

Newcomer Toolkit

U.S. Department of Education

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Note: This document does not address the legal obligations of states and school districts toward MLs and their families under *Title I and Title III* of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).* For more information on *ESEA,* go to https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/COMPS-748/pdf/COMPS-748.pdf

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Introduction

The U.S. Department of Education (Department) is pleased to provide this *Newcomer Toolkit*, originally published in September 2016. Schools are among the first U.S. institutions to welcome newcomer immigrants and refugees to local communities. Meeting the physical, linguistic, social, emotional, mental health, and academic needs of these students and their families is essential to their success and can be an opportunity for educators and community members across the country to reflect upon and enhance their practices and processes. Accordingly, this toolkit is a resource for state, local, and school leaders to support multilingual learners (MLs)* and general education educators who directly serve immigrant and refugee students.

The toolkit consists of five chapters:

Chapter 1: Who Are Newcomers?

Chapter 2: Welcoming Newcomers to a Safe, Inclusive, and Thriving School Environment

Chapter 3: Supporting Newcomers' Social and Emotional and Mental Health Needs

Chapter 4: Providing High-Quality Instruction for Newcomers

Chapter 5: Establishing Partnerships With Families

Each chapter includes (1) discussion of topics relevant to understanding, supporting, and engaging newcomer students and their families or guardians; (2) tools, research-based strategies, and examples of classroom and schoolwide practices in action; (3) chapter-specific professional learning activities for use in staff meetings or professional learning communities; and (4) selected resources for further information and assistance, most of which are available online at no cost. Readers will also find an appendix that summarizes the instructional context and student demographic profile for each school highlighted in the toolkit.

The toolkit serves to support the Department's mission: *to help each and every student reach their full potential and promote student achievement and preparation for global competitiveness by ensuring equal access to educational opportunity and fostering educational excellence.* To that end, the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) is charged with providing national leadership to help ensure that all MLs—immigrants, refugees, and those born in this country—attain English language proficiency and meet challenging state academic standards. OELA also identifies major issues affecting the education of MLs and supports state and local systemic reform efforts to improve ML opportunity and achievement.

Below are some key terms used throughout the toolkit.

Key Terms Related to Working With Newcomers and Their Families

For purposes of this document, the following table describes terms related to the education of newcomer students and to the engagement of their families. In addition to being described here, these terms will also be further addressed in chapters throughout the toolkit.

*The term *multilingual learner(s)* refers to the student population defined as English learner(s) in Section 8101(20) of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965*, as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESEA)*. In this toolkit the two terms are used interchangeably.

Note: This document does not address the legal obligations of states and school districts toward MLs and their families under *Title I and Title III* of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).* For more information on *ESEA,* go to https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/COMPS-748/pdf/COMPS-748.pdf

Term	Description
Community Partnership	A strategic relationship between a school or school system and a community organization whose aim is to better engage families in the school community. These partnerships may provide wraparound services to assist students and families related to housing, food and nutrition, clothing, physical and mental health, supplementary education, adult language learning, and/or translation. In most cases, these services are coordinated by district- or school-based personnel who serve as school-community liaisons.
Dual Language Learner (DLL)	Children who are learning two (or more) languages at the same time or learning a second language while continuing to develop their first language. Children who are DLLs come from homes where a language other than English is spoken. For some, both English and a language other than English may be spoken at home.[1]
Multilingual Learner (ML)	An English learner (which this toolkit refers to as a multilingual learner or ML) is "an individual (A) who is aged 3 through 21; (B) who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary school or secondary school; (C)(i) who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English; (ii)(I) who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and (II) who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; or (iii) who is migratory, whose native language is not English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant; and (D) whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding English may be sufficient to deny the individual (i) the ability to meet the challenging State academic standards; (ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or (iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society" (*ESEA,* Section 8101(20)).
Family and Parent/Guardian Engagement/ Involvement	According to Section 8101(39) in *ESEA*, the term ''parental involvement'' means the participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring (A) that parents play an integral role in assisting their child's learning; (B) that parents are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school; (C) that parents are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child; and (D) the carrying out of other activities, such as those described in Section 1116."
Immigrant Children and Youth (*Title III*)	"Immigrant children and youth are those who (A) are aged 3 through 21; (B) were not born in any state; and (C) have not been attending one or more schools in any one or more states for more than 3 full academic years" (*ESEA*, Section 3201(5)).
Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP)	Programs that LEAs implement to provide language assistance services to MLs. These are courses "(A) in which an English learner is placed for the purpose of developing and attaining English proficiency, while meeting challenging State academic standards; and (B) that may make instructional use of both English and a child's native language to enable the child to develop and attain English proficiency, and may include the participation of English proficient children if such course is designed to enable all participating children to become proficient in English and a second language" (*ESEA,* Section 3201 (7)).

[1] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, & U.S. Department of Education (n.d.) *Policy statement on supporting the development of children who are dual language learners in early childhood programs.* https://www2.ed.gov/about/inits/ed/earlylearning/files/dll-policy-statement-2016.pdf

Note: This document does not address the legal obligations of states and school districts toward MLs and their families under *Title I and Title III* of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).* For more information on *ESEA,* go to https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/COMPS-748/pdf/COMPS-748.pdf

Term	Description
Limited-English Proficient	A term used to refer to MLs prior to the reauthorization of *ESEA* by the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (*ESSA*). This is also a term on the U.S. Census that refers to persons age 5 and older who reported speaking English "not at all," "not well," or "well" on their survey questionnaire. Individuals who reported speaking "only English" or speaking English "very well" are considered proficient in English.
Migrant Student	A K-12 student whose parent or guardian is a migrant agricultural worker or fisher and who has moved from one school district to another during the regular school year. Migrant students may be immigrants and/or MLs, but many are not. For more information about migrant students and the programs that support their educational opportunities and academic success, please visit the Office of Migrant Education's website.
Newcomer Program	Newcomer students who attend public school may be placed in a specially designed program known as a newcomer program. Newcomer programs are temporary, with students moving into general education classrooms as soon as possible, generally within a year of entering the program. These programs are often offered within a school.
Newcomer Student	For purposes of this toolkit, the term newcomer student refers to K-12 students born outside the United States who have arrived in the United States in the last three years and who also are still learning English. This designation is temporary.
Refugee	A refugee is a person who has fled his or her country of origin because of past persecution or a fear of future persecution based upon race, religion, nationality, political opinion, or membership in a particular social group. If the person is currently residing in the United States, the person may apply for asylum. If the person is not in the United States, the person may apply to the U.S. Refugee Admissions Program.[2]
Students who may have experienced Limited/Interrupted Formal Education (SIFE/SLIFE)	SIFE/SLIFE: Student with interrupted formal education/student with limited or interrupted formal education (a newcomer with significant gaps in formal education).[3]
Unaccompanied Children	Children under the age of 18 who come into the United States from other countries without an adult guardian.[4]

Since the toolkit's prior revision, OELA has published several instructional briefs and a family engagement toolkit that add to the field's research-informed practices in educating MLs new to the U.S. school system. In addition, new research continually improves the field's understanding of how best to engage newcomer MLs and their families as this research responds to shifts in demographics and changing circumstances surrounding MLs. Furthermore, *ESEA* requires schools and districts to shift the focus from parental involvement to parent and family engagement and requires two-way communication, which sometimes presents issues for schools that have not historically worked with newcomer children and families.[5] Lastly, the COVID-19

[2] U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. (2015). *Questions and answers: Refugees.* United States Department of Homeland Security. https://www.uscis.gov/humanitarian/refugees-asylum/refugees/questions-answers-refugees

[3] Greenberg Motamedi, J., Porter, L., Taylor, S., Leong, M., Martinez-Wenzl, M., & Serrano, D. (2021). *Welcoming, registering, and supporting newcomer students: A toolkit for educators of immigrant and refugee students in secondary schools.* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2021064.pdf

[4] U.S. Department of Education. (2015, October 20). *Resource guide: Supporting undocumented youth.* http://www2.ed.gov/about/overview/focus/supporting-undocumented-youth.pdf

[5] https://www2.ed.gov/documents/essa-act-of-1965.pdf

pandemic has revealed how many student populations require extra assistance from schools to ensure that remote instruction, student support, and family engagement are provided equitably during times of school interruptions and closures.

In addition to revisions necessitated by new research and changing perspectives on ML education, several aspects of the toolkit were revised to increase its relevance and functionality. These aspects include the following:

Audience. The revised toolkit is geared toward state or district staff who work with ML and general education teachers and are best positioned to tailor the information in ways that are most compatible with their instructional environment and student populations. The authors envision state and district leaders using this information to help create optimal learning conditions for newcomers.

Content Depth and Breadth. Recognizing the limitations of providing suggestions and recommendations for the varied instructional and schooling scenarios that exist, this updated toolkit focuses on describing the landscape and research regarding each educational factor for newcomers and providing resources that the readers can examine and tailor to their school or district's ML population and instructional context.

Definition of Newcomers. For the purposes of this toolkit, *newcomers* are defined as K-12 students born outside the United States who have arrived in the country in the last three years and are still learning English. The definition employed in the previous version of the toolkit stated that newcomers referred to any student born outside the United States and his or her family who have recently arrived in the United States. The term *newcomer* is often seen as an umbrella term that refers to many different types of students new to the country, such as refugees or students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE). However, the educational, linguistic, physical, social, emotional, and mental health needs of refugees and students with limited or interrupted formal education can be quite different when compared to students who have recently immigrated to the country voluntarily or with strong formal education in their first language. In addition, because pre-kindergarten and early elementary newcomers (e.g., K-1) have more time than older newcomers to acquire English, these learners often do not face the same educational challenges as older newcomers.[6] Despite those differences, the toolkit does not address solely the needs of refugees or SLIFE, many of whom are also refugees, although some of the material may be applicable. Also, please note the focus of the toolkit is newcomer students who are still acquiring proficiency in English.

In addition, it is important to be aware that while the information presented in the toolkit can apply to K-12 newcomers, for some very young newcomer students, the content in the chapters may be more applicable to working with the families rather than with the students themselves. It is also essential to note that *newcomer* is a temporary designation. An ML may still require language assistance services but not be classified as a newcomer.

Parent and Family Engagement. Given ESEA requirements, the new OELA *English Learner Family Toolkit*, and OELA's goal to focus on family engagement, the topic of family engagement is woven throughout each chapter. Accordingly, while some chapters may have a more specific focus on how to work with newcomer ML families, all chapters will address how to engage families for all educational components discussed.

Remote Learning/Engagement. To ensure that newcomer students and families have the support they need during times of school interruptions and closures, this toolkit highlights remote instruction and family engagement considerations, as well as resources for ensuring equity during such times.

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[6] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). *Promoting the educational success of children and youth learning English: Promising futures.* The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/24677

Users of the toolkit may consider developing professional learning sessions for educators and school staff who work with newcomers and their families.[7] After becoming familiar with the content, users of this toolkit may consider tailoring and sharing this information with their staff by using some of the recommended activities that accompany each chapter. To help ensure professional learning enhances teacher knowledge and leads to enactment of the featured instructional practices, the professional learning should

- Be content focused,
- Incorporate active learning,
- Be of sustained duration,
- Be job-embedded and collaborative,
- Model practices outlined in the professional learning, and
- Provide opportunities for reflection and feedback.

Some productive formats in which to engage educators and other staff on these topics include the following:[8]

1. Whole-group workshops
2. Professional learning communities
3. Communities of practice
4. Mentoring programs for new staff
5. Instructional coaching
6. Instructional rounds

Within the Department, OELA led the development and revision of this toolkit. The previous version of this toolkit was developed with support from the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development (OPEPD), the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), Principal and Teacher Ambassador Fellows, and the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics (WHIEEH). NCELA was integral to the revisions of this toolkit, as was our team of subject matter experts who provided valuable guidance and feedback:

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- Brenda Custodio, Ph.D., The Ohio State University
- Annie Duguay, Center for Applied Linguistics
- Helaine Marshall, Ph.D., Long Island University
- Kim Song, PhD, University of Missouri-St. Louis
- Julie Sugarman, Ph.D., Migration Policy Institute

[7] Please see Section 8101(42) in *ESEA* for a definition of professional development.

[8] *Whole-group workshops* refers to activities led by one or more facilitators to provide direct instruction to teachers on a given topic; *professional learning communities* are groups of educators who meet regularly to improve their teaching towards the academic performance of their students and are often led by an administrator; *communities of practice* also refers to a group of educators who interact regularly on the topic of improving instruction for learners, but the improvement of practice is led from within the group rather than by someone such as an administrator; *mentoring* involves providing teachers new to the profession with sustained support and guidance in the skill and knowledge development of teaching; *instructional coaching* is job-embedded, professional learning grounded in the teacher's day-to-day practices with the aim of improving instruction for learners; and *instructional rounds* is a professional learning format adapted from the medical profession where groups of educators observe teaching with the purpose of comparing the observed instructional practices to their own practices in order to improve instruction.

CHAPTER 1
Who Are Newcomers?

After reading this chapter, readers should be able to

- Understand immigration trends and policies that affected those trends;
- Identify characteristics that contribute to the heterogeneity of newcomers and begin to see how these characteristics can inform program design, instruction, and family engagement strategies;
- Support the cultural and linguistic assets of newcomers and help educators begin to support these assets in the classroom;
- Develop and implement professional learning activities to help educators and other school staff learn about newcomers and their families' needs; and
- Continue learning about newcomers and their families through an annotated bibliography of resources.

Newcomers to the United States are a highly heterogeneous group with different needs. While some newcomers adjust to life in the United States with relative ease, other newcomers encounter significant hurdles. In addition to sometimes facing challenges in adjusting to a new life in America, newcomer students and their families are also learning how to adjust to an education system and language that typically differs from their prior experiences. This chapter of the toolkit discusses immigration, the diverse backgrounds of newcomers, the assets they bring, and ways schools can leverage these linguistic and cultural assets for the benefit of the school community.

Who Are Newcomers?

As noted in the Introduction, for the purposes of this toolkit, the term *newcomers* refers to K-12 students born outside the United States who have arrived in the country in the last three years and are still learning English. The term *newcomer families* refers to the families or guardians of these students. (See the Introduction for definitions of key terminology discussed in this chapter.) Some newcomers may arrive in the United States voluntarily (e.g., to reunite with families or to work), while others are forced to leave their home countries due to violence or war (e.g., refugees).

U.S. schools are essential civic institutions for welcoming all types of newcomers to the United States and can be well situated to address and mitigate challenges newcomers face, such as prejudices and xenophobia that lead to hostility and discrimination. School and district leaders have the important responsibility of countering this negativity by ensuring a safe, inclusive, and welcoming environment for newcomers. One first step toward providing this environment is understanding immigration patterns in our nation as a whole and how those patterns are realized in the local context.

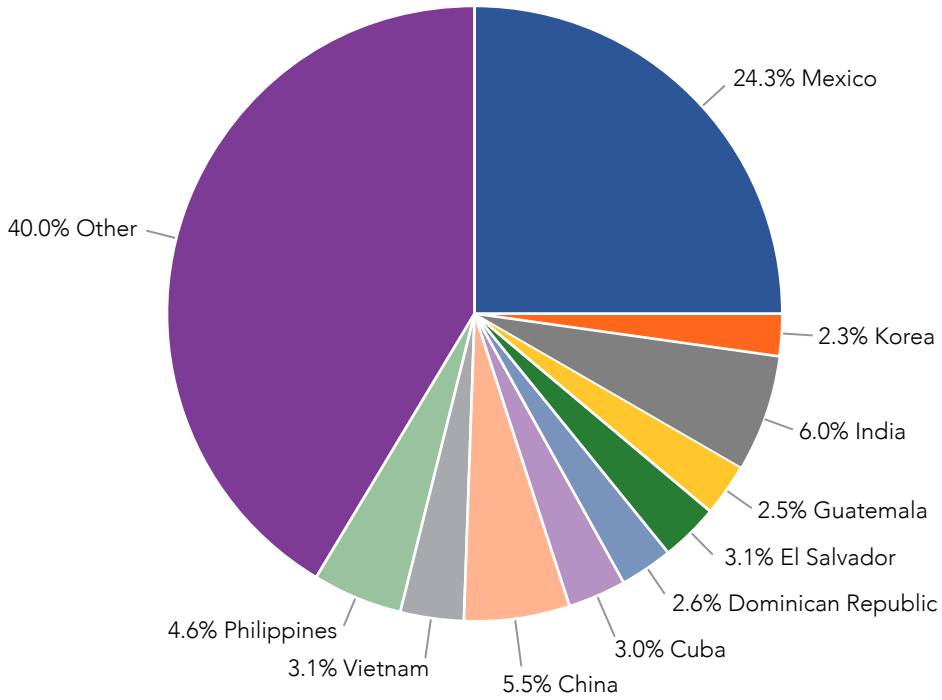


Immigration Today

In 2019, one in seven U.S. residents was born in another country, and immigration growth since 2015 remains relatively stable.[1] In 2019, the country of origin of the largest percentage of immigrants in the United States was Mexico (24 percent); India was the second largest country of origin (6 percent).

[1] Yearbook of Immigration Statistics (2019). U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics.

Figure 1.1. Top 10 Immigrant Origin Countries 2019

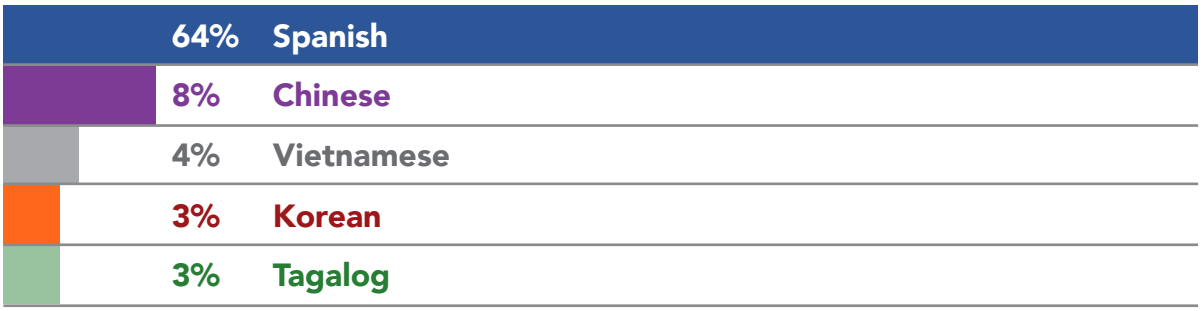


Source: Yearbook of Immigration Statistics (2019). U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Office of Immigration Statistics.

The age of immigrants tends to skew older when compared to U.S. native-born persons.[2] For example, 18 percent of the native-born population in 2018 were age 5-17 years, compared to 5 percent of immigrants.[3]

Immigration and English acquisition. According to the American Community Survey, approximately 47 percent of the 44.4 million immigrants age 5 and older were limited English proficient (LEP) in 2018.[4] Immigrants accounted for 81 percent of the country's 25.6 million LEP individuals. Among immigrant LEP individuals, Spanish was the predominant language, with Chinese as the second-most-reported language spoken by students born outside the United States.

Figure 1.2. Top Five Languages Among Limited English Proficient Immigrants (2019)



Source: American Community Survey. (2019). *1-year estimates-public use microdata sample*. Detailed home language. U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau.

[2] Immigrant for the purposes of this data source from the U.S. Census was defined as any person without U.S. citizenship at birth.

[3] American Community Survey. (2019). *1-year estimates-public use microdata sample.* U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau.

[4] The term "Limited English Proficient" on the U.S. Census refers to persons age 5 and older who reported speaking English "not at all," "not well," or "well" on their survey questionnaire. Individuals who reported speaking "only English" or speaking English "very well" are considered proficient in English.

Common reasons for migration. Throughout the late-20th and into the 21st century, some immigrants to the United States have arrived from war-torn or politically unstable countries. Many immigrants arrive in the United States for economic opportunities. Immigrants have also arrived under less dire circumstances. For example, many immigrants have arrived to reunite with family already living and working in the United States or to deploy occupational skills crucial to areas of the American economy, such as in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM)-related careers. In fact, U.S. Census data indicate there are more workers born outside the United States who majored in STEM fields than native-born STEM majors.[5]

Refugees. In 2019, 30,000 refugees were resettled in the United States, with the largest group of refugees originating from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, followed by Burma (Myanmar), Ukraine, Eritrea, and Afghanistan.[6] The states of Texas, Washington, Ohio, New York, and California resettled more than a quarter of all refugees in 2018. (See Chapter 3 for further information.)

Immigrant Students Today and Their Families

Immigrant families represent a wide variety of experiences, religions, cultural backgrounds, customs, and beliefs.

The maintenance of immigrants' culture and languages offers short- and long-term benefits to immigrants and their communities. Maintaining proficiency in the native language and keeping one's cultural traditions can promote positive academic, social, and emotional outcomes for immigrant students. Any work with immigrant communities should embrace their cultural and linguistic assets to engage and empower families.[7]

Biliteracy development is the fostering of an individual's ability to read and write in two languages, whereas bilingual development is the promotion of high oral proficiency in two languages. To support newcomers becoming bilingual and biliterate, schools can establish and enact a variety of language instruction educational programs (LIEPs), such as dual language immersion programs. (See Chapter 4 for more information on LIEPs.)

Districts can also incentivize the maintenance of the home language and culture. One type of incentive is the Seal of Biliteracy, a state or local recognition on the high school transcript and diploma that recognizes a student who has attained proficiency in English and one or more additional world languages. Schools may also offer courses such as Spanish for heritage language speakers and ensure that heritage language speakers receive academic credit for their bilingualism and biliteracy skills. A heritage language is the language a person regards as their native, home, and/or ancestral language.

It is important to note that refugee students and their families may have different experiences and needs from other newcomer student populations. Refugee students are extremely diverse and possess varied academic, cultural, and social characteristics. One thing they have in common is an event or phenomena that has triggered the need to seek refuge in the United States. Educators should consider the individual characteristics and experiences of refugee students in order to determine the appropriate instructional match and provide the necessary wraparound services. Some refugee students will arrive with English language proficiency skills, while others may not have received prior academic instruction in English. Some refugee students will have strong academic skills in core academic subjects such as math, science, and language arts, while others may have experienced significant interruptions to academic instruction and need remedial foundational skill

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[5] American Community Survey. (2019). *1-year estimates-public use microdata sample.* U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. Census Bureau.

[6] Department of Homeland Security. (2019.) *Immigration data and statistics.* https://www.dhs.gov/immigration-statistics

[7] Ambroso, E., Dunn, L., Fox, P. (2021, September). *Research in brief: Engaging and empowering diverse and underserved families in schools.* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory West. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/regions/west/pdf/Family_Engagement_and_Empowerment_Brief_Final_Clean_ADA_Final.pdf

development. Districts and schools can develop detailed student profiles to design appropriate services and supports for refugee students. It's important to understand not only the hardships and challenges that refugee students have faced, but also to leverage the linguistic, academic, and social experiences of refugee students as assets.

How Schools Can Support Newcomers—A Look Ahead at the Toolkit

To support newcomers and their families, the following chapters of the toolkit provide resources for establishing the following:

1. A welcoming environment (Chapter 2)
2. Social and emotional development to be successful in school and beyond (Chapter 3)
3. High-quality programs designed to meet the academic and language development needs of newcomer students (Chapter 4)
4. Family partnerships that encourage and support engagement in education (Chapter 5)

By recognizing these needs and developing strategies to meet them, schools can help newcomers build the necessary foundation to thrive both socially and emotionally and to achieve academic success.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITY I

"See Me" – Understanding Newcomers' Experiences, Challenges, and Strengths

Purpose

K–12 school administrators and teacher leaders can use this jigsaw activity in a staff meeting or professional learning community to discuss the experiences, challenges, and strengths of newcomer students; to examine their own assumptions about newcomers; and to identify ways to support such students.[8]

Materials

- Vignettes
- Reading Jigsaw Note-Taker Matrix

Time Required for Activity

- 1 hour

Preparation for Facilitator

- Read Chapter 1 of this toolkit and summarize key information relevant to the educators and the demographics of newcomers in the area.
- Reflect on possible appropriate answers for the questions posed to participants and be prepared to address misconceptions about newcomers that surface during the group discussion. For example, facilitators may want to address the length of time some newcomers may need to acquire academic English and the variables that impact their acquisition (e.g., prior school experiences in the first language, similarities between the first and second language). Facilitators may also need to be prepared to address different cultural expectations regarding family involvement (e.g., in some countries, teachers are seen as experts, and parents are not expected to interact with them on a regular basis). To further solidify your understanding of the demography of newcomers and their instructional needs, please review the resources found at the end of this chapter.
- Make copies of the four Vignettes (one set for each group of four participants) and the Reading Jigsaw Note-Taker Matrix (one for each participant).

Instructions for Facilitator

STEP	ACTION
1	Have participants sit in groups of four per table. This group is known as the base group. Have the participants then count off by 4s (1-2-3-4) to determine which of the four learning groups they will be in.
2	Participants move to their learning groups (all 1s together, all 2s together, etc.). Each person in the first learning group receives a copy of Vignette 1, each person in the second learning group receives a copy of Vignette 2, and so forth. There will be one learning group per vignette. If there are more than 16 participants, consider forming two learning groups per number to create smaller groups in which discussion will be more easily facilitated.
3	Participants read their assigned vignette silently and consider the questions at the bottom of the page. They may underline text or jot notes on the page, if desired.

[8] See Reading Rockets *Jigsaw* to learn more about the about the jigsaw technique as a cooperative learning strategy and to learn more about its research base.

STEP	ACTION
4	Participants discuss the reading and their responses to the questions with others in their learning group.
5	Each participant receives a copy of the Reading Jigsaw Note-Taker Matrix. Within each learning group, participants discuss how they will fill out the cells that correspond to their assigned vignette. Once they reach consensus, each participant fills in his or her copy of the matrix.
6	Participants return to their original base groups. There, they take turns (starting with Vignette 1) briefly summarizing their assigned vignette, the associated questions, and the consensus responses from their learning group, referring to their matrix as needed. As each person speaks, the others in the base group listen and add notes to the empty cells in their copy of the matrix.
7	Facilitate a group discussion by asking the following questions: ■ How were the vignettes similar to things you've seen in our school? How were they different? ■ What new ideas or insights did you gain during this activity? ■ What are the implications for practice? ■ What do you think you might try or do differently in your classroom as a result of this activity? ■ What do you think we as a school might try or do differently?

Vignette #1 Newcomer Profile: **Fathima**

Fathima is a 13-year-old girl who recently arrived from Indonesia. Fathima speaks Indonesian and Arabic at home with her parents and her little brother. Her mother enrolled her in a dual immersion program upon arriving in the United States with the hope that Fathima will be able to improve her English, as well as maintain her Arabic language. Her mother is pleased that the school district offers a dual language program in English and Arabic.

When Fathima is with her two best friends, there is a lot of laughter. Today, the trio of girls is performing a play for their classmates. Fathima speaks rapidly and animatedly in Arabic. The story the girls have written is funny, and their classmates seem captivated by the story the girls have created. When Fathima's character speaks, she interjects English phrases. During the show, Fathima's character exclaims, "No way!" and "Let's go!" and "See you tomorrow!" During the girls' performance, they are expressive and talkative. Their classmates applaud loudly at the conclusion of the performance.

Later in the morning, the teacher is reading with the class. They are reading a version of the Indonesian folktale "Mouse Deer and the Farmer" in English. Throughout the lesson, Fathima adjusts her hijab and seems distracted. As the lesson progresses, Fathima continues to sit quietly, sometimes appearing not to be paying attention. Each time the teacher asks a question of the students, the English-speaking students call out excitedly, sometimes speaking over each other. Fathima remains silent during this time.

As the students leave for lunch, the teacher asks Fathima if she liked the book. She tells the teacher in Arabic that the story reminds her of home. When asked why she did not offer that observation during the lesson, she comments, "I understand the story, but I don't understand the words.""

In your learning group, consider and discuss the following questions:

- What strengths does Fathima bring to the classroom?
- If the teachers were to observe Fathima and her friends only performing their play during this period in the day, what conclusion could they make about Fathima as a student and a member of the classroom community?
- What changes can Fathima's teachers make to the lesson that would provide opportunities for Fathima to be more engaged and to participate in the discussion about the story?

