



# PARENTING EXPERIENCES OF RECENTLY ARRIVED AFGHAN REFUGEES

## ARTICLE DETAILS

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Authors: Julia Rosenberg, Jessica Kung Leung, Kristin Harris, Amer Abdullah, Arzoo Rohbar, Camille Brown, and Marjorie S. Rosenthal

Title: Recently-Arrived Afghan Refugee Parents' Perspectives About Parenting, Education and Pediatric Medical and Mental Health Care Services

## WHY WAS THIS RESEARCH DONE?

The challenges refugee children encounter before, during, and post-migration place them at risk for mental health problems such as anxiety and depression. To understand the challenges confronted by Afghan refugee children, this study examined the parenting experiences of Afghan refugee parents and their perspectives on accessing health care.

## WHAT DID THE STUDY INVOLVE?

The study used a community-based participatory approach (CBPR) to develop the research questions and methods. The study team consisted of various refugee-serving stakeholders and healthcare professionals.

Nineteen Afghan refugee parents (ten families) were interviewed about their parenting experiences in Afghanistan and the United States. Parents were also asked their perspectives on accessing healthcare resources for their children. The interviews were conducted in 2019-2020. All participants were recent arrivals, with their time in the U.S. ranging from 12 to 27 months.



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## WHAT ARE THE STUDY'S FINDINGS?

Four themes emerged from the interviews. First, the parenting practices of Afghan refugee parents shifted once in the United States in important ways. They became less concerned with access to basic needs and their children's safety and were able to focus more on other aspects of parenting. One parenting issue that emerged in the U.S. was their children's increased use of phones and tablets. Parents also worried about hindrances in their children's ability to maintain their religious traditions, such as praying during the school day. Parents missed the multigenerational households in their home country and struggled to adjust to caring for their children without the help of family members. Lastly, in Afghanistan, parents largely accessed healthcare only in emergency situations and welcomed access to more routine checkups and medical care in the United States. They also appreciated the connections between health care providers, resettlement agencies, and educational institutions.

## RELEVANCE TO CIMH

The study's findings highlight potential ways to support refugee families. These include helping parents navigate the shifts in parenting and facilitating connections between recently arrived refugees and more established refugees to support the maintenance of their traditions and religious activities.

The findings also highlight the value of community-based participatory research methods and collaboration between health care providers and refugee serving agencies.

## FOR MORE ON THIS RESEARCH

The study was funded by the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences. Find the full article in the *Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health* [here](#). More information about the lead author, Dr. Julia Rosenberg, can be found [here](#).