



July 19, 2024

# Providing Culturally Sensitive Guidance

on Caregiving Practices to Newcomers

---

**switchboard**  
connecting resettlement experts



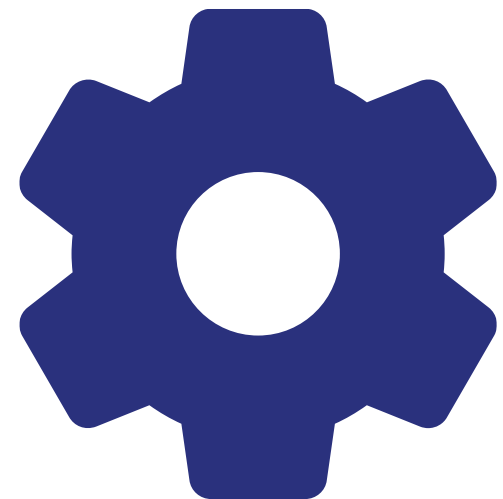
# **This training is presented to you by Switchboard.**

Switchboard is a one-stop resource hub for refugee service providers in the U.S.





**Here's a quick  
overview of your  
settings.**





# Here's a quick overview of your settings.

This is a webinar, so you're joining on listen-only mode.





# switchboard

connecting resettlement experts

Connect phone or  
computer audio under  
**Audio Settings**

Audio Settings ^



Chat



Raise Hand



Q&A

Leave Meeting



**Due to the large number of learners on today's webinar, we've disabled the chat box.**





**Though disabled for learners, keep an eye on the chat for messages from Switchboard and links to various resources we'll be mentioning throughout.**





# switchboard

connecting resettlement experts

You can **access the chat** by clicking here

Audio Settings ^



Chat



Raise Hand



Q&A

Leave Meeting





**You do have the option to send messages to the speakers and co-facilitators via the Q&A.**





# switchboard

connecting resettlement experts

You can type a question  
by clicking **Q&A** here

Audio Settings ^



Chat



Raise Hand

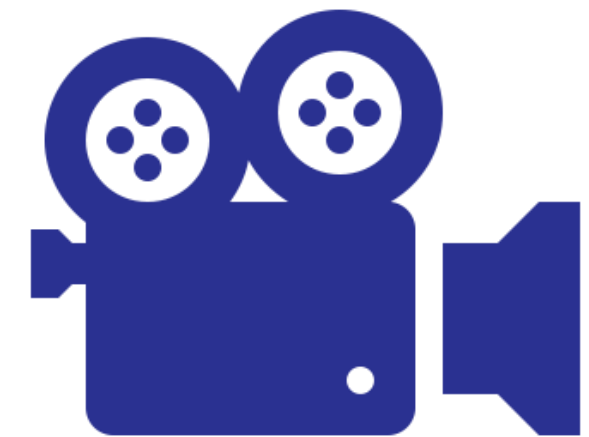


Q&A

Leave Meeting



**Today's webinar will  
run for 75 minutes  
and is being recorded.**





**You'll receive an email with the recording, slides, and recommended resources within 24 hours.**

The webinar transcript, along with the recording, will also be posted on the Switchboard website.





**Last, we ask that you kindly complete our webinar satisfaction survey at the conclusion of our session.**





**This short, five-question survey helps us here at Switchboard continuously improve our training and technical assistance offerings to you all.**





# **Thank you for joining today's training!**

We will begin momentarily.

# Today's Speakers



**Caroline Dilts**

Program Manager,  
Research Program for  
Children and  
Adversity, Boston  
College



**Farhad Sharifi**

Refugee Program Advisor,  
Research Program for  
Children and Adversity,  
Boston College



**Maliha Raza  
Khan**

Nonprofit Consultant,  
Michigan



**Audrey  
Montgomery**

Research Associate,  
Research Program for  
Children and Adversity,  
Boston College





# Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, you will be able to:

1

## IDENTIFY

common challenges  
newcomer parents face in  
the U.S. and explain how  
they affect parenting skills

2

## DESCRIBE

the impacts of culturally  
sensitive and strengths-  
based conversations about  
caregiving with newcomers

3

## APPLY

trauma-informed strategies  
when educating newcomer  
caregivers on U.S. child-  
rearing laws, norms, and  
behavior management



1

# **Common Challenges Newcomer Caregivers Face in the U.S.**

And Their Effect on Parenting Skills

slido



What challenges have you seen affect the parenting skills of the newcomer caregivers you work with?



