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Region of Peel Immigration Discussion Paper

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Meeting the Needs of Immigrants Throughout the Lifecycle

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Working for you

Human Services

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1. Introduction

This paper examines specific intergenerational and family dimensions of the immigrant experience in Canada, generally, and in the Region of Peel in particular. Our analysis is organized around the concept of lifespan or lifecycle groups, specifically on age ranges at the beginning and end of the lifecycle; childhood (birth-8 years), youth (12-24 years) and seniors (65+ years). In addition, we include a section on the migration stresses faced by couples.

An overview of changing patterns of immigration in Canada, with selected demographic for the Peel Region, is presented in *Neighbourhood Patterns and Housing Choices of Immigrants*, one of the other discussion papers in this series. This paper begins by adding demographic data relevant to the lifespan groups in question in order to help set the context for our identification of needs and strategies. This is followed by a section for each lifespan group, including a review of the underlying issues and needs pertinent to each.

Any discussion of immigrant integration needs to consider issues of intersectionality, including gender, length of stay, ethnicity, generational status and socioeconomic status (SES). In looking at the lifespan issues of immigrants, it is important to recognize the substantial differences between the needs and experiences of immigrants who are first-, 1.5, (one-and-one-half) or second-generation immigrants. Also important are special challenges presented by the many people whose access and outcomes are affected by living with precarious legal status-refugee claimants, temporary visa holders and undocumented persons, as well as persons who entered the country under a legal category but then lapsed into undocumented status-and those who arrive in Canada after extended family separations.

Promising strategies and solutions that the Peel Region (including its various municipalities) might consider advocating, collaborating on or implementing in each case are then listed. The strategies and solutions we outline include macro-level policies as well as a number of programs, including those delivered by the Region and community-based and school-based organizations.

Demographic Profile of Children and Youth in Peel

Government figures indicate that, of the 1.8 million immigrants arriving in Canada during the 1990s, 17% were school-aged children and youth (Statistics Canada, 2006a). Every year, about 25,000 non-English speaking immigrants under 19 years of age arrive in Ontario, most settling in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) and surrounding areas. Of these immigrants, 75% are from countries where English is not the first language. Many Canadian-born children are raised in homes with immigrant parents, contributing to the 10% of the Canadian population with home languages other than English or French. Almost 90% of urban schools in Ontario have ESL students, with some reporting as many as 92% of students requiring ESL (People for Education, 2008).

Brampton and Mississauga are the main locales of immigrant settlement in Peel. In Brampton, 27.3% of children ages 0-9 speak only a non-official language at home while this figure is 25.5% for Mississauga (Statistics Canada, 2006). The number of children 0-9 who do not speak English at home increased dramatically in the five years between 2001 and 2006. In Brampton, the number of children 0-4 who use a non-official language in the home has increased by 115.5%. For Brampton children 5-9 years of age, the percentage has increased by 93.1%. For Mississauga, the proportion of children who do not speak English or French in the home has increased by 27% for children 0-4 and by 4.9% for those 5-9 years of age (Statistics Canada, 2006).

In these municipalities, 37% and 34% of the populations, respectively, are under age 24. These figures compare with 32% of the total population for Ontario. According to the 2006 Census, over one-third of youth aged 15 to 29 living in Toronto are first generation, while close to 40% are second generation. Large percentages of the populations of second-generation visible minorities are between the ages of 15 and 34 (Jantzen, 2008). While similar age-specific statistics are not available for the Region of Peel, the 2006 Census data indicate that, across age categories for the population 15 years and over, 60% comprises first generation, 20% second generation, and 20% third generation plus (Statistics Canada, 2006c).

Thirty-nine per cent and 45% of those between the ages of 15 and 24 living in Brampton and Mississauga, respectively, speak a non-official language in the home.

The socioeconomic integration of first- and second-generation youth and their parents relates to such key factors as educational attainment, employment outcomes and income. Comparisons across individuals and groups on such variables as country of origin, period of arrival, generation, gender, ethnic origin and visible minority status also shed light on this issue. The economic status of newcomers to Canada, who are mainly visible minorities, has generally declined over the last 20 years compared with Canadian-born individuals and previous immigrants who arrived in the country prior to this period (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003).

Problems with labour market integration result in high rates of underemployment and unemployment and increased dependence on social assistance for these newcomers and their families (HRDC, 2001). Based on 1996 Census data, Ornstein (2000) found family poverty among non-European groups in Toronto to be twice as high as among groups of European and Canadian origin. For certain groups (e.g., Latin Americans, African Blacks and Caribbeans, Arabs, and West Asians) the figure is as much as three times the rate. Milan & Tran (2004) reported that 44% of Black children compared with 19% of non-Black children live in low income families.

Economic marginalization may be even greater for temporary immigrants undocumented immigrants, and refugee claimants and their families (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003). The rates of low socioeconomic status for immigrant families suggest many first- and second-generation youth, particularly those of visible minority status, live in poverty.

Demographic Profile of Seniors in Peel

Dramatic increases in the size of both the senior and the senior immigrant population have been projected for Peel (Peel Seniors, 2006). In Canada, the proportion of seniors (65+ years) among immigrants is higher than that of the population as a whole (19% vs. 12.2%), with the highest proportion among immigrants born in European countries (31%) and the lowest among immigrants born in Asian, African and Central/South American countries (9.7%, 8.0% and 6.7%, respectively). In 2001, two-thirds of Peel's seniors were immigrants, with 54% having immigrated prior to 1971 and only 6% having immigrated between 1996 and 2001 (Peel Seniors, 2006). Peel seniors also have a higher prevalence of low income levels as compared with the general population. Ontario seniors and Peel unattached seniors (particularly women) are at a higher risk of low income compared with their counterparts (Peel Seniors, 2006).

2. Immigrants in the Early Childhood and Childhood Years

Immigrant children come from diverse cultures and migration trajectories and they face various challenges when adjusting to their new host country. The process of setting up care and learning programs for young immigrant children is thus also a challenge. It is important to make sure that immigrant children not only learn academic and social skills, but also are also given opportunities to make sense of the world around them, develop meaningful relationships, and feel a sense of belonging.

As co-constructors of knowledge, children engage in learning new skills best when they know that their voice and participation are valued. Though this holds true for all children, the migration and urban life stressors faced by immigrant children complicate their situation and thus necessitate a diverse array of solutions to bridge the gap between their needs and those of non-immigrant children.

The overall goal of this section of the paper is to address two basic questions: 1) In what ways do the challenges of migration create exceptional early childhood education and care needs for immigrant children from birth to twelve years of age, and 2) What solutions and strategies can be adopted by Peel Region to respond to immigrant children's adaptation and well-being?

Following a brief summary of the importance of the early childhood years and of the need for quality education and care, we concentrate specifically on five key underlying issues as they relate to the adaptation needs faced by immigrant children: 1) access to quality child care and education programs that are culturally respectful; 2) early academic disengagement leading to school drop-out; 3) language proficiency and retention of the home language while learning English; 4) generational problems; and 5) socio-emotional consequences created by particular migration trajectories. Following discussion of each issue, a set of potential and promising solutions for the Region of Peel is presented. The solutions are organized in such a way as to suggest how the Region might advocate, collaborate and implement/support Regional policies and programs. A list of exemplary programs is also included for each issue.

Before beginning, a brief note is in order. In addition to the underlying issues detailed below, immigrant children are profoundly affected by the challenges faced by their parents (and, in some cases, their grandparents as well) in adapting to new environments. As parents struggle with such factors and realities as learning a new language, poverty, underemployment, less-than-full legal status and perceived discrimination, children's health and well-being are negatively impacted (Leitch, 2007). Supportive educational and care environments can help children to mediate the repercussions of these common migration experiences.

Responding to the parental component of children's migration-related challenges is the subject of *Social Cohesion, Social Exclusion, Social Capital*, part of the Region of Peel's Discussion Paper series. Thus, the present section will focus specifically on children rather than on the challenges faced by their families and caregivers.

Why is early childhood an important and critical stage?

The early years are an important and critical life stage. During this time, children are affected by contextual and environmental factors, as well as by biological maturation processes.

The conceptualization of children's development has been changing. Childhood used to be understood as a fairly narrow range of ages and stages that applied to all children, regardless of background. Educators looked for signs that children were advancing to the next predetermined stage and were thus "ready" to learn new skills. The implication was that expecting the child to learn skills too soon would not only be pointless, but might also damage his or her fragile sense of self-esteem.

More recent models identify differences in developmental goals and interactions in the lives of minority children (Baltes, 1987; Bernhard, 2004; Garcia Coll, 1990; Lerner, 1988, 1991; Rogoff, 1990). It is now increasingly recognized that milestones of childhood and definitions of "optimal development" are diverse and culturally dependent. What each culture values will shape what matters for the individuals within it and will define what behaviours are considered appropriate (Super & Harkness, 1986; Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1962). For instance, in a household in which individual achievement is stressed over interpersonal cooperation, the "normal" developmental pathway will be to emphasize the individual. In contrast, in a household organized around economic production, children's "normal" development is likely to be defined as having the ability to participate cooperatively in tasks.

Similar differences exist in discourse norms, such as the structuring of attention and the regulation of talk and turn-taking. Different cultural norms may even apply to biological cycles such as sleeping and waking. In short, culture can be seen as the intrinsic foundation upon which societies organize child-rearing routines. Concepts such as "mature child," "healthy functioning" and "optimal development" are, therefore, not universal, but take their meaning from the values of a specific culture.

This qualification regarding culture is more than a technicality. Assessment instruments and teacher observations are often based on the norms of a culturally specific set of ages and stages that is assumed to be universal. In focusing on the emergence of these pre-determined outcomes, educators are likely to miss the many other ways children demonstrate strength and competence as they ask critical questions and co-construct knowledge to make their world meaningful.

A main implication of this diversity in children's development is that it is necessary to widen the gaze beyond prescribed norms. It is essential to look at what children and their families from different cultures are concerned with and how their experiences and childrearing goals can be used to motivate learning (Cummins, Brown, & Sayers, 2007, Dahlberg & Moss, 2005; González, Moll & Amanti, 2005).

In order to reflect this diversity we employ the concept of “well-being” -not only physical and emotional health, but social and cultural contentment and welfare. This concept also carries with it the idea of having a sense of belonging in a given society, and of feeling valued and respected by members of that society (Rees, 2003). This understanding of well-being is typical of work that considers human health from a broad, “social determinants of health” perspective (Raphael, 2003).

Such an approach emphasizes the impact of poverty and inequality on health and well-being, and also recognizes gendered and ethnoracial dimensions to these conditions (Campaign 2000, 2007; Goldring, Berinstein & Bernhard, 2007; Suarez-Orozco & Qin, 2006). Well-being, in sum, reflects an individual’s ability to function in and adapt to a new society. In the case of immigrant children, well-being is especially crucial.

It is also clear that, because early learning and development take place within a social context, a supportive community is needed to encourage dialogue, apprenticeship and mentoring. Within these “learning communities,” or what Gee (2001) termed “affinity groups,” novices are enabled to participate in the practices of the community from the very beginning. Guided by caring adults, children are situated and begin to situate themselves in the cultural life of their community (Rogoff & Lave, 1984), thereby learning to trust that the adults around them will be caring and able to take care of their needs.

Once children develop trust in the world and their caregivers, they begin to form attachments that profoundly influence their development. These early attachments give children the freedom to explore, dream, hope and be imaginative, caring and resilient. Such positive interactions with responsive adults are essential (Health Canada, nd); however, it is the precise character of these interactions that will determine the formation of a child’s identity. What cannot be ignored here is the obvious point that an exclusive focus on home-culture practices will lead to home-culture attitudes and processes of identity formation that work against easy integration into the culture of the Canadian school. We will expand upon this point below; however, for the moment, it can be said that, for immigrant children, the early years must become a period in which a hybrid identity is able to emerge.

As children interact with others, they begin to construct their own identities, have a sense of who they are and develop positive and negative attitudes about their emerging selves and their place in the world (Brooker & Woodhead, 2008). There is a danger in Canadian society that in the celebration of diversity, we encourage children to adopt only their parents’ cultural identities, thereby robbing them of the opportunity to form cross-cultural identities that differ from those of their parents. Children’s identities are also affected by factors such as gender, ethnicity, religion, their teachers, families and the various communities of which they become increasingly aware.

As part of the process of developing their cross-cultural identities and adapting to the Canadian environment, children will develop different understandings of these factors. Children are also likely to be affected acutely by the systemic barriers that result both from discrepancies within and among class divisions and from economic injustice (Michaels, 2006).

Early experiences also directly affect neurobiological development and cortical connections (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; World Bank, 2008.). Research in brain development has demonstrated clearly that opportunities for well-being are most significant in the early years, when children acquire essential physical, emotional, linguistic and cognitive skills (Doherty, 2007; McCain, Mustard & Shankar, 2007). During this period, children need good nutrition and positive stimulation to develop to their full potential.

There is evidence that allowing for a focus on the spontaneous events of the here and now is essential for children's learning and well-being. For example, play helps children to sort through their life experiences and allows them to practise physical, emotional, social and cognitive skills. Since the 1970s and 1980s, psychologists have observed how play allows children to organize and communicate thoughts and engage in social interactions.

Children's ability to engage in dramatic and socio-dramatic play has been found to be linked directly to a plethora of skills, including verbalization, vocabulary building, language comprehension and problem-solving strategies. Play also results in a better ability to take on the perspective of another person, reduced aggression, more empathy, better control of impulsive actions, better prediction of others' preferences and desires, improved emotional and social adjustment, more imaginativeness and longer attention span (Saracho & Spodek, 2003).

Underlying issues faced by immigrant children and potential solutions

Issue #1: Access to quality child care and education programs that are culturally respectful

Quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) programs are central to immigrant children's adaptation and well-being. The term ECEC includes a range of community-based programs offered for children from birth to 8 years of age. These include centre-based child care, kindergarten to Grade 3, family child care, early intervention, family literacy and family resource programs (including Early Years Centres).

Well-designed ECEC programs are considered central in children's well-being. They act as a foundation for developing literacy, problem solving and enhancing social skills. A number of studies have demonstrated that children who participate in ECEC programs have improved outcomes, including greater productivity. This is true not only in the short term, but later in life.

In 2001, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) published a key report on the state of Canada's early education and care system calling for the development of a nation-wide curriculum. Although the promised national child care strategy has not yet materialized, a number of Canadian provinces, including Ontario, have released frameworks that can serve as best practices (Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth).

The framework-released by the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth in 2006 and titled Early Learning for every Child Today: A Framework for Ontario Early Childhood Settings (ELECT)-is a significant step in recognizing the importance of leaving room for projects based on family and community goals.

Currently, the Ontario Ministry of Children and Youth is leading an incubation phase of the Early Learning Framework (ELF) project that involves not only eight demonstration sites, but also tracks groups of educators and community members who meet regularly to discuss the implications of the framework for their programs. In Peel, the Best Start Network (Peel, 2008) is involved in the implementation and monitoring of the initiative.

The 2001 OECD report also noted the need to take into account the link between early childhood education and care programs and the compulsory education system:

A strong and equal partnership with the education system supports a lifelong learning approach from birth, encourages smooth transitions for children, and recognizes ECEC as an important part of the education process. Strong partnerships with the education system provide the opportunity to bring together the diverse perspectives and methods of both ECEC and schools (OECD, 2001, p. 5).

In order to realize the benefits of ECEC, a comprehensive system of affordable, quality early learning and child care programs must first be in place (Friendly, Doherty & Beach, 2006). There is agreement in the field that quality ECEC requires attention to what are called the “QUAD” principles: quality, universality, accessibility and development (Friendly & Beach, 2005; Region of Peel, 2008). It is, however, imperative that ECEC programs be designed with an explicit balance of home and school cultures.

In spite of the benefits of ECEC programs for young children, there is evidence from the U.S. that immigrant children are underrepresented in centre-based care and overrepresented in parental care (Brandon, 2004; Crosnoe, 2007; Matthews & Ewan, 2006; Matthews & Jang, 2007). Unfortunately, since the National Child care Study (Lero, Pence, Shields, Brockman, & Goelman, 1992), there have been no Canadian studies documenting the characteristics or backgrounds of children enrolled in child care centres. Given the increased lack of spending on child care in Canada, there is no reason to believe that immigrant children’s access to child care would have changed significantly since that time. Canada’s spending on child care, as a percentage of GDP, is the lowest among OECD countries (OECD, 2008).

Regulated child care spaces meet the needs of less than 16% of children, and the cancellation of federal child care agreements suggests there is no prospect for improvement in the near future (Jenson & Mahon, 2002). There is no information on the care and education arrangements of children who are not attending regulated child care settings.

Not only are parents likely to have difficulty finding culturally respectful care for their children, they also face financial barriers in that access to subsidized child care spaces not available to working class people or for those with less-than-full legal status. Even those who qualify have to wait many months before a spot opens for their child.

There are even longer wait lists for the care of infants and toddlers.

The lack of access to quality child care and education programs restricts immigrant children's ability to develop much needed cross-cultural knowledge. It also limits their ability to benefit from school systems and the important Canadian life skills school systems have to offer.

One of the ways in which the concept of "quality" in ECEC has been operationalized in North America and beyond is through use of the Early Childhood Environmental Rating Scale (ECERS, Harms & Clifford, 1980). Although there is much debate in the Canadian early childhood community about the need to broaden notions of quality, many Canadian researchers have used this scale in their studies.

Three items in the ECERS address the issue of diversity: it asks if there are props representing various cultures included for use in dramatic play; whether there is an inclusion of diversity as part of daily routines and play activities; and if the child engages in activities that promote understanding and acceptance of diversity. Canadian studies that have assessed programs with the use of the ECERS consistently report low scores on the diversity item of this scale. Furthermore, most centres rely on volunteers or the children themselves to help with translation, a practice that is clearly problematic.

The same variation in quality is found in Family Resource Programs, some of which are operated under the label, "Ontario Early Years Centres." Although these centres usually provide greatly needed support for parents who work part-time or in the home, they often supply less than ideal levels of support, particularly if they are not connected to a child care program or a First Duty site. The First Duty Program (Pelletier & Corter, 2005) is an example of an integrated service delivery model. The "school as hub" is an important theme that can involve the family and community, particularly if the school resources include staff that can focus on orienting new members of the community, and who see themselves as gatekeepers welcoming others into the community (See also Arnold, Bartlett, Gowani & Merali, 2007).

In addition to the lack of resources and inadequate support networks characterizing many ECEC programs, there is often a lack of well-prepared staff willing to work for the low wages typically associated with them. As a result, even when parents are able to find a space for their child in a regulated centre, the quality of the care provided is often questionable.

