

Attending Schools in the United States

“Attending Schools in the United States” is the second topic in the English Learner Family Tool Kit. This tool kit is meant to support families of English learners (ELs) in the U.S. education system. Each topic has five parts: (1) Overview, (2) Family and Student Rights (3) Questions to Ask School Staff, (4) Tips, and (5) Resources.

Tips for Families

- Some schools may want families to help out in the school, playground, or cafeteria. Families may also volunteer to support sports teams or join a parent-teacher association (PTA). Helping out at your child’s school will give you a chance to learn more about schools in the United States. Do not be shy about asking how you can help or volunteer in your child’s school.
- Before you visit the school, check the school’s website. You may find answers to your questions there.
- Most schools charge for meals, supplies, or uniforms. Ask the school about financial assistance if you cannot afford to pay for these things.
- Schools often send families important information by text messages or email. If you have limited proficiency in English, ask how the school will notify you of the same information that is given to parents who are proficient in English. Be sure that the school has the information that it needs in order to contact you.
- Make sure you understand all of the information you receive. Do not agree to or sign anything until you understand fully what is being asked of you.
- In addition to a report card for your child, each year, all families must receive another type of report card: a school report card. The school report card provides important information about your child’s school. This is a good way to learn how well the school is performing, and enables you to compare your child’s school with other schools in the district. School report cards must be posted on the district’s website.

Information That May Be on a School Report Card

- Student demographic data
- School safety and climate information
- Academic performance in mathematics, reading, language arts, and science
- Number of English learners achieving English language proficiency
- School graduation rates
- Teacher and staff information
- Postsecondary preparation information
- Financial data

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