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Supporting early years transitions for children with refugee and asylum- seeker backgrounds

A SCOPING REVIEW

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Background

Moving to a new early years education and care service or into the first year of school is a major milestone for many families, but families with refugee and asylum-seeker status can face a unique combination of challenges with these transitions.

More information is needed to support early years educators' professional understandings of these children's and families' needs and to shape effective systemic responses.



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Method

- A scoping literature review of peer-reviewed academic literature following Arksey and O'Malley (2005) was conducted.
- Five academic databases were searched: Web of Science, Informit, EBSCOHost, Scopus and ProQuest.

- **Keywords:**

- educat*	- refugee*	- early years transition*	- pre-school
- teacher*	- asylum-seeker*	- early childhood	- daycare
- school*		- support*	- kindergarten
			- primary school
			- elementary school

- **Criteria:**

Inclusion criteria:	Exclusion criteria:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Published between 1 January, 2000 and 31 August, 2021 • Focused on in-service teachers/educators • Peer-reviewed • English 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Posters, editorials, introductions to special issues, blogs, social media posts, news reports, book reviews • Literature reviews



Research questions

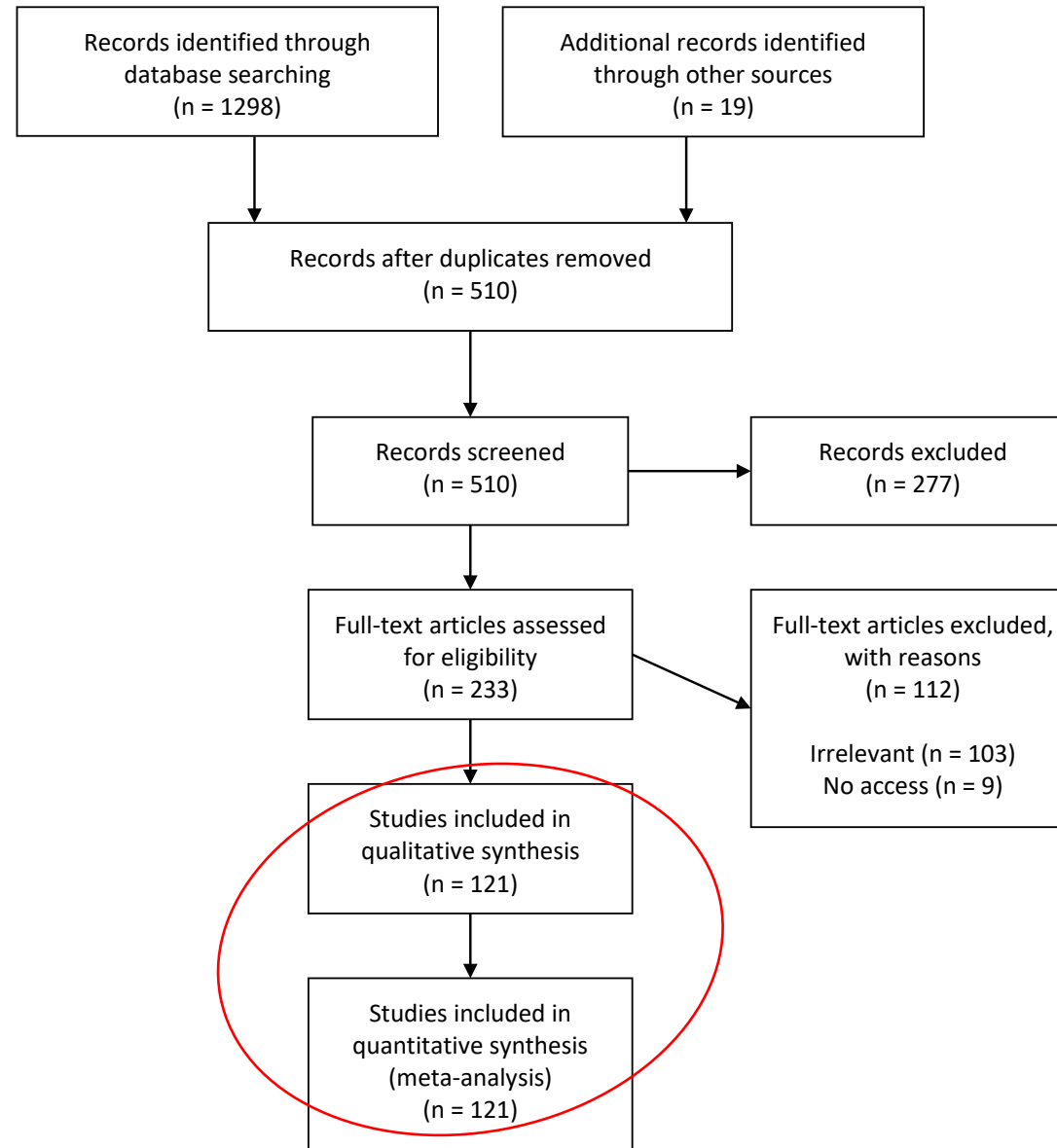
1. What are the transition experiences of children and families with refugee and asylum-seeker backgrounds?
2. What system and educator supports can assist families with refugee and asylum-seeker backgrounds?



