



LIVING IN A NEW COUNTRY

Moving to America is not an easy thing to do; leaving behind all of your family and friends. There could be many reasons for such a move: bettering the family's circumstances, looking for an education, getting a job, being closer to relatives, or maybe searching for medical treatment. It is a stressful and exciting time.

When you move to a new country, everything can be a challenge. You may not know anyone in your new community. Your family may not know the language well. When you get here, you need to find a house, jobs, and the knowledge to survive in a different world, with new laws and a new culture. These are just some of the problems that immigrants to this country face every day.

For families who have a child or children with special needs, the challenges are even more daunting. Immigrant families with children with disabilities also need to learn to navigate the health care system, coordinate services for their children, and unravel the mysteries of special education in the public school system.

Furthermore, in some societies, people with mental and physical disabilities confront a level of prejudice more severe than one might face in the United States, including physical abuse, ostracism, and fear of contagion. It is difficult for many immigrant families to leave behind cultural stigmas and prejudices that their societies may have regarding people with disabilities and try to engage in the inclusive model that most Americans believe in. Sometimes parents do not believe that they will understand the "experts," don't know about the rights that they have concerning their children's disabilities, don't realize the range of services available, or understand or have experience advocating and partnering with medical and educational teams.

It is important for families to know, you are not alone. There are a number of organizations that provide guidance, teaching, legal advice, and also emotional support. Parents are the most powerful force of change and support. If you are an immigrant with children with disabilities, Family TIES is here to help you, as well as the following organizations:

- ❖ [Catholic Charities](#): Helps refugees and other immigrants with basic needs, legal advice, and counseling and training to become self-sufficient.

Boston Office: 617-451-7979

Worcester Office: 508-798-0191

- ❖ [International Institute](#): Offers a wide range of services to refugees and other immigrants to help them become self-sufficient members of their communities. Services are free, except for certain legal and citizenship services which are offered at a reasonable fee. Services may vary by location.

Boston Office: 617-695-9990

Lowell Office: 978-459-9031

❖ [Jewish Family Service](#): Helps refugees become reunited with family members and transition into American life by offering social, educational, vocational, medical, social, and recreation programs and economic assistance.

Framingham Office: 508-875-3100

Lynn Office: 781-593-0100

Springfield Office: 413-737-2601

Waltham Office: 781-647-5327

❖ [Lutheran Social Services of New England \(LSSNE\)](#): Provides resettlement and support services to help refugees and other immigrants become self-sufficient and productive citizens of the United States.

West Springfield Office: 413-787-0725

Worcester Office: 508-754-1121

❖ [Massachusetts Alliance of Portuguese Speakers](#): Provides a wide range of health and human services to Portuguese speakers and other residents of eastern Massachusetts

Toll-free, Statewide: 800-232-7725

Allston Office: 617-787-0557

Cambridge Office: 617-864-7600

Dorchester Office: 617-825-5897

Framingham Office: 508-872-2652;

508-397-9051 (Portuguese); 508-259-9889 (Spanish)

Lowell Office: 978-970-1250

Somerville Office: 617-864-7600

❖ [Refugee and Immigrant Assistance Center](#): Helps Somali women and children and other immigrants by providing resettlement.

Jamaica Plain Office: 617-522-8882

Lynn Office: 781-593-0100

Worcester Office: 508-756-7557

❖ [Parents Helping Parents](#): Parental Stress Line offers a comforting voice when you need one. Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Toll-free, Statewide: 800-632-8188

**For more information, contact your Family TIES Regional Coordinator at
1-800-905-8437 ~ www.massfamilyties.org**