

**Center for
Childhood
Resilience**

Resilient Kids. Stronger Communities. Brighter Futures.



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“Taught to Feel Free:” Multi-Tiered, School-Based Supports for Newcomer Youth

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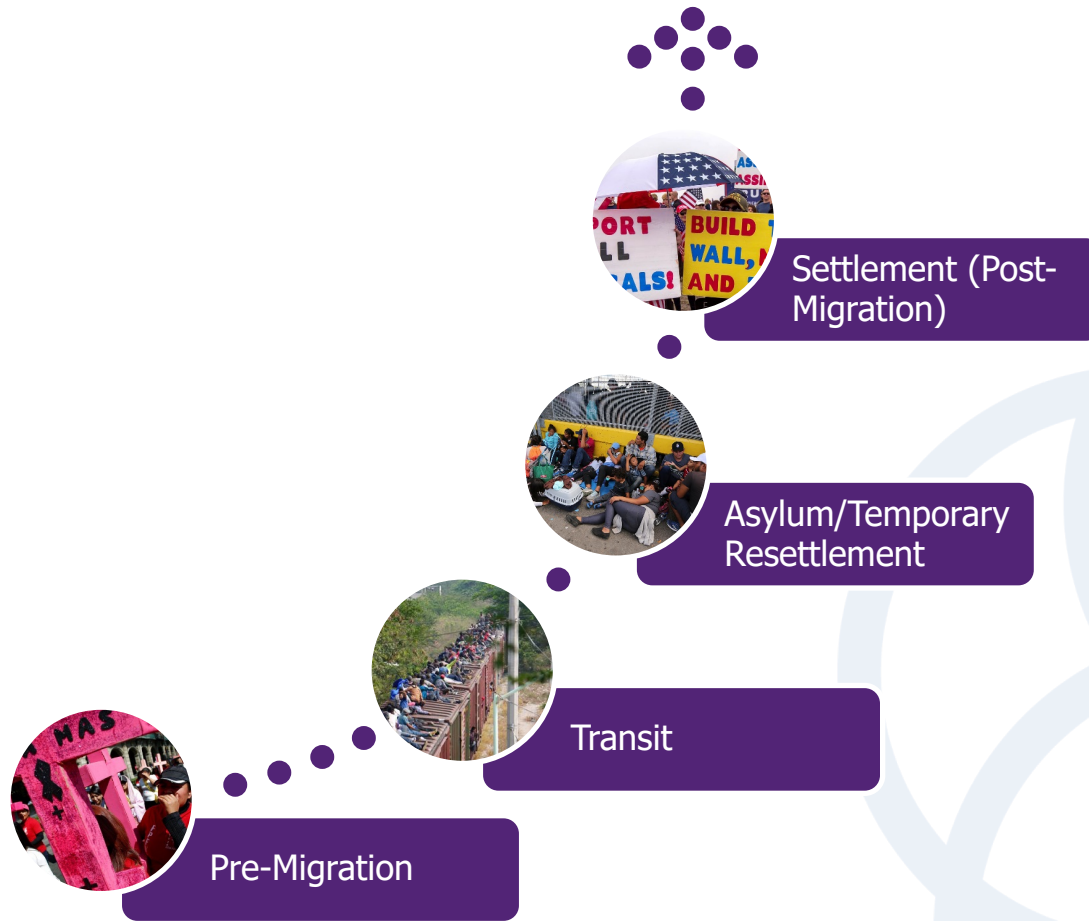
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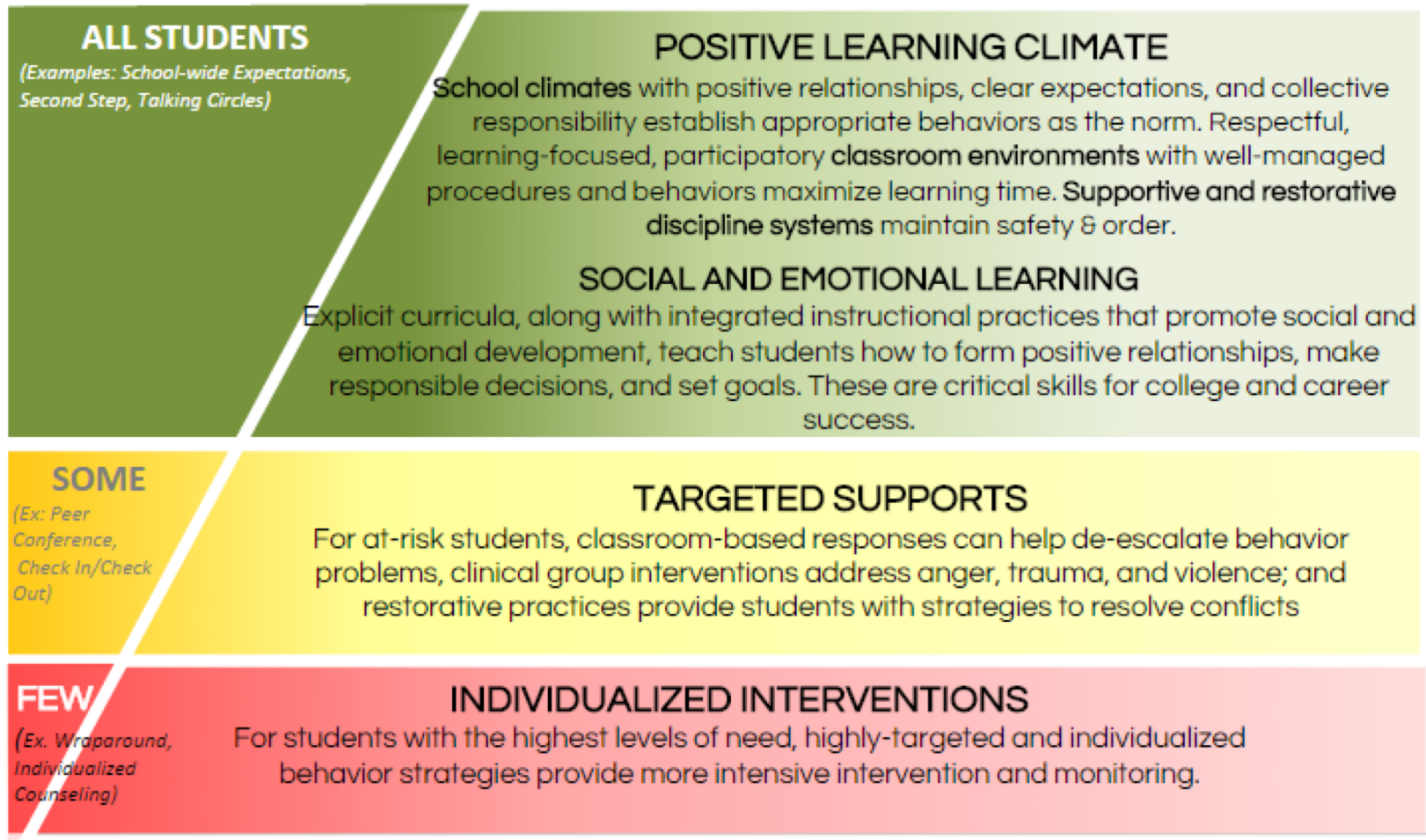
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The “Invisible Backpack”