Immigrant parents are often nervous when they arrive at school to register their children, and there are many occasions when school procedures can quickly turn parents off, making them (and their children) feel negative toward educational institutions. For example, many school secretaries ask parents for legal papers or require them to show documentation regarding their legal status (Community Social Planning Council of Toronto, 2008; Young, 2005). Students may also be asked questions about their parents that may be considered private family business. Although educators do need information about home languages, family goals, lines of family authority and emergency contacts, it is very important to consider how the enrolment process can be carried out in a manner that is respectful rather than probing and that gives a message of welcome rather than one of apathy or interrogation.

Pessimistic about what Canada provides for their particular child care and early learning educational needs, some parents “elect” to send their children back to their home country (Bernhard, Landolt & Goldring, 2005; Salazar-Parrenas, 2006). This decision can further exacerbate the challenges of migration, and can also lead to children growing up with feelings of abandonment. ECEC programs need to make a special effort to involve immigrant parents with young children and to begin a dialogue with them that demonstrates respect for their cultural practices and childrearing strategies, while making explicit the specific goals of the curriculum and pedagogy.

Promising Solutions:

Advocate:

- For funding for the development of a high-quality national system of universal child care, including a range of care and education options.
- For increased research to determine the child care and education needs and enrolment patterns of immigrant families. How, for example, do the early education experiences of children of immigrants differ by ethnicity, migration status, country of origin and primary language? How do immigrant families navigate the child care system? What barriers, such as language and culture, do immigrant families face in making informed decisions about available early education programs? What are the most effective ways to reach out to different immigrant groups in order to make quality early education programs more accessible?
- For ending the requirement for municipalities to fund social services, including child care programs, from the property tax base.
- For fully reinstating funding for the Best Start networks, so that more subsidized child care spaces and learning opportunities are available.
- For child care and early education programs and policies that intentionally address the needs of immigrant families with young children.
- For widespread adoption of “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” policies with regard to legal status, so that it does not pose a barrier to access for school or child care services.
- For a home visitor program, so that prior to starting school, each immigrant child will receive a home visit to exchange school-related information. Families can be advised not only of what they can expect from a school, but also of the school's expectations (e.g., being on time, ensuring appropriate winter clothing, disciplinary strategies, study skills and available resources). In the spirit of exchange, the home visitors can also inquire about important relationships in the child’s life (including those in other countries) and the skills that children and families bring with them to the new environment.

This information can then be the basis of a dialogue with teachers, with a view to incorporating such familiar skills (e.g., languages, carpentry skills, cooking abilities, written materials in the home, musical talent) as part of the curriculum. A linguistic match between families and the home visitor is essential.

- For a public education campaign about the importance of early education and care on attachment and learning.

Collaborate:

- With schools and early childhood centres to work toward the “school as hub” model of integrated service delivery.
- With Family Resource Programs, Early Years Centres and child care centres to ensure that parents understand the goals of early care and education programs, and to convey the message that they are both invited and expected to have a voice.
- With the Best Start Networks, with the aim of creating Early Learning Councils for a unified ECEC system.
- With the Best Start Networks, Success by Six and Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC) to create a demographic profile of children in the community (e.g., languages spoken at home, language proficiency of ECEC and school staff). Information should be updated regularly to reflect changes in the composition of communities.
- With immigrant-serving organizations to help conduct a community needs assessment to identify early care and education needs, as well as gaps in service provision.
- With immigrant-serving organizations to help recruit immigrant families and identify and address issues of access and other barriers.
- With community centres to support accompaniment programs, through which immigrants who are pregnant or have young children are accompanied to various community services, helped to make appointments for their children and given information about local parent supports.
- With community groups, to bring about increased dialogue regarding parental goals in childrearing and education.
- With ECEC programs and schools, to ensure that children have warm, positive, and nurturing relationships with highly trained teachers.

Implement/Support Regional Policies and Programs:

- Access to high-quality, integrated ECEC programs, regardless of family legal status. These should be conveniently located and staffed with caregivers who are linguistically and culturally competent.

- Review the child care subsidy process to eliminate barriers and long wait times.
- Provide guidance to immigrant-serving agencies about eligibility for early childhood programs. Encourage ECEC programs and schools to re-assess current enrolment requirements.
- Provide the infrastructure for ECEC staff to prepare themselves to effectively implement and sustain high-quality care that is equitable and responsive to immigrant needs. (e.g., Professional development, mentoring, on-site consultation).
- Implement program operating criteria that reflect the needs of immigrant children. Ensure that quality standards are in place and are being met.
- Policies and procedures for welcoming new families in the centres (e.g., prepare teachers and other school personnel with welcome phrases in the languages represented in the community; create welcome signs; distribute information about parent networks in home languages; provide the names of families willing to act as ambassadors to the newcomers).
- Ensure immigrants have information about ECEC and educational options at multiple sites and in multiple languages.
- Ensure the hiring of Peel ECEC staff from a variety of linguistic, racial, religious and ethnic groups.
- Require that ECEC programs develop and implement inclusion and family policies.

Exemplary Programs:

- California has passed “Proposition 10,” allowing the State to levy new cigarette taxes. All funds raised are being earmarked for early childhood programs. (<http://vote98.sos.ca.gov/VoterGuide/Propositions/10.htm>)
- Children’s Trust. This program was created in Miami-Dade in 2002 as a result of a referendum that asked voters to support dedicated funding for early learning initiatives. In 2007-2008, the Children’s Trust revenues from taxes were, \$99.3 million based on a 0.4223 mill property tax (the statute authorizes The Trust to levy up to 1/2 mill). For a medium-sized home, a family would pay \$61 a year or about \$1 per week. (<http://www.thechildrenstrust.org/AboutUs.asp>)
- “Don’t Ask Don’t Tell” Campaign. This campaign proposes to provide access to city services, such as health care, education, emergency services, housing and food banks, regardless of immigration status. Municipal and school personnel would not be allowed to inquire about immigration status. Municipal funds and resources would not be used to enforce federal immigration laws. (<http://toronto.nooneisillegal.org/dadt>)

- St. Christopher House in High Park, Toronto has a program in which families are accompanied to different community service agencies and centres. Clients are helped with arranging appointments and are provided with interpretation services at their appointments. (www.stchristhouse.org/children-youth/parent-support-newcomers/sup-new-accompaniment/).
- Toronto First Duty. In this model, teachers, early childhood educators, educational assistants, and parenting workers collaborate to provide an integrated experience for kindergarten children. A number of supports are also provided for parents to work or study. (<http://www.toronto.ca/firstduty/>).
- The Vormingscentrum voor de Begeleiding van het Jonge Kind (VBJK) (Resource and Training Centre for Early Childhood Education) has developed programs in Brussels for newly arriving immigrants with young children. In addition to recruiting and training staff to reflect incoming immigrant groups, the program has adapted their intake procedures so that now they ask important and helpful questions about the family's culture and their parenting behaviour. The staff makes an effort to find out about important relatives or contact people in family homelands who provide parents with childrearing advice over the phone or by email. This practice serves as a bridge between the values of the VBJK and those of the homeland. (www.vbjk.be/newcomers.htm).
- (La Escuelita) ["The little school"] is an early childhood education program in Atlanta, Georgia. It is funded by the W.K. Kellogg Foundation's SPARK initiative (Supporting Partnerships to Assure Ready Kids), which partners with six community agencies and local elementary schools to provide child care for the residents of two apartment complexes in a low-income, Spanish-speaking neighbourhood. A significant number of children in this program are living with undocumented family members. A parental advisory committee oversees the program and is responsible for hiring staff, developing a curriculum and helping families apply for state funded preschool programs. (<http://www.Sparga.org/>).
- St. Stephen's Community House in Toronto. The centre has developed an information binder and video to discourage parents from sending their children back home due to barriers in accessing child care for their children. (www.ststephenshouse.com/).
- Multicultural, Settlement and Education Partnership. A settlement service available to all schools in the Region of Peel to help parents and students adapt to Canadian schools. (www.icnss.ca/public/msep.htm).
- Healthy Babies Healthy Children (HBHC). A prevention and early intervention initiative to provide support and services to families with children from before birth to six years of age. In Peel, the program is offered in partnership with Peel agencies and services through "Success By Six in Peel", a coalition working to promote optimal development of all children in the Region by age six.

One of the program goals is to act as a catalyst for a coordinated, effective and integrated system of services and supports for healthy child development. (www.toronto.ca/health/baby.htm).

- The City of Toronto Children’s Services Division requires all directly operated child care centres to develop and embed an inclusion policy. Although the focus is on children with special needs, the model could be adapted for immigrant children. (www.toronto.ca/children/pdf/policy_inclusion.pdf).
- Family Day Care Services. The agency has developed an excellent set of principles to recognize the importance of being a family-centred organization. Sample principles include: “All families have strengths,” and “Families and staff both have something to offer each other.” (www.familydaycare.com/about.html#values).

Issue #2: Early academic disengagement that may lead to early school drop out

Over the past two decades, the focus of most children’s migration-related programs has been on what is termed “diversity”: an amalgam of factors that includes race, gender, linguistic and religious differences. Reinforcing home culture and diversity for the sake of children’s self-esteem is often presented as the solution to academic achievement. However, this approach risks ignoring other important factors that contribute to well-being.

There is clear over-representation of certain groups of immigrant children in the school drop-out rate (Anisef et al., 2008; People for Education, 2008). For example, Toronto teens born in the Caribbean, Central or South America and East African countries are twice as likely to drop out of school as their peers from China, Korea or Japan. In Toronto, 40% of students born in the English-speaking Caribbean drop out of school, compared with 23% of Canadian-born students. It is argued here that this phenomenon does not suddenly appear in high school. Rather, the signs of school disengagement can be seen already in the early years.

In general, the research data suggest that second-generation immigrant youth perform well compared with their Canadian-born counterparts, but that there are wide variations according to SES and ethnicity factors (Boyd, 2008). The recent OECD Programme for International Student Assessment study (Statistics Canada, 2006), however, found that Canadian-born 15-year-old students outperformed both first- and second-generation immigrant students by as many as 23 points.

Although the authors of the OECD PISA report tried to give it a positive spin-by emphasizing that this gap is even wider in other OECD countries and by noting that there are indications that immigrant students do catch up after a few years-this finding raises a red flag. It suggests that where certain groups of immigrant children are concerned, our current strategies fail to achieve stated goals. Moreover, it implies the existence of a two-tiered system that fails certain students while rewarding others.

More research is necessary to understand these pockets of under-achievement among immigrant students and to comprehend why disparities in educational outcomes remain, even after parental resources have been taken into account (Boyd, 2002). Research is also needed to determine whether the over-representation of immigrant and minority students in special education programs, as reported in the U.S., also exists in Canada.

It is clear that the current Canadian focus on the celebration of cultural, linguistic, religious, ethnic and racial diversity must be accompanied by measures to increase the academic skills of immigrant children. In this regard, the correlation between early literacy and future school success has been well documented (Takanish, 2004).

According to Statistics Canada (2006b), five-year-old children who have a parent born outside Canada and whose main language at home is not English or French, score significantly lower in the receptive vocabulary category than those with both parents born in Canada. Because receptive vocabulary is a key skill if students are to benefit from instruction, learn to read and succeed in school, it is clear that early interventions are needed to support effective literacy development.

Literacy interventions vary, both in terms of the philosophical approach behind them, and in their focus. They can be thought of as falling roughly along a continuum, from a skill-based focus on low-level mechanics of literacy, to seeing children as active knowledge generators. At one end is the direct teaching of the low-level mechanics of specific literacy skills. This has become increasingly popular in the current “No Child Left Behind” mentality, wherein educators are under pressure to make sure children demonstrate progress in EQAO test scores. Such interventions tend to focus on formal reading instruction through structured, skills-based programs. These include programs in which teachers explicitly teach phonics and phonemic awareness via rhyming, phoneme identification, finger-point reading, syllable clapping, first sound isolation and blending and segmenting activities.

These programs are numerous and, relative to control classrooms, have been shown to have positive effects in evaluation studies (Byrne & Fielding-Barnsley, 1991; Justice & Pullen, 2003; O’Connor, Notari-Syverson & Vadasy, 1996).

Skills-based interventions, despite their successes, have not been without criticism, however. Cummins has argued that intensive and sustained phonics instruction has minimal impact on the reading comprehension of students beyond Grade 1 (Ehri, Nunes, Stahl & Willows, 2001). It seems that students learn decoding and basic comprehension skills well in the early elementary years, but that they do not sustain this growth beyond Grade 4. This phenomenon is known as “the fourth grade slump” (Chall, Jacobs & Baldwin, 1990).

Sustained reading growth requires that students form a bond to literacy that motivates them to read extensively for pleasure. Thus, we come to the other end of the spectrum, in which we encounter early literacy interventions with an emphasis on the pleasure of reading and attention to comprehension of meaningful texts. Here, students engage in knowledge-generation.

In addition to a focus on effective teaching of sound-symbol relationships, attention is paid to two crucial components of early literacy, namely, cognitive engagement and identity investment (Cummins, 2004).

There is consensus among cognitive psychologists (e.g., Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 2000) that people learn best when there is a focus on learning with understanding. Building on pre-existing knowledge and the availability of community support for learning are essential. Classrooms that focus on active learning, building on prior knowledge and the use of family knowledge are more likely to lead to increased student identity investment and cognitive engagement. Yet because neither of these factors is easily or readily quantified or assessed in the context of experimental or quasi-experimental research, they have not been considered seriously in language and literacy instruction.

There are, however, published studies that are consistent with this latter approach (Chow & Cummins, 2003; Cohen, 2008; Reyes, 2001, Taylor et al., 2008). Some of these are related to the outcomes of a large-scale evaluation of the Early Authors Program carried out by Bernhard, Winsler, Bleiker, Ginieniewicz, and Madigan (2008) in the Miami-Dade School Readiness Coalition. The Early Authors Program is based on the work of Ada & Campoy (2003) and involves children and parents in a process of creating their own literature, based on their own family history, observation of the world, and interests. The texts created by participants have been labelled identity texts insofar as the students invest their identity in them.

These texts hold a mirror up to students such that their identities are reflected in a positive light. The findings of the Miami-Dade study in particular show that students' scaffolded literacy performances go far beyond what they could produce independently and create an affective bond to literacy that is often lacking in programs focusing primarily on drills and skills. Children participating in the study made greater gains in language comprehension and expressive language than did the controls. The children moved from the 39th to the 42nd national percentile in expressive language and from the 35th to the 45th percentile in language comprehension.

In order to close the gap between the educational performance of immigrant and Canadian-born children, more attention needs to be paid to the social and cultural context of emergent literacy and to providing children with meaningful, motivating and culturally relevant literacy experiences in the classroom (Bransford, Brown & Cocking, 1999; Cairney & Langbien, 1989; Erickson & Gutierrez, 2002; Gee, 1990, 2001; Guthrie, 2004; Labbo, Eakle & Montero, 2002; Heath, 1983; Solsken, 1993).

A culture of caring has been identified as an important component of a school program. When students have meaningful interactions with educators and peers, they are more likely to stay in school and engage in learning. In a recent study, Schussler & Collins (2006) report on the aspects of school culture that students find motivating:

Teachers demonstrated their care for students' academic work by providing them with numerous opportunities for success and being flexible in how students achieved this success. The opportunities for

success embodied both a present and a future orientation. They included achieving short-term goals that involved academic content. Specifically, students thought that teachers were interested in helping them achieve academic success through outcomes like receiving good grades (p. 5).

Another factor contributing to children's academic success is having an advocate to help them navigate the system. The W.K. Kellogg Foundation launched a program that involved having learning advocates for every child. The idea was for the advocate to be familiar with the child's needs as well as the resources of the community for a successful transition from child care to Kindergarten.

Although the program was successful in some areas, there was little communication between educators in child care and kindergarten. "The school has strong relationships with other groups in the community, especially with agencies and organizations that serve and/or advocate for refugees. However, because of other priorities, the school does not have extensive ties to early care and education. During a discussion about children transitioning from early care to education [during the evaluation site visit], one teacher said: ... 'It would be helpful for the kindergarten teachers if they knew more about children and their experiences in early care and education'" (Curtis & Simmons, 2008, p. 176). Further, it was difficult to find advocates who were knowledgeable about the system. In many cases, the advocates ended up being the parents themselves, a strategy that needs careful evaluation.

In a series of studies on visiting home nurses, Olds and colleagues have also documented the effects of having one person to advocate for the family (Olds, et al., 1998, 2007).

Whether the advocate is a home visitor, an educational professional or the parent of the child, it is essential to ensure that families are explicitly aware of the goals and expectations of schooling in Canada. These expectations must be formulated on the basis of immutable and non-negotiable components of Canadian social propriety with the ultimate goal of providing children of all backgrounds with the skills they need to succeed here. These principles are especially applicable to immigrant children and children of immigrants, many of whom require clear guidance to both adapt to and overcome the challenges of life in this country. An example of such a statement of principles is the one following. It was developed by a group of educators in San Francisco, California:

All children have a right to live in and learn in an equitable society. Children must grow up with a strong sense of self, in families and communities that promote attitudes, beliefs and values of equity and support their full participation.

As members of communities, educators who provide education and care to young children have the responsibility to develop their own understanding of diversity and inclusion and to partner with families, staff, administrators, institutions and governments to contribute to creating a society in which social justice is a reality.

The capacity of educators to help create such a society is built when principles, legislation and resources that promote equity and social justice are infused into values, program standards, practices, professional education and ongoing professional development. (Adapted from BANDTEC, 2006).

Promising Strategies and Solutions:

Advocate:

- For increased research to ascertain the impact of migration on school achievement and timely graduation rates.
- For increased research to create culturally and linguistically appropriate curricula and assessment tools.
- For policies and infrastructure that will support culturally competent educators who understand the need to keep up with the pace of demographic change.
- For raising teacher expectations of academic performance among immigrant children.
- For sending out the message that children's education requires family involvement and advocacy.
- For continued support of the Understanding the Early Years national initiative.

Collaborate:

- With schools and community centres to develop policies and programs that support immigrant children's educational experiences.
- With schools and community centres to develop programs that profile role models from various linguistic, racial, religious and ethnic backgrounds, particularly among new immigrant groups.
- With schools to ensure the provision of specific components of optimal classroom environments that support effective literacy development, as outlined by the expert panel of the National Association for the Education of Young Children and the International Reading Association.
- With schools to share information with families about optimal literacy strategies for immigrant children. Such strategies are those that provide a wide variety of literacy experiences with regular opportunities for active engagement with various types of print through reading aloud, talking about stories, writing stories and notes, acting out stories and/or referring to word labels in the classroom.

