

Chapter 9

Policies and practices to support the resilience of students with an immigrant background

This chapter discusses the policy implications and provides further evidence on examples of countries' approaches to integrate, and promote the well-being of, students with an immigrant background. It also details a comprehensive set of education policies and practices. Some of these policies and practices are designed to address the specific challenges immigrants face upon arriving in a new country; others are designed to foster the long-term integration of immigrants and their children.

Note regarding data from Israel

The statistical data for Israel are supplied by and under the responsibility of the relevant Israeli authorities. The use of such data by the OECD is without prejudice to the status of the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the West Bank under the terms of international law.

This report provides ample evidence that international migration flows have reshaped the composition of classrooms in most education systems, with a marked increase in the heterogeneity of student populations. Students with an immigrant background in many education systems are at an increased risk of academic underperformance, of reporting feelings of alienation, high anxiety related to schoolwork and low satisfaction with life. Yet, many express high levels of motivation to achieve at their best in school and beyond.

A key contribution of the report is that it identifies the possible long-term effects of having an immigrant background on individuals' academic performance and broader well-being. Some of these consequences span more than one generation (as in the case of increased risk of academic underperformance that is associated with being native-born but having at least one foreign-born parent). Others are more complex and play out over time in non-linear ways, interacting with individuals' life circumstances (such as the increased risk of reporting low satisfaction with life among native-born children of mixed heritage).

In order to address the risks associated with having an immigrant background and support the resilience of students with such background, teachers and educators need to know the personal histories of their students, develop the tact that is necessary to discuss their past experiences, and be aware of how migration can affect academic performance, social integration, and emotional and psychological well-being. Students with an immigrant background should receive support to help them achieve their potential, but care should be taken to avoid stigmatising such students because of their background if and when targeted initiatives are implemented. Supporting students with an immigrant background can help education systems develop adequate responses to tackle underachievement and poor student well-being more generally and help classrooms become inclusive and responsive to individual needs.

The report identifies the key barriers to the academic, social, emotional and motivational well-being of students with an immigrant background, and has shown how they might affect the different groups of students with an immigrant background.

Language barriers and a relatively disadvantaged socio-economic status are key risk factors for students with an immigrant background, particularly first-generation immigrant students who had settled in a new country at or after the age of 12. Teachers are crucial in helping these students adjust in their classrooms and in the broader society. Teachers in many education systems appear keen to offer additional assistance to students with an immigrant background. But many students with an immigrant background reported feeling that they are unfairly treated by their teachers, suggesting that teachers might not know how to support their students. In fact, teachers in many education systems reported that they need to develop further their ability to handle multicultural classrooms. Just as countries invest in developing language programmes and initiatives aimed at supporting socio-economically disadvantaged students, so they should invest in widening the availability of programmes designed to help teachers teach in diverse classrooms and upgrade the quality of existing training modules.

This chapter draws on the evidence detailed in the report, the research literature and policies developed in OECD and EU countries to provide concrete examples of education policies and practices that could help students with an immigrant background reach their academic potential, become better socially integrated, emotionally adjusted and motivated to achieve. The examples highlighted do not constitute an exhaustive list of policies and practices towards these ends; however they are exemplary in that they represent a wide selection of approaches taken to tackle the problem and illustrate commonalities and differences in approaches.

In some cases policies and practices attempt to reduce the vulnerability of students with an immigrant background by limiting the factors that could undermine performance and prevent social, emotional and motivational adjustment. At other times, policies and practices try to strengthen the factors that protect these students from the adverse effects of migration. While many policies and practices are designed explicitly for students with an immigrant background, others benefit these students indirectly by targeting broader groups in which students with an immigrant background are over-represented, such as socio-economically disadvantaged students.

The overall well-being of students

The report highlights major differences in the academic, social, emotional and motivational outcomes of students without an immigrant background (students who were born in the country in which they sat the PISA test in 2015 of parents who were also born in that country) and different groups of students with an immigrant background. The report shows a large degree of variation in the vulnerability of different groups of students and that such variation differs systematically, depending on the country in which they (or their parents) had settled, and the characteristics of the schools they attend and of their families.

By defining resilience using multiple indicators that reflect academic, social, emotional and motivational well-being, the report identifies a clear role for education systems in promoting the full development of children with an immigrant background. The report recognises the different sets of vulnerabilities that accompany direct and indirect displacement (being foreign-born or having foreign-born parents) and the fact that they might affect students' sense of themselves (e.g. when native-born students of mixed heritage have to negotiate among multiple identities). While education systems clearly can and should play a role in promoting the well-being of students with an immigrant background, their role should be seen in light of a broad and co-ordinated effort encompassing the education, health, social and welfare systems, and potentially involving partnerships among schools, hospitals, universities and community organisations.

Policies and practices aimed at promoting overall well-being

In Ontario, Canada, "Developing child and student well-being means supporting the whole child – not only the child's academic achievement but also his or her cognitive, emotional, social and physical well-being" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 2014: 14). Promoting the well-being of children helps ensure that students can be better learners and excel in school. The guidelines provided by the ministry are followed by district school boards. For example, the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board (OCDSB) aims to enhance the use of resources to improve the well-being of all learners by 2019 (OCDSB, 2015). The board has developed a well-being framework as a guide for schools and the district to ensure the socio-emotional, cognitive and physical well-being of students (Bilgili, 2017).

An effective project targeting the well-being of immigrant students is the Boston Hospital SHIFA project. Since 1992, more than 5 000 Somali refugees and immigrants have settled in Boston, Massachusetts (United States). While many Somali youth suffer from mental health problems related to trauma and stress, few receive the help they need because of cultural or other barriers. Project SHIFA was founded to address this concern. It grew out of a partnership between the Somali community, and education and mental health systems in the Boston area. Based at the Lilla G. Frederick Pilot Middle School in Boston, the project provides culturally appropriate services, from prevention to full intervention, including parent workshops, home visits and phone calls, teacher training, student groups and direct intervention for students. The programme works with schools for one to two years to develop skills among the school staff to address mental health and cultural issues relevant to the Somali refugee experience. An evaluation of Project SHIFA suggests that community-wide acceptance of the programme led to high rates of engagement by children and families and a significant decrease in post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms over eight months. Alongside the positive mental-health outcomes for Somali youth, involvement in Project SHIFA is also associated with greater parental involvement with the school, increased sense of belonging at school, and a reduction in immigrant students' rejection of school (Ellis et al., 2012). The programme has been expanded to the Bhutanese community.¹

The Bridges programme, based at New York University (NYU) in New York City (United States), also aims to build immigrant parents' resilience by strengthening their cultural identity.² The prevention programme seeks to enhance the well-being of young children attending New York public schools by providing consultation to teachers and a workshop series to parents of students in first grade. Consultation includes education on cultural competence, ethnic socialisation, and common mental health problems among young children. Consultation and training is provided in five schools in Brooklyn, New York, a community where the majority of residents are immigrants from Afro-Caribbean countries. Consultants, a team made up of NYU Child Study Centre clinicians and community representatives, help teachers use behaviour-management techniques, incorporate cultural activities in the classroom, and engage families.

Parent workshops focus on ethnic and racial socialisation by encouraging the use of strategies that teach children about the unique values and behaviours of their culture of origin and instil pride in their cultural background.

Another promising project is World Relief Chicago, a youth mental-health project in Albany Park. The community of Albany Park has the highest percentage of foreign-born residents in the Chicago area and is one of the most diverse communities in the United States. Refugees from all over the world settle in the community, often with little time for the school and community to prepare for them. To help families see the importance of school and parents working together, Horizons Clinic of World Relief Chicago placed culturally competent mental-health clinicians in an elementary and high school in Albany Park. Through home visits and family meetings, the programme educates families about the school, helps them become more involved in supporting their children's education, and ultimately helps them become integrated into the life of the school.³

The importance of access to education for all children with an immigrant background

By relying primarily on data from PISA, this report inevitably focused on individual-, school- and system-level factors that foster the academic, social, emotional and motivational resilience of children with an immigrant background who are enrolled in and attend lower or upper secondary schools at the age of 15, and have the basic language skills that are necessary to be able to complete a test. As a result, the report contains very little pointers on factors that support access to education, or on the academic and broader well-being outcomes of the most recent wave of migrants, which, in Europe, includes a considerable number of refugees and asylum-seekers. Ensuring that students with an immigrant background, and, in particular, first-generation immigrant students, have access to schools requires co-ordination between the education sector, housing, social welfare and migration services. A vibrant civil society that supports national, regional and local institutions can further facilitate access to, and ensure the continuity of, schooling among students with an immigrant background, particularly among the most disadvantaged children.

In about half of OECD countries with available data, the enrolment rate in pre-primary education in 2015 exceeded 90% for 3- and 4-year-olds. Enrolment at even earlier ages is relatively common in some countries, with Denmark, Iceland and Norway achieving full enrolment for two-year-olds. In other countries, full enrolment is achieved for children between the ages of 5 and 6, except in Russian Federation (hereafter Russia) (full enrolment for 7-year-olds) and Estonia (full enrolment for 8-year-olds) (OECD, 2017a). Several countries have policies in place that encourage students with an immigrant background in general, and newly arrived children in particular, to attend schools and other education services.

