OFFICE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE ACQUISITION
EL FAMILY ENGAGEMENT WEBINAR

FEBRUARY 27, 2019

How to Take Part in This Webinar

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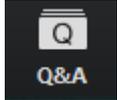
Click the 'Q & A' button ![Q&A button] to ask **content questions** at any point.

Click the 'Chat' button ![Chat button] to ask **technical questions** at any point.
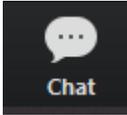
A PDF of the presentation and the recording will be made available to you after the webinar!

Webinar Facilitator Introductions

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Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA)

OELA mission: To provide national leadership in English learner (EL) education by advancing opportunities for educational excellence and equity for ELs and their families.

Agenda

- Welcome, introductions, webinar overview

- EL Family engagement overview and strategies

- ESSA requirements related to family engagement

- OELA EL Family Toolkit and Family Questions

- Q&A

- Closing

Webinar Objectives

- Gain understanding of English learner (EL) family engagement
- Understand the ESSA requirements related to EL family engagement
- Explore the OELA EL Family Toolkit and family questions component

EL Family Engagement

School-Family Partnerships in Support of ELs

- Improve student outcomes
- Remove language, cultural, and social barriers

Research Highlights

- Shift: involvement to engagement

- Forms of engagement

- Families' and educators' capacity to engage

- School district infrastructure

- Family empowerment

5 Strategies for Fostering EL Family Engagement

1. Create a welcoming environment for EL families
2. Build relationships with EL families
3. Communicate effectively with EL families
4. Overcome barriers to EL family engagement
5. Empower EL families

1. Create a Welcoming Environment Checklist

Creating a Welcoming Environment for English Learners and their Families Checklist

It is important to make English learners (ELs) and their families feel welcome at school. There are multiple ways you can build ELs' and their families' trust at your school.

Directions: First, review each of the following strategies to decide if you are currently making ELs and their families feel welcome in these ways. Then, consider action steps you will take to create a more welcoming environment for ELs their families.

| Strategy At our school, do we….	Yes	No
Display student work on the walls (including work in home languages)?		
Have visible signs in students' home languages?		
Communicate with families in a variety of ways (e.g., information sent home in home language, phone calls, home visits)?		
Display maps and flags of students' home countries?		
Have a bilingual staff or bilingual volunteers who can meet with families as needed?		
Provide staff opportunities to learn some common phrases in families' home languages and key information about families' cultures?		

Staehr Fenner & Snyder, 2017; Adapted from Breiseth, Robertson, & LaFond, 2011.

2. Build Relationships with EL Families

- Use an assets-based approach
- Begin from a place of empathy and assume the best
- Recognize that family engagement may look different in other cultures
- Take part in community events
- Hold a community walk
- Collaborate

Henderson & Whipple, 2013; Staehr Fenner, 2014; Staehr Fenner & Snyder, 2017

3. Communicate Effectively with EL Families

- Need for two-way communication
- Parent interview to determine best ways of communicating (school level)
- Flexibility
- Variety of communication tools and strategies
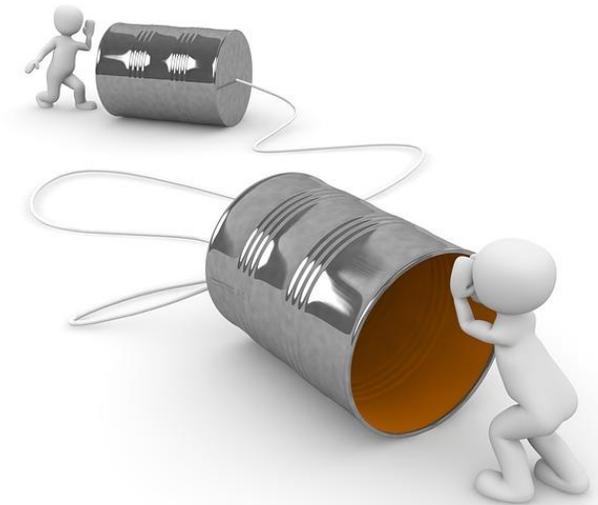
4. Overcome Barriers to EL Family Engagement