- With schools to emphasize the changing culture of the classroom and arrange classroom space (both physically and conceptually) for the purpose of learning through active participation in literacy activities, in addition to the direct teaching of specific literacy skills.
- With schools to expose children to a diverse set of multiple literacies and media, including books, technology, computers, software and multimedia.
- With schools to develop special interventions for children from families in which the parents are illiterate in their own language.
- With schools to implement literacy and numeracy programs that allow for the incorporation of child and family knowledge and viewpoints.
- With schools to provide planning and study skills for immigrant children.
- With immigrant groups and immigrant-serving agencies to provide after-school tutoring programs.

Implement/Support Regional Policies and Programs:

- Coordination of ECEC and school programs for children.
- Social support networks for immigrant parents to help them obtain knowledge of “how things work” in Canada, and how to tap into resources that may enrich the lives of their children. Home language groups are essential.
- Programs to train immigrant parents to be advocates for their children.

Exemplary Programs:

- Under a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundations’ SPARK initiative, eight schools are developing a program in which all children are assured an advocate to help them and their families to navigate the educational system. For the program in Miami-Dade see: [\(www.wkcf.org/Default.aspx?tabid=90&CID=168&ItemID=5000009&NID=5010009&LanguageID=0/\)](http://www.wkcf.org/Default.aspx?tabid=90&CID=168&ItemID=5000009&NID=5010009&LanguageID=0/).
- The Early Authors Program (EAP). Based on the conscientization theories of Freire (1973) and Ada & Campoy (2003), the EAP is a transformative literacy model in which children self-author books or “identity texts” about themselves, their families and their goals. Scanned photographs and word processing are used to create the books that allow children, parents and caregivers to communicate and share their personal experiences. The process of self-authoring books aims, not only at enrichment of children’s print motivation, increased vocabulary, and enhanced phonemic awareness, but also at the strengthening of links between and among children, their families and educators. Moreover, the process is geared toward the acquisition of a strong sense of self-worth and pride in cultural identity. [\(www.ryerson.ca/~bernhard/bilingual1.html\)](http://www.ryerson.ca/~bernhard/bilingual1.html).

- Understanding the Early Years is a national initiative to enable communities to complete an inventory of community programs and to map and interpret the data. (<http://uey.peelschools.org/about.html>).

Issue #3: Language proficiency and retention of the home language while learning English

One of the major challenges faced by immigrant children is learning a new language while maintaining fluency in their home language.

Many immigrant children have limited proficiency in the dominant language of the schools. These children require between two and five years of explicit English instruction to develop basic communication skills, and between five and seven years to develop academic language proficiency (Cummins, 1979). According to People for Education (2008), 48% of ESL students in Ontario are in schools in which there is no ESL teacher.

The provision of support for preschool and kindergarten children learning English is rare but needed (Language Australia, 1998; Langford, 2008).

The issue of additive bilingualism in which strong language development occurs in two languages, has been researched for a number of years in Canada (Cummins, 2008; Genessee, 1987, 1987; Harley, Hart & Lapkin, 1986; Ianco-Worrall, 1972; Lambert & Tucker, 1972). Cummins (1993) and others have pointed out the rarity of additive as opposed to subtractive outcomes (i.e., in which learning the new language means losing the home language). In simple terms, a number of minority language communities are, within a single generation, likely to have no young adult speakers of the language.

The home language also serves as an important basis for the development of cognitive skills in the second language.

The challenges of acquiring a second language while maintaining the ability to have meaningful conversations with family members can also have a profound effect on attachment, or a child's sense of security and the ability to know that their expressed needs will be met. Furthermore, as children are learning to regulate their emotions and act in socially acceptable ways, they need to be able to make themselves understood by their educators.

One of our earlier studies incorporating various immigrant communities (Bernhard, Lefebvre, Chud & Lange, 1996; Bernhard, Lefebvre, Murphy Kilbride, Chud & Lange, 1998) viewed the language socialization of children, highlighting ways in which the educational system tends to encourage assimilation, contributing to the eventual loss of children's home language. In this pan-Canadian study on child care centres, it was found that, in some cases, 80% of the children in a particular language group were in centres where there was not even one person who shared their language (see also Bernhard, Lefebvre, Murphy Kilbride, Chud & Lange, 1998).

A second and third study conducted with Latin American parents (Bernhard, Freire, Torres & Nirdosh, 1998; Pacini-Ketchabaw, Bernhard & Freire, 2001) indicated that elementary school-age children tend to lose their mother tongue during the “normal processes” of institutional functioning of Canadian schools.

Although parents in this study saw Spanish maintenance as a way to foster family unity, Latino identity and professional advancement, the strong assimilative messages received from the schools resulted in parents doubting the desirability of openly speaking Spanish at home.

Many parents became convinced that in order to get ahead, children needed to become quickly immersed in English. They did not realize, however, that acting on this belief too strongly often meant that the first language could be lost in a very short time.

Numerous studies have shown the alarming rate of home language loss in the first years of schooling, particularly when children do not have a chance to practise their home language. Not only do children lose the valuable social and cognitive benefits associated with bilingualism, they also face the disastrous consequences of not being able to talk to their parents and grandparents, or to receive necessary feedback and guidance from them on aspects ranging from sexual activity to academic decisions and other normative behaviour (Chumak-Horbatsch, 2006, 2008; Pacini-Ketchabaw, Bernhard & Freire, 2001; Park & Sarkar, 2007).

The findings indicate the necessity for schools to proactively recognize and build upon the family’s cultural capital, including their home language.

Promising Strategies and Solutions:

Advocate:

- For stable funding for heritage language programs in schools, libraries and communities.
- For increased dedicated funds for ESL programs as well as expanded ESL programs for children born in Canada.
- For a survey on the policies and practices of each institution in the area of language and educational support for immigrant children.
- For a demographic survey of immigrant children, identifying existing services, both mainstream and community-specific and service gaps.

Collaborate:

- With schools and ECEC programs to recruit bilingual staff and provide additional training to those working with immigrant children.

- With regulatory colleges (e.g., Ontario College of Teachers, College of Early Childhood Educators) to ensure standards of practice that incorporate cultural and linguistic competency by focusing on: 1) accreditation requirements for professional programs; and 2) ongoing professional development required for individual educators to be certified.
- With Faculties of Education and Community Colleges for program standards that address culturally responsive practices, with a goal of achieving equitable outcomes. Ensure accountability mechanisms for meeting program standards.
- With schools to ensure the provision of ESL and heritage language programs for children of all ages.
- With schools to support children's cultural backgrounds and encourage the development of biliteracy, incorporating both the child's home language and the language of the school.
- With the Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI) to provide a web portal for service providers looking for information on services to linguistic minorities.
- With midwives and doctors to encourage parents to consider speaking to their children in their home language.
- With doctors, nurses and other health professionals to provide accurate information on raising bilingual children.

Implement/Support Regional Policies and Programs:

- Provide a centralized website with resources so that educators and service providers know how the home language can act positively as a basis for acquisition of the new language.
- Build the linguistic and cultural competency of government and local agencies and child care and early education programs.
- Provide a centralized website for answering parent questions regarding raising bilingual children.
- Facilitate exchanges of information between communities, child care centres, and schools.
- Develop library programs that provide literacy materials in different languages and support for children learning English.

Exemplary Programs:

- Welsh Language Board: Raising Children Bilingually (TWF). A campaign to encourage pregnant women to raise children who speak Welsh as well as their home language. Website materials and pamphlets are distributed through midwives, who review the benefits of bilingualism (www.twfcymru.com/en-gb/home/Pages/default2.aspx).

- Multiliteracies Project. A national Canadian study exploring pedagogies (or teaching practices) that prepare children for the literacy challenges of an increasingly globalized, networked culturally diverse world. Increasingly, we encounter knowledge in multiple forms, print, images, video and combinations of forms in digital contexts and are asked to represent our knowledge in an equally complex manner. The goal is to assist schools in helping students to achieve a more diverse folio of literacies. (www.multiliteracies.ca/index.php).
- Multi-age groupings. Between 1996 and 1999, Ryerson University conducted a study on multi-age practices in child care settings to see how multi-age models could be used to help meet the language needs of minority children, families and childhood caregivers. Providing a space for children from different age groups to play together and learn from one another can help support home language maintenance as well as foster caring and empathy among the children. (www.ryerson.ca/~bernhard/bilingual2.html).
- Eurydice European Unit. A survey of measures taken in European countries to provide language and educational support to immigrants. The survey distinguishes between policy and evidence of implementation, and notes the rare cases in which evaluation of support measures has taken place. (www.eurydice.org/ressources/eurydice/pdf/0_integral/045EN.pdf).
- Language Australia (1998). Early *literacy* and the ESL learner: Participants manual for early childhood educators working with children from *language* backgrounds other than *English*. (www.eric.ed.gov/ERICDocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/17/16/6a.pdf).
- Project Orillas. Clusters of class-to-class collaborations have led students from dozens of countries to use technology to take part in learning exchanges over long distances. Sample projects over the past decade have included letter writing, a Proverbs Project and an Oral History project. Another successful global learning network is entitled iEARN (International Education and Resource Network, 2008), a non-profit organization made up of over 20,000 schools and youth organizations in more than 115 countries. (www.orillas.org/abte.html).
- OCASI web portal for service providers (<http://www.settlement.org/>).

Issue #4: Generational problems

One of the migration-related stressors is the need for development of a positive identity. Although migration to Canada is continually increasing, updates to immigration law have caused a dramatic shift in the place of origin of Canada's immigrants. Previously predominant source countries (i.e., Anglo-European countries) have been replaced by those in East and South Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. As a result, areas that were once populated by White middle-class families are now diverse.

Current figures indicate that over three-quarters of immigrants now entering Canada are from non-European countries (Ambert, 2006; George & Young, 2006). Furthermore, the children of new immigrants are likely to be affected by the changed status that comes with the underemployment their parents typically face here.

For immigrant children, these shifts signify a growing divergence between the values and child-rearing practices found in their homes and those prevalent in Canadian schools, where teachers are still mostly White and from middle-class backgrounds. Conflicting expectations around rights and responsibilities ensue, and tend to create great stress. The well-being of children is affected by their ability to construct a new identity based on maintaining the traditional expectations of the home and adding the norms and social practices of the new culture (Bernhard, 1999, Rajiva, 2005).

Immigrant families bring with them high expectations for their children as well as a number of ideas and perspectives (whether right or wrong) about how to raise them for success in the new environment. For example, many immigrant parents are surprised to find out that children in Canada rarely have homework and have a lot of spare time to watch TV and play video games. Acculturation stresses, along with institutional pressures to become more compliant with Canadian norms, can have a detrimental effect on parents' confidence in their ability to guide their children (Ali, 2008; Anisef, Kilbride, Ochocka, & Janzen, 2001; Hatton & Bacic, 2001).

Generational problems can develop because children often learn the new official language faster than their parents do. As parents come to rely on their children to be linguistic and cultural brokers, unusual and sometimes dangerous role reversals and shifts in parental authority may occur (Tyyska, 2007).

Family members may also become discouraged and even depressed when they realize they cannot work in their known profession because their credentials are not recognized in Canada. The many demands of their own acculturation limit their ability to support their children's adjustment to the new country.

Studies with Latin American immigrants in Canada have reported that problems are likely to occur when parents try to become involved in their children's schooling without knowing what the school expects of them (Bernhard & Freire, 1999; 2004a; Shor & Bernhard, 2003). For example, generational gaps arise when parents try to help their children with homework using repetition and drill and practice methods. Further, parents tend not to understand terms such as "special education," "withdrawal," or "resource centre." They are also confused by report cards that focus only on positive aspects so as not to damage children's self-esteem.

Many immigrant parents are fearful of child protection agencies and have a great deal of misinformation about appropriate disciplinary strategies. The issue of suspensions and zero tolerance has increased parental mistrust of schools (Bernhard, 2004a; Shor & Bernhard, 2003).

Networks that link home, schools and the community can provide important protective functions for decreasing the stressors experienced by immigrant children. In order to construct a positive personal identity, children need to spend time with people who share the cultural characteristics of their family and community as well as with Canadian-born peers and those of other immigrant groups.

Immigrant children need a sense of belonging, a sense of pride in themselves and their extended families and the ability to maintain their home language while learning English so that they can continue to engage in meaningful conversations with their families. In making the transition to formal care and education programs, children need support to explore new hybrid identities that complement, but do not contradict, the values and norms of their family and community.

From Generation to Generation: Utilizing the Human Capital of Newcomer Parents to Benefit Families, part of the Region of Peel's Discussion Paper series, reviews literature that deals with the ways in which immigrant parents' social networks can be expanded to help reduce emotional strain and foster positive socio-emotional and academic development in children living in poverty (e.g., Ali & Kilbride, 2004; Bernhard, Freire, Pacini-Ketchabaw, & Villanueva, 1998; Carrasco, Rose, & Charbonneau, 1999; Da, 2008).

Promising Strategies and Solutions:

Advocate:

- For the development of policies to ensure opportunities for children to experience close, affectionate relationships with parents, grandparents and other adults.
- For the expansion of settlement services to include child and family issues at initial settlement and beyond.
- For the development of family-friendly work policies to allow parents to support their children.

Collaborate:

- With schools to ensure a continuation of efforts to involve immediate and extended families in children's education.
- With Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) on a continuing basis to expand Settlement Workers in School (SWIS) programs.
- With community groups to create opportunities for families to connect with each other (e.g., farmers' market, community events, multicultural festivals).
- With child protection agencies to ensure parents are informed about the reasons children are apprehended from homes.
- With communities to inform all parents about the importance of attachment and close relationships.

- With Family Resource Programs to create links between and among child care programs and schools as well as with other health, cultural and social programs that strengthen families.
- With schools and immigrant-serving agencies to translate the murky language of report cards into clear discourse that is also translated into various home languages.
- With schools to establish a set of principles that outlines the expectations of teachers, as well as the goals of achieving equity of outcomes.
- With schools to inform families that, while the diversity of wisdom, knowledge and skills that exists among the great variety of cultures in Canada is highly valued, there is a set of legal rights and social norms that does not allow prejudice of any kind.
- With schools to provide clear guidelines for parents regarding what is expected in and from schools and how to support their children in meeting the expectations of these guidelines.
- Ensure the continuation of heritage language programs and use of community languages in the schools and ECEC programs.

Implement/Support Regional Policies and Programs:

- Recognize that assistance seeking may be stigmatized. Develop outreach programs that address this problem.
- Involve seniors in becoming community leaders.
- Ensure that settlement agencies have information on the use of interpreters and resources for children and families.

Exemplary Programs:

- **Success By Six.** A program funded by the United Way that aims to improve the life chances and well-being of at-risk children in Toronto by supporting parents, connecting families and building community. The program offers pre- and post-natal care, parenting skills, family resource centres, school readiness initiatives and home visits.
(www.successby6peel.ca/Page.asp?IdPage=5639&WebAddress=successby6peel).
- **Canadian Parenting Workshops: Preparing Children for School Success.** A set of 10 research-based workshops, developed, field-tested and empirically evaluated by Ryerson University's School of Early Childhood Education. The facilitator's guide, funded by Human Resource Development Canada (HRDC), uses an alternative form of parental participation that acknowledges the particular historical context in which families live and bases itself in parents' understanding of mainstream institutional processes.

Ultimately, the project is about involving conscious, active parents in a liberating pedagogy. (www.ryerson.ca/~bernhard/bilingual3.html).

- Citizenship and Immigration, Ontario. The ministry funds the Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) and Settlement Education Partnership of Toronto (SEPT) programs, in partnership with local school boards and libraries. The main goal is to facilitate the integration of newcomer students and their families in their school and community. There are 90 SWIS programs in 400 schools in Ontario. Between September 1, 2003 and April 30, 2004, there were 25,794 service sessions of information provided, including language training and the provision of employment, housing and immigration aid. (www.cic.gc.ca/english/DEPARTMENT/MEDIA/RELEASES/2008/2008-03-26a.asp/).

Issue #5: Socio-emotional consequences created by particular migration trajectories

For many families, Canada is the last stop on the long journey from their home country. Children experience culture shock, unfamiliarity with new norms and practices and grief at leaving a familiar culture, loved ones and language behind. Yet neither educators nor the families of immigrant children tend to recognize the signs of trauma immigrant children may be experiencing (Bernhard & Freire, 1996; Rutter, 1998).

Special attention is needed for children who have experienced trauma in the migration process and who present symptoms related to post traumatic stress states (Fantino & Colak, 2001; Multicultural Family Connections, 2004; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001, 2002). If special attention is not given, the children will almost certainly have trouble developing the hybrid identity and the confidence that is essential to succeeding in Canadian schools.

Researchers, practitioners and policymakers often think of immigrant children as uprooting themselves from one country and beginning the stages of integration into another country. There is the assumption that families migrate together as intact units. Where families have not started out intact, reunification is assumed. However, the intact family model is “not the norm” or “not always the case.”

A growing phenomenon noted in the literature concerns families whose members are spread geographically over several nation states and whose lives cross national boundaries. Collectively these families are known in the social science literature respectively as “multi-local” and “transnational” families (Bernhard, Landolt & Goldring, 2005; Da, 2003; Levitt, 2003; Hondagu-Sotello & Avila, 1997; Wayland, 2006).

One of the challenges faced by multi-local and transnational families involves extended family separations. In the U.S., the Harvard Immigrant Family Study reported that 85% of immigrant children were separated from one or both parents (Suarez- Orozco et al. year). Studies with a transnational focus are only beginning in Canada and, although the difficulties documented are similar to those in the Harvard Study, no prevalence evidence exists.

It is important to note that family separation is often the result of Canadian immigration policy. For example, domestic workers are not allowed to sponsor their children until they have been working in Canada for two years. The impact of globalization has forced many parents from the global south to travel north to find work and send much-needed remittances to their home country. Such border crossings often leave people with precarious legal status and result in long delays in sponsoring children. Parent-child relationships are necessarily affected by children who feel anger and a sense of abandonment at having been left behind.

The increasing number of children who have experienced separation from one or both of their parents and who have undergone multiple attachment ruptures from significant caregivers may affect children's well-being, making it more difficult for them to learn. The growing importance of family remittances to the balance of payments in countries throughout the global south reflects not only the prevalence of migration, but also the magnitude of family dispersal and social obligations across borders (Guarnizo, 2003; Ramírez, 2005).

Religious and racial discrimination is a major concern for many immigrants. For example, given that the high percentage of migrants to Peel Region are from South Asia, it is expected that the community has been affected by the events of September 11, and are likely to feel that their entire community is being blamed for the actions of a few terrorists.

Immigrant families are also likely to be affected by recent changes in Canadian immigration laws. Many families are likely to want to sponsor family members to join them in Canada. Religious and racial discrimination, at the social, employment and political levels, is also of concern.