Examples of policies to promote access to quality early education

In most OECD countries, access to pre-primary education has been expanded to include children with an immigrant background. Most of these programmes are part of policies designed to offer access to pre-primary education to disadvantaged students. Germany, for example, set a strategic goal in its National Action Plan on Integration (2011) to facilitate access to early learning, care and education in day-care facilities and day nurseries for children (OECD, 2015b).

In Estonia, the Pre-school Child Care Institutions Act states that local governments are to provide the opportunity to attend childcare institutions to all children between the ages of 1 and 7 if requested by their parents. In France, every child living in the country has the right to education in a state school, including pre-primary education. Free pre-primary education starts from the age of 2 and extends to the age of 6. Most children of immigrant families attend pre-primary school at the age of 3 (MIPEX, 2015). In Finland, participation in pre-primary education is voluntary but municipalities are obliged to provide pre-primary education if parents ask for it. Furthermore, the backgrounds of immigrant children are taken into account, even if the instruction follows the general objectives of education and learning (MIPEX, 2015).

In the United States, several states have tried to increase immigrant enrolment in early childhood development programmes as part of wider efforts to expand pre-school options among disadvantaged communities. To improve access, some states have created or expanded public pre-school systems that supplement and complement the federal Head Start and Early Head Start programmes (Crosnoe, 2013).

Both national and municipal governments in Norway have made special efforts to support equality of participation, particularly for low-income and minority-language families. Initiatives include fee reductions or exemptions, as well as pilot programmes providing up to four hours per day of kindergarten free for children aged 3 to 5. This scheme is expected to be extended to all 4- and 5-year-olds from low-income families across Norway (OECD, 2015c).

Access to compulsory education

Having access to compulsory education is also key for children with an immigrant background. Across most OECD countries, full enrolment ends when students are around 17 or 18 years old, but it ends earlier in Mexico (at the age of 14) and Turkey (14). In most OECD countries, compulsory education starts at the age of 6 and ends at the age of 16 or 17. The typical starting age for compulsory education ranges from 4 in Brazil, Luxembourg and Mexico to 7 in Estonia, Finland, Indonesia, Russia, South Africa and Sweden. In the United Kingdom, the starting age ranges between 4 and 5, and in the United States between 4 and 6 (OECD, 2017a). However, many students with an immigrant background do not participate in compulsory education. In particular, children who entered a country illegally might not have a right to enrol or might be afraid of enrolling in education for fear of deportation. In other cases, children might miss time in school because they had migrated during the school year. In other cases, children might not have stable accommodation or might not have the language skills to be able to take part in regular classes, and they might not be able to access classes in their mother tongue.

Several countries offer compulsory education to immigrants, refugees and sometimes even undocumented individuals as a legal right (including the Czech Republic, Italy, Korea, Latvia and Portugal). However, this does not mean that children are obliged to attend school (e.g. in the Czech Republic) (MIPEx, 2015). For example, in Portugal, the Education Law specifies that basic education is universal, compulsory and free: for children between the ages of 6 and 18, schooling is compulsory. The Support for Multicultural Families Act in Korea specifies that neither the state nor local governments shall discriminate against children of any multicultural family in providing care and education to children. Children of multicultural families can be provided with care and education before entering elementary school and given assistance to improve their language skills (MIPEx, 2015).

Some countries actively promote the integration of immigrant students in schools. For instance, in Portugal, the General Directorate of Education and the High Commission for Migration, in collaboration with the Aga Khan Foundation Portugal, have awarded an intercultural school seal since 2012, and disseminate good practices in welcoming and integrating students who are descendants of immigrants. The Intercultural School Seal distinguishes public, private or co-operative schools that, through educational programmes and practices, promote the recognition and enhancement of cultural and linguistic diversity as an opportunity and a source of learning for all (European Commission, 2018).⁴

Examples of policies to promote access to vocational education and training, and higher education

Matching the aspirations and skills of students with an immigrant background to potential vocational pathways is difficult. Many recently arrived immigrants are unfamiliar with vocational education and training systems, the occupations covered, and the labour market outcomes associated with participation in vocational education. In many of the countries of origin of immigrants who had settled in OECD countries, vocational education and training is often poorly developed. Therefore many immigrants may view tertiary-level education as the only pathway that will enable them to attain a good job. For others, financial constraints mean that they cannot afford to pursue lengthy vocational education and training programmes and earn only apprentice wages for several years, even though future returns would make such choices a worthwhile investment.

In some countries (such as Austria, Belgium and France) being enrolled in a vocational track is associated with a stronger sense of belonging and greater satisfaction with life, but students with an immigrant background are less likely to be involved in vocational education than native students. A number of countries offer access to education and training to immigrant and refugee students beyond the compulsory school age, such as vocational training or higher education. This is the case, for example, in Australia, Canada, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, the Netherlands and the United States.

The German National Integration Pact underlines the importance of measures to increase the participation of students with an immigrant background in vocational education and training, and of employers who will be willing to host such students in work-study programmes or apprenticeships. These include programmes like KAUSA,⁵ which encourages entrepreneurs with an immigrant background to provide vocational training to students with an immigrant background, or Netzwerk IQ.⁶

In Australia, both the federal and state governments have such policies. At the federal level, they include the Trade Training Centres in Schools Programme, which enables all students attending secondary schools to access vocational education through Trade Training Centres; the Productivity Places Programme, which provides targeted training to develop skills in the country to meet existing and future industry demands; and the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Programme, which improves participants' language, literacy and/or numeracy, with the expectation that such improvements will enable immigrant students to participate more effectively in training or in the labour force, and lead to greater gains for them and society in the long term (MIPEx, 2015).⁷

To facilitate access to and participation of students with an immigrant background in higher education, the Finnish government has implemented targeted measures to develop student-selection processes, allocate sufficient resources for student guidance, increase and focus instruction in the Finnish language and culture, and develop open higher education studies. The institutions of higher education may apply for state support (study vouchers) to assist their students' Finnish/Swedish language studies (MIPEx, 2015). In Australia, the state government of Victoria has targeted measures to increase acceptance and participation of immigrant students at the tertiary level. For example, the Victorian Tertiary Admissions Centre provides a Special Entry Access Scheme for eligible migrant students who come from a non-English speaking or refugee background to be granted extra consideration for entry into programmes at the university level (MIPEx, 2015).

Evidence on ability grouping, grade repetition and early tracking

Policies that support access to and participation in education programmes among students with an immigrant background are a crucial first step to ensure the long-term integration of these students and their broader well-being. However, such policies have to be complemented by others that sustain the quality of the education received by these students, and that ensure that they have access to these programmes, and the same opportunities to succeed as other students.

Ability grouping, early tracking and grade repetition might have adverse effects on student achievement and well-being, and might disproportionally affect students with an immigrant background. Many studies have shown the negative effect of early selection for children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Ammermüller, 2005; Bauern and Riphahn, 2006; Breen and Jonsson 2005; Brunello and Checchi, 2007; Horn, 2009; van der Werfhorst and Mijs, 2010) and a few studies have examined the effect of early selection and tracking on children with an immigrant background (Crul and Vermeulen, 2006; Entorf and Lauk, 2008; Heckmann et al., 2001; Penn and Lampert, 2009; Shavit, 1990). Entorf and Lauk (2008), Shavit (1990) and Schnell (2014), in particular, suggest that ethnic minority groups suffer most when students are tracked at an early age. There is also some evidence that early tracking might be especially problematic for students with an immigrant background if these students do not have access to high-quality early childhood education (Crul, 2015; Crul et al, 2016).

While there is great variation in children's cognitive and personal development, this variation is likely to be even more pronounced among children with an immigrant background, given the wide variety of their experiences. For example, students with an immigrant background might have difficulties with language because of their multilingualism, they might have been exposed to different curricula and education systems, and might have had their schooling interrupted, possibly for extensive periods of time. All of these factors make the identification of underlying ability, potential and aspirations even more difficult than is the case for students without an immigrant background.

The increased likelihood of developing certain skills at an older age could make students with an immigrant background more likely to be asked to repeat grades, when countries use grade repetition to create relatively homogeneous classrooms. However, evidence presented in this report suggests that

students with an immigrant background are at a greater risk of repeating grades even when they perform similarly to other students in a standardised test. Teachers and educators might be more likely to require students with an immigrant background to repeat a grade not because of their academic proficiency, but because these students might have behavioural or disciplinary problems that might be related to their background or because these children are relatively less knowledgeable about the set of behaviours that are considered acceptable and/or are encouraged in their host country. In addition, students with an immigrant background might not be fully informed about the availability of different education pathways. Their parents might have fewer resources (cognitive, time, social, cultural) than other parents to advocate on behalf of their children and negotiate decisions with teachers and school staff that could maximise their children's academic and broader well-being.

If students with an immigrant background are separated too early from other children and are grouped with other academically weak students, they will fall behind in the development of linguistic and culturally relevant skills that are needed to perform well at school (Entorf and Lauk, 2008; Sirin and Rogers-Sirin, 2015).

Given that studies suggest that early tracking could increase the vulnerability of students with an immigrant background if these students had not attended pre-primary education, Table 9.1 groups countries on the basis of two characteristics: presence of early tracking and attendance rates in pre-primary education. In the top right quadrant (Belgium, Italy and Luxembourg), students are tracked at an early age, but many students attend pre-primary education. To the extent that students with an immigrant background are encouraged to take part in pre-primary education, the potentially negative effects of early tracking could be relatively easily reduced in these countries. In the bottom left quadrant (the Dominican Republic), few students attend pre-primary education, but students are tracked in later years, which can compensate for the low attendance rates in pre-primary education. However, in the bottom right quadrant (Croatia and Germany), the combination of a small share of students in pre-primary education and the early age at which children are first tracked could greatly increase the vulnerability of students with an immigrant background to poor performance in school.

