



Illinois State Board of Education

Professional Development Modules: English Learner Tool Kit

Chapter Ten—Ensuring Meaningful Communication With Limited- English- Proficient Parents

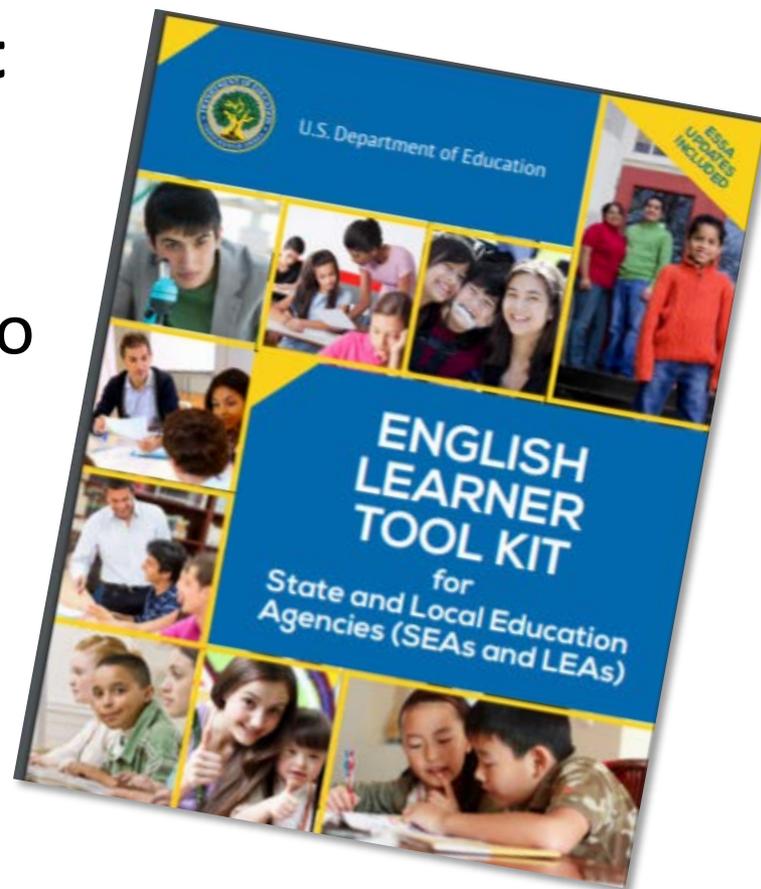
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Purpose

The **Professional Development Modules: English Learner Tool Kit** is a series of presentations intended to provide guidance to help local education leaders meet their legal obligations to English learners (ELs) and enhance existing EL practices to meet the needs of all EL students, parents, and families.





English Learner Tool Kit Topics

1. Identifying All ELs
2. Language Assistance Programs
3. Staffing and Supports
4. Meaningful Access
5. Inclusive Environment
6. ELs With Disabilities
7. ELs Who Opt Out of Programs
8. Monitoring and Exiting EL Programs
9. Evaluation of EL Programs
- 10. Ensuring Meaningful Communication With Limited-English-Proficient Parents**



Significant Legal History

□ Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, 1964

- Prohibits discrimination on the grounds of race, color, or national origin by recipients of federal financial assistance.
- The Title VI regulatory requirements have been legally interpreted to prohibit **denial of equal access to education** because of a language minority student's limited proficiency in English.



Significant Legal History

- [Lau v. Nichols Court Case, 1974](#)
 - Case dealt with San Francisco school system's failure to provide English language instruction to 1,800 students of Chinese ancestry.
 - U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled that a lack of supplemental instruction for ELs denies them a **meaningful** opportunity to participate in education programs, which violates the Civil Rights Act of 1964.



Significant Legal History

- [Equal Educational Opportunities Act \(EEOA\), 1974](#)
 - ▣ Prohibits states from denying equal educational opportunity to an individual on account of his or her race, color, sex, or national origin.
 - ▣ The statute specifically prohibits states from **denying equal educational** opportunity by the failure of an education agency to take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by its students in its instructional programs.

“There is no equality of treatment merely by providing students with the same facilities, textbooks, teachers, and curriculum; for students who do not understand English are effectively foreclosed from any meaningful education.”

