Engaging Limited English Families & Family Reading Events

Presented by Jennifer Baker, former Parents as Educational Partners (PEP) Coordinator for Loudoun County Public Schools
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Agenda

- Welcome/Introductions
- Video: Coming to America- English Learners Speak Out
- Federal Requirements and National Standards
- Supporting families with Parents as Educational Partners (PEP)
- Origin of PEP and PEP’s Mission
- Implementing PEP at the District Level
- Implementing PEP at the School Level
- How the PTA Can Support PEP
- Building Family Literacy
- Cultural Cues
- Share Ideas
Please share:

- Your name
- Your school/district
- Your *why* for supporting families
Coming to America- English Learners Speak Out
Video Reflection

- What did you learn about what it’s like to learn English?

- How does this help you understand the way families from other countries in your school feel?
Title I Federal Requirement

Sec. 1005. Local Education Agency Plans

- "(C) PARENTAL PARTICIPATION."
  - "(i) IN GENERAL. — Each local educational agency receiving funds under this part shall implement an effective means of outreach to parents of English learners to inform the parents regarding how the parents can—
    - "(I) be involved in the education of their children; and
    - "(II) be active participants in assisting their children to—
      - "(aa) attain English proficiency;
      - "(bb) achieve at high levels within a well-rounded education; and
      - "(cc) meet the challenging State academic standards expected of all students.
  - "(ii) REGULAR MEETINGS. — Implementing an effective means of outreach to parents under clause (i) shall include holding, and sending notice of opportunities for, regular meetings for the purpose of formulating and responding to recommendations from parents of students assisted under this part or title III."
Title I Federal Requirement

Sec. 1010. Parent and Family Engagement

- “(D) conduct, with the meaningful involvement of parents and family members, an annual evaluation of the content and effectiveness of the parent and family engagement policy in improving the academic quality of all schools served under this part, including identifying—
  - “(i) barriers to greater participation by parents in activities authorized by this section (with particular attention to parents who are economically disadvantaged, are disabled, have limited English proficiency, have limited literacy, or are of any racial or ethnic minority background);
  - “(ii) the needs of parents and family members to assist with the learning of their children, including engaging with school personnel and teachers; and
  - “(iii) strategies to support successful school and family interactions;
- “(E) use the findings of such evaluation in subparagraph (D) to design evidence-based strategies for more effective parental involvement
National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

- **Standard I**: Welcoming all families into the school community—Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.

- **Standard II**: Communicating effectively—Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.

- **Standard III**: Supporting student success—Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students’ learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

- **Standard IV**: Speaking up for every child—Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

- **Standard V**: Sharing power—Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.

- **Standard VI**: Collaborating with community—Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.

*Find more information at: [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)*
Supporting Families with Parents as Educational Partners (PEP)

Life Experiences (What Parents Know)

Increased Understanding of the United States School System

Increased Involvement in Children’s School Experiences

Increased Second Language Skills
Instructional Units

1. The United States School System
2. School Personnel and the School Day
3. School Procedures
4. Parent-Teacher Conferences
5. Report Cards and Curriculum
6. Study Skills and Homework
7. School Health Procedures

*Districts may personalize and/or add units
The PEP program was developed and field tested at an Adult Learning Center in Des Plaines, Illinois during a three-year project on family English Literacy.

The Title VII project was funded by the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs.

The PEP Project was designed on the premise that parent involvement is a process, not an event, based on trust and communication between school and homes.

A PEP Class is designed to be two-hours long, with the first hour teaching school information (in the parents’ native language) and the second hour teaching English based on the school information.
PEP’s Mission

- Reduce the achievement gap for students from all backgrounds
- Promote a climate that supports equity, diversity, and collaborative behaviors for students and stakeholders
- Develop and maintain strong school-home partnerships tied to improved student achievement
- Empower parents to advocate for their child(ren)
Implementing PEP at the District Level

- Training and support for PEP Teachers
- Inform schools of how the program helps families
- Manage PEP payroll, attendance, and materials
- Collaborate with school system and community resources
- Hold events to support families at non-PEP schools
- Honor where families come from
- Build relationships with families
Implementing PEP at the School Level

- Set a schedule of PEP Classes
- Teach all PEP Units
- Teach English based on the PEP Units
- Explain school-based information and events
- Offer food and childcare/homework help
- Answer parent questions
- Honor where families come from
- Build relationships with families
How the PTA Can Support PEP

- Attend PEP Classes to get to know parents
- Help with food and childcare/homework help
- Help with extra materials needed for the program
- Collect books to give to families
- Invite parents to PTA events
- Translate flyers into the top languages needed at the school
- Explicitly tell parents how they can help
- Consider taking payments and volunteer sign-ups that are not online
Building Family Literacy

- Parents need **explicit instruction** on how to help at home
- Empower parents to read at home in their native language
- Children and parents can explore books together at a PEP Class or a Family Reading Event
  - Books can also be checked out to use at home
  - Books can be kept at home if enough resources are available
Building Family Literacy

Reading Strategies at Home
- Make a prediction using the front cover of the book.
- Take a Book-Walk and talk about the pictures.
- After reading, talk about:
  - Beginning
  - Middle
  - End
- Read the same book multiple times for fluency.
- "Find and Frame" sight words.
- Look for rhyming words, chunks, etc.
- Ask questions:
  - What does this book make you think of?
  - What was your favorite part?

Math Strategies at Home
- Ask your child to practice counting each day (start at 1 and go as high as he/she can).
- Practice counting 1:1 with toys, household items, food on their plate, etc.
- Identify shapes in the home and out in the community.
- Talk about Math:
  - What did you learn today?
  - Which one is ________?
    - (bigger, smaller, heavier, lighter, more, less)
  - How many ________?
- "Find and Frame" numbers.
- Have your child help you with measuring while cooking.
- Use ten-frames.
- Use toys and household items to practice addition and subtraction.
- Use the computer:
  - Dreambox, free apps
- FLASHCARDS!!!
  - Build fact fluency
  - + - x +
Building Family Literacy
Building Family Literacy

- Create a Family Reading Experience
  - This can be done with or without PEP
  - Visit your District website or National PTA’s for resources
  - You can make sure that books represent the students and families in your school
  - This can be a venue for families to share stories from their countries
Cultural Cues

- Learn from your families
  - They have a wealth of experiences from their countries
- Be mindful of different countries’ expectations of greeting, eye-contact, personal space, etc.
  - You may unknowingly offended someone, or be offended by something that a person thinks is acceptable
- Avoid stereotypes
- Doing research on the countries where your families come from and/or talking to your schools’ EL staff will be helpful
Parents may not be ready to speak in English

Many people start their language acquisition by listening and taking-in information

Parents can be encouraged, but not forced to participate

It is normal for English learners to code-switch, or fill in words in their native language when English words are unknown

You can model the correct way to say something, but be sure to do so positively

Make sure parents feel safe to take risks with English

Parents may have difficulty writing in their native language
Share your ideas!