Table 9.1 ■ Interaction between tracking and attendance at pre-primary education

	Late age at first tracking	Average	Early age at first tracking
High percentage of students who had attended pre-primary education	Chile, Spain		Belgium, Italy, Luxembourg
Average	Malta, United Kingdom	France, Hong Kong (China), Ireland, Macao (China), Mexico,	
Low percentage of students who had attended pre-primary education	Dominican Republic	Georgia, Korea	Croatia, Germany

Notes: Dimension 1 (rows) sorts countries based on the percentage of students who reported to have attended pre-primary education in their responses to the PISA student questionnaire.

Dimension 2 (columns) sorts countries based on the age at first tracking in school.

Source: OECD, PISA 2015 Database.

Examples of policies to reduce grade repetition and early tracking

Policies to reduce the use of grade repetition have been introduced in a few countries. For example, France reduced repetition rates by 11.1 percentage points between 2003 and 2012. Since then, the country has used grade repetition only in exceptional cases (OECD, 2013). In the French Community of Belgium, the Take-off project (*Projet décolage*, 2012) was developed to reduce the use of grade repetition by providing pedagogical tools for schools (OECD, 2015a).

While in some countries tracking takes place at a later age and provides opportunities for all students to access higher education, in Germany students are selected into tracks already at the age of 10 or 12 thus limiting students' options later on (Crul et al, 2017). The new school education system in Berlin (Germany) introduces an integrated secondary school (ISS) to provide more individualised support and learning. It also provides heterogeneous learning groups, all-day schools and work-based learning. These measures are aimed at mitigating against early tracking. The ISS combines elements of academically oriented learning with vocational training and offers a range of vocational qualifications, as well as the possibility of completing the Abitur as offered in the Gymnasium (European Commission, 2013b: 37).

Access to quality education and career guidance

While students with an immigrant background are often highly motivated, it is important that they are able to capitalise on their motivation and have realistic expectations to achieve their goals. Information on education and career opportunities and on the requirements of different pathways should be made available so that students with an immigrant background can fully benefit from education and training services (OECD, 2012a). Guidance is crucial in countries with differentiated schooling and education sectors, where students and their families are expected to make important decisions on which school a student will attend and/or where there are few second-chance opportunities for students. Education and career guidance is particularly important for students with an immigrant background, given the limited knowledge students and their parents might have about career opportunities, and how best to prepare for them.

Career guidance can include providing information about careers, using assessment and self-assessment tools, interviews, career-education programmes, taster programmes, work-search programmes and transition services. But young people in all levels of education often face obstacles to obtaining the guidance they need, because of a lack of access, poor quality of services, or limited resources that are not always dedicated to career guidance (OECD/European Commission, 2004).

Examples of policies to reduce grade repetition

In Sweden, newly arrived students receive career guidance on the same terms as other students. The quantity and quality of the services depend upon local regulations and allocation of resources (Hertzberg, 2017). Career guidance in lower secondary education mainly involves choosing upper secondary education. Studies on career guidance of ethnic minorities in Sweden (Sawyer, 2006) and in other countries (Yogev and Rdoditi, 1987; Resh and Erhard, 2002) suggest that immigrant and/or ethnic minority students might be advised to temper their career aspirations, implicitly or explicitly, based on low and unfair expectations for immigrant and/or minority students.

Quality career guidance goes hand in hand with education guidance for students with an immigrant background and their families. In Sweden, municipal authorities have a responsibility to inform newly arrived families of their rights with regard to pre-school and school education. Interpreting services must be made available, when required, at the welcome meetings for recently arrived families. These families are also entitled to an interpreter to enable them to participate in the “personal development discussion” held with all parents twice a year. Schools are obliged to communicate with all parents and must therefore adopt the measures necessary (MIPEx, 2015).

In Flanders, Belgium, every school co-operates with a Pupil Guidance Centre (CLB).⁸ The CLB guides students as they develop into independent adults and monitors students’ health and well-being, either systematically or if requested to do so. Parents, teachers, school-management teams and the young people themselves may turn to the CLB for information, help and guidance. Various professionals, including doctors, nurses, social workers, psychologists and educators work together within a CLB. Working with the school, this team ensures that every child and young person can develop his or her knowledge, talents and skills at school. The CLB operates in four guidance domains: learning and studying, educational career, psychological and social behaviour, and preventative health care.

In Australia, the New South Wales Education and Training website and Victoria’s Department of Education and Training website provide advice at all levels of education about the education system, in immigrants’ languages of origin. They also have centres students can consult for orientation as well as interpretation services for families of students with an immigrant background for advice and guidance on education (MIPEx, 2015).⁹

Early assessment of language and other skills

It is important to assess the language and other skills of students with an immigrant background, not only those of foreign-born children who had arrived after the start of schooling, but also of native-born children of foreign-born parents, in order to identify the needs of each individual child and to target training. Language support requires an accurate assessment of children’s language skills (in both the

mother tongue and the language of instruction) and other competencies at the time of entry into the education system (European Commission, 2013a; Nusche, 2009; Sirova and Essoemba, 2014) and also during their education, since some children with an immigrant background may not exhibit difficulties at the start of their schooling, but might progressively fall behind due to a lack of language practice and support at home. Poor measures of assessment on entering the school system can have a detrimental impact on immigrant children because these children are more likely to be allocated to special education and lower-ability tracks (European Commission, 2015).

Screening for language proficiency not only informs teachers about individual students' needs, but also informs education authorities at the district or system level, and can be used as a basis for distributing additional funding to schools (Mengerling, 2005).

Policies that support early language assessment can target language-minority students or students with an immigrant background, or be part of non-targeted initiatives aimed at diagnosing children with language difficulties and meeting their individual needs.

Examples of policies to promote early language assessment of all children

Denmark, for example, introduced a mandatory assessment of language development for all 3-year-olds that aims to diagnose possible language problems before children start school (MIPEX, 2015; OECD, 2015a). If identified as necessary, additional language training of at least 15 hours per week can take place as an integrated part of normal kindergarten activities or in separate groups.

In Germany, the majority of Länder introduced screening processes to identify pre-school children in need of additional language support. These assessments are usually conducted 12 to 24 months before children's transition to school. Support for other mother tongues besides German is only provided within individual projects or on the initiative of early childhood and education staff/centres/providers. The most common practice to improve children's skills in German is the child-oriented approach *Alltagsintegrierte Sprachliche Bildung* (i.e. language education embedded into daily routines). This approach was spread nationwide through the federal programme *Frühe Chancen: Schwerpunkt-Kitas Sprache und Integration* (Early Chances: Childcare centres with special focus on language and integration), and continued through the follow-up programme *Sprach-Kitas: Weil Sprache der Schlüssel zur Welt ist* (Language day nurseries: Because language is the key to the world)¹⁰ (OECD, 2017b).

In the Netherlands, young children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds, are entitled to receive language-development support. These children can participate in early childhood and education targeted programmes (*voeren vroegschoolse educaties*) that provide support before and during the first years of school. All toddlers (2.5 to 4 years old) who are part of this programme receive 10 hours of language development per week. For the rest of the day, targeted toddlers attend the same early childhood and education programme as their non-targeted peers. Findings from the Pre-COOL national cohort study show that this approach is effective (Akgunduz and Heijnen, 2016; Leseman et al., 2017). Participating in day care centres and preschools reduces the difference in language and executive-function skills (measured by a selective-sustained attention test) between advantaged and disadvantaged children. Disadvantaged children who attend day care centres and preschools implementing these programmes show even more enhanced language and executive-function development than disadvantaged children who participated in other centres and preschools (OECD, 2017b).

Examples of policies to promote rapid language assessments of newly arrived immigrant children

In Canada, welcome centres assess English language and mathematics skills of newcomers, connect students and families with a settlement worker, and offer advice on entry into school. Newly arrived immigrants are particularly targeted and receive additional support for transitioning to school as soon as possible (Bilgili, 2017).

Ireland developed guidelines for language assessment, with assessment tool kits and intercultural education guidelines for pedagogy to integrate language learning with content learning (OECD, 2010).¹¹ Standardised tests are only used at the end of a student's participation in a language programme when a school wants to extend language support beyond two years (MIPEX, 2015).

In New Zealand, the Ministry of Education requires schools to identify and assess students with high English-language needs. All students from immigrant and refugee backgrounds are entitled to funding for English-as-a-second language programmes for up to 5 years (20 terms) if they score below the benchmark (MIPEX, 2015).¹²

In Oslo, Norway, an assessment tool with levels equivalent to those in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages was developed to enable more tailored and systematic second-language training and a better assessment of children's language skills (European Commission, 2015).

Since 2016, Sweden has implemented a policy whereby diagnostic tests on students' previous schooling and their level of academic knowledge are conducted within two months of the student's arrival at school. Subsequently, additional tests are conducted in different school subjects. No more than two months after the student is enrolled in a school, the principal makes a decision regarding his or her grade and placement in either introductory (separate) or regular class. The decision is based on the student's accumulated academic knowledge and relevant social reasons, such as his or her age and network in the community (Bunar, 2017).

