

Preparing to move

Preparing for a permanent move

As a quota refugee you and those included in your application have been granted a refugee status, a continuous residence permit and a right to work in Finland. It is important to discuss with the members of your family about the prospect of a permanent move and its meaning, and it is good to prepare for the trip together. Ahead of you there is a new living environment and new people with different customs and habits who will talk to you in a new language.

Travel documents

Remember to take with you all existing travel documents and identification papers. Original documents help in the registration process, and later on, getting the new travel documents.

School and work certificates

Already in the first education needs assessments the immigrants will be asked for all certificates related to school or work. Therefore it is important that you take with you all original certificates related to education, degrees and work. It is good to prove the certificates by a notary and, if possible, to translate them to English in the country of departure already.

The existence of certificates is important because the achieved degrees, previous studies and work experience serve as a basis for planning for further education in Finland. Certificates from work life also help in getting a job in Finland.

Education and job seeking plan

In order to get work in Finland the immigrants usually need and get the integration training and further education in Finland. To ensure the appropriate education in Finland you should do a preliminary plan for the further education and work already in the place you are residing now. In your plan you should include where, when and what you have studied, which degrees you have gained and where you have worked. Also you should write down your own special skills and your personal assessment on what kind of work you would fit into. It is also very useful to make a resume (Curriculum Vitae) which lists your skills and experience. You can find tips on making a resume on the internet.

Soon after the move to Finland children are placed in preparatory classes aimed for immigrant children that prepare them for comprehensive education. It is useful that parents prepare their children to face the new school environment. This self-study material provides basic information on

children's schooling in Finland. You can get information on the Finnish school system through the other internet links (check the useful internet links).

Medicine prescribed by the doctor

In the first interview at the health centre the public health nurse will go through the history of your earlier illnesses, medication and vaccinations. Therefore, it is important to take with you the old prescriptions, doctors statements and possible vaccination cards from your country of departure. These will help speed up the process of finding correct treatment and medication in your new municipality of residence. You should also take with you a month's supply of your obligatory medication.

Mental preparation for the move

It is important that immigrants prepare for the opportunities and challenges that he or she and his or her family will face in their new living environment.

A new beginning in a new country provides opportunities to learn new issues, to succeed and prosper. In the beginning all family members will have new things to learn and work through. Children go to school and parents go for integration training. Everybody studies the Finnish language. The family gets to know new people and a new environment.

A new environment affects everybody differently, and it can change the roles in the family. All the members of the family have to learn a new language and new customs. Usually children learn the new language faster than their parents. It is possible that children will be able to function better outside of the home environment than their parents. This can affect the role of children in the family.

In Finland women study and work actively outside of the home. The education and work of an immigrant woman can change the previous roles in the family. It is also possible that burdened by their own challenges, the parents are not able to fully support their children. It is possible to discuss the family's situation confidentially for example with the social worker. Acknowledging the situation and open conversation with someone outside of the family can help the family solve the issues arising from changes.

It is important to be aware of the fact that integration to a new culture can cause strong mood changes. Sometimes it feels wonderful to live in a safe Finland. Sometimes the absence of one's own family, new lifestyles, new set of values and different religion can cause loneliness and feelings of home-sickness. Mood changes linked to integration can be discussed in confidence with the public health nurse, doctor or social worker. Also the immigrant friends can help share these feelings and experiences. Emotions cannot be avoided but openness to them can help perceive own situation.

In order to reach own goals in a new environment an immigrant has to do a lot of work. It helps to reach these goals if the plans for education and work are realistic. You can get help for these plans from the employment advisor and social worker in your municipality.