What can schools do?

Provide information to immigrant parents on the schooling options available for their children and help parents to overcome financial and/or logistical barriers to access the school of their choice. Limit the extent to which advantaged schools can select students based on socio-economic status. This can be done by providing financial incentives for over-subscribed schools to enroll migrant students.

Retain and attract more advantaged students in schools that also host immigrant students. For example, schools in disadvantaged areas can make their curricula more appealing to students from across the socio-economic spectrum by offering special mathematics, science and/or art courses.

What can countries do?

Integrate language and subject learning from the earliest grades. Integrating migrant children into mainstream classes from the beginning of their schooling is associated with better outcomes than enrolling them first in preparatory language classes and delaying entry into mainstream courses. While language training is essential, it should be offered in addition to, not instead of, regular course work. Help teachers to identify students who need language training. Some countries, including Denmark and Germany, systematically assess children of preschool age in their language abilities. Strategies and pedagogies for developing second-language skills should be covered in both initial and in-service training for teachers who work with immigrant students.

Reduce or eliminate the use of ability grouping and grade repetition. Instead, identify struggling students early and offer them extra support. For immigrant students, identify language-training needs early, since proficiency in reading is key to all learning. Avoid early tracking. Both academic and vocational programs can help students to acquire the skills they need to contribute to society and participate fully in the economy. Give immigrant students enough instructional time to realize their full potential before assigning them to any program of study

The data in the table under Figure 2.2A show that, on 1 January 2002 in the majority of countries, the foreign population was recorded as between 2.5 % and 9 % of the total population. This applied to Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, Italy, Cyprus, the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden, the United Kingdom, Iceland and Norway. The situation in the other countries was markedly different. The proportion of the foreign population recorded in the total population was 20 % in Estonia and Latvia – as a result of the size of their minority population of Russian origin (many of whom were not Estonian or Latvian nationals) – Luxembourg and Liechtenstein, whereas in Hungary, Lithuania, Portugal, Slovenia and Finland, the foreign population accounted for under 2.5 % of the total population.