



Chapter for Parents

Parents' Role in ESEA Title III, Part A

It is important for teachers, schools, parents, and the community to work together to ensure that students with limited English proficiency (LEPs) in the District of Columbia learn the English language and excel academically. When this partnership is established, children tend to succeed not only in school, but also throughout life.

When parents are involved in a student's education, those students generally have higher grades and test scores, better attendance, and more consistently complete homework. These students also have a lower rate of suspension for disciplinary reasons, as well as lower rates of alcohol use, violence, and antisocial behavior.

A partnership between parents of LEPs and the school is critical for the student's success. It is also mandatory for schools receiving Title III, Part A funds to communicate with parents of these students. The information in this section will show you how you can become involved in your child's education and actively help your child learn English, achieve high levels in core academic subjects, and meet state standards.

What to Expect from Your Child's School

Your child's school must take the following steps to support LEPs. By law, the school must communicate with you about certain actions and services, and the performance of your child. You can expect your child's school to take these steps:

1. Ask you to complete a home language survey.
2. Assess your child's English language proficiency.
3. Notify you of your child's placement in an English language instruction educational program.
4. Notify you if annual performance objectives are not achieved.
5. Assess your child's annual progress and host parent meetings.
6. Exit your child from the program once he or she is proficient in English.
7. Monitor your child's success and reclassification.

These steps are described in more detail on the following pages.

Tips

OSSE encourages parents to work with their child's school to maximize their child's success in learning English. You can support this by:

- Reading to your child.
- Checking homework every night.
- Discussing your child's progress with teachers.
- Helping your school set challenging academic standards.
- Limiting TV viewing on school nights.
- Creating a home environment that encourages learning.
- Talking with your child about achievement and future careers.
- Voting in school board elections.
- Becoming an advocate for better education in your community.



1. Ask You to Complete a Home Language Survey*

Upon enrolling your child in the school, you will receive a Home Language Survey. Schools must provide the Home Language Survey to parents of *all* students.

The survey will ask you a couple questions related to the language spoken in your home and by your child.

- Is a language other than English spoken in your home?
- Does your child communicate in a language other than English?
- What is your relationship to the child?

Schools are required to inform parents if their child has been identified to participate in an English language instruction educational program.

If your response to either of the first two questions is “Yes,” the school is required to assess your child’s English language proficiency (ELP) with an English proficiency assessment.

2. Assess Your Child’s English Language Proficiency

If your responses to the Home Language Survey indicate that a language other than English is spoken in the home or by the child, the school is required to administer an English language proficiency assessment to your child. This assessment will determine how well your child is able to speak, read, listen to, and write in the English language.

The school may use a variety of assessments that vary by age. Measures that will be used as part of this assessment may include observation, teacher judgment, parent recommendations, and the D.C. Comprehensive Assessment System (DC CAS) results.

All public schools, including charter schools in D.C. also use an assessment called ACCESS for ELLs[®] which stands for “Assessing Comprehension and Communication in English State-to-State for English Language Learners[®].” ACCESS for ELLs[®] is an English language proficiency assessment for students in grades K–12. OSSE administers this assessment for D.C. students once annually in the spring.

As measured by these assessments, students who are not fully proficient in the English language are considered to be Limited English Proficient (LEP). LEP students are entitled to English as a Second Language (ESL) or bilingual language services.

3. Notify You of Your Child’s Placement in an English Language Instruction Educational Program

By law, schools are required to inform parents if their child has been identified to participate in an English language instruction educational program. Schools must send this notification no later than 30 days after the beginning of the school year. If a child was identified as LEP sometime after the beginning of the school year, then the school must notify the parents within two weeks of the child’s placement in a language instruction program.

The school will send the notification letter** to your home. The letter will include information about why your child was identified as LEP. The letter also will identify why the child needs to be placed in a language instructional education program and how it will assist them in developing and attaining English proficiency and meet state standards.

The notification may include:

- **Information about your child’s English proficiency**, which means how well your child speaks, reads, listens to, and writes in English. This will also include the assessments used to determine your child’s English proficiency and his or her academic level.

*A copy of the OSSE Home Language Survey is included in Appendix 1.D

**A copy of the Parent Notification is located in Appendix 1.F



- **Information about the instructional program.** This may include the type of instructional program that will be used to serve your child, and how the program will meet the specific needs of your child in attaining English and meeting state academic standards in reading and mathematics
- **Information about exiting the instructional program.** This may include the program's exit requirements, the expected rate of transition into a classroom not tailored for LEP students, and, in the case of high school students, an expected rate of graduation;
- **Additional information for students with a disability.** This may include how the instructional program will meet the objectives of an individualized education program (IEP) for a child with a disability.
- **Information about your rights as a parent.** This may include written guidelines on your rights to remove your child from a program upon your request, or to choose another program or method of instruction, if available. This may also include information on how you will be assisted in selecting the best program to serve your child.

