



# Engaging Families of English Language Learners

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## Objectives for Today's Session:

- Learn about needs and challenges of English Learner families.
- Explore strategies to understand and engage ELL families success.





# **TABLE CHAT QUESTION?**

**Besides English, What Are the Top  
Three Languages Spoken by Students and  
Families in Your School or Program?**

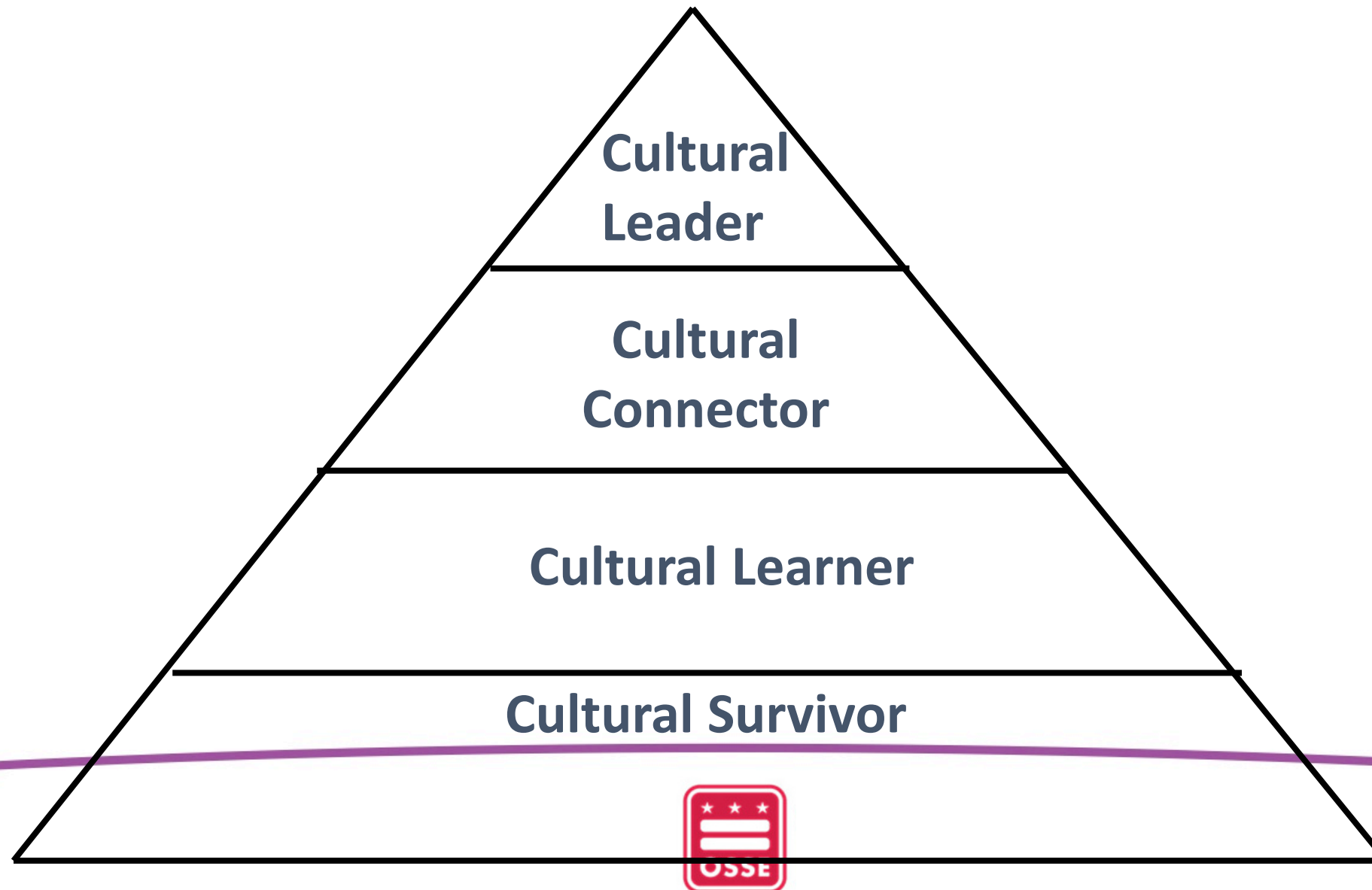


# TABLE CHATQUESTION

What Challenges Are You Experiencing in Your Efforts to Engage Immigrant Families?



## Stages of Immigrant Parent Involvement



# Challenges:

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1. **Language:** telephones, reading, writing, using children as interpreters
2. **Concerns for meeting immediate needs:** shelter, electricity, food, finding a job, etc.
3. **Cultural differences/norms**
  - Fear, Trust and apprehension about new culture
  - Difficulty navigating American education
4. **Logistical challenges**
  - Transportation
  - Financial difficulties
  - Other family obligations and responsibilities

# Challenges:

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- 5. **Debt:** medical bills, legal problems, scams, rent, electric
- 6. **Immigration**
- 7. **Driver's Licenses and transportation**
- 8. **Hectic and constantly changing schedules**
- 9. **Health Insurance**
- 10. **Feeling welcome at school and community events or programs**



# Strategies to Engage Immigrant Families

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1. **Language** – communication and services in parent's native language
  - Literacy levels vary
  - Bilingual staff, interpreters and translators
  - Identify cultural connectors (critical link!)
  
2. **Meeting immediate needs** –
  - Find out what the needs are
  - Connect families with community resources including faith-based institutions. (cultural connectors)





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## Strategies to Engage Immigrant Families (cont.)

