¡Colorín colorado! http://www.colorincolorado.org

Toolkit: Helping Immigrant Families Navigate Migration Decisions and Schooling in a Different Country

Schools play a unique role in providing support and information for immigrant students and families, many of whom are English language learners. Regardless of their own immigration status (or that of their parents), all K-12 children have a right to access a free public education across the country – a right established by the Supreme Court Case *Plyler vs. Doe*.

Many people are working across the country to ensure that all children exercise that right nationwide, as well as to support children in immigrant families who are facing great uncertainty through the following activities:

- ensuring that families understand their own rights and their children's rights
- helping families connect with important services, they need such as legal assistance or help in meeting basic needs
- providing social-emotional support for students
- ensuring that all staff at the school understand immigrant students' rights and appropriate policies related to immigration status and privacy

[You can learn more about the ways schools support immigrant students from our Colorín Colorado resource section on this topic.]

In addition to providing these kinds of supports, many educators are being approached by families who are considering a complex set of decisions: whether to stay in the U.S., where they may have lived for many years, or to return to their home countries. The choices that mixed-status immigrant families who are considering a return to their home country face include:

- staying and keeping children enrolled in U.S. schools with which they are familiar, while risking the possibility that an undocumented parent, sibling, or relative may be deported
- making arrangements for the child to stay with a relative or other guardian to continue schooling while the undocumented parent or caretaker returns to the home country
- making a proactive decision to return to a country that the child may have never visited and whose language the child may not have used in an academic setting, but where family members who might have been deported, and an extended family network, may be accessible and available.

aft A Union of Professionals
WETA WASHINGTON DC
nea NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION Great Public Schools for Every Student

These questions are particularly complicated for mixed-status families in which at least one member of the family is undocumented, or in the cases of families facing policy changes that will impact their immigration status if they have participated in programs such as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) and Temporary Protected Status (TPS). Millions of children across the country live in a mixed-status family and the majority of these children are U.S. citizens themselves – who, as noted above, have a right to a free, public K-12 education. Since education can be a major factor in immigrant families' decisions regarding their own migration, teachers and administrators are often being included in families' conversations about their children's futures and in some cases being asked for guidance around these choices.

For educators who are approached with these kinds of questions, it can be helpful to have a good understanding of the issues and considerations that can impact families making these decisions. In addition, there are resources and recommendations that can help ease the transition of families who do decide to return to their home country – **although it is not appropriate for educators to encourage families to make a certain choice. Educators should carefully consider how they communicate about these issues so that their conversations are not construed as encouragement to make one decision or another.** Each family's situation is unique and families may also be considering factors that they are not sharing publicly.

In order to address the challenges of integrating students into a wholly different education system and some of the things to be considered, we have prepared a practical toolkit with Dr. Sarah Gallo, who has been studying the issues, choices, and implications for children who have returned to one of the countries most directly impacted by these policy changes, Mexico.

This toolkit includes:

- "Overview: Migration and Binational Schooling," an article detailing:
    - Challenges and opportunities for binational students
    - Considerations that can impact families' decisions
    - Recommendations for schools in communicating with families
    - Steps that schools can take to support families who return to their home countries
- Tips for parents in both English and Spanish
- A sample letter that schools can use to report on student records in English and Spanish, along with guidance on providing such a letter
- A flier detailing information that parents need about Mexican documents available in English and Spanish

Examples and quotations from families interviewed by Dr. Gallo are included throughout this document. Please feel free share this toolkit with colleagues at the school, district, state, and national level.

Note: While the information is specific to Mexico, many of the recommendations and even forms could be adapted to serve other countries, in consultation with educators who know the educational systems of those countries well. Educators who wish to share information related to schooling in other countries are welcome to contact Dr. Gallo at slipinog (at) gmail.com.

About the Author

Dr. Sarah Gallo is an assistant professor at Ohio State University whose research focuses on bilingual and immigrant education in the U.S. and Mexico. Dr. Gallo is currently residing in Mexico and studying the experiences of binational children who have moved to Mexico from the U.S. in recent years, with a special focus on those who have moved back due to U.S. immigration policies.

Overview: Migration and Binational Schooling

Although migration between the United States and Mexico is often assumed to move from South to North, or from Mexico to the United States, over the past decade this has shifted. Indeed, since 2009, it is estimated that net migration between the two countries showed a million *more* people moving South, from the United States to Mexico (Pew Hispanic Center, 2015). It is estimated that at least 500,000 children with U.S. schooling experiences are now enrolled in Mexican schools (Gándara, 2016). Most of these children are U.S.-born citizens with Mexican-born parents who have moved to Mexico for an array of reasons: heightened deportation policies during the past decade, the economic recession in the U.S., or wanting to reunite with family.

In light of changing immigration policies, such as an expansion of deportation priorities to include all undocumented immigrants, the uncertain future of Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), and recent announcements regarding Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for immigrants from a number of countries, undocumented and mixed-status families will increasingly face difficult decisions regarding repatriation.

Educators across the U.S. are working with students impacted by these policies: there are an estimated 5.5 million children in U.S. public schools with at least one family member who does not have official U.S. documentation and over 80 percent of these children are U.S. citizens themselves (Passel & Cohn, 2011). For many families, education is at the heart of their migration decisions. Many caregivers ask, "What will happen to my children who have gone to school in the U.S., and often only in English, if they enroll in school in our home country?"

These resources are designed to provide a toolkit for U.S. educators looking to *support* immigrant families as they navigate these difficult decisions. Educators can play an important role in talking through various considerations and implications of a family's decision and provide resources that can be helpful to families regardless of their decisions. However, the goal of this toolkit is not to encourage families to make a certain choice. I strongly advise educators to consider how they communicate about these issues carefully so that their conversations are not construed as encouragement to make one decision or another. Each family's situation is unique and families may be considering factors that they are not sharing publicly.

