

# Welcoming Newcomers into Our School Communities

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## Icebreaker

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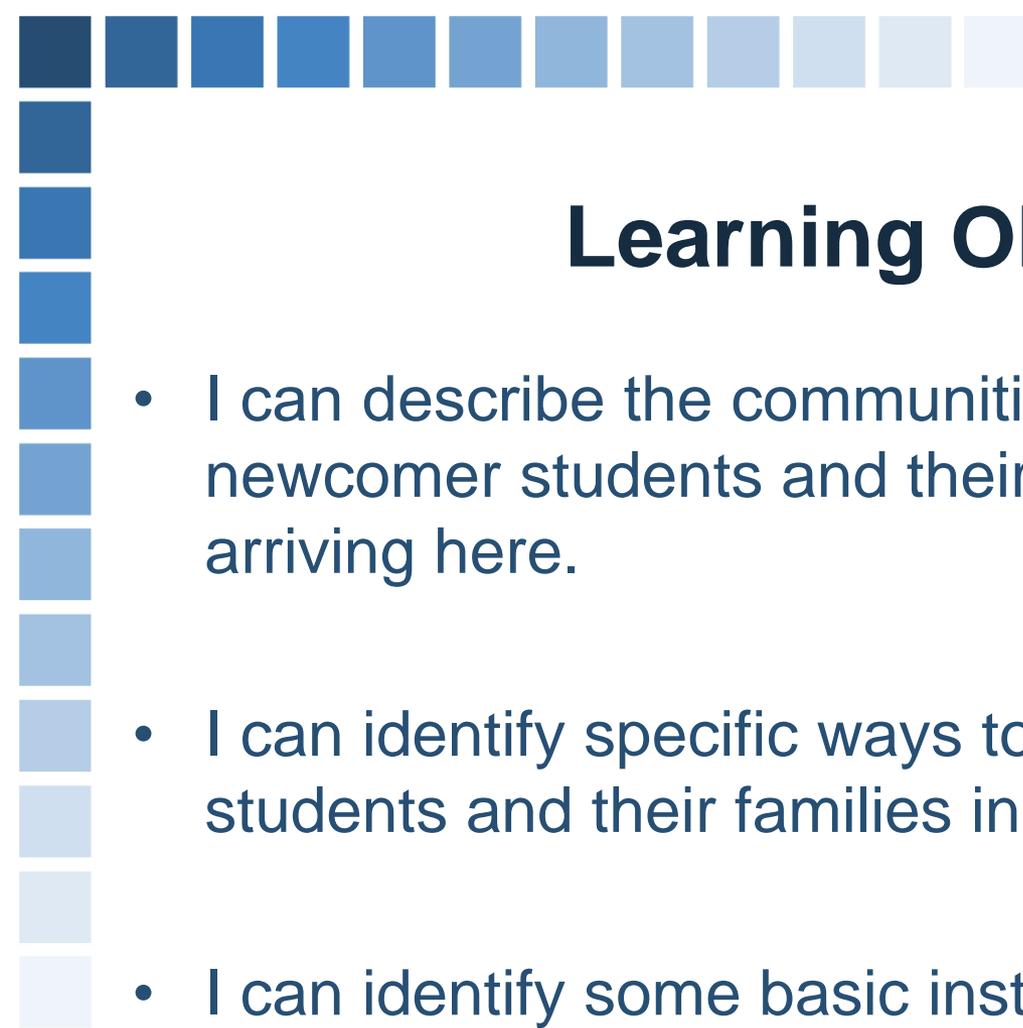
minutes

As your school community welcomes newcomer students, what are you excited about? What are you feeling a little apprehensive about?

# Overview

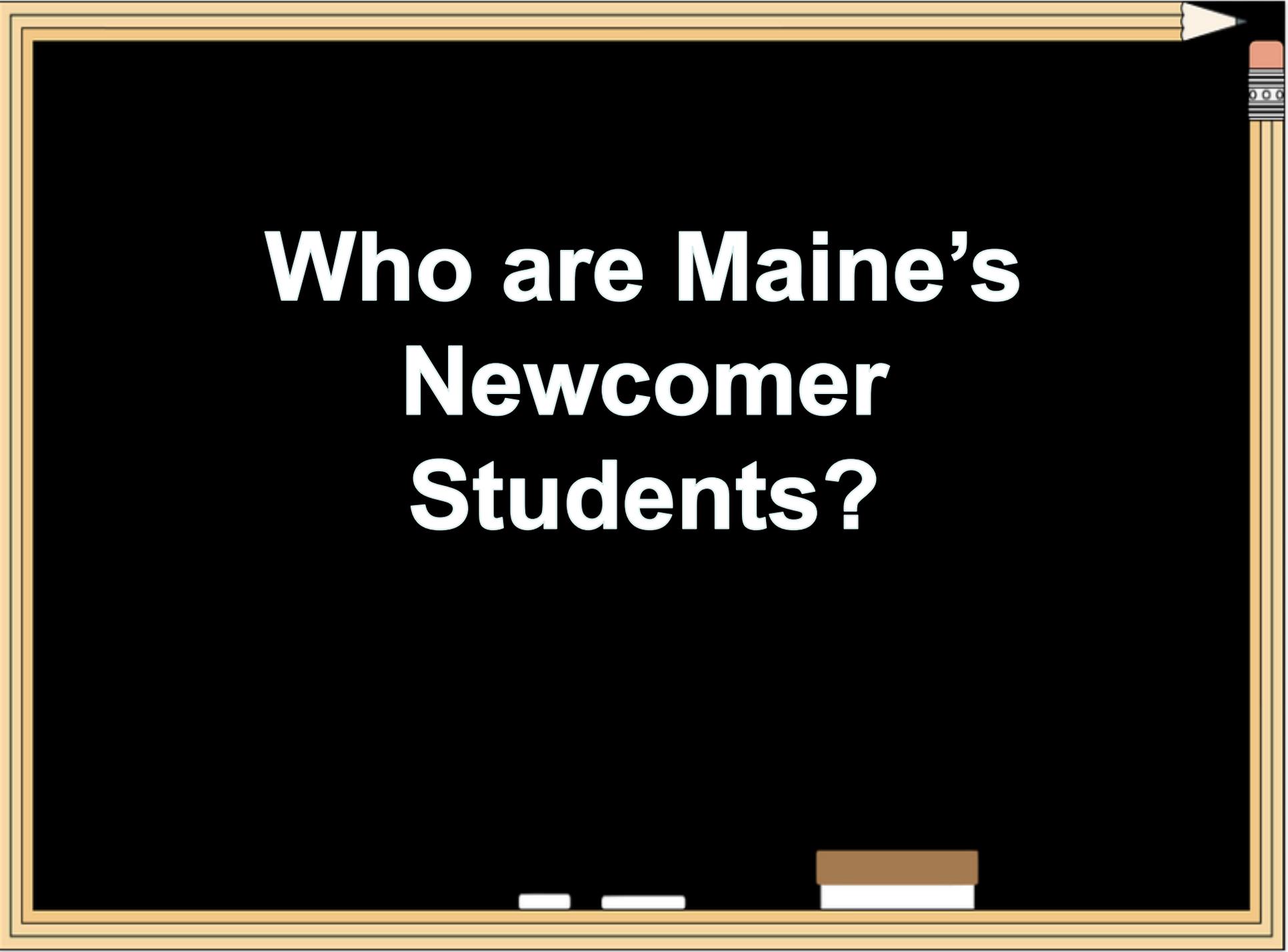
- Who are Maine's Newcomer Students?
- Strategies for Welcoming and Inclusion
- Instructional & Socioemotional Tools