The issue of family legal status is another important stressor that presents barriers to children's well-being and access to public services. Although no prevalence figures are available for Canada, in the U.S., an estimated 3 million children live in households headed by an undocumented adult (Passel, 2005). A recent Canadian study of 15 families living with limited or precarious status (Bernhard, Goldring & Young, 2008) reported that the status of one family member affects the well-being of the entire family.

Even Canadian-born children whose parents have uncertain legal status are affected and face barriers in accessing health, education, and other entitlements. For example, they are not able to receive child care subsidy and their parents, wanting to stay "under the radar," tend not to want to respond to school-based parental involvement initiatives. Further, although the Education Act allows all children to attend school, immigration information is regularly asked for, if not demanded. It is suspected that many immigrant children are not attending school at present because of deportation fears.

Interventions for socio-emotional aspects include arts-based "therapy" as well as support from peers who have had similar experiences.

Children who participate in organized sports and have lessons in physical activities and the arts are better prepared for school (Browne, Byerne, Roberts, Gafni & Watt, 2001). Nonetheless, many of these programs are inaccessible to low income and immigrant students.

Problems with criteria for eligibility prevent children from accessing these programs. In one study, Torjman (2004) noted that in some Canadian communities applicants who seek eligibility for reduced fees to recreation programs must get a letter from their doctor to qualify for a subsidy that is sometimes worth only \$50. The cost of the application itself may be more than that.

Promising Strategies and Solutions:

Advocate:

- For research on the mental health needs of immigrant children.
- For designated funding for service-providers to work with mothers who have been separated from their children.
- To make child care and after-school program subsidies available to newly arrived low-income immigrant children, regardless of legal status.
- For investments of infrastructure funds in recreational and community spaces.
- For the development of an inventory of community programs that takes note of both gaps in services and access barriers.
- For the partnering of programs with immigrant-serving agencies, religious/ethnic communities and newcomer organizations in order to offer a welcoming environment.
- For the examination of current municipal policies regarding access to recreation.

Collaborate:

- With institutions at different levels (e.g., federal and provincial governments, school boards, municipalities, churches, immigrant-serving organizations, organizations of internationally trained professionals and university programs preparing educators, psychologists, family doctors, psychiatrists and social workers). Include the work of religious groups in government publications as legitimate sources of assistance to immigrants.
- With schools, ECEC programs and health centres to provide training so that staff recognize the signs of trauma and the diversity of migration patterns.
- With immigrant agencies and schools to develop programs for children whose migration journey involves some family separation and possible stressful reunification.
- With community centres to prevent difficulties arising as a result of mothers sending their children back to their home countries by having a home visiting program focused on the needs of immigrant children.

Implement/Support Regional Policies and Programs:

- Provide training at all levels so that policy, management and frontline staff are aware of the different types of needs of immigrant children and families.
- Consider setting up qualification criteria that would enable poor working families to access social supports.
- Develop an inventory of culture and recreation programs, noting gaps in quality services programs.
- Expand quality of and access to cultural and recreational programs for children of all ages.
- Provide free summer programs for preschool and school-aged children.
- Revisit eligibility criteria and financial barriers for recreation subsidies and simplify process of application.
- Ensure educators understand the nature of the journey taken by the child, as well as the political and economic conditions of the country from which they came.
- Make recreation facilities available to families at no cost or provide subsidies to low-income immigrant families.
- Provide funds for transportation to recreational facilities.
- Use schools as hubs for the delivery of a range of programs, supports and activities.
- Organize sessions in child care centres and schools to help parents recognize the signs of trauma, autism and other conditions.
- Collaborate with ethno-specific, community and religious groups to address issues of family separation and its impact on children by developing appropriate programs and strategies.

Exemplary Programs:

- Centre for Victims of Torture. Has developed videos and resource manuals for teachers and others working with children.
(www.cvt.org/main.php/ResourceCenter/ProviderResources/WorkingWithYouth).
- Reunification and Adaptation Project (RAP). Set up as part of the Toronto Department of Public Health in 2002, it aimed to establish peer support among 20 ethnic communities. Workshops were offered on the immigration and reunification process, and peer counsellors provided information support and referrals. The 30 staff members were able to involve almost 8,000 participants, and conducted 263 workshops. Unfortunately, funding for the project ceased as of December, 2004.

- The Early Childhood Initiative Foundation, Miami-Dade, Fla. The website provides information for parents and educators on how to help children cope with tragedy and deal with issues of trauma. (www.teachmorelovemore.org/BestTrends.asp).
- Community Parent Outreach Program (CPOP), St. Christopher House, Toronto. Helps to connect newcomer and/or isolated families with at least one child under the age of six to needed services and resources. (www.stchrishouse.org/children-youth/parent-support-newcomers/).
- Churches of various denominations often constitute an important link between newcomers and their community by providing resources and information about housing, schooling, English lessons and job opportunities. Some churches also provide legal aid.
- PREVnet. A national network of Canadian researchers, voluntary organizations and governments interested in preventing bullying.
- Everybody Gets To Play. A project sponsored by the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association that links recreation with transportation, child care, and other supports. (www.cpra.ca/EN/main.php?action=cms.initEgtp/).

3. First, 1.5 and Second Generation Immigrant Youth

Why Peel Region should focus on first- 1.5, and second-generation immigrant youth

In most societies, youth is a time of identity formation, increasing autonomy from parents and development of intimate relationships. It represents an impressionable and vulnerable transition stage. Youth is also a critical period of social and economic integration into society through education and work. Previously, it was assumed that immigrant youth in Canada were on an upward, linear trajectory for socioeconomic status compared with their parents. Because of increased educational opportunities and the ability to assimilate into the mainstream culture, it was thought that immigrant youth were able to advance socially and economically with little trouble.

While this picture is still true for many first- 1.5, and second generation immigrant youth, assumptions of positive socioeconomic advancement for all persons included in this population segment are now being questioned. Research shows the great heterogeneity of experience among immigrant youth and the vulnerability of some to social exclusion and economic marginalization. Factors associated with first- 1.5- or second-generation status are important in this regard (Portes & Zhou, 1993).

The question of identity depends to some extent on the variables that are being considered. However, it can be said that first, 1.5 and second generation youth in the Region represent an increasingly prominent segment of the population. This population is made up, more and more, of visible minorities, and it is becoming highly heterogeneous in terms of inter- and intra-ethnocultural differences with respect to experiences of socioeconomic integration. These trends are relatively recent in the Region of Peel, and are particularly strong in the City of Brampton.

Understanding the particular needs of this growing population is challenging in light of several important shifts: 1) the continuing increase in ethnocultural, racial and linguistic diversity; 2) the shifting of immigrant settlement patterns away from traditional urban cores to suburban areas that are underserved; and 3) the shift to a globalized, knowledge-based economy.

Equally difficult, yet essential, is determining how to meet the needs of these youth through services to support their successful integration. Not effectively doing so risks the economic marginalization and social exclusion of immigrant youth, individuals and groups from Canadian society. These are conditions that could persist over generations, resulting in increased racism, divisiveness and social strife.

The following sections highlight the main issues facing immigrant youth and identify literature related to questions of the successful integration of this segment of the population. Promising solutions and strategies to support first- 1.5- and second-generation youth integration are also presented.

Underlying issues faced by first- 1.5- and second-generation youth and potential strategies and solutions

All youth face challenges as they establish themselves as adults in society. However, these difficulties may be accentuated for first- 1.5- and second- generation immigrant youth.

The main issues identified here are: 1) language proficiency; 2) support for social integration; 3) intergenerational tensions and conflicts; 4) health and well-being, including health risk behaviours; 5) academic disengagement; 6) Access to employment; 7) poverty and lack of resources; 8) crime and justice; and 9) access issues.

Issue #1: Language proficiency

As discussed in Section 1, first-, 1.5- and second generation immigrant youth may face challenges related to their level of skill and proficiency in English. Language issues may arise because many immigrant youth are from non-English speaking countries and do not speak English with their families at home. But language issues may also emerge because youth are from countries where, although English is spoken, it is not “Canadian English.” Such is the case in several Caribbean countries, for example.

Lack of language proficiency may lead youth to feelings of self-doubt and make them susceptible to negative external judgments that put them increasingly at risk (Kilbride & Anisef, 2001). Low levels of English proficiency may also affect levels of social integration and confidence, school achievement (including grades, school placement and drop-out rates), access to services and information and employability. Additionally, low language proficiency may create vulnerabilities to discrimination, bullying, and violence (e.g., youth may be teased about their accent by peers; they may receive negative assessments by teachers) (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003; Kilbride et al., 2000; Bettencourt, undated).

Youth who arrive at a young age or who are born in Canada may adapt with less difficulty because they have more time to acquire language skills and to adapt to the educational system (Kilbride et al., 2000). Students require between two and five years of explicit English language instruction to develop basic communication skills, and between five and seven years to develop academic language proficiency.

Maintaining and/or developing competency in one’s first or heritage language is also important in the adaptation process. Holding onto the language of one’s family (parents, grandparents, etc.) can help first-, 1.5- and second-generation youth in understanding culture, bridging intergenerational gaps and developing a healthy cultural identity (Ngo & Schliefer, 2005). Yet, many immigrant youth do not have opportunities to learn and practice their heritage languages. As discussed in *From Generation to Generation: Utilizing the Human Capital of Newcomer Parents to Benefit Families*, another paper in this series, there is evidence that when immigrant children abandon or reject their home language and culture, gang problems are aggravated in urban areas and immigrant children’s chances of success are inhibited (Colorado Department of Education, 2007; p.13). Research strongly suggests that providing primary language instruction is the best way to guarantee long-term academic

success (Collier & Thomas, 1997; as cited in Colorado Department of Education, 2007; p.19).

Promising Strategies and Solutions:

Advocate:

- For Federal funding of ESL training, the establishment of national benchmarks and standards for identification, assessment, curriculum and instruction, and for tracking the progress of youth with ESL needs (Ngo & Schliefer, 2008).
- For expanded and secure federal and provincial funding for heritage language learning.

Collaborate:

- With schools, community and settlement organizations to support ESL training and heritage language program development.

Implement/Support Regional Policies and Programs:

- That provide and/or use language interpretation services in all municipal services and programs for youth and parents.
- That recruit multilingual staff as much as possible for direct services to youth, such as recreation.

Issue #2: Social exclusion and social inclusion

There is growing literature on post-migration and ethnic identity stresses experienced by first-, 1.5- and second-generation immigrant and racialized (visible minority) youth. These stresses include racism, alienation, language barriers, academic pressures and intergenerational and cultural conflicts (Khanlou et al., 2002; Hyman et al., 2002; Yu et al., 2003).

Such influences may affect the integration of youth on three levels: 1) individual psychosocial experiences (e.g., sense of belonging, cultural identity, self-esteem); 2) group behaviour (e.g., intra- and inter-group relations); and 3) broader societal involvement (e.g., civic engagement, volunteerism) (Khanlou, 2008). What makes first-, 1.5- and second-generation youth resilient versus at risk when it comes to social integration, and what factors contribute to making them feel socially included versus socially excluded or marginalized? The factors are multidimensional, interrelated and dynamic and thus complex.

Immigration requires significant psychosocial adjustment. Constructing one's identity and sense of belonging and maintaining self-esteem and confidence are all important elements of social integration. In addition, in culturally diverse societies like Canada, ethnocultural identity is not only important to individual well-being and social inclusion, but also to social

cohesion (McDonald & Quell, 2008).

The processes of psychosocial adjustment can be compromised by feelings of isolation and loneliness as first-generation youth are separated from friends, family members and familiar settings of the country of origin. They may also be affected by conflicting values and familial pressures that differ between the family and Canadian society. “Cultural marginalization,” related to a lack of social integration, may lead to negative psychosocial affects on youth, including identity confusion. This risk may persist into the second generation (Choi, 2001).

Another factor in individual psychosocial experiences that can marginalize first-, 1.5- and second-generation youth is racism and discrimination. According to the Canadian Ethnic Diversity Survey (2003), one in 10 of all Canadian residents 15 years of age and older reported having personally encountered discrimination. By comparison, one in five members of visible minority groups reported at least one experience of discrimination because of ethnicity, culture, skin colour, language, accent or religion. The highest rates – one in three – were reported by Africans and Afro-Caribbeans (Statistics Canada, 2003).

There is evidence that racism and discrimination may be experienced differently by first versus second plus generations. Data from the Canadian Ethnic Diversity Survey showed that second-generation individuals reported feeling more victimized by discrimination than newcomers (Reitz & Banerjee, 2007). Of particular concern for immigrants are recent studies suggesting that perceptions and experiences of discrimination increase over length of stay (LOS) due to a greater recognition of discriminatory behaviour as well as an increased exposure to discrimination over time (Gee et al., 2006).

Other explanations of this differential experience of discrimination by generation are that initial settlement barriers, such as language, are no longer relevant (Reitz & Somerville, 2004). There is also an increased expectation among Canadian-born, second-generation youth that their social equality and rights as citizens will be recognized and respected (Potvin, 2008). As Potvin argues, “What makes second-generation visible minority youth stand out most from other local youth is the racism they suffer. which tends to create or recreate physical and symbolic differences” (p. 100).

Promising Strategies and Solutions:

At the level of intra- and inter-group relations, first-, 1.5- and second- generation youth can benefit from expanded social networks (both ethno-specific and intercultural) and those that consist of interactions across class or achievement lines. This not only helps to develop a sense of belonging and self-esteem, but also can be a strategic means of gaining helpful guidance for pathways to employment, among other things (Yan, Lauer and Jhangiani, 2008). Strategies to support the development of youth social networks are likely to be influenced by the geography of settlement patterns.

For example, it is probable that first-, 1.5- and second-generation youth who live in neighbourhoods where their own ethnic group is concentrated residentially will have needs that are different from those who live in situations in which they are isolated from people of like ethnicity.

Likewise, youth who live in neighbourhoods where there is a high concentration of poverty will have needs that are different from those where poverty is not as much of an issue. Neighbourhoods with high levels of poverty are usually underserved, poorly resourced, stigmatized and lacking in community capacity.

Youth social networks can be enhanced through a variety of strategies to build social support with peers and the community. Such strategies include: establishing buddy programs to welcome newcomer youth providing recreational activities (e.g., arts, sports, hobbies, outdoor recreation), creating youth drop-in centres and developing youth library programs. Social integration in Canada may be supported through relationship building with friends from the same ethnic background (Seat, 2000) and through developing “bicultural competencies” (Suarez-Orozco & Suarez-Orozco, 2001) as well as ethnocultural identity development. These factors are associated with comfort in initiating inter-ethnic contact, greater academic achievement and higher psychosocial functioning (Phinney et al., 2006). Municipal recreation spaces offer ideal venues for spontaneous, unregulated physical activities, such as pick-up soccer games, as well as more programmed activities.

Art also offers an opportunity to support ethno-specific preferences as well as occasions for youth of all ethnoracial backgrounds to come together. Tirone & Legg (2004) discuss the challenges of diversity and the municipal recreation delivery system, highlighting barriers caused by poverty and discrimination, and racism.

The authors note, “Recreation is known to generate the social capital necessary for people to develop trust and linkages between diverse groups of people” (p. 163). OCASI (2006) developed a model to support inclusive recreational programming that can serve as a useful guide for addressing the barriers to engaging first-, 1.5- and second-generation youth. Consistent with this model, Khanlou (2007) suggests that multicultural settings provide opportunities for becoming aware of one’s cultural identity, not only in contrast to a dominant majority, but through ongoing contact with other cultures.

Community programs that are flexible, diverse, culturally sensitive and accessible (i.e., low or no cost) are important in order to respond to the diverse needs of first-, 1.5- and second-generation youth. There must be greater outreach to places where youth spend time, so that they can build relationships to establish trust. Additionally, greater efforts must be made to engage them in positive activities and to disseminate information about the sorts of activities and help available.

Moreover, these efforts must be sensitive to family and cultural context. Opportunities should be tailored and targeted initially to those most at risk of being marginalized such as first-, 1.5- and second-generation youth in low-income neighbourhoods (e.g., initiatives by the Strong Neighbourhood Task Force in Toronto, <http://unitedwaytoronto.com/whoWeHelp/neighbourhoodStrategy/strongNeighbourhoods.php>).

At the broader level of civic engagement, researchers have suggested various strategies to reach out to youth, generally, and to first- and second-generation youth in particular. Nurturing youth involvement in leading, designing, planning, delivering and evaluating community initiatives is considered important for building self-esteem, fostering a sense of belonging and instilling confidence, as well as for enhancing skill development. Action research is one model that has been used to empower youth. The formation of youth councils created to advise municipalities has also been a source of youth empowerment. Such opportunities allow youth to take on adult roles and prepare for the world of work in addition to providing them with settings for positive social networking. Special funding for similar initiatives is essential.

Another strategy to encourage civic engagement is to lower the voting age for participation in municipal elections to 16 years and to extend this right to all city residents regardless of their citizenship status (Siemiatycki, 2006). Other ways to support first- and second-generation youth engagement at the civic level is to remove institutional barriers so that accessibility to, and receptivity of, municipal programs and community organizations is increased.

Other strategies and solutions required to address social exclusion and marginalization among immigrant youth are as follows:

Advocate:

- For funding at the federal and provincial level for the development of newcomer youth integration programs.
- For national and provincial anti-discrimination campaigns.

Collaborate:

- With community organizations to enhance opportunities for youth to participate in the development, operation and evaluation of activities and development projects.
- With settlement agencies and community organizations to provide buddy systems for newcomer youth.
- With settlement agencies and community organizations to promote youth leadership development in community building, in the cultural arena (as leaders, resource persons and teachers of their heritage culture and language) in designing, running and/or guiding programs and in civic participation.
- With “cultural intermediaries” and organizations that serve refugee and immigrant families.

Implement/Support Regional Policies and Programs:

- That address racism and discrimination through cross-cultural and anti-racism training/awareness and public education (Desai & Subramanian, 2000).

- That provide forums with media and police to discuss and address stereotyping and negative images of marginalized communities/neighbourhoods.
- That provide positive spaces for youth to meet and gather (e.g., youth drop-in centres, community centres, recreation activities).
- That are intercultural as well as ones that are ethno-specific.
- That support community activities aimed at celebrating cultures and traditions as well as neighbourhoods.
- That support the development of action research projects that involve first-, 1.5- and second-generation youth to determine needs and develop solutions (e.g., anti-discrimination initiatives, neighbourhood awareness projects, photo projects on relevant themes).
- That address systemic barriers by recruiting multicultural and multilingual staff and volunteers (i.e., “cultural intermediaries”) who can provide diversity training and establish links with organizations that are multicultural and multilingual.
- That support and enhance existing projects targeting youth.
- That consider lowering the municipal voting age to 16 and extending voting rights to all residents, regardless of legal status.
- Create a youth council to advise the local municipal council.