Although these materials focus specifically on the students we share between the United States and Mexico, they can be adapted to work with families from an array of countries as they face difficult decisions regarding family migration and schooling.

Students Who Study in Two Countries

Binational students are young people who have lived and learned in more than one country. There is no agreed upon or perfect term, as many of these students are not "repatriating" or "returning" to a country they have ever lived in – most of them are arriving to their parents' home country for the first time. By calling students binational, I seek to highlight the ways that they belong to more than one country and must navigate schooling across two uncoordinated national education systems that may not recognize the range or knowledges they bring to their new schools. As students in our U.S. classrooms today, this toolkit provides resources for administrators and educators to proactively support their students' educational success across our national borders.

Binational students I know are almost always part of **mixed-status families** in which some members have official U.S. papers, and some do not. Over three-quarters of these children are U.S. citizens, but they live with the daily possibility that their loved ones may be stopped, deported, and removed from the U.S. If a family member is deported, it is common for children to become withdrawn, sad, and visibly stressed (see Brabeck et al., 2011 or Gallo, 2017). It is important to note that although deportations are a leading motive for families' repatriation, many children also move for other reasons; perhaps their parents need to care for a grandparent who is at the end of their life, or their parents choose to raise their children in a place that offers more freedom without the fear of deportation in the U.S.

Due to the increased costs and risks of re-crossing the border, an undocumented family member's *visit* to Mexico for any reason often leads to their family's *relocation* in Mexico, and enrollment in Mexican schools for their children. Families navigate these decisions with great care and look for ways to best support their children and their education. Although a deportation or family illness in Mexico may mean that families return with limited time to prepare, most families try to plan their return during the major school breaks in the summer or winter. This toolkit is meant as a way for U.S. educators to work with immigrant families to prepare for enrollment in Mexican schools if they decide to return at some point in the future.

Parent voices

The following quote from a mother who returned to Mexico highlights the complexities of these decisions:

> "Six months after my husband's deportation, I came back to Mexico. I said to myself, 'OK. If I stay in the U.S., it will be a better life for my kids. They won't suffer. I'll work. They were going to get ahead. But they're not going to be with their dad.' And I thought that nowadays kids do have the right to be with both parents. Just as much their dad as their mom…And my own mom was also alone in Mexico…She didn't have any of her kids in Mexico with her. No one. All of us were in the U.S. On Mother's Day – there were six of us siblings and we all used to send our mom money from the U.S. But on Mother's Day she said, 'What good does sending me money do if no one can come and give me a hug? This is what I want.' And so because of this, and because my husband was already there, I decided it was better for me to go. This way we could all be together."
>
> - Liliana, Returnee mother with 3 binational children

How to Begin the Conversation

For many educators, one of the most difficult things is figuring out how to begin a conversation with immigrant families about migration decisions and schooling in ways that signal support. *Plyler v. Doe* (1982) is the Supreme Court Case that guarantees free public schooling to all K-12 students regardless of their or their family's immigration status. As a measure to protect students form discriminatory practices, *Plyler* also makes clear that educators and school officials can never ask students or families about their immigration status. In addition, all families are protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) regardless of immigration status. Thus, figuring out how to productively broach this conversation with immigrant families is delicate and important. Below I outline a few ideas on how to do this.

Don't ask about documentation status: You can talk about migration and binational schooling, but you should not ask families or students what their documentation status is. While families may share information about their immigration status with others, schools **should not** request or share any information related to immigration status. Some teachers

worry that, like mandated reporting for criminal offenses, they are supposed to report undocumented status. This is not true. In fact, schools are meant to be safe spaces in which students cannot be deterred from accessing their right to public schooling. Requesting, sharing, or reporting a family's documentation status could do that, so you should never share it with others.

Regularly signal your support for immigrant students: Many students and families share these important life and educational decisions with educators they feel they can trust. As members of undocumented families, they are often attuned to who signals their support of immigrant students and who appears to care about them and their well-being. With this in mind, a big part of engaging in a supportive conversation about migration and schooling requires building a relationship with students, and by extension their families, in which they feel they will not be discriminated against due to their family's immigration status. Here are some ways to signal your support of students from immigrant families:

- Include undocumented status as a form of difference that merits equitable treatment in your classroom. Any time you engage in conversations with students that it is not okay to discriminate against others due to their race, religion, sexual orientation, gender, or other form of social difference, include immigration status. If you have signs in your classroom that name how hate is not permitted or conversations regarding different kinds of bullying, include immigration status as well. You do not have to have separate conversations about immigration status to signal this.
- Look to integrate topics related to immigration into your curriculum. This might entail including DACA as a current event, integrating children's literature and classroom resources that touches upon these themes such as books by Duncan Tonatiuh or these recommended ideas from Colorín Colorado, or offering writing opportunities where students can reflect upon their immigration experiences.
- Work with like-minded educators or community organizations to offer school-based resources for immigrant families, such as advertising or organizing Know Your Rights Workshops. (For additional information, see the American Federation of Teachers' resources on this topic, as well as Colorín Colorado's related resource section.)
- Don't single students out publicly. You can signal your support to all of your students and invite them to share in these resources without having to disclose their immigration experiences to you or others.
- Ensure that staff understand immigrant students' rights. It is critical for all staff, including teachers, specialists, administrative staff, cafeteria/bussing/nursing/safety staff,

and substitute teachers, to understand that all students have a right to attend school and that immigration status should never be referenced.

Note: If families are considering giving power of attorney or guardianship of their children to a trusted adult, it is imperative that they get the appropriate legal advice on how to do so; that all decisions are recorded in writing; and that they understand all implications of those decisions.

