THE COLORADO TRUST
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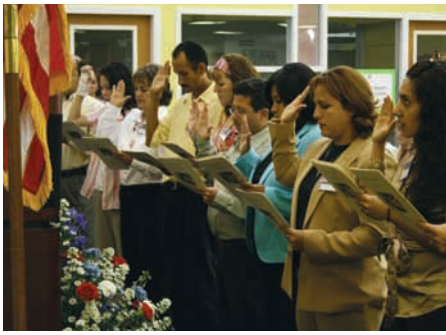
Colorado Department of Education

Immigrant Integration

EDUCATOR RESOURCE GUIDE



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The *Immigrant Integration Educator Resource Guide* was prepared by Nancy L. Commins, Ph.D., Consultant, Colorado Department of Education. The Colorado Department of Education and The Colorado Trust also extend our thanks to the many other individuals who provided valuable input toward the development of this guide – in particular, we thank Dr. Robin Waterman for her early work in soliciting broad input to conceptualize and embark on this project. Other contributors included:

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Introduction

PURPOSE

The Immigrant Integration Educator Resource Guide identifies, explains and provides specific recommendations for promoting immigrant integration in schools. Intended primarily as a resource for district administrators, school administrators and teachers, the guide provides an overview of the critical areas that influence immigrant integration in schools – from school enrollment and classroom instruction to family and community outreach.

To encourage integration of immigrants into our communities through curricula, programs and activities for schools, this guide outlines challenges and research related to each critical area, as well as recommended strategies and resources for more information. When applicable, legal mandates and policies that guide the education of immigrant children are also included; these are the minimum standards that school districts must have in place to meet legal requirements.

A Framework to Strengthen Community

Immigrant integration is a dynamic, two-way process in which newcomers and the receiving community work together to build secure, vibrant and cohesive communities.

[Grantmakers Concerned with Immigrants and Refugees]

BACKGROUND

Colorado is an increasingly diverse state, with people across the country and across the globe arriving here to enjoy beautiful landscapes, a high quality of life, and education and economic opportunities. With such demographic shifts come increased opportunities to infuse the state with new ideas, energy and vitality, as well as challenges – including basic communication issues that occur when some newcomers have not yet mastered English. Other challenges include cultural differences manifested in the way that people express themselves, relate to family and friends, and interact with their communities.

To date, little national emphasis has been placed on immigrant integration and what happens to newcomers once they arrive to a new community. But over the past several years, 19 communities across Colorado have worked to bring together immigrants, refugees and native-born community members to plan for and address immigrant integration at the local level.

IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION IN SCHOOLS

Schools are where immigrant families often have the most community interaction. While finding employment and housing are all-important to resettlement, many immigrant families will first try to understand their community by engaging directly with schools on behalf of their children. These families try to learn and understand the expectations of parent involvement in schools, as well as how parents are viewed in promoting school success, which is often quite different in the United States than in most other places in the world.

Colorado has 178 school districts, 156 of which serve a total of 124,000 English Language Learner (ELL) students across the state (Spanish is the first language of 85% of these students). Since the 1994-1995 school year, there has been a 352% growth in Colorado's ELL students, with some school districts experiencing up to 700% growth. In the Aurora district, 33% of students are ELLs; whereas Denver has 28% ELLs and Adams 14 has 34% ELLs, demonstrating the need to address educational achievement in the context of immigrant integration.

Many school districts have tried to keep pace with such demographic changes, but doing so is challenging as teacher training has historically not encompassed the needs of ELL students.

Further, there is great diversity within the immigrant student population – some districts, like Cherry Creek, Denver and Aurora, have a variety of languages and cultural backgrounds to consider. Other districts serve fewer language groups, but the students differ all the same. As well, some students have higher English proficiency than others. And some students come from refugee backgrounds, having spent years fleeing war and persecution; still others may have made terrifying journeys through the desert, while some may come from well-educated families brought to this country to work in specific fields (e.g., technology).

By presenting some of the most significant considerations toward achieving immigrant integration in the classroom, this guide also provides a basis for discussion among service providers, faculties, parent-teacher groups and/or community forums. However, to effectively promote immigrant integration and the educational achievement of all children, these recommendations are only the beginning. At its core, immigrant integration is a matter of attitude and outlook toward a shared goal to make Colorado a better place for all of us to live and flourish.

NOTE: *For more detailed guidance on program implementation, please refer to the Colorado Department of Education's Guidebook on English Language Learners, a step-by-step guide to the identification of and program planning for ELLs.*

Chapter 1: School Enrollment

WHY IS SCHOOL ENROLLMENT AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION?

For many immigrant students, the school office is their first contact with the bureaucracy of U.S. schooling. The reception given to students can set them on the path to success or confirm their fears about the overwhelming tasks they face. All school personnel, especially those who personally greet and receive students and their parents, must be aware of their critical role; they must also know the law, and understand how their attitudes can impact children and their families. To the extent possible, it is recommended that districts seek out bilingual and bicultural staff to fulfill this function.

Immigrant students who arrive to enroll in school are often nervous – they usually don't speak the language, they don't know what will be expected of them and they may even fear for their safety. They are likely unfamiliar with U.S. schools, particularly the demands for documentation of residency, dates of birth, and requirements for immunizations and transcripts of prior schooling. It should be obvious from the words, body language and facial expressions of school faculty and staff that newcomers are welcome and that they will receive whatever assistance they need to take these important steps.

Above all, it is important to remember that – for some families who have come to enroll their children in school – education may not have been available to their children in their home countries, even as they understand that education offers their children a promise of a better life here. These families are trying to ensure that their children become a part of their communities as quickly as possible.

WHAT IS THE LAW?

Two dimensions of immigrant students' school enrollment have legal underpinnings – documentation of status and requirements regarding the education of English as a Second Language (ESL) learners.