## Who is a Caregiver?

- Office of Refugee Resettlement:  
“Any person who is primarily entrusted with the child’s care and who lives with the child”



# Child Welfare Statistics

- 17.6 million children in U.S. lived with at least one immigrant parent in 2022
  - 42% of these 17.6 million children lived in families with low income
- Children living with a foreign-born parent comprised 8.6% of children who came to the attention of the child welfare system in the U.S. (2021)
- Children of immigrants were more than twice as likely to be subjects of substantiated reports of emotional abuse than U.S.-born parents
- What the data doesn't say...

# Overview of Challenges for Newcomer Caregivers



Language Access



Change in Parenting  
Role Norms



Gap in Knowledge of  
Child Welfare System



Cultural/Religious  
Practice Conflicting  
with Norms



Lack of Culturally-  
Appropriate Formal  
Supports



Lack of Informal  
Supports



Difference in  
Educational  
Involvement





# Language Access



## **Speaking no/limited English...**

- Can discourage parents from participating in their children's education
- Makes it harder to understand policies and laws
- Limits access to supportive services



# Change in Parental Role Norms



- Differences in gender roles
- Differences in parenting styles/norms
- Power dynamics with children
- Threat of child welfare involvement





# Gap in Knowledge of Child Welfare and Other Systems



- State involvement may be an unfamiliar concept
- Fear of child welfare system
- Need for more in-depth cultural orientation specific to parenting and child welfare in the U.S.



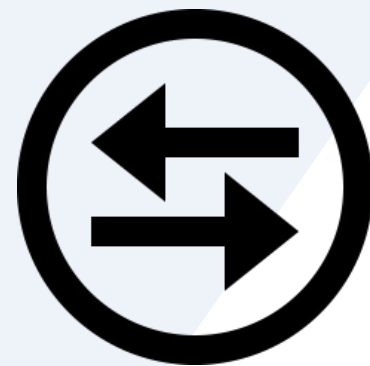
# Cultural and Religious Practice Conflicting with Norms



- Corporal and other forms of punishment may be normative for some cultural groups but not accepted in the U.S.
- Some parents worry that raising children in a Western environment will negatively impact their cultural and religious values



# **Lack of Culturally Appropriate Formal Supports**



- Need for providers who can offer culturally relevant services
- Parenting practice information provided to new arrivals is not always culturally appropriate
- Inadequate or no training provided to staff in areas such as cultural humility



# Lack of Informal Supports



- Separation from family may result in less familial and community support in child rearing



# Difference in Educational Involvement



- Many cultures do not encourage or require significant involvement in their child's learning as is custom in the U.S.
- Lack of knowledge of rights and responsibilities in education



What might occur if a provider does not approach discussions appropriately with a newcomer caregiver about their parenting practices?



