

# Helping children grow in a new culture

## **1. Stay connected to your children**

- Where are your children going?
- Who are your children's friends?
- Know what is happening – at school, with their friends.

## **2. Spend time with your children**

- Go to church/mosque/synagogue together.
- Do household chores together (grocery shopping, cooking, washing dishes etc.)
- Go for a walk with your child just to talk to him/her alone.
- Have a family discussion while eating a meal together.

## **3. Talk/ provide guidance/listen**

- Talk to your children about your beliefs and why they are important to you.
- Talk about behaviour that is acceptable or not acceptable to you.
- Show interest in what your children think by listening to them.
- Set rules and limits. Talk about why these rules are important (safety, respect, family harmony).
- Make new rules as children get older and show you that they can be responsible for their behaviour.

## **4. Try to understand your child's adaptation**

- Adapting to a new culture is difficult for children.
- Do not reject your child. Your child will find other people to connect with – boyfriend or girlfriend, using drugs with friends, joining a gang, etc.
- Ask your child: “How does it feel growing up in a new country?”

## **5. Your relationship with your children is important**

- *Change* is part of adapting to a new culture.
- This does not mean that you have to change everything. Keep the important things from your culture.
- Talk about family stress and learn new ways to solve problems.
- Ask yourself: What is more important? Keeping everything from my culture or making **some changes** to keep my family together?