When schools in Portugal identify at least 10 students as having beginning or intermediate proficiency in Portuguese, these students are enrolled in a Portuguese-as-a-second-language course. Additional teachers are allocated based on the needs of each school and with the defined criteria. When schools fail to meet the necessary conditions for the formation of these groups, students attend regular Portuguese courses, but follow a special curriculum and benefit from support language classes. In addition, the Ministry of Education, in partnership with the Portuguese Language Cyberschool and with some schools, has developed a project distance courses in Portuguese-as-a-second-language offered by the Cyberschool.¹³

Targeted language training

As Chapter 5 has noted, language skills are not only important for academic achievement, but are essential if students with an immigrant background are to develop a sense of belonging at school. That is why it might be beneficial for newly arrived immigrant children who are not proficient in the host-country language to be moved quickly to targeted language support provided in mainstream classrooms (immersion) rather than in separate classes (European Commission, 2015).

Age at arrival explains much of the outcome gap between immigrant and native students, as does mastery of the assessment language. Late-arrival penalties vary across countries, but they are more pronounced for immigrant students who do not speak the assessment language at home (OECD, 2012b; 2015a). As Chapter 5 has reported, linguistic differences explain a large part of the disadvantage for late arrivals Austria, Germany and Slovenia.

While most countries provide language training to first-generation immigrants and new arrivals, it is also important to offer targeted language training to returning students and students from mixed-heritage households (i.e. with at least one native-born parent) when proficiency in the host language is markedly lower than that among native students (see Chapter 5).

Examples of policies to promote language training

Several countries offer targeted language training to immigrant students. For example, classes in the Estonian language are provided to any student in pre-primary school who does not speak Estonian at home (MIPEX, 2015). In Finland, the National Core Curriculum for Instruction Preparing Immigrants for Basic Education was introduced in 2009 to support students with an immigrant background who are not proficient in the Finnish or Swedish language. The curriculum is differentiated according to age, learning abilities and background. Austria developed a national curriculum framework for language learning in kindergarten and standards for second-language learning (OECD, 2010; 2015a).

In keeping with Norway's Curriculum in Basic Norwegian for Language Minorities in compulsory primary education, support for lessons in Norwegian-as-a-second-language can be provided as long as local authorities deem it necessary. The national strategy plan, "Equal Education in Practice!", strongly recommends language support in both the mother tongue and Norwegian in pre-primary education,

primary, secondary and higher education, as well as adult training. About 150 different projects were implemented between 2004 and 2009, some of which are ongoing (MIPEX, 2015).¹⁴

In Luxembourg, native students speak Luxembourgish at home, start to learn French and German during primary education, and then later usually learn English. The government provides two years of compulsory pre-school education for children aged 4 to 6 which introduces language learning. At the end of compulsory education, 43% of total teaching time is devoted to teaching languages. Students – including immigrant students – are expected to achieve high levels of competency in at least two foreign languages (European Commission, 2015).

Multilingualism and exposure to more than one language

This report could only examine the language spoken at home versus the language of the assessment due to limited questions in PISA; but it recognises that being exposed to more than one language can be beneficial to immigrant children. Multilingualism is associated with cognitive, social, personal, academic and professional benefits (Herzog-Punzenberger, Le Pichon-Vorstman and Siarova, 2017). Studies indicate that children exposed to more than one language tend to perform better than their monolingual counterparts (Collier and Thomas, 2007; Cummins, 2000; see also discussion in Mehmedbegovic and Bak, 2017). Learning multiple languages requires the support of families, communities, school leaders and teachers, and also involves relevant training and professional-development activities for teachers.

Examples of policies and practices to promote multilingualism

The *Bundeszentrum für Interkulturalität, Migration und Mehrsprachigkeit* (BIMM)¹⁵ in Austria (Federal Center for Interculturalism, Migration and Multilingualism) is a resource centre for the professionalisation of teachers in the field of interculturalism, migration and multilingualism. BIMM organises network meetings among the relevant staff of the teacher-training institutions, and convenes workshops and conferences (Herzog-Punzenberger, Le Pichon-Vorstman and Siarova, 2017).

Most surveys only allow respondents to mention one “home language”; but a few surveys include questions about “exposure to more than one language”. The broad and inclusive definition of exposure to more than one language (Hall et al. 2012) is much more suitable to contexts where many languages are spoken and where proficiency in the languages used varies considerably (Mehmedbegovic and Bak, 2017). This definition was used in London schools to collect data on languages spoken at home during the Ethnic Minority Achievement Grant (1999–2010), which funded specialist teachers who provide language support to children new to English (Mehmedbegovic and Bak, 2017). In future rounds of the assessment, PISA could also include a question about “exposure to more than one language” in order to collect data on multilingualism among 15-year-old students.

The role of socio-economic disadvantage

Socio-economic status is a strong determinant of students’ academic performance and general well-being (OECD, 2016a; 2017c) and the relevance of socio-economic status in shaping the outcomes of students with an immigrant background has been widely examined (Marks, 2006; Martin, 1998; Portes and MacLeod, 1996). It affects student outcomes in a variety of ways, at the individual, school and system levels.

Sorting and selecting policies used by schools and education systems, such as early tracking or grade repetition, can lead to differences in academic and well-being outcomes across students from different socio-economic backgrounds. While the selection of students for certain grades or programmes should be based primarily on performance, research shows that students’ background characteristics also influence those decisions (Agasisti and Cordero, 2017; van de Werfhorst and Mijs, 2010). Other characteristics of education systems, such as the level of resources available to public or private schools, or to urban and rural schools, can strengthen or weaken the relationship between socio-economic status and academic performance (Greenwald, Hedges and Laine, 1996; OECD, 2016b; Rivkin, Hanushek and Kain, 2005).

As Chapter 6 on socio-economic status has shown, immigrant students (both first- and second-generation immigrant students) tend to be more disadvantaged than native students. By contrast, in the majority of countries, returning foreign-born students and native students of mixed heritage are more advantaged than their native peers.

Differences between native and immigrant students in academic proficiency are at least partly explained by greater socio-economic disadvantage among immigrant students. Yet, disadvantage is not the same across the distribution, and also differs by country. Performance gaps between native and immigrant students are largest at the middle of the socio-economic distribution, where student performance is most varied and the relationship with socio-economic status is weaker. Chapter 6 has shown that while socio-economic status accounts for a remarkably large share of the differences in academic achievement between immigrant and native students, the largest portion of the disparities is unexplained in most countries and economies.

Additional support to disadvantaged students and schools

Disadvantaged students and schools need additional support, which is most often provided in the form of greater resources. Immigrant students are a key focus of resource allocations both because of migration-related needs (such as language difficulties) and socio-economic disadvantage (immigrant students tend to be socio-economically disadvantaged and live in disadvantaged communities). Countries typically use one of the following two approaches to promote equity: provide additional resources through targeted programmes (external to the main allocation mechanism) or include additional funding in the main allocation mechanism (e.g. through weightings in a funding formula) (OECD, 2017d).

Programmes might direct additional funding to certain geographical areas or to the actual population in each school. Area-based funding aims to address the additional negative impact of a concentration of disadvantage; student-based funding aims to adapt funding levels to the needs of the actual population in each school. Providing additional resources to students or areas that have greater need to promote equity in outcomes assumes that data on students' level of needs is both available and accurate. Designing funding formulas to account for individual or area-based need also involves a trade-off between simplicity and accuracy (OECD, 2017d).

Examples of policies aimed at providing greater support

Many countries provide additional resources to schools to overcome language difficulties among newly arrived students, with funding provided to promote second-language teaching and learning and to support the creation of innovative teaching modules. For example, in Estonia, the Multicultural School project covering 2017-20 aims to reform the structure of financial support available to schools with a diverse student population and change school-level approaches to multiculturalism.

In the Flemish Community of Belgium, schools receive additional funding to target socio-economic disadvantage and have discretion over how to use this funding. The funding is mostly used to provide necessary material for teachers, and to cover expenditures to address the needs of disadvantaged students, such as specific teaching materials, in-service training or community-school activities (OECD, 2017d).

Extra funding can also be targeted to immigrant students facing a transition into a new education system. In Canada, for example, the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador has a funding programme for before- and after-school activities for "new Canadians". This immigration strategy funding can support initiatives such as the provision of additional English Second Language (ESL)¹⁶ materials to school districts, funding to community groups such as the Association for New Canadians¹⁷ to support after school activities and funding to the organisation Sharing Our Cultures for the publication of Cultural Context,¹⁸ a grade 6 complementary resource for English, Francophone and Aboriginal communities which features local students with diverse backgrounds and cultures.

Evidence on the concentration of students with an immigrant background in disadvantaged schools

Concentration of disadvantage in schools is another risk factor that can affect the resilience of immigrant students. Schools that struggle to do well for native students might struggle even more with a large population of children who cannot speak or understand the language of instruction. Countries that distribute immigrant students across a mix of schools and classrooms achieve better outcomes for these students. A more even distribution also relieves the pressure on schools and teachers when large numbers of immigrant students arrive over a short period of time (OECD, 2015a).

As the previous chapters have shown, most of the differences in student outcomes that appear to be associated with the concentration of students with an immigrant background in specific schools reflect the fact that these schools are socio-economically disadvantaged, rather than that these schools are disadvantaged because of a concentration of students with an immigration background.