2

# **Best Practices for Discussing Caregiving**

# Key Strategies



**Culturally  
Competent Service  
Provision**

**Trauma-Informed  
Education on Child  
Behavior**



**Strengths-Based  
Approach**

**Education on U.S  
Laws and Norms**



# Culturally Informed Service Provision

Macro level



1

**Invest in qualified staff who come from the cultural background of the population being served**

2

**Encourage and provide opportunities for professional development for staff on cultural humility**

3

**Host regular parenting programs and multi-cultural events and gatherings**

4

**Collaborate with organizations composed of members from the same community as the parents you are serving**

# Culturally Informed Service Provision

Provider level



1

**Meet the family where they are**

2

**Use resources like translation software and services**

3

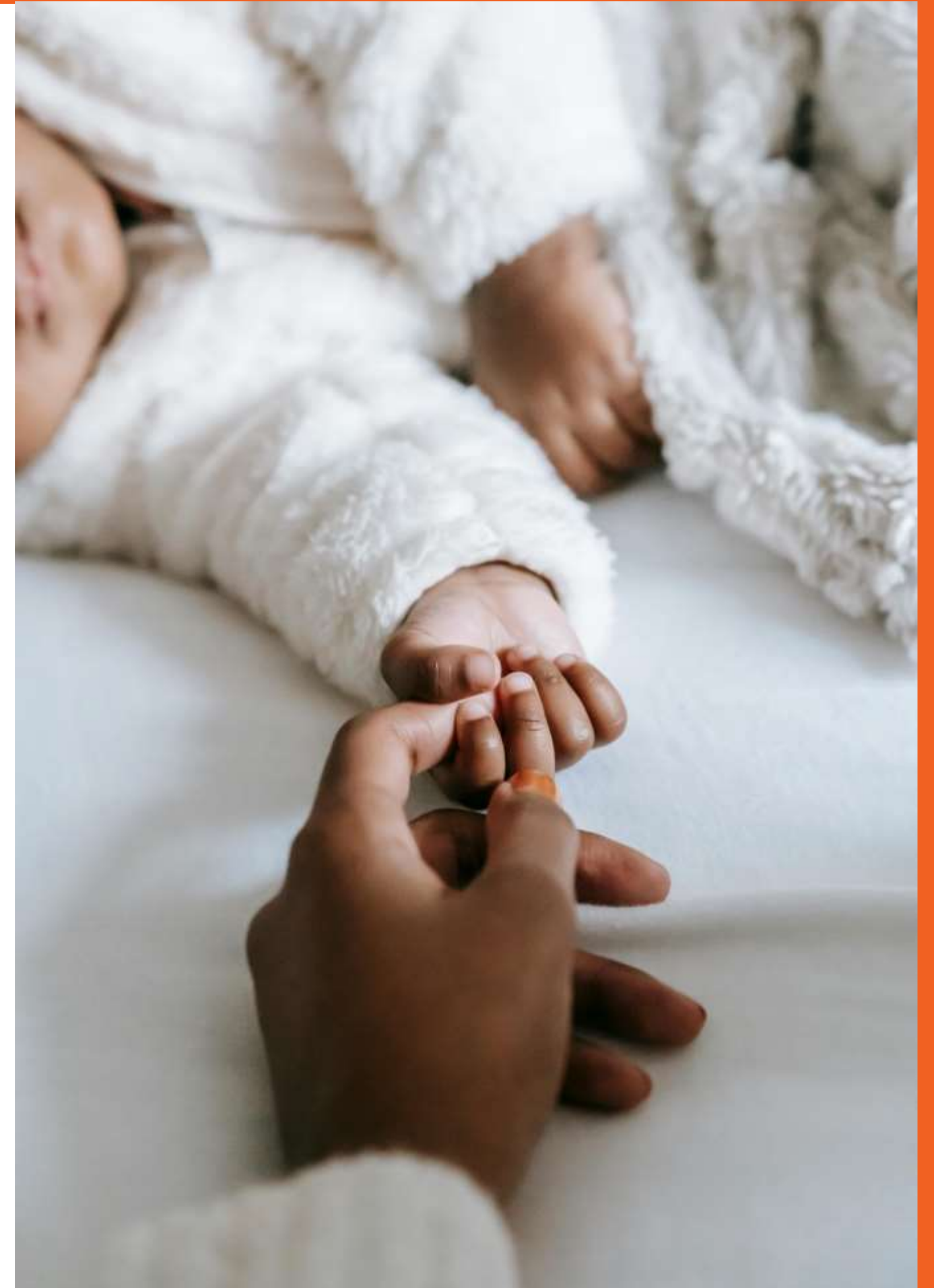
**Use culturally appropriate tools in psychoeducation**

4

**Participate in professional development opportunities focusing on cultural humility**

# Strengths-Based Approach

- Remember that religious beliefs can be a strength for a family
- Your role is not to change anyone's beliefs or opinions even if they strongly contradict your own
- Identify the values and skills that each person brings and use this to empower caregivers





# **Education on U.S. Laws and Norms**

- Clearly explain the role of child protective agencies in your state
- Know your state's policies so you can provide accurate information to caregivers
- Provide clients with education about their rights and responsibilities for their child's education
- Further educate clients about what constitutes neglect and abuse in your state