Multi-Tiered Systems of Support for Social, Emotional, & Behavioral Needs



You're Not Alone (YNA): Response to Public Health Crisis

- Collaborative, community-wide advocacy response to acute distress in the refugee/immigrant community post-2016 presidential election
 - Press conferences
 - Psychological First Aid webinars/live streamed events



Community Capacity Building Training Content

- Content focus:
 - Strengths-based approaches
 - Family and community-focused frameworks
 - Resilience framework
- Relevant models
 - Psychological First Aid
 - Trauma-informed practice



The 4 Rs

1. **Realize** the widespread impact of trauma and understand potential paths to recovery
2. **Recognize** the signs and symptoms of trauma in clients, families, and staff
3. **Respond** by fully integrating knowledge about trauma into policies, procedures and practices
4. **Resist Re-traumatization**

Reach of YNA Capacity-Building Trainings

- March 2017 – June 2018:
 - 1,642 participants trained in 48 events
- Implications:
 - Brief community capacity building trainings **can improve community awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and practices in serving a highly stressed population such as refugee and immigrant youth and families.**
 - Organizational leadership may play a particularly important role by establishing **mandatory trainings for front-line employees.**



Supporting Newcomer Youth Wellness in Schools



- Teams of 2-3 staff from each participating school, to be comprised of an EL teacher or coordinator from each school plus one support person (Social Worker, Counselor, Psychologist, etc.)
- Core content areas are:
 - Terminology and Identifying newcomers in schools
 - Overview on the impact of stress and trauma on newcomers
 - Trauma-informed strategies to support newcomers in schools
 - Engagement of caregivers
 - Self-care for adults
 - Available supports from CPS Office of Language and Cultural Education (OLCE)
 - Intro to STRONG

Supporting Transition Resilience Of Newcomer Groups (STRONG)



Goals of STRONG

- Build newcomers' resilience and promote their healthy adjustment to a new school and country
- Increase social support and connections among newcomer youth
- Develop newcomers' strategies to cope with stress
- Build problem-solving and goal-setting skills
- Increase newcomers' positive sense of identity, and buffer newcomers from the impact of racism/xenophobia

STRONG Structure

Elementary and High-School Interventions

- 10 student group sessions
- 1 individual *Journey Narrative* session
- 1 parent group session
- 1 teacher group session

STRONG IN CPS

2021-2022

- 20 CPS school teams trained in STRONG

2022-2023

- 20 more CPS school teams will receive training in STRONG

Evaluation in Chicago

- 2019-2020 – interrupted by COVID-19 and school closures
 - 3 elementary and 3 high schools
 - 29 students enrolled
- 2021-2022 (data still being collected)
 - 5 schools
 - 22 students enrolled
- 2022-2023
 - 7 schools



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Student-Reported Change

- Significant Pre- to Post- changes in student reported



Coping efficacy

**School
connectedness**

It's like a private place that you can share everything. And it's not only you, everybody sharing in there... maybe they have been through the things you have been through or anything like that. It's how you kind of have the similar things in common, you know?