Exemplary Programs:

- Newcomer Youth Integration Program to break down cultural barriers and build social competencies. (KW YMCA: http://www.kwymca.org/Contribute/immigrant/program_newcomer.asp).
- North Shore Multicultural Society (Vancouver) youth leadership, research and advocacy skill development initiatives. (<http://www.nsms.ca/publications.htm>).
- Council of Peoples Organization, Coney Island, New York, (neighbourhood action projects for youth). (<http://copousa.org/Programs/Projects/Neighbour.htm>).
- Bajucol community organization in Boston to support cultural identity and belonging. (http://www.mentoring.org/access_research/immigrant_all/).
- YMCA Peel Youth Village - <http://www.ymcatoronto.org/en/find-ymca/peel/mississauga/youth-centres/peel-youth-village.html>
- Dixie Bloor Neighbourhood Centre - <http://www.dixiebloor.ca/>).
- Youth Cabinet, City of Toronto - <http://www.torontoyouth.com/> (site under construction).

Issue #3: Intergenerational tensions and conflicts

The family context is fundamental in the development and support-social, emotional, physical, educational, financial, cultural-of all youth, whether immigrant or non-immigrant, and whether first-, second-, or other-generation. While some factors, such as the ability to identify with and respect one's culture of origin, can foster personal resilience, other factors associated with immigration and settlement increase vulnerabilities to stress and create particular needs for first- and second-generation immigrant youth. Pre- and post-migration factors may alter the family dynamic and require significant family adjustment.

As discussed in Section 1 of this paper, many changes in family dynamics are imposed by Canadian immigration policy and may create tensions. Prolonged family separation and resultant stresses associated with family reunification are being increasingly documented in many communities in Canada (e.g., Filipino and Jamaican) (Anisef, Kilbride, Baichman-Anisef & Khattar, 2001). These stresses compromise academic achievement by youth and are associated with an increased risk of family disintegration and anti-social activities.

First-, 1.5- and second-generation youth may experience cultural conflict with both their immediate family and their ethnic group as they struggle to fit in with their peers and the dominant culture and, at the same time, meet their parents' expectations (Kilbride & Anisef, 2000; Tyyska, 2008). For example, family conflict may arise in situations in which there are contradictions over values in the dominant culture outside versus those inside the home. Typical situations include dating and spouse selection patterns, educational and career choices and participation in cultural and religious traditions. In addition, these situations may be gendered with girls and boys experiencing different kinds of tensions.

Family conflict situations may also vary according to culture of origin. For example, when it comes to academic performance, children of Chinese immigrants often experience greater familial and cultural pressure to become high achievers compared with their European Canadian peers. Second-generation Chinese Canadians may feel even more stress from such pressure (Lalonde & Giguere, 2008).

Youth who are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgendered may be particularly vulnerable to family conflict, since the values of their parents and ethnic community may be incongruent with their lifestyle choices.

Intergenerational communication problems and conflict may be rooted in the different experiences of parents and children in terms of differential exposure and relative level of ease of entry into the dominant culture versus the culture of origin. Tyyska (2006) suggests that youth who share the first-generation immigrant experience with their parents may be more likely to retain heritage values as they become adults. This means less potential for conflict as compared with first-generation immigrant parents and their second-generation (Canadian-born) children (Tyyska, 2007).

As discussed in Section 1, differential acquisition of one of the official languages and dominant cultural values by children compared with their parents may contribute to communication gaps and family conflict. It may also affect parental authority (Tyyska, 2008; Anisef et al., 2001).

Some parents may send children back to the country of origin as a way to remedy family conflict. This practice has implications for the youth involved in terms of schooling, future employability, socio-emotional adjustment and language proficiency. Family conflict may also lead to violence and/or a situation in which a youth is asked to leave the family home. In such cases, youth may require safe, affordable housing and associated supports.

The importance of having a caring adult to articulate, model and reinforce clear norms and to provide guidance has been highlighted by best practice guides to healthy youth development (Metrocouncil, 2008). First-, 1.5- and second- generation youth may not have access to a full-time adult role model given that his or her parents may be working multiple jobs and/or shift work. A mentor, either from within or outside the cultural community, may help fill this gap and foster feelings of safety, inclusion and belonging. Mentors can complement parental values, compensate for parental absences and serve as a bridge between youth and mainstream cultural and educational institutions.

Promising Strategies and Solutions:

Advocate:

- For anti-poverty initiatives at federal and provincial levels (e.g., affordable housing; employment and educational supports for parents; better social assistance; and a national child care program)

Collaborate:

- With settlement, community and social services agencies to provide opportunities for intergenerational dialogue (e.g., forums), orientation to Canadian systems and culture for parents and youth, etc.
- With settlement, community and social services agencies to ensure availability of culturally consistent and linguistically accessible family and individual counselling.
- With schools to involve parents and bridge understanding of youth culture and stressors.

Implement/Support Regional Policies and Programs:

- That provide safe housing or shelters for youth facing conflict or violence in the home.
- That establish mentorship opportunities for youth with caring adult role models.

- That establish a youth help line that is linguistically accessible.

A fuller presentation of promising strategies and solutions related to parental and family financial instability can be found in *Social Cohesion, Social Exclusion, Social Capital*, part of the Region of Peel's Discussion Paper series.

Exemplary Programs:

- North Shore Multicultural Society (Vancouver) Immigrant Family Bridging Project (youth support group with family forum to strengthen relationships between the generations). (<http://www.nsms.ca/publications.htm>).
- Mentoring.org (USA). (http://www.mentoring.org/access_research/immigrant).
- MIND – mentoring program at Youth Employment Services, YMCA, Greater Toronto.

Issue #4: Health and health risk behaviours

This section reviews the health risks faced by first-, 1.5- and second- generation youth.

Youth that have experience pre-migration trauma, such as persecution, war, violence, loss of family members or other trauma, may experience mental health risks in the form of alcohol or drug abuse, delinquency, post traumatic stress states, depression and behavioural problems (Beiser, 1999; Beiser et al., 2005). Racialized and refugee groups are particularly vulnerable.

Generational studies have shown increases in the use of illegal drugs by second- and third-generation youth, particularly among youth experiencing acculturation and/or identity-related problems (Cheung, 1993; Guarnaccia & Lopez, 1998).

Ngo & Schliefer (2005) found that youth that immigrate from countries with strong sexuality taboos, high incidences of sexually transmitted infections and cultural practices such as female genital mutilation are at increased risk for confusion about sexual biology and sexual health issues. Much of their confusion arises as a result of the conflicting messages they receive from a sexualized popular and media culture, as well as from lack of access to reproductive health and sex education.

Additionally, these authors note that gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered immigrant youth are at risk for high rates of suicide, attempted suicide, depression, violence, victimization, substance abuse and HIV-associated risky behaviour. They point to the intersection of race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation as often compromising healthy development and well-being among young people.

First and second-generation immigrant youth face barriers at individual, family and societal levels in terms both of forming their sexual identity and having that identity accepted such that, “They often face fear, internalized homophobia, rejection and ostracism by family and community members, social stigma, harassment and gay-bashing” (p. 30).

Tailoring and targeting health promotion and treatment programs to the particular health needs of first- and second-generation immigrant youth- whether these needs involve mental health, addictions, reproductive health, or infectious disease-can increase effectiveness of delivery and conserve resources. Community mobilization and organization is also important for tailoring community-based interventions to the specific needs and values of neighbourhoods with low SES and ethnoracial diversity. The prioritizing, design, implementation and evaluation of these strategies requires community involvement to ensure that messages are consistent and compatible with community needs, economic resources and diversity profiles.

Promising Strategies and Solutions:

Advocate:

- For comprehensive health care for youth, including reproductive and mental health care.
- Comprehensive and developmentally appropriate information and guidance about sexuality and relationships.
- For a school curriculum that provides examples of and practice with communication, negotiation, refusal skills and employs teaching strategies that involve participants.
- For federal and provincial health policies geared to youth (e.g., national substance abuse prevention and treatment strategy).

Collaborate:

- With schools and community organizations, including ethno-specific agencies, to develop and provide health education programs (e.g., peer educators).

Implement/Support Regional Policies and Programs:

- That maintain mental health and reduce health risk behaviours among vulnerable first- and second-generation immigrant youth.
- That are aimed at safe, healthy and inclusive communities.
- That tailor and target health messages to first- and second-generation immigrant youth.

Exemplary Programs:

- Communities that Care. (<http://ncadi.samhsa.gov/features/ctc/resources.aspx> or <http://ctcsquamish.com/>).
- Metro Council for Teen Potential, Rochester, New York. (http://www.metrocouncil.us/health_promo.html).

Issue #5: Academic disengagement

As Beiser et al. (2005, p.23) state, “Apart from the family, school is the most potent influence on children’s development.” While many first and second generation immigrant youth succeed and even surpass their Canadian-born peers in educational attainment, some sub-groups (e.g., those organized around gender, family structure, ethnic origin, language skill, parents’ education level, or age at arrival) are vulnerable to school drop-out (Boyd, 2008; Anisef et al., 2008, Brown, 2006, Nunes, 2008).

The role of parents in youth’s school achievement and strategies to support parents and families are reviewed and discussed in *From Generation to Generation: Utilizing the Human Capital of Newcomer Parents to Benefit Families*, part of the Region of Peel’s Discussion Paper series, with a focus on factors such as parental socioeconomic status, levels of expectation and understanding and involvement with the school system. The following section focuses more directly on youth vulnerabilities that affect school achievement.

The socioeconomic integration of first- and second-generation immigrant youth and their parents can be profiled in relation to such key factors as educational attainment, employment outcomes and family income level. Correlations to and comparisons, across individuals and groups on such variables as country of origin, period of arrival, generation, gender, ethnic origin and visible minority status can illuminate the phenomenon.

On a general level, over the last 20 years, there has been a downward shift in the economic status of newcomers, most of whom are mainly visible minorities, as marked by earnings relative to Canadian-born individuals and immigrants who immigrated prior to this period (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003). Problems faced in labour market integration translate into rates of high underemployment and unemployment and thus on increased dependence on social assistance for newcomers and their families (HRDC, 2001).

Based on 1996 Census data, Ornstein (2000) found family poverty among non-European groups in Toronto to be twice the rate for groups of European and Canadian origin. For certain groups (e.g., Latin Americans, African Blacks and Caribbeans, Arabs and West Asians), the figure is as much as three times the rate. Milan and Tran (2004) reported that 44% of Black children compared with 19% of non-Black children live in low-income conditions. Economic marginalization may be even greater for temporary immigrants, undocumented immigrants and refugee claimants and their families (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003). The rates of low socioeconomic status for immigrant families suggest many first- and second-generation youth, particularly those of visible minority status, live in poverty.

Statistics on the socioeconomic integration of first- and second-generation immigrant youth themselves show that they tend to acquire more years of schooling, (Palameta, 2007). However, Aydemir et al., (2005) note that returns on education in terms of economic integration may vary by region of parental origin. This is further discussed in *From Generation to Generation: Utilizing the Human Capital of Newcomer Parents to Benefit Families*, part of this series.

Gender differences are also evident. Canadian women with two immigrant parents have an earning advantage compared with Canadian women and men with two native-born parents (Palameta, 2007).

Of particular concern are findings suggesting that racialized men with two immigrant parents experience a significant earnings disadvantage compared with peers with Canadian-born parents (Palameta, 2007). This is clearly an area that requires further investigation of the systemic barriers that contribute to these differential outcomes and policies aimed at reducing racial disparities in income, as these will contribute to continuing cycles of disadvantage.

Less data was available on the social integration of first- and second-generation immigrant youth and how they differ from Canadian-born youth and from each other.

The age of arrival of first-generation youth in Canada was identified as a main factor in how youth adapt to the school system: the later the arrival, the more challenges they face and the greater their vulnerability to early school leaving. Inadequate assessment techniques, discrimination or inappropriately low expectations by teachers can lead to a lack of recognition of past learning and low grade level placement. This, in turn, can negatively impact a young person's self-confidence and motivation, prompting school drop-out. The alternative of placing youth in grade levels according to their age, however, carries its own risks. Immigrant youth may not be able to pass the grade they are placed in, and thus become lost (Ngo & Schliefer, 2005).

Language proficiency figures as an important variable in assessment and placement, since, as already mentioned in an earlier section, many newcomer youth have a different first language than English or they may speak a different variety of English than those found in Canada. While ESL training is important, research findings suggest that inappropriate streaming into ESL classes may occur, taking time away from the study of other subjects as well as stigmatizing and/or negatively affecting motivation levels. Drop-out rates among ESL learners are significant, with figures as high as between 61 and 74% (Alberta Education, 1992; Gunderson, 2004, Watt & Roessingh, 1994, 2001).

Besides issues related to grade-level placement, newcomer youth who are unfamiliar with the school system in Canada may experience other difficulties. These include social withdrawal, fear of isolation, decreased self-esteem, social marginalization, early-school leaving and problems with the formation of a hybrid identity. They may have troubles adjusting to the different school culture and environment, where they may perceive a lack of respect for teachers and a lack of discipline. They may also have difficulty making friends (Bettencourt, undated).

Other barriers, such as discrimination at school, based on level or type of English language spoken, religion, SES or ethnic origin, contribute to social exclusion and affect school achievement among first- and second-generation immigrant youth. The absence of visible minority teachers, lower expectations held by teachers and counsellors toward students perceived as "non-Canadian," "colour-coded" streaming, Eurocentric curricula and values conflicts (Dei et al., 1997; Kilbride, 2000 in Krahn, 2005) are also problematic variables in relation to scholastic achievement. Therefore, for first- and second-generation immigrant youth, the interplay of family and school environment is an issue requiring serious attention.

First- and second-generation immigrant youth may also face challenges in accessing and continuing on to post-secondary education. Students may not be familiar with college and university systems in Canada, and they may face barriers related to the cost of tuition and/or lack of full legal status (Omidvar & Richmond, 2003).

Finally, it is important to recognize that first- and second-generation immigrant youth may be required to enter the workforce early as a means to increase family income. This reality may jeopardize their educational attainment (Lam, 1994). Thus, along with measures to address poverty among immigrant groups generally, supports that would enable youth to continue their education while working are of critical importance.

Promising Strategies and Solutions:

Addressing academic disengagement requires advocacy, collaboration and strategies and solutions that support first- and second-generation youth. These include:

Advocate:

- For the development of policies, regulations and programs that address equity and inclusiveness.
- For the creation of a transitional-year program for newcomer students.
- For improved assessment of past learning and appropriate grade placement.
- For more inclusive schools, where inclusion involves incorporation of a multicultural curriculum and provision of heritage language classes.
- For the development of anti-discrimination policies and diversity training for students and staff.
- For the transformation of schools through community participation.
- For the inclusion of settlement workers as part of the school team.
- For the provision of counselling services for youth, parents and teachers in order to address intergenerational issues.
- For access to student loans for first- and second-generation immigrant youth facing barriers due to legal status.
- For policies and procedures to make post-secondary studies more accessible through financial and academic supports and outreach.

Collaborate:

- To provide mentorship and after-school programs to support first- and second-generation immigrant youth considered at risk.
- With schools, colleges and universities to ensure smooth transitions for vulnerable first- and second-generation immigrant youth.

Exemplary Programs:

- Pathways to Education. First developed in Regent Park, Toronto, and now expanded nationally, this is an exemplary program that aims to support educational attainment by youth at risk and/or facing economic disadvantage. Pathways to Education (2008) attributes its success to the active participation of community members, ensuring local support systems, ongoing research about how to improve the program, the fostering of community-building, and dedicated staff open to innovation. (www.pathwaystoeducation.ca).
- Logan Square Neighborhood Association, Chicago, Illinois This organization has worked to make schools community partners for learning and empowerment (e.g., through parent mentor programs, tutoring, training parents to work in schools and providing them with a stipend, weekly workshops for parents to discuss and share experiences, and valuing language status to enable parents to be involved and contribute to schools). Other projects include the Literacy Ambassador program, Community Learning Centers and the Nueva Generacion Bilingual Teacher Preparation Program. (www.lsna.net).
- The Center for Latino Achievement and Success in Education, Athens, Georgia. Provides professional development and technical assistance to local schools. Among their offerings is a week-long summer institute on best practices for teaching English language learners, a model curriculum and strategies for instructing immigrant children in different academic subjects, cultural background awareness on relevant ethnocultural communities and effective ways to increase parental involvement. (www.coe.uga.edu/clase)
- City College of San Francisco, San Francisco, California. A promising program based in a community college, it uses various strategies to recruit and engage immigrant students, among them: outreach, the placement of bilingual staff in positions requiring public contact, scheduling classes to meet the realities of immigrants' working lives, developing curricula to meet immigrant needs, linking ESL and vocational training so that immigrants can pursue goals simultaneously, and providing academic support to immigrant students (Petsod et al., 2006). (www.ccsf.cc.ca.us)

Issue #6: Access to employment

Securing employment is a challenge for all youth with the first- and second-generation immigrant segment of the population. These youth experience generally higher levels of employment than older segments of the workforce (Rootham, 2008; James, 1993; Marquardt, 1998; Felstead & Krahn et al., 1999, Shields, Rahi et al., 2006). The current economic climate presents challenges due to the shift from an industrial to a service economy, the increasing trend away from full-time-permanent towards short-term-temporary work situations and low rates of union membership (Marquardt, 1998; de Wolff, 2006).

First- and second-generation immigrant youth may face additional barriers to getting a job due to factors such as racism and a lack of social networks and resources, compared with their third-plus-generation peers.

There is emerging evidence that racialized status may be a factor in poorer job integration. While second-generation youth generally have equivalent if not higher educational attainment compared with their Canadian-born counterparts, and second-generation youth tend to do better than their first-generation immigrant parents, some racialized youth experience higher rates of unemployment, lower incomes and less desirable jobs (Boyd 2008; Yan et al., 2000; Palameta, 2007). These findings are further supported by a report by the Canadian Labour Congress (2005) that found a tendency among Canadian-born workers of colour to have higher unemployment rates, a higher ratio in part-time and temporary jobs and higher levels of education but lower economic achievement. Furthermore, studies reveal that racialized workers receive significantly fewer financial returns for their education (Lian & Matthews, 1998; Marquardt, 1998).

Yan et al. (2008) found that newcomer youth used same-ethnic group social networks to gain employment. These authors also identified barriers to job access, such as parents' lack of a professional job, lack of cross-ethnic social networks and lack of know-how about job search processes. These findings, while preliminary, suggest that needs in the area of employment include the development of cross-cultural social networks, training in job search techniques and creating opportunities to work.

It is vital to reduce the vulnerabilities that risk, for visible minority youth in particular creating, a generational downward trend in terms of economic integration.