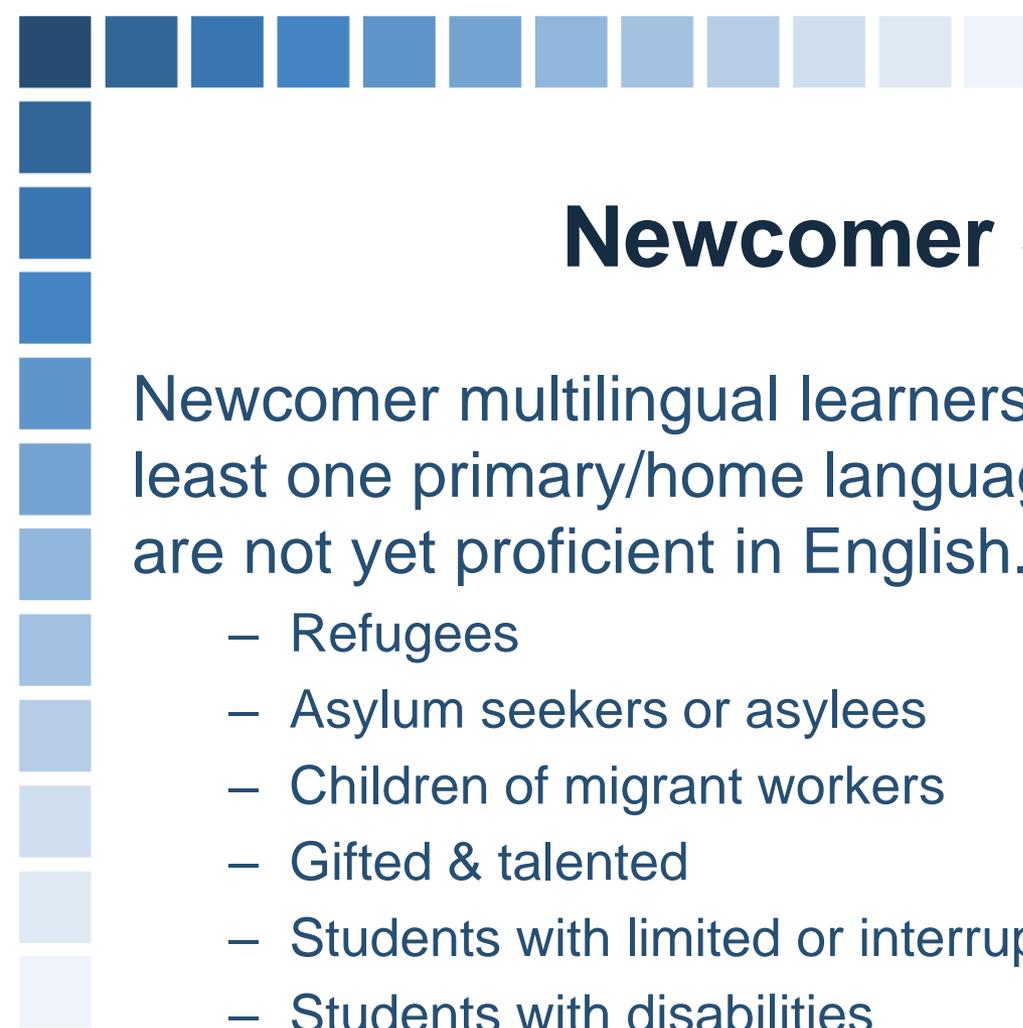


# Learning Objectives

- I can describe the communities of some of Maine's newcomer students and their typical experiences before arriving here.
- I can identify specific ways to include newcomer students and their families in our school community.
- I can identify some basic instructional and socioemotional tools to support newcomers.



# Who are Maine's Newcomer Students?

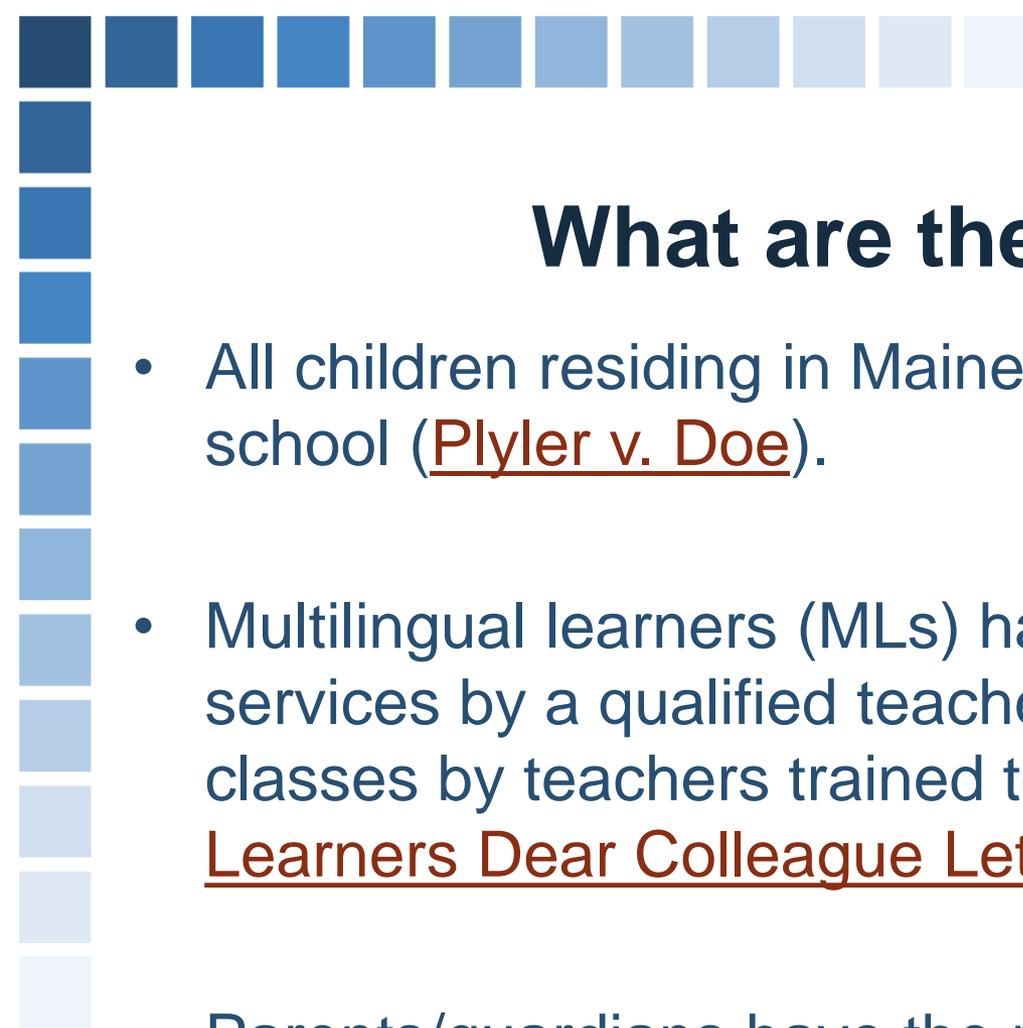


# Newcomer Students

Newcomer multilingual learners\* (MLs) are students with at least one primary/home language other than English who are not yet proficient in English. They may also be:

- Refugees
- Asylum seekers or asylees
- Children of migrant workers
- Gifted & talented
- Students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE)
- Students with disabilities
- Experiencing homelessness
- Students with adverse childhood experiences (ACES)

[\\*Honoring and Celebrating All Languages Spoken By Maine Students With the Shift to Multilingual Learners Terminology](#)



# What are their rights?

- All children residing in Maine have the right to attend school ([Plyler v. Doe](#)).
- Multilingual learners (MLs) have the right to ESOL services by a qualified teacher and support in all their classes by teachers trained to meet their needs ([English Learners Dear Colleague Letter](#)).
- Parents/guardians have the right to interpretation/translation in order to communicate with school staff ([LEP Parents Fact Sheet](#)).