How to Frame the Conversation

Families may consider moving back to their home country for many different kinds of reasons and you want to offer support and resources so that they can prepare to enroll their children in schools in their home country if or when they decide to move there. It is very important to avoid giving them the impression that you are sharing these materials because you want them to leave. You want to make clear that they are part of your classroom and school community, and you are talking to them about this as a potential resource, if they are interested. These materials should only be uses in contexts where educators are looking to support immigrant families.

It is also useful to be intentional about where you begin this conversation. For example, you might share these materials with each family (regardless of immigration background) at parent-teacher conferences and include a way for them to follow up with you, or attend a larger event that addresses these questions, if they are interested. You want to share the resources widely and then place the decision to talk more about this in families' hands. You also want to provide a method of contact in which they do not have to decide in the moment or show their interest in front of others.

Note: If you are already holding events addressing immigrant families' questions and concerns, consider hosting an event focusing on this topic or including this topic as one of a list of topics addressed. If presenting this information publicly, preface it by saying something along the following lines: "Our goal is not to encourage you to make one decision or another. Instead, we want to make sure you have as much information as possible to make the best decision for you and your family."

Challenges, Experiences, and Opportunities that Binational Students Face

Despite their robust and increasing numbers, binational students are a largely invisible schooling population in Mexico and there currently is no federal plan from the Mexican government for educating recently arrived binational students in Mexican schools.

Access: One of the greatest challenges that families initially face is access to public schools. Although this is a guaranteed right in theory, in practice it can be difficult to access. Unlike the United States, in Mexico public schooling is predominantly available to children who are Mexican nationals. Therefore, children must acquire their Mexican citizenship to access schooling, and children with at least one Mexican parent can do this.

The challenge is that it requires a lot of paperwork, which can be difficult to acquire if a family with a U.S.-born child has already moved to Mexico. The handout, "Como inscribir a sus hijos en escuelas mexicanas" ["How to enroll your children in Mexican schools"] outlines the many documents immigrant families should gather prior to moving to Mexico and numbers to call in Mexico if they encounter challenges accessing schooling.

Since 2015, advocacy groups in Mexico have helped streamline this process and have eliminated the need to acquire costly "*apostillas*" (government stamps) and official translations of students' documents. Unfortunately, local school districts are often unaware of these changes and may mistakenly deny schooling access for binational students. The "Cover Letter to U.S. School Districts" and "U.S. School District Letter Template for Enrollment in Mexican Schools" detail the types of documents that U.S. schools can provide to help facilitate a student's transition into Mexican schools.

Vignette: Sebastián's story

Silvio worked in Texas for several years and his oldest son, Sebastián was born there. In 2009, Silvio was detained when he was carrying the only copy of his son's U.S. birth certificate he had. When he was deported, the immigration officer claimed he could not take his son's birth certificate with him, which is not true. Feeling he had no choice, he gave his son's birth certificate to the immigration officer and returned to Mexico without any official proof of his son's birth.

For the past 7 years, Silvio and his wife have tried to get another copy of his son's U.S. birth certificate, but because of Texas' complex rules that limit undocumented parents' abilities to access birth certificates (especially if living outside of the U.S.), Silvio was unable to establish his son's Mexican nationality. Without an official birth certificate, the elementary school principal refused to enroll his son. Eventually Silvio was able to find a principal who would permit his son to attend school without his official paperwork. Silvio lamented, "My son does not exist here in Mexico because no one knows him. He does not have a single document that states his complete name here, that shows he exists."

Luckily, in 2017 Silvio was able to work with advocates at the *Instituto para Las Mujeres en la Migración* to acquire a copy of his son's Texas birth certificate. He has now been able to establish his U.S.-born son's Mexican nationality, access his son's Mexican schooling and health care, and apply for his son's U.S. Passport.

Limited Supports to Develop Academic Spanish at School: In most Mexican public schools there is no "Spanish as a Second Language," or the equivalent of English as a Second Language supports for students who have not had the opportunity to develop academic Spanish or literacy in their U.S. schools. This is common because most Latinx children in the U.S. attend English-only schools. This means that newly arrived students in Mexican schools will be in a 'sink or swim' Spanish-immersion context in which they will have limited school-based support to develop their Spanish literacy.

In addition, most teachers in Mexico have not been trained in bilingual education approaches. They are also guided by a relatively rigid federal curriculum in which there is limited differentiated instruction or specialized teachers (such as the equivalent of ESL teachers) who work with students. This means that newly arrived students are often left to their own devices to develop their academic Spanish and literacy. It may be useful to discuss with families ways they could begin to develop their children's Spanish literacy before they move, and how to seek out additional supports, such as tutors, to help their child once in Mexico. Students who had the opportunity to study in bilingual schools in the United States have easier transitions into Mexican schooling.

Vignette: Bilingual Education in the U.S.

When I first spoke to Jocelyn's fourth grade teacher in their 200-student elementary school in Mexico, he openly shared his fear when he saw that a student from the United States would be entering his classroom. He lamented how – despite being a veteran teacher of almost 30 years

– he had never been prepared to work with students from other countries, or who did not know how to read and write in Spanish.

He joked that he was literally '*temblando*,' or trembling, when he saw her name on his list. Yet several months into the school year, Jocelyn, who had moved from the buzzing metropolis of Brooklyn, NY to this small town at the foot of a volcano, was excelling in his classroom. In Brooklyn, she had had the opportunity to attend a bilingual school, which her mother had deemed important for her educational success. Although Jocelyn certainly faced many changes and challenges as she navigated life and schooling in a very new context, access to bilingual education in the U.S. helped prepare her to successfully transition into schooling on both sides of the border.