Vignette #2 Newcomer Profile: **Margaret**

Margaret, a 4th-grade student, loves to read and play the piano. Her parents, her two brothers, and she immigrated to the United States from France three months ago. Her mother is a U.S. citizen and speaks English to the children in the home, but French is used by her father and was used at school when they lived in France. In France, Margaret's mother was the head of the human resources department for a successful publishing company. The company recently opened an office in the United States, and Margaret's family decided to leave France and become permanent residents here.

In France, Margaret was popular and outgoing. She did very well in school; her favorite class was math. Margaret played handball, and she also played the piano.

Margaret often draws in the library during recess, and she describes her friends in France and says she misses them. In conversations to her friends back home she says, "They don't play handball here. All of the girls in my class here play on a softball team, but I don't play softball."

Because Margaret had been to the United States a few times to visit Margaret's mother's family prior to their relocation and because her mother is a U.S. citizen, Margaret's mother assumed there would be little difference between her life in France and her life in the United States, but Margaret is finding that this is not the case. First, Margaret says the English they use at home is different from the English the children use at school. "There are a lot of words I don't know, and when I first came, the other kids laughed at my accent. Sometimes I didn't understand them, and sometimes they didn't understand me." Second, Margaret feels left out when it comes to jokes and references to popular culture, as she hasn't seen many of the shows her classmates reference. Third, Margaret was surprised that, even though her favorite subject is math, she did not understand a lot of the math problems she had to do in class and for homework. "The numbers are different! We used kilometers, and here we use miles. And I have to learn about pounds and ounces. They also use periods for decimals, instead of commas!"

In addition to the linguistic and cultural challenges Margaret faces, there are also significant differences in the school schedule in the United States compared to France. In France, children have Wednesdays off and go to school on Saturdays for a half day once a month.

In your learning group, consider and discuss the following questions:

- Although Margaret entered school with English-speaking proficiency, in what ways is Margaret's experience in school similar to that of non-English-speaking immigrants?
- In what ways is it different?
- What structures need to be in place to ensure that Margaret feels comfortable and safe in her new school?
- Although Margaret had formal schooling in France, given the differences between the United States and France, what supports should the school provide to ensure Margaret's academic success, as well?

Vignette #3 Newcomer Profile: **Emilio**

Emilio, a shy boy from Mexico, arrived with his family in the United States a year ago. He is now 12 years old and in the 7th grade; he has missed the past three days of school and has fallen behind on several projects. When asked why he has missed school, he shrugs and says that sometimes he just "can't take it anymore." His math teacher adds that she cannot understand why Emilio has not integrated more with the other students from Mexico, adding, "More than half of our student population is from Mexico."

When Emilio is asked where he is from, he says he is from Oaxaca. "The teachers think that all Mexicans are the same, but I am from Oaxaca, and they make fun of me." The they Emilio refers to are a group of fellow Mexican students who call Emilio and other students from Oaxaca names, such as "indito," referring to the indigenous roots of many Oaxacans. "When I speak Mixteco, they laugh at me and tell me I should go home. In middle school, the kids tell me I am dumb because I don't speak Spanish as well as they do."

While many of Emilio's teachers do not know that this bullying takes place, the ESL teacher acknowledges the struggles that his students from Oaxaca face in school. His ESL teacher says, "Mexico is actually an extremely diverse country, and many students come to the United States not speaking Spanish or have parents who do not speak Spanish. There are racial and linguistic distinctions within Mexican society that we teachers are only now realizing. We used to think of our students as one big group, but that simply is not true."

Emilio says he has learned more Spanish since coming to the United States last year and explains, "When they found out I was from Mexico, they put me in a class for Spanish speakers." Emilio laughs when he adds, "I'm learning two languages now!"

In your learning group, consider and discuss the following questions:

- Because Emilio is from Mexico, certain assumptions were made about him, by students as well as by teachers. What were these assumptions? Why were they made?
- Thinking of your own school and district, what assumptions are sometimes made about particular student populations? What are the consequences of these assumptions?
- What steps can the school take to address the bullying of the Oaxacan students?

Vignette #4 Newcomer Profile: **Yan**

Yan grew up in China, where he attended school regularly, was an excellent student, and enjoyed his childhood and early adolescence. When he was 14, his family moved to New York. Yan had studied some English in school, but like the rest of his family, he knew only a few phrases. His father had been an elementary school teacher in China, but in New York, with extremely limited English skills, he could get only a job as a janitor in a department store.

Yan's father studies English at night and dreams of someday working in a school again. Yan and his family live in Astoria, Queens, where they keep in close contact with the Chinese community. At first, Yan attended a neighborhood high school, but a year later, encouraged by immigrant friends of the family, he transferred to International High School at LaGuardia Community College, where he is a 17-year-old junior.

At home, the family converses in Mandarin Chinese, and Yan and his teenage friends speak Mandarin Chinese with the adults in their circle. Among themselves, they speak both Mandarin Chinese and English.

A warm, open, and energetic young man, Yan has made friends easily. At school he speaks primarily English, except when he talks with other Mandarin Chinese-speaking students who are new to the school. His English has developed rapidly since his arrival, and he can read fairly well in English. He still does not understand everything in his school texts but knows how to persevere and be patient. When he writes in English, he makes errors, but, as he puts it, he feels he has "come a long way." Because he is doing well and he feels that he has a strong enough foundation in English to succeed, Yan has decided to take the test for his high school equivalency diploma (HSED) and help his dad by getting a job rather than staying in school and graduating with his class.

In your learning group, consider and discuss the following questions:

- What strengths and experiences does Yan have that have helped him be a successful student in the United States?
- What are some of the possible outcomes for Yan leaving school with a HSED?
- What advantages might Yan have if he stays in high school and graduates with his class?
- What could the school do to support Yan staying in school?

Reading Jigsaw Note-Taker Matrix

	Fathima	Margaret	Emilio	Yan
List the student's age, grade, and country of origin. At what age did the student immigrate?				
How many similar students do we have in our school? How prepared are we to offer them quality learning opportunities? What do we need to learn to be able to do it?				
Record three key points to keep in mind programmatically from your learning group discussion.				
Record one question you have about the student in your vignette.				

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITY II

Monitoring the Progress of Newcomer Students

Purpose

Schools use district-level processes to monitor student progress and, if necessary, design individualized interventions for students who struggle. A common practice to monitor and understand student progress is to shadow a student throughout the instructional day and analyze a student's response to in class scaffolds and supports. This process can be useful when analyzing services for newcomer students.

During shadowing, observers can identify the degree to which the content materials, instructional process strategies, and formative assessment products have been differentiated to provide appropriate accommodations for the newcomer student. Feedback can be provided for instructional staff; additional or alternate resources can be recommended; and accommodations can be highlighted and modeled in order to ensure that newcomer students can access content and demonstrate their learning progress in ways that recognize their language proficiency and affirm their assets, such as using bilingual dictionaries, for example.

Materials

- Shadowing observation protocols
- Shadowing article

Time Required for Activity

- One hour for preparation, 45 minutes per shadowing session, one hour per observation data analysis and next steps.

Preparation for Facilitator

- Gather sample shadowing observation protocols (see below).
- Ask observers to read about shadowing before joining the professional learning session in order to receive an overview of what newcomer shadowing generally entails.
- Decide what focal features of instruction and/or the classroom environment that the observers will focus on. Then design your shadowing protocol. You may consider using one of the ones below or may want to create your own based upon the needs of your school and learners.

Instructions for Facilitator

Prepare for Newcomer Shadowing

1. Form a small team of educators (no more than four) to conduct the shadowing.
2. Review with the observers the purpose and overall process of newcomer shadowing and open the floor to questions.
3. Once everyone is clear on the purpose and process, work with the team to identify students to shadow who are representative of the school's newcomer population. To identify appropriate students, the team will want to consider language proficiency, prior schooling, and other factors, such as newcomers who may have learning disabilities or who are identified as gifted and talented.

4. Notify the families and newcomers that the team will be shadowing newcomer students at the school. Consider sharing the protocol once it is created.
5. As a team, agree on the purpose of the shadowing and create an appropriate observation protocol. For example, if the focus is on access to academic language, the observation protocol might capture the type of academic language used with the newcomer and the type of academic language the newcomer uses in a set time period. Conversely, some teams may choose to use a more open-ended protocol (see Sample Observation Protocol on page 25 of this toolkit).
6. To help the team collect useful data, have them try out the observation protocol using classroom videos recorded at the school. After viewing a short segment of instruction, discuss the types of observations the team noted on the protocol and guide observers to see the difference between descriptive rather than evaluative/inferential statements (e.g., the learner answered three yes/no questions in 40 minutes vs. the learner can't answer higher-order questions). Repeat this process until you are confident the observers are able to use the protocol reliably.
7. Notify teachers of the newcomers when the team will visit and why they are visiting. Stress that the team is not watching the teacher but rather the student. Consider keeping anonymous the identity of the students being shadowed until after the observation to avoid the observation being skewed, however unintentionally, by the teacher.

Conduct Newcomer Shadowing

1. Before the observation, provide student profiles of the selected students to the observers. Profiles should include background information (how many years in the United States, first language, prior educational experiences, and other relevant demographic information).
2. Have the team convene outside the teacher's room at the agreed-upon time and when the team enters the classroom, ask observers to try to sit away from the newcomer to avoid affecting student and teacher behavior.
3. The team records notes on their observation protocol.

Analyze Newcomer Shadowing Data and Next Steps

1. After the observation, provide enough time for the observers to compile and analyze their data to identify trends or patterns while the observation is fresh in their memory.
2. Have the entire observation team meet to share their notes. Identify a process that works for the team to share this data (e.g., the facilitator collects data on poster-size sticky notes using different colored markers to identify different themes; collect positive aspects of the observation; and then move to problematic observations and/or opportunities for improvement).
3. After debriefing, the team should create an action plan to address the issues/themes that were most prevalent in the data.

Sample Observation Protocol

Date:	
Time:	
Student:	

Observations of Student	Observations of Teacher

Resources

The resources below have been selected based on the following criteria:

- Resource produced by a federally funded study or center
- Resource produced by an open access and peer-reviewed journal
- Resource produced by a nonpartisan and nonprofit organization

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. (n.d.). *School climate improvement: Resource package*. https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/scirp/about

This center offers a variety of resources on different topics related to safe and supportive learning, such as student and family engagement, culturally and linguistically relevant schooling, and how to identify and prevent bullying.

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. (n.d.). *English learner family toolkit.* U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. https://ncela.ed.gov/family-toolkit

This toolkit is a free, online resource with answers to questions newcomer families may have about public schools and education in the U.S. Each chapter has five sections: General Information, Family and Student Rights, Questions to Ask Schools, Tips, and Resources.

Office of English Language Acquisition. (2023). *The biennial report to Congress on the implementation of the* Title III *State Formula Grant Program: School years 2018–2020.* U.S. Department of Education. https://ncela.ed.gov/biennial-reports-on-title-iii-state-formula-grants

This report offers definitions of terms and extensive statistical analyses of the demographic profile, English proficiency, and academic achievement of MLs in school years 2018–2020.

CHAPTER 2
Welcoming Newcomers to a Safe, Inclusive, and Thriving School Environment

After reading this chapter, readers should be able to

- Understand the laws and regulations schools need to follow to protect the rights of immigrant and refugee students and their families;
- Build a knowledge base of research-informed practices for creating safe, supportive, and welcoming schools for newcomers who are MLs;
- Become familiar with schools that have successfully implemented practices and processes for welcoming newcomer students and engaging their families;
- Understand the challenges faced by older newcomer students with interrupted formal education and learn strategies for addressing this population of students;
- Develop strategies for continuing newcomer learning and family engagement during interruptions to in-person schooling;
- Acquire professional development tools for increasing their staff's ability to effectively build upon the assets of newcomers and their families and meet their needs; and
- Continue learning about newcomers and their families through an annotated bibliography of resources.

Some newcomer students and their families may be proficient in English and may already have experience with school structures similar to U.S. public schools, while others may need language accommodations and orientation to the processes, procedures, and family engagement opportunities in U.S. schools.

Some families may have left their homeland to escape violence, war, natural disasters, or other traumatic events. In addition, newcomer families are navigating employment, housing, and the other demands of establishing a new life in a new land.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, newcomer students and their families bring numerous strengths, including a global perspective, prior knowledge, and skills. Newcomers possess rich cultural backgrounds and may speak two or more languages. It is important to note that each newcomer's experience is unique, and assumptions about their experiences and/or backgrounds should be avoided. Schools should recognize and build on the strengths of newcomer students and their families; doing so can enhance the entire school community.

Establishing district or school policies and practices that are asset-based and offer a warm and affirming welcome to newcomer students and their families has long-term benefits for the students, their families, and the school community. When newcomer families feel welcomed, they are more apt to engage with their children's schools and teachers. Greater family engagement and involvement lead to positive relationships between immigrant families and the school and, ultimately, to better student outcomes.

Understanding the Legal Rights of Newcomers and Their Families

School and district administrators must understand and provide for the legal rights of newcomers and their families. In addition, it is incumbent upon administrators to ensure newcomer families are informed about and comprehend their rights. Brief summaries of the most relevant court cases and laws follow.

In the United States, undocumented immigrant students have the right to a free public education at the elementary and secondary level. In 1982, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a landmark decision in *Plyler v. Doe.*

Note: This document does not address the legal obligations of states and school districts toward MLs and their families under *Title I and Title III* of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).* For more information on *ESEA,* go to https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/COMPS-748/pdf/COMPS-748.pdf

The Court's decision struck down a Texas law allowing districts to deny enrollment to undocumented immigrant children and policies in two school districts charging such children tuition. The Court held that denying undocumented immigrant children access to free public education violated the equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. For additional information about states' and school districts' obligation to provide all children with equal access to public education at the elementary and secondary level, please see the resources listed in the resource table on this page.

- In 1974, the U.S. Supreme Court determined, in *Lau v. Nichols*, that in order for public schools to comply with their legal obligations under Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VI)*, which prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance, they must take affirmative steps to ensure that students who are not proficient in English can participate meaningfully in their educational programs and services.[1] That same year, Congress enacted the *Equal Educational Opportunities Act (EEOA)*, which confirmed that public schools must take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by their students in their instructional programs.[2]
- The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit issued a decision in *Castañeda v. Pickard* in 1981 that strengthened educational programs for MLs.[3] It established a three-part test to evaluate a school district's program for ELs. Specifically, the test looks at whether the program is based on an educational theory recognized as sound by some experts or a legitimate experimental strategy; whether the program and practices are reasonably calculated for the effective implementation of the educational theory; and whether, after a legitimate trial period, the program succeeds in producing results indicating that students' language barriers are actually being overcome within a reasonable timeframe. These standards also are used by the Department to evaluate districts' and states' compliance with civil rights laws.

Check out these RESOURCES

Chapter 1 of the NCELA *English Learner Family Toolkit* summarizes the legal rights of MLs and their families. The toolkit is designed specifically for families and is available in several languages, as is the app.

The Department of Education and the Department of Justice also have many resources to ensure families understand their legal rights. These include:

Fact Sheet: *Confronting Discrimination Based on National Origin and Immigration Status* (2021)

Dear Colleague Letter: *English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents* (2015)

Fact Sheet: *Information for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Parents and Guardians and for Schools and School Districts that Communicate with Them* (2015)

Fact Sheet: *Ensuring English Learner Students Can Participate Meaningfully and Equally in Educational Programs* (2015)

Dear Colleague Letter: *School Enrollment Procedures* (2014)

Fact Sheet: *Information on the Rights of All Children to Enroll in School* (2014)

Questions and Answers: *Information on the Rights of All Children to Enroll in School: Questions and Answers for States, School Districts and Parents* (2014)

[1] Lau v. Nichols, 414 U.S. 563 (1974); 42 U.S.C. § 2000d to d-7 (prohibiting race, color, and national origin discrimination in any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance).

[2] Pub. L. No. 93-380, § 204(f), 88 Stat. 484, 515 (1974) (codified at 20 U.S.C. § 1703(f)). The Office for Civil Rights (OCR) at the U.S. Department of Education and the Civil Rights Division at the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) share authority for enforcing Title VI in the education context. DOJ is also responsible for enforcing the EEOA.

[3] 648 F.2d 989 (5th Cir. 1981).

- *Title I* of *ESEA* states that schools must provide parent communications required for parents of MLs in a uniform and understandable format and, to the extent practicable, in a language that the parents understand.[4] These rules ensure schools meaningfully communicate to all families about any program, service, or activity they offer for MLs under *Title I* and *Title III*, regardless of the family's native language or English proficiency.[5] Additionally, *ESEA* encourages family engagement and recognizes that parental involvement requires regular, two-way, meaningful communication about an ML's academic learning and other school activities.
- *Title I* of *ESEA* permits state and local educational agencies to administer the required state academic content assessments in languages other than English to students who are MLs. However, native language assessments of reading or language arts are allowed for these students for only the first three years, with a possible additional two years if the local educational agency (LEA) determines it is appropriate.[6] *ESEA* also permits schools to exempt recently arrived MLs who have been enrolled in school in the United States fewer than 12 months from one administration of the state-required reading or language arts assessment and includes options for excluding reading and math scores of these recently arrived MLs from school accountability calculations in certain circumstances.[7]
- The *Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act* (*FERPA*) is a federal law that protects the privacy of student education records.[8] *FERPA* applies to all educational institutions (i.e., schools) and agencies (e.g., school districts) that receive funds under any program administered by the Department. *FERPA* gives parents of students who are under 18 years of age, including applicable newcomer parents, and students who are 18 years of age or older or in attendance at an institution of postsecondary education (referred to in *FERPA* as "eligible students"), including applicable newcomer students, certain rights with respect to their children's or their own education records.
- The *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* (*IDEA*) requires that whenever consent is required (e.g., for initial evaluations and initial provision of special education and related services), school personnel must use the language normally used by an individual, or for a child, the language that the parents normally use and understand.[9]

School and district administrators need to be aware of and protect the rights of newcomer students and their families. Although it is crucial for schools to meet their legal obligations to newcomers, it is not sufficient for creating a welcoming, inclusive, and supportive environment.

Welcoming Newcomers and Their Families

Schools can welcome newcomer students and their families from their very first contact. There are several different approaches mentioned in the research literature on schoolwide strategies to welcome newcomers, but the common themes are establishing two-way communication, exchanging information, welcoming newcomers' cultures and languages, building relationships with newcomer families, breaking down barriers to newcomers' access, and establishing partnerships with community organizations. Each of these is discussed briefly in the following sections.

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[4] *ESEA*, 1112(e)(4).

[5] U.S. Department of Justice, & U.S. Department of Education. (2015). *Information for limited English proficient (LEP) parents and guardians and for schools and school districts that communicate with them.* https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-factsheet-lep-parents-201501.pdf

[6] *ESEA*, 1111(b)(2)(B)(vii)(III) and (ix).

[7] *ESEA*, 1111(b)(3)(A).

[8] *FERPA*, 20 U.S.C. § 1232g; 34 CFR Part 99.

[9] *IDEA*, 34 C.F.R. §§ 300.9 and 300.29.

Establishing Two-Way Communication With Newcomer Families in Their Preferred Language

Communication between newcomer families and school personnel is a critical first step for establishing positive, trusting relationships that can lead to greater family engagement.[10] School personnel should identify the family's preferred language as soon as possible so the school can develop a plan for communicating with them, both orally and in writing, in that language.[11]

CAVEAT

Many newcomers speak an indigenous language that is not the official language of their country. Such families may not mention this language at intake, even though it is their preferred language. This hesitancy and reticence maybe due to the discrimination—or worse—against their culture group and the use of their language, which reveal their identity and allegiance as indigenous, in their home country. They persist in this thinking even in the face of a welcoming school district because they have the misconception that their language is not welcome here—or even less, perhaps—than it was in their homeland. Indigenous groups have different backgrounds and needs that should be both celebrated and addressed at intake and subsequently.

There are a variety of ways schools can meet families' language needs. Some schools may already employ staff who know the language and culture of the newcomer family. If not, school administrators should cast a wider net and identify multilingual staff in the district who are fluent in the family's language and know their culture. Districts should establish a protocol for connecting staff and families with trained interpreters. Districts can tap into their multilingual community and local partner organizations to identify candidates for their interpreter certification programs.

If school administrators and staff do not speak the newcomer family's language, they can convey a welcoming and accepting disposition by learning how to pronounce the newcomer student's name correctly and by conveying a warm and welcoming demeanor and a welcoming school and classroom environment.

Check out this RESOURCE

From the Institute on Community Integration, Working with Language Interpreters: Information for Principals. In this series, there are two companion briefs, one for teachers and another for families.

Exchanging Information

As stated earlier, the U.S. school system may be unfamiliar to newcomer families. The school system in their country of origin may have very different norms and expectations, so they need to learn about American schooling in general and get information about even very common practices (e.g., raising one's hand), as well as the specific policies and practices of the school. Similarly, schools need to get specific information about newcomer students and their families. Newcomers are not a monolith. Not only do newcomer families have different countries of origin and different languages and cultures, they also have different backgrounds and

[10] National Charter School Resource Center. (2020, November 23). *Planning for family engagement in the charter school life cycle: A toolkit for school leaders.* Manhattan Strategy Group. https://charterschoolcenter.ed.gov/sites/default/files/upload/toolkits/Family-Engagement-Toolkit.pdf

[11] U.S. Department of Justice, & U.S. Department of Education. (2015). *Information for limited English proficient (LEP) parents and guardians and for schools and school districts that communicate with them.* https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-factsheet-lep-parents-201501.pdf

experiences. In addition to screening for English proficiency as required by law, it is important for schools to gather information from newcomer families about the student's educational history—even if the student does not have an academic transcript—to determine the best placement and immediate instructional goals for the student to ensure they are on the path to graduation. School administrators can put structures in place to exchange information with newcomer families; these structures include an orientation and a registration process.

Orientation for Newcomers

Establishing an orientation for newcomer families to learn about school policies and processes is one strategy school administrators use to exchange information. An orientation can be delivered through an in-person meeting at the school, a home visit, or via welcoming video messages in the family's home language or in English accompanied by translated subtitles. A variety of topics can be covered during an orientation. These may include school policies (e.g., homework/grading, attendance, discipline), logistics (e.g., lunch options, transportation), and programs, such as school clubs, sports, gifted education, and special education.[12]

Check out this RESOURCE

To learn more about welcoming newcomer students and families and get some ideas for designing an orientation, see *Welcoming and Orienting Newcomer Students to U.S. Schools* on the Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services website.

To communicate from the beginning that the school and family should be partners in meeting newcomer students' needs, the orientation should also offer multiple opportunities for dialogue with newcomer families. For example, the facilitators of the orientation should be prepared to answer newcomer families' questions and to learn about their priorities in a language they understand.[13] An orientation is an opportunity for newcomer families to view their role in relation to the school and vice versa. At the outset, this is intended to establish an ongoing two-way relationship that will be maintained throughout the student's education. With advances in technology, several presentation platforms offer simultaneous translations using closed captions in a variety of languages. Bilingual family members or staff can also record versions in additional languages.

Creating parent handbooks is another way to share school information with newcomer families. A toolkit from the Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Northwest highlights several handbooks that use simple text and pictures to illustrate the information provided and increase readers' comprehension.

Check out these RESOURCES

Need more information on translating and validating transcripts? See pages 16-18 in the REL Northwest toolkit.

Does a newcomer student lack birth records or provide a birth date that may be wrong? Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services developed a guide, *Refugee Children in Schools: A Toolkit for Teachers and School Personnel*, for estimating children's ages.

Has a newcomer resided in a Health and Human Services shelter prior to enrollment? The U.S. Department of Education has published two fact sheets on educating and enrolling these students.

Registration Process for Newcomers

A registration process for newcomers is how the school gathers critically important information about the student's linguistic, academic, social, and emotional strengths and needs to inform placement and instruction and to identify appropriate

[12] National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. (n.d.). *English learner family toolkit.* U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. https://ncela.ed.gov/educator-support/toolkits/family-toolkit

[13] U.S. Department of Justice and U.S. Department of Education. (2015). *Information for Limited English Proficient (LEP) parents and guardians and for schools and school districts that communicate with them.* https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-factsheet-lep-parents-201501.pdf

wraparound services and level-the-field supports. School and district administrators who establish a uniform registration process can help to ensure that complete data are collected for all newcomer students and that no inappropriate questions are asked.

Registration is a "complex process dictated by federal, state, and local laws and policies."[14] Figure 2.1 outlines the steps of a registration process that collects background information on the student (e.g., prior schooling), gathers new information on the student's knowledge and skills, and uses all this information to determine the student's placement, program, and services.

Collecting and analyzing student records and transcripts are the first step of the registration process in the registration flow chart. Understanding newcomer students' prior schooling will inform placement decisions, build upon students' experiences, and facilitate individualizing program planning and services.[15] Translating and validating transcripts are part of the analysis of student records, as are determining transfer equivalencies and awarding credit for work newcomer students have already completed. Some schools and districts have the capacity to review transcripts, whereas others contract with organizations to analyze transcripts. The collection and analysis of students' school records are important for all newcomer students, but they are especially crucial for students entering secondary schools, as students will be accruing credits toward high school graduation.[16]

In addition to collecting information on prior schooling, other forms of documentation (e.g., health records, vaccinations, copy of birth certificate) should also be collected. It is important to note that the absence of some of documentation, such as Social Security cards or birth certificates, cannot prevent LEAs from enrolling students in schools.[17] In the case of unaccompanied children or refugees whose records are not available, the school can tap other sources of information, such as U.S. government agencies and refugee resettlement agencies, to gather this or comparable information.[18]

Step 2 of the registration flow chart is "Screen and assess students to accurately identify services and needs and to meet federal requirements." Whereas step 1 is collecting and analyzing existing information, such as a student's prior schooling experiences, step 2 involves gathering new information from the student. Both phases of the registration process yield information to determine grade level, placement, services, and program development. It should be noted that much of the screening and assessments discussed

Check out this RESOURCE

The first chapter of the *English Learner Toolkit* is all about identifying MLs. It includes sample Home Language Surveys.

Chapter 1 Tools and Resources for Identifying all English Learners.