Immigration status

According to the U.S. Supreme Court, all children residing within the United States have a right to a public school education, regardless of their legal or immigration status. School personnel are not permitted to ask students anything – or require any documentation – regarding legal status. According to the Colorado Department of Education, "Determination of legality of a student's immigration status is not a duty of the local school district, nor is it necessary in determining the residency of a child." *(January 25, 1999 memo from the Commissioner of Education to superintendents and other school personnel.)*

Further, in 1982, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that undocumented children and young adults have the same right to attend public primary and secondary schools as do U.S. citizens and permanent residents. Like other children, undocumented students are obliged under state law to attend school until they reach a mandated age (age 17 in Colorado). As a result of this ruling, public schools may *not:*

- Deny admission to a student during initial enrollment, or at any other time on the basis of undocumented status.
- Require students or parents to disclose or document their immigration status.
- Make inquiries of students or parents that may expose their undocumented status.
- Require social security numbers from students, as this may expose undocumented status.

- Treat a student differently in any way, in an effort to determine residence.
- Engage in any practices that "chill" the right of access to school.

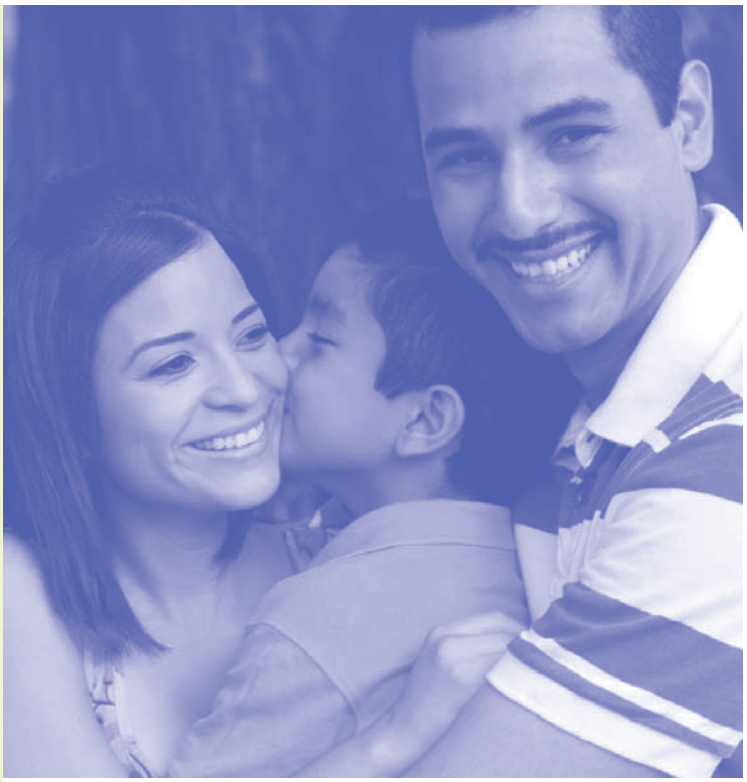
Students without social security numbers should be assigned a number generated by the school. Adults without social security numbers who are applying for a free lunch and/or breakfast program on behalf of a student need only indicate on the application that they do not have a number. *(School Opening Alert, National Coalition of Advocates for Students, Boston, MA.)*

Additionally, the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act prohibits schools from providing any outside agency – including Immigration Control and Enforcement – with any information from a child's school file that would expose the student's undocumented status without first receiving permission from the student's parents. The only exception is if an agency gets a court order – or subpoena – which parents can then challenge. However, schools should note that even requesting such permission from parents could "chill" a student's rights.

English as a Second Language

The second major aspect of enrollment pertains to identification of second language learners and their placement into appropriate educational programs. A number of legal precedents establish the right of second language learners of English to access the academic curriculum by receiving instruction that is comprehensible and tailored to their needs.

NOTE: Initial language proficiency assessments and program placements should always be carried out by certified education personnel. *Not all immigrants are ESL learners, and not all ESL students are immigrants. While it may appear obvious in some cases, it is not appropriate for office personnel to determine language proficiency or program placement. Office personnel must follow the guidelines established by the school district according to state and federal policy.*



HOW CAN AN ENROLLMENT PROCESS BE IMPLEMENTED?

Above all, districts must establish and follow uniform guidelines for all schools. Regardless of where they occur, initial enrollment procedures should be the same for *all* students, beginning with a questionnaire or survey regarding the home language of the student. To ensure equal treatment when enrolling students, some districts have created centralized intake centers – sometimes within a school or an administrative building – where enrollment forms are completed and initial assessments are conducted for all students new to the district. Recommendations for intake and orientation include:

- Develop a well-defined process for receiving new students, including an intake interview

and a formal orientation process for students and their families.

- Create a flowchart of the steps in the enrollment process.
- Document the languages represented in the school.
- Provide materials about the school and the enrollment process – for example, create a one-page information sheet or a small brochure about the school and have it translated into the languages of the community.
- Create a list of interpreters in each language, or know whom to contact in the central administration for help.
- Keep handy a list of welcome phrases in the languages represented in the languages of the community.
- Post an easily visible map of the school to help newcomers locate classrooms, key departments and other services.
- Post welcome signs, critical directions and notices in multiple languages.
- Appoint an ambassador of the same gender and, when possible, who speaks the same language(s) as immigrant families and their children to provide a guided tour that introduces newcomers to school facilities, sports programs and/or clubs. Provide these ambassadors with training and recognize their contributions.

NOTE: *The best source for information on enrollment is the description of specific policies and procedures for Colorado schools in the Colorado Department of Education's Guidebook on English Language Learners. Ideas for improving enrollment procedures can also be found in materials that describe programs for newcomers (see Chapter 7).*

RESOURCES

Ammie Enterprises
www.ammieenterprises.com

This organization offers a complete set of books that include templates of letters for school offices and educators. Titles include *School Office Spanish, School Letters in English and Spanish, Reporting to Parents in English and Spanish, School Terminology Handbook, The Bilingual Dictionary of School Terminology in English and Spanish, and Spanish for the School Nurse's Office.*

PUBLICATIONS

Haynes, J. (2007). *Getting Started with English Language Learners: How Educators Can Meet the Challenge.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD).

Among many topics related to second language learners, Chapter 4 – "The Newcomers' First Weeks of School" – provides tips and ideas for the school and classroom teachers for welcoming students, establishing a nurturing environment and reaching out to parents. There is also an accompanying Study Guide.