Possible Barriers	Possible Solutions
Language	• **Parent** liaisons • **Bilingual** staff • **Translated** materials • **Home language** phone tree/volunteers
Transportation	• **Rides** to school events • **Ride sharing** resource • **Information** about public transportation • **Meeting with families** in their community
Time	• **Flexibility** in scheduling conferences and events • **Parent** survey

SupportEd, 2018

4. Overcome Barriers to EL Family Engagement

Childcare	• **Provide childcare** for conferences and school events
Understanding of school system and role of parent	• **EL meetings** to provide information about school system and education • **School tours** • **Community volunteers** to share information in home language
Fear	• **Demonstrated support** for EL families (regardless of status) • **Adult education** programs • Family **support groups**

5. Empower EL Families

- Adult education

- Student goal setting

- Family advisory committees

- Committees and school support teams

- Volunteer opportunities

- OELA's EL Family Toolkit

EL Family Engagement Checklist

Area of EL Family Engagement	Scale: 1 (Lowest) to 5 (Highest)
1. Our school (or district)* advocates for its EL families who have not yet developed their own voice in the school context.	1 2 3 4 5
2. Our EL families participate in their children's education as much as our non-EL families	1 2 3 4 5
3. Our school has high expectations of EL families.	1 2 3 4 5
4. Our school understands our EL families' perspectives.	1 2 3 4 5
5. Our school conducts home visits with its EL families.	1 2 3 4 5
6. Our school is flexible and creative in providing alternative schedules, locations, and kinds of events to involve its EL families.	1 2 3 4 5

ESSA EL Family Engagement Requirements

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): Family Rights

- Communication with Parents
- Be informed of EL status and program
- Inquire about teacher credentials
- LEA report card
- Student achievement and progress
- Outreach to parents of ELs

ESSA (2015). Every Student Succeeds Act of 2015, Pub. L. No. 114-95 § 114 Stat. 1177 (2015-2016).

ESSA: Parent and Family Engagement in Title I and Title III

Title I

- Language and format of communication
- Informed of status
- Inquire about credentials
- LEA report card
- Student achievement
- Outreach to parents

Title III

- Family engagement policy
- Language Instruction Educational Programs include parent, family & community engagement activities

EL Family Toolkit

EL Family Toolkit

EL Family Toolkit Purpose

- English learner (EL) achievement, educational excellence, and access to high-quality education

- Educational services

- Questions EL families may have about public schools

Family Toolkit Languages
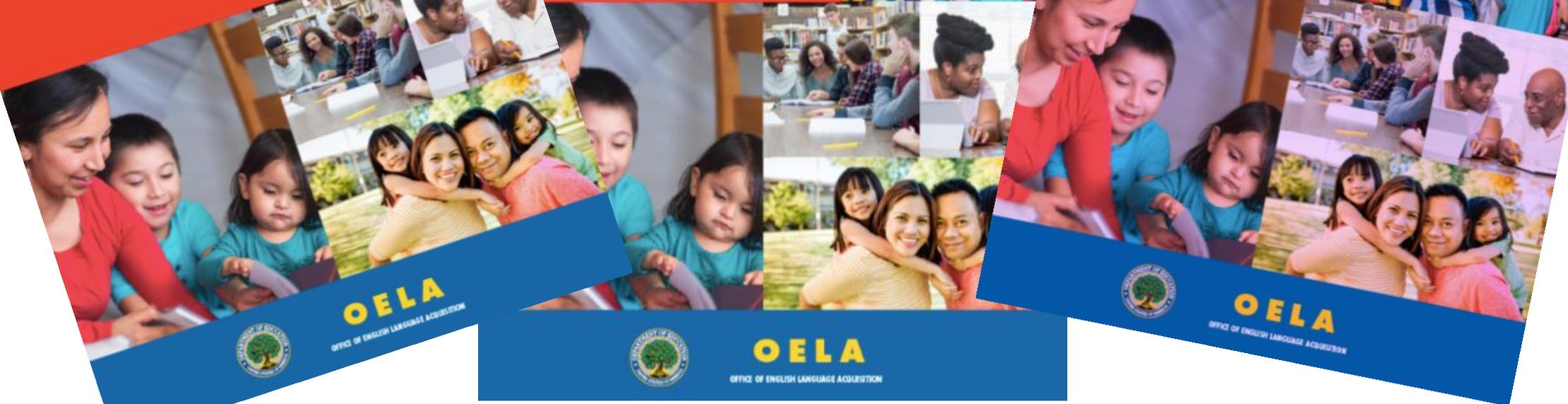
Development Process

