

Considerations for Support of Newcomer Students

Recommended for Local Literacy Plans

“Newcomer” is an umbrella term inclusive of all recent immigrants who are born outside of the United States. Most newcomer students are multilingual learners, but some newcomers have unique needs requiring additional consideration by districts and schools.

To support newcomer students, Local Literacy Plans should consider the following when developing policies, programs, and plans:

Develop a Safe and Supportive School Environment

- Welcome students and families to school and ensure an inviting, inclusive environment.
- Build relationships with students:
 - Learn correct pronunciation and spelling of students’ names.
 - Provide opportunities for students to share their stories; their interests, strengths, and talents; and their cultural celebrations and family traditions.
 - Value and encourage students’ use of their native languages.
- Establish partnerships with parents.
- Foster community and cultural connections.
- Recruit, cultivate, and develop community liaisons and interpreters to support communication.
- Provide [communications](#) in families’ home languages.

Provide High-Quality, Responsive Instruction for Newcomer Students

- Maintain high expectations, but tailor instruction to what students can do.
- Build background knowledge and make connections to students’ lives.
- Model and support students’ practice with academic conversations and writing.
- Support instruction with visuals and non-verbal gestures.
- Familiarize yourself with the typical features of the student’s native language to accurately determine whether an English error reflects those linguistic patterns or suggests a potential special need.

Support Students’ Social-Emotional Needs

- Understand and help students to process common stages of the newcomer experience – euphoria (initial excitement), culture shock, acceptance, and assimilation/adaptation (i.e., new normal).
- Understand and attend to signs of trauma.
- Understand the unique, diverse experiences of different populations of multilingual learners, including immigrant and refugee students, migrant students, and students with limited or interrupted formal education (SLIFE).
- Foster a whole child approach supported by wrap-around services and a tiered system of supports



If you would like to ...	Refer to ...
Explore additional research-based best practices to improve the achievement of multilingual learners	Illinois English Learner Handbook for School Board Members, District Administrators, and Principals , chapter 6 (Latino Policy Forum, pp. 37–47), which provides research-based principles for instructional programs, assessment, support services, and family engagement.
Explore ISBE-sponsored professional development	Resources listed under the Professional Development dropdown on ISBE’s Multilingual Resources for Districts page.
Explore other high-quality professional development resources	The Office of English Language Acquisition Resources webpage on the National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition includes recorded webinars and podcasts, infographics, briefs, fact sheets, and toolkits, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Toolkit • English Learner Toolkit • Newcomer Toolkit
Explore considerations, practices, and resources for newcomer students more deeply	ISBE’s Newcomer Resources webpage, which includes school and district resources, social-emotional learning (SEL) resources, and other resources. OELA Newcomer Toolkit , which provides chapters on understanding who newcomers are; building safe, inclusive, and thriving school environments; supporting social, emotional, and mental health needs; providing high-quality instruction for newcomers; and establishing partnerships with families.
Learn more about communicating with Parents in their native language	ISBE’s FAQ on Communicating in Parents Native Language document provides information on the requirements surrounding registration, translations/translators, Special Education, waivers, and additional resources.
Learn more about the federally funded Migrant Education Program in Illinois	ISBE’s Migrant Education Program webpage shares information about the federally funded MEP, including its purpose, eligibility requirements, fundings, prioritization for services, and resources to support identification and recruitment.