Promising Strategies and Solutions:

Addressing employment issues faced by first- and second-generation youth requires advocacy, collaboration and program development. These include:

Advocate:

- For the integration of immigrant skills into the economy (e.g., provide incentives to employers, recognition of credentials).
- For the development of employment supports by federal and provincial governments and community organizations.

Collaborate:

- With community and ethno-specific agencies to provide mentoring programs.
- With community employers to develop coop placements for first- and second-generation youth at risk.
- With employment centres to develop job search supports specific to youth.

- With community partners to develop internship opportunities for youth (e.g., using public services and private sector partnerships).
- With schools and guidance counsellors to provide youth information about services and job opportunities (e.g., how to continue one's education while working).

Implement/Support Regional Policies and Programs:

- This provides internship opportunities in the municipal sector for first- and second-generation youth.
- That provides targeted and tailored job search and support programs for first- and second-generation youth.
- That assesses to support program improvement.

Exemplary Programs:

- City of Toronto programs for internships for youth through partnerships with business (<http://www.toronto.ca/yep/>).
- The Aboriginal Internship program, part of the First Steps: Municipal Aboriginal Pathways initiative, designed for use in all city departments to increase Aboriginal representation in the civic workforce. Through the internship, Aboriginal students and graduates are given the opportunity to use their academic studies in professional or technology disciplines to gain valuable work experience. For example, the Public Works Department hires Aboriginal students from the University of Manitoba's Engineering Access Program (ENGAP) for a four-month period in the summer. Based on available vacancies, they also seek to hire graduates from the program as Engineers in Training (EITs) (<http://www.winnipeg.ca/interhom/guide/map/Internships.stm>).
- North Shore Multicultural Society (Vancouver) Immigrant Youth Volunteer Network (<http://www.nsms.ca/publications.htm>).
- The Los Companeros Mentoring Program, New Mexico. This program is part of the Enlace Initiative of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, Battle Creek Michigan (www.wkkf.org) and is a path to college programs for Latino youth (Petsod et al., 2006). It includes such key elements as:
 - Cultural competence (e.g., ethno-specific mentors who are bicultural and bilingual)
 - Intensive mentoring (i.e., one-on-one, minimum twenty hours per week)
 - Working with the entire family
 - Collaboration (e.g., working with educators from various levels of schools to address systemic issues)

- The Santa Ana Partnership, Santa Ana ENLACE, Santa Ana California collaboration between higher education institutions and the local school district (Petsod et al., 2006 and). The Santa Ana partnership has worked with schools to change their curriculum and graduation requirements, expand supplemental educational activities, and develop innovative parental involvement programs. An ongoing challenge is to provide financial support to students who qualify for college, including undocumented students. This effort is being realized through fundraising with local businesses, foundations and private donors to establish scholarships for immigrant youth. www.sac.edu/community/partnerships/enlace/index.htm).
- The PROMISE Initiative Southern California Promotes success for English language learners through:
 - Enriched and affirming learning environments
 - Empowering pedagogy
 - Challenging and relevant curriculum
 - High-quality instructional resources
 - Valid and comprehensive assessment
 - High-quality professional preparation and support
 - Powerful family and community engagement
- Advocacy-oriented administrative and leadership systems www.promise-initiative.org.

Issue #7: Poverty and lack of resources

As discussed in Papers #3 of this series, the socioeconomic status of the parents of first-, 1.5- and second-generation immigrant youth is a major determinant of health and well-being. SES influences youths' exposures to unhealthy physical and social environments. Low parental income affects housing and neighbourhood choice and, in turn, is associated with available school and neighbourhood resources. Low parental income correlates with increased risk of school drop-out. It also affects teacher expectations and is a primary determinant of negative development. Heavy smoking, alcohol and drug abuse and having unprotected sex are all associated here, as are depression, suicide risk and poor psychological well-being. Poverty also creates situational and systemic obstacles that undermine attentive and nurturing parental behaviours (Beiser et al., 1999).

As previously mentioned, to alleviate family poverty, first- and second-generation immigrant youth may be required to seek employment to contribute to the family income. They may also have to assume family responsibilities such as care of siblings, cooking or shopping to assist the family situation. Such requirements add stress and take time away from educational pursuits (Kilbride et al., 2000).

Tyyska (in press) argues that the material needs of immigrants, as well as the issues of poverty, are likely more critical in terms of the settlement problems they experience than the often cited cultural conflict between Old and New World values.

The problems associated with low socioeconomic status faced by recent immigrant families are further compounded by downloading and funding freezes. They have also been exacerbated by cutbacks to social services and settlement agencies (Richmond & Shields, 2005). In Ontario, such economic retrenchment has created additional demands on community agencies, including those providing settlement services. Further challenges to the existing service system have arisen as immigrant settlement patterns have shifted away from the downtown urban core to underserved suburbs. In sum, settlement services are currently inadequate to meet demands (Richmond & Shields, 2005).

Issue #8: Crime and the justice system

Among the factors that contribute to vulnerability among first- and second-generation immigrant youth to victimization and recruitment by organized crime groups are traumatic migration experiences, poverty, limited English ability, intergenerational and family conflicts, social isolation, lack of a sense of belonging and discrimination (Ngo & Schliefer, 2005).

In addition, first- and second-generation immigrant youth may have limited knowledge about the Canadian justice system. They may lack understanding of their constitutional rights. They may have had a negative experience with police and the youth justice system resulting in feelings of distrust and fear of authority figures. In addition, they may encounter linguistic and cultural barriers that impede understanding, and/or the provision of accurate information during investigations and court proceedings. Moreover, when sentenced to judicial measures and sanctions, immigrant youth may have limited access to community resources to help them (e.g., culturally competent counsellors and rehabilitation) (Ngo & Schliefer, 2005).

Promising Strategies and Solutions:

Addressing youth issues of crime and the justice system requires strategies and solutions that advocate, collaborate and implement programs to better inform and support youth. These include:

Advocate:

- For anti-poverty initiatives.
- For ESL training.
- For family supports.
- For mental health supports to deal with traumatic migration experiences.
- For anti-discrimination programs.
- For cross-sectoral crime prevention programs.

Collaborate:

- With police and the youth justice system, to provide cultural interpreters and supports for first- and second-generation immigrant youth and their families in situations in which they must come into contact with authorities.
- With community and settlement organizations to provide culturally competent counsellors and rehabilitation opportunities.

Exemplary Programs:

The Peel Youth Violence Prevention Network (education, policy and programs; working with families; services and supports for youth; and community development) (May 2008) (<http://www.endyouthviolence.ca/>).

Issue #9: Access issues

Here we discuss issues of access to a range of services (health and otherwise) that relate directly to youth. For first- and second-generation immigrant youth, access issues involve a wide range of community resources, services and institutions. These include schools, community centres, recreational facilities, employment programs and supports, settlement services and transportation. Barriers to access may be connected to information gaps created by factors such as lack of awareness of services and various cultural aspects (e.g., lack of familiarity with “Canadian” sports and their rules may create a barrier to participation). Other access-reducing factors may include systemic discrimination.

Participation may also be hindered due to concentrations of immigrant families in neighbourhoods with low socioeconomic status that lack community resources (Ngo & Schliefer, 2005; Malvern Youth Leadership Inclusion Facilitation Enabling Project, 2005) or by problems of less-than-full legal status. All of these factors may result in low participation rates of immigrant youth in community activities and services.

In their analysis of the social exclusion of immigrants and refugees, Omidvar & Richmond (2003) highlight the need for an integrated settlement policy that recognizes the settlement process as one that is long-term, multidimensional and pan-Canadian. They state that, “The settlement journey for newcomers is one that lasts a lifetime and extends into the second generation, and our public policy response must accept this basic reality as a point of departure” (p. 18). Needs for youth are left unaddressed due to the narrow focus of settlement services on adults (e.g., service providers may not be able to properly assess youth needs and/or know where to refer young people).

There is also a focal bias on initial settlement as opposed to issues related to longer-term integration, such as successful integration into the labour market and housing domains, development of a sense of belonging, civic participation and reduction of discrimination (Richmond & Shields, 2005; Ngo & Schliefer, 2005). Additionally, Richmond & Shields (2003) maintain that problematic funding models remain a root cause of ineffective settlement services.

Ngo & Schliefer (2005) argue that “funding competition in the age of scarce resources and a fear of sharing information and knowledge have impeded partnership opportunities among schools, family resource centres, mainstream organizations, immigrant-serving agencies and ethnocultural groups” (p.32) and point to a need for joint advocacy to address systemic factors affecting immigrant youth.

Promising Strategies and Solutions:

The issues surrounding access suggest the need for a multi-pronged, multi-layered strategy. A main barrier to access for many youth services, both generic and more targeted, is the lack of coordination across sectors and the lack of a comprehensive approach. Addressing access issues requires advocacy, collaboration and program development that is coordinated and comprehensive. These include:

Advocate:

- For settlement services that extend beyond initial settlement and that consider specifically first- and second-generation immigrant youth.
- For discussion, consultation and “visioning” about the goals of the newcomer settlement journey and its impact on our social, cultural and political institutions in order to combat exclusion and promote inclusion of newcomers in labour markets and public institutions.
- For restoration of adequate resources for settlement services to support an integrated settlement policy and the autonomy of the community-based agencies that are on the front lines of settlement service delivery.
- For a national newcomer youth settlement strategy to outline settlement needs for youth and develop a comprehensive strategy and framework for funding and services.

Collaborate:

- With service providers in different sectors (e.g., health, education, social services and justice) to address the need to work in partnership in order to plan and implement inter-sectoral and system-wide coordination of services for immigrant youth.
- To develop and integrate cultural competency in all practices.
- To develop mechanisms to include leaders from immigrant and refugee communities in the definition and monitoring of settlement policies.
- With local settlement agencies and the education sector to ensure that programs aimed at youth orientation with respect to Canadian social, economic, educational and community service systems and cultural norms are meeting needs and that their effectiveness is being evaluated.
- To support mainstream service providers to develop services for youth that incorporate their cultural contexts.

Implement/Support Regional Policies and Programs:

- Review and revise all municipal policies, regulations, plans and processes so as to remove barriers to first- and second-generation immigrant youth.
- Improve effectiveness of communication with ethnocultural groups and youth about municipal structures, processes and services (e.g., Diversity Management and Community Engagement, City of Toronto <http://www.toronto.ca/diversity/index.htm>).
- Create a youth Council to advise on policy and program development.
- Establish an ombudsman to provide an impartial review of complaints and issues by youth.
- On-going systems for needs assessment, program evaluation and improvement and research that is community-specific, longitudinal and action-oriented.
 - Provide free or subsidized municipal programs for youth.

Exemplary Programs:

- Malvern Neighbourhood Action Research Project.

4. Immigrant Couples

Why is it important to look at immigrant couples?

In addition to impacts on individuals and life cycle groups, migration has a profound impact on the lives of couples. These impacts are important to examine, not only because marriage is an important form of human capital, but also because research suggests that immigrants are more likely to be poor when they are not part of an intact family unit (Lerman, 2003).

Among the aspects of the migration experience that most affect marital relationships are changes in income and status, changes in the availability of social support and acculturative differences in rates of adaptation (Hyman et al., 2008). Some immigrant couples also experience stresses associated with prolonged family separation and reunification.

Post-migration changes in gender relations represent an additional stressor, particularly among those who emigrate from non-traditional source countries. In many of these countries of origin, men are the principal breadwinners and are accorded more authority in relationships as a result of education, income and cultural influences. Women perform the dual role of paid work and household/child care responsibility, though most are supported in these activities by hired household help and family members (Mason & Hyman, 2008; Tyyska & Mina, 2005).

There are notable changes following migration in the areas of household tasks, paid work and marital interactions. For example, many immigrant women in Canada have described changes in the gendered assignments of household tasks and chores, but these more accurately reflect the sharing of specific tasks rather than shifts in overall responsibility (Hyman et al., 2004). Concordant patterns of change in marital interactions include both partners accepting the old ways or negotiating new ways, while discordant patterns may include one partner resisting change, making sacrifices, and/or tolerating the old ways. Even when migration represents an increase in social mobility, economic independence and relative autonomy for women, it may not change their relative position within the family. In fact, labour force participation may increase women's role burden unless or until they find new ways of dealing with their traditional roles and responsibilities, particularly those of child care and housework (Boyd & Grieco, 2003).

Post-migration changes, including changes in gender relations, have been cited frequently as contributing to relationship difficulties, increasing levels of divorce and IPV (Tyyska & Mina, 2005; Hyman et al., 2004; Naidoo & Davis, 1988). Rates and risk factors for divorce and IPV are presented in the following two sections.

Divorce

According to Statistics Canada (2006), over one third of Canadian marriages will end in divorce before a couple celebrates their 30th anniversary. No data are available on divorce rates among Canadian immigrant couples; however, several immigrant communities have expressed concern that these rates are increasing.

In the international literature, migration has been associated with elevated risks of divorce; nevertheless, there have been surprisingly few empirical studies.

Among the well-established correlates of divorce in the general population are: 1) temporal factors (e.g., historical trends, changes in attitudes); 2) life-course factors (e.g., parental SES, divorce, early age at marriage, premarital birth, living common-law, early school leaving, presence of children); 3) attitudinal factors (e.g., attitudes towards gender roles, attitudes towards marriage, religious beliefs); and 4) economic factors (e.g., lack of socioeconomic resources)(Clark & Crompton, 2006; Hewitt et al., 2005). However, differential exposures to these factors do not entirely explain the racial and ethnic variations in divorce reported in the U.S. (Phillips & Sweeney, 2006).

Neither has much research examined risk factors associated with divorce in immigrant communities. According to assimilation theory, when immigrants arrive from countries with very low divorce rates, they assimilate into the Western divorce culture and experience increasing rates of family disruption. However, this theory is not entirely supported. Furthermore, rates of divorce vary across immigrant communities, with notable exceptions by LOS, ethnicity, gender, SES, and exogamy (i.e., marriage to a person belonging to a group other than one's own).

This suggests that risk factors for divorce in immigrant communities are complex (Hewitt et al., 2005; Frank & Wildsmith, 2005; Phillips & Sweeney, 2006). Some of the main findings are summarized here.

- Recent immigrants, especially from non-English-speaking backgrounds, are less likely to divorce than non-immigrants in the host population or non-immigrants in their country of origin (Hewitt et al., 2005; Parrado & Flippen 2005). Possible explanations relate to the correlates described above, including survival priorities, strong family orientation and more traditional gender roles. For example, familism, a social pattern in which the family assumes a position of ascendancy over individual interests, has been used to explain lower marital dissolution rates and stronger family ties among Mexican Americans when other determinants failed to explain the differentials between native-born residents and recent immigrants (Wildsmith, 2000).
- Recent Chinese female immigrants in the U.S. are more likely to divorce/separate, unlike women in China, and even overtake their male counterparts in terms of divorce rates. It has been suggested that this is because of newly gained freedom in the U.S to choose their spouse and to be less tolerant of “bad” marriages (Zhang, 2007).
- Some international literature has reported that mixed marriages have higher divorce rates than endogamous marriages (Hewitt et al., 2005; Zhang, 2007). This finding may be due to different cultural expectations of marriage and/or greater barriers to workforce participation. In Canada, a growing proportion of unions (both marital and common-law) are considered to be mixed and this proportion (over 3%) is higher than in the U.S (Milan & Hamm, 2004).

Couples engaged in mixed unions are more likely to be immigrants, younger, live in urban areas and have a higher level of education.

- A study of Ethiopian immigrant couples in Toronto found that many couples reported improvements in communication and intimacy, joint decision-making and mutual reliance post-migration (Hyman et al., 2004; Hyman et al., 2008). However, as a result of gender role socialization, communication skills may be lacking (e.g., women reported feeling undervalued or disrespected by male partners and men did not always have the necessary skills to be good listeners or express intimacy) (Hyman et al., 2008).

Intimate Partner Violence (IPV)

Compared with research on divorce, more data are available on intimate partner violence (IPV) among Canadian immigrants. IPV, defined as controlling or abusive behaviour by a spouse or common law partner, can take many forms, including physical or sexual violence as well as verbal, psychological, emotional and financial abuse. IPV occurs in all societies and cultures. According to the 2004 Canadian General Social Survey (GSS) on Victimization, 7.0% of Canadian women who were married or living in common-law relationships reported experiencing physical or sexual abuse, and 18.0% reported experiencing emotional or financial abuse by a current or ex-partner on at least one occasion during the five years preceding the survey (Statistics Canada, 2005).

Reported rates of IPV are lower among immigrant women in Canada, compared with Canadian-born women (Cohen & Maclean, 2003) and lower among recently arrived immigrant women (0-9 years in Canada), but increase with increased length of stay (Hyman et al., 2006a).

Factors associated with IPV in the general population are well established (Jewkes, 2002; Jewkes et al., 2002). The ecological model proposed by the World Health Organization includes: 1) individual-level factors (e.g., young age, low income, lack of academic achievement or opportunity, witnessing or experiencing violence as a child, substance abuse and social isolation); 2) family-level factors (e.g., marital conflict, poor family functioning, male dominance and the presence or absence of children); 3) community-level factors (e.g., support networks, community norms regarding violence, levels of unemployment, availability of weapons and male and female attitudes towards violence); and 4) societal-level factors (e.g., legislation regarding weapons and women and children's rights) (World Health Organization, 2002).

There is a small but growing body of literature on risk factors associated with IPV in immigrant populations (Tyyska & Mina, 2005; Mason & Hyman, 2008; Raj & Silverman, 2002). These risk factors are similar to those described above, but are compounded by cultural and other factors related to the migration context (e.g., linguistic barriers, social isolation) that increase vulnerability and prevent women from leaving an abusive situation (Smith, 2004).

Existing migration policies, such as entrance criteria that make it difficult for women to enter in the “independent class” category, deny women access to federally sponsored language training and employment assistance programs and increase dependency (Tyyska & Mina, 2005). In many immigrant communities, women are held responsible for promoting family harmony and reducing marital conflict.

What are the underlying issues faced by immigrant couples?

The literature reviewed identifies two key underlying issues for immigrant couples. These are: 1) promoting stable marital relationships (i.e., preventing divorce and IPV); and 2) addressing the service needs of immigrant women experiencing IPV.

The following section describes policies and programs the Region of Peel may wish to advocate for, collaborate with other sectors on, and/or develop or support in order to address these underlying issues.

Issue #1: Promoting healthy marital relationships

The success or failure of a marriage is ultimately decided by the personal dynamics of a couple and their unique situation (Clark & Crompton, 2006). Marital conflict is a major risk factor for both divorce and IPV but it is important to recognize that IPV, unlike divorce, has its roots in gender inequality and male domination.