# Newcomers & McKinney-Vento

Many of our most recently arrived families qualify for support under the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, due to living in emergency or transitional housing such as motels/hotels.

McKinney-Vento-eligible students are guaranteed:

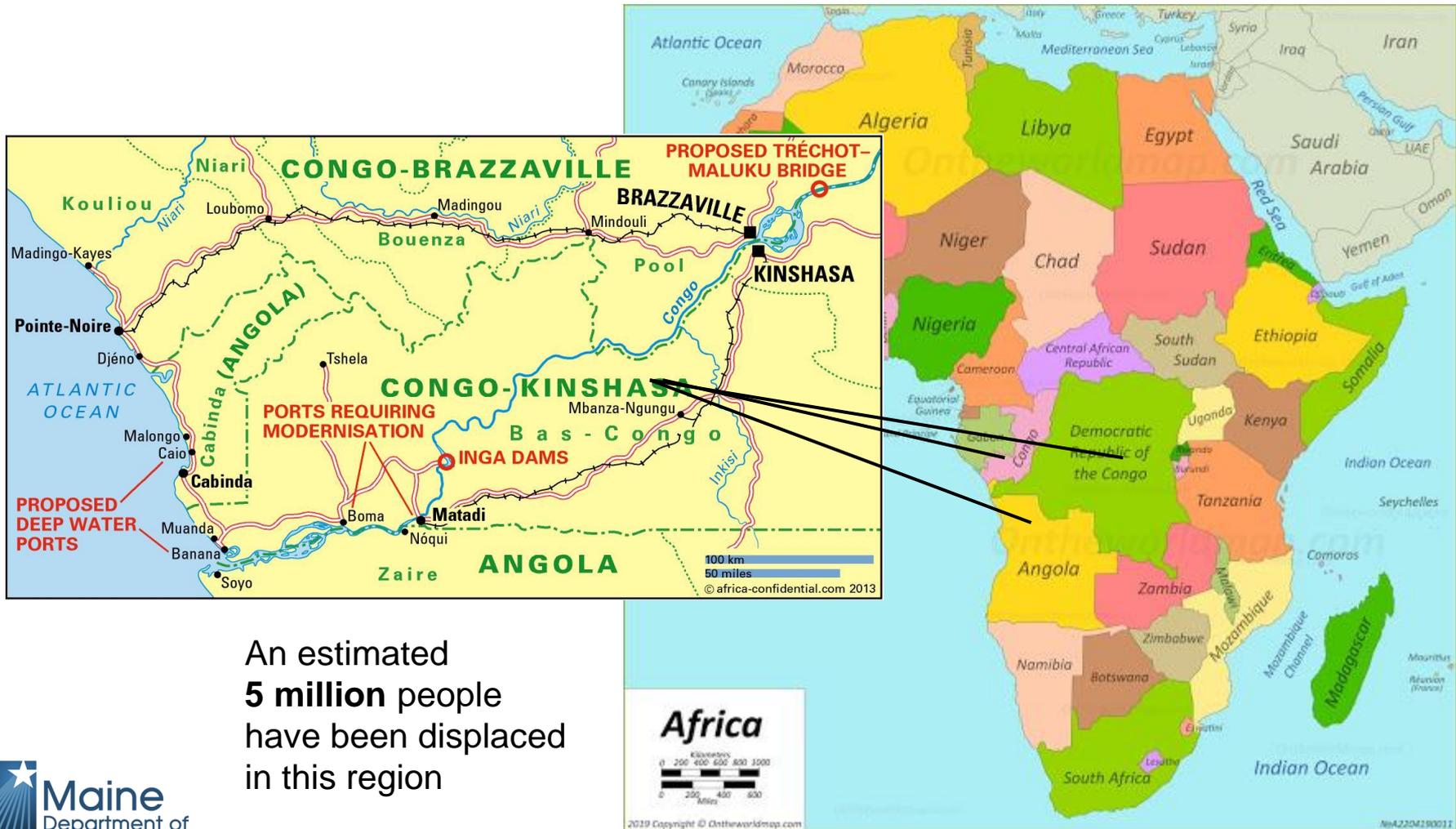
- Free, appropriate public education
- The right to remain in a school where they've been attending or enroll in the school where they currently reside
- Immediate enrollment, regardless of documentation
- Transportation to school

**Amelia Lyons**

McKinney-Vento Education Consultant

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# Where are our newcomers coming from?



An estimated **5 million** people have been displaced in this region

## Democratic Republic of the Congo

A



B



C



D



# Focus on Culture: Democratic Republic of the Congo

**Languages:** French, Kiswahili, Kikongo, Tshiluba, Kinyarwanda, Lingala, and some English

## Education System:

- Begins at age 6-7
- Mixed age classrooms with one teacher for all subjects
- Boys have higher rates of schooling than girls
- National exam in 6<sup>th</sup> grade determines if student will proceed to secondary
- Discipline may be physical

## Social Customs:

- Handshakes for greeting and leaving
- Asking about health and family shows respect
- Reverence for elders
- Childcare is communal, including older siblings
- Strong tribal affiliations
- Traditional gender roles

## Congolese Community of Maine



<https://www.worldatlas.com/maps/democratic-republic-of-the-congo>

<https://usahello.org/how-to-help/for-teachers/cultural-background-resources/dr-congolese-students/>

# Angola

A



B



C



D



# Focus on Culture: Angola

**Languages:** Portuguese, Lingala, Bantu languages, and many other local languages

## Education System:

- Compulsory education ages 7-11
- Boys have higher rates of schooling than girls
- Open air schools are common
- Large, mixed age classes
- Discipline may be physical

## Social Customs:

- Handshakes for greeting and leaving
- Asking about health and family shows respect
- Reverence for elders
- Childcare is communal, including older siblings
- Strong tribal affiliations
- Traditional gender roles