4. Notify You If Annual Performance Objectives Are Not Achieved

Your school is required to continually monitor its EL program through a variety of methods including data collection, on-site visits, and a Self-Assessment Report.* Also, OSSE sets annual performance targets known as Annual Measureable Achievement Objective (AMAOs), and monitors the LEA's success in achieving these objectives. The AMAOs are goals regarding the number of students that will achieve and make progress in English language proficiency and the content standards during a specific school year.

If your school fails to meet the performance objectives established by OSSE, the school must notify you of its failure no later than 30 days after the failure occurs. Should a failure occur, you will receive a letter through the mail or possibly carried home by your child.

5. Assess Your Child's Annual Progress and Host Parent Meetings

Schools are required to conduct ongoing assessment of an LEP student's progress. Progress means moving to the next level of the English language instructional program and eventually exiting the ESL program. The District of Columbia uses the ACCESS for ELLs[®] English language proficiency assessment for grades K–12 in the domains of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. A derived comprehension score is also produced and shared with parents at annual meetings.

Schools also should invite you to a meeting to discuss your child's progress. These meetings give you an opportunity to ask questions about your child's academics and what you can do to help them achieve as a partner in their education.

6. Exit Your Child from the ESL or Bilingual Program

Once your child reaches a level of English proficiency that no longer prevents them from fully accessing the curriculum of the school, he or she may exit the ESL and/or bilingual instruction program. The decision to exit the program will be based on multiple measures, including ACCESS for ELLs[®] results. A composite score of 5.0 or more on the ACCESS for ELLs[®] indicates the student is proficient in the English language and can therefore exit the program.

Tips

Here are some questions you might ask a teacher about your child's progress:

- What is my child's level of English language proficiency?
- Has my child made progress this school year?
- What are my child's strengths and weaknesses in the English language?
- What can I do at home to help my child better read, write, listen, and speak in English?

*A copy of the Self-Assessment Report is located in Appendix 1.C



7. Monitor Your Child's Success and Reclassification

After exiting a student from an ESL or bilingual program, the LEA must monitor the success of that child for two years. This will ensure that every student who is exited from ESL or bilingual program is successful in transitioning to general education setting of the school.

Your child's school should have a documented process for how often students will be monitored and what information will be reviewed to measure success. If a student is not successful in transitioning to general education setting, the school will first determine whether the cause is language proficiency, academics, or other, and then should support the student as needed.

Accountability, Asking Questions, and Expressing Concerns

A tiered accountability structure is in place to ensure that schools follow the required process to instruct LEPs. The U.S. Department of Education monitors practices in the District of Columbia. As the state education agency, OSSE monitors local education agencies (LEAs), including D.C. Public Schools and public charter schools.

If you may have questions about your child's education or feel that the school is not following the required process, please first contact the school principal. If this person cannot answer your questions or address your concerns, contact the district-level ESL/bilingual program coordinator at the LEA. Finally, contact the OSSE Elementary and Secondary Education Division at osse.title3@dc.gov if your concern cannot be resolved by the principal or district-level person.

ESL Programs and Service Offered by Schools

If your child's English language proficiency is identified as Limited English Proficient (LEP), he or she will participate in an English as Second Language (ESL) or bilingual instructional program. There are five types of instructional programs that D.C. schools might offer. These programs have been chosen based on the needs of D.C. students and are supported by second language acquisition experts. The programs have also been designed to meet the varying needs and grade levels of students across English proficiency levels.

Program models include:

1. **Two-Way/Dual-Language Bilingual**

Program: In this instructional model, students develop literacy skills in their native language while simultaneously learning a second language.

2. **Inclusion/Collaborative Teaching:** The ESL teacher and the general education teacher collaborate and plan instruction based on students' strengths and needs. Instruction is given in the general education classroom and, in some instances, LEPs are taken to a different classroom for instruction.

3. **Content-Based ESL:** In this model for teaching English to speakers of other languages, the academic content areas (i.e., English/language arts, math, science, and social studies) are used as the vehicle for language learning. The emphasis is on the development of the cognitive- academic skills student need to succeed in mainstream classes. The content and performance standards serve as the curriculum foundation for the ESL content study. Native language support is provided when necessary and possible, to facilitate the acquisition of both English language skills and content knowledge.