The literature review above suggests that gender inequality and post-migration stresses (e.g., financial hardship, changes in gender relations) contribute to the risk of marital conflict, separation/divorce and IPV among immigrant couples. On the other hand, strong marital relationships and good community connections may represent important buffers.

Promising Strategies and Solutions

Prevention strategies need to address the multiple and multilevel determinants of IPV, including systemic barriers that marginalize women and limit integration and existing community norms that may perpetuate gender inequality and limit options for women. Promising prevention strategies have been identified in several reports (Hyman & Mason, 2008; Smith, 2004; Macleod & Shin, 1993). These strategies are generally organized based on their specific target group (e.g., individuals, couples, communities and macro-level society).

Until recently, most interventions in the area of IPV have focused on the individual. These have included reactive interventions, such as crisis management, emergency care, shelters and criminal justice against perpetrators. Proactive primary prevention strategies at the individual level should include:

- Early diagnosis and treatment of psychological or personality disorders, addictions and substance abuse.
- Early intervention in order to minimize either children’s aggression or victimization.

- Supportive parenting programs in order that children are raised in violence-free families.
- Subsidized child care programs, recognition of international credentials, training and employment opportunities and increased availability of ESL to promote autonomy and reduce the dependency of immigrant women.
- Collaboration with mainstream and ethno-specific agencies to inform women of their rights and the laws pertaining to IPV and immigration status.

At the level of the relationship/couple, promising primary prevention strategies include:

- Early education about healthy relationships.
- Culturally appropriate couples' counselling.
- Dialogue between newcomer men and women about gender roles, marriage and family relationships in Canada.
- Strengthening couples' connections to the community to ensure there is adequate social support and to minimize the risk of women's isolation.
- Pre-marital counselling programs to improve the communication skills of newcomer men and women.
- Programs aimed at increasing community awareness about post-migration changes in gender relationships and their potentially negative impacts on couple relationships.
- Partnerships between service providers and community-based organizations to develop culturally appropriate education and counselling strategies.
- Programs for young men and women about healthy dating relationships, responsible fatherhood programs and programs to steer boys away from violence.

At the community level, successful primary prevention strategies are both community-specific and broad. These include:

- Information on post-migration changes in orientation programs (e.g., Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) and materials.
- Strategies to combat negative social norms (e.g., gender inequality, divorce) that are targeted at different age groups and both genders.
- Programs to raise the awareness and capacity of religious and community leaders to address post-migration changes in marital relationships in a confidential way.
- Programs that develop, support and/or maintain community capacity building, gathering information on culturally appropriate responses to IPV, and developing community-specific messages about IPV.
- Newcomer women's, men's and couples' support groups.

At the macro/societal level, the Region of Peel should consider supporting Regional/municipal initiatives and advocating for broader solutions such as:

- Strong socially supportive and safe communities with adequate income levels and minimal unemployment.
- Recreational facilities, including parks and playgrounds, that support ongoing interactions between and among community members and allow for the early detection of potentially abusive relationships.
- Collaborations with immigrant and ethno-specific community organizations to develop and support community-based initiatives to reduce and prevent IPV.
- Public education and media campaigns that are developed with and targeted to specific communities, and that use imagery and messages that are acceptable to community members.
- Increasing the awareness of policy makers about the ramifications of existing legislation, such as creating dependency and making it nearly impossible for some women to leave abusive relationships.
- Interventions to help Canadian employers recognize foreign training, work experience and expertise.
- Formal policies and the dissemination of informal values, both locally and nationally, that condemn violence against women.

Exemplary Programs:

There are several examples of violence prevention campaigns that have been developed in partnership with immigrant communities. An Australian study found that, in contrast to the strategy frequently used in violence prevention campaigns, immigrant women did not want to see negative images of abused women. Rather, they wanted an increased emphasis on positive values – to see images of happy families demonstrating strong family units, community and social ownership of the issue.

The violence-prevention project conducted by the Family Service Association of Toronto with four newcomer communities also highlighted the need for community-specific media messages and dissemination strategies. For example, one community made a short film that was shown in theatres, while another developed print materials in the form of a booklet, and yet another developed public service announcements for radio. Another approach, used by the Cut it Out program in the U.S., is to train the staff of beauty salons to recognize warning signs in their female clients and safely refer them to local resources (<http://www.cutitout.org/>).

And finally, the Ethiopian Association of Toronto organized a workshop on promoting healthy marital relationships with the participation of researchers, mainstream providers, spiritual leaders and settlement workers.

Issue #2: Service needs

Women who experience IPV may not acknowledge or understand that their relationship is abusive. Coming to that recognition may in itself be a long-term process. Disclosure of IPV can reduce women's sense of isolation and secrecy, validate their feelings and initiate a process of change. Immigrant women who experience IPV share many of the same experiences as other women who suffer abuse, such as feelings of fear and shame, hoping that their partner can be convinced to stop the abuse, desire to protect their children and so on. But there are also unique vulnerabilities, such as linguistic, informational, social and economic barriers. It is also important for immigrant women who experience IPV to feel supported, whether or not they choose to leave an abusive relationship (Mason & Hyman, 2008).

The following section describes the service needs of immigrant women in the areas of health and social needs, crisis management, law enforcement and legal justice and long-term independence. It also outlines promising strategies and solutions to address these complex and multifaceted needs, as identified in several reports (Guruge et al., 2008; Mason & Hyman, 2008; Smith, 2004; Macleod & Shin, 1993).

Issue #2.1: Health and social needs

In addition to physical injuries and chronic conditions, IPV is associated with poor mental health, symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or states, depression and anxiety. Since women who experience IPV use health services more frequently than women who have not been abused, health professionals have a critical role to play in identifying, assessing, responding to and preventing IPV. Health professionals need to be aware of recommended procedures following the disclosure of IPV, including documentation, risk assessment, safety planning, mandatory reporting and providing referrals. Children who witness IPV are at greater risk of developmental problems, school failure, violence against others, low self-esteem and of developing psychiatric disorders (Mason & Hyman, 2008).

Promising Strategies and Solutions:

Advocate:

- For training for health and social service professionals to identify, respond to and support immigrant women who experience IPV, including validation of feelings and choices, documentation, risk assessment, safety planning, mandatory reporting and providing referrals.
- For training for health and social service professionals to identify, respond to and support the children of women who experience IPV, including documentation, risk assessment, safety planning, mandatory reporting and providing referrals.

Collaborate:

- To ensure that health and social service professionals are aware of the resources that are available in the community and how women might benefit from them (e.g., shelters, legal aid, settlement and ethnocultural organizations).
- To reduce access barriers.

Issue #3: Crisis needs

Safety is paramount for women who experience IPV and their children. Women experiencing IPV require linguistically and culturally appropriate information and support to determine where help can be found, should there be further episodes of violence. The majority of Canadian women who experience IPV (immigrant and non-immigrant) first disclose to informal sources of support, rather than police or social services (DuMont et al., 2005). Thus, increasing community awareness of the issue and of the resources and information available is vital. A recent report on responses to IPV among immigrant and visible minority women in Canada identified major shortages in the availability of culturally appropriate crisis intervention services, such as shelters and counselling (Smith, 2004). Such services are essential to prevent women from returning to abusive situations for economic reasons.

Promising Strategies and Solutions:

All women who experience IPV need to have access to safety. Collaborative and Regional programs and services are needed that address the crisis needs of immigrant women experiencing IPV.

Advocate:

- For the recruitment of immigrant women into all the service professions, including the police, as they are likely to facilitate community empowerment through both professional status and service to their own communities.

Collaborate:

- With community agencies to establish support groups for immigrant women dealing with IPV or its aftermath.
- With community and mainstream health, social, legal and law enforcement services to address IPV and share best practices.
- With programs aimed at enhancing community capacity to address IPV by carefully screening and identifying a pool or coalition of trained community leaders to address IPV.
- With programs aimed at assessing and addressing the needs of both mainstream and ethno-specific agencies providing support for women who experience IPV in terms of funding, volume, staff and crisis intervention services.

Implement/Support Regional Policies and Programs:

- To ensure that information about women's rights and Canadian laws is available in multiple languages at places women frequent.
- To ensure that information about sources of help for women experiencing IPV is available at places women frequent (e.g., health centres, doctors offices, municipal offices, community centres, libraries).
- To ensure that information about sources of help for women experiencing IPV is available in multiple languages and through ethno-specific agencies and media.
- To ensure that transportation and escorts are available for women who require such services to get away from an abusive partner.
- To provide immediate support and counselling including linguistically appropriate call centres.

Issue #4: Law enforcement/legal justice

Immigrant women who experience IPV need information about their rights and Canadian laws. The service systems in Canada, particularly the law enforcement and justice systems, are often linguistically inaccessible and culturally inappropriate for abused women from immigrant communities. Service providers may be untrained or unfamiliar with community norms and may hold negative attitudes or stereotypes. These service systems need to develop formal partnerships with ethno-specific and mainstream agencies serving immigrant women (Smith, 2004).

Promising Strategies and Solutions:

All women who experience IPV need access to police and legal justice systems. Collaborative and Regional policies and programs/services are needed to address the legal needs of immigrant women experiencing IPV.

Collaborate:

- With programs aimed at establishing good working relationships between police and immigrant communities (e.g., build trust and change negative attitudes and stereotypes).
- With police to ensure they have information about community resources for women from immigrant communities who experience IPV.

Implement/Support Regional Policies and Programs:

- To reduce access barriers, the following are needed:
- Training programs for police officers and legal aid workers aimed at sensitivity and cultural issues.
- Policies and programs to reduce systemic barriers in the police force and legal justice systems (e.g., increasing workforce diversity, increased representation, the availability of independent interpreters, response teams that include male and female staff).
- Policies and programs aimed at ensuring that legal aid services are available and that they cover translation and the length of the court proceedings.

Issue #5: Independent living

Women who experience IPV need to be provided with options and supports for independent living if they choose to leave on a long-term basis. A woman experiencing IPV may use a shelter in an emergency situation, but this solution is only temporary. For example, a woman who uses a shelter must find alternative housing within six weeks. This can be a major challenge for many immigrant women who may have language barriers, may be unfamiliar with existing support services and may be ineligible to receive welfare or other forms of government assistance.

Finding good, affordable housing is particularly difficult (Agnew, 1998). Although abused women and their families are theoretically given priority for subsidized housing, Canadian-born women have been more likely to benefit from this service. Long-term assistance (e.g., income support and language and job training) to help immigrant women make a stable and safe home for themselves and their children has been described as inadequate and inaccessible (Smith, 2004).

Promising Strategies and Solutions:

Advocate:

- For macro-level policies addressing the economic and physical DOH (e.g., universal daycare, ESL, increased training and employment opportunities, social housing).

Collaborate and Implement/Support Regional Policies and Programs:

- To ensure that mainstream social services, community based and ethno-specific services have the necessary resources to maintain and improve assistance to women experiencing IPV.
- To ensure that all women have access to information about government services at all levels.
- To improve the coordination and accessibility of community services.

Issue #6: Access barriers

Despite the serious impacts of IPV on women's health, many women do not seek help. Findings from the 1999 General Social Survey on Victimization suggest that only half of Canadian women experiencing IPV seek help from health or social services (Du Mont et al., 2005). Reports using focus groups and key informant data consistently suggest that immigrant women in Canada underuse medical and legal services, shelters, and hotlines, compared with abused women in the majority population (MacLeod & Shin, 1993; Smith, 2004). However, compared with their non-recent immigrant counterparts, recent immigrant women were more likely to report violence to the police and less likely to use social services (Hyman et al., 2006b).

Among the multiple and intersecting barriers that immigrant women face in accessing help are those encountered by women in the majority population as well as those specific to the immigrant context. The recent Kilbride et al. (2008) report, "Reclaiming Voice: Challenges and Opportunities for Immigrant Women Learning English," provides an excellent overview of how Linguistic barriers that act to maintain women's dependency, increase social isolation and prevent help-seeking.

What follows is a description of additional legal and cultural barriers that deter immigrant women experiencing IPV from seeking help.

Immigrant women often arrive in Canada as dependants of their spouses, or as individuals sponsored by their family or spouse. Abusive spouses often use sponsorship obligations to assert power and control within the family (Jiwani, 2001). Women who are visitors (e.g., international students, temporary workers, tourists) or wives of visitors are also vulnerable because they have no legal or permanent status in Canada while their immigration applications are being processed. W

omen without refugee or landed immigrant status do not have access to health care, social assistance or subsidized housing. According to MacLeod & Shin (1993), even in cases in which women have sponsored their husbands, fear of deportation, of having children taken away, of jeopardizing potential applications for citizenship and of not being able to sponsor extended family members deterred immigrant women from seeking help.

Cultural barriers are those social constructs, such as patriarchal ideology and family values/filial piety, collectivism, and religious beliefs, that may make it difficult for abused women to seek help. Patriarchal ideology refers to the accompanying set of beliefs that justifies and maintains a system of social organization of male domination over women (Sugarman & Frankel, 1996).

Traditional gender roles may keep women isolated and dependent, reducing options for separation and/or remarriage (Raj & Silverman, 2002). In collectivist communities, values emphasizing family ties, harmony and order prevail and individuals are taught to subordinate the self to the interests of the family and community. Women are also taught that the intact family is best for children.

Concern for the well-being of children may be a more important deciding factor in whether to stay or leave an abusive relationship than status, financial concerns or language barriers (Hyman et al., 2006c; Tyyska & Mina, 2005). Religious beliefs may also dictate responses to IPV (Smith, 2004). Although within any religion individuals vary in their practices from those who are more liberal to those who rigidly adhere to religious tracts, the writings from several religions (e.g., Catholicism, Confucianism, Islam) emphasize the sacred nature of the marriage bond, while reinforcing male superiority and dominance.

Promising Solutions and Strategies:

The types of advocacy, collaboration and Regional programs and services that are needed to reduce access barriers are include, first and foremost, advocacy and collaborative work with communities to change social norms that perpetuate IPV and act as barriers to help-seeking.

Exemplary Programs:

The literature identifies two types of programs that are available for immigrant women experiencing IPV. First, there are programs aimed at providing women experiencing IPV with information about community resources. For example, a booklet prepared by Justice Canada, “Abuse is Wrong in Any Language” contains information about Canadian law, womens rights and where to go for help and safety tips, in multiple languages. The Assaulted Women’s Helpline gives free, confidential crisis counseling by telephone. Help finding shelters, the police and/or medical, legal and counselling services, is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week in multiple languages.

Second, there are a number of examples of community based agencies that provide help to immigrant women experiencing IPV in multiple languages. For example, the Family Service Association in Toronto Violence against Women program offers services in several languages (English, Hindi, Tamil, Somali, Farsi, Punjabi, Urdu) to everyone living or working in the Greater Toronto Area. Springtide offers a peer education program in which immigrant and refugee women are trained to facilitate community workshops with such titles as: Living with Others; Me, Myself and I; and Settlement: Dealing with Family Changes.

As a spokesperson for Springtide said, “We know from experience that if we put ‘domestic violence’ or ‘woman abuse’ in the title, women are hesitant to come.” Rexdale Women’s Centre, which operates out of 13 different locations, offers women a crisis intervention program that includes one-on-one counselling and two types of support groups: one for women who simply want information, another for those who self-identify as victims of violence and want support in moving on with their lives.

5. Immigrant Seniors

Why is it important to look at seniors and immigrant seniors?

Two significant demographic trends are presently underway in Canada. First, the population is aging and second, the population is increasing due to immigration. These two trends have resulted in the creation of a new group of senior immigrants, but to date the needs of this population group have not received adequate attention (Durst, 2005).

What are the underlying issues faced by immigrant seniors?

In identifying the issues faced by immigrant seniors, it is important to consider universal, migration-specific and ethno-specific factors related to the aging process. For example, the so-called “senior” years may span more than 30 years and all seniors experience varying degrees of independence and/or loss (e.g., financial, physical, emotional/social and mental) over time (Durst, 2005). However, the needs of immigrant seniors who migrated when they were young adults as economic migrants and “aged in Canada” are very different from family class sponsored parents or grandparents recent immigrants.

Refugees who experienced past violence and trauma may feel mental health effects in later life. Ethnic, cultural and religious beliefs and values influence how immigrant seniors integrate into their new environments as well as needs for family and community support. For example, changes in values regarding filial responsibility and autonomy are associated with a growing proportion of immigrant seniors choosing to live independently and requiring culturally and linguistically appropriate support services.

While most seniors are able to speak either English or French, Ontario has a significantly higher percentage of seniors who do not speak English or French (6.4%) compared with Canada as a whole (4.4%). In Ontario, 2% of the total population but 6.4% of those over age 65 do not speak either English or French (Statistics Canada, 2002). Approximately 14% of Peel seniors have no knowledge of English or French (Regional Municipality of Peel, 2006).

Immigrant seniors who do not speak English or French suffer from limited access to official language information, exclusion from “ambient” sources of information (such as newspapers or television), lack of knowledge of community resources, and language barriers to appropriate care (MacAdam & Joshi, 2007a). These may be increased for senior immigrant women who may have had less opportunity to learn an official language.

The issues faced by immigrant seniors that emerged from this literature review included: health, poverty, social isolation, service gaps and access barriers. The latter were especially pronounced for immigrant seniors, further increasing health, economic and social risk.

Issue #1: Health

Although the health of immigrants is generally better than that of non-immigrant Canadians and recent immigrants report better health status than non-recent immigrants (in Canada for more than 10 years), this trend has not been observed among very recently arrived senior immigrants who report poorer health status than seniors who have been in Canada for more than five years (40% vs. 23%)(Maurier & Northcott, 2000).

With respect to non-recent immigrant seniors, several studies have shown that the prevalence of chronic diseases (e.g., some cancers, heart disease) among immigrants increase over time spent in Canada (Hyman, 2007). Rates of obesity are increasing among Canadian immigrants as a whole, and rates of diabetes among non-recent immigrants are surpassing Canadian-born rates.

The complexity of the current care delivery system for frail seniors (those over age 80, those with multiple chronic conditions, those living alone and those who are socially isolated) is especially burdensome for ethnocultural communities because of language issues, lack of knowledge about how care is delivered, lack of awareness about available services, and reliance on family members to translate and negotiate the system for them.

In addition to length of stay (LOS), a proxy measure of acculturation, variation in health outcomes have been observed by country of origin, gender and poverty. For example, seniors born in Central and South American or African countries report poorer health status than immigrants born in other countries (Maurier and Northcott, 2000). Older immigrant women are at particular risk for mental health problems, social isolation and experiencing barriers to help services (National Council on Aging, 2005; Hyman et al., in press; Chandalamala et al., 2006).

There is strong evidence that low income and social status is associated with poor health (Raphael, 2004). Among immigrant seniors, low income was found to be strongly associated with transitioning to poor health (Newbold, 2005a; 2005b). The health needs of refugees are well-documented and it is likely that his group will continue to experience increased health risks as they age, compared with other immigrants and the Canadian-born population (Hyman, 2007).