Examples of policies aimed at limiting the concentration of disadvantaged students

Some countries have measures designed to counter the concentration of students with an immigrant background and promote integration. Countries have used three main ways to address the concentration of immigrant and other disadvantaged students in particular schools. The first is to attract and retain other students, including more advantaged students. The second is to better equip immigrant parents with information on how to select the best school for their child. The third is to limit the extent to which advantaged schools can select students on the basis of their family background (OECD, 2015a). Brunello and De Paola (2017) suggest that desegregation policies are not only equitable – they provide better opportunities to individuals from relatively disadvantaged backgrounds – but also efficient.

Language barriers, resource constraints, lower levels of education or lack of knowledge of the host country's school system could hinder immigrant parents' capacity to enrol their children in the most appropriate schools (OECD, 2015a). To overcome these barriers, the municipality of Rotterdam in the Netherlands runs bus tours to take parents around to visit local schools. The purpose of the tour is to allow parents to discuss enrolment options and encourage them to use their local schools. There are also student-exchange projects run by schools with very different profiles. These projects, which include team sports, after-school child care and excursions, attempt to bring together students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Brunello and De Paola, 2017).

In the Flemish Community of Belgium, in regions with many immigrant communities, a platform of local organisations linked with education has been established to design regulations that aim to avoid high concentrations of immigrants or natives in particular schools. The project *School in zicht*¹⁹ encourages parents of native children to enrol their child in local schools that have many students with an immigrant background (MIPEX, 2015).

In Denmark, the 2006 school act permits municipalities to refer students with an immigrant background to other schools. Different measures to promote integration are developed at municipality level. Some municipalities, such as Aarhus, practice forced desegregation; others, including Copenhagen, encourage ethnic-minority parents to choose a school with fewer ethnic minorities, and majority parents to choose schools with a large number of ethnic-minority students. A report from the municipality of Copenhagen concluded that such measures seem to improve societal integration to a certain extent, but they can create new problems for the targeted minority students (MIPEX, 2015).

The Education Territories of Priority Intervention Programme for clustered and non-clustered schools in Portugal is largely implemented in disadvantaged contexts, where the risk of school failure and dropout is high. The programme involves 137 school clusters, representing 17% of all Portuguese school clusters. These schools are invited to develop specific improvement plans based on an agreement, between the school and school authorities, on measures, targets, evaluation and additional resources. The specific improvement plan covers four areas: support to improve learning; management and organisation of the cluster's programmes; prevention of dropout, absenteeism and indiscipline; and relations among the school, families and community.²⁰

Studies have shown that it is mostly advantaged, non-immigrant families who exercise school choice. Therefore, it is important to make schools attractive to students from these families. One example is *Qualität in multikulturellen Schulen* (Quality in multicultural schools-QUIMS)²¹ in Switzerland, which is an obligatory programme if more than 40% of a school's student population are multilingual. The school administration supports QUIMS-schools with extra financial resources and professional help, so that the school can adapt the programme as required in the areas of language, attainment and integration. Language support includes promoting literacy for all students using language-competence assessments, and creative work for oral and written proficiency, and supporting integrated "native language and culture lessons". Attainment support includes a variety of learning methods to encourage co-operative learning

and problem solving, and to increase the involvement of parents and mentors. Integration support is based on building a shared culture of appreciation, respect and understanding by using intercultural mediators to develop connections between parents and teachers, including the establishment of parent councils (Gomolla, 2006; Herzog-Punzenberger, Le Pichon-Vorstman and Siarova, 2017).

As school places are limited, the schools that are perceived to be of the highest quality are likely to attract more applicants than they have places available. Several studies suggest that school-choice plans should use simple lotteries to select among the applicants for oversubscribed schools in order to promote more diverse student populations (Godwin et al, 2006). Education systems can also consider providing financial incentives for oversubscribed schools to enrol immigrant students (Field, Kuczera and Pont, 2007). For example, in the French Community of Belgium, differentiated funding is provided to schools based on the socio-economic background of students. The 2004 Contract for School and the 2007 Enrolment Decree seek to fight against segregated schools. The 2005 Report on Intercultural Dialogue identified the problem of concentration of disadvantage in ghetto schools and recommended using funds to increase socio-cultural diversity (MIPEX, 2015).

Links between language and socio-economic background

Prioritising language training or reducing socio-economic disadvantage might not be equally beneficial in all countries: there might be a trade-off between language policies and policies targeting socio-economic disadvantage for promoting the academic and social resilience of students with an immigrant background. Tables 9.2 and 9.3 show that in some countries, language is a relatively important factor in explaining the disparities in academic performance and sense of belonging between native and immigrant students. In these countries, offering language-specific training for immigrant students is a crucial ingredient of policies aimed at fostering their academic and social resilience. In other countries, socio-economic background plays a more important role than language in promoting academic proficiency and sense of belonging.

In Table 9.2, for countries and economies in the top left quadrant of the table (Croatia, Hong Kong [China] and Luxembourg), policy might promote immigrant students' academic resilience by targeting both socio-economic and linguistic differences. For countries and economies in the top right quadrant (Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires [Argentina], France and the United States), policies to reduce socio-economic disadvantage might be more beneficial to reduce the academic gap between immigrant and native students. In the bottom left quadrant (Estonia, Latvia and the Slovak Republic), policies that target language training might be more effective. In the bottom right quadrant (the Czech Republic, Portugal and the United Kingdom), policies might instead target issues other than language and socio-economic background.

Table 9.2 ■ Targeting efforts on key risk factors for the academic resilience of immigrant students: The relative importance of language and socio-economic background

	Language relatively important	Average	Language relatively not important
Socio-economic status relatively important	Croatia, Hong Kong (China), Luxembourg	Greece, Netherlands	Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires (Argentina), France, United States,
Average	Jordan, Switzerland	Austria, Belgium, Germany, Slovenia, Sweden	Italy, Spain
Socio-economic status relatively not important	Estonia, Latvia, Slovak Republic	Denmark, Finland	Czech Republic, Portugal, United Kingdom

Notes: Dimension 1 (rows) sorts countries based on the share of the difference between native and immigrant students (first- and second-generation) in the likelihood of attaining baseline academic proficiency that is explained by differences in socio-economic status. The share is larger for countries in the top row and smaller for those in the one below.

Dimension 2 (columns) sorts countries based on the difference between native-speaking and non-native speaking immigrant students in the likelihood of attaining baseline academic proficiency. The positive gap is larger for countries in the left column and smaller for those in the right one.

Students who attain baseline academic proficiency are those who reach at least PISA proficiency Level 2 in all three core PISA subjects: science, reading and mathematics.

Socio-economic status is measured through the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS).

Native-speaking students are students who speak most frequently at home the language of the PISA assessment. Non-native-speaking students are those who reported that the language they most frequently speak at home is different from the language of the PISA assessment.

Source: OECD, PISA 2015 Database.

Table 9.3 ■ Targeting efforts on key risk factors for the social resilience of immigrant students: The relative importance of language and socio-economic background

	Language relatively important	Average	Language relatively not important
Socio-economic status relatively important		Austria, Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires (Argentina) , Denmark, Netherlands	Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg
Average	Greece, Italy, Spain, Sweden	New Zealand	Slovenia, Switzerland
Socio-economic status relatively not important	Estonia, Jordan , Latvia, Montenegro	Czech Republic, Portugal	Ireland, Malta

Notes: Dimension 1 (rows) sorts countries based on the share of the difference between native and immigrant students (first- and second-generation) in the likelihood of reporting a sense of belonging at school that is explained by differences in socio-economic status. The share is larger for countries in the top row and smaller for those in the one below.

Dimension 2 (columns) sorts countries based on the difference between native-speaking and non-native speaking immigrant students in the likelihood of attaining baseline academic proficiency. The positive gap is larger for countries in the left column and smaller for those in the right one.

Students who reported a sense of belonging at school are those who reported that they “agree” or “strongly agree” with the statement “I feel like I belong at school” and “disagree” or “strongly disagree” with the statement “I feel like an outsider at school”.

Socio-economic status is measured through the PISA index of economic, social and cultural status (ESCS).

Native-speaking students are students who speak most frequently at home the language of the PISA assessment. Non-native-speaking students are those who reported that the language they most frequently speak at home is different from the language of the PISA assessment.

Source: OECD, PISA 2015 Database.

In countries in the top right quadrant of Table 9.3 (Belgium, France, Germany and Luxembourg), policies that target socio-economic differences are likely to be particularly beneficial in supporting the social resilience of immigrant students. By contrast, among the set of countries that are in the bottom left quadrant of Table 9.3 (Estonia, Jordan, Latvia and Montenegro), policies that target language are likely to be particularly beneficial in reducing the gap between immigrant and native students in sense of belonging at school.

Achieving a supportive climate at school through positive relationships

As Chapter 7 has shown, a positive classroom climate is key for students’ academic and well-being. Some of the facets of a positive school climate that have been shown to be associated with positive academic performance are supportive teacher-student interactions, good student-student relationships, and an orderly learning atmosphere with clear disciplinary rules (Creemers and Kyriakides, 2008; Harris and Chrispeels, 2006; Hopkins, 2005; Scheerens and Bosker, 1997). Even more notably, research suggests that supportive teacher-student interactions, good student-student relationships, and the strong focus on student learning that characterises schools with a positive disciplinary climate are particularly beneficial to disadvantaged students (Cheema and Kitsantas, 2014; Murray and Malmgren, 2005).