Limited Special Education Services: Overall, there are far fewer resources in public schools for students who would benefit from special education services in Mexico. If an immigrant family has a child who is on an Individual Education Plan (IEP), it may be helpful to discuss they types of educational supports, such as a private school, that they might consider if they were to move back to their home country. For many families, having a child with significantly different learning needs plays a major factor in repatriation decisions. I have met families who have sent their child back to the U.S. to live with a relative after moving to Mexico in order for their children to continue to access the special education services they need, as described in the vignette below.

- **Related video:** Colorín Colorado Director Lydia Breiseth discusses this dilemma in a conversation with veteran ELL educator Anne Marie Foerster Luu.

Vignette: Accessing Special Education

Marcelo was the second of three siblings who was born in Virginia. When he was a toddler, it became clear to his parents that his speech was developing differently from his older sister's, and by the time he entered elementary school in Virginia, he received an array of services to support his speech development and learning. Due to a family health emergency when he was in second grade, his family relocated to his parent's small town in Mexico. Marcelo's mother realized that without special education services and speech development supports, which were unavailable in local schools in Mexico, her son was unable to learn effectively. Their family did not have the financial resources to pay for a private school, or the transportation costs to and from the school, to support her son's special education needs. They faced difficult decisions about his educational future and considered having him return to live with a close relative in the U.S. so he could access educational supports for his learning needs.

Socio-Emotional Issues: Understandably, the transition to life and schooling across international borders brings big changes for children, which can be exciting as well as challenging. Children often leave friendship networks, a lifestyle with more material stability, and a familiar schooling context in English for a place filled with new faces and ways of doing things. For many children I know, they are leaving urban or suburban contexts in the U.S. to live in small, rural towns in Mexico.

If they return due to a family member's deportation, the emotional trauma of family separation may exacerbate the challenges of navigating change. And binational students are likely entering a schooling context in Mexico in which educators are caring, but have received little preparation to support students who are navigating these changes. Although it varies greatly across contexts, in some places recently arrived binational students face social exclusion from mononational peers because they speak, act, or look different.

It may be useful to speak with parents about how they will talk to their children about the types of changes that they may experience, and how to maintain open lines of communication so that their children can share the successes and challenges of the transition with them. It can also be useful to encourage caregivers to emphasize some of the things that will feel familiar across contexts – such as a favorite TV program that is also available in Mexico – so that children can anchor a changing childhood with familiar things.

Some of the Joys of Returning

Although there are some real challenges to navigating binational schooling, most children and families I have interviewed have had many positive experiences to share as well. Some of the aspects they highlight include:

Freedom: Unlike the long hours with babysitters, watching TV inside their homes, or participating in a multitude of activities in the United States, children and parents celebrate the increased freedom of childhood once they move to Mexico. Many families live in spaces where children can be outside to play and have ample opportunities to build caring relationships with children of varying ages.

Family: Most families return to their hometowns, which provides opportunities for their children to get to know extensive family networks in Mexico. Children who have never met their grandparents or cousins before now get to spend time with them daily. If a family member was deported, they have the opportunity to reunite with this loved one.

Celebrations: Most families are from towns and cities where celebrations bring people together in public for an array of cultural and religious purposes. Similar collective celebrations are rare in the United States, and families and children appreciate the opportunity to learn from and with others through these important events.

Caring Educators: Although the overall structures of Mexican and U.S. school systems create significant obstacles for binational students transitioning to Mexican schooling and offer limited technical preparation for Mexican educators to work with binational students, many students work with caring educators who seek out ways to understand their recently arrived students and try to support them. Although the curriculum does not permit a great deal of space for different knowledges, many educators creatively look for ways to provide the time and space for students to learn at their own pace and to support them in their learning.

It is also important for educators and families to keep in mind that siblings may have very different experiences from each other in terms of schooling, friendships, and language acquisition, just as siblings in immigrant families who come to the U.S. have different experiences. The following vignette illustrates an example.

Vignette: Family Differences

In 2017, Alejandra (5th grade), Julián (3rd grade), and Gregorio (1st grade) moved from their English-only elementary school in suburban North Carolina to a Spanish-only elementary school in their parents small town in Puebla, Mexico. Although none of them had learned how to read and write in Spanish before arriving in their parents' town for the first time, the transition into their Mexican school differed for each of them. Gregorio, the youngest and a confident and outgoing personality, was able to learn to read and write alongside his young classmates, who were also just beginning to develop literacy in Spanish. 5th grader Alejandra had been a successful student in the U.S. who had developed strong English literacy skills prior to their move. Through her mother's and a tutor's help in Mexico, she was able to transfer many of her literacy skills in English to her Spanish-medium schooling, and was fortunate to work with a teacher who created ample group work opportunities for interactive learning in which she could rely on classmates to help her along the way.

Juliían, however, had a much more difficult transition. In the U.S., he had received extensive ESL supports and had encountered challenges developing literacy in English in 2nd grade. His 3rd grade teacher in Mexico also oriented to a teaching style in which students had to independently read content silently, and then write or publicly share the correct answer. Julián, with limited supports, had a difficult time transferring his developing literacy skills in

English to his Spanish-medium classroom, and was unable to access much of the content because he had not yet developed Spanish literacy to do so. Although all three children moved from the same schools from North Carolina to Puebla, their transitions into schooling, based on their ages, previous experiences, and teachers in Mexico, varied greatly.

Concluding Thoughts

The decisions that immigrant families currently face are significant and complex, and can have profound implications for their children's future. Reminding families that they have strong networks of support in both countries can help offer some reassurance during an uncertain time. Most importantly, however, helping parents think through both the opportunities and challenges of their different options can help them see the situation a little more clearly in order to make the best decision for their family.