[14] Greenberg Motamedi, J., Porter, L., Taylor, S., Leong, M., Martinez-Wenzl, M., & Serrano, D. (2021). *Welcoming, registering, and supporting newcomer students: A toolkit for educators of immigrant and refugee students in secondary schools.* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2021064.pdf

[15] Martinez-Wenzl, M. (2018). *Finding the right starting point: Three steps for evaluating international transcripts* [Infographic]. U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/infographics/pdf/REL_NW_Findging_the_Right_Starting_Point_Obtaining,_Interpreting_and_Evaluating_International_Transcripts.pdf

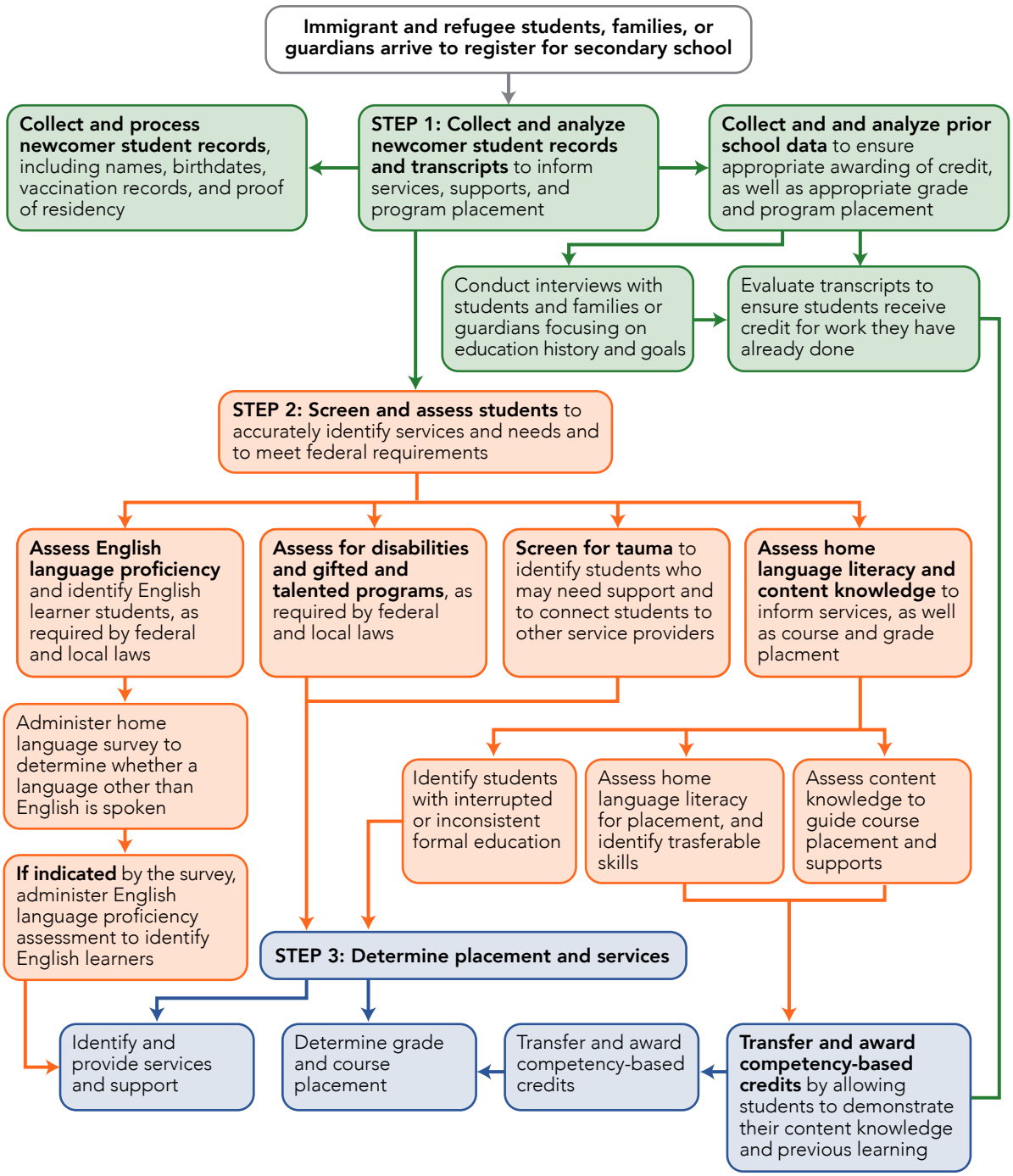
[16] Greenberg Motamedi, J., Porter, L., Taylor, S., Leong, M., Martinez-Wenzl, M., & Serrano, D. (2021). *Welcoming, registering, and supporting newcomer students: A toolkit for educators of immigrant and refugee students in secondary schools.* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2021064.pdf

[17] U.S. Department of Education. (n.d.). *Educational services for immigrant children and those recently arrived to the United States* [Fact sheet]. https://www2.ed.gov/policy/rights/guid/unaccompanied-children.pdf

[18] Greenberg Motamedi, J., Porter, L., Taylor, S., Leong, M., Martinez-Wenzl, M., & Serrano, D. (2021). *Welcoming, registering, and supporting newcomer students: A toolkit for educators of immigrant and refugee students in secondary schools.* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2021064.pdf

below (special education, gifted and talented, and trauma screening) can and often do take place after the student is registered and settled in his or her new school rather than during the actual registration process. However, ESEA requires all students who may be MLs to be assessed for ML status within 30 days of enrollment (ESEA Section 3113[b][2]).

Figure 2.1. A Summary of the Registration Process for Newcomer Students



Note: Recreated for 508 compliance with permission from *Welcoming, Registering, and Supporting Newcomer Students: A Toolkit for Educators of Immigrant and Refugee Students in Secondary Schools* (p. 14), by J. Greenberg Motamedi, L. Porter, S. Taylor, M. Leong, M. Martinez-Wenzl, and D. Serrano, 2021, https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2021064.pdf). Copyright 2021 by the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest (REL 2021-064).

As previously noted, *ESEA* Section 3113(b)(2) requires schools to assess students who may be MLs within 30 days of the student's enrollment. Initially, a home language survey is conducted to identify the language(s) spoken in the home. If the results indicate that a language other than English is how the family communicates, then the school assesses the student's English proficiency level. If the results of the English proficiency screener assessment determine that the student requires services from a language assistance program, then the school must offer English language services. School districts that use *Title I* or *Title III* funds to supplement language instruction educational programs (LIEPs) must inform the student's family of the results of the assessment and its recommendations within 30 days of the beginning of the school year or within two weeks of placement in an LIEP for students who enroll after the start of the school year) (*ESEA* Section 1112[e][3]). The notice must also provide families with information about families' options, including the right to opt out of language services. (*ESEA* Section 1112[e][3]).

The *IDEA* requires schools to identify and assess children who may have a disability and provide special education, if warranted. Schools must screen and assess newcomer MLs for disabilities and type(s) of disabilities (visit the Office of Special Education Programs for links to resources about identifying and assessing MLs). Evaluations may not be delayed because of a student's limited English language proficiency (ELP) or the student's participation in an LIEP. The *IDEA* recommends that a team of educators collaborate to assess MLs and develop the individualized education plan if the need for special education services is indicated.

In addition to screening for disabilities, schools may consider identifying students who may be gifted and talented. However, when LEAs lack culturally, developmentally, and linguistically appropriate assessments for MLs, it makes accurate determinations of gifted and talented newcomer students difficult. Some nonverbal assessment tools are available and when used in conjunction with other data may present a more complete estimate of the newcomers' knowledge and skills.[19]

During the screening and assessment processes, schools and districts should also want to look for potential trauma, as some newcomers have arrived from war-torn countries or refugee camps, or they may have escaped violent gangs. These traumatic events, including the migration to the school district, may cause newcomer students to suffer from anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and/or depression. In addition, leaving one's country, friends and family, and way of life to move to a new, unfamiliar country with a different language and norms is stressful for newcomer students and their families. Given the diversity of newcomers in U.S. schools, finding a linguistically and culturally appropriate screening tool for trauma may be difficult. It is recommended that schools partner with local mental health organizations to help determine if a newcomer student is suffering from trauma and, if so, to work with the mental health organization to provide the student and family with additional supports.[20]



The over- or underrepresentation of MLs in special education and/or gifted and talented programs is noted in the literature and becomes an issue for districts that fail to assess MLs accurately. Disproportionality in such programs is a sign that the problem may be present in a given school or school district.

[19] Greenberg Motamedi, J., Porter, L., Taylor, S., Leong, M., Martinez-Wenzl, M., & Serrano, D. (2021). *Welcoming, registering, and supporting newcomer students: A toolkit for educators of immigrant and refugee students in secondary schools.* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2021064.pdf

[20] A deeper discussion of how schools can support newcomer MLs impacted by trauma is presented in Chapter 3 of this toolkit, "Supporting Newcomers' Social and Emotional Needs."

The last item in step 2 is conducting content and literacy assessments in the newcomer student's home language, when possible. Gathering information on a newcomer's content knowledge in areas such as mathematics and science through assessments in the student's home languages will enable more accurate placement decisions. Depending on the graduation requirements of the state educational agency (SEA), the achievement of newcomers in secondary schools on these assessments can lead to students receiving competency-based credits. It also may eliminate the need for newcomers to take courses to cover content they have already mastered.[21]

Check out this RESOURCE

Access the *Registering and Enrolling Refugee and Immigrant Students in Secondary Schools* webinar from the Office of English Language Acquisition for a discussion of best practices and resources for facilitating refugee and immigrant students' transition into U.S. schools.

The final and culminating step in the registration flow chart is using the information from the two previous steps to determine the newcomer's grade level, placement, programs, courses (if applicable), and support services. For secondary education students, this step may also include an individualized plan for high school graduation, postsecondary education, or for a career. This is not to imply that screenings and assessments are all accomplished during registration; gathering information and determining programming and services are ongoing processes.

Ideas in ACTION

When a student enrolls at **Manhattan Bridges High School**, counselors and teachers collaborate to develop an educational program designed specifically for that student, based on her educational history and test scores. Because many students are newcomers who bring transcripts from foreign schools with them, the guidance counselors work to validate the coursework from their home countries to determine newcomer progress toward graduation.

Learn more about these programs by visiting the school's website at https://sites.google.com/manhattanbridgeshs.org/mbhs/home?pli=1

Welcoming Newcomers, Their Cultures, and Languages

The school environment impacts a student's sense of belonging and overall mental health and well-being, and this is especially true for newcomers.

There are numerous strategies school leaders can use to make newcomer families feel valued and respected.[22] The following are some suggested practices districts and schools might consider:

- Establish a "welcome center" that brings together school administrators, teachers, family liaisons, counselors, and an interpreter to meet with newcomer families individually when they first enter the school district.

[21] Greenberg Motamedi, J., Porter, L., Taylor, S., Leong, M., Martinez-Wenzl, M., & Serrano, D. (2021). *Welcoming, registering, and supporting newcomer students: A toolkit for educators of immigrant and refugee students in secondary schools.* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2021064.pdf

[22] Greenberg Motamedi, J., Porter, L., Taylor, S., Leong, M., Martinez-Wenzl, M., & Serrano, D. (2021). *Welcoming, registering, and supporting newcomer students: A toolkit for educators of immigrant and refugee students in secondary schools.* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2021064.pdf

- Identify mentors among the newcomer's peers to provide support and orientation during routine school activities such as lunch, class transitions, fire drills, and dismissal.
- Identify students, staff, or community members who speak the student's native language. They can be a resource for the student and the school, as needed.
- Offer home visits to families.
- Learn to correctly pronounce the names of newcomer students and strive to learn a few words or phases of their languages. Encourage staff members to do likewise.
- Identify students, staff, or community members who speak the student's native language that could assist the front office staff when greeting students and families, as needed.
- Discuss with families the value of strong home language skills and the benefits of maintaining their languages at home and, if applicable, at school.
- Provide opportunities for the school community to learn about immigrant experiences through literature (such as the activity described below) or personal narratives. The objectives are for other students to empathize with newcomers and develop a more global perspective.
- Hire bilingual staff and recruit bilingual volunteers who speak the newcomers' language whenever possible.
- Provide training to all staff on why maintaining newcomer students' home languages is important and how to support students' bilingual development.
- Offer staff guidance on how to respond to parents' questions and comments.
- Investigate the possibility of offering a two-way dual language program to develop bilingual and biliterate students, both newcomers and English-dominant speakers.



Newcomers High School in Long Island City specializes in teaching recent immigrants. It launched the collaborative Building Bridges project with St. Luke's, a private middle school in Manhattan, to establish a conversation about diversity and combating bias. MLs at the high school exchange letters with their St. Luke's "buddies" and meet with them several times a year. The St. Luke's buddies help the students edit their personal immigration stories and then, in turn, develop research papers on immigration based on interviews with their newcomer buddies. Several newcomer students also created video diaries so that they could share their personal stories with more people.

Learn more about this project by visiting the school's website at https://30q555.echalksites.com/in_the_news

The physical environment can be a tool for welcoming newcomers and showing appreciation for their languages and cultures. Educators might consider the following:

- Hanging the flags of newcomers' home countries
- Posting signs that say "welcome" in the home languages of the schools' newcomers
- Purchasing books in newcomers' home languages for the library and classrooms
- Displaying newcomers' artwork and photos from their countries in hallways and classrooms
- Creating a Family Center in the school with comfortable seating where families, including newcomer families, can meet informally. Include books in newcomers' languages that can be loaned to families.

Ideas in ACTION

School staff at **Marble Hill School for International Studies** have sometimes faced difficulties reaching out to immigrant parents with little formal education or English proficiency; they have addressed this issue by hiring translators, creating a welcoming environment, and providing support for all families. For example, they have staff that speak Spanish, Bengali, Urdu, and several African languages. Staff also employ the New York City Department of Education's phone translation services for lesson commonly spoken African languages.

Learn more about this school by visiting the school's website at https://www.marblehillschool.org/

Check out these RESOURCES

Understanding and Addressing Newcomers' Needs and Experiences, Fostering Empathy, and Promoting a Global Perspective

The resources below may provide ideas on how to help newcomers feel more comfortable in the classroom. They can also help educators gain new perspectives and receive useful guidance on supporting the needs of newcomer students and their families. Below are several resources that may be helpful for educators serving newcomer students.

1. A video from the Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific on the benefits of translanguaging. *Multilingualism and Translanguaging in the Classroom.*
2. An infographic from the Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific on the importance of incorporating student and family voice in education with the goal of creating culturally responsive classrooms. *Including Voice in Education: Addressing Equity Through Student and Family Voice in Classroom Learning.*
3. A video from the Regional Educational Laboratories West, Northwest, and Northeast and Islands on how families can utilize caregiver and family activity sheets and how teachers can incorporate this resource into their classrooms. *Connecting Classroom Instruction to Learning at Home: Applying Academic Vocabulary to Multiple Contexts*.

Partnering With Community Organizations

Schools might not have the resources and expertise needed to provide wraparound services for newcomer families. To support schools, there may be community organizations that have the expertise, resources, and mission to address the diverse needs of newcomer families. Through partnerships with various community organizations, schools can support newcomer families more comprehensively.

There is a range of community organizations schools may partner with, such as arts or cultural organizations, mental health centers, religious organizations, refugee resettlement agencies, and postsecondary education institutions (e.g., community colleges, career and technical programs, universities). Many school-community partnerships center around health, mental health, and social services (e.g., housing assistance, food banks, job centers). When choosing which organizations to partner with, schools should consider the needs of the newcomer families, as well as the availability, mission, ability, and interest of the organizations.

There are several steps schools and community organizations can take to ensure their partnerships run smoothly and effectively. It is recommended that partnerships are formalized and that jointly agreed-upon

expectations are put in writing. A schedule of regular meetings of staff from the school and the community organization should be established. In addition, any disclosure of personally identifiable information from student education records by the school to the community organization must comply with applicable privacy laws. In the case of FERPA, for instance, unless an exception to FERPA's general written consent requirement applies, a school's disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student's education records to a community organization is not permitted without the prior written consent of the parent or eligible student. Exceptions to FERPA's general written consent requirement can be found in 34 CFR § 99.31 and 20 U.S.C. §§ 1232g(b)(1)-(3), (b)(5), (b)(6), (h), (i), and (j). In certain circumstances, the disclosure of personally identifiable information from student education records by a school to a community organization may also require the school and community organization to enter into a written agreement.[23]



In the 2019–2020 school year, **Manhattan Bridges High School**, boasted a 4-year graduation rate (90 percent) that exceeded city (77 percent) and borough (78 percent) percentages. The school achieved such success by building intentional partnerships with key community organizations:

- **Cornell University Hydroponics Program and Internship:** pays student interns to do hydroponics research with a university professor after school
- **College Now at the City University of New York:** grants students access to courses, including "College 101," psychology, and criminal justice courses, earning college credits for participants
- **St. Joseph's College New York and Fordham University:** provide students with summer programs on SAT preparation
- **Options Center at Goddard Riverside Community Center:** provides students additional one-on-one college counseling
- **iMentor:** matches students in 9th, 10th, and 11th grades to professional mentors from across New York City; mentors meet with their mentees during monthly events and provide another layer of support to help students focus on their college and career goals.

Learn more about this school by visiting the school's website at https://sites.google.com/manhattanbridgeshs.org/mbhs/home?pli=1

Creating Safe and Supportive Schools for Newcomer Students and Their Families

Schools have a responsibility to provide not only a welcoming environment for newcomer students and their families, but also to ensure the school environment is safe, inclusive, and supportive.[24]

School administrators can work to ensure that newcomers feel and are safe in school. Policies should be reviewed to ensure that the policy has clear language



This video from the U.S. Department of Education outlines schools' obligations to address the harassment of protected students.

[23] For more information on the sharing of personally identifiable information from student education records under FERPA with community-based organizations, please see the Department's guidance entitled, "The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Guidance on Sharing Information with Community-Based Organizations," *available at* studentprivacy.ed.gov/Community_Based_Organizations.

[24] National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. (n.d.). *English learner family toolkit.* U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. https://ncela.ed.gov/educator-support/toolkits/family-toolkit

protecting newcomers from bullying. Schools should provide anti-bullying professional learning to ensure that teachers and staff know how to recognize and intervene when bullying occurs.[25] In addition, the anti-bullying policy then needs to be communicated to students and consistently enforced. The same is true for establishing an anti-bias policy that addresses racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural bias. School administrators can provide educators and other school staff with tools and strategies to implement an anti-bias approach to learning.

Schools that have a positive school climate are safer and more welcoming places for all students, including newcomers and their families. According to the Safe and Supportive Schools Model (see Figure 2.2) developed by a national panel of researchers and other experts, there are three key elements of a positive school climate:

1. **Engagement:** Strong relationships between students, teachers, families, and schools, and strong connections between schools and the broader community
2. **Safety:** Schools and school-related activities where students are safe from violence, bullying, harassment, and controlled-substance use
3. **Environment:** Appropriate facilities, well-managed classrooms, available school-based health supports, and a clear, fair disciplinary policy

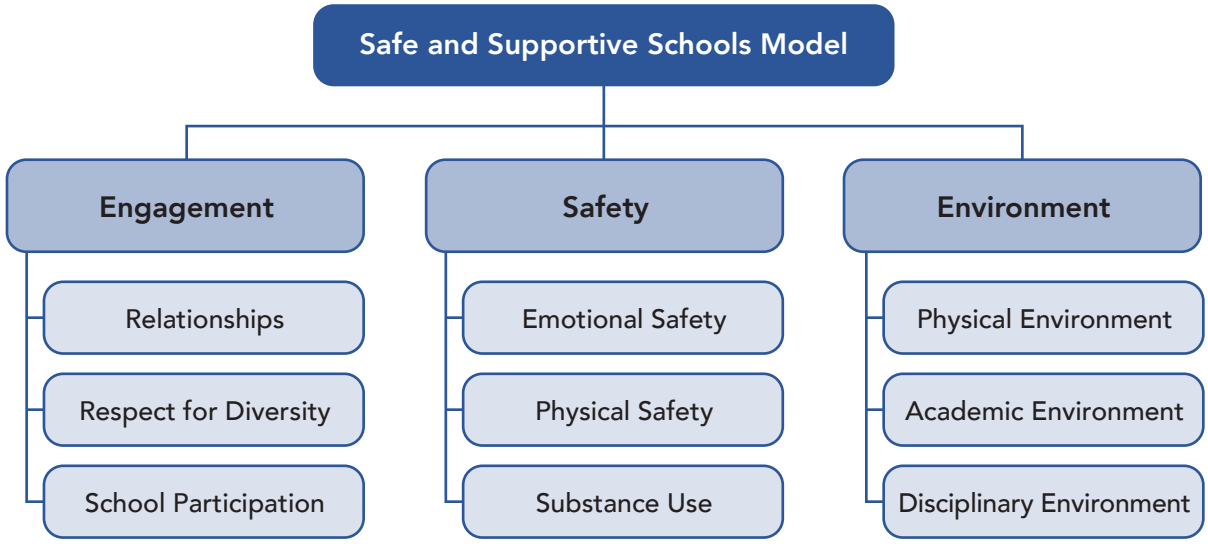
Figure 2.2 illustrates the overlap among these three elements. It is critical that all three elements are aligned in policy and practice.

Check out this RESOURCE

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) has developed the high-quality, adaptable ED School Climate Survey (EDSCLS) and associated web-based platform. Version 4.5 was released on April 28, 2021. The EDSCLS can be downloaded and administered free of charge.

School administrators can gather data on their school climate to see which of the key elements may need strengthening. There are several school climate assessments available. Once data have been collected and analyzed, administrators may then consult resources, such as the School Climate Improvement Resource Package, before launching efforts to improve their school climate.

Figure 2.2. Safe and Supportive Schools Model



Note: From *Safe Supportive Learning*, by the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments, (n.d.), (https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/). Copyright 2021 by American Institutes for Research. Recreated for 508 compliance with permission.

[25] The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments has several training modules on this topic: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/safety/bullyingcyberbullying

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITY

Purpose

Four Corners: Providing a Safe and Supportive Learning Environment[26]

This activity is designed to help educators evaluate the school or district's learning environment for newcomers and begin to see their role in creating a safe and supportive learning environment for newcomers at both the school- and class-level. This activity can lead to a rich discussion on how the school or district can begin to address areas of the learning environment that can be enhanced to better meet the needs of newcomers. The activity could also serve as a formative assessment to gauge how much educators at the school/district already know about safe and supportive learning and determine future instruction they might need.

Materials

- Four, large sticky notes
- Set of colored markers

Time Required for Activity

- 1 hour

Preparation for Facilitator

1. Read Chapter 2 of the toolkit and summarize key info from the chapter that will be relevant to present to your participants.
2. Post a large sticky note near each corner of the room.
3. Label the sticky notes accordingly:
   - **#1** What does a safe and supportive school look like for our newcomers?
   - **#2** What is our school already doing to cultivate a safe and supportive environment?
   - **#3** What more could our school do to create a safe and supportive environment?
   - **#4** What challenges might we face as we work to provide this environment, and what are some potential solutions?

Instructions for Facilitator

1. Review the content of the last professional learning session and open the floor to discussion of additional ideas and/or questions that arose from that session.
2. Present summarized information from Chapter 2, if relevant/appropriate.
3. Put participants into four groups and have each group go to the poster that corresponds to the number of their group (i.e., 1-4).
4. Provide each group with a different colored marker and ask them to record ideas to address the question on their poster. Tell the participants you will give them two minutes and when you call time, they must rotate to the next poster.

[26] Learn more about this activity at https://americanenglish.state.gov/resources/week-2-collaboration-and-movement-using-four-corners

5. Once two minutes have elapsed, ask the participants to rotate clockwise as a group to the next poster. Instruct participants to read the question and the ideas posed by the previous group. Then tell them to add their ideas to the poster. If participants agree with the ideas recorded by the group(s) who have already viewed this poster, encourage them to note this with a star or some other icon. Once time is up, ask the participants to rotate again.
6. Repeat the process until each group has visited all four posters.
7. Lead the participants in a discussion of the ideas presented on the posters. Note where the school is successful and where the school can grow to better meet the needs of newcomers.
8. Begin to plan the next steps to begin addressing the growth areas. Consider forming working groups of educators/school staff to research and develop a plan for addressing the areas of the school environment/instruction that can be enhanced for newcomers.

Virtual Learning Modifications

Participants meet on a virtual platform, and the facilitator uses breakout rooms to simulate the four corners. The facilitator can drop into each breakout room a link to a Google Doc with slides with each of the four corner prompts. Participants in each breakout room will discuss each slide for a pre-determined number of minutes and then rotate to the next slide. At the end of the activity, the facilitator can use a shared whiteboard to guide and collect information from the debrief.

Professional Learning Resources

The National Research and Development Center to Improve Education for Secondary English Learners created a series of modules for developing educator expertise to work with adolescent English learners. These modules were developed through consultations with leading linguists and educators from around the world. These resources can be used with pre-service and in-service educators as professional development activities. Each module contains the following:

- An introduction
- A series of activities
- Links to related readings and videos
- Directions on how to lead teachers through the module activities

For more information and to access the modules, visit the website of the National Research and Development Center to Improve Education for Secondary English Learners at https://www.elrdcenter.wested.org/resources-modules-overview.

Resources

The resources below have been selected based on the following criteria:

- Resource produced by a federally funded study or center
- Resource produced by an open access and peer-reviewed journal
- Resource produced by a nonpartisan and nonprofit organization

Greenberg Motamedi, J., Porter, L., Taylor, S., Leong, M., Martinez-Wenzl, M., & Serrano, D. (2021). *Welcoming, registering, and supporting newcomer students: A toolkit for educators of immigrant and refugee students in secondary schools.* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, Regional Education Laboratory Northwest. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/northwest/pdf/REL_2021064.pdf

As the title suggests, this toolkit discusses the why and how of welcoming, registering, and supporting newcomers and their families. It provides specific information and resources for processes, such as transcript translation and awarding competency-based credit, as well as many other topics school administrators should consider.

Office of English Language Acquisition. (2017). English learner toolkit for state and local education agencies (SEAs and LEAs) (2nd Rev. ed.). U.S. Department of Education. https://ncela.ed.gov/educator-support/toolkits/english-learner-toolkit

The EL toolkit is designed for state, district, and school administrators and for teachers. It offers tools and resources to help them meet their legal obligations in providing support to ELs to learn English while meeting college- and career-readiness standards.

Stuart-Cassel, V., Terzian, M., & Bradshaw, C. (2013, May). *Social bullying: Correlates, consequences, and prevention*. American Institutes for Research, National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments. https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/sites/default/files/1315%20NCSSLE%20Social%20Bullying%20d7_lvr_0.pdf

This brief focuses on social bullying, a form of emotionally aggressive bullying behavior. It includes discussion of how social bullying is defined, what distinguishes it from other types of aggression, how commonly it occurs in schools, and what factors contribute to social bullying involvement. The brief summarizes research findings concerning the impacts of social bullying on individual social development and adjustment and identifies implications for school learning environments. The last section describes school-based approaches for preventing and reducing social bullying.

The U.S. Departments of Justice and Education jointly issued the following resources to inform school leaders about their obligations when communicating with families of MLs (including those who are newcomers) and to support their practices:

Dear Colleague Letter: *English Learner Students and Limited English Proficient Parents*

Fact Sheet: *Information for Limited English Proficient (LEP) Parents and Guardians and for Schools and School Districts that Communicate with Them*

Fact Sheet: *Ensuring English Learner Students Can Participate Meaningfully and Equally in Educational Programs*

CHAPTER 3
Supporting Newcomers' Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

After reading this chapter, readers should be able to

- Recognize the link between social, emotional, and mental health well-being and academic success;
- Understand the unique social, emotional, and mental health needs and stressors of newcomers;
- Identify strategies school districts and schools can use to support newcomers' social, emotional, and mental health needs;
- Acquire professional development tools for increasing staff's capacity to recognize and address the unique needs of newcomers;
- Expand their learning about the social, emotional, and mental health needs of newcomers and strategies for addressing these needs; and
- Continue learning about newcomers and their families through an annotated bibliography of resources.

Social and Emotional Well-Being and Student Success

There is widespread consensus affirming the interconnectedness of social, emotional, mental health well-being and academic development as central to the learning process. Students' positive social, emotional, and mental health well-being correlates with higher rates of academic engagement, a sense of belonging and connectedness in school, and academic motivation, as well as reduced conduct issues, drug use, and violence. Thus, an equitable education for all students addresses academic performance and achievement while attending to their social and emotional development.[1]

When school districts intentionally integrate addressing students' social, emotional, and mental health needs with academic instruction, students can benefit in multiple ways. There is evidence that addressing the needs of the whole child has the potential to increase students' social and emotional competencies across all grade levels, and that the intentional integration of whole-child supports into district activities has the potential to improve achievement and school climate and lessen the need for disciplinary action.

Addressing social, emotional, and mental health needs and academic instruction has the potential to benefit all students, including newcomers. However, newcomer MLs have unique social, emotional, and mental health needs stemming from their status as immigrants who may be unfamiliar with the language and cultural context in the United States. Some newcomers may be traumatized from fleeing war-torn countries or being separated from family members during the immigration process. Some newcomers may experience civil rights violations because of bullying or discrimination due to their race, ethnicity, country of origin, or language. To ensure that newcomers not only adjust, but thrive academically, socially, and emotionally, school leaders and staff need to become aware of the unique social, emotional, and mental health needs of newcomers and acquire an array of strategies to support these students.