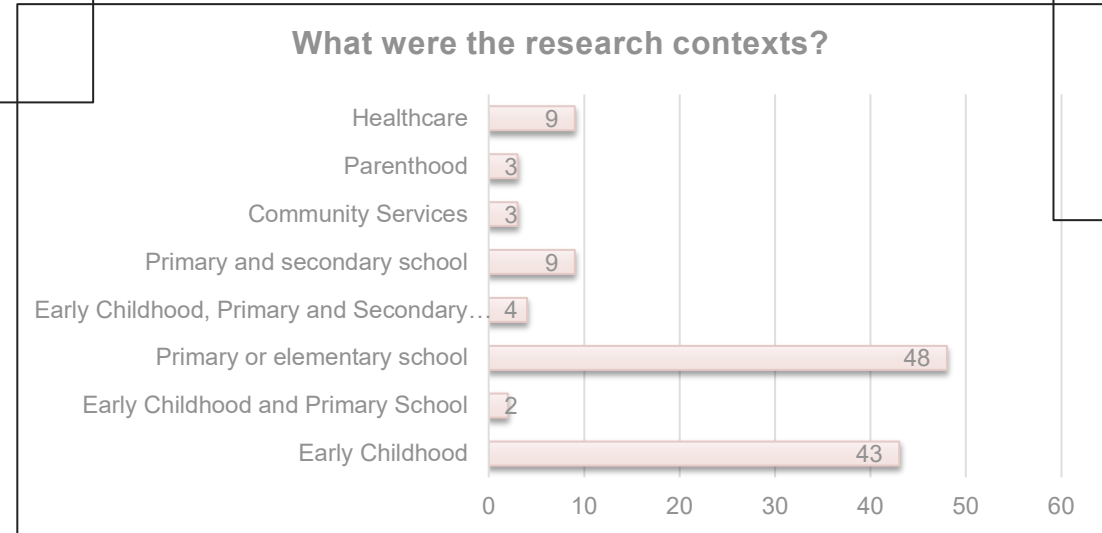
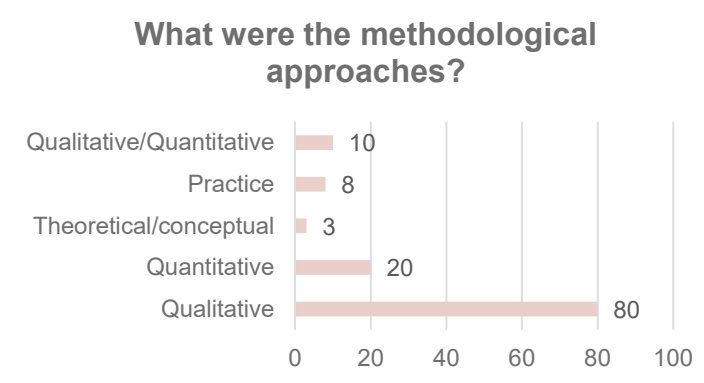