# Trauma-Informed Education on Child Behavior



- Resettlement stressors, loss, separation, and trauma can lead to mental health symptoms
- Everyone reacts to trauma differently
- Train caregivers to recognize common symptoms of trauma:
  - Stomach aches or headaches
  - Crying, fear, or anxiety
  - Sadness or hopelessness
  - Nightmares, trouble sleeping, or sleeping too much
  - Difficulty managing emotions or behaviors
- Organizations can provide training to staff on distinguishing between “culture” and “trauma behavior”



# Applying What You Learned

Case Study: Amina

# Case Scenario: Amina

- Amina grew up conservative Muslim in Nigeria
- She married John, an American, while he was living in Africa, and they had two daughters
- Eleven years later, the family moved to the U.S. with their now pre-teen daughters
- Once in the U.S., differences in values between John and Amina surfaced, and the children started to play them against each other
- Amina raised her hand to discipline their daughter; John became angry, and called CPS
- The CPS case was dismissed, but the incident was a traumatic experience for Amina
- Cultural and parenting conflicts led to Amina and John divorcing
- Despite challenges in the U.S., Amina desires to become a foster parent

slido



**What is one parenting challenge that Amina faced as a newcomer caregiver in the U.S.?**



# Case Scenario: Amina (continued)

- The foster care licensing agency learned from her daughters that Amina needed more education on U.S. child-rearing norms
- The agency recruited a cultural ambassador who was proficient in both Amina's native culture and U.S. norms
- This ambassador educated Amina in effective parenting skills that were culturally sensitive and aligned with U.S. norms
- The ambassador recognized Amina's strengths: resilience, responsibility, and commitment to family
- Amina received ongoing mentoring and support from the ambassador
- Training program included content on trauma-informed care
- Amina learned to integrate her cultural values with the foster care system

slido



**What is one strategy you learned today that you can use when providing parenting education to newcomers?**

# Q&A Panel



---

## **Caroline Dilts**

Program Manager,  
Research Program for  
Children and  
Adversity, Boston  
College

## **Farhad Sharifi**

Refugee Program Advisor,  
Research Program for  
Children and Adversity,  
Boston College

## **Maliha Raza Khan**

Nonprofit Consultant,  
Michigan

## **Audrey Montgomery**

Research Associate, Research  
Program for Children and  
Adversity, Boston College

# Learning Objectives



Now you are able to:

1

## IDENTIFY

common challenges  
newcomer parents face in  
the U.S. and how those  
challenges affect parenting  
skills

2

## DESCRIBE

the impacts of culturally  
sensitive and strengths-  
based conversations about  
caregiving with newcomers

3

## APPLY

trauma-informed strategies  
when educating newcomer  
caregivers on U.S. child-  
rearing laws, norms, and  
behavior management

# Recommended Resources



- [Schmidt, Susan. \(2006\) \*Refugees and the U.S. Child Welfare System: A Toolkit for Service Providers\*. BRYCS Clearinghouse.](#)
- [Child Welfare Information Gateway. \(2022\). \*Guidance for immigrant and refugee families: Parenting in a new country\*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Children's Bureau.](#)
- [Child Welfare Information Gateway: State Statutes Search](#)
- [Switchboard TA: Foundations of Mandatory Reporting for Refugee Service Providers](#)
- [USA Hello: Life in the USA articles](#)
- [El-Khani, A., Calam, R., & Maalouf, W. \(2023\). \*The role of faith in parenting; considerations when implementing family skills interventions with families affected by armed conflict or displacement\*. \*Frontiers in Psychiatry\*, 14, 1118662.](#)



Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services



# Help us help you!

Scan the QR code or click the link in the chat to access our feedback survey!

- Five questions
- 60 seconds
- Help us improve future training and technical assistance





# Stay Connected



**Switchboard@Rescue.org**



**@SwitchboardTA**



**www.SwitchboardTA.org**



**@SwitchboardTA**

The IRC received competitive funding through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant #90RB0052 and Grant #90RB0053. The project is 100% financed by federal funds. The contents of this document are solely the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official views of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.