The Unique Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs of Newcomers

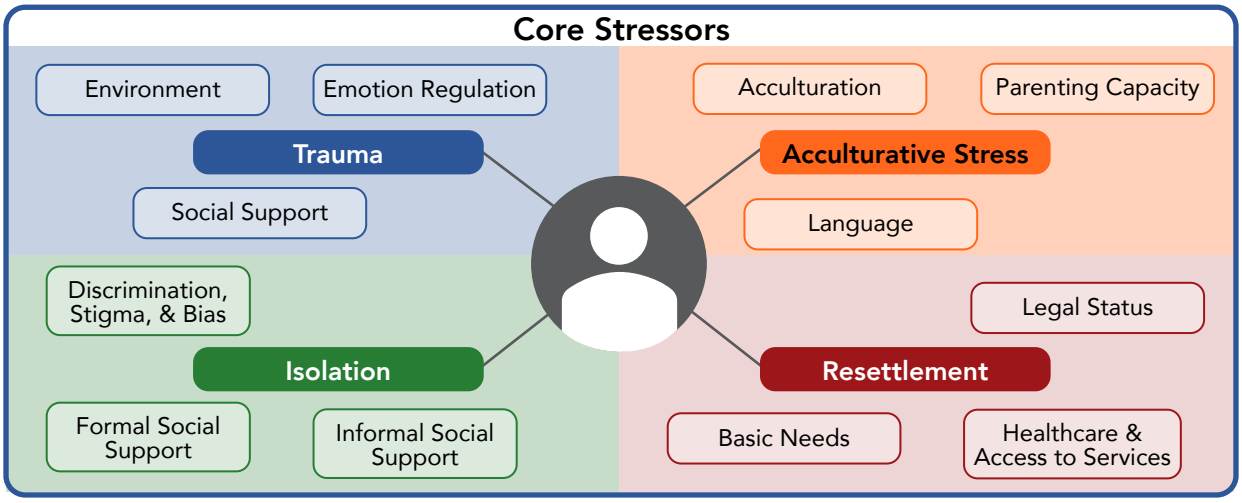
As addressed in Chapter 1, newcomers are a heterogeneous population. They come from different countries, speak different languages, and represent different cultures. Newcomers vary racially and ethnically and have

[1] Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services. (2021). *Supporting child and student social, emotional, behavioral, and mental health needs.* U.S. Department of Education. https://www2.ed.gov/documents/students/supporting-child-student-social-emotional-behavioral-mental-health.pdf

different backgrounds and education levels. Some newcomers immigrate to the United States with their families, and others arrive as unaccompanied minors. The reasons for their immigration also differ. Some newcomer families leave their native country seeking a better life and more opportunities for their children. Others are fleeing war, persecution, or violence.

Due to the heterogeneity among newcomers, the specific type, intensity, and causes of their social, emotional, and mental health needs also vary. However, there are core stressors faced by all newcomers to some extent. Figure 3.1 illustrates the core stressors and unique challenges newcomers may face.

Figure 3.1. Core Stressors of Newcomers



Traumatic Stress

Trauma occurs when a child experiences an intense event that threatens or causes harm to his or her emotional or physical well-being. Immigrants and refugees can experience traumatic stress related to the following:

- War and persecution
- Displacement from their home
- Flight and migration
- Poverty
- Family/community violence

Acculturative Stress

Stressors that refugee and immigrant children and families experience as they try to navigate between their new culture and their culture of origin include the following:

- Conflicts between children and caregivers over new and old cultural values
- Conflicts with peers related to cultural misunderstandings
- The necessity to translate for family members who are not fluent in English
- Problems trying to fit in at school
- The struggle to form an integrated identity including elements of their new culture and their culture of origin

Stress of Isolation

Stressors that refugee and immigrant children and families experience as minorities in a new country include the following:

- Feelings of loneliness and loss of social support network
- Discrimination
- Experiences of harassment from peers, adults, or law enforcement
- Experiences of mistrust by host population
- Feelings of not "fitting in" with others
- Loss of social status

Resettlement Stress

Stressors that refugee and immigrant children and families experience as they try to navigate between their new culture and their culture of origin include the following:

- Financial issues
- Difficulties finding adequate housing
- Loss of community support
- Lack of access to resources
- Transportation difficulties

Note: Recreated for 508 compliance with permission from *Refugee and Immigrants Core Stressors Toolkit,* by Boston Children's Hospital, 2019. Copyright by Boston Children's Hospital.

Unique Challenges of Newcomers Who Are Black MLs

The population of newcomers who are Black MLs is diverse and growing. In the 2017–2018 school year (SY), 223,893, or 4.2 percent, of K–12 MLs identified as Black; this number includes native-born and immigrant ML students. The largest percentage of non-native Black MLs was born in Haiti (17 percent). The countries of origin of the second through fifth largest percentages of Black immigrant MLs are Ethiopia (8.2 percent), Nigeria (7.3 percent), Kenya (6.7 percent), and the Dominican Republic (6.2 percent). Spanish was the home language of 30.6 percent of non-native Black MLs in SY 2017–2018. In that same year, 13.1 percent of non-native MLs identified Haitian Creole as their home language, and 11.1 percent identified French as their home language.[2]

Check out these RESOURCES

- English Learners Who Are Black infographic
- English Learners Who Are Black fact sheet

Both of these documents were created by the Office of English Language Acquisition of the U.S. Department of Education.

Many newcomers experience discrimination, racism, and xenophobia in K–12 schools.[3]

Educators may lack an understanding of the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds of Black MLs and the intersectionality of their lived experiences. This lack of understanding could lead to Black MLs being misidentified or under-identified for ML services. The New York City schools are an example of a responsive school community, in that they have established dual language, Haitian Creole programs where Black MLs can attain English proficiency while continuing to learn their language and history.

How Schools Can Support Newcomers' Social, Emotional, and Mental Health Needs

When school administrators prioritize meetings students' social, emotional, and mental health needs, students reap long- and short-term benefits, and school climate improves.[4] This approach can benefit all students, including newcomers.

In addition to prioritizing students' social, emotional, and mental health needs and implementing policies and programs that support the whole child, school administrators can provide leadership in other areas that have the potential to address the unique needs of newcomers. These are summarized below.

Create Trauma-Sensitive Schools

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, many students, including newcomers, may have experienced serious social, emotional, and physical trauma. Transforming schools to be more trauma-sensitive by implementing a strength-based approach will not only benefit newcomers who may be living with trauma resulting from the

[2] Office of English Language Acquisition. (2021). *English learners who are Black* [Infographic]. U.S. Department of Education. https://ncela.ed.gov/resources/infographic-english-learners-who-are-black

[3] Romo, H. D., Thomas, K. J., & García, E. E. (2018). Changing demographics of dual language learners and English learners: Implications for school success. *Social Policy Report, 31*(2). https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED592254.pdf

[4] Kendziora, K., & Yoder, N. (2016, October). *When districts support and integrate social and emotional learning (SEL): Findings from an ongoing evaluation of districtwide implementation of SEL.* American Institutes for Research, Education Policy Center. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED571840

immigration process and/or the reasons that prompted their immigration, it will also benefit other students who may be traumatized by other types of events in their lives.[5]

Trauma-sensitive schools are safe and supportive places where students who have experienced trauma make positive connections and build relationships with adults and peers. Although trauma-sensitive schools may look different from each other, the Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative (TLPI) has identified six core attributes of a trauma-sensitive school:

- There is a shared understanding among all staff that a whole-school approach to trauma sensitivity is needed.
- The school supports all children to feel safe physically, socially, emotionally, and academically.
- The school addresses student needs in holistic ways, taking into account their relationships, self-regulation, academic competence, and physical and emotional well-being.
- The school explicitly connects students to the school community and provides multiple opportunities to practice newly developing skills.
- The school embraces teamwork, and staff share responsibility for all students.
- Leadership and staff anticipate and adapt to the ever-changing needs of students.

Check out this RESOURCE

The Trauma and Learning Policy Initiative (TLPI) has produced a 10-minute video of an elementary school's journey to create a trauma-sensitive, safe, and supportive school, "A School's Journey Toward Trauma Sensitivity".

Support Teachers in Implementing Asset-Based and Trauma-Informed Approaches

Teachers first need to get to know newcomers and not make any assumptions about who they are based on their cultures, languages, and family backgrounds. Learning about newcomers as individuals will lay the foundation for teachers to establish trusting relationships with each of their students. Developing positive relationships with students, including newcomers, has the potential to support students' social, emotional, and mental health well-being, cognitive engagement in school, resilience, and achievement.

Newcomers, like all students, need to be recognized for the strengths they possess. Teachers should not only acknowledge the assets newcomers have, but also build upon these assets to support students living with trauma to meet their linguistic, academic, and personal goals.

Research demonstrates how an asset-based approach to supporting the social, emotional, mental health needs, and academic growth of all students, especially MLs, can help students thrive. There are four asset-based practices teachers should use to support students facing adversity:[6]

1. *Build asset-based relationships with students:* Teachers know who their students are and build relationships with them through personalized interactions. They support

Check out this RESOURCE

The National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments offers the Trauma-Sensitive Schools Training Package. The training package provides school and district administrators and staff with a framework and roadmap for adopting a school- or district-wide trauma-sensitive approach.

[5] Zacarian, D., Alvarez-Ortiz, L., & Haynes, J. (2020, October). Meeting student trauma with an asset-based approach. *Educational Leadership, 78*(2), 69–73. https://www.ascd.org/el/articles/meeting-student-trauma-with-an-asset-based-approach

[6] Figure 3.2.

students to identify their strengths so they can best leverage them in order to become productive members of the learning community.

2. *Encourage student voice and choice:* Teachers should create a classroom environment that provides various opportunities for students experiencing trauma to speak up, make decisions, take risks, and build their confidence.
3. *Connect the curriculum to students' lives:* Curricula that are affirming and culturally relevant can make students feel seen and heard. Connecting the curriculum to students' experiences communicates to students that their experiences are valid and should be celebrated.
4. *Ensure that routines and practices are consistent and predictable:* Implementing consistent routines can make students living with trauma feel more stable and confident. Teachers who use the same classroom routines and rituals minimize students' fears.

The use of the asset-based strategies above is not unique to newcomers living with trauma. These trauma-informed practices are applicable to newcomers and other students who have experienced trauma and/or are currently living in adverse circumstances.

Promote Resilience Through Facilitating Responsive Relationships

Resilience serves to counterbalance trauma; it is the ability of an individual to withstand and rebound from stress. Research into the development of resiliency indicates that there is both a biological predisposition determined by a child's genetic make-up and brain development and environmental factors determined by the strong relationships children have with the adults in their family or community. Resilience depends on the development of supportive, responsive relationships that help students master a set of capabilities crucial in helping them respond and adapt to adversity in healthy ways.[7]

One strategy school and district administrators can employ to build newcomers' resilience is to provide opportunities for school personnel to respond to students' needs. Establishing advisory teacher programs, newcomer support teams, or after-school activities (e.g., clubs, sports) are some ways in which adults can work to form supportive relationships with newcomers, a critical factor in building resilience.



At **Marble Hill School for International Studies** in Bronx, New York, an advisory teacher follows a cohort of students throughout their academic career and serves as an advocate for each student. Advisors oversee student academic progress by gathering information about grades, attendance, and behavior; providing support whenever needed; and fostering communication between the school and home. At the beginning of the program the advisory program addresses socializing, learning study skills, and familiarizing students with the college process. Later students are taken on college visits, and the focus is more on postsecondary college and career success. Teacher lessons for advisory courses are continuously being created, adapted, and modified to fit the needs of the students.

Learn more about this school by visiting the school's website at https://www.marblehillschool.org/
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. (2016). *Newcomer Tool Kit.* Washington, DC: Author

[7] National Scientific Council on the Developing Child. (2015). *Supportive relationships and active skill-building strengthen the foundations of resilience: Working paper No. 13.* Harvard University, Center on the Developing Child.

Develop Individualized Strategic Plans for Newcomers in High School

Older newcomers who enroll in high school upon their arrival in the United States face the added stress of having little time to learn English, acclimate, and complete all graduation requirements so they can receive a high school diploma. Districts and schools can alleviate some of that concern by instituting the practice of developing individualized strategic plans with newcomers in secondary schools for completing high school and making postsecondary plans.

A publication by the Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest discusses the process and identifies resources for creating individualized strategic plans for newcomers. One key to a successful plan and outcome is to begin the planning process as soon as possible, so newcomers have adequate time to earn needed credits for graduation. It is also important to include newcomers and their families during the planning process.



For more information and resources on individualized strategic planning, see Welcoming, Registering, and Supporting Newcomer Students: A Toolkit for Educators of Immigrant and Refugee Students in Secondary Schools by the Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest.

There are several challenges older newcomers face related to obtaining records of previously completed courses, credit deficiencies, and ineligibility if planning for postsecondary education. An individualized strategic plan that is collaboratively created with a newcomer and his or her family that includes the student's goals and a realistic timeline can help the newcomer navigate these challenges. This may include providing information on pursuing a high school equivalency diploma. High school equivalency testing is available in languages other than English and could be an option that older newcomer MLs and their families may wish to consider.

Put a Stop to Bullying

In addition to other stressors, newcomers are often victims of school bullying because they are perceived as being different. Bullying is defined as aggressive behavior that is repetitive and that plays upon a power imbalance between the aggressor and the victim. Immigrant bullying is based on the victim's immigrant status or family history of immigration and can take the form of (1) hurtful remarks about a student or student's family members, (2) physical violence or threat, (3) manipulation, (4)cyberbullying, or (5) exclusion.[8]

Bullies may be American-born students or other immigrant students who have lived longer in the United States. Newcomers may bully other students in an effort to try to fit in and belong. Newcomers may not report bullying due to factors such as misinterpreting language and culture, fear of authority figures, and/or trauma from their immigration experiences. When bullying constitutes discriminatory harassment (conduct that is based on race, national origin, color, sex [including orientation and gender identity], age, disability, or religion), schools have an obligation to resolve this harassment.[9]

By working with students, families, and community groups, schools can create safe learning environments in which all students can participate in a robust exchange of ideas to stop the bullying of newcomers. The U.S. Department of Education suggests that schools use the following strategies to counter bullying:

- Value the diverse linguistic, cultural, racial, and ethnic backgrounds of all students.

[8] Maynard, B., Vaughn, M. G., Salas-Wright, C. P., & Vaughn, S. R. (2016). Bullying victimization among school-aged immigrant youth in the United States. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 8*(3), 337-344. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4764796/

[9] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (n.d.) *Stopbullying.gov: Federal laws.* Stopbullying.gov. https://www.stopbullying.gov/resources/laws/federal

- Encourage students on all sides of an issue to express disagreement over ideas or beliefs in a respectful manner.
- Communicate a clear message to students that harassment and bullying will not be tolerated and that school is a safe place for all students.
- Create opportunities—for example, by engaging interfaith leaders or campus ministries and others in the school or community—for students to enhance their cultural competency by being exposed to various cultures and faiths, such as through co-curricular activities in which students work on service projects so they discover commonalities and appreciate differences.
- Encourage students and parents to report all incidents of harassment and bullying to the school staff, so that the school can address them before the situation escalates.
- Have a system in place to intervene if a student's conduct could endanger others.
- Ensure that information about the steps outlined above is easily understandable for all students, families, and school or college personnel—including those from diverse linguistic backgrounds.[10]

Create An Inclusive Environment Through Adult-Led and Peer-Led Formal and Informal Supports

There are several types of formal and informal, adult-led and peer-led programs and structures that can support newcomers to promote their social and emotional development and to help them to feel more comfortable, less anxious, and more connected to their new school.[11] Figure 3.2, which is adapted from the 2016 version of the *Newcomer Toolkit*, lists some examples and potential benefits of formal and informal, adult-led and peer-led programs and structures.

Figure 3.2. Adult- and Student-Led, Formal and Informal Social and Emotional Supports for Newcomers

Type of Support	Examples	Potential Benefits
Formal, Adult-Led	■ Strategic collaborations with culturally relevant community-based organizations and faith-based institutions ■ Sessions for "newcomers only" where they can learn about college planning, why and how to get involved in service-learning projects, or other topics related to college applications ■ Formal extended-day programs that provide opportunities (e.g., clubs, sports, service learning) to learn in interactive, interest-driven environments ■ Parent and family workshops in home languages on such topics as college planning; tax preparation; immigration assistance; medical, dental, and mental health clinics (if families are receptive to these services); and computer and internet skills	■ Offers a sense of stability, minimizes fear of acculturation, provides companionship to bolster the student's sense of belonging and contribution to the school and community ■ Helps students focus their efforts to achieve social, emotional, and academic success ■ Offers consistent communication to help strengthen relations among families, students, schools, and the community

[10] U.S Department of Health and Human Services (n.d.) *How to prevent bullying*. Stopbullying.gov. https://www.stopbullying.gov/prevention/how-to-prevent-bullying

[11] Office of English Language Acquisition. (2016). *Newcomer Toolkit*. U.S. Department of Education.

Type of Support	Examples	Potential Benefits
Informal, Adult-Led	■ Advisory programs or a daily advisory period in which the student checks in with a homeroom teacher or another adult every day ■ Student check-in times with the school counselors to identify any changes and to help students develop a positive sense of themselves, their potential roles with others, and their unique contributions to the school	■ Offers regular support for the student ■ Provides a one-on-one opportunity to speak with adults in an informal, confidential environment ■ Establishes a reciprocal sense of trust and caring ■ Allows adults to work with teachers and support staff to connect students with relevant services and supports ■ Provides opportunities to strengthen problem-solving skills, attitudes, and experiences in ways that help students become engaged learners and members of their new community
Formal, Peer-Led	■ Cross-age peer mentoring between students of different ages; for example, a high school junior is paired with an elementary student ■ Cross-age programs (e.g., tutors, sports assistants, junior counselors, partnerships with community groups that work with youth)	■ Benefits both peers and mentors through their relationship ■ Helps students gain independence, understand and respect diverse people and experiences, and move toward functioning effectively
Informal, Peer-Led	■ Opportunities for newcomers to speak in informal social situations ■ Opportunities for students to have access to linguistic support and opportunities to interact with others from the same cultural background	■ Allows students to begin to assume leadership roles ■ Encourages positive interethnic interactions that support English proficiency and academic achievement

Note: Adapted with permission from *Newcomer Toolkit*, by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, 2016. Copyright 2016 by the U.S. Department of Education.

Partner With Outside Organizations and Newcomers' Families

As discussed in Chapter 2, there are a multitude of reasons for school administrators to partner with community organizations. Some organizations focus on a specific immigrant population, while other community organizations can provide wraparound services for newcomer MLs and their families. This might include medical and dental care, mental health services, and social services (e.g., securing housing, financial support, food and clothing, employment services). All this can support the social emotional, and mental health needs of newcomers and their families. In addition, immigrant families might prefer connecting to their children's school through a community or religious organization rather than school-based organizations, such as the PTA.[12]



Check out this RESOURCE

Read about the emotional impacts of COVID-19 on MLs in TESOL's *Back to School After COVID-19: Considering Emotional Well-Being.*

The most important partnership schools can forge to support the social, emotional, mental health needs, and academic success of newcomers is with their families. Chapter 5 of this toolkit provides an in-depth discussion of school-family partnerships and guidance for establishing positive, productive, and culturally responsive partnerships with newcomer families.

[12] Umansky, I., Hopkins, M., Dabach, D. B., Porter, L., Thompson, K., & Pompa, D. (2018). *Understanding and supporting the educational needs of recently arrived immigrant English learner students: Lessons for state and local education agencies*. Council of Chief State School Officers.

Ideas in ACTION

- Having a community clinic in the school helps the **Columbus Global Academy** identify student health needs and connect them to local services. For example, if indicated from the nurse's exam, students who are enrolling in Columbus Global Academy receive vouchers for free chest X-rays at Children's Hospital to check for tuberculosis. A mobile dental clinic comes to the school twice a year, as well. Medical students at the Ohio State University eye clinic perform eye exams once a year, and Lenscrafters provides free eyeglasses to those in need. Local hospitals and agencies, such as St. Vincent's and Rosemount respectively, provide mental health counseling.
- At the **International High School at LaGuardia Community College** in New York, support extends well beyond formal course- and curriculum-based sources of home language development. They offer a variety of clubs and after-school programs, which draw on and develop students' home languages. The Chinese club, for example, is a Wednesday afternoon elective in which students organize cultural events, as well as publish an extensive magazine in Chinese each year. The program also promotes partnerships with groups such as South Asian Youth Action, a community-based organization, to connect students to communities.

Learn more about these schools by visiting the schools' websites at https://www.ccsoh.us/ColumbusGlobalAcademy and https://www.ihsnyc.org/
Source: U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. (2016). *Newcomer Tool Kit*. Washington, DC: Author

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITY

Scenarios and Discussion

"Support Me" – Creating Social and Emotional Supports for Newcomer Students

Purpose

This professional development tool is designed to help district and school administrators become more familiar with the resources provided by the National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE) and can be tailored to meet the specific needs of teachers and staff. The purpose of this activity is for staff to analyze and apply the information on newcomers' social, emotional, and mental health supports provided in this chapter of the toolkit in order to learn more about NCSSLE's resources.

Materials

The featured resources for this activity can be found here: https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/engagement/relationships

Time Required for Activity

- 1 hour

Preparation for Facilitator

- A few days in advance, ask participants to read Chapter 3 of this toolkit. If time is limited, ask participants to read pages 40–46.

Instructions for Facilitator

- Put participants into small groups and direct participants to go to https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/topic-research/engagement/relationships.
- Ask participants to scan the featured resources on that website. Then ask each group to select one resource to read.
- After each group member reads the selected resource, ask the groups to discuss what they learned from that resource and how that information could be used to support the needs of newcomers at their schools.
- Ask each group to summarize their selected resource for the whole group and share the key take-aways as they relate to working with newcomers and their families.
- Facilitate a full-group discussion focused on implications for the district or school's approaches to developing social, emotional, and mental health supports for newcomers.
- Ask a group member to capture the main ideas and use this input for improvement planning.

Offering This Professional Development Activity Virtually

With modifications, the "Support Me" professional development activity can be delivered synchronously online. These modifications are as follows:

Preparation:

- Email the link to the featured resources to each participant prior to the start of the activity.

Implementing the "Support Me" Professional Development Activity:

- After welcoming the whole group and reviewing the instructions for the activity, create breakout groups of four participants each. In each breakout group, participants decide on the featured resource they would like to share with the group. Participants can use collaborative software to capture their thinking regarding the summary of the resource and how it can be used to support newcomer students and families.
- To conclude the activity, the facilitator reconvenes the participants for a full-group discussion of what they decided about supports and what the implications are for their district or school.

Resources

The resources below have been selected based on the following criteria:

- Resource produced by a federally funded study or center
- Resource produced by an open access and peer-reviewed journal
- Resource produced by a nonpartisan and nonprofit organization

Jones, S. M., & Kahn, J. (2017, September 13). *The evidence base for how we learn: Supporting students' social, emotional, and academic development.* National Commission on Social, Emotional, and Academic Development.

This brief presents the consensus statements of the Council of Distinguished Scientists. These consensus statements of evidence—drawing from brain science, medicine, economics, psychology, and education research—unite the country's leading scholars of learning in calling for the full integration of social and emotional learning with academic instruction.

National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (NCSSLE). (n.d.). *Safe supportive learning*. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Healthy Students. https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/

NCSSLE is funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Healthy Students to help "improve schools' conditions for learning through measurement and program implementation, so that all students have the opportunity to realize academic success in safe and supportive environments." This website "includes information about the NCSSLE's training and technical assistance, products and tools, and latest research findings." It also includes a link to a free school climate assessment tool (https://safesupportivelearning.ed.gov/edscls).

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. (2021). *Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Multilingual Learners and Their Social and Emotional Well-Being.* U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. https://ncela.ed.gov/sites/default/files/legacy/files/fast_facts/OELA-SocioEmotionalELs-20220413-508.pdf

For MLs and their families, the COVID-19 pandemic has had disproportionate and inter-related consequences for their economic stability, educational opportunities and outcomes, and social, emotional, physical, and mental well-being. This infographic presents areas of impact for MLs that schools should address, and some ideas on how to best support MLs and their families during recovery efforts.

White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders Fact Sheet. (2021, May 28). https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/05/28/fact-sheet-president-biden-establishes-the-white-house-initiative-on-asian-americans-native-hawaiians-and-pacific-islanders/

On May 28, 2021, President Biden signed an executive order re-establishing the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians, and Pacific Islanders. This fact sheet details several aspects of this initiative and includes descriptions of related presidential actions (e.g., signing the *COVID-19 Hate Crimes Act*).

CHAPTER 4
Providing High-Quality Instruction for Newcomers

After reading this chapter, readers should be able to

- Understand the components of newcomer programs;
- Identify features of high-quality instruction for newcomers;
- Develop strategies for helping schools provide high-quality instruction to newcomers during times of remote learning;
- Acquire professional development tools for increasing staff's ability to effectively teach newcomers; and
- Continue learning how to provide high-quality instruction for newcomers through an annotated bibliography of resources.

High-quality education for newcomer students builds on their unique strengths and supports their development in ways that enable them to reach their full potential. Newcomers who need to develop English proficiency require instruction that addresses the simultaneous development of English proficiency and grade-level concepts and skills. This chapter includes guidelines for teaching newcomers and, in particular, principles for teaching MLs; common misconceptions about teaching MLs; and a sample list of academic programs for newcomers. The guidelines in this chapter are useful for strengthening existing programs or creating new ones to ensure that all newcomers have access to ambitious, high-quality instruction.

Process and Practice Components of Newcomer Programs

Creating an inclusive school community hospitable to the implementation of high-quality instruction for newcomers requires designing and sustaining school structures and processes that help to ensure newcomers are both welcomed and provided information and the resources they need to thrive in the school environment. This includes a broad spectrum of support, from initial entry through the learning of rigorous academic content, to transitioning to a mainstream program or to postsecondary options in education and careers.

Many of the recommended components listed below are district-based; however, schools may also implement these practices or advocate for particular components.[1]

Newcomer Program Components With Examples of Processes or Practices

Develop a clear vision and goals for newcomers.

Examples:

- Set academic and social goals for the students and build a program to meet those goals.
- Define entry criteria and exit criteria for the students in the program.
- Hold newcomers to the same high standards as other students, coupled with high support.
- Communicate the vision and goals to school, district, and community stakeholders.
- Conduct initial intake interviews with students and families in their home language. (See Chapter 2 for further ideas.)

(Continued on next page)

[1] Castellón, M., Cheuk, T., Greene, R., Mercado-Garcia, D., Santos, M., Skarin, R., & Zerkel, L. (2015, December). *Schools to learn from: How six high schools graduate English language learners college and career ready.* Stanford University, Stanford Graduate School of Education. https://www.lehman.edu/academics/education/middle-high-school-education/documents/SchoolstoLearnFrom-NewWorld-Gashi.pdf

Develop a set of common values about newcomers and accept shared accountability for their education.
Examples:

- Ensure the school or district's mission is focused on preparing newcomers for college and career success.
- Hold a mindset of continuous improvement.
- Recognize that the entire school shares responsibility for newcomers' success.
- Determine the needs of newcomers and their families and design and adapt school structures that meet those needs, with continuous improvement based on evidence.
- View newcomers' prior educational and life experiences as assets that can be leveraged for learning.
- Maintain a strong sense of pride in and respect for all cultures.

Design specific courses for students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE).
Examples:

- Develop a separate literacy course or set of courses for students with interrupted educational backgrounds if the program has both preliterate and literate newcomers.
- Develop numeracy skills courses that prepare newcomer MLs with limited or interrupted formal education to access high school-level math courses, such as algebra.[2]
- Develop introductory-level courses in basic science and social studies that prepare newcomer MLs with limited or interrupted formal education to access content in these subject areas.[3]

Design instruction for newcomers' development of conceptual, analytic, and language practices simultaneously.
Examples:

- Create or adopt a unified language development framework integrating content, analytic practices, and language learning.
- Consider developing bilingual, dual language, or two-way immersion programs to support newcomers' home languages and English.
- Review general education and language assistance programs to ensure that there is an explicit focus on building academic literacy and cultivating English language development.
- Promote cross-disciplinary and cross-grade literacy expectations and teacher collaboration.
- Be aware of the second language acquisition process and be able to detect when a delay may not be due to the language learning process but is the result of a disability instead.

Promote the use and development of newcomers' home languages at school and in the community.
Examples:

- Promote the development of newcomers' native language skills and incorporate native language instruction into the curriculum where possible.
- Promote the use and maintenance of home languages through community partnerships.