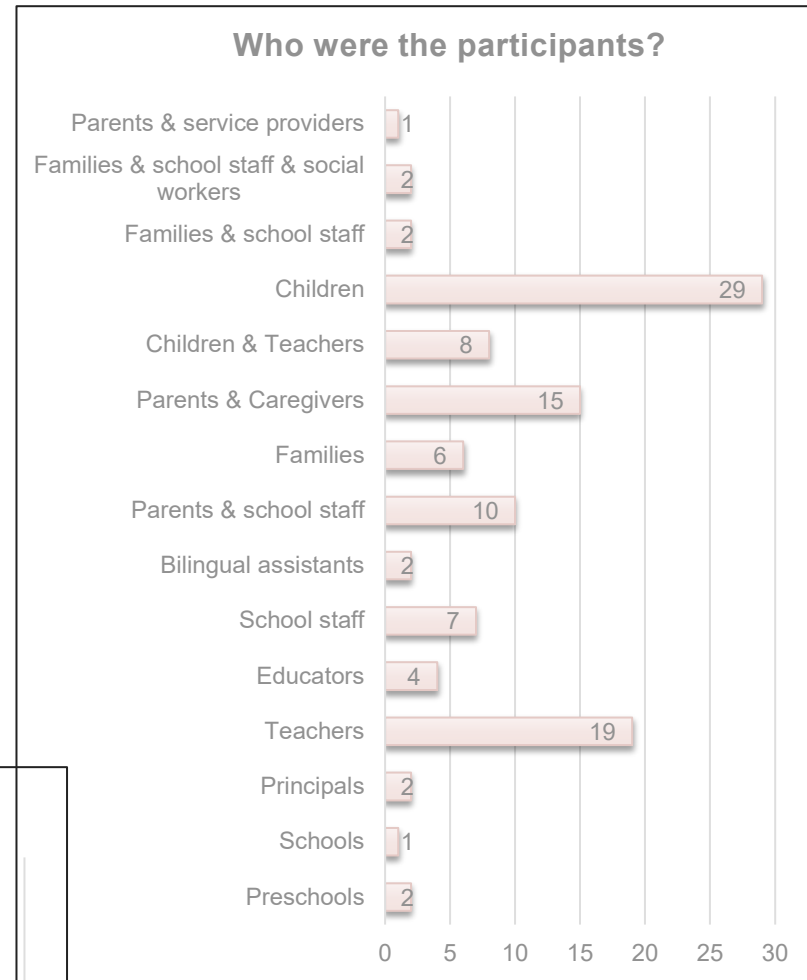
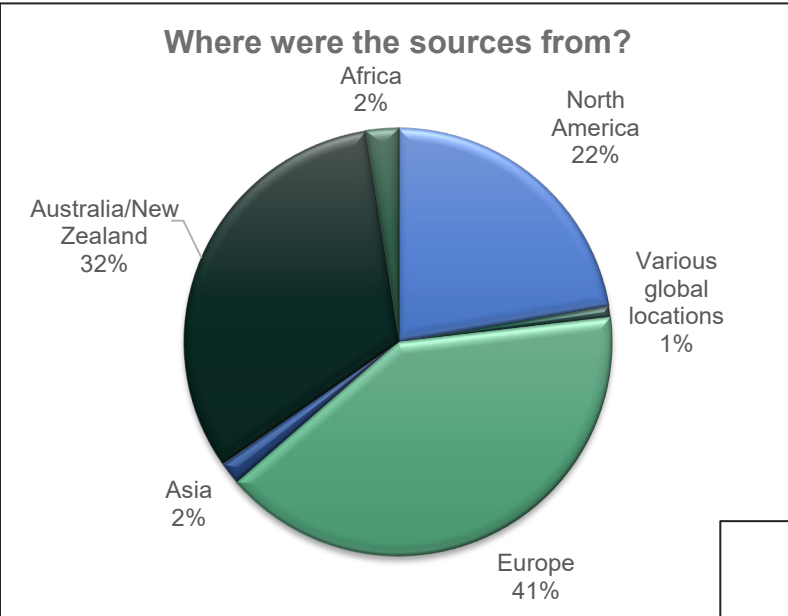
Method