## Angolan Community of Maine



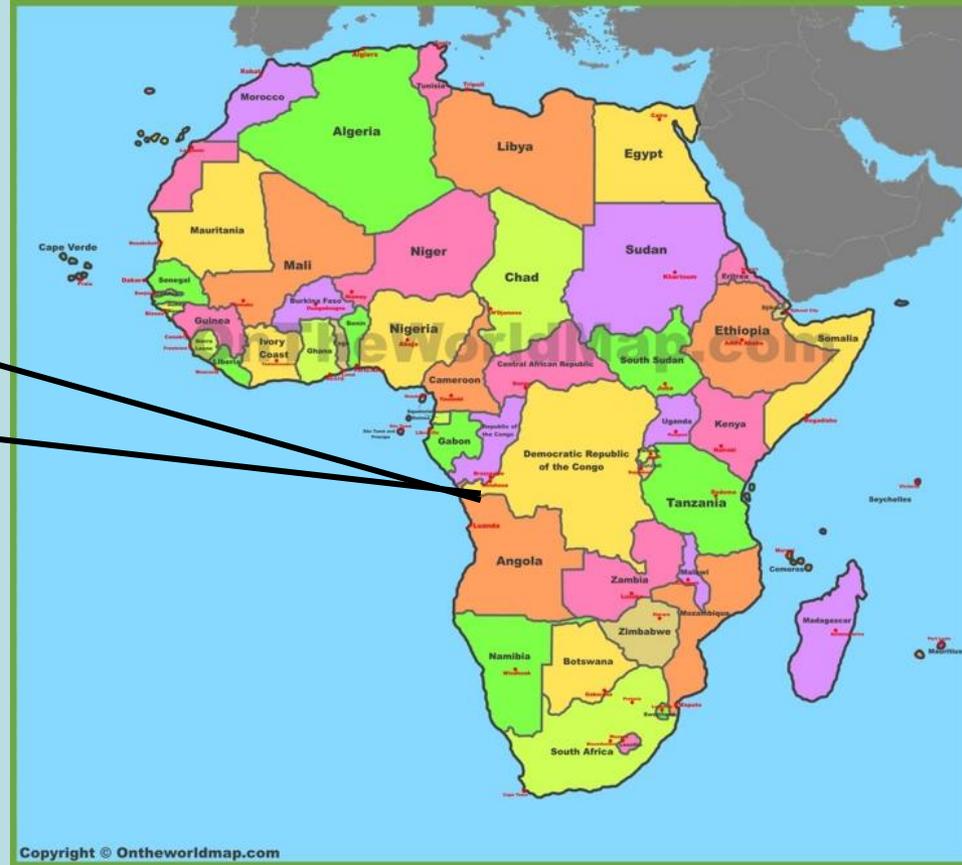
<https://www.worldatlas.com/maps/angola>

<https://www.justlanded.com/english/Angola>

# Seeking Asylum



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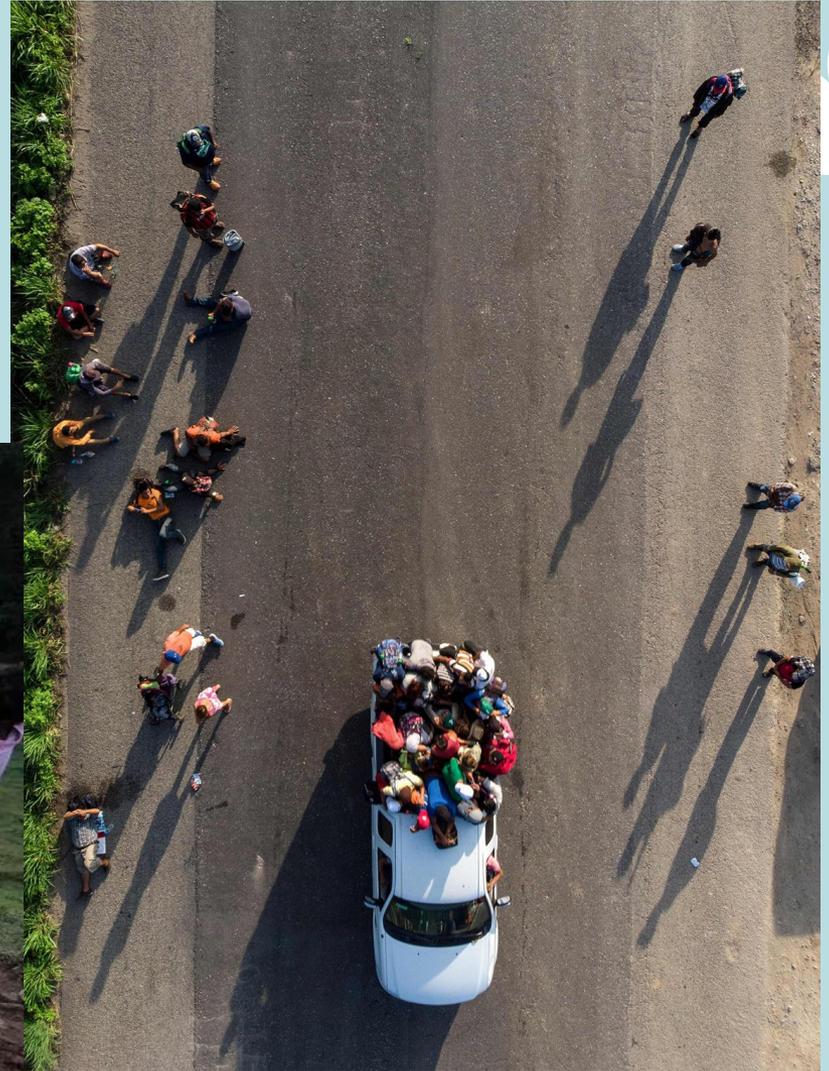


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## Common Western Hemisphere Migration Routes for African Migrants

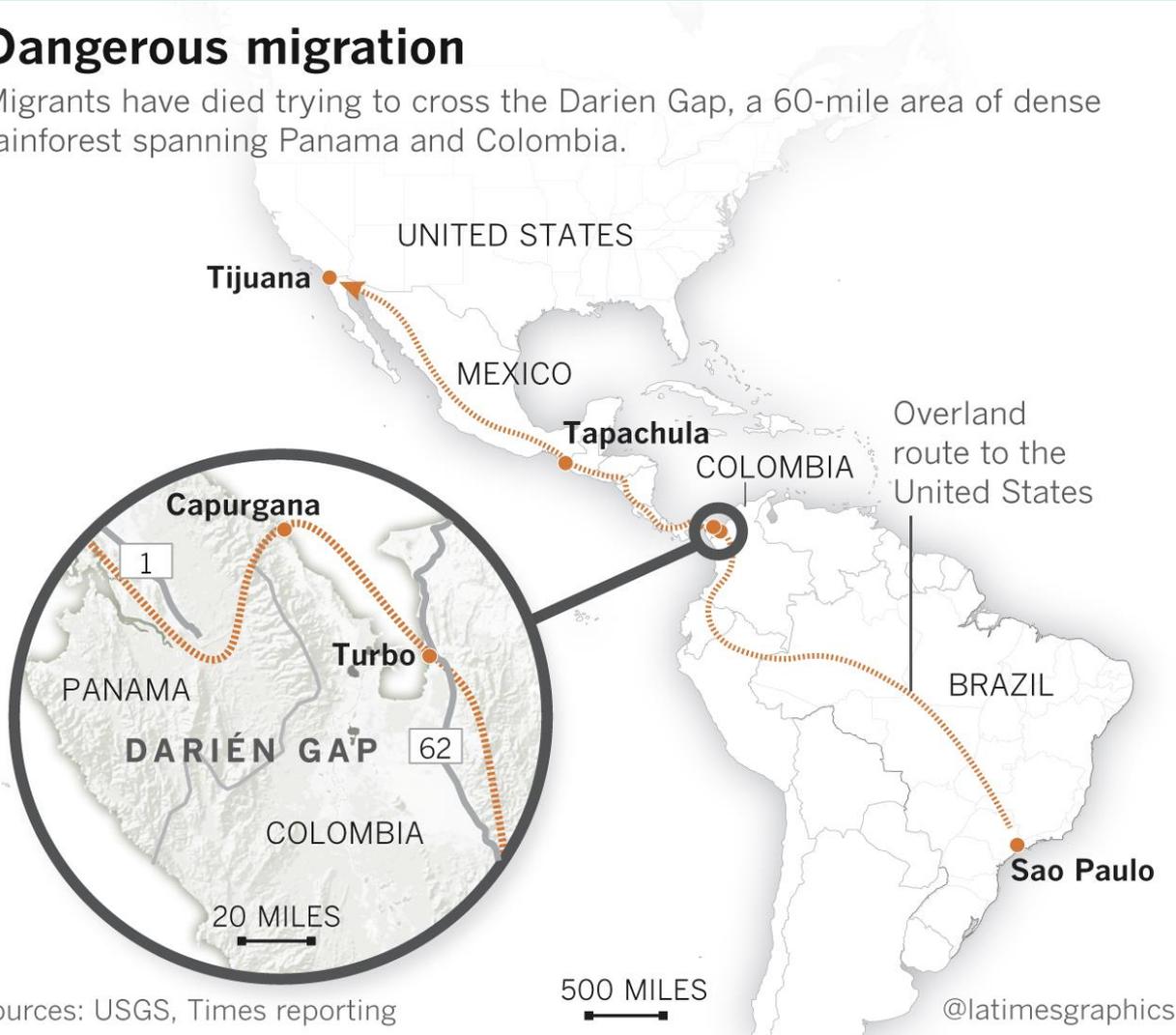




# Crossing the Gulf of Panama & Darien Gap

## Dangerous migration

Migrants have died trying to cross the Darien Gap, a 60-mile area of dense rainforest spanning Panama and Colombia.



