships. If some students will be in the same class or grade, arrange for time for them to connect with one another.

After School Activities



After School Activities