A search protocol was developed and resulted in the collection of 121 sources which were quantitatively and qualitatively analysed.

Identification
Screening
Eligibility
Included



Findings: Quantitative summary

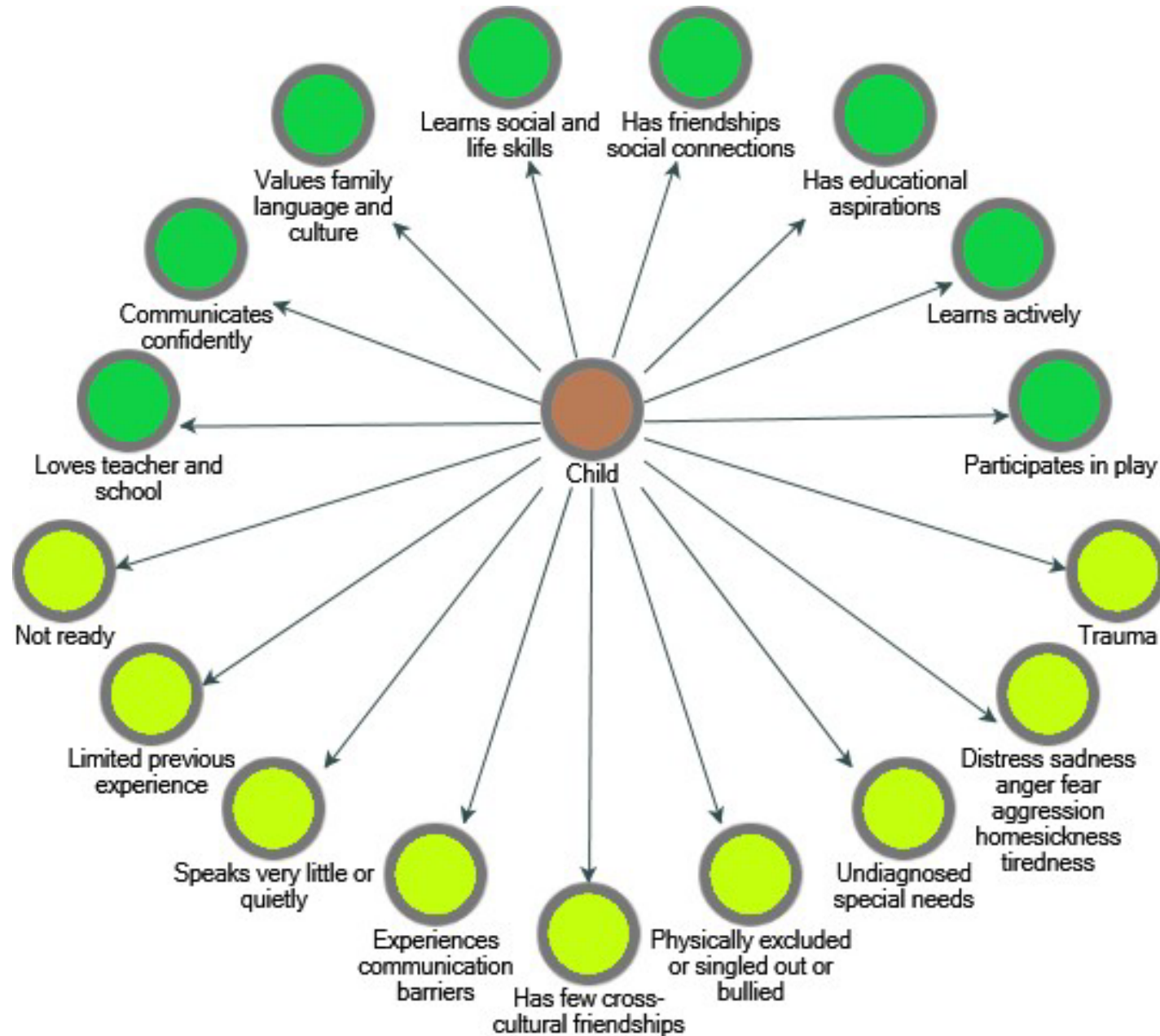


Most common sample size: 1 - 10 participants (25.6% of sources)