-High School Student

My child is quiet, closed off, and doesn't share things with me so that he doesn't burden or bother me. But his heart was open with the school clinician and he was able to help him and share with him advice.

-Parent

...That he could feel a bit more relaxed talking, and sharing what he is feeling, and how he felt coming here. That he was going to be with other children who went through a similar experience, and that he wasn't the only one. -

Parent

Well, the best memory was making friends...those friends became people I talk to on daily basis. And the other thing that I liked about the program was the one who in charge of the program, they communicate with us. They help us go through things and activities... it was such a great experience for me. And like, I wish I could do it again. And if I could suggest people to do it, I would recommend it for them... I learned, and I would love to learn more.

-High School Student

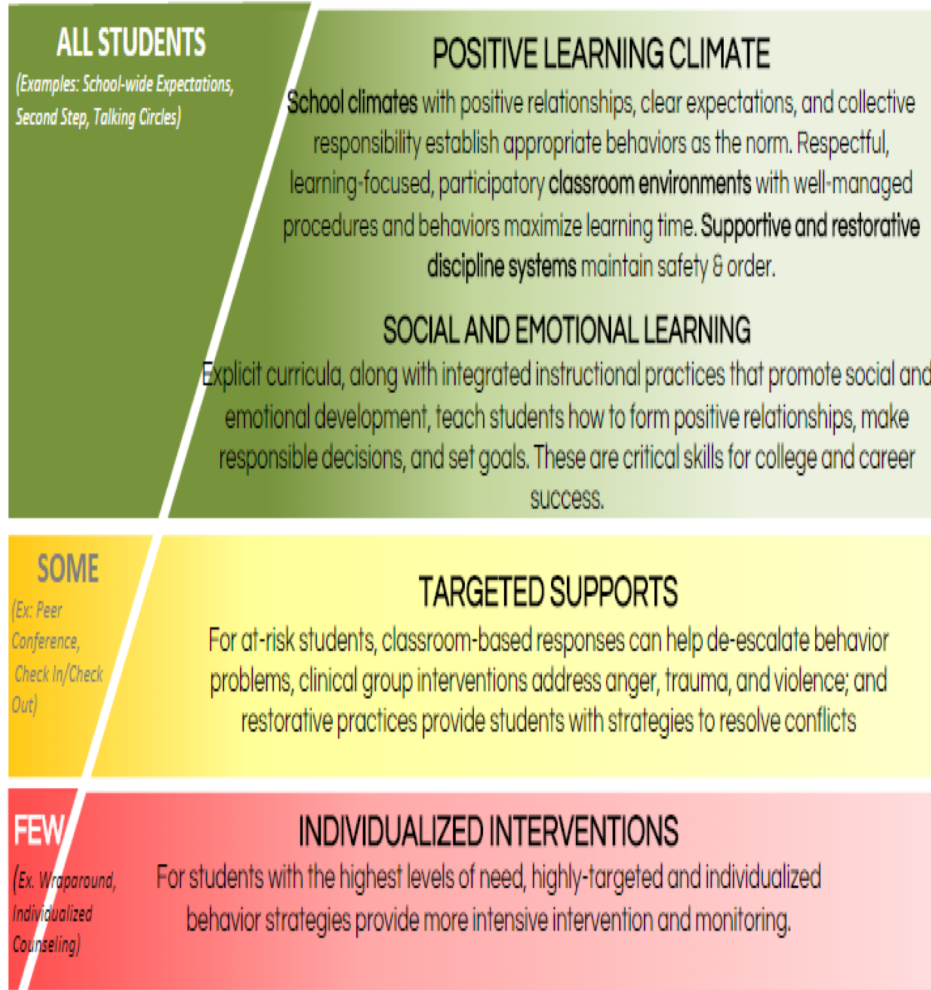
I did it because I had not been here for that long when I arrived at this school. I feel it helped me; it was supposed to help me. When I first got here, I didn't have many friends, but when I was there, or for the time I was there, I was motivated or taught to feel free.

-
Elementary School Student

I would just say, you guys should really do this thing (STRONG) every year, not just next year, or like you're working with other schools. It will help a lot of people, not just for this year, we just had five people or something, but hopefully next year we can have 10, then we can just go 15...

-High School Student

Summary



- Supporting Newcomer Youth Wellness Series
- STRONG group intervention
- Individual intervention/referral

Questions?

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