Documents for Schools & Related Research

Documents for Schools

Educators can use the following documents for their own reference and to share with families:

- Tips for parents in both English and Spanish
- A sample letter that schools can use to report on student records in English and Spanish, along with guidance on providing such a letter
- A flier detailing information that parents need about Mexican documents available in English and Spanish

Related Research

To learn more about this topic, look at the research conducted by Dr. Gallo, as well as related research conducted by Dr. Bryant Jensen at Brigham Young University in collaboration Mónica Jacobo from the Centro de Investigación y Docencia Económicas. Dr. Jensen presented an overview of schooling for U.S. Citizens in Mexico at the Woodrow Wilson forum on The Impact of Immigration Enforcement Policies on Teaching and Learning in America's Public Schools in February 2018. This event also included new research on the social-emotional impact of enforcement on students, educators, peers, and families.

References

Brabeck, K. M., Lykes, M. B., & Hershberg, R. (2011). Framing immigration to and deportation from the United States: Guatemalan and Salvadoran families make meaning of their experiences. *Community, Work & Family, 14*(3), 275-296.

Gallo, S. (2017). *Mi padre: Mexican immigrant fathers and their children's education*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Gándara, P. (2016). Policy report. The student we share. *Mexican studies*, 32(2), pp. 357-378.

Passel, J. S., & Cohn, D. (2011). Unauthorized immigrant population: National and state trends, 2010. Washington, DC: Pew Hispanic Center. http://www.pewhispanic.org/files/reports/133.pdf

Pew Research Center (2015). More Mexicans Leaving Than Coming to the U.S. http://.pewhispanic.org/2015/11/19/more-mexicans-leaving-than-coming-to-the-u-s/

¡Colorín colorado! http://www.colorincolorado.org

Tips | For Parents

Making a Decision About Returning to Your Home Country

The decision to return to your home country can be very difficult. Here are some important things to think about as you make your decision.

Note: *This information focuses on Mexico. If you are from a different country, check with officials from your school, consulate or other community groups to see if they have updated information for your country.*

Documentation

School registration

You will need certain documents when you register your child in a Mexican school. These include:

- Transcripts and report cards from the current/previous year
- If possible, transcripts and report cards from all other years of schooling in the U.S.
- Certificate of completion after "graduating" from elementary, middle, or high school

You may have to ask for these documents from your child's school. A sample form is below that you can share for the school to use. You do not need an apostille, a certified translation of these documents, or a certified translation of the child's birth certificate for school registration.

How to Prepare Your Children for Registration in Mexican Schools

What documents do you need? This list is available in:

- English
- Spanish

Documents: Citizenship and Nationality

In Mexico, children must show that they are Mexican nationals in order to register for school. (This is different than in the U.S.) Before returning to Mexico, you should also have:

- At least two **original** copies of the child's birth certificate
- A certificate of the child's immunizations
- A Mexican passport (this does not put U.S. Citizenship at risk)
- Mexican identification number, which you can get at the Mexican Consulate (*Clave única de registro de población* - CURP)

Note: If you are detained, deported, or travel to Mexico voluntarily, you can take your child's birth certificate with you. It may be difficult to get another copy of the birth certificate once you are out of the country. You may also wish to give multiple copies to different relatives.

Once in Mexico

Sometimes officials at Mexican schools don't know the new rules for registration. If you have trouble, you can contact the following Ministry of Accreditation:

ce@nube.sep.gob.mx | (01 55) 3601.7599 | 01 (800) 288-6688

http://www.controlescolar.sep.gob.mx/es/controlescolar/Control_Escolar

Note: If your child has a U.S. birth certificate, it is important to also register for a Mexican passport. If your child enters without a Mexican passport, he/she will be given a tourist visa. Your child will need a Mexican passport when leaving Mexico in the future, or he/she will be charged a fine.

Moving to Mexico: Special Considerations

What is different in Mexican schools?

How are schools in Mexico different? Here are two big differences that impact children coming from the U.S.

- **Spanish-language instruction:** Most public schools in Mexico teach all subjects in Spanish. For children who have not yet mastered academic Spanish or literacy, most Mexican schools do not teach "Spanish as a second language" in the way that U.S.

schools teach English as a second language (ESL). Parents may wish to help their children learn Spanish while still living in the U.S., or think about hiring a tutor in Mexico. Students who attend bilingual schools in the U.S. often have an easier transition to school in Mexico.

- **Special education:** Mexico does not have as many resources for special education services as the U.S. does. Many of the special education services are offered in private schools. If your child has an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), you can:
  - learn more about the education options for your child in Mexico before moving back
  - talk with an immigration attorney about options for your child to stay with an appointed guardian in the U.S. and continue to receive the services for which they are eligible in his/her U.S. school if you have to return to Mexico

What are some challenges and opportunities?

In addition, moving to a new country can be both difficult and exciting. Children who move back to their parents' home country leave behind:

- friends and school
- a culture and language they know
- a familiar routine
- what may be a life with more material stability

Once they move to their parents' home country, children make new friends, attend a new kind of school in a new language, and often get used to a very different way of life. If these changes happen because of deportation, detention, or separation, they can also be very traumatic. Their Mexican peers may leave them out because they talk, act, or speak differently, and teachers may not have much experience with students in their situation. It can be helpful for parents to prepare children for these changes and keep talking with children so that they will share their feelings during the transition. In addition, helping children appreciate the culture of their family's home country, sharing familiar music or TV shows that will be available, or celebrating special holidays can help make the experience more positive.