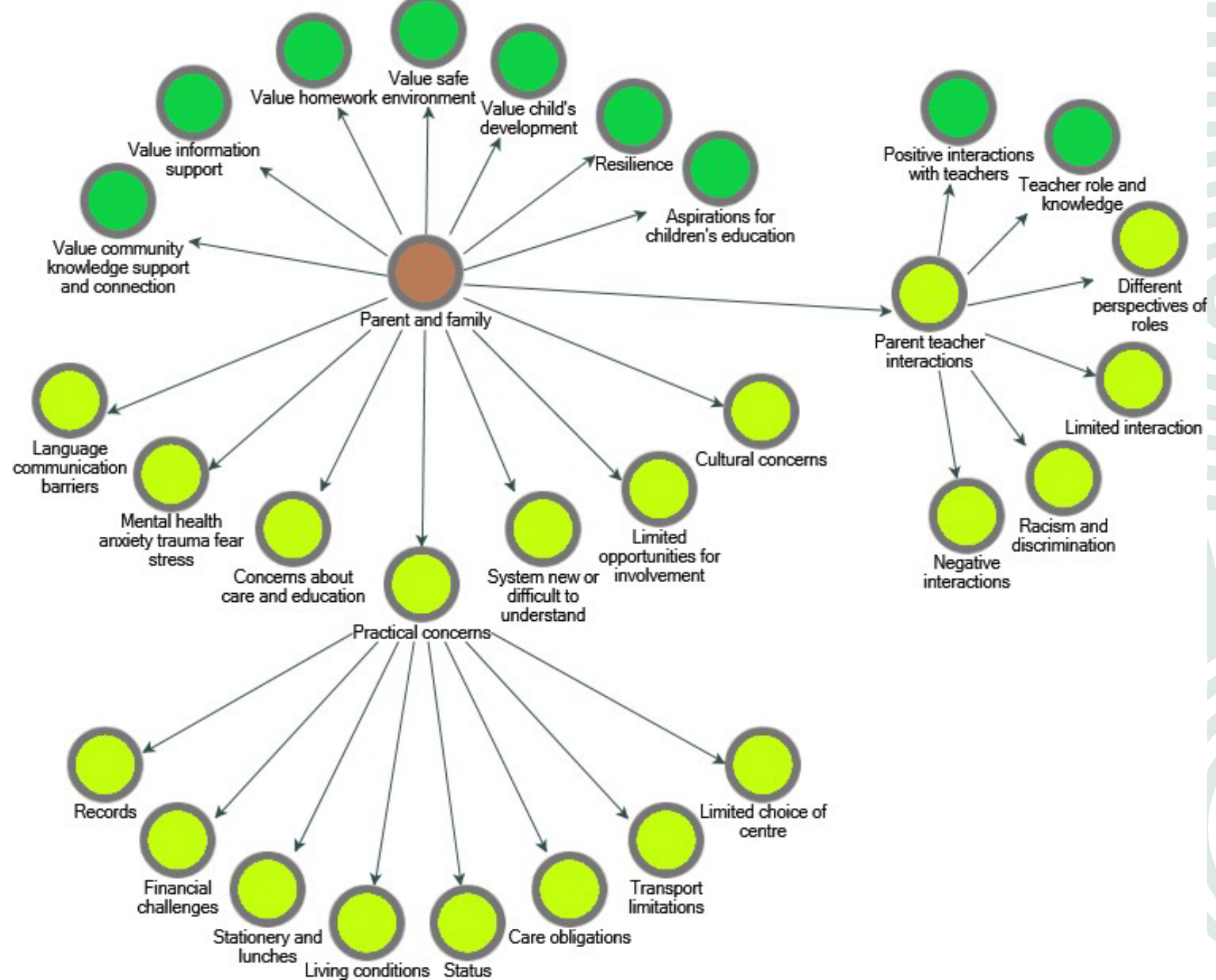
Most common length of study: 3 - 6 months (27.3% of sources)