Short, D. and Boyson, B. (2004). *Creating Access: Language and Academic Programs for Secondary School Newcomers.* Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics; Delta Systems Co., Inc.

The authors identify important implementation features and offer a checklist for developing a new program, practical advice for existing programs and in-depth case studies of three successful, long term newcomer programs.

Short, D. (1998). *Secondary Newcomer Programs: Helping Recent Immigrants Prepare for School Success.* Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
www.cal.org/resources/digest/short001.html

Chapter 2: School Culture and Climate

WHY ARE SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION?

In an increasingly global society, it is critical to prepare children and adults to learn from, work for, interact with and care about people with diverse backgrounds. While schools face many challenges in serving immigrant students, they are also presented with unique opportunities to build intercultural understanding within their schools and the larger community. For example, a school environment where all students and their families are made to feel welcome and appreciated improves the learning climate for immigrant students.

Challenges

Newcomers to this country introduce new dimensions of diversity into the schools they attend. Differences may be both visible and audible – skin color, language, accent, gestures, body language and clothing. But they may also be invisible – the physical space expected between two people, concepts about time, gender roles and attitudes toward elders, among others.

Most people living in new circumstances experience "culture shock" – the need to confront differences in every aspect of their lives. As such, immigrant students have many adjustments to make, but – because so many features of culture are invisible – the cause of a particular student's discomfort may be unclear. To such students, everything feels different and language barriers amplify these difficulties, which often leads to frustration and sometimes behaviors that seem inappropriate or counterproductive.

To better understand these challenges, Elizabeth Coelho[1] offers an important set of questions around the issues that face immigrants, including:

- **Choice –** Did the family and the student have a choice in leaving their native country?
- **Preparation and support –** Were they emotionally and financially prepared to establish their new life in the United States?
- **Family separation –** Did all members of the family arrive as a unit?
- **Minority status –** What are the implications of going from a majority status to a minority status?
- **Loss of status –** Are the parents able to sustain their skill and professional level of work?
- **Culture conflict between home and school –** Do the students have to negotiate and, in some instances, abandon their cultural values?
- **The refugee experience –** How do experiences of survival affect the refugee student?
- **The culture of the school –** Is there a process to help immigrant and refugee students learn about and understand the school culture?

It is inevitable that misunderstandings and conflicts arise, making it important for school personnel to assume good intentions despite some appearances – overall, immigrants have come here for a better life and recognize the importance of education in reaching that goal.

[1] Coelho, E. (1994). "Social Integration of Immigrant and Refugee Children," in Genesee, Fred (Ed.) *Educating Second Language Children: The Whole Child, the Whole Curriculum, the Whole Community.* New York: Cambridge University Press.

HOW CAN WE BUILD A SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE THAT PROMOTES IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION?

While there are many steps and strategies that school personnel can take, perhaps the most significant action is to develop a positive mindset, and an accepting and welcoming attitude. Because immigrant students endure so many stresses, it is important that the school serve as their "safety zone."

First impressions are critical. From the moment someone enters the school, it should be obvious that the school culture and climate celebrates all students.

Remember that entry into a U.S. school usually occurs when immigrants are least familiar with the language and customs of the United States. Newcomers likely won't know the specific rules or expectations for school enrollment – for example, they may not feel comfortable, or be able to leave younger siblings at home; or they may feel intimidated by school bureaucracy. By anticipating such concerns, educators can help pave the way for a welcoming atmosphere that instills in all students and their families a sense of belonging.

Successful schools are proactive in teaching staff, educators and students how to approach, interact with and learn from newcomers. This can only happen when there is awareness and celebration of school diversity. Thus, an important goal is to develop a plan for increasing the intercultural competency of all adults and students, and to openly acknowledge both the challenges and the benefits of immigrant integration.

NOTE: *Effective cross-cultural interactions do not happen automatically – they require thoughtful planning and a willingness on all sides to listen, learn, share and adjust to new ways of thinking. In part, this means working with native-born students to develop a curiosity about, and appreciation for other cultures and parts of the world. To do so, it is necessary to communicate explicit expectations for all students, anticipating where misunderstandings might occur.*

HOW CAN WE CREATE A WELCOMING SCHOOL[2] AND INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS?

Creating a positive school climate has many dimensions, all of which require educators to be open to learn new viewpoints. Specifically, to promote a school climate that fosters immigrant integration, the most critical components are: how students and their families are received, the accommodations made by the school as a whole and what teachers can do in their own classrooms (see Chapter 1 for information about immigrant student intake and orientation).

The following suggestions for individual classrooms and schools as a whole provide a starting point for action.

School-wide and in the hallways

- Identify and share with all staff members which cultures are represented in the student body, including native-born English speakers.
- As a staff member, make an effort to learn more about the backgrounds represented, starting with the biggest group – if there are many different cultures represented, different staff members can share something about each of these cultures with the rest of the school.
- Ensure that all students see themselves reflected, and foster an acceptance of multiple cultural backgrounds.

[2] Some of the ideas included are drawn from the publication *Many Roots, Many Voices: Supporting English Language Learners in Every Classroom* (2005). Ontario Ministry for Education.

- Value students' ability to use two languages by sending a unified message from the school that encourages immigrant parents and family members to interact and communicate with their children in their strongest language (which is not usually English).
- Seek out and publicize community resources that serve the immigrant community.
- Incorporate cultural diversity into arts programs – for example, expose students to the work of artists, musicians and playwrights from a variety of cultures, and give them opportunities to express themselves in a variety of artistic forms from other cultures.
- Display a chart near the school entrance showing the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of all students.
- Post pictures of the staff with their names in a central area, arranged by grade level or subject area.
- Seek out educational resources – books, Internet sites and such – in students' home languages for the school library.
- Invite parents and other community members to make use of these resources to support their children's academic development.

Many Roots, Many Voices

By welcoming a student's home language, schools facilitate the flow of knowledge, ideas and feelings between home and school, and across languages.