Good student-student relationships are an important factor in creating a positive school climate. However, many vulnerable children and adolescents, including those who are poor or from ethnic, linguistic or cultural minorities, or are from migrant or refugee communities, or have disabilities, are at higher risk of school violence and bullying (UNESCO, 2017). The social costs of bullying are high: bullied children face a greater risk of poor health, internalised stress, and suicidal thoughts (United Nations, 2016). Bullying of immigrant children is particularly problematic as immigrants often experience several layers of disadvantage (Caulfield et al, 2005; Elame, 2013; Mühlenweg, 2010; Ponzo, 2013). “Immigrant bullying” has been defined as “bullying that targets another’s immigrant status or family history of immigration in the form of taunts and slurs, derogatory references to the immigration process, physical aggression, social manipulation or exclusion because of immigration status” (UNESCO, 2017). A number of countries have introduced policies to combat bullying of all children, though some countries have specific immigrant-related strategies.

Examples of policies that promote a bully-free environment

In Ireland, the National Action Plan on Bullying (2013) promotes the development of school policies, including strategies to combat bullying. The plan was informed by consultations with children and young people, who emphasised prevention, including the need for: all members of the school community to understand the various manifestations and consequences of bullying; schools to tackle the underlying causes of bullying by promoting a culture of respect for the dignity of every person; and children and young people to learn about and value diversity. The plan also called for new national anti-bullying procedures for schools, support for training of school administrators and parents, and the creation of a positive school culture to tackle bullying²² (United Nations, 2016).

In Ontario, Canada, the Comprehensive Action Plan for Accepting Schools includes legislation and resources on bullying prevention and intervention, while the Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy identifies discriminatory biases and systemic barriers to student achievement, promotes the participation of parents in their children's education and in supporting safe and inclusive schools, and provides counselling and guidance on Internet safety.²³

In Mexico, in 2014, the *Convivencia sin violencia* campaign was introduced to bring attention to bullying in schools and to promote peaceful social interaction. The campaign included an anti-bullying initiative, *Proyecto a favor de la convivencia escolar*, through which the education community, including parents, students and civil society actors, were given access to resources and recommendations on how to support and protect children both within and outside of school. The initiative advances the peaceful resolution of conflict, self-control and the development of coping abilities (UNESCO, 2017).

In France, bullying prevention has been a priority for the Ministry of National Education. Students are offered training and support and are informed of available services, while the responsibilities of school administration are clearly identified. An Internet site sets out national policies and programmes for the general public (*Agir contre le harcèlement à l'École*)²⁴.

In Sweden, the Education Act (2010) identifies measures that schools must take to prevent bullying and highlights their responsibility to investigate and take appropriate measures against degrading treatment. It also requires that schools report and investigate all alleged incidents of bullying and have an annual plan to prevent and address it (United Nations, 2016).

In Portugal, the Directorate General for Schools is partnering with Public Security Police and the PIN-Progressive Children's Clinic in a pilot project to analyse the phenomenon of bullying through innovative management of cases of young people with at-risk behaviour or who seriously violate students' rights. Although bullying is used to define aggressions, physical or psychological, with characteristics of increasing continuity and intensity, it also often includes cases of racism and intolerance (Ministry of Education, Portugal).

Evidence on the availability of and participation in extracurricular activities

Chapter 7 has highlighted that allocating resources to after-school activities can make a difference in helping immigrant students integrate better. Extracurricular activities include any organised social, artistic or physical activities for school-aged youth that occur during out-of-school time, usually before or after school or during the summer. But schools are not the only venues where after-school activities take place; these activities are also often provided by communities or religious organisations.

There is strong evidence that extracurricular activities increase students' self-esteem and positive social behaviours (Durlak et al., 2010). They can also be a vehicle for strengthening social support systems, developing social skills and relationships, and enhancing neighbourhood cohesion (Macomber and Moore, 1999). There are a variety of these types of activities and programmes, and some are more effective than others (Farb and Matjasko, 2012). Creative extracurricular activities, such as music, dance, drama and the visual arts can increase participants' self-confidence, self-esteem and positive behaviours (Bungay and Vella-Burrows, 2013). After-school activities appear to improve immigrant high school students' sense of belonging, motivation and academic achievement (Camacho, 2015).

Extracurricular activities with academic components can also help students modestly improve their grades, test scores and academic proficiency (Bodilly and Beckett, 2005; Durlak et al.; Farb and Matjasko, 2012; Grogan, Henrich and Malikina, 2014; Leos-Urbel, 2015; Vandell, 2013).

While extracurricular activities have mainly positive benefits for every student, they can be particularly beneficial for students with learning disabilities and from disadvantaged backgrounds. Through such activities, these students might assume leadership roles and demonstrate talents in ways that that might not be available to them in traditional classroom settings. Extracurricular activities might also allow students to meet and make friends with peers from different cultural and socio-economic backgrounds (Moody, 2001).

One after-school activity that can be particularly beneficial for immigrant students is sports. There is a growing literature on the benefits of sports for individuals, including better health and social skills (see Heckman, Stixrud and Urzua, 2006; Keogh, 2002; Morgan, 2008; UNHCR, 2008). Sporting environments can offer equal opportunities and promote racial equality among those involved, allowing immigrants to maintain their cultural identity while integrating into the host-country society (Iwasaki and Bartlett, 2006). By participating in leisure activities with native populations, immigrants can learn about local customs and culture, and interact with native peers (Makarova and Herzog, 2014; Garibaldi, 2017). This, in turn, can improve the way immigrants relate to natives and create positive social bonds (Toyoda, 2012). Sports can also provide “a sense of purpose and direction for young people recovering from the traumas of the refugee experience or the impact of racism” (Dykes and Olliff, 2007: 1). Sport also offers an opportunity for social interaction, and a way for non-English speakers to learn and practise English; and it can promote ethnic and cultural harmony and strengthen communities (Allen et al., 2010; Olliff, 2007).

Examples of practices to encourage participation in sports and extracurricular activities

Communities have developed a variety of ways to promote sporting activities among immigrants. For example, the German Football League (DFL) started a “Willkommen im Verein” (Welcome to Football) initiative in 2015, leading to 24 of the country’s professional clubs launching similar schemes (e.g. Werder Bremen’s “Bleib am Ball” (Stay on the Ball) project and Bayer Leverkusen’s “Bayer 04 macht Schule” (Bayer 04 does school project). Around 65 training sessions involving about 800 refugees aged between 4 and 30 take place in Germany every week, and around 600 of these participants have begun playing in amateur leagues. In conjunction with the local amateur side TSC Eintracht Dortmund, and with funding from the DFL and the German Children and Youth Foundation, the Bundesliga club’s BVB Foundation has helped to create a project that allows a group of refugees aged between 18 and 20 to attend a weekly training session at the stadium, where they also receive a free meal before training and a German lesson afterwards. Students from refugee communities attending local schools are rewarded for good behaviour with a year-long place in the course, and organisers also help find them jobs and university places afterwards. In addition to providing coaching and equipment, Dortmund gives away free tickets for their matches (Aarons, 2017).

At the EU level, the “European Sport Inclusion Network (ESPIN): Promoting Equal Opportunities of Migrants and Minorities through Volunteering in Sport” involves those who are at risk of social exclusion. Equal access to organised sport is promoted among disadvantaged groups.²⁵ Another example is the “MATCH MigrAtion and SporTs – a CHallenge for Sports Associations and Trainers”.²⁶ This is a partnership among five countries, targeting sports associations and focused on the theme of integrating migrants through sports. The project collects and disseminates good practice examples. One of them is the multicultural sports festival “Let’s play”, in Alto Adige, a region in northern Italy. This festival, a sporting competition in which local and migrants participate together, is organised every year by the non-profit association OEW-Organizzazione per Un mondo solidale in Bressanone.

The role of parent engagement

As Chapter 7 has shown, parents’ engagement is crucial for good academic, and social and emotional outcomes of students with an immigrant background. Numerous other studies indicate that students are better learners when their parents are involved in their education (Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003; Fan and Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2007; OECD, 2012a; Schofield, 2006). Therefore it is important that parents can communicate with teachers, and get to know their children’s teachers and friends. Several studies examine factors that can promote or hinder immigrant parents’ engagement with the education of their children (Bouakaz, 2007; Bouakaz and Persson, 2007; Crul et al., 2017; Fibbi and Truong, 2015). Whatever the parents’ educational background, parents who are able to provide strategic direction, show support for their children’s education, and value education can help their children’s integration into the host-country school system and promote a climate at school and at home that supports their academic, social and emotional development. Schools and teachers that offer information to parents, meet with them regularly and seek to understand students’ backgrounds can also encourage parents’ engagement.

Visiting homes, recruiting culturally appropriate and trained specialists, providing learning resources and information to families, launching awareness campaigns, and training teachers and staff to work with culturally and linguistically diverse children are all ways that education systems can support immigrant parents in their efforts to help their children succeed (OECD, 2014).

Examples of policies and practices that promote parent engagement

Many countries have developed policies to support parents as their children move from pre-primary to primary school. For example, Australia, Austria, New Zealand, Norway and Wales have implemented a number of strategies to encourage parents from disadvantaged households to support their children as they transition from early childhood education into primary schools (OECD, 2017b).

