

Title	IOM - Migrant children are children first and foremost. They should be treated the same regardless of where they are from, why they have left their homes and their migratory status.
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Annexes	N/A
Related Documents	N/A

IOM's programming in the field of child protection

Migrant children are children first and foremost. They should be treated the same regardless of where they are from, why they have left their homes and their migratory status.

Migrant children represent a significant share of the migrant and refugee population. Children migrate for multiple reasons: to reunite with family members abroad; and to seek better economic and educational opportunities. Migrant children are highly susceptible to violence, abuse, exploitation, detention, and trafficking. Different factors contribute to migrant children's vulnerability, including pre-existing risk factors at **individual, household, community, and structural levels**; the specific reasons why they have migrated; and the specific conditions they face during travel, transit, and at destination. These vulnerabilities are intensified for those migrant children who are unaccompanied or separated.

Children and youth are at the heart of IOM's global mandate on migration. IOM's actions are guided by international law in this field, including the **International Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**, aiming to support states to respect, to promote and to fulfil the rights and unique individual needs of children and strive to achieve the Sustainable Development goals of the 2030 Agenda. IOM advocates for child-sensitive migration policies and programming, alternatives to detention of migrant children and facilitating children's access to protective and assistance services, in line with IOM key principles under international law. IOM implements a broad range of projects and initiatives, which directly and indirectly address the needs and interests of children and youth worldwide, including:

- **PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE:** IOM provides protection and assistance services to migrant children when in need, such as medical and psychosocial assistance, family tracing and reunification/ alternative care options, assisted voluntary return and sustainable reintegration, shelter, and legal aid in order to support children's sustainable recovery from a situation of vulnerability, exploitation, and abuse. Protection and assistance services also include providing migrant children with access to solutions, such as support to integration, alternative care options and resettlement to a third country as per their best interests.
- **POLICY AND ADVOCACY:** IOM is engaged in advocacy efforts to promote child-sensitive migration policies and programming, alternatives to immigration detention of children, and to facilitate children's access to protective and assistance services that address their specific needs regardless of their migratory status. IOM also works with partners to encourage responses to migration crises that recognize children as entitled to specific rights including protection.
- **DATA, RESEARCH & LEARNING:** to strengthen States and partners' capacity, as well as inform its own programming, IOM is engaged in data and research projects that aim to bolster data information management systems and in turn improve data availability on migrant children at all stages of the migratory process. This in turn contributes to the formulation and implementation of child-sensitive migration policies.
- **CAPACITY BUILDING:** IOM works to build/enhance the capacities of governmental and non-governmental actors, including social workers, in order to enhance prevention and assistance and protection mechanisms for migrant children.
- **PREVENTION:** In order to contribute to reducing the vulnerability of children to violence, exploitation, abuse, and/or other violations of their rights, IOM implements a broad range of prevention activities, including awareness raising, capacity building, and community engagement.
- **CHILD PROTECTION IN CRISIS RESPONSE** IOM has committed to integrate child protection minimum standards in humanitarian action (CPMS) throughout its emergency operations-, including camp coordination and camp management, provision of assistance such as shelter and non-food items, emergency evacuations, and psychosocial and health support. IOM is progressively mainstreaming child protection and migrant protection activities in its emergency response in order to both address the needs of migrant children, and reduce their exposure to violence, abuse, trafficking, and exploitation in crisis situations. During crises, IOM works with its key humanitarian partners involved in the provision of other essential child protection services.



TRAINING MATERIALS

Equality - Working with Unaccompanied Migrant Children Toolbox [↗](#)

This toolbox aims at training frontline professionals working in reception on the topic of Sexual and Gender-based violence.

U-CARE Training materials [↗](#)

Training to support the development of alternative care systems for Unaccompanied Migrant Children in Europe.

Training Manual for Guardians and Social Workers working with unaccompanied minor asylum seekers [↗](#)

This training aims to enhance the quality of guardianship and care of UAMAS

Caring for Unaccompanied Migrant Children : A foster carer training manual [↗](#)

This training support the family-based carers in providing children with the best possible standards of care.



REPORTS & STUDIES

From Evidence to Action: Twenty Years of IOM Child Trafficking Data to Inform Policy and Programming [↗](#)

U-CARE report: Alternative care for unaccompanied migrant children transitioning to adulthood [↗](#)

Fatal Journeys Volume 4: Missing Migrant Children [↗](#)

Ending child labour, forced labour and human trafficking in global supply chains [↗](#)



GUIDELINES & HANDBOOKS

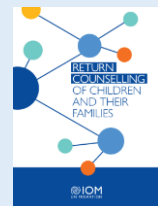
IOM Handbook on Protection and Assistance for Migrants Vulnerable to Violence, Exploitation and Abuse [↗](#)
Presents best practices and lessons learned in providing protection and assistance services to vulnerable migrants, including children.

Return Counselling Toolkit of Children and their Families [↗](#)
Provides specialized guidance on how to prepare and deliver return counselling to accompanied, unaccompanied and separated children.

Safety and Dignity for Refugee and Migrant Children: Recommendations for alternatives to detention and appropriate care arrangements in Europe [↗](#)

Want to know more about our work ?

If you want to learn more about IOM's tools and resources on migrant children, you can consult our [Regional](#) and [Global](#) Libraries.



This brief was prepared by IOM Regional Office for the European Economic Area, the European Union and NATO.
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