[Cummins, J., Bismilla, V., Chow, P., Cohen, S., Giampapa, F., Leoni, L., Sandhu, P. and Sastri, P. (2005)]

In the classroom

Find out what students already know and build from there – don't assume that, because they can't express themselves in English, they don't already know a lot.

- Utilize materials that acknowledge students' cultures and help them feel like they belong.
  - Ensure that visual images accurately reflect the student population and that they depict students of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds engaged in a variety of school activities.
  - Ensure that educational displays of, for example, famous historical figures represent individuals from many cultures.
  - Select materials for the classroom and library that contain illustrations of members of various ethnic and cultural groups engaged in a range of positive roles and situations.
- Ask questions about students' goals and aspirations, and show interest in them and what they know.
- Observe students interacting with peers from their own and different backgrounds and language groups, and take note of how their behaviors might change and how this information can be used to strengthen intercultural interactions.
- Invite community members – carpenters, mechanics, business owners and others – into the school as partners in building a sense of community, contributing to instruction and supporting the school in providing for all the needs of its students.
- Encourage newcomers to get involved in the school and in extracurricular activities, perhaps by assigning peer mentors and buddies.

RESOURCES

Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL)
www.cal.org/topics

CAL has several projects – for example, its Cultural Orientation Resource Center (see below) and other resources – to support the implementation of programs for immigrants, including newcomers who have limited or no English language proficiency and who acquired limited formal education in their native countries. Topics include *English Language Learners, Literacy Education and Refugee Integration*.

Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice (CECP)
http://cecp.air.org

The Center's Cultural Competence resources support its larger vision of providing for the emotional development of all children. The Cultural Competence section of the website offers a discussion of the concept, as well as links to many different organizations and resources that support cultural competency in various contexts, including schools.

Cultural Orientation Resource (COR) Center
www.cal.org/projects/corcenter.html

COR provides orientation resources for refugee newcomers and their service providers – including information on refugee populations and the orientation services they receive when they arrive in the United States – as well as other resources that teachers may find helpful. COR also provides information for families that explains the laws pertaining to their rights and responsibilities. There is also a section to browse by culture to learn pertinent information on all major refugee groups in the United States. Publications include cultural profiles, refugee backgrounders, a guidebook for refugees, video trainers, orientation videos for families and youth, and phrasebooks.

Internet Public Library
www.ipl.org

The Library includes a useful section for schools wanting to create a welcoming environment. In *Kidspace,* a subsection titled *Hello* (ipl.org/div/kidspace/hello) allows visitors to learn how to say "hello, my name is" in 100+ languages; this subsection also shows what each language's script looks like and offers information on words in English with their origin in that language – this is especially helpful in obtaining basic information about languages that are less frequently encountered. More detailed cultural information is found in the *Culture Quest* section.

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition & Language Instruction Educational Programs (NCELA)
www.ncela.gwu.edu

This site provides a wealth of information on a variety of topics related to second language learners of English, including information about migrant education.

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
www.tesol.org

The website of this professional organization contains extensive resources for teachers. The *Tapestry* section provides teachers with critiques of original research that addresses important questions regarding language acquisition and teaching children who are learning English as a second language. The *Library* is designed to assist teachers in their teaching, curriculum decision-making and professional development by providing teaching resources and information on policy and research, as well as websites of educational organizations, government offices and nonprofit organizations.

PUBLICATIONS

Gonzalez, J. and Darling-Hammond, L. (1997). *New Concepts for New Challenges: Professional Development for Teachers of Immigrant Youth.* Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.
www.eric.ed.gov/ericwebportal/contentdelivery/servlet/ericservlet?accno=ed421018

This source presents a framework for considering what teachers must understand about their students and what professional development experiences are likely to facilitate those understandings. The authors suggest a professional development model that promotes community, collegiality and collaboration.

Hamayan, E. and Freeman, R. Eds. (2006). *English Language Learners at School: A Guide for Administrators.* Philadelphia: Caslon Publishing.

This practical handbook covers such topics as policy and accountability; parents and community; learning in two languages; program development, implementation and evaluation; classroom instruction and assesment; and self-surveys to guide program implementation.

Nieto, S. and Bode, P. (2007). *Affirming Diversity: The Sociopolitical Context of Multicultural Education (5th Edition).* New York: Allyn & Bacon.

This book examines the meaning and necessity for – and benefits of – multicultural education for students of all backgrounds, providing a conceptual framework and suggestions for implementing multicultural education in today's classrooms. Case studies, in the words of students from a variety of backgrounds, are presented on topics of home, school and community experiences, and how these experiences influence academic achievement.

Ontario Ministry of Education (2005). *Many Roots, Many Voices: Supporting English Language Learners in Every Classroom. A Practical Guide for Ontario Educators.*
www.edu.gov.on.ca./eng/document/manyroots

While this booklet is written for a Canadian audience, nearly all the information and suggestions are pertinent to immigrant integration in the United States and Colorado.

Chapter 3: Family and Community Outreach

WHY ARE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION?

Efforts to reach out to families and community members are an integral part of creating a positive and supportive school environment. Research consistently points to parent participation as a strong contributor to children's academic achievement. For immigrant parents and the schools their children attend, linguistic and cultural barriers make this involvement even more necessary – as well as more challenging. So rather than creating a completely separate outreach effort, consciously include immigrant families in existing outreach activities, adding relevant features as needed.

A critical goal in the immigrant integration process is to build strong relationships based on two-way communication. This entails building trust, breaking down language and cultural barriers, establishing mutual respect, adopting an attitude of learning and maintaining a commitment to the good of the whole community. The more welcome parents feel, the more likely they will be willing to integrate into the larger community and encourage their children to do the same. One way to meet the needs of students is to build on what they already know, and parents are a rich source for this information.

Issues that may impact community outreach to immigrant parents include why immigrants are here in the first place, as well as the larger issues of language and/or culture implied in integrating immigrant groups. Another challenge to be aware of is that, in different countries across the world, there are vast differences in expectations around schooling – including the way teachers dress, when students can enroll, expectations for parental involvement or the way addition and multiplication are taught. Additionally, a less obvious issue area to address is the potential pitfalls of intergenerational rifts.