The Parent-Child Home Programme²⁷ in the United States is an early-childhood literacy, parenting and school-readiness programme. It provides two years of twice-weekly visits to families with children between the ages of 16 months and 4 years who are living in poverty or isolation, have limited opportunities for education and poor language and literacy skills, and/or are confronted with other obstacles to healthy development and success in education. The programme employs early literacy specialists from the community they serve, sharing both the language and culture of the families with whom they work. In addition to leading weekly activities to stimulate parent-child interactions and help the child learn English, the specialist also connects the families to other community resources, such as health and medical facilities, and other education programmes. On completion of the programme, families are assisted in enrolling their child in a centre-based, pre-school programme (OECD, 2015a).

Another example of an effective way to engage marginalised parents in early childhood education is the HIPPY²⁸ (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters) programme, which operates in 10 countries spanning 5 continents. The programme is designed especially for those parents who may not feel comfortable in their own abilities to support their children's (pre-primary) education. Similar initiatives are found in Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland. HIPPY has gained recognition as an efficient method for raising families' awareness of their potential as educators. Once a week the family is visited by trained peers from the same socio-cultural background who provide first-language assistance and learning activities for children. The visitor acquaints parents with games and learning materials in their mother tongue. Parents are also encouraged to create learning situations for their own child. Several research studies have shown positive results both for children and families alike (Gomby, 2005).

Some programmes aim specifically to involve immigrant parents in their children's education. One of them is Berlin's (Germany) "Neighbourhood mothers" programme, through which immigrant mothers are trained to act as contact and resource persons for families and particularly other women in the neighbourhood (for instance by working in schools or by visiting families in their homes).²⁹ It resembles similar programmes in Denmark and the Netherlands (Herzog-Punzenberger, Le Pichon-Vorstman and Siarova, 2017).

In Norway, the Multicultural Initiative and Resource Network, a volunteer organisation, recognises parents as resources for student learning. This network works for bilingual parents who wish to co-operate with the school and who will and can take responsibility for their child's learning. The agency also works to make parents more aware of their role in relation to the Norwegian school system, to society and to their own children (National Centre for Multicultural Education, 2010).³⁰

Australia also implements measures to support immigrant parents and communities. For instance, in Queensland, intensive English-language courses are offered in consultation with parents³¹ as the government has committed to improving the engagement of migrant and refugee communities in education. The New South Wales Department of Education offers Community Information Officers to help schools strengthen links with parents and community members from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The department also offers a specific programme for Youth Partnerships with Pacific Communities that includes parent/school partnerships and homework support³² (MIPEX, 2015).

The role of diversity-aware teachers for supporting all learners

All efforts to integrate children with an immigrant background depend on well-skilled and well-supported teachers who take into account the diversity of their student populations in their instructional approaches and who can help all students to achieve. Teachers are often ill-prepared in pedagogical approaches for second-language learning or in recognising and helping children overcome the effects of trauma that many immigrant children endure (OECD, 2015a).

Table 9.4 shows the difference between native and immigrant students in the extent to which immigrant students are more likely to receive feedback from their science teachers (after accounting for their PISA science score) and the extent to which immigrant students are more likely than native students to perceive that their teachers treat them unfairly. In countries and economies in the top left quadrant (Costa Rica, Finland, Lithuania, Macao [China], Norway and Singapore), immigrant students appear to be relatively well-supported by their teachers: they reported receiving additional feedback compared to native students and reported being treated fairly by their teachers. Immigrant students in countries and economies in the bottom right quadrant (Brazil, Croatia, the Netherlands and Turkey) reported receiving little additional feedback from their teachers compared to native students, and reported feeling that they are treated unfairly by their teachers. These countries might consider implementing policies that support teacher-training initiatives designed to improve teachers' ability to support and assist immigrant students. In countries listed in the top right quadrant (Belgium, Denmark, the Slovak Republic and Sweden), teachers appear to be aware of the importance of supporting immigrant students, since immigrant students in these countries reported receiving more feedback than native students. But teachers in these countries appear to need additional training in how to provide assistance to these students without stigmatising them.

Table 9.4 ■ Interaction between feedback and perceived unfair treatment by teachers

	Small gap in perceived unfair treatment (immigrant - native)	Average	Large gap in perceived unfair treatment (immigrant - native)
Large gap in feedback (immigrant - native)	Costa Rica, Finland, Lithuania, Macao (China), Norway, Singapore	Chile, Estonia, Luxembourg, Slovenia	Belgium, Denmark, Slovak Republic, Sweden
Average	Austria, Mexico, Portugal	Czech Republic, Ireland, United Kingdom, United States	Austria, Dominican Republic, Germany, Mexico, Portugal, Switzerland, Tunisia
Small gap in feedback (immigrant - native)	Beijing-Shanghai-Jiangsu-Guangdong (China), Bulgaria, Hong Kong (China), Montenegro, Russia, Spain	Colombia, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Thailand	Brazil, Croatia, Netherlands, Turkey

Notes: Dimension 1 (rows) sorts countries based on the difference in the percentage of immigrant and native students who reported receiving frequent feedback from their science teacher, after accounting for their science performance. Immigrant students tended to report more frequent feedback, so a large gap favours immigrant students.

Dimension 2 (columns) sorts countries based on the difference in the percentage of immigrant and native students who reported frequent unfair treatment by their teachers. Immigrant students were more likely to report unfair treatment, which is a "negative" outcome.

Students who reported frequent unfair treatment by their teachers are those who answered "a few times a month" or "once a week or more" to at least one of the question of how often, during the previous 12 months: "Teachers called me less often than they called on other students"; "Teachers graded me harder than they graded other students"; "Teachers gave me the impression that they think I am less smart than I really am"; "Teachers disciplined me more harshly than other students"; "Teachers ridiculed me in front of others"; and "Teachers said something insulting me in front of others".

Students who reported receiving frequent feedback from their science teacher are those who answered "many lessons" or "every lesson or almost every lesson" to at least one of the questions about how often: "The teacher tells me how I am performing in this course"; "The teacher gives me feedback on my strength in this subject"; "The teacher tells me in which areas I can improve"; "The teacher tells me how I can improve my performance"; and "The teacher advises me on how to reach my learning goals".

Source: OECD, PISA 2015 Database.

Examples of policies and practices for building a diversity-aware teaching force

All teachers could benefit from training to teach children who do not speak the language of instruction and to address cultural diversity within their teaching. This could include intercultural training and training for different learner needs (European Commission, 2015). For example, in the French Community of Belgium, intercultural education has been part of teacher training since 2000, and includes pre-service training for teaching in culturally diverse classrooms and awareness of ethnic/social discrimination for all teacher candidates. Professional-development training on diversity is also offered for all teachers (MIPEX, 2015).

In New Zealand, pre-service training is required in order to qualify as a teacher. The standards make specific reference to the need for teachers to develop intercultural competence. They also require graduating teachers to have knowledge of the Maori culture and language so they can work effectively in the bicultural contexts of Aotearoa New Zealand. In-service training is provided through teachers' centres and/or through postgraduate courses at universities across the country (MIPEX, 2015).

In the Netherlands, an understanding of cultural diversity is also a prerequisite for qualification as a teacher. The Requirements for Teaching Staff Act also specifies and requires ongoing development of all competencies, including cultural understanding (MIPEX, 2015).

Teachers might also benefit from learning about the needs specific to immigrants. For example, in Norway, the government introduced a five-year plan in 2013 to improve multicultural competence among teachers and kindergarten staff. The efforts are focused on multicultural pedagogy, multilingualism, second-language teaching and adult education. The programme aims to cover 600 schools during the five-year period (MIPEX, 2015).

All teachers in Victoria, Australia, are required to register with the Victorian Institute of Teaching (VIT). To qualify for registration, an applicant must have completed an appropriate four years of tertiary education in primary or secondary school teaching, or relevant industrial experience, and have completed an approved course of teacher education. For English-as-a-second language teachers, an additional requirement is needed (the ISLPR Test, which is a language test to measure a person's proficiency in English and other languages). Teachers could be encouraged to participate in professional development activities in order to maintain their registration, which is renewed every five years. This is also required to renew their certificate and to acquire knowledge and practice with the relevant VIT standards. Standards at the Proficient Teacher level expressly require skills to work with students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds. This standard is also evident in the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (MIPEX, 2015).

Initial teacher education in the United Kingdom focuses on standards including those on equality and diversity. There is an expectation that trainee teachers will understand issues of diversity and be able to work with those students for whom English is not their mother tongue. Standards for serving teachers also address diversity, and if teachers wish to progress in their career they must excel in these areas. However, there is a variety of constraints on standards for existing teachers to the extent that these specific standards might not be targeted as explicitly as they are in initial teacher education (MIPEX, 2015).³³

To understand and teach immigrant students effectively, it is helpful for teachers to learn how to teach students with different mother tongues. Various methods are taught in teacher training (for an overview, see European Commission, 2017), including language-sensitive teaching. In this approach, teachers learn to become aware of the language dimension of teaching and learning content in their subject, and to acquire teaching strategies and techniques which link language to curriculum content and academic standards (Beacco et al., 2015: 99).

One example is the "Step Together" project in Hungary, which developed content-based language-teaching material to assist primary school teachers in teaching children who do not speak the host-country language. The material covers four areas of the national core curriculum with the aim of building language skills by learning content related to topics covered in the wider curriculum throughout the school year (European Commission, 2015).

