

ELL PARENT PARTICIPATION

ELL PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Contents

- Parent Involvement and Support
- Rights for Parents through NCLB
- Informative Letters for Parents
- Navigating the American Educational System
- Parents as Educational Partners

ELL PARENT PARTICIPATION

Parent Involvement and Support

Article 14C of the Illinois School Code requires that each school district implementing a state-mandated Transitional Bilingual Education Program establish a Bilingual Parent Advisory Committee (BPAC) consisting of parents of ELLs enrolled in the program.

Under NCLB law, parents are now able to play a greater role in the education of their children. All schools receiving Title III funding must implement an effective means of outreach to parents of limited English proficient children. Outreach to parents must include information on how parents can become involved in the education of their children and how they can actively participate in helping their children learn English, achieve high levels in other academic subjects and meet state standards. Outreach must also include regular meetings for parents and notices of such meetings so that parents have the opportunity to provide suggestions and recommendations.

Important considerations:

- The BPAC's function is to provide feedback/input regarding ELLs needs and the quality of services provided to them.
- The BPAC brings to the attention of the Director of Second Language Learners academic and administrative concerns of the TBE program.
- The ultimate role of the BPAC is to help parents of ELLs develop skills for effective participation in the school, improve their child's academic achievement and advocate on behalf of all ELLs.

Declaration of Rights for Parents of English Language Learners Under No Child Left Behind

President George W. Bush had a vision that all children could achieve academic success by receiving a high-quality education. He knew that something had to be done to close the large achievement gap that exists between minority children and their peers. Under No Child Left Behind, you, the parents of English language learners, can expect:

1. To have your child receive a quality education and be taught by a highly qualified teacher.
2. To have your child learn English and other subjects such as reading and other language arts and mathematics at the same academic level as all other students.
3. To know if your child has been identified and recommended for placement in an English language acquisition program, and to accept or refuse such placement.
4. To choose a different English language acquisition program for your child, if one is available.
5. To transfer your child to another school if his or her school is identified as “in need of improvement.”
6. To apply for supplemental services, such as tutoring, for your child if his or her school is identified as “in need of improvement” for two years.
7. To have your child tested annually to assess his or her progress in English language acquisition.
8. To receive information regarding your child’s performance on academic tests.
9. To have your child taught with programs that are scientifically proven to work.
10. To have the opportunity for your child to reach his or her greatest academic potential.

No Child Left Behind--a new era in Public Education.
www.ed.gov--1-800-USA-LEARN
Office of English Language Acquisition—January 2004
www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela

BICS and CALP

Jim Cummins
University of Toronto

The acronyms BICS and CALP refer to a distinction introduced by Cummins (1979) between basic interpersonal communicative skills and cognitive academic language proficiency. The distinction was intended to draw attention to the very different time periods typically required by immigrant children to acquire conversational fluency in their second language as compared to grade-appropriate academic proficiency in that language. Conversational fluency is often acquired to a functional level within about two years of initial exposure to the second language whereas at least five years is usually required to catch up to native speakers in academic aspects of the second language (Collier, 1987; Klesmer, 1994; Cummins, 1981a). Failure to take account of the BICS/CALP (Conversational/academic) distinction has resulted in discriminatory psychological assessment of bilingual students and premature exit from language support programs (e.g. bilingual education in the United States) into mainstream classes (Cummins, 1984).

Guide to Teachers

BICS/CALP

Situation 1:

You have a student who speaks English very well. She participates orally in the class and socializes with other students. She even translates for other students. However she is doing very poorly in other content areas such as math and physical sciences.

This student has acquired BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) but has not yet acquired CALPs (Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency) needed to learn in content areas. Many second language learners are exiting ESL programs at the BIC level, which is Stage I and lower Stage II (CLB 6-7) in the Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment. We need to work on CALPs (CLB 7-8) before these students are leaving high school. Good BIC skills also fool mainstream teachers, who think that a learner speaking with friends during the break, is just being lazy when not doing his/her work.

BICS are *Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills*. These are the language skills needed for everyday personal and social communication. Second language learners must have BICS in order to interact socially and in the classroom. It usually takes students from 1-3 years to completely develop this social language. BICS are not necessarily related to academic success.

CALP is *Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency* and the language associated with native language literacy and cognitive development. These are the language skills needed to undertake academic tasks in the mainstream classroom. It includes content-specific vocabulary. It may take students from 5 to 7 years to develop CALP skills. CALP developed in the first language contribute to the development of CALP in the second language. So if your student has limited education in first language, the development of CALP will take even longer.

Consider the activities in the following framework and note the language sophistication required. Most of the requirements for successful high school performances are in the Cognitively Demanding quadrants.

Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) are those that are cognitively undemanding and include known ideas, vocabulary and syntax. They are the aspects of communication that are used daily in routine communicative exchanges (e.g., while dressing, eating, bathing, playing, etc.) BICS skills represent the informal aspects of social talk as well as skills that do not require a high degree of cognition (e.g., naming objects and actions, referring to non-existence, disappearance, rejection, and negation, and so forth).