Provide alternative school day and school year schedules and structures based on student and family needs.
Examples:

- Provide extra learning time through after-school, summer school, Saturday school, and/or vacation institutes.
- Determine student and family needs and design schedules and structures to meet those needs.
- Optimize student engagement, learning, and effort through creative scheduling and rigorous coursework.

(Continued on next page)

[2] Custodio, B. (2011). *How to design and implement a newcomer program.* Allyn and Bacon.
[3] Custodio, B. (2011). *How to design and implement a newcomer program.* Allyn and Bacon.

Engage families and community stakeholders in school programs and other supports to ensure newcomers' success.

Examples:

- Engage families by teaching them about schooling in the United States and showing them how to be involved in their children's education. (See EL Toolkit for more information.)
- Create opportunities for family input and involvement in school planning and the implementation of programs. (See Chapter 5 in this toolkit.)
- Plan support groups and activities to address family reunification issues.
- Make connections in the community for social and emotional support, health and mental health services, and immigrant and refugee services.
- Make connections in the community for career exploration, work experience, and internships for high school newcomers.
- Pursue community support for initiatives designed to accelerate achievement among newcomers.

Establish processes for newcomers' transition to mainstream programs or postsecondary options.

Examples:

- Smooth the transition process for students in the exiting newcomer program (e.g., classroom and school visits, field trips, student mentors, auditing a course, cross-program teacher meetings).
- Work on postsecondary options for high school newcomers (e.g., connect with community colleges and trade schools, explore scholarship options, provide career education).
- Create strategic community partnerships for students to expand extracurricular options and explore college and career opportunities.

Check out this **RESOURCE**

Access the Career and Technical Education: Preparing K–12 Multilingual Learners for Postsecondary Education and Careers infographic to learn how access to career and technical education can benefit MLs and how to support ML participation.

Recruit, place, and retain qualified teachers and provide ongoing professional learning.

Examples:

- Continue to recruit and retain teachers who are specifically trained to teach newcomers and have English as a Second Language (ESL) or bilingual credentials or endorsements. Provide ongoing professional learning for them.
- Assess district standards for hiring, placing, and retaining teachers, paraprofessionals, and staff members who work directly with newcomers to ensure that these students have access to highly effective personnel.
- Share leadership among principals, assistant principals, teachers, and other staff, and expect them to work collectively to support the school's vision, values, and goals.
- Ensure that all school staff have an appreciation of and sensitivity toward cultural diversity.
- Provide professional learning for mainstream teachers who serve newcomers after they exit temporary newcomer programs.
- Ensure that all teachers of newcomers and MLs have access to high-quality professional learning that provides differentiated instructional strategies, promotes the effective use of student assessment data, and develops skills for supporting second-language acquisition across the curriculum, as well as resources for understanding the impact of early life trauma on the developing child.

Check out this **RESOURCE**

Access information about the National Professional Development discretionary grants program administered by the Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). The grants program supports the creation and implementation of professional development activities intended to improve instruction for MLs.

(Continued on next page)

Develop protocols to ensure newcomers have access to all course offerings and educational services.
Examples:

- Create processes and structures to ensure that newcomers have access to the entire spectrum of district course offerings, including gifted and talented programs, special education, advanced placement courses, and other programs or courses offered to mainstream students.
- Work with the department in charge of special education to design an eligibility process for newcomers suspected of needing special education services because of a disability, so they can be evaluated and, if found eligible, provided with an individualized education plan (IEP) in a timely manner.

Collect and analyze student and program data to drive continuous improvement.
Examples:

- Collect student data and conduct regular program evaluations.
- Develop a system for tracking multiple measures of newcomers' educational progress.
- Assess student capacities thoughtfully and in detail from entry through graduation and beyond, and update instruction, course offerings, and structures based on the data.
- Work closely with newcomers and their families, both formally and informally, to gather relevant information about the knowledge, background, and needs of newcomers and their families. (See Chapter 2 of this toolkit for more information.)
- Implement extensive formative assessment practices in classrooms to inform instruction.
- Ensure that, if there are concerns of a disability, the student's status as a ML does not delay the eligibility process.

Allocate appropriate resources.
Examples:

- Ensure that resources generated by and allocated for newcomers are properly and effectively expended to provide quality instruction and services.
- Encourage school leadership to seek resources for newcomer programs and services from the district and community partners.

Note. Adapted with permission from *Newcomer Toolkit*, by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition, 2016. Copyright 2016 by the U.S. Department of Education.



To learn more about scheduling considerations, academic evaluations, and options for registering newcomer students who arrive without academic credentials or who do not meet state academic requirements, view this OELA webinar *Registering and Enrolling Refugee and Immigrant Students in Secondary Schools*.

Guidelines for Teaching Multilingual Learners and Newcomers

In addition to sound policies and practices at the district and campus levels, high-quality instruction for all students anticipates all students' potential and provides the supports they need to attain challenging academic goals. Students can achieve at high levels and reach their potential by engaging in rigorous, deep, and accelerated learning.

Many newcomers may arrive in the United States needing to learn English. Some newcomer students may also have gaps in content knowledge due to limited or interrupted education. Thus, high-quality education for newcomers is based in large part on quality teaching practices for MLs. Both newcomers and MLs may learn concepts in each core subject through simultaneously engaging in subject-specific analytic practices and related language practices. Students should be encouraged in deliberately constructed, stimulating, and supportive ways to carry out tasks beyond those they can do independently.

Perspectives about high-quality education for MLs that are grounded in sociocultural theories of learning often challenge common assumptions and practices, such as the deficit approach.[4] These perspectives provide a platform for (a) rethinking instruction for both newcomers and MLs and (b) providing a high-quality education that is or does the following:

- **Is future-oriented and asset-oriented, with high expectations for success.** Teaching is focused on students' goals and strengths rather than students' deficits. Thus, instruction should provide supports that help students develop new understandings and skills, understand complex concepts, think analytically, and communicate ideas effectively in both social and academic situations.
- **Provides students authentic opportunities to simultaneously develop language and discourse, analytic and problem-solving skills, and competency in academic subjects, such as mathematics, science, and social studies.** Simultaneous development of these three areas will help students begin to develop their own agency and autonomy as learners and thinkers.[5,6] As students learn new concepts and skills (for example, in mathematics or history), they learn the language. This idea runs counter to the idea proposed by traditional language acquisition curricula and programs which assume that students first need to learn English and then they can learn disciplinary content. That traditional view also holds that language learning is a linear and progressive process (step by step, with increasing difficulty) and that the learner should not move forward until the formal and structural aspects of language (grammar, roots and parts of words, vocabulary, sentence structures, parts of speech, and the like) are learned. Learning is not, however, a linear process; learning a second language is complex, gradual, nonlinear, and dynamic. Thus, instruction that focuses solely on acquiring English is insufficient for newcomers.
- **Provides rich opportunities to learn.** Educators ensure that (a) the curriculum is rich in content and connects disciplinary (subject matter) practices and uses of language in that discipline and (b) instruction intentionally scaffolds newcomer students' participation to enable them to access complex ideas and engage in rigorous analytic and problem-solving skills on the same level as their grade in school. Such scaffolds include inviting students to make intellectual claims based on evidence in their experience or providing academic and linguistic support for expressing ideas in different disciplines

[4] Gibbons, P. (2015). *Scaffolding language, scaffolding learning: Teaching second language learners in the mainstream classroom.* Heinemann.

[5] Agency is the ability to be proactive in determining one's life path and goals.

[6] Autonomy is encouraging students to independently apply learning to new challenges, in and out of school.

(e.g., describing their observations and proposing hypotheses in science, or explaining their solutions to mathematical problems).[7] Providing the appropriate kind of support and the intellectual push required for students to work beyond their current competence builds their autonomy in the field of study.

- **Reflects a cultural orientation.** Educators recognize and use the rich cognitive, cultural, pragmatic, and linguistic resources that newcomers bring to their classrooms. By recognizing that newcomer students arrive with valuable knowledge, skills, and language that frame their social, physical, and symbolic worlds, teachers can use these assets to leverage student learning.[8] High quality instruction pays close attention to the language, academic and life experiences, and proficiencies of students. Students build schemas (clusters of interrelated understandings) that increase content learning and language development simultaneously.[9] Knowing that their family and community culture(s) and language(s) are valued in school develops newcomers' confidence in their new environment and learning. Viewing newcomers as valued contributors to the school and community may provide connections between the new contexts of U.S. school and students' prior experiences. This, in turn, may strengthen new learning.
- **Develops student autonomy and agency by fostering metacognition.** Educators help students become self-aware about their developing skills and knowledge, and they provide opportunities for students to apply their knowledge and skills in a variety of academic areas and in problem-solving settings. Providing students the strategies for engaging in academic dialogue with others (for asking questions and analyzing information) and giving them the tools to choose those strategies when needed are setting the stage for their autonomy and agency as learners. Newcomers need a range of supports to participate in grade-level disciplinary learning while learning a new language. Ongoing assessment can provide feedback about how a student's conceptual, analytical, and language development is progressing.
- **Implements purposeful student grouping configurations that vary between homogeneous and heterogeneous, depending on students' literacy and language skills.**[10] Heterogeneous groups provide students who are not strong English speakers with peer modeling and support. Homogeneous groups help teachers to pay close attention to students' needs related to the theme of the lesson or the discipline-specific uses of English. In all circumstances, schools should carry out their chosen programs in the least segregated manner consistent with achieving the program's stated educational goals.[11]

Evidence-Based Practices

Schools can use evidence-based practices to update and enhance their current curriculum and instruction for newcomers. Newcomers require more than basic reading and writing skills to help them meet their future goals. They should be able to access grade-level content while simultaneously developing proficiency and autonomy in the use of academic English and advanced literacy skills necessary to engage with complex content

[7] Kibler, A., Valdés, G., & Walqui, A. (2014, September). What does standards-based educational reform mean for English language learner populations in primary and secondary schools? *TESOL Quarterly, 48*(3), 433–453.

[8] Walqui, A., & van Lier, L. (2010). *Scaffolding the academic success of adolescent English language learners: A pedagogy of promise.* WestEd.

[9] Walqui, A. (2000, June). *Strategies for success: Engaging immigrant students in secondary schools* (ERIC Digest No. ED442300).

[10] Saunders, W., Goldenberg, C., & Marcelletti, D. (2013). English language development: Guidelines for instruction. *American Educator, 37*(2), 13-39.

[11] U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, & U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division (2015, January). Fact sheet: *Ensuring English learner students can participate meaningfully and equally in educational programs.* U.S. Department of Education https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-factsheet-el-students-201501.pdf

and express their ideas in ways appropriate to the content area. Here are five evidence-based instructional practices from OELA's teaching brief that schools can help educators implement:[12]

1. Provide MLs with opportunities to build content knowledge and language competence in tandem.
2. Leverage MLs' home language(s), prior knowledge, and cultural assets.
3. Engage MLs in productive interactions with peers.
4. Provide direct and explicit instruction focusing on key aspects of literacy.
5. Regularly incorporate opportunities to develop written language skills.



Access NCELA Teaching Practice briefs to learn more about evidence-based practices for supporting MLs in math, STEM, and early childhood.

These practices below were drawn from the encouraging practices published in *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures*.[13] The practices were selected based on the frequency with which they appeared in the report, the strength of their supporting evidence, and their practical application for K-12 educators. The practices are meant to help guide educators and administrators as they align instruction with standards.

Each of the evidence-based practices are described below with suggested considerations for newcomers.

Provide MLs with opportunities to build content knowledge and language competence in tandem.

Learning is a process that requires teachers to intentionally design learning opportunities that integrate reading, writing, speaking, and listening with the practices of each discipline. In order for newcomers to develop proficiency in the academic English in various subject areas, teachers should consider making the language of their content areas comprehensible for students and intentionally plan instruction that allows students to develop their language skills within the context of the subjects being taught.

[12] U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Education (2020). *Implementing evidenced-practices for English learners: Using research to guide practice.* https://ncela.ed.gov/resources/podcast-implementing-evidence-based-instructional-practices-for-english-learners-using

[13] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). *Promoting the educational success of children and youth learning English: Promising futures.* The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/24677 These three documents (i.e., the *Promising Futures* report and the two IES Practice Guides) provide the evidence base for the practices in this report, but this report does not make claims about how these practices correspond to the evidence tiers of ESEA as amended by the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*. Guidance about how the What Works Clearinghouse standards relate to the *ESEA evidence* definition may be found here: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/essa. Meanwhile, the *Promising Futures* report does not state how its recommendations, which are based on an extensive review process by 19 national experts (see pp. 17–20 of the report), relate to the *ESEA* evidence definition.

Ideas in ACTION

Manhattan Bridges High School is located in the Hell's Kitchen neighborhood of Manhattan and serves approximately 500 students, many of whom are English learners. *U.S. News & World Report* identified Manhattan Bridges as one of the best high schools in the nation in 2015, and it has a significantly higher graduation rate (94 percent) than the city in general (70 percent).

At Manhattan Bridges, teachers embrace the idea of scaffolding students' language acquisition while maintaining a focus on content instruction, and they regularly collaborate to strategically develop and embed schoolwide language scaffolds across content areas. For example, they introduced a schoolwide focus on argumentative writing in response to the argument writing requirement on the New York State Regents Exam for English Language Arts. The MEAL writing support acronym was first introduced to the students in their targeted English language development classrooms and then incorporated throughout the day in the content area classrooms where argument writing conforms to the same structure:

- **M**ain Idea
- **E**vidence
- **A**nalysis
- **L**ink to Argument

2. Leverage MLs' home language(s), prior knowledge, and cultural assets.

As discussed in Chapter 1 of this toolkit, newcomers arrive at school with rich backgrounds and cultural knowledge, as well as language and skills that enable them to engage in academic learning. They often have literacy skills and content knowledge developed in their home language and through prior school and out-of-school experiences. Students who have literacy skills in their home language have knowledge and skills they can draw upon when learning to read English. Research has demonstrated that there are significant positive correlations between literacy skills in English learners' first language and the development of literacy skills in English, their additional language.[14] Some newcomers who are SLIFE may have limited or no literacy skills when entering school in the United States. Instead, their prior knowledge may be more pragmatic, based on experience, and acquired orally.[15] It is therefore important for educators to remember that oral language may be a tool they can leverage in the classroom when supporting SLIFE.

Check out this RESOURCE

Read and listen to the story of an immigrant ML in which she recounts her life in her home country, her journey to the U.S., and her life and experiences at the Teaching Channel: *The Power of Story for ELLs and Newcomers: Identity and Empathy.*

[14] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). *Promoting the educational success of children and youth learning English: Promising futures.* The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/24677

[15] DeCapua, A., & Marshall, H. W. (2011) *Breaking new ground: Teaching students with limited or interrupted formal education in U.S. secondary schools*. University of Michigan Press.

Consideration For Newcomers

Funds of Knowledge is a conceptual framework centered on the principle that the best way to learn about student knowledge is to focus on their lives and experiences. Research shows that students draw from an intercultural and hybrid knowledge base to support them in their new environment. To support the learning of newcomer students successfully, teachers need to build their knowledge of students' backgrounds and experiences. This can enable teachers to scaffold students' learning from the familiar to the new and to validate newcomer students' knowledge and life values.

Source: Hogg, L. (2010). Funds of knowledge: An investigation of coherence within the literature. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 27*(3), 666-677.

3. Engage MLs in productive interactions with peers.

Newcomers must learn to use a broad repertoire of strategies to construct meaning from academic talk and complex text, to participate in academic discussions, and to express themselves in writing across a variety of academic situations. Several studies have demonstrated positive learning outcomes following the integration of opportunities for students to discuss content in pairs or small groups.[16] By providing well-structured opportunities for students to engage in discussion, teachers can ensure that interactions are equitable (not dominated by one partner or group member) and that students respond to each other by building onto, clarifying, and respectfully challenging each other's ideas.



Lawrence, Massachusetts, a city with a deep immigrant history and the home of **ENLACE (Engaging Newcomers in Language and Content Education) Academy**, serves newcomer students within Lawrence High School. ENLACE's approach to working with newcomers requires that lessons provide students with opportunities to learn and practice language as they read, write, speak, and listen about meaningful topics in their community. Through this approach, ENLACE empowers students to develop their multilingual and multicultural identities proudly and purposefully.

Learn more about this program by visiting the school's website at https://www.enlaceacademy.org/.

4. Provide direct and explicit instruction focusing on key aspects of literacy.

Supporting newcomers to interact with complex texts is paramount. "The only place ELs are likely to encounter the words, grammatical structures, and rhetorical features of academic language is in written texts. Thus, it is only through meaningful engagement with such language in written texts that students can learn academic language at all."[17] Learning to engage with complex texts requires continuous interaction and teacher support around written language and its forms, structures, and functions. In order to advance students' reading skills, it is important to provide students with abundant opportunity and appropriate support to read and interact with texts that are beyond their independent reading level. Students with developing levels of English proficiency

[16] August, D., & Shanahan, T. (Eds.). (2006). *Developing literacy in second-language Learners: Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth* (1st ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315094922

[17] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). *Promoting the educational success of children and youth learning English: Promising futures.* The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/24677

will require instruction that carefully supports their understanding and use of emerging language as they participate in these activities.

Teachers should explicitly draw students' attention to the thinking and strategies that experienced readers use while interpreting complex texts. Consider the following sample practices for comprehension instruction:

Sample Practices

Before Reading	■ Leverage students existing background knowledge. ■ Focus students' attention on concepts to be developed. ■ Introduce vocabulary in context.
During Reading	■ Provide multiple opportunities for students to collaboratively construct ideas about the text. ■ Draw on students' home language knowledge, such as developing cognate awareness. ■ Provide visual and multimedia supports. ■ Teach students to monitor their understanding and to identify and repair breakdowns in understanding. ■ Explicitly teach how to use context clues to determine the meaning of unknown words during reading. ■ Provide explicit instruction on taking notes and using graphic organizers. ■ Model thinking aloud as you read, making explicit reference to the strategies you use (e.g., visualizing, predicting). ■ Provide multiple opportunities for students to practice comprehension strategies. ■ Deconstruct text by focusing on understanding a chunk, reconnect the chunk to the whole text, and establish connections between ideas within the text. ■ Explicitly teach the structure and linguistic features of specific text genres (e.g., narrative, argument, explanation) and how to analyze them.
After Reading	■ Explicitly teach high-utility vocabulary words found in complex texts. ■ Make connections to ideas from other texts to the outside world or to large conceptual questions. ■ Apply newly gained knowledge to novel situations or problem-solving. ■ Create products based on new understandings.

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5. Regularly incorporate opportunities to develop written language skills.

In order to be successful in school and beyond, newcomers must be able to effectively communicate their ideas in writing for varied purposes. As such, college- and career-readiness standards include the expectation that students routinely engage in a range of discipline-specific writing tasks. As newcomers move up in the grades, writing expectations become more rigorous; students are expected to produce longer, more complex pieces of analytical writing in which they support their ideas with reasons and relevant evidence. Research has demonstrated that providing students with regular, structured opportunities to develop written language skills promotes increased writing ability.[18]

[18] Baker, S., Lesaux, N., Jayanthi, M., Dimino, J., Proctor, C. P., Morris, J., Gersten, R., Haymond, K., Kieffer, M. J., Linan-Thompson, S., & Newman-Gonchar, R. (2014). *Teaching academic content and literacy to English learners in elementary and middle school* (NCEE 2014-4012). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE). https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/practiceguide/english_learners_pg_040114.pdf

Ideas in ACTION

Funded by the Department of Education's Investing in Innovation (i3) grant, the Leading with Learning research team worked with Rowell Elementary School in Fresno, California, to focus on two key aspects of writing instruction with teachers:

- Teachers need to demystify how language works in different genres so that students have the tools to communicate their ideas across content areas, in a variety of genres, and to a range of audiences.
- Writing needs to be authentic and relevant to students' lives, to what they are learning, and to the world around them so they can connect more deeply with content through writing and see how their writing can make an impact on the world.

Students are often asked to explore the social purpose, organization, and linguistic choices that authors make to create meaning in text. In one unit, 5th-grade students learn about threats to local owl populations while also analyzing the language of explanation texts. A sampling of their learning activities includes the following:

- Reading and discussing informational texts about owls to gain core conceptual understandings
- Investigating the owl's role in the food chain by engaging in an owl pellet dissection task and taking field notes in their science journals
- Engaging in a text jumble game in which they reassemble sections of an explanation text based on what they know about the structure and organization of explanations
- Identifying cohesive language that helps explanation texts hang together and flow (e.g., text connectives, referencing, and summarizing nouns such as "these actions")
- Writing their own explanation texts about threats to owl populations

Activities such as these help students understand that effective writing is not formulaic or about following a set of rules; it involves making informed decisions about language use based on the specific purpose for communicating.

Source: Spycher, P., Austin, K., and Fabian, T. (2018, April). *The writing centered classroom*. Educational Leadership.

Formative Assessment

An essential component of implementing evidence-based instructional practices for newcomers is assessment. Formative assessment is an informal and ongoing assessment process that helps provide students and teachers with information about students' knowledge and skills throughout a course of learning. It is important to conduct formative assessment in all learning. Educators should make sure that formative assessment practices are culturally appropriate. In working with newcomers and MLs, formative assessment will help teachers to

- Understand that newcomers are a heterogeneous group and that each student learns differently;
- Continually assess achievement;
- Obtain evidence of how students' thinking and language use evolve during the learning process;
- Determine if students act on what they hear and see in real time;
- Continually monitor the emergence of language and adapt to students' needs by designing new strategies that advance language learning; and

- Observe student performance to change instruction while it is happening and provide feedback and support that allows the student to self-assess performance.[19]

Culturally appropriate formative assessment will also help teachers discern whether a newcomer requires an evaluation to determine whether he or she has a disability and as a result requires special education or other aids and services under the *IDEA* or Section 504. (See Special Education Needs on page 64.)

Using formative assessment also involves newcomers in the process; it enhances their agency in the learning process and helps them self-monitor and determine if they need any type of support. This is an opportunity for teachers and students to collaborate in monitoring learning progress and planning and adjusting immediate learning accordingly. When newcomers engage in formative assessment, they may

- Analyze their performance against what they understand counts as optimal performance and begin to realize the distance between one and the other;
- Plan future action to increasingly approximate the model;
- Gain control of their own learning and identify what they see they must accomplish;
- Provide opportunity for personal reflections; and
- Receive timely information that is pivotal in developing subject-area knowledge, analytical skills, and language proficiency.[20]

Just as with instruction for MLs and newcomers, language proficiency of the students and language demands of the assessment should be considered when assessing MLs and newcomers in any context. Research has demonstrated that language proficiency of students has significant influence on their assessment performance. Varying levels of language proficiency often affect the validity of assessment by measuring language instead of content knowledge.[21] It is therefore essential to consider language background in developing, selecting, and administering assessment, as well as in interpreting ML and newcomers' assessment results.

Response to Intervention and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support

Response to Intervention (RTI) and Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) are service delivery models that can be beneficial for academic learning and the social, emotional, and mental health needs of MLs and newcomers, in particular. Both service models use a multi-tiered structure of increasingly intensive and focused supports, are data driven, and rely on evidence-based practices.

The issue of overrepresentation, as well as the under referral of MLs and culturally and linguistically diverse students to special education services, has been well documented and remains a concern for educators.[22] Both RTI and MTSS models aim to ensure that when a referral to special education is made, it is appropriate and is not due to misinterpretation of language acquisition and/or cultural differences as a learning disability.

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[19] Heritage, M. (2010, September). *Formative assessment and next-generation assessment systems: Are we losing an opportunity?* Council of Chief State School Officers.

[20] Heritage, M., Walqui, A., & Linquanti, R. (2015). *English language learners and the new standards. Developing language, content knowledge, and analytical practices in the classroom*. Harvard Education Press.

[21] Abedi, J. (2002). Standardized achievement tests and English language learners: Psychometrics issues. *Educational Assessment, 8*(3), 231–257;

[22] deBettencourt, L. U., Hoover, J. J., Rude, H. A., & Taylor, S. (2016). Preparing special education higher education faculty: The influences of contemporary education issues and policy recommendations. *Teacher Education and Special Education, 39,* 121–133; Ortiz, A. A., Robertson, P. M., Wilkinson, C. Y., Liu, Y. J., McGhee, B. D., & Kushner, M. I. (2011). The role of bilingual education teachers in preventing inappropriate referrals of ELLs to special education: Implications for response to intervention. *Bilingual Research Journal, 34*(3), 316–333.

RTI is a model that focuses on academic achievement and aims to identify and address the specific needs of those students who struggle academically. The model is composed of three tiers. The first tier ensures that classroom instruction reflects best practices and meets academic and linguistic needs of all students by providing effective and differentiated instruction. This stage of RTI implementation is essential for newcomer MLs who may require substantial academic and linguistic support. During tier 1, teachers may consider designing and delivering lessons that utilize research-based components of systematic, explicit, and intensive instruction, such as Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP).[23] The second tier of the RTI model aims to provide supplemental instructional services to those students who are not responding to the instructional practices in tier 1. For MLs and newcomers, such practices may include intensive English language and literacy supports that are delivered in a variety of grouping formats, i.e., small groups or individually. Tier 2 services are usually supplemental, short-term supports that are provided along with tier 1 and can be administered by classroom teachers or specialists. The third stage of RTI supports is provided to those students who are still struggling academically despite the quality implementation of the two previous tiers of the model. Typically, approximately only 5–10 percent of students require tier 3 supports. Supports in this stage may take various forms. In some cases, special education instruction is provided to those students who have been identified as having a learning disability, and in other cases, intensive instructional interventions are provided to those students who do not meet grade-level expectations.[24]

While the RTI model focuses predominantly on academic achievement, the MTSS model has a broader scope and, in addition to the academic needs of the students, also focuses on non-academic areas, such as social, emotional, and mental health needs, behavior, community and family engagement, etc. The aim of MTSS is to provide a comprehensive and responsive framework for systematically addressing barriers to learning that results in improved academic and social outcomes for all students.

As with RTI, MTSS has three tiers of service delivery. In tier 1, core curriculum is delivered to all students. In tier 2, supplemental instruction is provided to those students who struggle after receiving instruction in tier 1, and in tier 3, application of intensive instructional interventions is implemented that may or may not include special education.[25] In addition to providing increasingly intensive instructional supports, MTSS aims to establish systemwide structures that aid in removing challenges and barriers that may hinder student success. This may include providing professional development to educators and activating and sustaining family and community engagement, as well as establishing and utilizing partnerships with entities that support education, mental health, social services, juvenile justice, recreation, and cultural services.[26]

Implementation of the RTI and MTSS models may have significant implications for MLs and newcomer students. Both models rely significantly on evidence of student performance that is collected through formal and informal assessment. These assessments may involve screenings, benchmark assessments, progress monitoring, diagnostic, and outcomes assessments. It is therefore essential that the unique linguistic needs of

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[23] Echevarría, J., & Hasbrouck J. (2009, July). *Response to intervention and English learners*. Center for Research on the Educational Achievement and Teaching of English Language Learners (CREATE). https://education.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/casei/RtIandELL.pdf

[24] Echevarría, J., & Hasbrouck J. (2009, July). *Response to intervention and English learners.* Center for Research on the Educational Achievement and Teaching of English Language Learners (CREATE). https://education.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/casei/RtIandELL.pdf

[25] Averill, O. H., & Rinaldi, C. (2013). *Research brief: Multi-tier system of support (MTSS).* Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative. https://www.academia.edu/5345629/Research_Brief_Multi_tier_System_of_Support_MTSS_Introduction_From_RTI_and_PBIS_to_MTSS

[26] Averill, O. H., & Rinaldi, C. (2013). *Research brief: Multi-tier system of support (MTSS).* Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative. https://www.academia.edu/5345629/Research_Brief_Multi_tier_System_of_Support_MTSS_Introduction_From_RTI_and_PBIS_to_MTSS

MLs and newcomer students are considered when assessments are selected and administered and when their results are interpreted.[27]

A feature that both models have in common is the idea that before making any decision regarding student progress in a particular tier, it is important to first examine the quality of instruction and support that the students are receiving. Both models acknowledge that the quality of instruction and/or contextual issues, rather than student inability, could be the reason for underperformance. For MLs and newcomer students, this may mean ensuring that students are receiving effective instruction that provides them with access to the core academic curriculum. Features of such instruction should include explicitly teaching grade-level academic language, activating students' background knowledge, providing comprehensible input, explicit vocabulary instruction, etc. For a more detailed description of instructional practices for MLs and newcomers, see previous sections of this chapter.