Tips

Here are some questions you might ask a teacher or principal about the ESL/bilingual program:

- What type of ESL/bilingual instructional program does the school offer?
- What does this program look like in practice for my child?
- How can I provide feedback about the program?



4. **Newcomer Oral Language and Literacy Program:** This instructional model focuses on students with limited formal school experiences and promotes the development of language skills necessary to function in the new culture of the U.S. The emphasis is on developing communicative competency.
5. **Sheltered Content Program:** Students are presented with skills and concepts that are equivalent to those taught in mainstream content courses. Instruction is adapted to ensure comprehension and to allow students to respond to, and report about, the material studied. To instruct this model, the teacher needs to be dual-certified in the content area and in bilingual/ESL.

Resources in the D.C. Community

There are many community organizations in D.C. that can help you and your family. These organizations support education, as well as health and well-being.

Carlos Rosario International Public Charter School (<http://carlosrosario.org/>)

Carlos Rosario School is a comprehensive adult education program. Working closely with the community, the school prepares adult immigrants to become invested, productive citizens and members of American society who give back to family and community. The school offers award-winning adult education programs including English as a Second Language (ESL), GED, ESL for Families, Citizenship, Technology Essentials and workforce development as well as comprehensive support services. For more information, call (202) 797-4700.

CentroNía (<http://www.centronia.org/>)

CentroNía is a nationally recognized, multicultural learning community with a pioneering approach to bilingual education. Visit CentroNía and see children building bilingual literacy skills with a native speaker, teens experimenting in music with our artists-in-residence, or budding entrepreneurs preparing to build a quality childcare business. For everyone, CentroNía offers a welcoming environment that encourages intellectual adventure and provides guidance each step of the way for children, youth and families to achieve their goals. For more information, call (202) 332-4200.

For Love of Children (<http://floc.org/>)

For Love of Children (FLOC) provides educational services beyond the classroom to help students succeed from first grade through college and career. FLOC brings together students, volunteers, families, and community partners in proven programs that teach, empower, and transform. FLOC's services are provided for free to students from low-income families in the District of Columbia. For more information, call (202) 462-8686. For information in Spanish, call (202) 349-3505.

Mary's Center (<http://www.maryscenter.org/>)

Mary's Center, founded in 1988, is a Federally Qualified Health Center that provides health care, family literacy and social services to individuals. Mary's Center offers programs in education services, health care services, dental services, social services, senior wellness, and mental health. For more information, call (202) 483-8196.



Education Resources to Support Your Child

There are a variety of resources available for you to help your child improve their English language skills. Here are links to some of the online resources:

General Education Resources:

[About.com: Print and Learn Activities](http://childparenting.about.com/od/printablelearningsheets/a/printworksheets.htm)

(<http://childparenting.about.com/od/printablelearningsheets/a/printworksheets.htm>)

This website includes links to many printable activities and worksheets. Topics include coloring books, paper dolls, and math and reading activities and games.

[ALSC: Exceptional Websites for Children](http://www.ala.org/alsc) (<http://www.ala.org/alsc>)

The Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association, regularly announces new education resources and websites for parents and children. Find “Great Websites for Kids” and “Sites for Parents, Caregivers, Teachers & Others” to find other useful resources and tools.

[American Federation of Teachers: Parent Resources](http://www.aft.org/yourwork/teachers/reports/parents.cfm)

(<http://www.aft.org/yourwork/teachers/reports/parents.cfm>)

The AFT offers many useful resources for educators to use with parents to help them navigate today’s hot- button educational issues, as well as how to help them become better consumers of public education and advocates for their children.

[Children Now: Education Resources](http://www.childrennow.org)

(<http://www.childrennow.org>)

This resource offers information, research, and policy recommendations for policy-makers, educators, and parents working on behalf of children.

[Family Education Network](http://www.familyeducation.com) (<http://www.familyeducation.com>)

This section of the Learning Network is designed to help parents stay connected to their children’s learning. Find homework help, creative activities, printables, games, and ideas from other parents and experts.

[World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment \(WIDA\)](http://www.wida.us/index.aspx) (<http://www.wida.us/index.aspx>)

With the mission to advance LEPs’ language development and academic achievement, WIDA has developed standards, assessments, and professional development for teachers. To learn more about the WIDA standards of the ACCESS for ELLs[®] assessment, visit WIDA’s website.

Reading Resources:

[Author Website: Jacqueline Jules](http://jacquelinejules.com/) (<http://jacquelinejules.com/>)

Jacqueline Jules, a children’s author and school librarian, highlights her stories on her Web site with the help of book trailers, teacher guides, videos, and some interactive games.

