

Specific protective and risk factors for unaccompanied children

Individual factors:

Host country language skills

Protective: if the foreign language is spoken sufficiently

Religion

Protective: children may receive support, meaning, comfort, and control from their religion and derive strength from it

Emotion regulation

Protective: when a child recognises their emotions and knows how to feel better in the event of a buildup of emotions

Risk: when a child does not know how to handle overwhelming emotions

Physical or psychological health issues

Risk: health issues before emigration, or received during the flight, or in refugee camps

Cognitive limitations

Risk: a serious cognitive limitation affects the ability of a child to function independently in society

Environmental factors:

Safety

Protective: experiencing safety, sufficient food, accommodation, no threat of violence

Risk: experiencing lack of safety

Continuity of residence

Protective: small number of transfers

Risk: more than four transfers

Acculturation

Protective: living in a host family or small-scale housing with residents of the same cultural background helps maintenance of own culture and integration into new culture

Risk: living in large refugee centres, little privacy and limited contact with guardians

Perspective

Protective: certainty regarding residency status and clarity about the future

Risk: lack of clarity, long proceedings

Social support

Protective: no hindrance of discrimination and racism, being appreciated, peer support safety at school and affiliation with the community

Risk: discrimination, racism, no peer support, no safety and no feeling of connection

Contact with family

Protective: contact with (distant) family or staying with or having arrived together with family

Risk: no contact with family