- Advocacy groups
- EL families and educator focus groups
- High school EL focus groups
- National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition (NCELA)

Topics Addressed in the Toolkit

1. Enrolling Your Child in School

2. Attending Schools in the United States

3. Obtaining Services for English Learners

4. Finding Additional Services for Your Child

5. Keeping Your Child Safe and Healthy in School

6. Helping Your Child with Schoolwork at Home

Information Provided for Each Topic

Five Sections

- General Information
- Family and Student Rights and School Responsibilities
- Questions to Ask School Staff
- Tips
- Resources (all available free online)

# Questions to Ask School Staff About Enrolling Children in School-Topic 1

- Who can help me enroll my child in school?

- Will my child's siblings enroll in this school?

- What documents must I bring to school or the district office to enroll my child?

- How does my child get to school?

- Does the school have before- and after-school day care for my child?

Questions to Ask School Staff About Attending School in the United States-Topic 2

- Who do I call to find out which school my child will attend?

- Who do I ask to have an interpreter when I go to the school?

- How old does my child have to be to start preschool or kindergarten in the United States?

- Does the school require a uniform? What if I cannot afford to buy the uniform?

- What does my child do for lunch? Do I pay for the lunch?

- What will happen if my child has to miss school?

EL Family Toolkit and OELA Website

- English Learner Family Toolkit: https://ncela.ed.gov/family-toolkit

- Office of English Language Acquisition (OELA) website: https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/index.html?src=oc
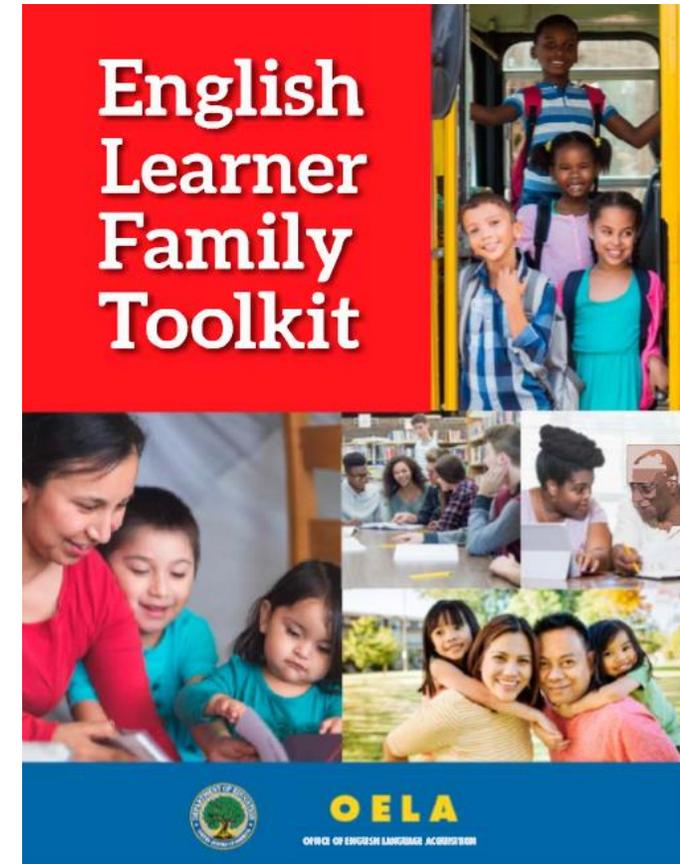
Engaging with OELA and ED

- Nexus Newsletter: https://www.ncela.ed.gov/ncela-nexus

- NCELA: https://www.ncela.ed.gov

- OELA on Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/ED.OELA

- NCELA on Twitter: https://twitter.com/ASKNCELA1

- OESE/OSS with EL resources (including OELA & NCELA):

  https://bit.ly/2GO0x5T

Q & A

OELA Contact Information

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Webinar Feedback

At the conclusion of this webinar, you will be directed to a brief online survey to provide us feedback on this event.

You will be asked:

1. How satisfied were you with the content provided?
2. What did you like most about the event?
3. How could this event have been improved?
4. What topics would you like to have addressed in future events?

Thank you for joining us!