A haphazard or uncritical immigrant integration approach, especially regarding issues of language use and cultural identity, can result in weakened family ties in the immigrant community.

WHAT IS THE LAW?

Most federally-funded education programs have expectations for family outreach efforts. These include Title I, Title III, Migrant Education, Even Start and GED testing. For example, Title I requires at minimum an annual meeting to discuss and solicit suggestions regarding the program plan and its implementation. Parents are intended to help determine how funds should be used and to become involved in the evaluation of services received by their children.

All schools that receive Title III funding are similarly charged with implementing an effective means of outreach to parents of ELLs, including sending notices of opportunities for regular meetings purposed to formulate and respond to parent recommendations. Parents must be notified about many aspects of their child's education, including procedures and reasons for ELL/LEP designations, methods of instruction, and how students' strengths and needs will be addressed. The guidelines for all these groups require that – to the extent practical – all information sent to parents should be in a format and language that they understand.

According to guidelines for each program and for No Child Left Behind (NCLB), the different federal programs should coordinate their parent outreach efforts. CDE has compiled a detailed

checklist specific to parent involvement that both districts and individual schools can use to monitor their compliance with NCLB (www.ed.gov/nclb/landing.jhtml).

WHAT DOES RESEARCH TELL US ABOUT "BEST PRACTICE"?

There are several key components to effective outreach programs that provide parents with opportunities to better integrate into U.S. society, support their children's academic development, and further their own goals and aspirations. The ideal effort combines specific orientation to school policies and expectations, educational opportunities for family members and access to resources that will further immigrants' opportunities to integrate into their new community. That is, successful outreach requires a total school effort led by strong administrative initiative and example.

One of the greatest downfalls in immigrant communities is the breakdown of intergenerational communication and the disruption of family ties. It is inevitable that, when people leave one country for another, such ties are strained. This stress is often exacerbated by well-meaning, yet uninformed school practices and policies. When children are exhorted to adapt to a new culture and told that English is the only valued language for instruction and learning, children sometimes absorb the wrong message – that who they are, as well as the language and culture of their parents, is irreverent or obsolete in the United States.

Without strong, positive messages from schools and the larger community, immigrant children quickly abandon their first language, reject their home culture and too often lose the ability to communicate with key members of their immediate care-giving community. There is evidence that this disturbing trend aggravates gang problems in many urban areas and often results in limiting the chances for success among immigrant children.

One counteraction is to encourage students to maintain their first language while they learn English, and to enlist parents in using their strongest language to continue to develop language and concepts with their children. This allows schools to more easily tap into community knowledge and help parents work from their strengths. Specifically, by encouraging parents to continue their children's conceptual development in their primary language – reading and talking in the first language at home – it is easier to bring the community into the classroom.

Finding out what students bring with them and helping them to develop a strong sense of self will also result in improved academic performance. The goal is to instill in children pride in who they are, while at the same time respecting differences and becoming open to new ways of thinking and doing.

When parents are unable to talk to their children, they cannot easily convey to them their values, beliefs, understandings or wisdom about how to cope with their experiences. They cannot teach them about the meaning of work, or about personal responsibility, or what it means to be a moral or ethical person in a world with too many choices and too few guideposts to follow. What is lost are the bits of advice, the consejos parents should be able to offer children in their everyday interactions with them. Talk is a crucial link between parents and children: It is how parents impart their cultures to their children and enable them to become the kind of men and women they want them to be. When parents lose the means for socializing and influencing their children, rifts develop and families lose the intimacy that comes from shared beliefs and understandings.

[Wong Fillmore, L. (1991). When learning a second language means losing the first. ***Early Childhood Research Quarterly,*** *6: 323-346.]*

WHAT DOES AN EFFECTIVE FAMILY AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH EFFORT LOOK LIKE?

An effective outreach program is multifaceted and multi-dimensional, including orientation to and involvement in the school itself, furthering immigrants' education and facilitating their integration into the larger community.

Overcoming language barriers

One aspect of working with immigrant families is the necessity to also work with oral interpreters, and to provide written translations of key documents and information. The most effective interpretations occur when the translator is proficient in English, possesses a strong understanding of U.S. culture – as well as the second language and culture – and is familiar with the context in which they will work (e.g., school rules, expectations and policies). It is also important to identify translators who speak the same dialect, as there are significant variations in terminology, accent and semantics across dialects of the same language. Additionally, interpreters must understand that their role is to communicate the desired message accurately and help clarify misunderstandings, but not to advocate for a particular response.

NOTE: *Having children translate for their parents has advantages and disadvantages. They are readily available, but they may not have the skills to go back and forth between two languages or be familiar with technical vocabulary. Acting as the translator may also shift the typical power relationships in the family and result in discomfort for both the child and the adult.*

Adult English as a Second Language

The main priority of most immigrants is to learn English. Schools can play a pivotal role in providing or connecting parents to opportunities to learn the language; for example, in collaboration with the school district, a school may provide Adult ESL classes through a community college or other local group. Some workplaces also offer onsite ESL training (see Chapter 8).

Family literacy

Family literacy programs strengthen immigrant families by addressing the needs of all its members. These programs generally encompass four key components: Adult Education, Children's Education, Parent and Child Together (PACT) and Parent Time.

Skill-based classes

These classes encompass a wide range of offerings, including job-related training, computer skills and parenting advice. Conducting interest surveys and needs assessments can be helpful to better identify and address specific community needs.

The following suggestions for reaching out and involving parents are intended to help stimulate family and community outreach:

Make parents comfortable by creating a welcoming environment

- When planning events, consult a multicultural or multifaith calendar to avoid conflicting with dates that may be significant in some cultures.
- Try to provide child care or develop a tolerance for children being present, and remember that food helps to transcend barriers.
- When contacting newcomer parents, be specific – parents may react with alarm to a phone call or note from the school, assuming that their child is in trouble, and will therefore appreciate a clear explanation early in the communication as to the purpose of the call or note.
- Connect newcomer parents with similar needs, interests or concerns – for example, parenting in their new cultural environment.

