

For parents who are
refugees in Norway

HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD IN A NEW COUNTRY



Tips on how to help your child in a new country

Experiencing a crisis, having to flee from war and settling in a new country can be very demanding and stressful for both children and adults. If you and your child have experienced a crisis and have had to flee, it is important to try to understand the reactions you may have after the crisis and how you can establish a secure and positive framework for your child.

As a parent, you are the most important person in your child's life. In this brochure you will find information on how children and adults can react after a crisis, and tips on how you as a parent can help your child to deal with emotions and reactions. You'll also find links to simple websites and apps that you can use to find out more information and where to turn if you need support or someone to talk to.



Reactions that you as a parent may experience

Everyone can react differently after experiencing a crisis or fleeing war, but some patterns of reaction continue, and many can experience having:

- Bad memories and nightmares that plague them and last over time
- A feeling of dread and sadness
- A feeling of powerlessness and uncertainty about the future

Reactions that your child may experience

Children and young people can also react very differently after a crisis:

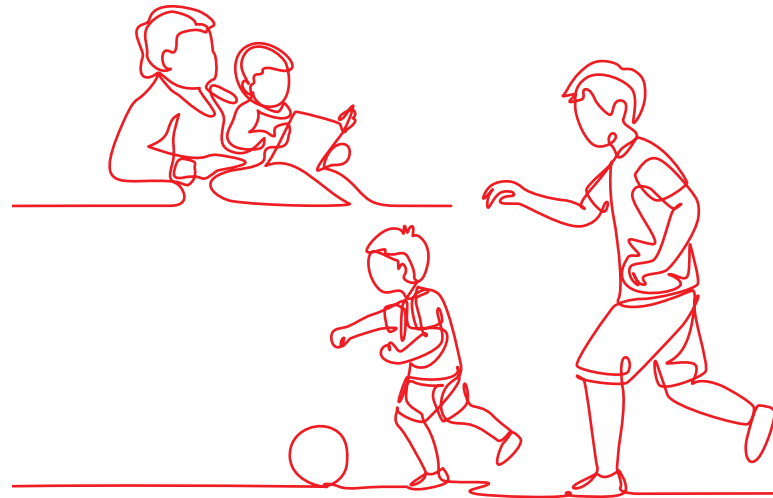
- Some become very sad and anxious and withdraw.
- Others may be restless, more active or get angry faster than usual.
- Older children may start to behave as if they were younger, and some may start wetting the bed at night.
- Some children may try to control the environment around them or feel that everything is difficult and hopeless.

No reaction is wrong, and it is important for you as a parent to respond to your child's reactions with understanding and patience.

Here's what you can do to help your child

1. Show understanding when your child is frightened and try to make them feel as safe and secure as possible. Listen to your child and take his/her feelings seriously. Answer questions as best you can. Tell him/her that you understand what he/she is feeling, that it is normal to be afraid, but that he/she doesn't need to be afraid anymore, as you are in a safe place and you are there for him/her.
2. Some children may be more anxious and have an increased need to feel secure. In this case it is important that you, as a parent, show that you are present and involved in the child's life. Avoid leaving your child alone or leaving your child with adults and in surroundings he or she is not very familiar with.
3. Try to establish daily routines such as regular meals, activities, playtimes, etc., to give the child a secure framework for everyday life. Starting at kindergarten or school can also help the child to have structure in everyday life.
4. Give the child the opportunity to play and do activities with other children. Play is important for children because it promotes their development and helps them to cope with stress or crises. For older children, it may be good to participate in a sport or in a recreational club if possible.

5. Make sure your child gets enough rest and sleep.
6. Identify what causes stress to yourself and your child and learn ways to prevent and reduce stress. This could be different breathing exercises, listening to relaxing music, painting, and drawing or dancing.
7. Protect your child from events or activities that may aggravate fears or bring back bad memories. It may be a good idea to turn off the TV and limit the use of social media or videos on the phone or tablet that may bring back memories of the war or other bad events.



Where to get help

Children need love and support while being given a secure framework and boundaries. As a parent, you are the most important person in your child's life. Be patient with yourself and your child and create a good dialogue between yourselves. Most children do just fine after a crisis and will be themselves again after a while.

If you need someone to talk to or need other help, you can contact the public health nurse at the hospital or school where your child attends.

Other services where you can get help

You can ring **Parent Support at 116 123**. This is a free and anonymous telephone and chat service for carers of children under 18 who need help, guidance or have a need to discuss their thoughts. They have interpreters in several languages, including Ukrainian and Russian.

<https://mentalhelse.no/fa-hjelp/foreldresupport>

Safe Place

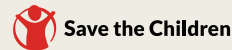
On the Save the Children Safe Place App, you can find simple exercises to help you and your child relax and calm down. You can also find more information about stress and difficult emotions in the app. Safe Place is free and anonymous.



ABOUT SAVE THE CHILDREN

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states that all children have the same rights, no matter who they are or where they live. Save the Children is an international organisation working to ensure that children's rights are respected.

We are present in many countries to help children and families who are refugees to ensure they are safe, can go to school, play and participate in leisure activities.





Save the Children

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