Students demonstrating BICS might recognize new combinations of known words or phrases and produce single words or short phrases. When students begin to acquire a second language, they are typically able to develop BICS within 2-3 years. *Most importantly, Cummins cautioned that students should not be placed in learning situations in which a second language (L2) is used just because they have adequate L2 BICS* since students usually have much more L2 to learn before attempting academically demanding tasks. Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) takes much longer than BICS to develop, usually about 5-7 years. CALP skills are those that are necessary for obtaining literacy and academic success. CALP enables students to have academic, analytical conversation and to independently acquire factual information. CALP is used to apply information acquired to find relationship, make inferences, and draw conclusions.

Hetty Roessingh's comparison between ESL learners and Native Speaking Learners in terms of the English language at their disposal, shows the challenge ESL learners face:

ESL Learners	Native English Speaking Learners
5,000 – 7,000 word vocabulary	40,000 words vocabulary
Reading speed: approximately 100 words per minute for narrative materials	Approximately 300 words per minute
Reading Grade equivalent: 6-7	Reading at grade 10 level or higher
Difficulty with writing in expository mode	Writing skills assumed
Familiar with standard English only	Familiar with a variety of dialects (Ebonics, the language of children)
Lacking experience with puns, double meanings, idioms	Enjoy humor based on language
The language of imagery, metaphor, symbolism, tone, bias in English will be a challenge	Can access abstract thought through English language



DEPARTMENT FOR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

West Chicago Elementary District #33
312 East Forest Avenue
West Chicago, Illinois 60185

Native Language

Dear Parents/Guardians:

The use of native language at home helps children be successful in school.

Research shows that children who speak their native language well are better prepared for school and have an easier time learning English. Without a strong native language it will take much longer for children to learn English and to become successful in school.

It is important to a child's development that the language they hear at home is well spoken and full of wonderful words for them to learn.

A child being able to speak their native language is also important to their families and their culture. It allows families to remain close and to communicate with everyone, even grandparents.

Please help your children do better in school by speaking to them in the native language.

Sincerely,

Transitional Bilingual Education Teacher



DEPARTMENT FOR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

West Chicago Elementary District #33
312 East Forest Avenue
West Chicago, Illinois 60185

Idioma Nativo

Estimados Padres/Guardianes:

El uso del idioma nativo en el hogar ayuda a que los niños tengan más éxito en la escuela.

Los estudios/investigaciones educativas demuestran que los niños que hablan bien su idioma nativo están mejor preparados para la escuela y tienen más facilidad de aprender el idioma inglés.

Si no tienen una fuerte base del idioma nativo, les llevará más tiempo aprender inglés y a tener éxito en los estudios.

Para el desarrollo social y educativo del niño es importante que el idioma que escuchan en la casa este bien expresado y lleno de palabras que harán más fácil su aprendizaje.

El niño que habla su idioma nativo también sirve de apoyo para su familia y su cultura. Esto permite que las familias se mantengan unidad y se comuniquen entre ellos incluyendo aún a sus abuelos.

Por favor ayude a sus niños a trabajar mejor en la escuela hablándoles en su idioma nativo.

Sinceramente,

Educación Bilingüe Transicional Maestro(a)



DEPARTMENT FOR SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

West Chicago Elementary District #33
312 East Forest Avenue
West Chicago, Illinois 60185

Dear Parents/Guardians,

English is a very difficult language to learn. It is important to understand that there are 2 different steps involved in learning English.

The 1st step is learning the words to be able to follow directions and talk with teachers and friends. This kind of English is called Social English. When students first begin to learn English it will take 6 months to 1 year for them to learn and understand all the words required to follow directions, listen and speak in social situations.

The 2nd step to learning English is to understand and be able to speak all the difficult words that go with academic language. This kind of English is called Academic English. These are the words that students need to use everyday in Math, Social Studies and Science. These words are very difficult, complicated words and concepts that will take from 3 to 5 years for bilingual students to learn.

Be careful not to think that bilingual students can be successful in school just because they can speak with their teachers and friends. They need time to develop that 2nd step of Academic Language before they will do well in all areas of school!

**Kristina Davis - Salazar
Director of Second Language Learners**



DEPARTMENT FOR
SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

West Chicago Elementary District #33
312 East Forest Avenue
West Chicago, Illinois 60185

Estimados Padres:

El Inglés es un idioma muy difícil para aprender. Es importante entender que hay 2 pasos diferentes en el proceso de aprender inglés.

El primer paso es aprender las palabras para poder seguir instrucciones y hablar con maestros y amigos. Este tipo de inglés se llama Inglés Social. Les tomara de 6 meses a 1 año a los estudiantes aprender todas las palabras requeridas para seguir instrucciones, escuchar y hablar en situaciones sociales.

El segundo paso para aprender inglés es poder entender y poder decir todas las palabras difíciles relacionadas con lenguaje académico. Este tipo de inglés se llama Inglés Académico. Estas son las palabras que los estudiantes necesitan usar todos los días en matemáticas, estudios sociales, y ciencia. Estas palabras son muy difíciles y complicadas. Éstas son palabras y conceptos académicos que toman de 3-5 años para que un estudiante biligüe pueda ser competente.

Es importante no confundir que los estudiantes biligües pueden tener éxito en la escuela solamente porque pueden hablar con sus maestros y amigos. ¡Ellos necesitan tiempo para desarrollar el segundo paso que es el Lenguaje Académico para que puedan tener aprovechamiento escolar en todas las áreas!

**Kristina Davis Salazar
Director of Second Language Learners**