Read a research study about implementation of MTSS and its impact on teacher performance in three rural elementary schools with a high population of MLs. Through a university-district partnership that promoted the development of sustainability plans to implement MTSS for MLs, one year after the study, 80 percent of participating teachers rated the professional development (PD) they received through the partnership as beneficial or highly beneficial. In addition, a year after the study began, 75 percent of the participants indicated that they were still participating in PD structures that the partnership implemented, such as taking part in professional learning communities (PLCs) or attending co-planning meetings between ML and general education teachers. Moreover, site visit data revealed that participants were able to sustain culturally and linguistically responsive instructional practices one year after initial implementation, including the use of students' native languages during instruction and incorporating students' family values and cultures during lesson planning and facilitation.

Source: Hoover, J. J., Soltero-González, L., Wang, C., & Herron, S. (2020). Sustaining a multitiered system of supports for English learners in rural community elementary schools. *Rural Special Education Quarterly, Vol. 39*(l), 4–16. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1243119

[27] Echevarría, J., & Hasbrouck J. (2009, July). *Response to intervention and English learners.* Center for Research on the Educational Achievement and Teaching of English Language Learners (CREATE). https://education.illinoisstate.edu/downloads/casei/RtIandELL.pdf

Special Education Needs

The *IDEA* and Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act of 1973* address the rights of students with disabilities in school and other educational settings. If an ML is suspected of having one or more disabilities, the LEA (local educational agency) must evaluate the ML promptly to determine if the ML has a disability or disabilities and whether the ML needs disability-related services (which are special education and related services under the *IDEA* or regular or special education and related aids and services under Section 504).

Disability evaluations may not be delayed because of a student's limited English language proficiency (ELP) or a student's participation in a language instruction educational program (LIEP). Furthermore, a student's ELP cannot be the basis for determining that a student has a disability.

It is important for educators to accurately determine whether MLs are eligible for disability-related services. Researchers have identified four potential factors that may contribute to the misidentification of special education needs, and learning disabilities in particular, among students who are MLs: (1) the evaluating professional's lack of knowledge of second-language development and disabilities, (2) poor instructional practices, (3) weak intervention strategies, and (4) inappropriate assessment tools.[28]

Appropriate disability identification processes that evaluate the student's disability-related educational needs and not the student's English language skills will help school personnel to accurately identify students in need of disability-related services. In addition, LEAs must ensure that a student's special education evaluation is provided and administered in the student's native language or other mode of communication and in the form most likely to yield accurate information about what the student knows and can do, unless it is clearly not feasible to do so.

Assessing whether a student has a disability in his or her native language or other mode of communication can help educators ascertain whether a need stems from a lack of ELP and/or a student's disability-related educational needs.

When an ML student is determined to be a child with a disability—as defined in the *IDEA* or an individual with a disability under the broader definition of disability in Section 504—the student's language assistance and disability-related educational needs must be met. For ML students, in addition to the required individualized education program (IEP) team participants under the *IDEA*, it is essential that the IEP team include participants who have knowledge of the student's language needs. It is also important that the IEP team include professionals with training, and preferably expertise, in second-language acquisition and how to differentiate between the student's needs stemming from a disability or lack of ELP.

In addition, under the *IDEA* (Section 300.322(e)), the LEA must take whatever action is necessary to ensure that the student's family understands the proceedings of the IEP team meeting, including arranging for an interpreter for families with limited English proficiency (LEP) or family members who are deaf. Under Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* and the *Equal Educational Opportunities Act,* for LEP families to have meaningful access to an IEP or Section 504 plan meeting, it also may be necessary to have the IEP, Section 504 plan, or related documents translated into the family's primary language.

Source: Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA). (2015, September). Tools and resources for addressing English learners with disabilities. *English Learner Tool Kit (*Chapter 6). U.S. Department of Education. http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap6.pdf

[28] Sánchez, M. T., Parker, C., Akbayin, B., & McTigue, A. (2010). Processes and challenges in identifying learning disabilities among students who are English language learners in three New York state districts. *Issues & Answers.* REL 2010-No. 085. Regional Educational Laboratory Northeast & Islands. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED508343

Common Misconceptions About Newcomers

Schools often need support in implementing evidence-based educational practices. This may encompass recognizing and helping to shift schools and educators' misconceptions about educating newcomers and MLs. Without consciously addressing misconceptions and bias, schools may not be able to develop specifically designed policies, procedures, and strategies to help newcomers learn content and language as rapidly and effectively as needed.

Below are four common misconceptions about educating newcomers, along with current understandings and suggested practices that may help prepare newcomers to acquire the skills needed to actively participate in their education and community environments.

Misconceptions, Current Understandings, and Suggested Practices

MISCONCEPTION 1: Students can learn only one language at a time, and bilingualism is counterproductive. Use of a student's home language will negatively affect academic and language learning.

Current Understanding: Literacy in a student's first language positively affects the learning of a new language.

Suggested Practices:

- Develop programs in which the student's first language supports learning a new language, such as bilingual or dual language programs and classes.[29]
- Help students learn English by using the home language as a tool for learning English and academic content.[30]
  Examples:
  - Provide amplified models of how to use English appropriately in academic contexts. In doing so, accept the students' need to create and share meaning in their native language(s).
  - Draw students' attention to academic vocabulary cognates in their native language(s).
  - Encourage students and their families to develop their native language by reading books and speaking the language.



Reading Rockets has an article, *Using Cognates to Develop Comprehension*, that addresses strategies for teaching cognates to MLs with the goal of developing comprehension of academic language.

MISCONCEPTION 2: Newcomers must develop significant language proficiency prior to participating in disciplinary learning.

Current Understanding: Students learn language to do things in the world. To help students develop academic language, they need to participate in meaningful and authentic activities about academic ideas and concepts.[31] It is therefore essential for newcomer MLs with varying English proficiency levels to have access to classroom academic tasks.

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[29] Gort, M. (2019). Developing bilingualism and biliteracy in early and middle childhood. *Language Arts, 96*(4), 229–243.

[30] National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). *Promoting the educational success of children and youth learning English: Promising futures.* The National Academies Press. https://doi.org/10.17226/24677

[31] National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. (2021) *English learners in secondary schools: Trajectories, transition points and promising practices* [Webinar]. U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition; National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. (2021) *English Learners in secondary schools: Trajectories, transition points and promising practices, Parts I & II* [Podcast]. U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition.

Suggested Practices:

- Orient students to the different types of texts they use in school and how language is used in each content area.
- Help students use academic language to promote English language development and support academic learning.

  Example: Provide newcomers with diverse types of text and help them understand different types of text (e.g., narratives, temporary expressions such as "first" and "later") and content-specific language. This will help students create their own academic practices and language.
- Focus on how students use key phrases associated with the type of text and convey meaning about the content through written, oral, visual, and symbolic texts, thus moving away from a focus on errors (such as verb tense and pronunciation). Initially, student efforts may be inaccurate, but proficiency will evolve.

  Example: Observe students' written and oral expression, and support and check on their development over time. Also, create opportunities for newcomers to use language in a variety of academic situations, both formal and informal, helping the student to increasingly use subject-specific English.

MISCONCEPTION 3: Students need simplified content and language as they learn English.

Current Understanding: Simplified language decreases, rather than increases, meaning. Removing connections between sentences and paragraphs and using simple sentences reduce the content and meaning of a text. Instead, texts for newcomers should be amplified, not simplified.[32]

Suggested Practices:

- Develop connections between sentences and paragraphs to help students navigate a text.

  Example: Identify text that contains illustrative examples and connections in both sentences and paragraphs. These include embedding definitions, repeating and rewording key terms, and adding connections between sentences and paragraphs.
- Expose and invite students to participate in content-related discussions in English.

MISCONCEPTION 4: Not all educators working with MLs or newcomers need to be specially trained. If teachers speak English, they can teach English.

Current Understanding: Teachers need specialized knowledge to teach English and academic content to MLs and to support the other needs of newcomers. Without pedagogical and social and emotional supports for MLs and newcomers in particular, we may fail to support the attainment of ambitious futures by these students.

Suggested Practices:

- Provide teachers, administrators, curriculum specialists, and ML teachers with sustained and high-quality professional learning opportunities about strategies for supporting the academic content and language development of newcomers.[33]
- Focus professional learning on effective pedagogical and social and emotional supports for newcomers.

  Example: Enrich and contextualize academic language to increase its accessibility for ML and newcomer students, particularly in upper grades.

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[32] Walqui, A. & Bunch, G. C. (Eds.). (2019). *Amplifying the curriculum: Designing quality learning opportunities for English learners.* New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

[33] Duguay, A. L., Vdovina, T. (2019). *CAL Commentary: Effective, engaging, and sustained professional development for educators of linguistically and culturally diverse students.* Center for Applied Linguistics.

High-Quality Core Academic Programs for Newcomer Students

High-quality core academic programs for newcomers provide the support needed to participate in rigorous, grade-level academic learning. High-quality programs build on the newcomers' assets and provide supports for students to learn both English and academic content. All teachers and staff are responsible for students' academic success and supporting their social, emotional, and mental health needs. Programs for newcomers include both of the following:

- **Integrated programs** are designed to meet the needs of varied populations—including newcomers, children of immigrant families, and English-only students at the same time—and are usually dual or bilingual language programs that enroll newcomers, children of immigrants, and English-only students in varying combinations.
- **Designated programs** are designed specifically to meet the unique needs of newcomers enrolled in a district and include newcomer centers and international schools that provide academic and social, emotional, and mental health support and development to students who attend until they transition to elementary or secondary schools within a district.

Dual Language, Integrated Programs

Two-way and one-way dual language programs may benefit MLs and newcomers because their home languages are used in teaching and learning. Two-way programs refer to those programs that serve students from more than one language group (e.g., MLs who are speakers of the partner language and non-ELs who are native English speakers). One-way programs usually serve one group of students (e.g., native English speakers or MLs who are speakers of the partner language). See the table on page 68 for detailed descriptions of dual language programs.

Using an ML's native language in a strong, supportive learning environment can build their confidence as learners, build English skills, and help them acquire academic content to become successful in school. In a randomized study of dual language outcomes in one large district, both ML and non-EL students receiving dual language instruction (DLI) performed better on the state reading assessments than their peers not participating in DLI. Dual language instruction has also been shown to be effective in helping MLs achieve English proficiency and exit from language assistance service programs more quickly than those MLs not enrolled in dual language programs.[34]



[34] Steele, J. L., Slater, R. O., Zamarro, G., Miller, T., Li, J., Burkhauser, S., & Bacon, M. (2017). Effects of dual-language immersion on students' achievement: Evidence from lottery data. *American Educational Research Journal*, *54*, 282–306.

Key Attributes of Dual Language Education Programs by Program Type

	Two-Way Dual Language Programs*	One-Way Dual Language Programs		
	Two-Way Immersion/ Dual Language Immersion	**World Language Immersion Programs**	**Developmental Bilingual Education Programs**	**Heritage Language Immersion**
Student Population Served	MLs and non-ELs (ideally, 50 percent in each group or a minimum of 33 percent)	Primarily English speakers; can include MLs and heritage speakers	MLs and students formerly requiring language assistance service programs only	Students whose families' heritage language is/was the partner language
Languages	English and the MLs' home language	English and a partner language	English and the MLs' home language	English and the heritage language
Staffing	One bilingual teacher who teaches in both languages or one teacher per language	One bilingual teacher who teaches in both languages or one teacher per language	One bilingual teacher who teaches in both languages or one teacher per language	One bilingual teacher who teaches in both languages or one teacher per language
Time Allocation per Language	Primarily 50:50 or a combination that starts with more of the partner language (90:10, 80:20, and so on)			
Language of Academic Subjects	Varies by program			
Language Allocation	Language of instruction allocated by time, content area, or teacher			
Duration of Program	Throughout elementary school, with some programs continuing at the secondary level			
Size of Program	Strand or whole school			

*Two-way dual language programs, also known as two-way immersion or dual language immersion programs, serve a student population consisting of both MLs and non-ELs (ideally, 50 percent in each group or a minimum of 33 percent).

Source: Boyle, A., August, D., Tabaku, L., Cole, S., & Simpson-Baird, A. (2015, December). *Dual language education programs: Current state policies and practices.* American Institutes for Research. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED601041

Designated Core Academic Programs for Newcomers

High-quality designated programs for newcomers have the potential to provide students with the academic as well as social, emotional, and mental health support and development that students need to engage in rigorous, grade-level academic learning. Designated programs such as newcomer centers and international schools enroll only newcomer students. Newcomer centers are the entry point for many students enrolled in districts with large numbers of newcomers. Students enroll in these programs until they are prepared to transition to a school in the district (typically, no more than one year). In contrast, students at international schools usually remain in the school until they graduate.

However, newcomer programs for international schools should be carried out in the least segregated manner possible, consistent with the program's educational goals.[35]

[35] U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), & U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. (2015, January 7). *Dear colleague letter: English learner students and limited English proficient parents.* https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf

The two programs described below illustrate components of high-quality core academic programs in specially designated schools for newcomer students. The descriptions include a secondary newcomer center in Arlington Heights, Illinois, and an international high school in Oakland, California.

District 214 International Newcomer Academy in Arlington Heights, Illinois

The International Newcomer Academy (Academy) meets the learning and acculturation needs of recently arrived high school students who are new to the English language. Students are at the beginning levels of English fluency and may be students with interrupted formal education (SIFE). The academic core program focuses on intensive English language and content instruction. Students enroll in a full academic program, consisting of a double block of English and math, social studies, physical education and health, and reading instruction, where Spanish-speaking students have a Spanish reading class and non-Spanish-speaking students have an English reading class. Enrollment is on a voluntary basis, and the length of time students attend the program depends on their individual needs. The focus of the academic core program is on ensuring that students are able to transition successfully to the full academic program at their high schools. The Academy believes the experiences and diversity that students and their families bring with them are assets to the community. Educators and staff meet with families in their homes to connect them to community resources and adult-education evening classes. Newcomer students participate in after-school programs that connect what they are learning at the Academy with their culture, prior knowledge, and previous experiences. They also participate in their home school extracurricular sports and clubs.

Oakland International High School

Oakland International High School (OIHS) is a small, public, four-year high school. OIHS's teachers are trained in the Internationals Approach, which allows students to develop their English skills through content classes while addressing state standards in the content areas. At OIHS, students receive English language instruction in all classes. Teachers receive professional development and coaching to support language development in their classes. Students are grouped heterogeneously by language, skill, English development, and grade level. A team of five teachers shares 100 students who are divided into four cohorts who move together from class to class. Students and teachers remain on the team for two years. Teachers work together to create curriculum and interventions (academic and behavioral) that will support the students on their team. All international high schools have a required internship program for students, but the project is linked to their academics. During or after the internship, students compile a written project or research paper. Most students enter the school in 9th grade and remain through graduation.

Learn more about these programs by visiting the schools' websites at https://www.d214.org/Page/1933 and https://www.oaklandinternational.org/

Key Elements of High-Quality Educational Programs for Newcomers

As described earlier in this chapter and evidenced in these examples of outstanding dedicated newcomer programs, optimal academic programs for newcomer students share a number of elements and reflect the following key features of effective instruction:

- Clear mission of excellence in the education of newcomers that values the positive contributions that newcomers bring to the school and community
- Rich learning opportunities for newcomers that are rigorous and include grade-level content and literacy learning in both English and newcomers' home languages whenever possible
- Agreed-upon educational pathways for students that promote coherence across grade levels or school settings

- School staff directly support students' education and social, emotional, and mental health needs, agency, and autonomy
- Regular check-ins with students and efforts to connect families with needed services
- Program with an asset orientation that values newcomers' home languages, cultures, families, and experiences
- Educators and staff who focus on continuous improvement of the core academic program with the goal of integrating rigorous academic and language learning to nurture and ripen newcomer students' potential



Check out these RESOURCES

- Read about the impacts of the pandemic on different student populations in Education in a Pandemic: The Disparate Impacts of COVID-19 on America's Students, published by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights.
- Refer to the Council of the Great City Schools brief, *Supporting English Learners in the COVID-19 Crisis* for information, resources, and ideas.

Recommendations on Mitigating the Consequences of COVID-19 on Multilingual Learners and Newcomer Students

To address the negative impacts that COVID-19 has had upon newcomers and their families, schools and districts may consider implementing the following recommendations regarding instruction, assessment, and family/community support.

1. Instruction:

- Increase learning time once MLs and newcomers return to in-person instruction
- Increase meaningful interaction opportunities
- Provide ongoing professional development focused on supporting MLs and newcomers to content area educators, as well as to school staff and administrators

2. Assessment

- Resume assessment of new students to identify if they need language assistance programs
  - Conduct interviews in person or over the phone
  - Administer home language survey
- Use diagnostic summative and formative assessments to gauge learning and language proficiency loss for MLs and newcomer students
  - Provide educators with immediate data
  - Provide constructive feedback to students and their families
- Monitor former MLs carefully
- Conduct ongoing student and family needs assessments

Sources:

Baker, S., Lesaux, N., Jayanthi, M., Dimino, J., Proctor, C. P., Morris, J., Gersten, R., Haymond, K., Kieffer, M. J., Linan-Thompson, S., & Newman-Gonchar, R. (2014). *Teaching academic content and literacy to English learners in elementary and middle school* (NCEE 2014-4012). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE). https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/Docs/practiceguide/english_learners_pg_040114.pdf

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020, August 26). *Preparing K-12 school administrators for a safe return to school in fall 2020*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. https://stacks.cdc.gov/view/cdc/91383

Garcia-Arena, P., & D'Souza, S. (2020, October). *Research brief: Spotlight on English learners.* American Institutes for Research.

Meckler, L., & Natanson, H. (2020, December 6). 'A lost generation': Surge of research reveals students sliding backward, most vulnerable worst affected. *The Washington Post.*

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). (n.d.). *NAEP long-term trend assessment results: Reading and mathematics.* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics. https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/highlights/ltt/2022/

Office of English Language Acquisition. (2020). *English learners: Absenteeism, retention, and suspension* [Fact sheet]. U.S. Department of Education. https://ncela.ed.gov/resources/fact-sheet-english-learner-absenteeism-suspension-and-retention-september-2021

Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development. (2021). *ED COVID-19 handbook, Volume 2: Roadmap to reopening safely and meeting all students' needs.* U.S. Department of Education. https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening-2.pdf

Note: This document does not address the legal obligations of states and school districts toward MLs and their families under *Title I and Title III* of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).* For more information on *ESEA,* go to https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/COMPS-748/pdf/COMPS-748.pdf

Subject-Specific Teaching Strategies for Newcomers

Schools must provide MLs and newcomers with access to the core curriculum in order to ensure they are able to meaningfully participate in educational programs.[36] The resources in the chart below provide strategies by subject area for helping newcomers access academic content. They can be shared with classroom teachers and other support staff and used for professional development and coaching purposes when supporting educators who serve newcomers.

Early Childhood Education

Integrating Language into Early Childhood Education Practice Brief. This teaching brief draws upon recommendations from the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine report *Promoting the Educational Success of Children and Youth Learning English: Promising Futures.* The brief highlights some promising instructional practices that are relevant and important for teachers of young children ages 3–7 who are identified as dual language learners or English learners.

Integrating Language into Early Childhood Education Podcast. The podcast, featuring Celeste McLaughlin, NAM Team Lead and Grants Management Coordinator at OELA and Dr. Pamela Spycher, Senior Research Associate at WestEd, explores the four key practices presented in the brief: Embracing an assets orientation, promoting multilingual development, providing frequent interaction with complex texts, and teaching foundational literacy skills.

Teaching Science

Strategies for Teaching Science. This webpage from The Sourcebook for Teaching Science website lists numerous resources and information for teaching science to MLs.

National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) Strategies for Teaching Science. This webpage on the NSTA website offers guiding principles and resources for teaching science to MLs.

Integrating Language While Teaching STEM (Science). The NCELA Teaching Practice Brief highlights promising practices related to science and engineering instruction for educators and other staff who support English learners (ELs) and their families. This brief draws upon recommendations from the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine's 2018 report titled *English Learners in STEM Subjects: Transforming Classrooms, Schools, and Lives*.

Helping English Learners Understand Science. This webpage from the United Federation of Teachers website contains numerous resources for science teachers on working with MLs.

Teaching Math

Integrating Language While Teaching Mathematics. The NCELA Teaching Practice Brief provides educators with current research findings and evidence-based, high-quality, instructional mathematics practices from the Institute of Education Sciences' Practice Guide for teaching English learners (ELs) academic content[37] and highlights instructional practices used to teach ELs according to the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine. In addition, the brief provides teacher educators with the latest research on how to better prepare the next generation of teachers.

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[36] U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR), & U.S. Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division. (2015, January 7). *Dear colleague letter: English learner students and limited English proficient parents.* https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-el-201501.pdf

[37] Baker, S., Lesaux, N., Jayanthi, M., Dimino, J., Proctor, C. P., Morris, J., Gersten, R., Haymond, K., Kieffer, M. J., Linan-Thompson, S., & Newman-Gonchar, R. (2014). *Teaching academic content and literacy to English learners in elementary and middle school* (NCEE 2014-4012). Washington, DC: National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance (NCEE), Institute of Education Sciences, U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved from the NCEE website: http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/publications_reviews.aspx

Teaching English Language Arts
Effective Literacy Instruction for Multilingual Learners: What it is and What it Looks Like. This webinar from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of English Language Acquisition in collaboration with the National Committee on Effective Literacy and the National Association of English Learner Program Administrators (NAELPA), shares research and resources on literacy development for multilingual learners.
Research on Teaching Reading. From the WETA website, check out *What Does the Research Tell us About Teaching Reading to English Language Learners*.
Effective Literacy and English Language Instruction for English Learners in the Elementary Grades. From the Institute of Education Sciences website: https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/PracticeGuide/6
Remote Learning Resources
Supporting Adolescent English Learners in Distance Learning. What Can Schools and District Leaders Do? From the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition website: https://ncela.ed.gov/facilitating-online-learning
School Reopening Resources. From the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition website: https://ncela.ed.gov/school-reopening-resources

Sample Core Principles for Educating Newcomers

The Internationals Network for Public Schools is a group of public high schools that work with newcomer students. The Internationals Network's mission is to provide quality education for recently arrived immigrants by growing and sustaining a national network of International High Schools and to share best practices as well as influence educational policy for MLs. The Internationals schools base their pedagogical approach on the following five "core principles."

Principle	Explanation
Heterogeneity and Collaboration	Heterogeneous schools and classrooms are collaborative structures that build on the strengths of each member of the school community to optimize learning.
Experiential Learning	Twenty-first-century schools that expand beyond the four walls of the building motivate adolescents and enhance their capacity to successfully participate in modern society.
Language and Content Integration	Purposeful, language-rich, interdisciplinary, and experiential programs allow strong language skills to develop most effectively in context and emerge most naturally.
Localized Autonomy and Responsibility	Linking autonomy and responsibility at every level within a learning community allows all members to contribute to their fullest potential.
One Learning Model for All	Every member of our school community experiences the same learning model, maximizing an environment of mutual academic support. Thus all members of our school community work in diverse, collaborative groups on hands-on projects; put another way, the model for adult learning and student learning mirror each other.

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PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITY

"Teach Me" – Instructional Practices That Support Newcomers' Participation and Academic Success
(Discussion Cards)

Purpose

K-12 school administrators and teachers can use the discussion cards provided with this activity in a staff meeting or professional learning community to seed a discussion about instructional practices that support newcomers' participation and academic success.[38]

Materials

- Discussion cards

Time Required for Activity

- 1 hour

Preparation for Facilitator

- A few days in advance, ask participants to read the Guidelines for Teaching Multilingual Learners and Newcomers, Evidence-Based Practices, and Misconceptions, Current Understanding, and Suggested Practices sections of Chapter 4 of this toolkit.
- Make copies of the discussion cards included on the next page (one set for each group of four participants). Please consider adapting the cards or creating additional ones tailored to the educational context at your school/district.

Instructions for Facilitator

1. Establish table groups with four participants at each table. In the center of each table, place a set of discussion cards, face down. (Each table gets the same set of cards.)
2. Provide an overview of the activity. Participants will use what they learned from their reading of the assigned sections of Chapter 4 about high-quality instruction for newcomer MLs to sort the cards into two categories: (1) presence of a feature of high-quality instruction with newcomers or (2) presence of a misconception about the education of newcomers. (It is helpful to write or post these two categories where all can see them.) Participants are to work collaboratively in their groups to decide whether a particular practice belongs in one category or the other.
3. Provide the following instructions: To begin the activity, one person in the group draws a discussion card from the deck and reads it aloud to the group. That person decides what category it belongs to and provides a rationale for that choice. The other group members can agree or disagree and say why. The group must reach consensus about the choice before the card is placed face up on the table (in either category 1 or category 2). The next person draws another card, and the process continues. When all cards have been sorted, the group discusses recommendations about the changes in practice needed for the cards that do not align with high-quality instruction for MLs.
4. Have each group report out and facilitate a whole-group discussion. Focus on recommended changes in practice and ask for ideas on what teachers and administrators can do to support such practices in your school.

[38] These discussion cards are informed by the literature cited in Chapter 4 of this toolkit as well as the OELA *Evidence-Based Instructional Practices* Podcast. Please visit https://ncela.ed.gov/resources/oela-resources/briefs to learn more about the instructional practices that informed the development of these discussion cards.

REMOTE FORMAT ADAPTATION

This activity can be conducted in a virtual format on a platform such as Zoom. When implementing this activity remotely, the facilitator can provide the discussion cards to the participants through email or a Google Doc in advance, and the group discussions can take place in breakout rooms of the platform. Once small groups have concluded their discussions, the participants can return to the main group to share out.

Discussion Cards for "Teach Me" Reflection and Discussion Activity

Copy a complete set of the following discussion cards on paper or cardstock for every four participants. You can add additional examples to this set if you wish.

A teacher gives her newcomers a test on English grammar once a week to gauge their progress in learning English.
A 6th-grade teacher uses a 2nd-grade text with her newcomers. She claims that the language is at the students' level and that if she gave them grade-level materials, they would not understand the texts.
A literacy coach walks into a teacher's classroom. The class has a mix of MLs who are newcomers, children of immigrants, and native speakers of English. All the students are engaged and animated, working on grade-level materials in activities that have them analyze texts and support the conclusions they draw from their reading. As the coach approaches a group, he notices that one student speaks in Spanish to another student while the rest of the group is working. He asks the other two students in the group what the Spanish-speaking students are doing. They say one student is a newcomer who had trouble understanding the assignment, and the other student is explaining what they are doing in the group. Before the coach leaves, he makes a note that students need to use English when they work in groups together.

Continued on next page

In a lesson about human rights for high school newcomers, the teacher uses a jigsaw project that addresses the needs of four different types of students through four different texts. The tasks and requirements for each group reading a different text are the same. To complete the activity, students will all share collective findings with new partners and then apply expertise and newly gained knowledge to produce a poster that explains the characteristics of good human rights speeches.
The teacher provides students with appropriate scientific language to assist students in discussing their observations of a science simulation.
Overall, the teacher in a class speaks approximately 30 percent of the time, and the students talk to each other through carefully constructed activities 70 percent of the time.
Most of the questions asked of newcomers about concepts or texts are factual and ask students to recall information.

Continued on next page

A parent volunteers in an 80:20 ratio, 2nd-grade dual language program with MLs and Spanish learners. The parent, who is Spanish/English bilingual, notices that the academic learning in Spanish is at a lower level than she expected. Her child is learning Spanish, and she is concerned that he will be behind his peers in other 2nd-grade classes.