- Establish and utilize telephone trees for each language group to convey important information. Identify someone who speaks both English and the target language, and ask them to pass on the message to three parents in that language community; then, ask each of those parents to pass the message on to three others, and so on for each target language community.
- Invite parents and community members to share their knowledge and resources – they may be able to help find library materials in their own languages, or be available to work with students on dual language projects (many willing people wait to be asked for help, not wanting to intrude onto teachers' turf).
- Encourage parents who are more established to develop a parent network to welcome and support newcomer families.

Build understanding

- Hold orientations and other regularly scheduled meetings to exchange information, solicit questions and ideas, and address concerns.
- Be explicit about school routines and requirements, such as school timetables and calendars, as well as professional development days.
- Explain the education system in the United States and in Colorado, including demonstration of teaching techniques.
- Provide suggestions for home activities, including routines for doing homework, household chores and bedtime.
- Discuss parenting in a country where the rules are different.
- Avoid using jargon – terms like "benchmark" or "credit," or acronyms like "NCLB" – as this may discourage parents and cause them to be confused about the message being conveyed.
- Encourage parents to continue using their first language at home – for example, talking and reading in the first language – to allow students to continue building skills and understanding while they are learning English.
- Foster connections between newcomers and longtime residents by linking families one-on-one, enabling immigrants and residents to break down barriers and build personal relationships.
- Recruit and train bilingual peer tutors for newcomers who can help translate signs, notices and newsletters, or serve as greeters and guides for parent-teacher meetings and events.

Encourage community ownership

- Encourage community groups to use school facilities for cultural and community events, as both a courtesy and to help foster a sense of community ownership of the school.
- Invite both large and small community groups to contribute classroom resources and expertise – from cultural artifacts to guest speakers – and to recommend competent interpreters to assist in communicating with parents.
- Make community service a cross-cultural experience by providing credit for projects that involve working with people from different backgrounds.
- Create formal partnerships with businesses and community service agencies.

RESOURCES

Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFL)
www.cde.state.co.us/index_adult.htm

A guide for family literacy programs in Colorado.

Breaking Down Barriers, Creating Space: A Guidebook for Increasing Collaborations Between Schools and the Parents of English Language Learners (Dr. Robin Waterman)
www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/nclb/downloads/pi_ellgdbk.pdf

This document is both a resource and a guide to educators who serve ELLs and their parents across Colorado. Primarily, it is directed at district and building-level administrators, parent liaisons and teachers. Drawing from experience in developing parent involvement in schools, as well as an assessment of existing resources and research, the Guidebook contains information on NCLB, research on parent involvement, policy recommendations, strategies and programs, as well as an extensive list of resources.

Colorado Department of Education, Intergenerational Literacy Activities Notebook
www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/iglindex.htm

A collection of thematically-based activities for adults and their children to complete together. Science and social studies activities primarily target the Adult Basic Education/General Educational Development learner.

Colorado Parent Information and Resource Center (CPIRC)
www.cpirc.org

Through the Clayton Foundation and the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement, CPIRC supports Colorado school and family partnerships that lead to increased student and school achievement. CPIRC offers training, technical assistance and other services to schools, districts and parents, including:

- Training of Trainers (TOT) for school staff and parent leaders to present "Workshops for Parents." All workshops are designed to help parents support their child's education at home.
- Professional development for educators to implement meaningful parent involvement.
- Technical assistance to schools and districts to develop parent involvement plans and policies.
- Dissemination of parent involvement information to families, school administrators, teachers and the general public.
- Training and support for early literacy and kindergarten transition activities.
- Parenting tips through the family support line.

Colorado Refugee Services Program (CRSP), Directory of Services
http://stateboard.cdhs.state.co.us/oss/refugee/refugee_services_program.htm

This resource guide details service providers in the Denver Metro area that can help meet the needs of the local refugee population. Much of the information, as well as the organizations and services providers listed are also pertinent to other immigrant populations throughout the state. Topics covered include Advocacy and Awareness, Case Management, Education/ESL, Employment, Food, Health Care, Housing, Legal Assistance, Mental Health, Pre-Employment Training, Supportive Services, Translation/Interpretation Services and Youth Programs.

Ensuring the Academic Success of Our Children
www.thecoloradotrust.org/repository/publications/pdfs/cspc%20supplement.pdf

This publication provides information about the education system at the school, district, state and federal levels; parental rights and responsibilities; parent expectations; effective parent engagement in schools and how parents can support their children's learning at home.

National Center for Family Literacy
www.famlit.org

This site explains the concept and mission of

the family literacy program model, maintains a calendar of training events and provides a variety of free resources for teachers and volunteer tutors of ELLs.

Strengthening Parent Involvement: A Toolkit
www.cde.state.co.us/fedprograms/pdssp/download/pi_083104_toolkit.pdf

This toolkit helps schools and districts comply with the regulations for parent involvement as prescribed in the No Child Left Behind Act.

MATERIALS DEVELOPED IN OTHER STATES:

New Mexico:

Working Together: School – Family-Community Partnerships, A Toolkit for New Mexico School Communities
www.ped.state.nm.us/div/rural_ed/toolkit/prof_dev_tools/index.html

This resource was created by the New Mexico Public Education Department and contains many suggestions that are applicable in Colorado, including tools for teachers, families and professional development in six areas: Improving Communication, Increasing Volunteerism, Enhancing Student Learning, Promoting Positive Parenting, Supporting Decision Making and Advocacy, and Collaborating with the Community.

Oregon:

Connecting Families and Schools – An Assessment Tool for Educators Working With Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students
http://leadersroundtable.org/site

Developed by a working group of educators and community members in Multnomah County, the assessment tool on this site provides a basis for schools to evaluate, discuss and improve their ongoing efforts. Additionally, parent resources regarding parent-teacher conferences and discipline issues are available in English, Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese, Russian, Vietnamese and Somali.