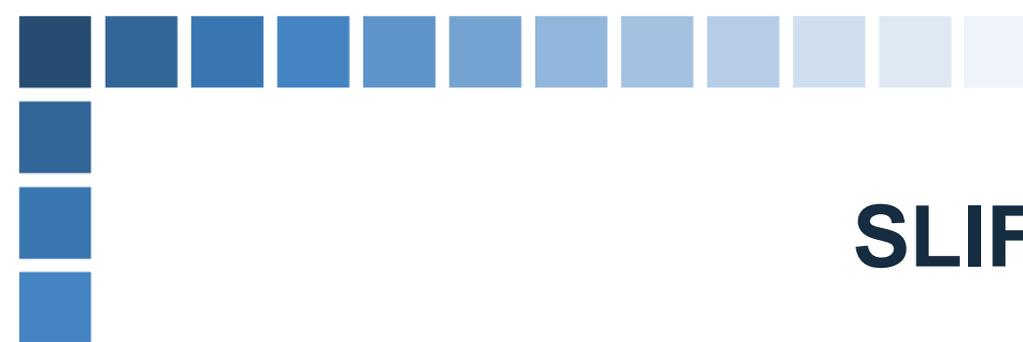
Sources: USGS, Times reporting

500 MILES

@latimesgraphics







# SLIFE

## Who are SLIFE?

- EL student, age 8-21 years old;
- Entered 1st US school after Grade 2 (or exited US for >6 months and did not attend school during that time)
- Prior exposure to formal schooling is characterized by:
  - No formal schooling; or
  - Interruptions in formal schooling (2 years fewer of formal schooling than peers); or
  - Consistent, but limited formal schooling
- Functions at least 2 years below expected grade level in native language literacy and/or numeracy relative to typical peer

- Within this definition, many of our new Mainers meet the SLIFE definition.
- Most recent arrivals report that their children have missed months and even years of school.
- **Families reported that students averaged missing around 1.5 years of education, with some students missing up to 5.5+ years.**

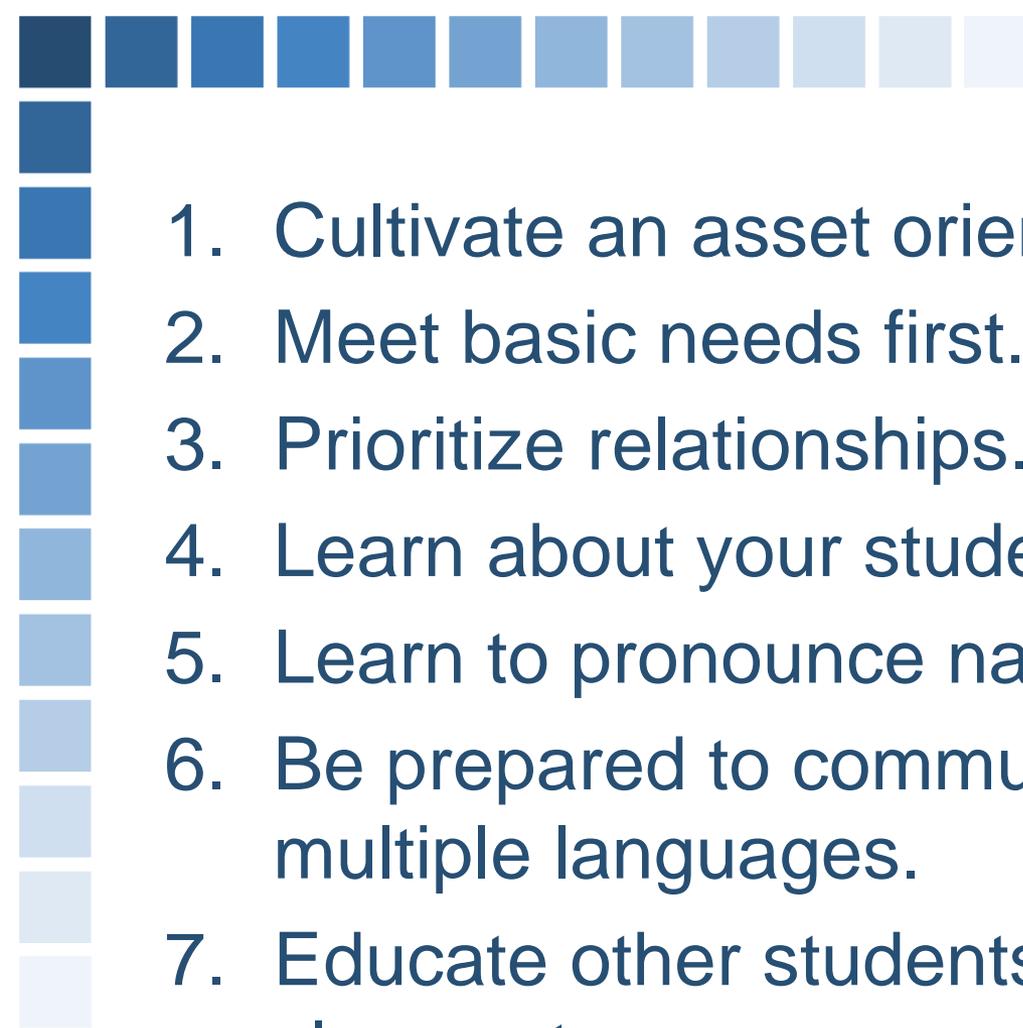


# **Strategies for Welcoming & Inclusion**

# Why are welcoming & inclusion so important?



Source: [US DOE Newcomer Tool Kit](#)

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1. Cultivate an asset orientation.
  2. Meet basic needs first.
  3. Prioritize relationships.
  4. Learn about your students & their families.
  5. Learn to pronounce names correctly.
  6. Be prepared to communicate with families in multiple languages.
  7. Educate other students about their new classmates.

# 1. Cultivate an asset orientation.

With your partners, discuss the assumptions that underlie these quotes and propose rephrasing with an asset-based lens.

This student doesn't speak a word of English.

How can I be expected to teach this student math when he doesn't understand anything I say?"

I'm not trained to work with this kind of student.

Our school is not able to handle this influx of newcomers.

This student should be placed in First Grade instead of Third. She just doesn't have the language yet.