Findings: Children's experiences of transitions



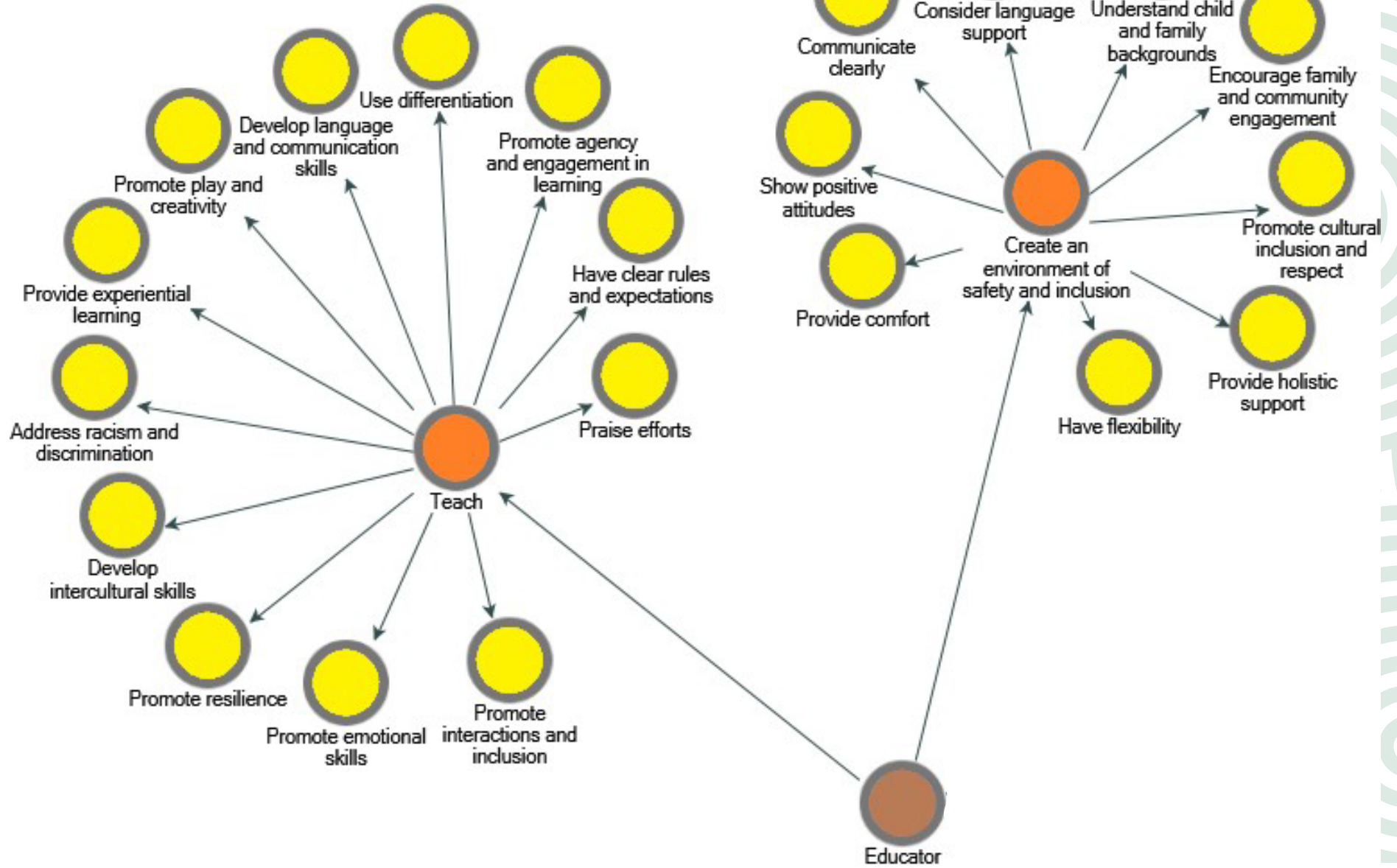
Findings: Families' experiences of transitions