At the same time, there can be many benefits to returning to a home country, including:

- Increased freedom for children
- More time playing outside and with neighborhood children
- Reunification with parents and family members
- More time with extended family

- Special celebrations
- Caring educators who want to help children succeed
- A new perspective

What You Can Do Now

If you are thinking about returning:

- Make a list of pros/cons.
- Encourage your child to keep learning Spanish, whether at home, school, in a religious organization, a community group, or someplace else. Think about ways they might learn how to read and write in Spanish in these spaces too.
- Be aware of the messages your child receives about Mexico from news, TV, family members, friends, the community, or at school. These sometime exaggerate negative aspects of life in certain parts of Mexico and overlook many of the wonderful parts of living there. Think about how to focus on some of the positive aspects of life in Mexico to provide your children with opportunities to have more balanced ideas of life in Mexico.
- If you know children who live in Mexico (cousins, family friends, etc.) try to connect your children with them via phone, messages, or video chat. Often having the opportunity to understand that their favorite TV programs, aspects of childhood that are familiar to them in the U.S., etc. are part of life for many kids in Mexico too can help kids imagine a potential future there.
- Consider talking with a trusted teacher or leader at your child's school, as well as other parents in Mexico who have returned from the U.S. and may have advice.
- Consider talking with an immigrant attorney about additional preparations you can make.
- Make sure that your child's school has updated contact information for you and other relatives. **Update it immediately if it changes.**

¡Colorín colorado! http://www.colorincolorado.org

Consejos

Para los padres

Tomar una decision sobre el regreso a su país de origen

La decisión de regresar a su país de origen puede ser muy difícil. Hay aquí algunas cosas importantes en las que conviene pensar al tomar una decisión.

Nota: *Esta información es válida para México. Si usted es de otro país, consulte a los funcionarios de la escuela, su consulado o a otros grupos comunitarios para averiguar si han actualizado la información referente a su país.*

Documentación

Registro en la escuela

Usted necesitará disponer de ciertos documentos cuando vaya a inscribir al niño en una escuela mexicana. Estos incluyen:

- Transcripciones y boletas de calificaciones del año en curso o del año anterior
- Si es posible, las transcripciones y las boletas de todos los otros años de escolaridad realizados en los Estados Unidos
- El certificado de conclusión de estudios después de haberse "graduado" de la escuela primaria, secundaria o de la preparatoria

Quizás usted tenga que pedir estos documentos a la escuela de su hijo. Abajo le damos un formulario de muestra que usted puede llevar a la escuela para que lo utilicen. No se necesita que lleve apostilla, ni traducción certificada de estos documentos o la traducción certificada del acta de nacimiento del niño para inscribirlo en la escuela.

Cómo estar preparados para inscribir a sus hijos en escuelas mexicanas

¿Cuáles documentos son necesarios? Vea la lista aquí:

- español
- inglés

Documentos: Ciudadanía y nacionalidad

En México, los niños deben demostrar que son ciudadanos mexicanos para poder inscribirlos en la escuela. (Esto es diferente en Estados Unidos). Antes de regresar a México, deben disponer de:

- Al menos dos copias **originales** del acta de nacimiento del niño
- Un certificado de las vacunas del niño
- Un pasaporte mexicano (éste no pone en riesgo a la ciudadanía estadounidense)
- Número de identificación mexicana, que puede obtener en el Consulado Mexicano (conocido como Clave única de registro de población - CURP)

Nota: Si usted ha sido detenido, deportado, o bien viaja a México voluntariamente, puede llevar su acta de nacimiento con usted. Puede ser difícil que obtenga otra copia del acta de nacimiento una vez que esté fuera del país. También podría darles varias copias a diferentes familiares.

Una vez en México

A veces los funcionarios de las escuelas mexicanas no conocen las nuevas reglas para hacer el registro. Si tiene problemas, puede contactar a la Dirección General de Acreditación, Incorporación, y Revalidación:

ce@nube.sep.gob.mx | (01 55) 3601.7599 | 01 (800) 288-6688

http://www.controlescolar.sep.gob.mx/es/controlescolar/Control_Escolar

Nota: Si su hijo tiene acta de nacimiento, es importante también sacarle un pasaporte mexicano. Si su niño entra a México sin pasaporte mexicano, le darán un visado de turista. Su hijo necesitará un pasaporte mexicano al salir de México en el futuro, o se le cobrará una multa.

Mudarse a México: Consideraciones especiales

¿Qué es diferente en las escuelas mexicanas?

¿En qué son diferentes las escuelas de México? Hay aquí dos grandes diferencias que afectan a los niños que vienen de Estados Unidos:

- **Enseñanza de la lengua española:** La mayoría de las escuelas públicas de México enseñan todas las asignaturas en español. Para los niños que aún no dominan el español académico o la alfabetización, sepa usted que en la mayoría de las escuelas mexicanas no se enseña el "Español como segunda lengua", así en las escuelas de Estados Unidos se enseña el inglés como segunda lengua (ESL). Se recomienda que los padres ayuden a sus hijos a aprender el español mientras aún viven en los Estados Unidos, o que piensen en contratar a un tutor en México. Los alumnos que asisten a escuelas bilingües en los Estados Unidos suelen tener una transición más fácil al volver a la escuela en México.

- **Educación especial:** México no tiene tantos recursos para ofrecer servicios de educación especial como los tiene Estados Unidos. Muchos de los servicios de educación especial se ofrecen en las escuelas privadas. Si su hijo tiene un Plan Individualizado de Educación (IEP), puede hacer lo siguiente:

    - Enterarse más acerca de las opciones de educación para su hijo que se ofrecen en México antes de irse y volver a México.
    - Hablar con un abogado de migración acerca de las opciones que hay para que su niño pueda quedarse con un tutor designado en los Estados Unidos y continuar recibiendo los servicios para los que el niño es elegible en su escuela de Estados Unidos en caso de que usted tenga que regresar a México.

¿Cuáles son algunos retos y oportunidades?