Resources

The resources below have been selected based on the following criteria:

- Resource produced by a federally funded study or center
- Resource produced by an open access and peer-reviewed journal
- Resource produced by a nonpartisan and nonprofit organization

Boyle, A., August, D., Tabaku, L., Cole, S., & Simpson-Baird, A. (2015, December). *Dual language education programs: Current state policies and practices.* U.S Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED601041

This report presents an "analysis of relevant research and extant data related to dual language education policies and practices."

Burr, E., Haas, E., & Ferriere, K. (2015). *Identifying and supporting English learner students with learning disabilities: Key issues in the literature and state practice* (REL 2015-086). U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory West. http://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/pdf/REL_2015086.pdf

This report presents a comprehensive study of identification and support practices across states. The report also addresses testing for MLs with disabilities and the types of accommodation practices that have proven to be successful.

The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. (2017). *Dual language learners and English learners with disabilities.* https://www.nap.edu/resource/24677/toolkit/pdf/6-DLs&ELs-with-Disabilities.pdf

This report brief outlines specific disabilities, their characteristics, identification and assessment, and recommended instructions and outcomes for students with these disabilities. The report also discusses common myths associated with dual language learning and children with disabilities.

Office of English Language Acquisition. (2019, May). *Supporting English learners through technology: What districts and teachers say about digital learning resources for English learners.* U.S. Department of Education. https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/title-iii/180414.pdf

This study reports on data from a nationally representative survey of districts that enrolled ML students, a teacher survey that included both mainstream teachers and ML specialists, and case studies of six districts to provide more in-depth information about district and teacher practices. Findings address how districts and teachers identified digital learning resources (DLRs), how teachers used DLRs, supports for and barriers to DLR use, and suggestions for improving the usefulness of DLRs in the instruction of ML students.

Uro, G., Lai, D., Alsace, T., Corcoran, A. (2020, August). *Supporting English learners in the COVID-19 crisis*. Council of the Great City Schools.

This guide was intended to help districts as they prepared to reopen schools in the 2020–2021 school year. The guide identifies ML-specific needs and challenges and addresses the issues facing families of MLs in greater detail. The guide includes some of the lessons that districts have learned while working to support their ML and immigrant communities during school closures.

CHAPTER 5

Establishing Partnerships With Families

After reading this chapter, readers should be able to

- Recognize diverse characteristics of newcomer families;
- Identify ways to facilitate newcomer family engagement at their schools;
- Examine tools and approaches for establishing successful partnerships with newcomer families;
- Review professional development tools for increasing staff's capacity to communicate with and empower newcomer families; and
- Continue learning about newcomers and their families through an annotated bibliography of resources.

When schools welcome newcomer families and collaborate with them in ways that respect and value their cultures, languages, assets, aspirations, and needs, the entire community is enriched. This chapter discusses the diversity among newcomer families, as well as potential barriers to school-family partnerships and ways to overcome those barriers. It also describes essential components of strong family engagement, characteristics of quality programs, and examples of effective, collaborative, sustained, and supportive partnerships with newcomer families.

Who Are Newcomer Families?

As discussed in Chapter 1 of this toolkit, people leave their countries of origin for a variety of reasons.

Newcomer families want their children to thrive in school and reach their full potential. They want their children to graduate from high school and take advantage of college and career options. These families understand the value of educational assets in a global society and expect their children to leverage those assets as they enter the workforce. The National Education Association (NEA) reports that Hispanic MLs and their families indicated on national surveys education as the issue of greatest importance.[1]

Newcomer Families

For the purposes of this toolkit, we will use the term "family" to identify parents or other immediate or extended family members, such as a grandparent or stepparent, with whom the child lives or a person who is legally responsible for the child's welfare.

Newcomer families bring strengths and assets that manifest in their children and that can positively influence academic performance and be harnessed in developing partnerships among schools, families, and communities. Although backgrounds of some newcomer families may also include traumatic and adverse experiences, well-resourced and stable environments, such as schools, can contribute to building children's strengths and talents and support positive educational outcomes.[2] It is, therefore, essential that schools partner with families to create environments that best facilitate their children's emotional and academic development.

Welcoming Newcomer Families

Highly successful schools spend time with families during the enrollment process to build trust and establish an understanding of engagement expectations for families. Such schools regularly communicate with families and visit with them in their homes to address challenges and opportunities. Newcomer families need specific

[1] National Education Association. (2020, June 23). *English language learners: What you need to know.*

[2] Shafer, L. (2018, April 26). *Partnering with newcomer families: Strategies for working across language and cultural differences to make families feel at home in new schools*. Harvard University, Harvard Graduate School of Education.

information on how to support their children's learning and development as these families adapt to a new culture and, in many cases, a new language.[3]

It is important to remember that not all students arrive with their parents: some arrive alone, some stay with relatives, and others may be in foster homes or with a sponsor. When enrolling newcomers, the school should identify who is responsible for the students and work with families to determine their children's language proficiency.

Check out this RESOURCE

Starting School in the United States: A Guide for Newcomer Students' Families is a resource from Regional Education Laboratory, Northwest. This infographic provides information about registering and attending U.S. schools and suggests several additional resources that may be helpful to newcomer students and their families.

Did You KNOW

There was a 6 percent increase in unaccompanied minors arriving in the U.S. between 2014 and 2019, with close to 70 percent of those coming from El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras. Unaccompanied minors are children who:

- Lack lawful immigration status in the U.S.,
- Are under the age of 18, and
- Are either without a parent or legal guardian in the U.S. or without a parent or legal guardian in the U.S. who is available to provide care and physical custody.

Many reasons exist for the migration of unaccompanied minors to the U.S. Some leave their native countries to escape from violence or poverty, while others seek to be reunited with family members in the U.S.

Source: Kandel, W. A. (2019). *Unaccompanied alien children: An overview.* Congressional Research Service. https://sgp.fas.org/crs/homesec/R43599.pdf

Informing Newcomer Families of Their Rights

As parents and guardians of school-age children, newcomer families have certain rights. It is very important that schools and districts inform newcomer families of their rights in a way that is accessible to them (i.e., using their home language); conveying information through channels accessible to families (e.g., making information available in ways other than solely online); utilizing mobile-friendly platforms to disseminate information; or making phone calls. For example, *Title I* of *ESEA* requires that school districts communicate to parents assessment results on statewide assessments in an understandable format and, to the extent practicable, in a language that the parents understand. (Section 1111[b][2][B][x]).

Schools and districts should consider providing information to newcomer families about the following topics:

- Eligibility of their children to attend school in the United States.: All school-age children, regardless of their citizenship or immigration status, are able to access free, public school education in the school district where they live.

[3] Castellón, M., Cheuk, T., Greene, R., Mercado-Garcia, D., Santos, M., Skarin, R., & Zerkel, L. (2015, December). *Schools to learn from: How six high schools graduate English language learners college and career ready.* Stanford University, Stanford Graduate School of Education.

- Which documentation is required for school enrollment and which documentation is not necessary: For example, families may need to provide immunization records and proof of their address, but schools cannot ask for proof of citizenship status or a parent's Social Security card.
- Confidentiality of the information that families provide to the school.
- Access to and eligibility of their children for language support services and families' ability to decline these services.
- Access to and eligibility of their children for disability-related services: Under Section 504 of the *Rehabilitation Act* (Section 504), children with disabilities are entitled to a free and appropriate public education, which includes disability-related services. The *IDEA,* as well as Section 504 and Title VI of the *Civil Rights Act of 1964* together, require that if a student is identified both as a student who needs language assistance services and as a student with a disability, the school must offer language assistance and disability-related services to the student at the same time. Disability evaluations may not be delayed because of a student's limited English proficiency. A child's English proficiency cannot be the reason for determining that the child has a disability.
- School facilities and programs, including computer labs and science labs; pre-kindergarten; magnet; career and technical education (CTE) programs; and Advanced Placement (AP), honors, and International Baccalaureate® (IB) courses, as well as counseling services and online and distance learning opportunities. Schools should provide newcomer families with information about the requirements necessary to access these programs.
- During remote learning, how to access hardware (e.g., computers) and software (e.g., programs) necessary to participate in school.
- How children, including students with disabilities, can participate in school-based programs and activities offered before, during, and after school, such as performing and visual arts, sports, clubs, and honor societies.
- Safety at school for their children: School staff, teachers, and other students cannot bully or threaten a child. For example, students or teachers cannot injure a child or destroy his or her property.
- Teachers and school staff cannot discriminate against or harass a child based on any reason, such as:
  - Wearing ethnic or religious clothes,
  - Being from another country,
  - Not being proficient in English,
  - Having a disability, or
  - A child's sex and/or gender identity.
- Their children's right to express their religious beliefs: This includes wearing religious clothing and symbols (such as a headscarf, crucifix, or yarmulke).
- Their children's eligibility for child nutrition programs, such as the National School Lunch Program, that may offer free and reduced-price meals to children most in need.[4]

[4] The National School Lunch Program is a food and nutrition program provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. https://www.fns.usda.gov/nslp

Approaches and Practices for Engaging Newcomer Families

Identifying Newcomer MLs

One way to engage newcomer families is to identify students who may qualify for language assistance services. The most common tool used by districts as part of the identification process is the home language survey (HLS). Home language surveys are currently developed by states independently. There is, therefore, a great deal of variation in these instruments across and even within states. However, the HLS typically includes questions about what language(s) the student first learned, understands, uses, and hears, and in what contexts. Additional questions about a student's language exposure and background (e.g., languages used in the home) can help ensure students requiring language assistance services are accurately identified.

Check out this RESOURCE

Home Language Survey Data Quality Self-Assessment was developed to help SEAs and LEAs improve the quality of data collected by HLS and improve identification of students requiring language assistance services.

To obtain accurate information, schools may need to reassure parents that the HLS is used solely to offer appropriate educational services (e.g., to inform placement into a language assistance program), not for determining legal status or for immigration purposes. Parents and guardians should also be informed that, even if their child is identified as a student requiring language assistance services, they may decline the program or particular language assistance services in the program.

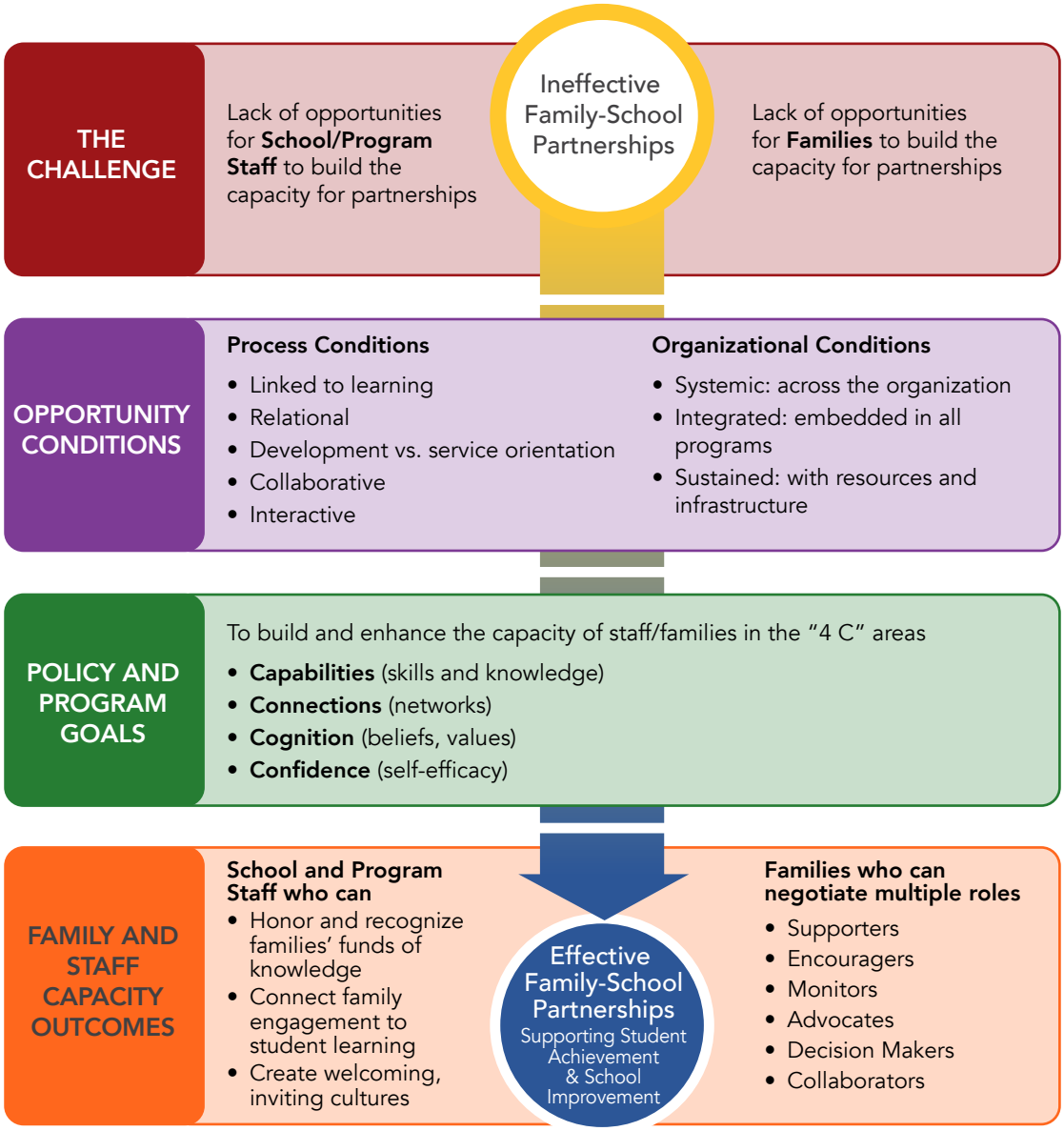
Building Partnerships Through the Dual Capacity-Building Framework

One of the challenges to effective and efficient family engagement is the limited capacity of stakeholders to partner and share responsibility for improving student achievement and performance. The Dual Capacity-Building Framework identifies the challenges, conditions, goals, and outcomes for successful school-family partnerships. The main idea behind this model is that to create and sustain partnerships, educational institutions should build capacity in their staff and families, as well as create conditions and program goals that are optimal for family engagement. The figure 5.1 demonstrates the components of the Dual Capacity-Building Framework.

Once the challenges to creating and sustaining partnerships have been identified, the framework outlines conditions that should be created to facilitate and sustain family engagement. These conditions are divided into two groups—*process* and *organizational*. Process conditions outline the processes that must take place for fruitful partnerships. For example, school-family partnerships must be linked to learning, meaning that activities aimed to engage families must be centered around academic and developmental goals for students. They must also be relational and focus on building trust between families and schools. Organizational conditions must be systemic, integrated, and sustained. Among other things, the framework recommends that capacity-building efforts for family engagement must be integrated into activities such as training and professional development for educators and administrators.[5]

[5] Mapp, K. L., & Kuttner, P. J. (2013). *Partners in education: A dual capacity-building framework for family-school partnerships.* Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) and the U.S. Department of Education. https://sedl.org/pubs/framework/

Figure 5.1. Components of the Dual Capacity-Building Framework



Note: Recreated for 508 Compliance with permission from *Partners in Education: A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family-School Partnerships*, by SEDL (in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education), 2013. www2.ed.gov/documents/family-community/partners-education.pdf). Copyright 2013 by SEDL.

Policy and program goals must also be re-oriented to build and sustain successful partnerships. The framework points out that often schools and districts focus solely on providing families with training and workshops on how to engage in their children's education, which may create tension between schools and families by placing the responsibility solely on families. Instead, it may be beneficial to build the capacity for engagement of both staff and families by following the four components of *capabilities*, *connections*, *confidence,* and *cognition*. Within the capabilities component, school staff must recognize the funds of knowledge of newcomer ML families, while families need to become knowledgeable about the U.S. school system and develop advocacy skills. The connections component emphasizes building relationships between not only schools and families, but also among families, as well as establishing connections to community organizations and agencies. The confidence component emphasizes the sense of comfort and self-efficacy that staff and families should feel in



View a webinar from the Office of English Language Acquisition on best practices and examples for continuous ML family and community engagement featuring the Dual Capacity-Building Framework.

the partnership. Within the cognition component, it is necessary for staff to value family partnerships and for families to view themselves as valuable contributors to their children's education.[6]

As a result of enhanced capacity on the part of schools and families, positive outcomes can be achieved. Staff should be able to recognize and respect families' knowledge, experiences, skills, and various forms of engagement; create and sustain environments that welcome diverse family perspectives; and develop engagement initiatives that are appropriate for all stakeholders and lead to improved developmental and academic outcomes. The outcomes for families include comfort in fulfilling various roles in supporting their children's education. These roles include supporters, encouragers, monitors, models, advocates, decision-makers, and collaborators.

While the Dual Capacity-Building Framework is not a blueprint for engagement initiatives, if it is designed and carried out to fit the needs and contexts of educational institutions and communities, it can serve as a guide to effective partnerships that support efforts to boost student achievement and improve schools.

Addressing Barriers to School–Newcomer Family Partnerships

The culture of U.S. schools and the expectations for family engagement may be new to some newcomer families. In their home countries some families may not have collaborated with schools closely and actively because such action may have been viewed as interfering with professionals. In the United States, on the other hand, family engagement is often expected to be explicitly school-based and visible to educators, such as volunteering in the classroom or regularly initiating contact with teachers.[7]



Review this blog to learn more about how to incorporate student and family voice to build and sustain relationship with diverse families and communities.

For example, families of children in U.S. schools are encouraged to

- Advocate for their children and school;
- Encourage their children's achievement, positive behaviors, persistence, and active participation in learning and school activities;

Ensure that their children attend school every day and are ready to learn;

- Communicate with the school about absences and any special circumstances affecting the student; and
- Collaborate, volunteer, and engage in decision-making to improve the quality of the school.

Schools should develop strategies to explicitly communicate about and facilitate collaboration with newcomer families. In addition, families may need support in building their capacity to engage productively in school-family partnerships.[8] Research shows that students thrive when schools and parents establish partnerships

[6] Mapp, K. L., & Kuttner, P. J. (2013). *Partners in education: A dual capacity-building framework for family-school partnerships.* Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) and the U.S. Department of Education. https://sedl.org/pubs/framework/

[7] Protacio, M. S., Piazza, S. V., & David, V. (2021). Family engagement in the middle: Reaching out to families of English learners. *Middle School Journal, 52*(1), 30–39.

[8] Mapp, K. L., & Kuttner, P. J. (2013). *Partners in education: A dual capacity-building framework for family-school partnerships.* Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) and the U.S. Department of Education. https://www2.ed.gov/documents/family-community/partners-education.pdf

that focus on student achievement and school improvement, shared responsibility, trust building, and respectful home-school relationships.[9]

Schools may need to explicitly reach out to newcomer families to establish and support two-way communication. Newcomer families need to know that their voices count, and they need to learn how to be heard in the school. The school can link parents to adult education opportunities, as well as social and cultural resources. School leaders can organize family engagement events that improve the newcomer's transition, taking into consideration the multiple challenges and opportunities newcomer students and their families may be experiencing in the United States. When parents come to the school for events such as student performances and parent–teacher conferences, schools can introduce these families to the wealth of resources the school offers and explain how they can be used to support children's academic, social, emotional, and mental health needs. Schools should also encourage families to avail themselves of community resources that are free and open to all.

Transportation, busy work schedules, childcare, racism, or intimidation based on legal status may be challenges to parent engagement.[10] Other factors can also hinder parents' full participation in their child's education. Some newcomer families' work schedules may make it difficult for them to attend school functions. Research has indicated that home visiting programs such as Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) increased immigrant family engagement in their children's education.

Schools should carefully and respectfully offer suggestions about supports available to help families with sensitive issues such as trauma, domestic violence, health, nutrition, food, social support, and disability. An understanding of the values and cultural norms of the newcomer will help schools become effective resource brokers and help families thrive.

A 2018 study that analyzed a nationally representative 10th-grade data set from the National Center for Educational Statistics found that teachers' perceptions of parental engagement and support differed for families of various racial and ethnic groups, as well as their generational status (e.g., students classified as first-generation immigrants versus third-generation immigrants).[11] For example, in general, English and math teachers perceived minority families, such as Hispanic and Asian, as less involved in their children's education. Teachers also perceived families from lower socioeconomic backgrounds as less engaged. The results of this study also show that teacher perceptions may be reflected in students' achievement and opportunities. Students whose families are perceived by teachers as disengaged or not involved in their children's education seem to have lower GPAs than the students whose families are perceived by teachers to be actively engaged. Teachers are also less likely to recommend for honors or advanced coursework and academic honors those students whose families they believe to be less engaged than their peers with similar academic performance.

While schools may need to support newcomer families in taking an active role in their children's education, they should also learn about, acknowledge, and value the less visible support that families provide to their children outside of school. Schools and districts may consider addressing racial, ethnic, and cultural stereotypes that may exist in their educational communities.

[9] Sibley, E., & Brabeck, K. (2017). Latino immigrant students' school experiences in the United States: The importance of family-school-community collaborations. *School Community Journal, 27*(1).

[10] Arias, M. B., & Morillo-Campbell, M. (2008). *Promoting ELL parental involvement: Challenges in contested times* [Policy brief]. Arizona State University, College of Education, Division of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Education Policy Research Unit.

[11] Ho, P., & Cherng, H. S. (2018). How far can the apple fall? Differences in teacher perceptions of minority and immigrant parents and their impact on academic outcomes. *Social Science Research, 74,* 132–145.

Empowering Newcomer Families to Engage With Schools

High-quality newcomer family engagement programs start with attention to the strengths and needs of families who send their children to school and aim to empower families with the knowledge and skills they need to support their children's academic success. When schools empower families, they can maximize learning not only at school, but also outside of school hours, where students spend most of their time.[12] As part of empowering newcomer families, schools should encourage families to ask questions and seek information about a variety of topics regarding the U.S. educational system, including families' rights that are discussed earlier in this chapter. These topics may include the following:



- Enrollment processes and procedures
- School policies
  - Attendance
  - Uniforms
  - Absences
  - Homework
  - Grades/advancement
- Educational programs and services
  - Tutoring
  - Advanced, honors, and International Baccalaureate® courses
  - Language assistance programs/language instruction educational programs
  - Disability-related services
  - Individualized instructional plans
  - Gifted and talented education programs
  - Dual language/bilingual programs
  - Online/distance/virtual learning
  - Summer intersession programs
  - Before- and after-school care programs
  - Access to devices and internet
- Extracurricular activities
  - School clubs and after-school activities
  - Sports/art/music/theater programs
- Health and safety
  - Bullying policies
  - Policies against discrimination
  - Confidentiality
  - Social and emotional well-being/mental health
  - Access to affordable medical and dental services
  - Nutritional services
  - Medications and nutritional/medical accommodations

[12] Arias, M. B., & Morillo-Campbell, M. (2008, January). *Promoting ELL parental involvement: Challenges in contested times* [Policy brief]. Arizona State University, College of Education, Division of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Education Policy Research Unit.; National Center on Safe Supportive Learning Environments (n.d). *Family involvement in elementary school children's education.* U.S. Department of Education, Office of Safe and Supportive Schools.

Impact of COVID-19 on Newcomer Students and Families

COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on the academic achievement and social and emotional well-being of MLs, newcomers, their families, and communities. Newcomers, MLs, and their families may have been affected by the pandemic in the following ways:

Economy, Community, and Society

ML and newcomer families are likely to have experienced the biggest economic and social impacts of the pandemic due to

- Family members being essential workers,
- Family members losing jobs, and
- Increased discrimination because of their ethnicity.

Physical and Mental Health

ML and newcomer families are most likely to live in the communities that have been hit the hardest by COVID-19 and experience lack of equitable access to health care. This may have had the following consequences on their physical and mental health:

- Vulnerability to COVID-19 infection
- Hesitancy to seek medical and mental health services
- Barriers to diagnosing and treating mental health issues
- Scarcity of culturally competent mental health care options
- Grief and shock at losing family and community members to illness
- Increased feelings of anxiety and isolation
- Re-emergence of traumatic memories

Research indicates that supportive learning environments and conditions can help overcome the negative effects of adverse experiences such as those that newcomer and ML families have faced during the COVID-19 pandemic. Schools and districts should take action to support students and families in the following ways:

- Implement **district- and schoolwide approaches** to meeting the mental health needs of students and families.
- Conduct student and family **needs assessments** regarding physical and mental health, financial security, child care, etc.
- **Talk** about mental health to students and their families.
- Provide students opportunities to **speak openly** about their lives, stressors, anxiety, etc.
- Let students and families know that they are not alone and allow **time to heal**.
- Build **community partnerships** to strengthen relationships with newcomer and ML families.
- **Strengthen** existing relationships and develop new ones with community-based organizations.

Sources:

Browning, A. (2020). *Mindfulness in education: An approach to cultivating self-awareness that can bolster kids' learning.* Center to Improve Social and Emotional Learning and School Safety at WestEd.

Garcia-Arena, P., & D'Souza, S. (2020, October). *Research brief: Spotlight on English learners.* American Institutes for Research.

Holquist, S., & Porter, T. (2020, June 3). *Culturally responsive leading and learning: Addressing equity through student and family voice.* Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory (REL) Pacific. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/pacific/blogs/blog27_culturally-responsive-leading-and-learning_addressing-equity.asp

U.S. Department of Education. (2020). *ED COVID-19 handbook: Roadmap to reopening safely and meeting all students' needs.* Volume 2. https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening-2.pdf

Note: This document does not address the legal obligations of states and school districts toward MLs and their families under *Title I and Title III* of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).* For more information on *ESEA,* go to https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/COMPS-748/pdf/COMPS-748.pdf

For more information on social, emotional, and mental health support for newcomers and their families, please refer to Chapter 3 of this toolkit.

Processes and Strategies to Create Partnerships With Newcomer Families and Facilitate Family Engagement

The following table suggests five processes schools can utilize to engage newcomer families effectively. The five processes are (1) collaboration among school staff, families, and community members; (2) development of staff and newcomers' capacities to re-envision their roles and take actions that support student success; (3) acknowledgement of newcomers' assets and focus on how they can strengthen the school; (4) employment of a multi-pronged approach to communicating with families and providing language supports, such as interpreters and translated materials; and (5) incorporation of family engagement as a standard part of the school's continuous improvement efforts.

Processes	Strategies
Collaboration	■ Examine assumptions and cultural biases, recognize and employ newcomer families' assets, bring family voices into planning for their children and the school's success, and craft multi-modal informational resources on everything families need to know and do. ■ Bring newcomer families and staff together to co-construct meaningful communications and resources for families and to collaborate in the delivery of learning and support activities for families[13] ■ Encourage and help parents develop leadership skills to participate in decision-making throughout the school and the community. ■ Enlist newcomer families to design and conduct family learning opportunities on parenting across cultures, promoting child development, supporting learning, and planning for college and careers.
Capacity Development	■ Build newcomers and staff members' capacity to effectively carry out multiple roles (advocate, supporter, encourager, decision-maker, etc.). ■ Build staff capacity to challenge deficit mindsets related to traditional expectations for newcomers and encourage an asset orientation.[14] ■ Create parent and family welcome kits with information about the school. Include families and students' responsibilities, school schedules, phone numbers, procedures, and any other information that will help families feel welcome, informed, and integrated into the school. ■ Sponsor and encourage families to attend family literacy events where families and/or students can engage in academic activities together.
Assets Orientation	■ Establish opportunities for listening to families and strive to meet high expectations, aspirations, and hopes by drawing on newcomers' cultures, languages, funds of knowledge, and skills. ■ Acknowledge and value multiple formats of family engagement, including the ones not readily visible at the school. ■ Encourage staff to recognize and acknowledge the value that newcomer families place on their children's education. ■ Incorporate the strengths of families and the community in the school curriculum.