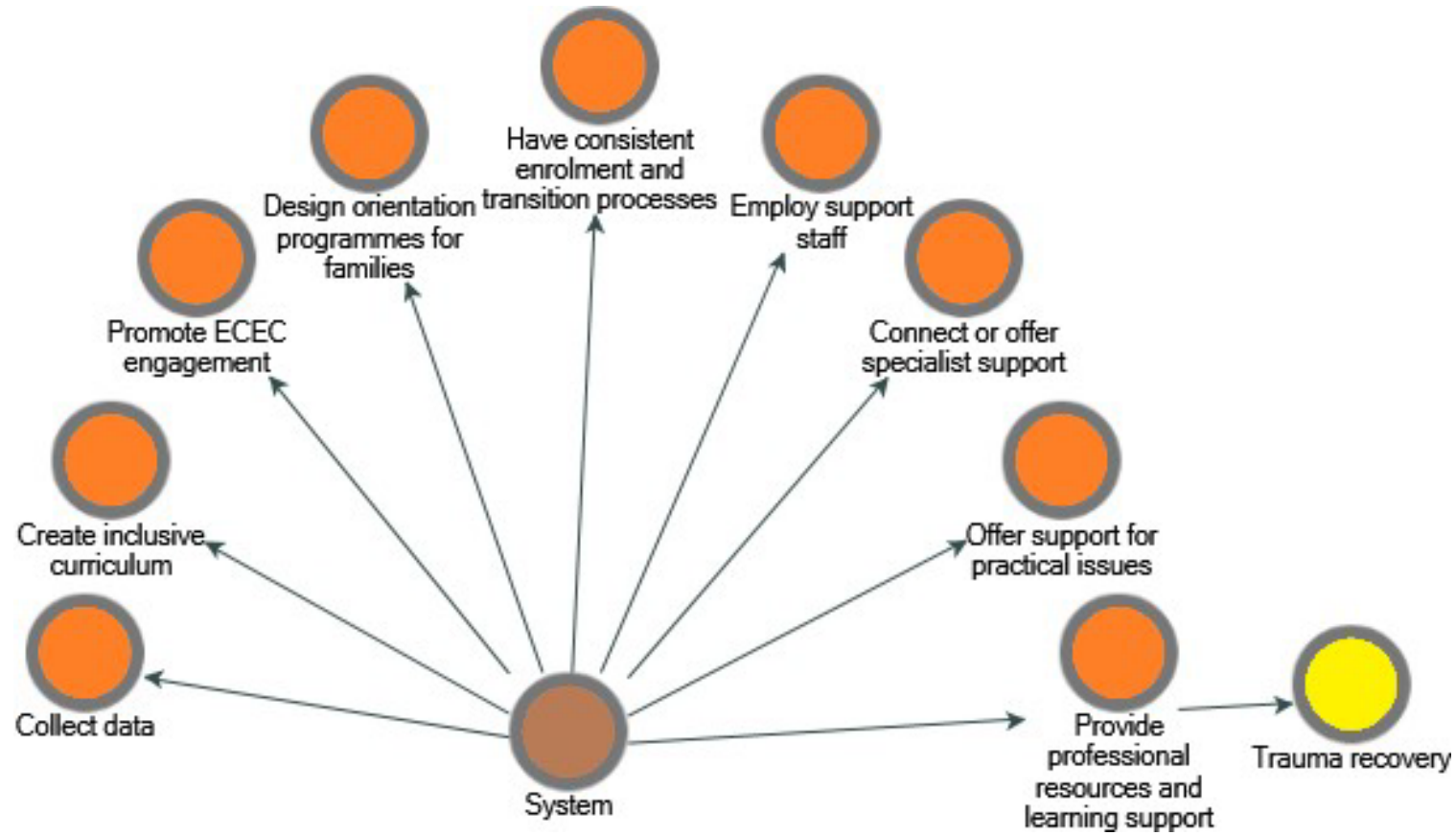
Supporting early years transitions for children with refugee and asylum-seeker backgrounds



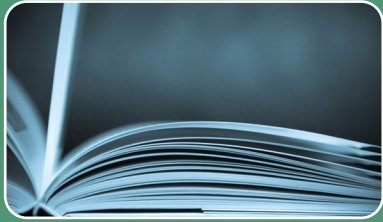
Findings: Educator supports



Findings: System supports



Ideas for moving forward



Clarify the field

- Distinguish refugee and asylum-seeker issues clearly from migrant and immigrant issues
- More research needed about theoretical/conceptual approaches to early years transitions



Areas that need more exploration

- Limited research about educational system responses
- Few studies carried out across localities or similar contexts
- Literature in English from South America and Middle East is limited although these are key sites of refugee and asylum-seeker activity – what are we missing?



Future directions

- Continue with strengths-based qualitative research focused on children's and families' experiences
- Explore systemic responses that can offer sustained professional support for educators and teachers
- Worth doing a systematic literature review with a narrower focus (e.g., transitions into ECEC, transitions into Primary for children with ECEC experience and for those without)



Conclusions

The positive transitions of children with refugee and asylum-seeker status into early years education and care services and schools requires educators and educational systems that are supportive of and responsive to the unique combination of challenges faced by these families.

The academic literature provided guidance for supporting families with refugee and asylum-seeker status, and it revealed several areas that require further exploration.



Photo by [Jason Sung](#) on [Unsplash](#)



Thank you for your kind attention

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References

- Arksey, H. and O'Malley, L., 2005. Scoping studies: Towards a methodological framework. *International journal of Social Research Methodology*, 8(1), 19–32. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1364557032000119616>
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