Evidence on mentoring schemes

While not explicitly discussed in the previous chapters, mentoring can provide additional, nonprofessional support to students with an immigrant background and thus improve their well-being. Mentors can be teachers, other school personnel or peers. Evidence indicates that mentoring relationships, especially those characterised by closeness and continuity, promote resilience and enhance psychological well-being among youth (DuBois and Silverthorn, 2005). There is evidence that young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, among which students with an immigrant background are over-represented, benefit the most from participating in mentoring programmes (DuBois et al, 2002; Rotich, 2011).

Mentoring can be especially beneficial for newly arrived immigrant students. Mentors can help facilitate the integration of these students into the host community, as they can offer opportunities to acquire or improve local language skills, and can help connect youth to resources, such as public transportation, the local library, and other programmes (Birman and Morland, 2014, Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Through such programmes, immigrant youth can build connections with caring adults who can encourage them in their studies and provide information about the school and higher-education system (Oberoi, 2016). Peer mentors can also help immigrant students feel welcomed and “learn the ropes” in the school they attend. Mentoring can also play an important role in developing the types of positive social relations with teachers and peers that research suggests can nurture students’ engagement and sense of belonging at school (Oberoi, 2016).

According to the Network of Experts in Social Sciences of Education and Training (NESSE, 2008) and Crul and Kraal (2004), the success of mentoring rests on how well mentors have been trained, the extent of schools’ co-operation, and the engagement of parents and children. Mentors are often from the same cultural background as the mentee, so they can use their mother tongue to communicate knowledge about the school and the education system, as well as help immigrant students learn the host-country language.

Examples of practices aimed to promote mentoring

Most mentoring initiatives aim to help children from minority groups “catch up” with their peers, but they can also promote linguistic diversity (Herzog-Punzenberger, Le Pichon-Vorstman and Siarova, 2017). For example, the (peer) mentoring initiative in Hamburg, Germany, *Junge Vorbilder* (Young Role Models), targets students in grades 8 to 11 (lower secondary school) with an immigrant background. Mentors are university students who come from immigrant backgrounds and often share similar cultural and linguistic heritage and school experience as their mentees (European Commission, 2015). Mentoring is conducted at the homes of the mentees so that mentors can learn about their mentee’s family environment and develop a good relationship with their parents. Mentoring consists of tutoring, social and emotional support, and educational and vocational orientation.³⁴

Another example is Nightingale Mentoring,³⁵ which operates in Austria, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and Uganda. Begun in Malmö, Sweden, in 1997, it seeks to recruit students from cultures and societies where there is little or no tradition of children being involved in higher education. The mentor gives the child a positive role model by establishing a personal relationship with the mentee child. This in turn helps strengthen the child’s personal and social confidence. The goal is that the child will perform better in school and will be more likely to apply for university when the time comes. The concept is based on the idea of “mutual benefit” for the child and student (Herzog-Punzenberger, Le Pichon-Vorstman and Siarova, 2017).

Monitoring progress

Information on students’ background characteristics, sources of vulnerability and well-being outcomes is crucial if education systems are to be able to help these students develop academically, socially and emotionally and overcome the adversities related to their immigrant background. Collecting relevant data is key to ensure that schools support these students; monitoring their progress through schooling helps to build a body of good practices and avoid repeating mistakes. Because of sensitivities associated with collecting highly personal information, many countries do not collect relevant data, or if they collect such data, they do not publish aggregated findings which makes it difficult to monitor progress and learn from experience. While identifying different groups of students with an immigrant background and evaluating their academic, social, emotional and motivational well-being is important for targeting initiatives to strengthen these students’ resilience, monitoring strategies could be perceived as stigmatising by some students and families if they are not implemented with sensitivity (OECD, 2015a).

Examples of monitoring policies

Monitoring the quality and impact of pre-primary education is not a well-developed practice across OECD countries. Monitoring processes tend to focus more on compliance with regulations than on the quality of service or assessing how well children’s needs are being identified and met (OECD, 2015d). However, a few OECD countries have developed systems to benchmark and monitor children’s progress, including

children from different socio-economic and ethnic groups. Some countries use school-entry tests as a means to focus on child development and to provide information on how young children are progressing. Australia, for example, uses a national adaptation of the Early Development Instrument (EDI). The EDI, originally developed in Ontario, Canada, is a measure of children's development as they enter school. Teachers complete a checklist measuring children's physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive skills, and communication skills and general knowledge. The results are aggregated to the group level (school, neighbourhood and city) to provide a population-based measure of children's development (OECD, 2015d). Another example is the Estonian Education Information System (EHIS), which records data of students' mother tongue and tracks progress through education. This data can be integrated with the census to track years of residence and generations (MIPEx, 2015).

The Finnish system disaggregates immigrants into a sub-group, "foreign-language students", and foreign-language students by age (statistics that are publicly available). For upper secondary education, vocational education, polytechnics and universities, the system disaggregates students into subgroups by mother tongue, nationality and country of origin (statistics are public although covered by privacy protection) (MIPEx, 2015).

The Primary School Information System (GSI) in Norway provides statistics about students, including language minorities. The data includes gender, age and language (not country of origin). Publicly available statistics on upper secondary students do not separate out language minorities, but the directorate does publish annual reports including statistics that are related to minority education issues (MIPEx, 2015).

In the United States, the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act mandates disaggregated assessment results for protected groups: limited English proficiency, black, Hispanic, Asian, low income, and special education. States can define the number that constitutes a group for reporting purposes. However, no information on country of birth is provided. This monitoring is conducted within the NCLB Waiver programme that applies to the vast majority of US states (MIPEx, 2015).³⁶

In Italy, a national observatory for the integration of foreign students and intercultural education was created in 2006. Since 2005, an annual statistical study on the presence of migrant students, based on reports from regional education authorities, is published by the ministry of education. The system disaggregates immigrant students by country of origin (MIPEx, 2015).

Notes

1. See www.healthinschools.org/caring-across-communities/childrens-hospital-boston/.
2. See www.healthinschools.org/Immigrant-and-Refugee-Children/Caring-Across-Communities/NYU.
3. See www.healthinschools.org/Immigrant-and-Refugee-Children/Caring-Across-Communities/World-Relief-Chicago.
4. See www.dge.mec.pt/selo-escola-intercultural.
5. See www.jobstarter.de/de/kausa-21.php.
6. See www.netzwerk-iq.de/.
7. See www.deewr.gov.au/Pages/DepartmentSites.aspx.
8. See www.komposyt.sk/pre-odbornikov/ziak-so-svvp/integracia-ziaka-so-svvp/dokumnetacia/preview-file/het-centrum-voor-leerlingenbegeleiding-docx_nl-nl_en-gb-3-767.pdf.
9. See www.det.nsw.edu.au/home; www.education.vic.gov.au/default.htm.
10. See <https://sprach-kitas.fruehe-chancen.de/programm/ueber-das-programm>.
11. See [www.curriculumonline.ie/Primary/Curriculum-Areas/Language-New-Junior-infants-2nd-class/Language-Home/Introduction/\(ii\)-Using-the-Curriculum-and-Toolkit](http://www.curriculumonline.ie/Primary/Curriculum-Areas/Language-New-Junior-infants-2nd-class/Language-Home/Introduction/(ii)-Using-the-Curriculum-and-Toolkit).
12. See <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/System-of-support-incl.-PLD/Learner-initiated-supports/ESOL-funding-and-MoE-support>.
13. See <http://dge.mec.pt/portugues-lingua-nao-materna>.
14. See www.regjeringen.no/globalassets/upload/KD/Vedlegg/Grunnskole/Strategiplaner/Likeverdige_ENG_net.pdf.
15. See <https://bimm.at/>.
16. See www.ed.gov.nl.ca/edu/k12/curriculum/guides/esl/index.html.
17. See www.ancnl.ca/?Content=SWIS/Homework_Club.
18. See www.sharingourcultures.com/cultural-contxt/.
19. See www.schoolinzicht.be.
20. See www.dge.mec.pt/teip.
21. See www.quims.ch/.
22. See www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Action-Plan-On-Bullying-2013.pdf.
23. See www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/safeschools/SafeAccepSchools.pdf.
24. See www.education.gouv.fr/cid86060/agir-contre-le-harcelement-a-l-ecole.html.
25. See www.sportinclusion.net/.
26. See www.match-eu.at.
27. See www.parent-child.org/.
28. See <http://hippy-international.org/>.
29. See <http://policytransfer.metropolis.org/case-studies/neighborhood-mothers>.
30. See www.mirnett.org/pub/.
31. See <http://education.qld.gov.au/multicultural/pdfs/qld-multicultural-action-plan-08-11.pdf>.
32. See www.schools.nsw.edu.au/learning/yrk12focusareas/ccbuilding/clresources.php.
33. See www.rbkc.gov.uk/pdf/standards_core.pdf.
34. See www.verikom.de/bildung/junge_vorbilder/.
35. See <http://nightingalementoring.org/>.
36. See www2.ed.gov/policy/eseaflex/secretary-letters/cssorenwalltr.html.

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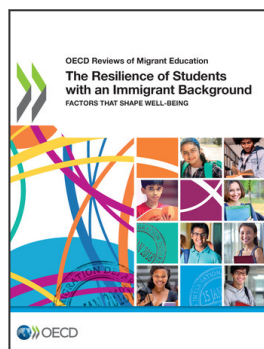
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