—*Justice William Douglas*





Legal Obligations

- U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights (OCR) and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) share enforcement authority.
- Issued joint guidance in 2015 to help states, districts, and schools meet legal obligations to ELs.
- Guidance identifies [10 common civil rights issues for ELs.](#)





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Ensuring Meaningful Communication With Limited- English-Proficient Parents

Whole Child • Whole School • Whole Community



English Learner Tool Kit

Chapter 10: Ensuring Meaningful Communication With Limited-English-Proficient Parents

KEY POINTS

- State education agencies (SEAs) and local education agencies (LEAs) have an obligation to communicate meaningfully with limited-English-proficient (LEP) parents and to notify LEP parents adequately of information about any program, service, or activity called to the attention of non-LEP parents.
- LEAs must have a process to identify LEP parents and provide them with free and effective language assistance, such as translated materials or an appropriate and competent interpreter.
- Appropriate and competent translators or interpreters should have proficiency in target languages, ease of written and oral expression, and knowledge of specialized terms or concepts as well as be trained on their role, the ethics of interpreting and translating, and the need for confidentiality.





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Chapter 10: Ensuring Meaningful Communication With Limited-English-Proficient Parents

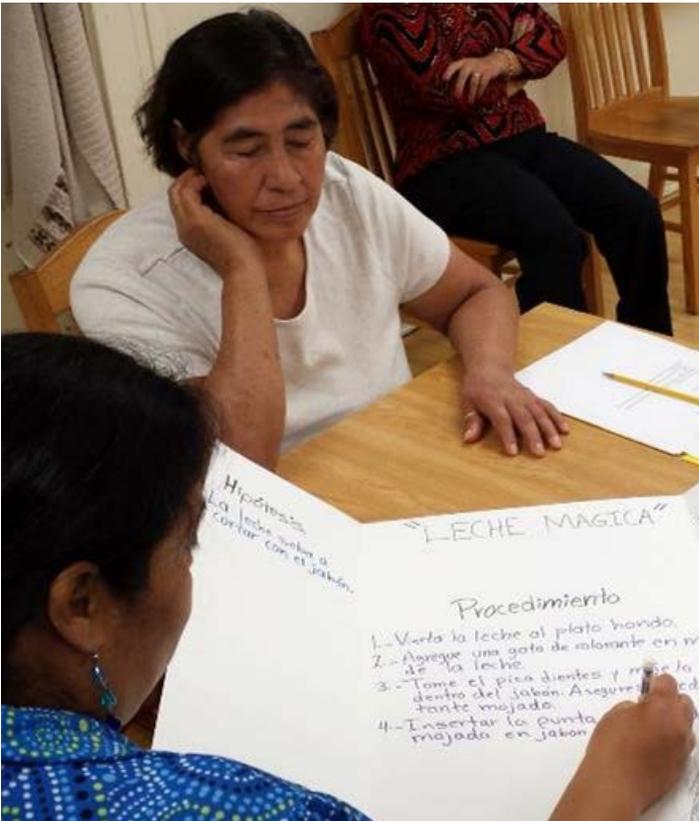
KEY POINTS

- SEAs and LEAs must **communicate meaningfully** with LEP parents and notify them about any activity called to the attention of non-LEP parents.
- LEAs must have a process to identify LEP parents and **provide them with free and effective language assistance**, such as translated materials or an appropriate and competent interpreter.



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Chapter 10: Ensuring Meaningful Communication With Limited-English-Proficient Parents



KEY POINTS (CONTINUED)

Translators/interpreters should have:

- **Proficiency** in target languages
- Ease of written and oral expression
- Knowledge of specialized concepts
- **Training** on their role, the ethics of interpreting/translating, and confidentiality



Pause and Reflect

- What is our process for determining family language needs?
- Are our school events scheduled with interpreters present at times that facilitate LEP family participation?
- How do we inform LEP parents about the availability of free language assistance services?
- What is our process for acquiring qualified and trained interpreters and translators?





Pause and Reflect

- How do we honor and reflect on the diversity of families, including their languages and cultures?
- How do our funding streams facilitate family and community engagement?
- What family, school, and community partnerships exist?
- What learning and leadership opportunities are available for parents of ELs?





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Additional Resources to Consider From the EL Tool Kit

Whole Child • Whole School • Whole Community



Tools for Ensuring Meaningful Communication With Limited-English- Proficient Families

Tool #1

Establishing Family-School Partnerships

This resource provides a framework for family engagement activities that help schools and families partner for improved student outcomes.



Tools for Ensuring Meaningful Communication With Limited-English- Proficient Families

Tool #2

Tapping Into the Strengths of Families and Communities

This resource provides educators with practices and tools to support establishing and maintaining strong community and parental engagement in schools.



Tools for Ensuring Meaningful Communication With Limited-English- Proficient Families

Tool #3

Interpretation and Translation Resources

This tool contains multiple resources for interpretation and translation.



Background Resources

- Fact sheet on the responsibilities of school districts
- Fact sheet answering common questions about the rights of limited-English-proficient parents and guardians
- Original OCR/DOJ guidance in the “Dear Colleague” letter
- Translations into multiple languages
- All available at
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/ellresources.html>
- Companion tool kit from the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of English Language Acquisition:
<https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oela/english-learner-toolkit/index.html>