## 2. Meet Basic Needs First

Before students can concentrate and learn, they need, at minimum:

- Enough food
- Enough sleep
- Sense of safety
- Sense of well-being

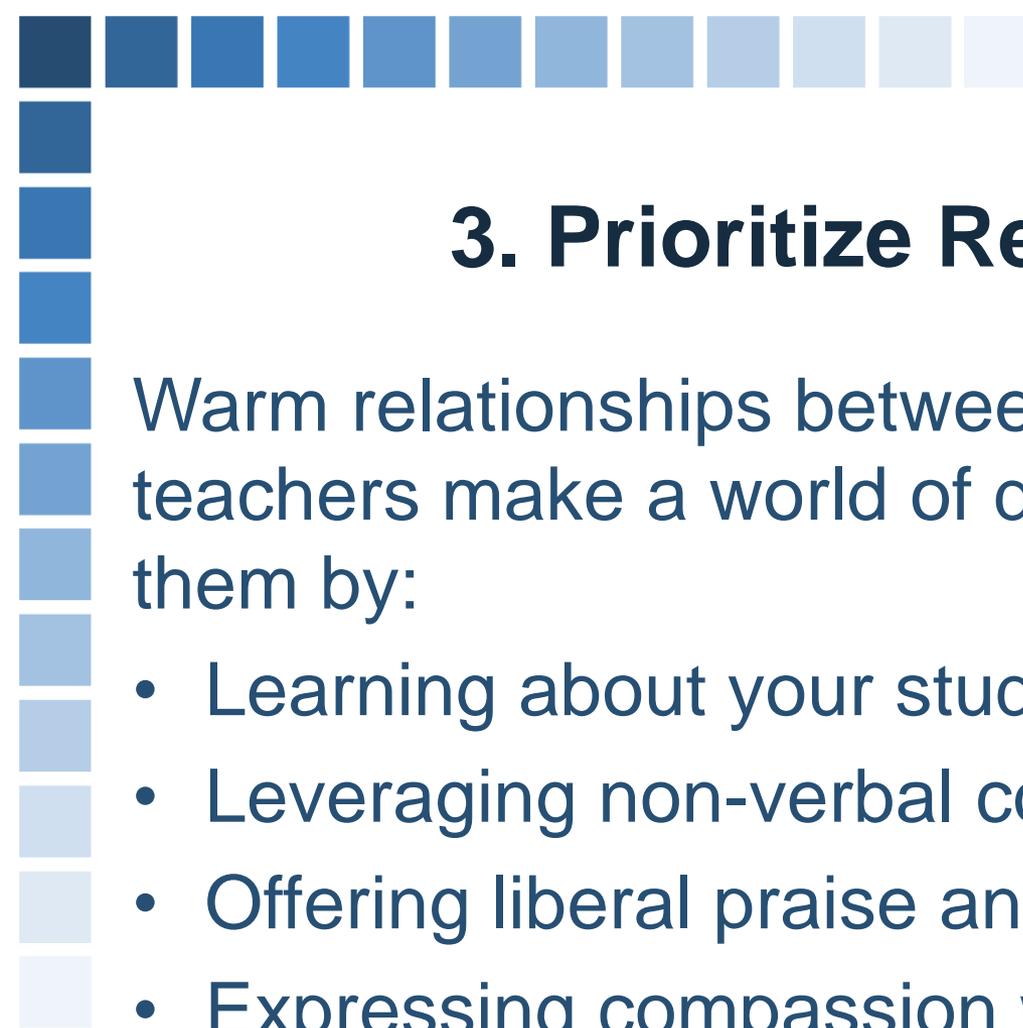
Connect families with programs and resources at school and in the community:

- [McKinney-Vento Homeless Liaison](#)
- [Maine Migrant Education](#)
- [Good Shepherd Food Bank](#)
- [Gateway Community Services](#)
- [Maine Immigrant Rights Coalition](#)



Image Source: [Education Library](#)





## 3. Prioritize Relationships

Warm relationships between newcomers and their teachers make a world of difference! Cultivate them by:

- Learning about your students and their families
- Leveraging non-verbal communication
- Offering liberal praise and encouragement
- Expressing compassion while maintaining high expectations for their achievement



## 4. Learn about your students & their families.

Through student & family intake interviews, conversations, and classroom work, find out what you can about their:

- Cultures
- Languages
- Interests
- Ambitions
- Individual personalities
- Schooling experience
- Academic and other assets



Example: [South Portland](#)  
[New Mainer Intake Interview](#)

# 5. Learn to pronounce names correctly.

“Remember that a person’s name is to that person the sweetest and most important sound in any language.” – Dale Carnegie

## TedTalk: Your name is the key!

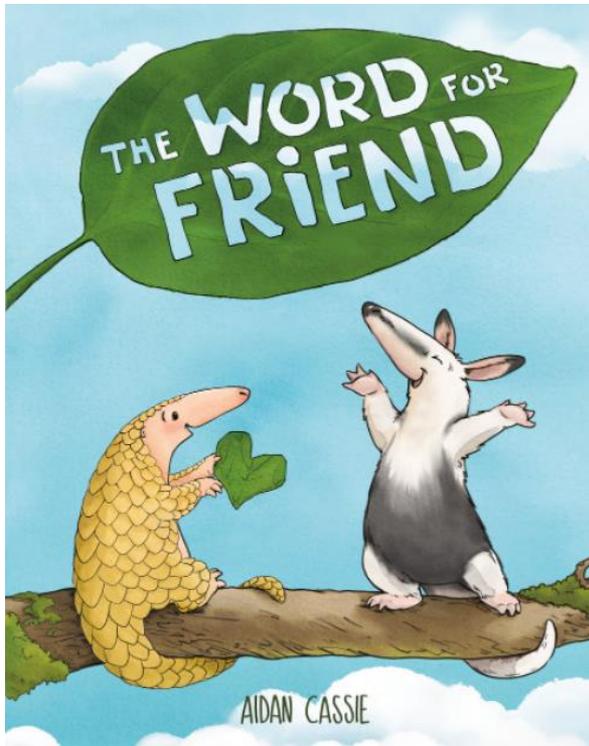
- Focus on syllable stress
- Note spelling phonetically
- Voice of America: Pronounce (with an American accent)
- Name Shouts (search names by country, slow pronunciation)

- Rosario - “rosary”
- Hunfredo - “peaceful”
- Eusebio - “pious”
- Thiago - “Saint Iago”
- Bonifácio - “good destiny”
- Aloisio - “famous warrior”
- Salomao - “man of peace”
- Rodolfo - “famous wolf”
- Eloi - “to choose”
- Flávio - “yellow hair”
- Maximino - “the greatest”
- Benedito - “blessed”
- Frederico - “peaceful ruler”
- Gilberto - “pledge”
- Bonifácio - “good destiny”
- Edmundo - “protector”
- Fransisco - “free”
- Eduardo - “guardian”
- Isidro - “a gift of ideas”
- Baltasar - “biblical king”
- Chico - “free”
- Serafim - “seraph”
- Olavo - “forefather’s heir”
- Sabion - “wise man”
- Maximino - “the greatest”
- Zé - “God will add”
- Timoteo - “to honor God”
- Ramiro - “supreme judge”
- Arnaldo - “strong soldier”
- Sabion - “wise man”

