



Office of English Language Acquisition Services (OELAS) Guidance

Parent and Community Engagement for English Learners

The purpose of this document is to provide Local Education Agencies (LEAs) with guidance regarding the legal requirements of Parent/Family/Community Engagement under Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Examples of engagement activities will also be shared to help LEAs explore different ways to raise awareness and participation of parents/families of ELs, that ultimately impact English Learners' academic and language proficiency. Meeting the requirements of parent/family engagement under a Title III grant will also be included.

Definition of Family Engagement:

Family engagement in schools is defined as parents and school personnel working together at the classroom, local, and system level to support and improve the learning and development of children and adolescents. Family engagement in schools is a shared responsibility in which schools and other community agencies and organizations are committed to reaching out to engage parents in meaningful ways, and the parents are committed to actively supporting their children's and adolescents' learning and development.

The Legal Requirements:

- Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Equal Educational Opportunities Act of 1974 (EEOA), all LEAs must provide language assistance to English learner (EL) families effectively with appropriate, competent staff or appropriate and competent outside resources. Vital communications include written and oral communications that contain information that is critical for accessing educational programs and opportunities or is required by law. This also includes communications that could have negative consequences for a student's education if the information is not provided in an accurate or timely manner.
- Under Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), all LEAs must implement an effective means of outreach to parents of ELs. This outreach must include holding regular meetings and sending notice of these opportunities in order to gather and respond to recommendations from parents.
- Federal Obligation Resources:
 - The *English Learner Family Toolkit* was created to help families choose education services that meet their child's needs. U.S. educators, elementary and secondary school teachers, principals, and other school staff can also share the toolkit as a resource for ELs and their families. <https://ncela.ed.gov/educator-support/toolkits/family-toolkit> Available in English, Arabic, Chinese, and Spanish.
 - The tenth chapter of the English Learner Tool Kit, Tools and Resources for Ensuring Meaningful Communication with Limited English Proficient Parents, is intended to help state and local education agencies meet their obligations to English ELs.

<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/chap10.pdf> Tool #3 in this chapter provides interpretation and translation resources.

Title III Family Engagement: SEC. 3115. [20 U.S.C. 6825] SUBGRANTS TO ELIGIBLE ENTITIES

- Required Activity: LEAs must provide and implement other effective activities and strategies that enhance or supplement language instruction educational programs for English learners, which:
 - shall include parent, family, and community engagement activities; and
 - may include strategies that serve to coordinate and align related programs
- Authorized Activities:
 - Providing community participation programs, family literacy services, and parent and family outreach and training activities to English learners and their families—
 - (1) to improve the English language skills of English learners; and
 - (2) to assist parents and families in helping their children to improve their academic achievement and becoming active participants in the education of their children.
- Reminder Regarding Supplement not Supplant Requirement: Federal funds made available under Title III sub-grant shall be used so as to supplement the level of Federal, State, and local public funds that, in the absence of such availability, would have been expended for programs for English learners and in no case to supplant such Federal, State, and local public funds. Title III funds cannot be used to meet federal and state requirements. Title III activities are above and beyond those provided for all families at the school. Title III is not permitted to be spent on activities for parents of non-EL students.
- Examples of possible Title III Family Engagement Activities to assist parents and families in helping their children to improve their English language skills and academic achievement, and to help parents and families to become active participants in the education of their children:
 - Family/parent outreach liaison to coordinate supplemental activities for Parents of ELs
 - Informational meeting with families of ELs, new to the country, to provide assistance in understanding and navigating the US school system
 - Informational meeting with families of ELs and community members to showcase community services and resources that are specific to the education of ELs
 - Informational session on school's EL program
 - Informational session on how parents can help to prepare students for Spring AZELLA test
 - Educational events specifically for ELs and their families
 - ESL classes for parents/families of ELs
 - Take home book bags with language activities for ELs to complete with their families at home

If you have any questions, please contact OELAS at OELASMonitoring@azed.gov or the Migrant Education Program at MEPInbox@azed.gov