

## Tips for ELL Home Visits

The establishment of school-family partnerships is essential in education, so making sure to address the different challenges unique to working with ELL families is of the utmost importance. These challenges include, but are not limited to: immigrant parents who may be unable to navigate an unfamiliar educational system, school staff who may not be bilingual, and undocumented families who might fear schools as a government institution. These challenges are not insurmountable, and many schools are beginning to address them through relationship-building home visits over the summer, especially with newly enrolled students. Below are some best practices to follow when conducting ELL home visits.

### Before the Visit

- Determine if an interpreter is needed
  - It is inappropriate to have students translate for their parents for various reasons, including conflicts of interest and lack of linguistic skills.
- Establish the purpose of the visit
  - For example: *We want to get to know your family better so that together we can support and be co-educators of your child.*
- Determine who is attending and the date, time, and location of the visit
  - Some families might not feel comfortable meeting at their home. In that case, have recommendations for a neutral location like a local public library.

### During the Visit

- Thank the family and reiterate the purpose of the visit
  - If an interpreter is present, make sure to look at the family member to which you are speaking, not at the interpreter.
- Pay close attention for different cultural norms
  - For example, in many Asian homes, it's customary for people to remove their shoes before entering the home.
- Avoid appearances of intimidation or evaluation
  - Try not to take notes or present paperwork until 20 or so minutes into the visit.
- Inquire about the family's past experiences with education
  - For ideas on what to ask, see our list of [suggested questions](#).
- Discuss the family's hopes and dreams for the child
- Discuss expectations, both what they expect of you as a school and what you expect of them as parents/guardians
- Encourage parent involvement by bringing a specific tool they can use when working with their child
  - For ideas in English and Spanish, visit <http://www.parenttoolkit.com>.
- Thank the family again and leave your contact information
  - Magnets with contact information work well because they are less likely to get lost.

### After the Visit

- Complete any next steps coming out of the visit
- Share any notes with staff who work with the child
- Review notes before meeting with families a second time