PUBLICATIONS

Epstein, J., Sanders, M., Simons, B., Clark Salinas, K., Rodriguez Jansorn, N. and Van Voorhis, F. (2002). *School, Family and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action,* Thousands Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

This handbook has been described as "a one-stop survival guide for anyone engaged in starting or improving partnership programs." The information is detailed and practical. The authors link research findings to effective practices and include step-by-step guidance for the establishment of effective Action Teams. The book is full of suggestions for how to develop a program that links family involvement to school improvement and student achievement

Fradd, S. and Wilen, D. (1990). *Using Interpreters and Translators to Meet the Needs of Handicapped Language-minority Students and Their Families.* NCBE Program Information Guide Series, Number 4.
www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/pigs/pig4.htm

This guide provides a detailed overview of the issues related to translation in schools, including a review of literacy and detailed recommendations for identifying, training and using translators and interpreters.

Suárez-Orozco, C. and Suárez-Orozco M. (2001). *Children of Immigration*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

This book is written by the co-directors of the largest ongoing longitudinal study of immigrant children and their families. It offers a clear, broad, interdisciplinary view of who immigrant children are and what their futures might hold. Chapters include the Varieties of Immigrant Experience, Rethinking Immigration, the Psychosocial Experience of Immigration, Remaking Identities and the Children of Immigration in School.

Chapter 4: Classroom Instruction

WHY IS CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION?

Teachers can truly make a difference in the lives of the immigrant children in their classrooms. While increased diversity brings additional challenges, the overarching goal is to meet the educational needs of *every* child. The more diverse the population, the more important it is to determine what strategies and approaches will reach the most students, especially ELLs.

No matter what program they are enrolled in, immigrant students – ELLs in particular – have a challenging task before them. To be academically successful, they must learn the curriculum that all the other students are expected to master, usually in their second language. This means they need to learn the content, be able to speak about it clearly, ask and answer questions, discuss ideas and be able to read and write about all the content areas. Eventually, they must be able to do all this within the conventions of standard English and despite the fact that they may have only been in the country for a short time.

Since these students' background experiences may not have prepared them for immediate academic success in U.S. schools, teachers must find ways to work together and support each other in meeting the needs of *all* students. Specifically, the needs of second language learners must be addressed throughout the day, in every classroom and setting, not only in specialized ESL classes. All school personnel must gain a basic understanding of second language acquisition, maintain an awareness and acknowledgement of the volatile political context around immigration and – most importantly – utilize differentiated instructional strategies that best serve a diverse population.

Fortunately, most strategies that help second language learners be successful will also be effective for native speakers, especially those unfamiliar with the topics being discussed. As such, instruction organized with the needs of second language learners in mind will benefit every student in the classroom.

NOTE: *For more detailed information on planning and implementing programs for linguistically diverse populations, please refer to the Colorado Department of Education's Guidebook on English Language Learners. This chapter does not focus on such programs, but on instructional settings and strategies that optimize the achievement of immigrant students.*

WHAT IS THE LAW?

All schools are required to provide instruction that is comprehensible and accessible to all students. The landmark case Lau v. Nichols was an effort to establish the right to a meaningful education for students who attended public schools but could not speak or understand English. The case argued that to provide an education that is incomprehensible is to deny access to that education. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled:

Under these state-imposed standards, 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… We know that those who do not understand English are certain to find their classroom experiences wholly incomprehensible and in no way meaningful. [Lau v. Nichols (1974), www.nabe.org/documents/policy_legislation/LauvNichols.pdf]

The result was to abolish the sink-or-swim practices of the past and led to congressional action that reaffirmed the right of language-minority students to equal educational opportunity. This action was strengthened by the passage of the Equal Educational Opportunities Act in August 1974, which affirmed the Lau decision and expanded its jurisdiction *"to apply to all public school districts, not just those receiving federal financial assistance."* The act further requires educational agencies to *"take appropriate action to overcome language barriers that impede equal participation by students in their instructional programs." maec.org/laws/eeo.html*

These decisions do not prescribe any particular instructional program, but they set the stage for accountability regarding the academic success of second language learners.

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, reauthorized as the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, also requires school districts to inform parents of their children's eligibility for placement in a Language Instruction Education Program (LIEP). When a child is going to be placed in a language program, districts shall make an effort to receive parental consent for program placement.

WHAT DOES RESEARCH TELL US ABOUT "BEST PRACTICE"?

Research about best practice addresses both program types and instructional practice. While the majority of second language learners receive all their instruction in English, studies show that such students who receive quality instruction in their first language achieve greater academic success more quickly than those in all-English programs. Additionally, research strongly suggests that providing primary language instruction is the best way to guarantee long term academic success. *[Collier, V. and Thomas, W. (1997). School Effectiveness for Language-minority Students. NCBE Resource Collection Series.]*

Because primary language instruction is not possible in all schools, all-English program teachers must realize that it requires significant effort to ensure that second language learners are academically proficient. Further, unless educators proactively seek to value students' first language and culture, most students in all-English programs become what is known as "subtractive bilinguals" – that is, they lose the ability to communicate and learn through their first language.

It takes a long time to achieve full academic proficiency, or the ability to accomplish everything on the level of native English speakers. But information can be made comprehensible from the beginning, enabling students to learn much about the content of instruction even if they haven't yet fully mastered the grammar and structures of English. Indeed, the most successful schools are those where instruction has been organized from the outset to meet the needs of a linguistically diverse population.

It is not sufficient to teach "in English." Rather, it is critical to provide intensive ESL instruction, as well as to apply daily classroom strategies that are tailored to the needs of second language students. A sound program for second language learners includes planned daily instruction that balances such components as oral language development, reading, writing and subject area content. Because students more rapidly acquire content area knowledge and improve their language proficiency when instruction is consistent across settings and teachers, the strongest programs in linguistically- and culturally-diverse schools integrate curricula throughout subject areas and align instruction vertically.

Immigrant students need opportunities to practice the English language and learn the content of their instruction; it is therefore necessary to group and regroup students to address these various needs. Chances for success improve when educators share responsibility for the success of all students by using thematic units that include explicit learning strategy instructions.

Develop a unified curriculum for all students

Using a standards-based approach, effective teachers identify what students should know, what they should be able to do with that information and how they will be assessed to evaluate their learning. A fundamental strategy is "Backwards Planning" whereby assessments and culminating activities are identified from the outset, and the sequence of instructional activities is designed to help students achieve the desired outcomes.

