



Government of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Education Towers, No.5 St. Vincent Street, Port of Spain, Trinidad

Joint Select Committee on Human Rights, Equality and Diversity

Request for Information

**Treatment of Migrants with
Specific Focus on Rights to
Education, Employment and
Protection from Sexual
Exploitation**

4:13 Given the disparity between the approximate number of migrant children in need of formal education versus the number enrolled in MOE schools and LWC's Equal Place, the Committee recommends that the MOE ensure that migrant children face no stumbling blocks with respect to the process for their registration at schools.

The Ministry of Education's response to the Committee is guided by the following recommendations put forward by the Committee:

- 1. The Committee has recommended that the Ministry of National Security consider the drafting of national legislation to ensure that migrant children can access education in accordance with international law.*
- 2. The committee further recommends, with regard to educational legislation/policy that a student permit waiver for children of all persons in need of protection (asylum-seekers, refugees, all persons from Venezuela), as well as migrants, that grants access to any educational institution with immediate effect.*

Once the relevant adjustments have been made to the Immigration Act as recommended by the Committee the Ministry of Education has recognised the following areas as possible stumbling blocks with respect to the registration of migrant children:

I. Medical Records – Immunization

All students entering government assisted and government Early Childhood Care and Education, Primary and Secondary institutions must present an immunization card with the necessary vaccines and boosters. Migrants may not be in possession of their medical records. If they do have medical records difficulties may arise in the verification of such records.

It is recommended that all migrant children obtain the necessary vaccines and boosters at local health facilities prior to registration. As such, the Ministry of Health is a key stakeholder in ensuring vaccination of migrant children.

II. Level of Placement

The placement of children into the entry level of ECCE and primary must be in accordance with established guidelines / placement criteria:

- For entry into ECCE, a child must have attained the age of three (3) and be potty trained; and
- For entry into the Primary level, a child must have attained the age of five (5) at or before the start of school for placement in Infant Level I.

For all other levels the following is required for each migrant child:

- an assessment of the English Language proficiency
- a diagnostic assessment to determine academic level

III. English Language Proficiency

The English Language Proficiency of the migrant child and the parent/guardian will impact on the registration process. As English is not the first language for many migrants, it may become necessary for interpreters to be made available to facilitate the registration process. Engagement with the respective Embassies and High Commissions, through the Ministry of Foreign and CARICOM Affairs, can be implemented as a viable option.

IV. Availability of Places

Migrant children may only be able to register at the ECCE, Primary and Secondary levels once Principals and School Supervisors have ascertained that:

- the school has space to accommodate the child; and
- no citizen or resident will be displaced in order to accommodate the request.

V. Guardianship – Legal Documentation

The Ministry of Education requires that a parent or legal guardian register the child. It is therefore mandatory that documents pertaining to legal guardianship and/or parental custody be made available for registration. Other legal documents that are required for registration is the birth certificate of the child.

It is recommended that the Immigration Department take into account these requirements as the Ministry of National Security drafts legislation.

VI. Transition

Targeted Transition programmes will be made available to the children of migrants upon completion of registration in schools. Transition programmes will be managed by Guidance Officers to help migrant students negotiate movement from one level of schooling to another as well as to help them adjust to the new school environment.

VII. Professional Development

Professional development courses focusing on managing the teaching and learning process with diverse learners will be provided. These courses will target principals, teachers and other school-based staff.

The Ministry acknowledges the following Committee recommendations:

- The training of teachers in the Teaching of English as a Second Language (TESOL)
- The development of teaching and learning materials for upload on to the Ministry's School Learning Management System (SLMS)
- Inclusion of migrant children into the School Nutrition Programme
- The promotion of functional literacy in the English Language for migrant children