

Areas of Opportunity (Adapted from Areas of Concern)

The Office of Migrant Education (OME) has identified Common Areas of Concern that address most migratory children. Consider how the areas identified in this document apply to migratory children in your local communities and the state. Then consider whether there are other areas of concern beyond these.

Identified by the Office of Migrant Education

Educational Continuity

Because migratory children often are forced to move during the regular school year, children tend to experience a lack of educational continuity. Migratory children experience differences in curriculum, academic standards, homework policies, and classroom routines. Their course placements reflect inconsistencies. The cumulative impact of educational discontinuity is daunting. Efforts to overcome this pattern are needed to strengthen educational continuity.

Instructional Time

Mobility also impacts the amount of time children spend in class and their attendance patterns. Such decreases in the time children spend engaged in learning leads to lower levels of achievement. Ways to ameliorate the impact of family mobility and delays in enrollment procedures are essential.

School Engagement

Migratory children are frequently faced with adjustments to new school settings, making new friends, and social acceptance challenges, which are generally grouped as behavioral, emotional, and cognitive.

Behavioral engagement focuses on the opportunities for participation, including academic, social, or extracurricular activities. It is considered a crucial factor in positive academic outcomes and preventing school dropout.

Emotional engagement involves the positive and negative reactions to teachers, classmates, academic materials, and school in general. Such responses influence identification with the school and a sense of belonging and feeling valued.

Cognitive engagement hinges on investment in learning and may be a response to expectations, relevance, and cultural connections.

Without engagement, children may be at risk for school failure. Migratory children need avenues that ensure they are valued and have the opportunities that more stable children have.

English Language Acquisition

English language acquisition (ELA) is critical for academic success. In the school setting, ELA focuses on the literacy skills applicable to content area learning. Since many migratory children have a home language other than English, migrant programs must find avenues to supplement the difficulties faced by migratory children in ELA due to their unique lifestyle, while not supplanting Title III program activities.

Educational Support in the Home

Home environment is often associated with children's success in school, reflecting exposure to reading materials, a broad vocabulary, and educational games and puzzles. Such resources reflect parent educational background and socio-economic status. While many migratory parents value education for their children, they may not always know how to support their children in a manner consistent with school expectations nor have the means to offer an educationally rich home environment. Efforts to inform families are crucial.

Health

Good health is a basic need that migratory children often do not attain. The compromised dental and nutritional status of migratory children is well documented. They have higher proportions of acute and chronic health problems and higher childhood and infant mortality rates than those experienced by their non-migratory peers. They are at greater risk than other children due to pesticide poisoning, farm injuries, heat-related illness, and poverty.

They are more likely to be uninsured and have difficulties with healthcare access. Families often need assistance in addressing health problems that interfere with their children's ability to learn.

Access to Services

Newcomer status and home languages other than English among migratory families can make it difficult for them to access educational and educationally related services to which migratory children and their families are entitled. Since they are not perceived as permanent residents, services become more difficult to obtain.