Source: Names Frog



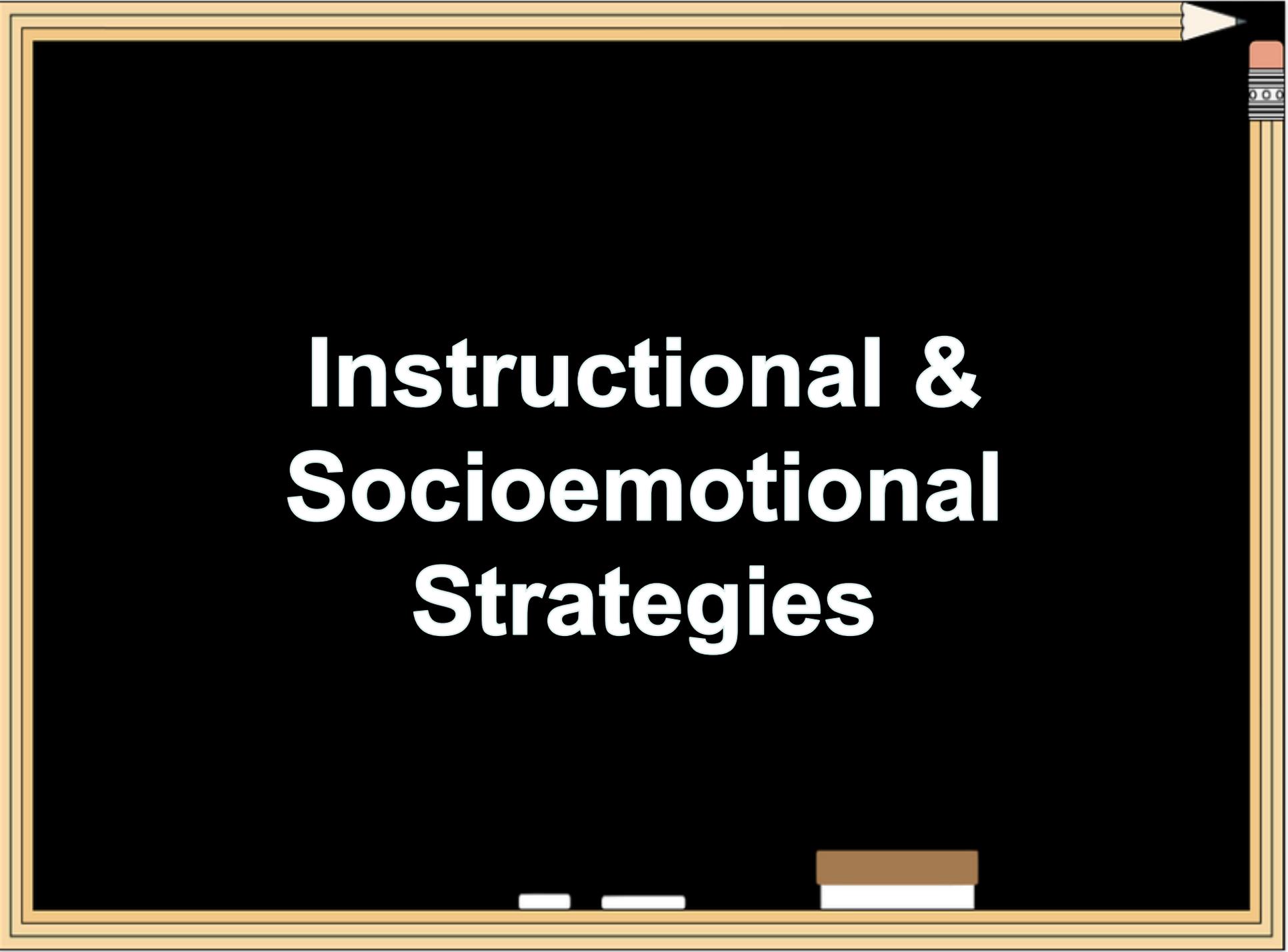
## 7. Educate other students about their new classmates.



Source: [Macmillan Publishers](#)

Depending on the ages and backgrounds of your students, these tools can be helpful to build a class culture of empathy and welcoming:

- Read alouds and discussions of books about migration, cultures, and language-learning
  - [Colorín Colorado](#) [The Refugee Experience: Books for Children](#)
  - [All are Welcome](#)
  - [I'm New Here](#)
- Documentaries & news stories
- Guest speakers
- Assignments that include interviewing diverse community members

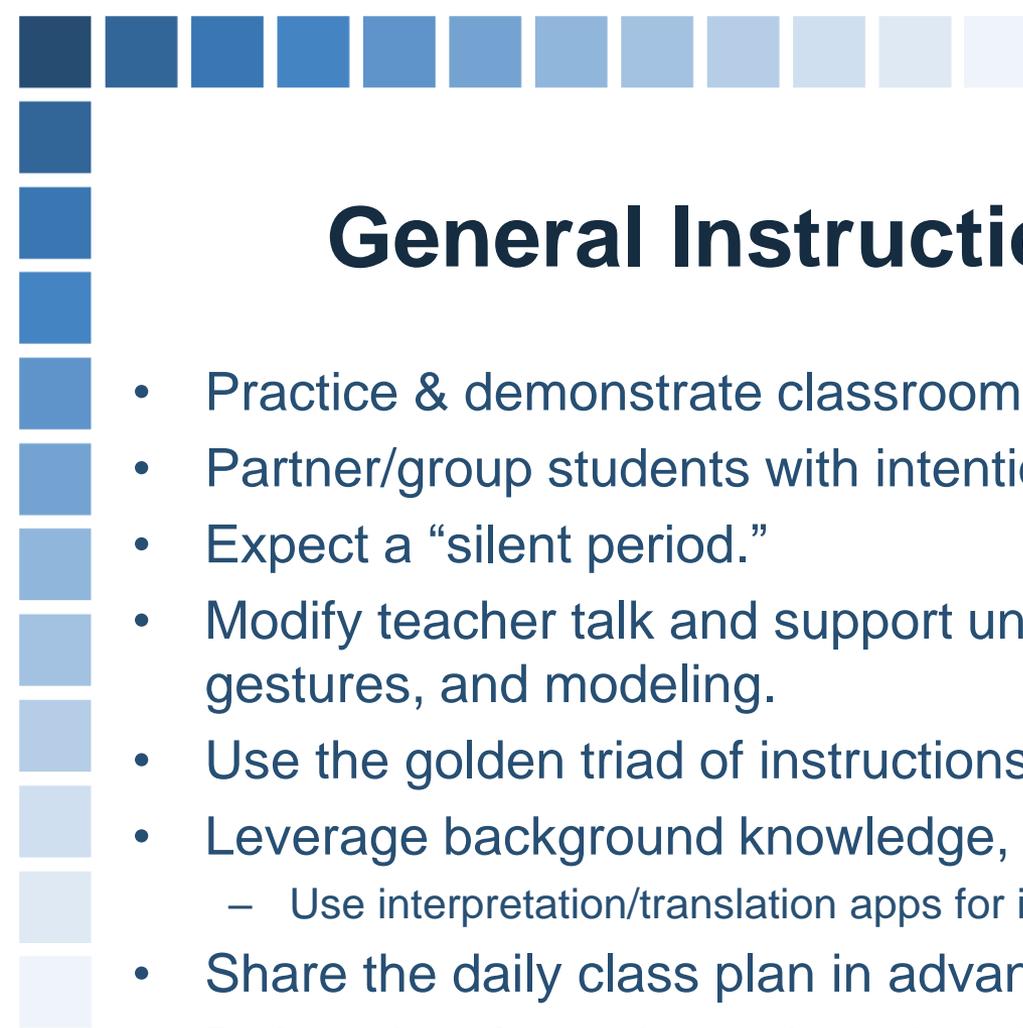


# **Instructional & Socioemotional Strategies**

# Video Reflection

While you watch, consider what the teacher did well and what she could do differently. Record on this [Google Doc](#).