Cultural issues emerged as key for ethnocultural seniors. These included concerns about the integration of traditional health treatments with mainstream Western medicine, mental health and home care preferences. Approximately 50% of Chinese seniors use traditional Chinese medicine (Chappell and Lai, 1998). Findings suggested that seniors may be reluctant to tell Western-trained health staff that they are using traditional health treatments such as herbal remedies (National Council on Aging, 2005).

In many immigrant communities, mental health is a private matter and most mental health programs are not prepared to meet the needs of immigrant seniors (National Council on Aging, 2005).

Although rates of health risk behaviours(e.g., smoking and binge drinking) are generally lower among immigrants as compared with the Canadian-born population, the convergence of rates to approximately those of the Canadian-born vary by region of origin (e.g., they were more common among European immigrants compared to non-European immigrants)(Hyman, 2007). Many factors challenge the maintenance and adoption of health promoting practices e.g., healthy diet, physical activity, including economic, cultural, social and informational. Existing health promotion and disease prevention programs are often not delivered in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways.

It is equally important to recognize the assets that immigrants and their communities have that contribute to good health and facilitate integration. Among immigrant seniors' assets are:

- Cultural and ethnic beliefs, values and practices associated with positive health and social outcomes e.g., beliefs about menopause
- Existing community organizations and structures (e.g., ethno-specific agencies) that have the expertise and knowledge/trust to do outreach and provide services either directly or in partnership with community organizations
- Cultural, faith and religious communities that are valuable sources of social support (Chundamala et al., 2006)

Promising Strategies and Solutions:

Addressing immigrant seniors' health issues requires collaboration and Regional/municipal policies and programs.

Collaborate:

- With parks and recreation departments and other community organizations to promote age-friendly and culturally friendly recreational facilities.
- With health, community and social sectors to plan, design and build communities that are safe and accessible for seniors.

Implement/Support Regional Policies and Programs:

- That promote safe environments.
- To address health informational needs that incorporate spiritual and culturally relevant approaches.
- That involve seniors and community leaders in developing innovative approaches to raise awareness about health promotion.
- That are delivered to small groups of seniors by someone from their own community. This is also key to decreasing social isolation and creating a web of support (MacAdam & Joshi, 2007b).

Exemplary Programs:

The South Asian Family Support Services, a settlement agency, prepared basic health information about a variety of health issues (e.g., glaucoma, depression, dementia and Alzheimer's Disease, asthma and hypertension, diabetes, and osteoporosis) in Hindi, Farsi, Punjabi, Urdu, Gujarati, Tamil and Bengali. This model of health promotion and health education materials could be replicated within other immigrant and ethnocultural communities across the province, were support available (MacAdam & Joshi, 2007b).

Issue #2: Poverty

Senior racialized Ontarians are more likely to live in poverty than their Canadian-born counterparts (National Advisory Council on Aging, 2005). Peel-specific data are not available. Senior immigrants (especially recent immigrants) may also experience increased economic insecurity if they do not qualify for Federal pension plans and/or lack the 10-year residency requirement to qualify for full Old Age Security benefits. They may be unable to secure employment due to language differences, lack of prior Canadian experience, ageism and racism.

Poverty also affects the ability of immigrant seniors to live well, secure necessary health services, and participate in/access municipal and community programs. Access to affordable and appropriate transportation was consistently listed by seniors as one of their most frequent issues. As well, many senior immigrants who want to live independently of their children may not have the financial resources to do so (MacAdam & Joshi, 2007a).

Promising Strategies and Solutions:

Addressing poverty requires advocacy, intersectoral collaboration and Regional/municipal initiatives.

Advocate:

- For macro-level policies addressing the economic determinants of immigrant health.
- To eliminate restrictions on government-funded pension benefits (e.g., less than 10 years, short employment history).
- For OHIP coverage for seniors who arrive in Canada while their reunification application is in process.
- For dental health to be accessible for all seniors.

Implement/ Support Regional Policies and Programs:

- To reduce financial barriers to Regional and municipal community services (e.g., parks, recreational facilities, libraries).
- Collaboration with public health and social service strategies aimed at reducing financial hardship among target groups.

Issue #3: Social isolation

The social needs of immigrant seniors, many of which are related to aging in an unfamiliar context, are well-documented (Guruge et al., 2008; Durst, 2005). Despite the fact that immigrants are twice as likely as their Canadian-born counterparts to live in multi-generational families (Milan & Hamm, 2003), isolation and alienation are common due to losses of social support such as childhood friends, caregiving demands made by family, and unfamiliar, culturally or linguistically inaccessible social support groups and recreational activities. Access to and participation in familiar family and social networks may be further exacerbated by weather, transportation and financial constraints. Transportation is particularly difficult for senior immigrant women because they may never have used public transportation services in their native country (Sherkin, 2004).

Immigrant and racialized seniors may also feel more “uncomfortable” in society compared with those who are White (Statistics Canada, 2003). One researcher found that older ethnic women do not refer to themselves as being discriminated against but prefer to use less loaded terms such as “rude” and “dislike” when referring to those who may have treated them badly (Brotman, 2003).

Compounding losses of autonomy are increased dependency on family for financial, social and psychological support. This form of stress has been described as a form of “role reversal” as elders are often respected household heads in the country of origin (Guruge et al., 2008). Stresses related to changing family and intergenerational relations and language barriers with children and grandchildren have also been described (Hyman et al., 2000). Particular to senior immigrant women are social stresses associated with sponsorship that create a sense of obligations to carry out family roles despite failing health and needs for social contact, conflicts with daughter in laws and elder abuse.

Promising Strategies and Solutions:

Addressing social isolation requires the collaboration of various levels of governments and community agencies and Regional/municipal programs.

Collaborate:

- With health, community and social sectors to plan, design and build communities that enhance inter- and cross-generational interaction.
- With community agency to develop community-based social and recreational activities and programs such as community gardens, community kitchens, trips to locations of interest.
- With mainstream seniors centres and clubs and ethno-specific seniors groups to plan reciprocal integration events for seniors.
- With public transit agencies to do outreach in multilingual media to welcome immigrant seniors to public transit and to train public transit operators to be aware of the needs of immigrant seniors and to ensure seating for seniors.

Implement/ Support Regional Policies and Programs:

- That expand informal social networks and help immigrant seniors build new relationships within their own communities.
- That use peer-support and peer outreach programs as these are known to successfully reduce social isolation, especially among recent newcomer women.
- That address weather and transportation barriers (e.g., a community funded bus).
- To encourage volunteerism.
- Senior driven drop-in support and social programs that include child care facilities for grandchildren.
- Linguistically appropriate call centres for seniors who are isolated.
- Recreational and educational activities that meet age, gender, linguistic and cultural needs.
- ESL specifically for seniors, as opposed to being focused on employment, including one-on-one tutoring, since seniors may have difficulty accessing transportation or are involved with child care.
- That expand home-based LINC and ESL programs.

Exemplary Programs:**Calgary Catholic Immigration Society**

A non-profit organization that strives to effectively respond to the needs of immigrant seniors. In the Seniors Host Program, an immigrant senior is matched with a volunteer who will help with English language skills.

New Westminster Family Place Grandparents On The Go

A program focusing on the needs of grandparents who come to Canada to fill the role of primary caregivers to their grandchildren. Most speak no English, are unfamiliar with Canadian culture, and feel very isolated in their new country. The program provides an opportunity to develop social connections and learn about Canadian culture and other resources available to seniors.

Seniors as Leaders Volunteer Project

Builds the capacity of South Vancouver Neighbourhood House to deliver culturally appropriate services through a group of trained multilingual senior volunteers who are bilingual and comfortable in the English-speaking environment, as well as their own ethno-cultural community. Volunteers learn to develop and lead mutual support groups, and to act as ambassadors to bridge vulnerable seniors to Neighbourhood House services.

Issue #4: Service gaps

Several service gaps for immigrant and ethnocultural seniors were identified in Ontario including financial assistance, outreach programs, drop-in and day programs, case management, health promotion, system navigation assistance, English language classes, personal care, supportive housing and Long-term care (LTC) (MacAdam & Joshi, 2007a). It should be recognized that identified service gaps varied by LOS and ethnicity. For example, East Asian, Italian and Jewish seniors have access to a greater supply of ethnically-based (and ethnically-sensitive) care than the South Asian Muslim, and African-Caribbean communities. The discrepancy is due to a combination of factors such as group size, capacity to raise private funds, length of time in Ontario and culture (MacAdam & Joshi, 2007a).

Service gaps of relevance to the Region of Peel, including family and community support and LTC, are described in greater detail here.

Family Caregiver Needs

An issue that to date has received almost no attention in Canada is the experience of caregiving in immigrant families. In many immigrant communities, adult children are both culturally and practically expected to assist their senior parents. In many collectivist cultures, such as Asian cultures, adult children are expected to care for their elderly parents, typically by having their parents live with them. Immigrant seniors who take care of grandchildren and engage in household labour can also be a major source of support, critical to the survival of a newcomer family.

U.S. studies demonstrate that Latino elders and their families are underserved by home care programs, in part from a cultural belief about the role of the family in caring for seniors, but also because of a lack of information about home care services (Crist, 2005). A related issue for family caregivers is the expectation that they will schedule home care (and other health) appointments and provide interpretation services, which means that a family member must be present when services are delivered.

Adult children must balance their responsibilities for their own families and employment with the need to understand the service delivery system for older people and to actively participate in assisting their parent's resettlement and integration. According to MacAdam & Joshi (2007a), the extra burdens on family members have been well-documented in the literature and the assumption that family members can meet all the needs of their elderly relatives is false.

Community Support Needs

Since 1981, there has been a decrease in the proportion of Canadian seniors 75+ years living in LTC (14% in 2001) due to increased community supports. In Peel Region, seniors are less likely to be living alone and more likely to be living with relatives compared with Ontario seniors.

However, a recent needs assessment of immigrant and ethnoracial seniors identified the need for an increased supply of services to support community living for Ontario's immigrant seniors. Other family and community supports identified include increased provision of culturally-sensitive case management, in-home services such as personal care and home support, and health-oriented day programs that also provide socialization, health education and information on site (MacAdam & Joshi, 2007a).

Long-term Care

In the area of LTC, facilities for immigrant seniors are only available for a minority of immigrant communities. The shortage of ethnoculturally appropriate care in LTC was identified as an ongoing issue for members of ethnocultural communities (MacAdam & Joshi, 2007b); in fact, the homes with the longest waiting lists are those homes serving specific ethnocultural communities. Immigrant seniors are often reluctant to use mainstream LTC homes because of cultural unfamiliarity with care provided outside the home setting (MacAdam & Joshi, 2007a). Maurier & Northcott (2000) reported that immigrant seniors from Asian, Central American, South American and African backgrounds were less likely to use home care services than immigrants from other parts of the world and Canadian-born seniors because of both informational and cultural barriers (e.g., service delivery not sensitive to needs).

Promising Strategies and Solutions:

Addressing the identified service gaps requires advocacy, collaboration of various levels of governments and community agencies and Regional/municipal programs.

Advocate:

- For increased funding for ethno-specific and “mainstream” service providers to enable choice as a “best practice” model of care for immigrant seniors.
- For increased funding for the Local Health Integration Networks (LHINs) to fund programs offering family and community support through targeted allocations to LHINS with large proportions of immigrant and ethnocultural seniors.
- For increased support to the Community Care Access Network (CCACs) to provide culturally sensitive care.
- For Aging at Home strategies (developed by LHINs) to be responsive to and reflective of diversity.
- For the recruitment and training of first-language caregivers, especially for long-term care.

Collaborate:

- With community providers to better coordinate community services to immigrant seniors services at all levels of care – primary, secondary and tertiary.
- With diverse communities to determine community needs, service priorities and best mechanisms to provide care (i.e., who, where).

Implement/Support Regional Policies and Programs:

- Family and community support services (e.g., Home Care, Meals on Wheels, daycare/respite care) that are accessible and culturally appropriate.
- Increased funding to LTC agencies serving immigrant seniors, as these agencies have additional expenses related to the provision of a culturally-specific home-like environment for their resident, including costs associated with delivery of culturally/religiously appropriate diet and food services, programming, recruiting and retaining nursing, and personal care staff with the required language skills and volunteer recruitment and training.

Exemplary Programs:**The Castlevue Friendly Visiting Program in Scarborough**

A community-based program that provides support and education for family caregivers, as well as socialization for seniors, from Toronto's Japanese community (Eapen, 2003).

Program for All Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE)

Originally the On Lok program in San Francisco, which served the Chinese community and was operated by a Chinese provider agency. Variations of this model have now been implemented in Hispanic and other ethnocultural communities.

PRISMA

This model, which embeds an intensive care management service for high risk elders, is being developed in Quebec, but could be adapted to appropriately serve frail elders who are members of various ethnocultural communities.

Diversity in Action: A Toolkit for Seniors' Residential Setting

Developed by the Ontario Association of Non-Profit Homes & Services for Seniors to provide tools, ideas and sample practices that address cultural diversity and inclusiveness among residents, families, staff and volunteers.

Issue #5: Access barriers

The barriers many immigrants face in accessing services include, linguistic barriers that act to reduce seniors independence, increase social isolation and deter the use of Regional/municipal or community-based services. Some seniors face all of these barriers, for example, immigrants from non-English-speaking countries that do not have private or public pension systems.

However, access barriers typically vary according to LOS and ethnicity. For example, seniors from rural India who are sponsored by their families typically do not speak English, are financially dependent on their families, and are reluctant to use services if family members are not present.

According to MacAdam & Joshi (2007a) most agencies serving immigrant seniors are aware that they are working with very small numbers of seniors from their ethnocultural community because seniors are not aware of the availability of ethnoculturally based services or mainstream services. Immigrant seniors may face additional systemic barriers because, to date, mechanisms and policies have not been in place to ensure their participation in decision-making processes, or their representation at senior government and institutional levels (Durnst, 2005).

The lack of equitable representation and partnering in governing boards of health was identified by MacAdam & Joshi (2007b) as a major access barrier to health services.

Promising Strategies and Solutions:

Addressing access barriers requires collaboration and Regional-level policies and programs, and is key to the success of all interventions. Examples of strategies addressing access barriers have already been discussed (e.g., health, poverty, social isolation). It is also imperative to reduce access barriers to information and to improve the overall coordination of services to newly arrived immigrant seniors (McDonald et al., 2001).

Collaborate, Implement and Support Regional Policies and Programs:

- To increase/ensure access to government information in multiple languages and provide multilingual information on government forms.
- To disseminate written material on government services and programs in multiple languages to the agencies and programs that are most frequently accessed by immigrants, including: immigration offices, Service Canada, places of worship, banks and schools.
- To better coordinate services.
- To organize geographically-based referral networks that seniors can use to navigate government programs.

Exemplary Programs:

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society. A non-profit organization that strives to effectively respond to the needs of immigrant seniors. Its Immigrant Seniors Service is funded by the City of Calgary – Family and Community Support Services. Services include: needs assessments; case management; notary services; language services; preventive educational workshops for immigrant seniors; facilitation of reciprocal integration; volunteer services; cultural competency assessment; training and support; and voicing immigrant seniors' needs and concerns in communities.

Summary and Research Gaps

This paper used a life cycle approach to identify major issues influencing the successful integration of immigrant children, youth, couples and seniors. Our findings suggested that the Region of Peel has a major role to play in addressing these issues:

1. In order to fulfill their full potential, a comprehensive and accessible system of culturally sensitive services, both mainstream and community-based, is needed that meets basic needs: income, housing, social support, education, and health.
2. The Region of Peel has a key role to play in coordinating and collaborating with governments at various levels and community-based services to ensure that immigrants' needs are met throughout the lifespan.
3. The Region of Peel has a key role to play in ensuring that immigrants have access to the information they need for successful health, social and economic integration.
4. The Region of Peel has a key role to play in promoting diversity, equity and inclusion principles, and policies that address systemic, linguistic, financial and cultural barriers to services in the Region.

Case management approaches have been recommended for immigrants (CIC, 2004) and are used in other jurisdictions (e.g., child health) (Olds et al., 1998; Olds et al., 2007) and in the U.S. (e.g., Los Camaneros Mentoring Program).

<http://www.gcir.org/integration/promising/toolkit/education/public/latino/newmexico>). CIC is currently working on implementing a Case Management pilot project for government assisted refugees (GARS), due to the high level of support and numerous tasks that this group needs to complete to successfully settle. Another example is the HOST program (CIC), but it does not consist of professional, responsible mentors who have been trained to be aware of and work with all the resources of a community. There is clearly a need for more research on the feasibility of the case management approach for newcomer families.

Other notable research gaps include:

- Research aimed at examining the variation within immigrant communities (e.g., gender, age, class, frequency, depth and range of transnational ties, social capital) that impact on successful integration. Examples of research questions include:
 - What role do gender, class and age play in transnational migration?
 - How is ethnic identity affected by transnational migration?
 - How can we draw out the social and cultural capital that people bring with them?
- Research on the child care and education needs and enrollment patterns of immigrant families. Examples of research questions include:
 - How do the early education experiences of children of immigrants differ by ethnicity, migration status, country of origin and primary language? How do immigrant families navigate the child care system
 - What barriers—for example, related to language and culture—do immigrant families face in making informed decisions about available early education programs?
 - What are the most effective ways to reach out to different immigrant groups in order to make quality early education programs accessible to them?
- Research aimed at better understanding the seemingly contradictory findings about the academic performance of second-generation immigrant youth, compared to their Canadian-born counterparts, and to determine why disparities in educational outcomes remain, even after parental resources have been taken into account.
- Research aimed at documenting the presence of immigrant and minority students in special education programs, to determine whether over-representation exists in Canada (as in the U.S.).
- Research aimed at ascertaining the impact of migration on school achievement and timely graduation rates.
- Research aimed at the development of culturally and linguistically appropriate curricula and assessment tools.
- Research examining the mental health needs of immigrant children and youth.
- Research aimed at how issues are conceptualized across generations and by ethnicity (e.g., racism and discrimination, identity, etc.).

- Research aimed at the development and evaluation of strategies geared to first, 1.5 and second generation youth (e.g., job internships, court support, priority neighbourhood actions, etc.).
- Research aimed at better understanding universal, migration-specific, and ethno-specific needs throughout the lifespan and across generations.
- Research aimed at better understanding factors associated with divorce/marital breakdown in immigrant families.
- Research aimed at immigrant seniors, including preferences for services to support community living and long-term care.
- Research aimed at identifying the assets that immigrants and their communities have that contribute to good health and facilitate integration.
- Research aimed at determining the implications of these findings for public policy and practice, and at what levels.

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