[Between the Lions](http://pbskids.org/lions) (<http://pbskids.org/lions>)

Between the Lions is an award-winning PBS children’s series designed to help young children learn to read. The web site includes games and materials from the show, including a literacy curriculum aimed at children ages 4–7.

Tips

You may need to use the internet to access and learn more about these resources. Visit the D.C. Public Library or one of the community organizations listed on the previous page for free access to a computer with the internet.



[DC Public Library: Bookflix](http://www.dclibrary.org/kids/videobooks) (<http://www.dclibrary.org/kids/videobooks>)

Scholastic BookFlix is an online resource available at no cost through the District of Columbia Public Library Web site for DC library cardholders, and for purchase through Scholastic.com. BookFlix offers high-quality Flash video picture books to link fact and fiction and to promote early reading skills. Some materials are available in Spanish.

[Martín de Porres: The Rose in the Desert](http://vegbooks.org/index.php/2013/01/08/martin-de-porres-the-rose-in-the-desert/)

(<http://vegbooks.org/index.php/2013/01/08/martin-de-porres-the-rose-in-the-desert/>)

Martín and his sister grew up in a Lima, Perubarrio, children of an African slave and a Spanish nobleman. Martín was apprenticed to Acirujano, would join a Dominican monastery, and later become sought after as a healer. Jewel-like illustrations complement the accessible telling to reveal a man of faith and courage, who, despite the prejudices he confronted, would become the first black saint of the Americas. Pura Belpré Award Winner.

[Starfall](http://www.starfall.com/) (<http://www.starfall.com/>)

Starfall offers free reading and phonics resources for students, parents, and teachers. Starfall's systematic phonics approach, in conjunction with phonemic awareness practice, is perfect for preschool, kindergarten, first grade, second grade, special education, homeschool, and English language development.

Math Resources:

[About.com: Make at Home Math Games](http://childparenting.about.com/od/makeathomemathgames/Make_at_Home_Math_Games.htm)

(http://childparenting.about.com/od/makeathomemathgames/Make_at_Home_Math_Games.htm)

Links to many math games that use common items such as dice and playing cards. Game boards can be printed too.

Spanish and Bilingual Resources:

[Becoming Bilingual](http://www.readingrockets.org/shows/launching/bilingual/) (<http://www.readingrockets.org/shows/launching/bilingual/>)

Acclaimed actress Rita Moreno hosts a 30-minute PBS program that examines the challenges of teaching children to read in a new language. The show visits six cities across the country to learn about the different ways schools are working to create. When children are young, they learn by listening and talking with their parents, relatives, babysitters, and others.

[Bringing up Baby Bilingual Blog](http://babybilingual.blogspot.com) (<http://babybilingual.blogspot.com>)

Website with many links to research, articles and useful links to support bilingual language development.

[Campaña Quetzal](http://www.campanaquetzal.org) (<http://www.campanaquetzal.org>)

Campaña Quetzal is a coalition of parent, youth, individuals, educators, and organizations committed to unleashing the academic and personal potential of each Latino student and eliminating the academic achievement gap.

[Cody's Cuentos](http://www.codyscuentos.com) (<http://www.codyscuentos.com>)

Cody's Cuentos produces free podcasts of classic fairytales translated into Spanish and read by a professional storyteller. The site mascot is a friendly cartoon dog named Cody. Users have the option of subscribing to receive new podcasts when they are available.



[Colorín Colorado](http://www.colorincolorado.org/) (<http://www.colorincolorado.org/>)

Colorín Colorado is a free web-based service that provides information, activities and advice for educators and Spanish-speaking families of English language learners (ELLs). The website and resources are available in English and Spanish.

[Education Resources for Spanish Speakers](http://www2.ed.gov/espanol/bienvenidos/es/index.html) (<http://www2.ed.gov/espanol/bienvenidos/es/index.html>)

This site, sponsored by the Department of Education, provides links for Spanish speaking parents of school-age children. It also includes answers to frequently asked questions, a resource center with publications and materials, a general information center, and assistance for parents in need of financial support to aid their child's education.

Additional Resources for Parents

For more information about ESEA Title III, Part A, contact the OSSE Office of Teaching and Learning at osse.title3@dc.gov.

OSSE's Language Line Services can also be a resource for parents and members of the community that speak a language other than English. Visit www.language-line.com for more information or call 1-800-752-6096.

Who should I contact if I need more information on ESEA Title III, Part A or have questions about the Resource Guide?

Bryan Sebobo
ESEA Title III Analyst
Office of the State Superintendent of Education
Government of the District of Columbia
bryan.sebobo@dc.gov

You can also contact osse.title3@dc.gov.