# General Instructional Strategies

- Practice & demonstrate classroom routines.
- Partner/group students with intention.
- Expect a “silent period.”
- Modify teacher talk and support understanding with visuals, gestures, and modeling.
- Use the golden triad of instructions.
- Leverage background knowledge, including language and culture.
  - Use interpretation/translation apps for in-the-moment communication.
- Share the daily class plan in advance.
- Before the class, determine what the essential learning and key vocabulary for the day will be. Share this with students explicitly.

# Specific Instructional Strategies

## Lesson Format:

- Agenda
- Content and language objectives
- Entry/bell work
- Interactive lesson/lecture (below)
- Review/repeat independent work expectations

## Lecture/Whole Group Instruction

- Slide presentation w/visuals
- Print cloze activities that follow slides
- Provide lecture notes in advance or after class
- Teach vocab explicitly with time for practice (*it takes 12-20 interactions with a word for it to stick*)

## Class Activities

- Quizlet, Quizlet Live
- Kahoot
- I Have, Who Has
- Sentence Frames for guided partner discussions or small group work
- Scaffolding questioning
- Frequent check-ins
- Pacing, repeat important information
- Review key learning at the end of class

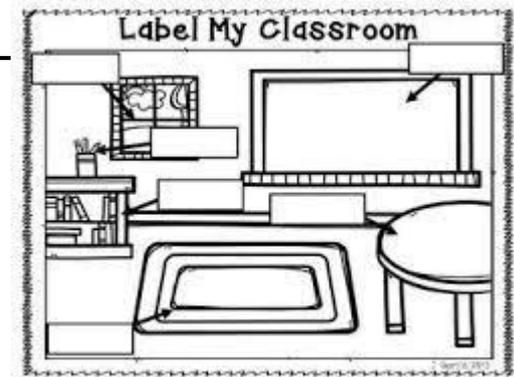
## Scaffolding independent work

- Differentiated reading materials
- Comprehensible input
- Use of first language for content acquisition
- Graphic organizers to support work

# Welcoming & Supporting New English Speakers

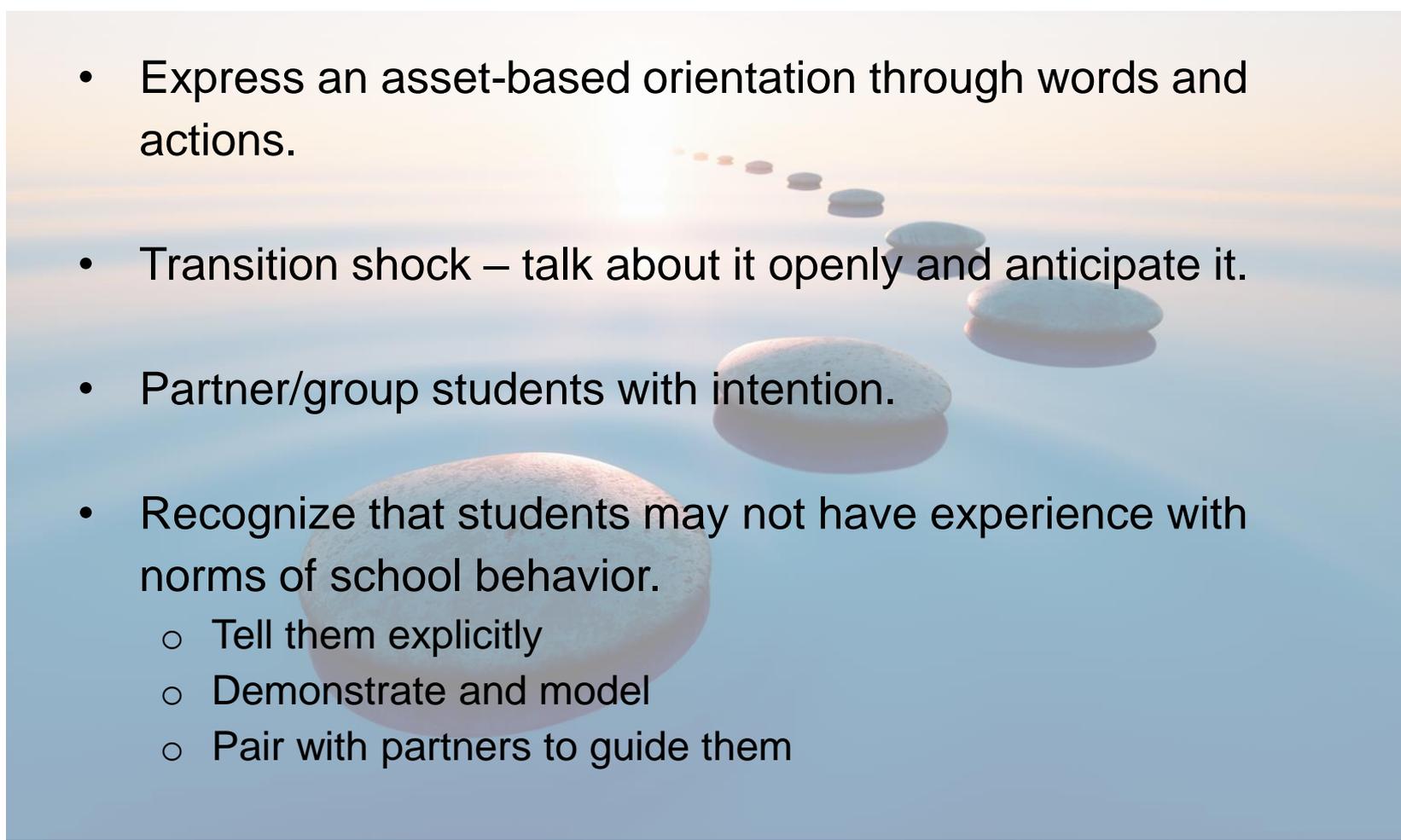
## Classroom Supports

- Visual Schedules
- Word Walls - consider [\*using first language\*](#)
- Entrance activities/accessible activities
- Frequent check-ins
- Label the classroom. New students can even participate in this!





# Socioemotional Strategies

- 
- Express an asset-based orientation through words and actions.
  - Transition shock – talk about it openly and anticipate it.
  - Partner/group students with intention.
  - Recognize that students may not have experience with norms of school behavior.
    - Tell them explicitly
    - Demonstrate and model
    - Pair with partners to guide them



# Socioemotional Strategies



- Recognize how trauma manifests in behavior. Create safe spaces and blowing-off-steam opportunities.
  - Lunch bunch
  - Quiet room
  - Counselor or social worker
- Language immersion is exhausting! Recognize how the challenge of language learning manifests in behavior.
  - Offer language break options
  - Use games and physical activities to release stress



# Resources

[US DOE Office of English Language Acquisition Newcomer Tool Kit](#)

[NCELA: Social and Emotional Supports for Newcomer Students](#)

[WIDA English Language Development Standards](#)

[The GO TO Strategies: Scaffolding Options for Teachers of English Language Learners, K-12](#)

[Colorín Colorado: Newcomer Students](#)

[Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services](#)

[Getting It Right: Reference Guides for Registering Students with Non-English Names](#)

[DW Documentary: From an African Refugee Camp to the US](#)

[Edutopia: Harnessing the Power of Storytelling to Support Migrant and Immigrant Students](#)



# Professional Learning

## Maine DOE Language Educators News

Stay tuned for many new PL offerings related to newcomers for school year 2022-23!

## WIDA Self-Paced eWorkshops

Engaging Multilingual Newcomers

WIDA ELD Standards

## ExcEL Leadership Academy

## Minnesota Department of Education: SLIFE Modules



# Thank you!

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