### **3. Cultural differences/norms**

- Provide workshops in different languages/use interpreters
- Meet families where they are
- Provide PD for program staff

### **4. Logistical challenges**

- Transportation – (ex. first day of K/ following a cab)
- Financial difficulties
- Other family obligations and responsibilities



## National PTA: Questions to Consider

- ✓ Are trained interpreters and translated notices available?
- ✓ Do staff establish personal connections with parents?
- ✓ Are multilingual, multicultural posters, etc. on display?
- ✓ Does the school have an effective link with ethnic communities, cultural and religious organizations?
- ✓ Does the school recognize the trauma and stress experienced by some immigrant and refugee families?
- ✓ Are all staff trained to understand immigrant/refugee backgrounds and to help everyone feel welcomed?



## **National PTA: Regarding EL Families Consider:**

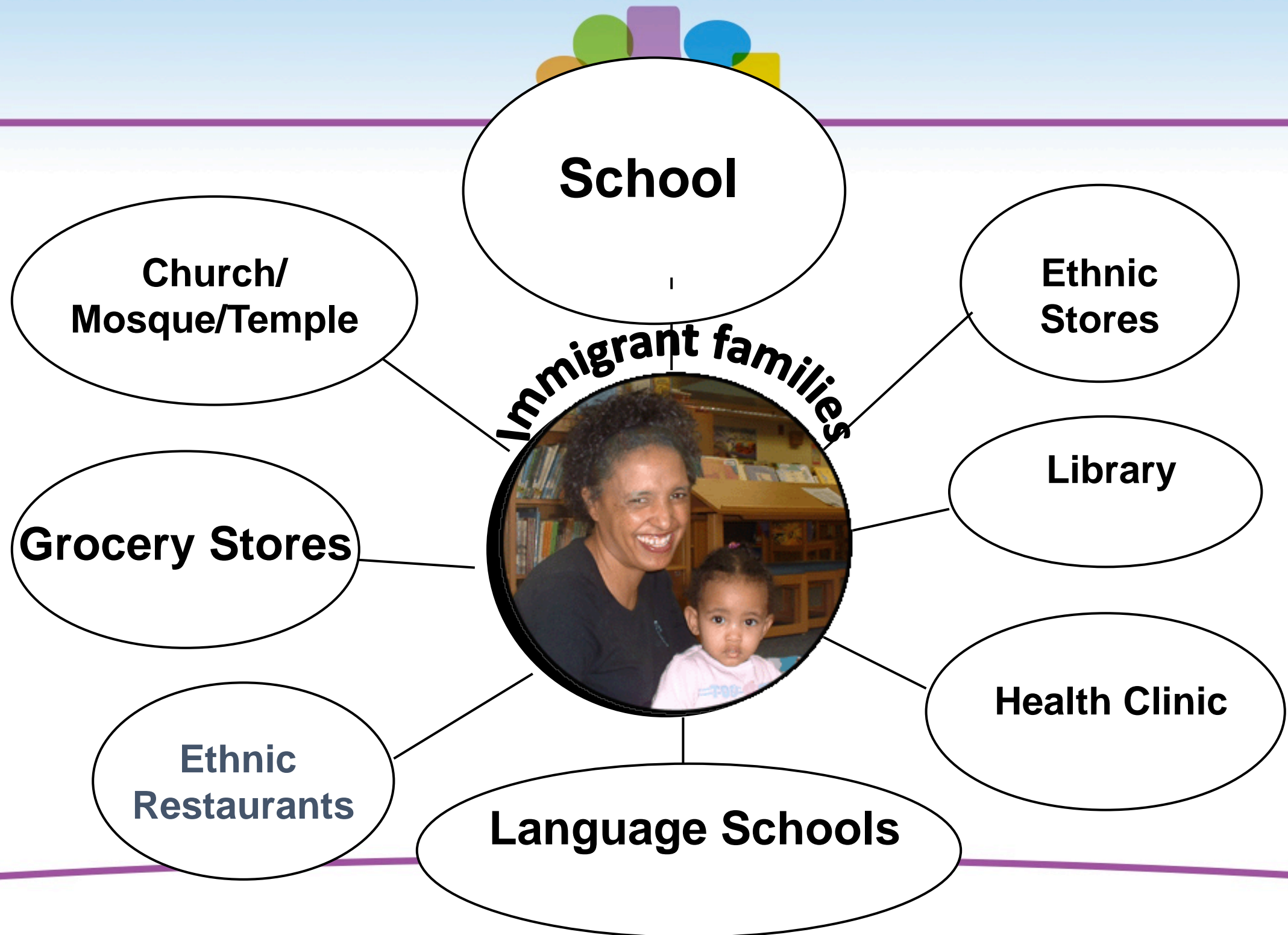
- ✓ School systems and parents' roles with them are very different around the world – ask parents about their views.
- ✓ Use existing Web-based multilingual materials (curricula, print, video, etc.) to share information about U.S. schools. Remember that not all families may be literate.
- ✓ Use a range of communication methods: ethnic media, cultural events and welcome dinners at the school, etc.
- ✓ Provide clear information, but create a dialog, listen to parents about their expectations, questions, etc.



# **TABLE CHAT QUESTION?**

**What are the Strengths of EL Families  
In your School or Program?**





# Remember:



- **Take time for self-assessment and reflection**
- **Be intentional in your outreach**
- **Get to know your ELL Families**
- **Identify cultural connectors and leaders**
- **Have a strength-base mindset**







**Thank You for Attending!**

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