Además, el cambio a un país nuevo puede ser difícil, pero también algo emocionante. Los niños que vuelven al país de origen de sus padres dejan atrás a:

- Amigos y la escuela
- Una cultura y un lenguaje que conocen
- Una rutina familiar
- Lo que puede ser una vida con una mayor estabilidad material

Una vez que se mudan al país de origen de sus padres, los niños hacen nuevos amigos, asisten a un nuevo tipo de escuela en un nuevo idioma y a menudo se acostumbran a un modo de vida muy diferente. Si estos cambios ocurren debido a la deportación, detención o la separación, también pueden ser muy traumáticos. Sus pares mexicanos pueden excluirlos debido a que hablan, o actúan de modo diferente, y es posible que los maestros no tengan mucha experiencia para tratar con alumnos en su situación. Puede ser útil para los padres que preparen a los niños para encarar estos cambios y que hablen continuamente con los niños para que les compartan sus sentimientos durante la transición. Además, el ayudar a los niños a apreciar la cultura del país de origen de su familia, compartir música familiar o programas de televisión que están disponibles, o de festejar fiestas especiales puede ayudar a hacer la experiencia de la transición más positiva.

Al mismo tiempo, puede haber muchos beneficios al regresar a su país de origen, como los siguientes:

- Mayor libertad para los niños
- Más tiempo para jugar afuera y con niños del barrio
- Reunificación con los padres y miembros de la familia
- Más tiempo con los demás familiares
- Celebraciones especiales

- Maestros que se preocupan y quieren ayudar a los niños para que tengan éxito
- Una nueva perspectiva

Lo que puede hacer ahora

Si usted está pensando en volver:

- Haga una lista de las ventajas y desventajas.
- Anime al niño a seguir aprendiendo español, ya sea en el hogar, la escuela, una organización religiosa, un grupo comunitario o en algún otro sitio. Piense también en la manera cómo podría aprender a leer y escribir en español en estos espacios.
- Esté al tanto de los mensajes sobre México que el niño recibe de las noticias, la TV, los amigos, los miembros de la familia, la comunidad o la escuela. En algún momento estos exageran los aspectos negativos de la vida en ciertas partes de México y pasan por alto muchos de los maravillosos aspectos de vivir allí. Piense en cómo enfocarse en algunos de los aspectos positivos de la vida en México para proporcionar a sus hijos oportunidades y así ofrecerles ideas más equilibradas sobre la vida en México.
- Si conoce a niños que viven en México (primos, amigos de la familia, etc.) trate de conectar a sus hijos con ellos por teléfono, mensajes o chat de video. A menudo el hecho de tener la oportunidad de entender que sus programas de TV favoritos, así como otros aspectos de la infancia que les son familiares en Estados Unidos, etc. igualmente forman parte de la vida de muchos niños en México también puede ser algo que les ayude a los niños a imaginar un futuro con potencial allí.
- Considere hablar con un profesor de confianza o líder de la escuela de su hijo, así como con otros padres en México que han regresado de los Estados Unidos que puedan darles consejos.
- Considere hablar con un abogado de migración para enterarse acerca de otros preparativos adicionales que usted puede hacer.
- Asegúrese de que su escuela ha actualizado la información de contacto de usted y sus otros familiares. **Actualícela de inmediato si ésta cambia.**

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CHILDREN FOR REGISTRATION IN MEXICAN SCHOOLS

Resources for Mexican Families

This flier includes basic information about the documents you should prepare before you leave the U.S. to register your child in Mexican schools. This document is for families or guardians with children currently enrolled in U.S. schools that may return to Mexico voluntarily or due to immigration enforcement. The goal of this flier is to help make the process easier when families arrive in Mexico.

Note: This information focuses on Mexico. If you are from a different country, check with officials from the school, consulate or other community group to see if they have updated information for your country.

Questions

For questions, you can contact the Ministry of Accreditation:

ce@nube.sep.gob.mx
(01 55) 3601.7599
(01) 800 288.6688

www.controlescolar.sep.gob.mx/es/controlescolar/Control_Escolar

This document was prepared by Dr. Sarah Gallo. I am a professor of immigrant and binational students in the U.S. and Mexico.

slipinog@gmail.com

Documents: Education

Take all educational records of each child (such as transcripts and reports cards)

- Bring these from the most recent year completed
- If it's possible, bring these from every year your child has completed
- **You are no longer required to bring apostilles or certified translations of educational documents or U.S. birth certificates**
- If your child finished elementary, middle, or high school, ask for a letter certifying that your child completed that level. If your child has not yet finished, request a letter indicating the last grade completed.(Sample included)

Documents: Nationality

Solicit and prepare U.S./Mexican passports

- Birth certificate (2 original copies) – apostille is not required
- **Mexican citizenship:** Go to the Mexican consulate and get your registration number (CURP) for Mexican schools (similar to a Social Security Number)
- For children born in the U.S., apply for a Mexican passport. It does not put U.S. citizenship at risk.
- Certification of vaccinations

In Mexico

Sometimes schools don't know the new rules related to registration

- If you have problems, contact (01 55) 3601.7599 o 01 800 288.6688 o ce@nube.sep.gob.mx
- If your child has a U.S. birth certificate, go to a civil registry to register your child in case you did not do so in the consulate
- If your child does not have a Mexican passport, your child will be given a tourist visa. To leave Mexico in the future, your child will need a Mexican passport, or you will need to pay a fine.

CÓMO ESTAR PREPARADOS PARA INSCRIBIR A SUS HIJ@S EN ESCUELAS MEXICANAS

Recursos para padres de familia mexicanos

Este document incluye información básica de los documentos que debe de preparar antes de irse de EE.UU para lograr la inscripción en las escuelas mexicanas. Es para padres de familia con hij@s en escuelas de EE.UU que tienen la posibilidad de regresar a México por su propia voluntad o por las políticas de inmigración. La intención es estar preparados para facilitar el proceso en México.