[13] Mapp, K. L., & Kuttner, P. J. (2013). *Partners in education: A dual capacity-building framework for family-school partnerships.* Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) and the U.S. Department of Education. https://www2.ed.gov/documents/family-community/partners-education.pdf

[14] Mapp, K. L., & Kuttner, P. J. (2013). *Partners in education: A dual capacity-building framework for family-school partnerships.* Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) and the U.S. Department of Education. https://www2.ed.gov/documents/family-community/partners-education.pdf

Processes	Strategies
Multi-Modal Communications and Supports	■ Use multiple methods to communicate (e.g., newsletters translated in the languages represented in the school, telephone trees, a school website, parent outreach workers, and other structures). ■ Conduct newcomer focus groups and/or newcomer advisory committees to get input on decision-making structures, concerns, questions, and recommendations. ■ Ensure that language supports are available for all educational communications and activities. ■ Use suggestion boxes, surveys, targeted and short interviews, and/or polling with the appropriate language supports to encourage newcomer families to voice their concerns and ideas to inform school planning. ■ Learn about newcomer families' familiarity with and availability of technological devices and the internet. ■ If necessary, provide training and support for using technology and navigating online school and district resources and information.
Continuous Improvement	■ Identify strategies to give newcomer families opportunities to enrich the school community's culture by sharing their personal and cultural assets.[15] ■ Continuously improve family engagement by examining multiple data sources to assess the impact of policies and practices on newcomers. ■ Include newcomer families' values and perspectives to promote cross-cultural understanding and strengthen their 21st-century skills through volunteer experiences they can engage in.

Check out this RESOURCE

Access the Statewide Family Engagement Centers Program page from the U.S. Department of Education. This program provides support organizations that assist SEAs and LEAs in implementation and enhancement of effective family engagement policies.

Special Considerations for Family Engagement in Secondary Schools



Secondary schools should be aware of the diverse needs, Secondary schools should be aware of the diverse needs, challenges, and aspirations of newcomer students and families as they strive to help them understand the various pathways to graduation and the relative advantages of the options available to high school students.[16] Newcomer parents may need help developing the knowledge and skills to advocate for their child's inclusion in extracurricular activities, college preparation programs, career pathway counseling, AP classes, and concurrent enrollment courses. They may also need information on the following topics: adolescent development, warning signs of gang affiliation, identifying and responding to drug use, financial aid for college, college exploration, and filling out application forms for college and financial aid. High schools can include such

[15] Mapp, K. L., & Kuttner, P. J. (2013). *Partners in education: A dual capacity-building framework for family-school partnerships.* Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL) and the U.S. Department of Education. https://www2.ed.gov/documents/family-community/partners-education.pdf

[16] National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. (2021). *English learners in secondary schools: Trajectories, transition points, and promising practices* [Webinar]. U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. https://ncela.ed.gov/Webinars; National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. (2021). *English Learners in secondary schools: Trajectories, transition points, and promising practices, parts I & II* [Podcast]. U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. https://ncela.ed.gov/resources/oela-resources/podcasts

topics in their newcomer family education programs. In addition, schools can support families and newcomers by developing individual graduation plans that are regularly reviewed with counselors to ensure that students are on track to graduate from high school ready for college and careers.

Check out these RESOURCES

- Access a webinar with the Federal Student Aid (FSA) Outreach Specialist to learn about FAFSA® updates and new tools and resources from FSA that can help students and their families prepare and pay for college or a career school.
- Review Developing Educator Expertise to Work with Adolescent English Learners learning modules from the National Research & Development Center to Improve Education for Secondary English Learners. These modules were developed based on the expertise of researchers and educators from around the world and can serve as resources for preservice teachers, as well as continuing education activities for in-service educators.

Ideas in ACTION

Protacio et al. (2021) present examples of adjustments made at three middle schools by teachers and staff that resulted in improved school-family partnerships and increased ML family engagement.

- **Example 1:** One school changed a poorly attended Open House event into a Diversity Night and provided families with the space and agency to share about their cultures. Students shared funds of knowledge posters about their cultures. The event had a higher attendance rate than the Open House, and families who completed a survey about the event were highly satisfied with it.
- **Example 2:** A middle school ESL teacher improved outreach to ML families by providing invitations for parent-teacher conferences (PTC) in families' native languages. The teacher also hired interpreters who accompanied families to meetings with general education teachers. This resulted in 100 percent PTC attendance by ML families, as well as the recognition by other teachers, who had previously held deficit beliefs, of the value ML families place on their children's education.
- **Example 3:** A health teacher encouraged MLs to indicate on a map where their families came from. Students also made videos about their countries. During PTCs, the teacher displayed the map in her room and played student-made videos on the computer. As families arrived at PTCs, they were asked to tell a story about their countries and cultures. This generated interest and engagement from families, teachers, and students, and helped families feel safe and welcome at the school.

These three examples demonstrate that even small changes can result in positive steps towards engagement and partnerships among secondary schools, MLs, and their families.

Source: Protacio, M. S., Piazza, S. V., & David, V. (2021). Family engagement in the middle: Reaching out to families of English learners. *Middle School Journal 52*(1), 30–39.

Core Components of Family Engagement Programs

When designing family engagement programs for newcomers, schools may wish to consider these three goals for family participation:

1. **Academic Success:** Strengthen newcomer families' capacity to support academic achievement by increasing their awareness of instructional programs and ways they can support their child's learning.
2. **Advocacy and Decision-Making:** Strengthen families' understanding of how to advocate for their child and how to participate in decisions to improve learning for their child and for others in the school
3. **Awareness and Use of Resources:** Strengthen families' awareness of resources available in the school and community and how to access these resources to support their family's well-being and their own personal growth.

The Important Role of Family Centers

Family centers provide valuable tools for engaging and supporting newcomer students' families. A thoughtfully designed center can do the following things:

Welcome Newcomer Families

A family center can provide a welcoming place within the school for all families. Families should be informed about the center and its purpose. They need to know that it is a place they can get information about the school and the community, feel safe asking questions, and meet other families. Those who staff the center—usually a parent coordinator or volunteer—should be informed about the special needs of newcomer families and ways the center can make newcomer families feel welcome and comfortable. Immigrant families and interpreters should be part of the center staff.



Check out this **RESOURCE**

See *Partnering for Success with Newcomer Students and Families* from the Aurora Public Schools Welcome Center to learn more about how one school district is supporting newcomer students and families in their transition to U.S. schools.

Serve as a Hub for Information and Communications

The family center staff can introduce newcomer families to the center and provide orientation materials, such as a fact sheet about the school. Families should be informed that centers are places where parents can gather to learn, share resources about external and internal opportunities for learning, exchange expertise, and connect with school and community resources. Family centers should provide up-to-date information about employment opportunities, medical and dental services, food and nutrition assistance programs, and citizenship applications. Family centers often offer a variety of classes, based on families' needs and interests.

Model and Support Families' Engagement With Their Children's Learning

Family centers can help identify learning opportunities at home and help families take advantage of museums, libraries, parks, and other resources in the community. Centers often sponsor classes to introduce families with young children to early literacy activities in the language the family feels most comfortable speaking. The children will benefit from reading materials in their home language, and the newcomer family members can become familiar with various cultures by discussing ideas, exploring characters in fiction, and being introduced to new perspectives. Staff in the center may model and teach questioning and engagement strategies that families can use to facilitate their children's learning at home. Families should be encouraged to monitor their children's reading and to talk about text every day; centers can empower families by building their capacity to do so in the children's home language. Finally, centers should make sure that translators are present, so they can translate the information in families' home languages.

Provide Disability-Related Resources

Family resource centers, including Parent Training and Information (PTI) Centers and Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs), provide resources to families who have children with disabilities. They can provide information about the disability or disabilities of the child, early intervention services, school services, therapy, transportation, and additional resources that are available. CPRCs may have some additional resources, as they are designed to reach underserved children with disabilities, including those who are MLs. Having a child with a disability may carry a cultural stigma for some newcomers, and family resource centers can provide supports and help families navigate the special education process within the U.S. school system.

Provide Access to Technology and Digital Support

Family centers provide opportunities for families to use technological resources. Research has found that many immigrant families have mobile-only access (i.e., cell phones) and no home access (no laptop or desktop computer and no internet connection).[17] Center staff should be aware of newcomer families' access, skills, and attitudes related to technology:

- The main reason some families do not have home computers or internet access is because they cannot afford it.
- Parents use the internet for a broad range of purposes, but mobile-only families are less likely to do certain online activities.
- Children from low- and moderate-income families use computers and the internet for a variety of educational activities, but those without home access are less likely to go online to pursue their interests.
- Families feel largely positive about the internet and digital technology, but many also have concerns about inappropriate content online, distractions from important activities, online bullying, and the possibility that classroom technology might be a distraction that hurts children's education.
- Children and parents frequently learn with and about technology together, especially in families with the lowest incomes and where parents have less formal education.

Check out this RESOURCE

The Office of Educational Technology's Advancing Digital Equity for All: Community-Based Recommendations for Developing Effective Digital Equity Plans to Close the Digital Divide and Enable Technology-Empowered Learning resource identifies barriers to broadband and technology access and strategies for navigating those barriers for learner communities furthest from digital opportunities, including ELs and highly mobile learners. The resource additionally highlights examples of communities and organizations implementing strategies to close the digital divide.

Family centers can be good places to build meaningful and equitable digital skills and connections for all families. Schools' outreach to parents when adopting new digital learning platforms—specifically how a district promotes the program to families and how programs respond to parents' needs and concerns—is also critical to maintaining families' trust.

In schools without family centers, teachers and administrators may wish to explore other practical and easily accessible and sustainable places to support families' digital use. For example, partnerships with libraries and public-private ventures may help families gain access to the internet or to devices that are pre-loaded with

[17] Rideout, V., & Katz, V. S. (2016). *Opportunity for all? Technology and learning in lower-income families*. The Joan Ganz Cooney Center at Sesame Workshop.

data. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the need for digital skills and access to the internet, and schools should be mindful of newcomer families' capabilities with technology prior to adopting new platforms and tools.[18] Regardless of whether a school or a district has a family center, newcomer families should be provided with training and support in using technology, as well as assistance in accessing devices and a reliable internet connection.

Resources From the Field: Innovative Newcomer Support

Below are some resources on effectively and efficiently supporting newcomer MLs that include engaging their families. These resources may spark ideas for your school. See the second schoolwide tool at the end of this chapter for additional examples from the field.

Global Family Research Project

The Global Family Research Project is the successor to the Harvard Family Research Project (1983-2016). The project has an excellent track record in defining and advancing the fields of family, school, and community engagement. Resources of the project include blogs and resources on various aspects of family engagement in the context of preK–12 education.

Engaging Newcomer Families: Examples From the Field

These examples demonstrate a wide range of approaches schools, districts, and communities can take to engage newcomer families. Use them to help your school staff gain insight and inspiration.

Example 1: **Engaging Families in Decision-Making (California).** A quarter of the students in the Alhambra Unified Schools District in California, arrived in the United States fewer than three years ago from various parts of the world. The district engaged families in decision-making as part of a Safe Schools/Healthy Students (SS/HS) Initiative. This initiative focuses on helping students, teachers, families, and others work together on education and health issues. To this end, the SS/HS Initiative created an ethnically diverse parent advisory board to provide a forum for family concerns. SS/HS staff worked with the schools to identify a variety of families, not just community leaders. Forty families joined the advisory board; many came as couples, demonstrating their commitment to their children's success. To reach out to immigrants, every flyer, poster, and communication material is translated into Cantonese, Spanish, and Vietnamese, and at every meeting, translations of speakers' comments are provided via headphones.

Example 2: **Family Resources at Franklin-McKinley School District (California) .** Parent Resources in the Franklin-McKinley School District in San Jose, California, offer parents a range of learning opportunities. These include parent workshops and support, immigration services and resources, anti-bullying information, information on children's health and nutrition, etc. The district also houses the Family Resource Center that, among other things, provides families with resources for basic needs, such as clothing, food distribution, school supplies, adult education, etc.

Example 3: **Family Resources at South Gate High School (California).** South Gate High School (SGHS) serves a predominantly Latina/o student population. The school website contains a section dedicated entirely to family resources. They include a request for technology help, mental health support resources, information about family workshops, and a link to the district Parent Portal and other resources. Almost all information, including forms that are available through the family resources page, is available in English and in Spanish.

[18] National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. (2020). *Engaging English learner communities and families through distance learning*. U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition.

Example 4: **Immigrant Services at Newcomer Community Service Center (Washington, D.C.).** The Newcomer Community Service Center (NCSC) is a nonprofit organization that helps refugees and immigrants from all countries become self-sufficient and participating members of American society. Founded in 1978 as the Indochinese Community Center, NCSC uses the following strategies to achieve its mission:

- Helping refugees and immigrants achieve economic self-sufficiency
- Helping refugees and immigrants maintain their legal immigration status
- Communicating to public and private agencies about newcomers' needs for education, health, employment, and other services
- Respecting diverse cultures and supporting cultural preservation activities

The center offers to newcomer immigrants services in the area of immigration support case management and provides referral services to such resources as translation and interpretation, English as a Second Language courses, vocational training, etc.

Assessing Family–School–Community Partnerships

Multiple data sources and data-gathering processes, such as interviews, focus groups, and informal conversations, can help identify what is working for families.[19] Once a vision and framework for newcomer family engagement are in place, their effectiveness needs to be assessed. The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction offers the following tool to help schools better understand how they are supporting family-school-community partnerships, with attention to six types of partnerships highlighted by the work of Joyce Epstein.

Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction: Measuring Your Family–School–Community Partnerships: A Tool for Schools

How does your school reach out to and involve families and the community in children's learning?

This tool is based on the six types of partnerships: (1) parenting and family skills, (2) communicating, (3) learning at home, (4) volunteering, (5) decision-making, and (6) community collaboration. It may help your school do the following three things to implement the partnerships effectively:

4. Assess the strength of the partnerships it conducts
5. Indicate the focus or direction of your partnerships
6. Identify areas that can be changed

Your school may do all, some, or none of the activities or approaches listed above. Not every activity is appropriate for every grade level. The items listed were selected because it has been shown that schools in which they take place are meeting the challenge to involve families in many different ways. These activities can improve school climate, strengthen families, and increase student learning. Your school may also be conducting other activities. Be sure to add them under each type of engagement and include them in your school's assessment of its key partnership practices.

[19] Castellón, M., Cheuk, T., Greene, R., Mercado-Garcia, D., Santos, M., Skarin, R., & Zerkel, L. (2015, December). *Schools to learn from: How six high schools graduate English language learners college and career ready.* Stanford University, Stanford Graduate School of Education.

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING ACTIVITY

The Three A's: Academics, Advocacy, and Awareness
CORE COMPONENTS OF STRONG FAMILY ENGAGEMENT PROGRAMS
(PLANNING TOOL)

Purpose

This exercise will help your school team build a common understanding of the core components of strong family engagement programs for newcomers (academic success, advocacy and decision-making, and awareness and use of resources) and reflect on your school's practices related to each component.[20] It includes a template to help organize your team's thinking and planning..

Materials

- Poster or handout of the three A's
- Handouts A and B
- Flip chart or whiteboard

Time Required for Activity

- 1 hour

Preparation for Facilitator

- A few days in advance, ask participants to read Chapter 5 of this toolkit.
- Make a poster (or handout) that displays the three A's of strong family engagement programs.
- Make copies of handouts A and B (one of each for each participant). Handouts are found on page 96–98.

Instructions for Facilitator

Step 1: Individual Reflection on Core Components

Distribute handout A and instruct participants as follows: "This handout presents three core components (focus points) of strong family engagement programs that influence newcomer families' experiences with schooling in the United States. It describes each component and summarizes the potential impact of well-designed activities for families in each of these focus areas. The handout also describes effective delivery methods for each area of support and, ultimately, who needs to share the responsibility for engaging families. Take a few minutes to study the chart and underline areas that you think our school is not currently attending to and circle areas that are being addressed in our school, particularly with regard to newcomer families." (Allow about 10 minutes for individual reflection.)

Step 2: Group Discussion

Facilitate a group discussion to make participants' thinking visible to the group. You might want to record main ideas on a flip chart or whiteboard. (Allow 5-10 minutes for discussion.)

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[20] Ambroso, E., Dunn, L., & Fox, P. (2021, September). *Research in brief: Engaging and empowering diverse and underserved families in schools.* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory West. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/rel/regions/west/pdf/Family_Engagement_and_Empowerment_Brief_Final_Clean_ADA_Final.pdf

Step 3: Preparation for Planning Activity

Distribute handout B and instruct participants as follows: "We will use this template to plan ways our school can address engagement of newcomer families in the coming year. Based on the exercise and discussion we have just completed and on what you know about research on effective parent engagement programs, jot down five things you think are priorities for our school. These should be actions you think our school absolutely must address. They can include aspects we are currently addressing, as well as aspects you think we should start addressing." (Allow about 3–5 minutes for individual reflection.)

Step 4: Group Planning Activity

Facilitate a group process for coming to consensus on priorities to include in your school's family engagement plan. Record the priorities and make sure they are used to inform your school's planning for the coming year.

The Three A's (Core Components) of Family Engagement Programs for Newcomers

When school communities design family engagement programs for newcomers, they should consider including in their plans three core components or areas of focus:

1. **Academic Success:** strengthening newcomer families' capacity to support academic achievement by increasing their awareness of instructional programs and ways they can support their child's learning
2. **Advocacy and Decision-Making:** strengthening families' understanding of how to advocate for their own child and participate in decisions to improve learning for their child and others in the school
3. **Awareness and Use of Resources:** strengthening families' awareness of resources available in the school and community and how to access them to support their family's well-being, as well as their own personal growth

HANDOUT A:
Organizing Family and Community Engagement for Impact

Component 1 Academic Success	Component 2 Advocacy and Decision-Making	Component 3 Awareness and Use of Resources
Opportunities for engagement: • Directly linked to student grade-level learning goals • About two-way communication and collaboration with teachers and school leaders	*Opportunities for engagement:* • Related to school academic and nonacademic programming • Connected to exercising advocacy and shared decision- making • About successful transitions	*Opportunities for engagement:* • Linked to social services • Connected to adult education • About information and access to school and community resources
Impact (why)	**Impact (why)**	**Impact (why)**
• Family knowledge and understanding of key grade- level learning concepts • Greater ability to apply strategies that support grade- level learning concepts • anywhere and anytime • Strong collaboration between teachers and families • Higher expectations for learning and achievement • Improved student achievement, attendance, and behavior • Family ability and access to monitor progress regularly • Increased interaction with learning between families and their children	• Increased family participation in the life of the school community through organized meetings, groups, and committees • Increased knowledge and understanding about families' rights and responsibilities • More families as thought partners for district and school improvement • Access to academic and nonacademic resources and after-school programs • Better understanding of curriculum, academic standards, and benchmarks • Knowledge of district and school vision, mission, and policies • More volunteers supporting the school and all students	• Increased number of partnerships with specialized community organizations • Greater selection of services and resources for families throughout the community • Increased number of academic and nonacademic opportunities for children beyond the school day • Efficient and effective use of fiscal and human resources across the community • An increased number of community organizations engaged in supporting district and school goals
Approach (how)	**Approach (how)**	**Approach (how)**
• Ongoing professional learning opportunities for school leaders, teachers, and support staff • Systematic application of research and evidence-based practices in engagements • Personal outreach by teachers • Integration of family engagement into the fabric of teaching and learning • Effective and targeted use of time and human and fiscal resources	• Personal invitations • Coordinated parent and family orientation that includes transition years, academic milestones, and college and career readiness • Quarterly newsletter • Structured and targeted open house events • Welcome centers	• A district/school strategic plan for community partnerships that targets the needs of the school community • An organized family and community engagement leadership team that meets regularly and includes partners across service areas • Marketing
People Responsible (who)	**People Responsible (who)**	**People Responsible (who)**
• District/school leadership team • Teachers • Parents and families • Support staff • Family and Community Engagement (FACE) coordinators	• District/school leadership team • Family and Community Engagement (FACE) coordinators • *Title I* staff • Volunteers • Front office staff	• Strategic community partners • Volunteers • Family and Community Engagement (FACE) coordinators • District leadership

Note: This document does not address the legal obligations of states and school districts toward MLs and their families under *Title I and Title III* of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)*. For more information on *ESEA,* go to https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/COMPS-748/pdf/COMPS-748.pdf

HANDOUT B:
Planning Template for Addressing the Three Core Components of Strong Family Engagement Programs

	Component 1 Academic Success	Component 2 Advocacy and Decision-Making	Component 3 Awareness and Use of Resources
What do newcomer families and staff need to know?			
How will you assess their needs?			
What will be the focus of engagement activities?			
What assets do the families and staff have that can be leveraged?			
Who will be involved in planning the engagement activities?			
How will you create a safe and welcoming environment for participants?			
What capacities need to be developed or strengthened for families and staff to improve the impact of the engagements?			
How will the required capacities be developed for both families and staff?			

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	Component 1 Academic Success	Component 2 Advocacy and Decision-Making	Component 3 Awareness and Use of Resources
What resources and structures will be used to recruit participants?			
What resources and structures will be used to have strong engagements and communications?			
What is the expected impact of activities?			
How will the impact be measured?			

Remote Format Adaptation

This activity can be conducted in a virtual format on a virtual platform. When implementing this activity remotely, the facilitator can provide the poster with the "three A's" and the two handouts to the participants through email or a shared document. Participants can indicate their opinions on handout A by highlighting them in different colors.

After participants come together and share what they indicated on handout A, the facilitator can share a document while jotting down the ideas that participants are voicing. Participants can describe their ideas on the three A's. The facilitator can use polling with multiple-choice options or true-false items on the three A's.

Next, the facilitator gives the group a few minutes to work on handout B, then assigns participants into breakout rooms to work in small groups on coming up with an effective family engagement plan. Once small groups have concluded their discussions, the participants can return to the main group to share their plans.

Resources

The resources below have been selected based on the following criteria:

- Resource produced by a federally funded study or center
- Resource produced by an open access and peer-reviewed journal
- Resource produced by a nonpartisan and nonprofit organization

Hoffman, L., Suh, E., & Zollman, A. (2021). What STEM teachers need to know and do to engage families of emergent multilingual students (English language learners). *Journal of STEM Teacher Education, 56*(1), 1–15.

This article lays out an argument for STEM teacher educators to explicitly address multilingual family engagement as a key part of STEM education.

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. (2018). *English learner family toolkit.* U.S. Department of Education, Office of English Language Acquisition. https://ncela.ed.gov/educator-support/toolkits/family-toolkit

The first two chapters of this toolkit provide information for immigrant families on enrolling their children in U.S. schools and what their children can expect while attending school. Additional chapters will be added to the toolkit.

Protacio, S., Piazza, S. V., David, V., Tigchelaar, M. (2020). Elementary teachers' initiatives in engaging families of English learners. *School Community Journal, 30*(2), 211–228.

This article describes authentic examples of initiatives targeting family engagement of ML families in several linguistically diverse districts in the Midwest.

Regional Educational Laboratory Program. (n.d.). *Joyful reading and writing with young children.* U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance. https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/west/Resources/JoyfulReading

The resources on this website share practical strategies for teachers to promote joyful reading experiences and support language and literacy development for multilingual learners.

APPENDIX
Profiles of Schools Spotlighted in the Toolkit

School or Program	Enrollment	Overview
Columbus Global Academy 4077 Karl Road Columbus, Ohio	Grades: 6–12 827 students	Students at the Columbus Global Academy are between the ages of 11 and 21, have recently arrived in the United States, have little or no formal schooling, and have few literacy skills in English and in their home languages. Many newcomers are refugees. Instruction at the academy promotes content area learning within the five designated second-language acquisition skill areas: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and cultural enrichment. More than 55 countries are represented at the academy. The Center for the Study of Teaching and Writing at The Ohio State University partners with the Columbus Global Academy to offer the Writing Studio in which newcomers "imagine themselves as always-already writers."
ENLACE Academy 233 Haverhill Street First Floor Lawrence, MA 0184	Grades 9–10[1]	ENLACE (Engaging Newcomers in Language and Content Education) serves 9th- and 10th-grade newcomers who have been in the United States. for fewer than two years and are still developing English language proficiency. It is a voluntary program that aims to provide newcomer students with the academic and linguistic foundation and social, emotional, and mental health supports to help them transition successfully and quickly into the mainstream high school environment.
Franklin-McKinley School District 645 Wool Creek Drive San Jose, California	Grades: TK–8 9,775 students	The tag line for the Franklin-McKinley School District is "Preparing All Children as Global Learners." The district is composed of 14 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, and 3 charter schools that serve children from transitional kindergarten (TK) through 8th grade. More than 40 percent of the district's students are English learners. The Franklin-McKinley School District offers several dual language programs. It also operates a Family Resource Center that includes information and resources for newcomer families.
Manhattan Bridges High School 525 West 50th Street Manhattan, New York	Grades: 9–12 517 students	Founded in 2003 as a transitional bilingual school for Spanish-speaking students, Manhattan Bridges High School has continued to evolve while maintaining a culture of college-readiness and supporting students to achieve at high levels. Since 2007 when New York began grading schools, Manhattan Bridges has consistently scored an "A" on the NYC Progress Report. The school established the Academies of Engineering and Information Technology so students can graduate with industry certificates and college credits. Manhattan Bridges provides students job-shadowing and internships through partnerships with various innovative 21st-century businesses.

[1] No data on student population is available for this particular program within Lawrence High School.

School or Program	Enrollment	Overview
Marble Hill School for International Studies 99 Terrace View Avenue Bronx, New York	Grades: 9–12 442 students	Students at the Marble Hill School for International Studies are from more than 45 countries and speak more than 30 languages. Each 9th-grade class is composed of 50 percent English learners and 50 percent English-dominant students. Marble Hill offers a college preparatory program that includes four years of math and sciences, and three years of a foreign language for English-dominant students. It also features the iMentor program that matches a college-educated mentor with every student for four years, the College Bound Initiative Partnership, seven Advanced Placement courses in grades 11 and 12, and a summer bridge program for incoming 9th graders..
Newcomers High School 28-01 41st Avenue Long Island City, New York	Grades: 9–12 602 students	The goal of Newcomers High School is for immigrant students to acquire academic language skills in English and their home languages and to celebrate and maintain their culture. This school was created especially for immigrant students. Newcomers receive "a rigorous instructional program designed to fit their unique needs." In addition to providing instructional programs that develop the academic, social, and critical thinking skills students need to be career- and college-ready, Newcomers High School supports students and their families as they acclimate to their new country.
Oakland International High School 4521 Webster Street Oakland, California	Grades: 9–12 367 students	The target population of Oakland International High School (OIHS) is newly arrived immigrants. OIHS believes that newcomers acquire English through academic content. English development is integrated into all content classes, art, music, and technology. Students work in small heterogeneous groups. OIHS uses a project-based curricular approach. Students remain with the same team of five teachers for their first two years at OIHS. Juniors and seniors have internship opportunities with local businesses and organizations. All OIHS students participate in the California Partnership Academy to learn technology skills. OIHS also houses the Association for Continuing Education (ACE) program, which provides continuing education opportunities at OIHS for students and their families.
South Gate High School 3351 Firestone Boulevard South Gate, California	Grades: 9–12 2,734 students	South Gate High School in Los Angeles County ranks in the top 50 percent of all schools in California in terms of graduation rates and achievement. Its student population is 99-percent minority. Although most of the students are Hispanic, students from various cultural and linguistic groups attend South Gate. In order to communicate with families in their home languages, there are 26 different language options for viewing the South Gate High School website.
The International High School at LaGuardia Community College 45-35 Van Dam Street Long Island City, New York	Grades: 9–12 519 students	The International High School (IHS) admits newcomers who are learning English and who have recently arrived in the United States (i.e., within the past four years). Once students are admitted to IHS, they complete their high school career there. IHS offers a rigorous college preparatory program in a multicultural educational environment. IHS offers newcomers a high school/college curriculum using a content-based English-as-a-new-language approach. At the same time, newcomers also develop their native language skills. Classes at IHS are heterogeneous by language, achievement, grade level, and age. IHS uses thematic projects and a cooperative learning instructional approach. In addition, students have internship and community service opportunities.

Note: This document does not address the legal obligations of states and school districts toward MLs and their families under *Title I and Title III* of the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).* For more information on *ESEA,* go to https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/COMPS-748/pdf/COMPS-748.pdf