

Tools and Strategies for Working with ELL Families

Important DCPS Phone Numbers:

Office of Bilingual Education

Office of Bilingual Education, Garrison Administrative Unit – East Wing
1200 S Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20009
Main Office: 202-671-0750
Fax: 202-671-2667
Office Hours: 7:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Family & Community Engagement

Foreign transcript evaluation, translation, and interpretation services
Phone: 202-671-0755

Language Access Line

202-671-0754

Tips & Important Things to Keep in Mind about ELL families...

- Good manners, a smile, and an attitude of respect go a long way to make up for not speaking your students' home language. All families want their children to succeed so start there and build success!
- DCPS has a system for getting letters and other written materials translated or for using the language access line. Familiarize yourself with these services, including how far in advance you need to give them material, how often you can request services, and how far in advance you need to make requests.
- Even though they claim to be fantastic, stay away from free online translation services. Those computerized programs can only translate verbatim. They cannot translate context or intention. Many unfortunate misunderstandings can occur when you don't take context or intention into account. Examples of how this may go awry include...
 - "I had to subject the subject to a series of tests."
 - "There is no time like the present; it is time to present the present."
 - "The buck does funny things when the does are present."
- Translations are written and interpretation is oral. Learn to use the correct word for the correct service. It matters to those who are in the habit of serving ELL students and families.
- Find **ADULTS** in your school community (parents, other teachers, coaches, after care providers, community organizations, etc.) who can help you translate important documents when necessary. Offer something in exchange for their help and be kind to them by limiting the amount of pages you ask to be translated at any one time! **For every page of text it takes about two hours to translate, so be kind!**
- You should try to avoid using students as interpreters since it is important that everything you have to share is done accurately. Also, when scheduling important school meetings such as IEP meetings, discipline meetings, etc. it is important to obtain a trained professional to serve as an interpreter. These meetings are full of school acronyms and "education-ese" and only a skilled education interpreter can ensure that the information is accurately relayed.
- It is important to identify who your students are, including countries of origin. Not every Spanish speaker comes from Mexico. Once you learn this important information, make an effort to attend cultural events in the community highlighting this group. Often community organizations serving this group will be present and it is a good way to make connections and learn more about your students. Not to mention, they are FUN!
- Be resourceful, for instance, you can help volunteer at a community-based organization in exchange for someone there translating a letter!

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Where to Get Help and Learn More...

Latin American Youth Center

1419 Columbia Road, NW
Washington, DC 20009
Phone: 202-319-2225
Fax: 202-462-5696
Hours of Operation:
Monday - Friday 8:00am - 8:00pm
Saturday - 10:00am - 5:00pm
Sunday – Closed

CARECEN (Central American Resource Center)

1460 Columbia Road NW, Suite C-1
Washington, DC 20009
Phone: 202-328-9799
Fax: 202-328-7894
Email: info@carecencdc.org

African Immigrant and Refugee Foundation

1525 Newton Street NW
Washington, DC 20010
Phone: 202-234-2473

DC Ethiopian Community Center

7603 Georgia Avenue NW, Suite 100
Washington, DC 20012
Phone: 202-726-0800
Email: eth@prodigy.net

Islamic Center of Washington, D.C.

2551 Massachusetts Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20008
Phone: 202-332-8343

Chinese Culture and Community Service Center, Inc. (CCACC)

16039 Comprint Circle, Gaithersburg, MD 20877
Phone: 240-631-1200
Fax: 240-631-2468
Email: ccacc@ccacc-dc.org
Website: <http://www.ccacc-dc.org>

Vietnamese-American Community Service Center, Inc .

2437 15th Street NW
Washington, DC 20009
Phone: 202-667-0437
Fax: 202-667-0438