Preguntas:

Cualquier duda consulta con la Dirección General de Acreditación, Incorporación y Revalidación en el correo: ce@nube.sep.gob.mx o a los teléfonos (01 55) 3601.7599 o 01 800 288.6688 en la página: www.controlescolar.sep.gob.mx/es/controlescolar/Control_Escolar

Este documento fue creado por Sarah Gallo. Soy profesora de estudiantes inmigrantes y binacionales en EE.UU y México. Correo: slipinog@gmail.com

Documentos Educativos

Traiga todos los records educativos de sus hijos (Transcripts, boletas)

- El ultimo año que cursó
- Si es posible, documentos de todos los años que cursó en la escuela en EE.UU
- **Ya no se requiere Apostillas ni traducciones certificadas en los documentos educativos ni en las actas de nacimiento expedidas en EE.UU**
- Si su hijo/a terminó la Primaria o Secundaria pida a la escuela una carta que certifique que terminó. Si no terminó todavía, pida la carta con el nivel que terminó (Incluímos un ejemplo de carta)

Documentos de Nacionalidad

Prepare sus pasaportes de EE.UU y México

- El **acta de nacimiento** (2 copias originales)
- **Nacionalidad Mexicana**: vaya al consulado mexicano y obtenga su Clave Unica de Registro de Población (CURP) para las escuelas en México
- Para el caso de sus hijos nacidos en EE.UU, contar con pasaporte méxicano. No pone en peligro la nacionalidad Estadounidense
- Cartilla de Vacunanción de Salud

En México

A veces las escuelas no saben las nuevas reglas para la inscripción

- Si encuentra dificultades llame a la Dirección General de Acreditación (01 55) 3601.7599 o 01 800 288.6688 o ce@nube.sep.gob.mx
- Si su hijo tiene un acta de nacimiento estadounidense, acuda a un registro civil para inscribir también su nacionalidad como mexicano, en caso de que no lo haya hecho antes en los consulados
- Si su hijo no tiene el pasaporte Mexicano mantenga la visa turística cuando entra México. Para salir de México en el futuro necesitará su pasaporte mexicano o pagará una multa

March 1, 2017

Dear Educators and Administrators in U.S. School Districts:

Many educators have been asking for resources that they can use to support their students who come from Mexican immigrant families. One way to do this is to help families gather their children's school records from U.S. schools so that they are prepared to enroll in Mexican schools if their family relocates to Mexico.

Enrolling in school in Mexico is very different from the procedures in the United States, and the more information that families can provide on a student's U.S. schooling, the easier the process becomes. If a family approaches you with requests for their child's school records for these purposes, please provide them with the following:

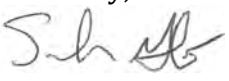
1. Copies of their child's transcripts for each year that he or she studied in your school
2. A letter that documents when that child graduated from your school, or the grade that he or she completed.
    a. This is important because parallel letters are a regular part of school enrollment and grade promotion in Mexico.
    b. I have attached a template for this letter. The first is in English, so that you know what it says. The second is in Spanish, with the categories to fill in written in English and Spanish. ***The ideal would be to complete the Spanish version of this letter on your school letterhead and have it signed by the school principal or another school representative.***

Please note: students who were previously enrolled in your school may ask for these documents. This is because they must document their entire educational history in the United States, not just their current schooling.

Thank you for supporting families in gathering their children's schooling records so that they can be prepared to enroll their children in Mexican schools, if they end up moving to Mexico at some point in the future.

Please feel free to contact me with questions. My name is Sarah Gallo and I am a faculty member in bilingual and immigrant education at The Ohio State University. I am currently conducting a research study with binational students in Mexico, and I prepared these documents to better support families who face many challenges when enrolling their children in Mexican schools. My email is slipinog@gmail.com

Sincerely,



Sarah Gallo, PhD

[date]

Commented [SG1]: Please put on school letterhead, if possible

To Whom it May Concern:

This letter is to certify that _____,
[student's full name, include BOTH last names]

with birth date _____ graduated
[Month, Day, Year of birthdate]

from, or finished the school year, at the school _____,
[Full Name of Elementary or Middle School]

located at _____.
[Full School Address]

This school is part of _____.
[Name of School District]

The student completed grade _____ at our school.
[Grade level]

S/he finished her studies on _____.
[Date of Graduation or Final Day of School]

This document is certified in the city of _____, in _____,
[City] [Full State Name]

United States on _____.
[today's date]

Signed,

Commented [SG2]: If possible, this letter should be signed by the school principal. If that is not possible, another representative from the school is fine.

_____
[Signature]

_____
[Printed Name]

[date]

Commented [SG3]: Please put on school letterhead, if possible

A Quién Corresponda:

Esta carta certifica que _____,
[student's name with BOTH last names/*nombre completo del alumn@ con los dos apellidos]*

con fecha de nacimiento _____se graduó
[Month, Day, Year of birthdate/ *mes, día, año fecha de nacimiento*]

de, o terminó el grado escolar en la escuela

_____,
[Full Name of Elementary or Middle School/ *nombre completo de la escuela primaria o secundaria*]

ubicada en _____.
[Full School Address/ *dirección completa de la escuela*]

El/la alumn@ completó el grado _____ en nuestra escuela.
[Grade level/*grado de la escuela*]

Esta escuela forma parte del distrito escolar _____.
[Name of School District/ Nombre del distrito escolar]

El alumno concluyó sus estudios en la fecha _____.
[Date of Graduation or Final Day of School/ *Fecha de la graduación o el ultimo día de clases*].

Este documento está emitido en la ciudad de _____, en el estado de
[City/ *ciudad*]

_____, de los Estados Unidos Americanos el día de _____.
[State/*Estado*] [today's date/ *fecha de hoy*]

Atentamente,

Commented [SG4]: If possible, this letter should be signed by the school principal. If that is not possible, another representative from the school is fine.

_____
[Signature/*firma*]

_____
[Printed Name/ *Nombre escrito en bloque*]