



# Addressing the Impact of COVID-19 on Multilingual Learners\* and Their Social and Emotional Well-Being

For multilingual learners (MLs) and their families, the COVID-19 pandemic has had disproportionate and inter-related consequences for their economic stability, educational opportunities and outcomes, and social, emotional, physical, and mental well-being.

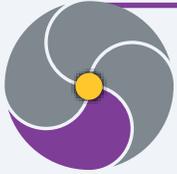


\*The term *multilingual learner(s)* refers to the student population defined as *English learner(s)* in section 8101(20) of the [Elementary and Secondary Education Act as amended by Every Student Succeeds Act](#). In this infographic the two terms are used interchangeably.

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## Recommendations for Supporting ELs in Schools

Supportive learning environments and conditions may help students overcome the negative effects of adverse experiences, such as those MLs faced during the pandemic.<sup>15</sup> As in-person instruction continues, schools and districts should continue to take action to support the social and emotional well-being of MLs.



### Supports, Resources, & School Policies<sup>4,10,15,16</sup>

- Continue to consider the impact school closures have had on MLs' experiences and **learning opportunities**.<sup>6,15,17</sup>
- Increase **learning time** for MLs.
- Provide **communication** opportunities (including in L1\*\*) by intentionally planning for interaction around academic and social content.
- Implement **social and emotional learning, mindfulness, trauma-informed, and culturally and linguistically responsive practices** by:
  - providing consistent routines
  - listening to students
  - promoting **translanguaging**
  - promoting student autonomy
- Implement **"working alliances"**<sup>3</sup> or **collaborative approaches** among school staff.
- Introduce a **multi-tiered system of supports**.
- Implement **project-based learning to increase student engagement**.
- Continue to **build MLs' fluency with technology** to allow learning opportunities inside and outside of the classroom.
- Provide **professional development** on trauma-informed care and teaching.
- Foster a **safe and supportive** school climate.
- **Locate and reengage** absent and disengaged students.
- Implement **positive discipline practices**, such as:
  - non-punitive approaches
  - non-exclusionary approaches
  - avoiding zero tolerance policies



### Mental Health Support<sup>15,17</sup>

- Implement **district and schoolwide approaches** to meeting the social, emotional, and mental health needs of students and staff.
- Increase the number of **culturally and linguistically competent counselors, social workers, and school psychologists** who can support MLs in their home languages, if needed.
- Share **mental health resources** with students, staff, and families.
- Work to **reduce any stigma** that can be associated with underserved student groups.
- **Talk** about mental health.
- Provide students opportunities to **speak openly** about their lives, stressors, anxiety, etc.
- Let students know that they are **not alone**.
- Allow **time to heal**.



### Family & Community Engagement<sup>15</sup>

- Strengthen existing relationships and **develop new** ones with community-based organizations.
- **Strengthen relationships** with ML families by providing language and culturally responsive supports as needed.
- Conduct student and family **needs assessment** and **collaborate with community partners** on areas of need such as:
  - physical and mental health
  - financial security
  - food security
  - employment
  - childcare
  - housing security
  - Internet and device access





## Sources and Endnotes:

The resources below have been selected based on the following criteria:

- Resource produced by a federally funded study or center
- Resource produced by an open access and peer reviewed journal
- Resource produced by a non-partisan and non-profit organization

<sup>1</sup> While these data are not disaggregated by ML/EL status, these numbers and percentages include English learners and other vulnerable student groups.

<sup>2</sup> Save the Children Survey included responses from students around the world whose schools may not have offered remote instruction during the pandemic.

<sup>3</sup> The term “working alliance” refers to any change process that involves interaction and collaboration.

<sup>4</sup> Boccanfuso, C., & Kuhfeld, M. (2011, March). Multiple responses, promising results: Evidence-based, nonpunitive alternatives to zero tolerance. *Child Trends*.

<sup>5</sup> Capps, R., Batalova, J., & Gelatt, J. (2020, June). *COVID-19 and unemployment: Assessing the early fallout for immigrants and other U.S. workers* [Fact sheet]. Migration Policy Institute.

<sup>6</sup> Dorn, E., Hancock, B., Sarakatsannis, J., & Viruleg, J. (2020, June 1). *COVID-19 and student learning in the United States: The hurt could last a lifetime*. McKinsey & Company.

<sup>7</sup> Gelatt, J. (2020, March). *Immigrant workers: Vital to the U.S. COVID-19 response, disproportionately vulnerable* [Fact sheet]. Migration Policy Institute.

<sup>8</sup> Korman, H., O’Keefe, B., & Repka, M. (2020, Oct. 21). *Missing in the margins: Estimating the scale of the COVID-19 attendance crisis*. Bellwether Education Partners.

<sup>9</sup> Leeb, R. T., Bitsko, R. H., Radhakrishnan, L., Martinez, P., Njai, R., & Holland, K. (2020, November 13). Mental health-related emergency department visits among children aged <18 years during the COVID-19 pandemic – United States January 1–October 17, 2020. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 69(45), 1675–1680. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6945a3.htm>

<sup>10</sup> Molyneux, T. (2015, January 25). *Welcome wave of change: Positive discipline and SEL in schools*. Committee for Children.

<sup>11</sup> Santibanez, L., & Guarine, C. The Effects of Absenteeism on Academic and Social-Emotional Outcomes: Lessons for COVID-19. *Educational Researcher*, Vol. 50 No. 6. X, pp. 392–400.

<sup>12</sup> Save the Children International. *Protect a Generation. The impact of COVID-10 on children’s lives*.

<sup>13</sup> Sugarman, J., & Lizarin, M. (2020, September). *Educating English learners during the COVID-19 pandemic: Policy ideas for states and school districts*. Migration Policy Institute.

<sup>14</sup> Tamanaha, A. (2020, April 1). *Rep. Judy Chu says attacks on Asian Americans at about 100 per day due to Coronavirus fear*. AsAm News.

<sup>15</sup> U.S Department of Education. (2021). *ED COVID-19 handbook: Roadmap to reopening safely and meeting all students’ needs, Volume 2*. <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening-2.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> U.S Department of Education. (2021). *New Resource Details Evidence-Based Strategies to Address Impact of Lost Instructional Time by Using American Rescue Plan Funding*. <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/lost-instructional-time.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> U.S Department of Education. (2021). *Supporting Child and Student Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Mental Health Needs*. <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/students/supporting-child-student-social-emotional-behavioral-mental-health.pdf>