It is important to become familiar with the standards for a particular grade level or content area that have been adopted by a school district, or by the professional organization that represents an area of specialty. From there, collaboration with colleagues can help determine clear benchmarks to guide instruction based on key questions that students will be able to answer at the end; it may be helpful to post these questions and refer to them as lessons are developed and taught. The enduring understandings, big ideas and vocabulary of what is being taught should be consistently displayed and highlighted in instruction; as well, students must be provided multiple avenues for learning about, interacting with and displaying their knowledge about the topics of instruction.

WHAT STRATEGIES WILL PROVE MOST EFFECTIVE?

Do whatever is necessary to make the lesson understandable without relying solely on oral or written text. In the field, this teaching concept refers to "sheltered" instructional practices. In classrooms that incorporate these understandings, teachers prepare for second language learners knowing that their efforts will benefit all students.

The cornerstone of an effective classroom is a safe, caring environment that promotes risk-taking. The goal is not to teach what is easiest, but to make the most important concepts understandable; to do so, teachers may use a visual approach to show what they are talking about, thereby identifying and reinforcing big ideas, enduring understandings and key vocabulary. Specifically, teachers decide what concepts are most important, repeating and highlighting them frequently; they implement cooperative learning strategies, encouraging, expecting and showing students how to work together; and they assign peers, mentors and buddies to allow maximum student participation.

Additionally, teachers in effective classrooms employ a hands-on and interactive approach by using manipulatives and task-oriented projects. They determine the most important concepts to convey and refer to them often, using the strategies listed in this section. They also smile, encourage humor and accept errors; and they utilize materials that acknowledge immigrant students' cultures and help them feel like they belong in their classroom.

Provide comprehensible input

- Use the whole classroom to support learning.
- Make teaching concepts understandable without relying solely on text or words – use visual images, gestures and realia to formulate and identify the big ideas in all content areas, as well as the physical environment to stimulate interaction and conversation.
- Use pictures, models, graphs, diagrams, charts and graphic organizers to organize information and to spark student dialogues.
- Write key concepts, main ideas and notes on the board or overhead.
- Read labels with students and relate them to the pictures and topics.
- Use questions and statements to label the room and the work displayed.
- Seek out materials on key concepts with a lower vocabulary load or simplified text.
- Take time to preview and review concepts.
- Identify, recognize and apply what students already know and understand about the topics of instruction, knowing that learning in a language other than English contributes to overall academic proficiency, and that what students know in their first language will transfer to their second.
- Make purposeful connections between what students do in different parts of their day and what they know in each language.
- Inform parents about ongoing units of study and encourage them to use their first language to participate in their children's learning.

Promote interaction around the topics of instruction

- Elevate oral language practice by providing constant opportunities for interaction through increased student talk and decreased teacher talk.
- Monitor and encourage each student to participate orally in activities.
- Repeatedly model language for students and help them to practice it before requiring them to use it on their own.
- Allow for more wait time before expecting students to answer questions.
- As concepts are initially being learned, place more emphasis on students' understanding of the big ideas from content area instruction and less on how they express that knowledge.
- After students know the concepts, help them develop the language to fully express them in English.
- Remember that any question asked of the whole group can be answered first in partners – *"Turn and talk to your neighbor about..."*
- Group and regroup students during their instructional day according to their language proficiency. If possible, collaborate with other teachers to coordinate scheduling to group students across classrooms for specialized opportunities.

Pay attention to the language demands of assignments

Language development encompasses multiple dimensions, including vocabulary and the concepts the words represent, communicative functions (using language for a purpose – describing, asking and summarizing) and grammatical structures. Each aspect must be addressed in planning instruction as follows:

- Review the scope and sequence of a published ESL series to become familiar with how it describes the functions of language, as well as the basics of English grammar and structure.
- Evaluate instructional activities to get a sense of the language demands placed on students and to identify language features – grammar, academic language functions and vocabulary – that require additional instruction for second language students.
- By evaluating instructional activities, use language demands to develop specific language objectives.
- Provide time for second language learners to work on these aspects of academic language, both orally and in writing.

Use strategies that are appropriate for developing literacy skills through a second language

- Establish context and meaning before interacting with text.
- Seek materials on every content topic at a range of reading levels and complexity.
- Use text to represent ideas and concepts that students understand and can talk about.
- Incorporate language experience approaches.
- Make purposeful connections between the big ideas from the content areas and the subjects that students will read and write about in other parts of their day.
- Become acquainted with the ways in which literacy is used in students' homes on a daily basis, and help them use what they already know to build their English skills.

RESOURCES

Center on Instruction
www.centeroninstruction.org/resources.cfm?category=ell&subcategory=&grade_start=&grade_end=

The Center provides materials and resources to improve instruction and intervention for English Language Learners, including exemplary delivery models and professional development for teachers in content and language areas.

- Book 1 (2006): *Research-based Recommendations for Instruction and Academic Interventions*
- Book 2 (2006): *Research-based Recommendations for Serving Adolescent Newcomers*

Colorado Department of Education English Language Acquisition Unit
www.cde.state.co.us/cde_english/index.htm

Three statewide organizations (CABE, CCFLT and CoTESOL) serve teachers who work with linguistic diversity. They each offer annual and regional conventions and conferences, as well as extensive information and links to other resources:

- ***Colorado Association for Bilingual Education***
  www.cobilingual.org
  CABE represents the interests of language minority students and the bilingual education professionals who serve them.
- ***Colorado Congress of Foreign Language Teachers***
  www.ccflt.org
  CCFLT provides foreign language teachers a forum for mutual support, a means for sharpening their pedagogical skills and a vehicle for keeping culturally and linguistically current.
- ***Colorado Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages***
  www.colorado.edu/iec/cotesol
  This website provides current information about the Colorado TESOL affiliate.

National Association for Bilingual Education
www.nabe.org

NABE provides resources, research and information toward ensuring the conditions and education for all English Language Learners and speakers of more than one language.

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages
www.tesol.org

TESOL is a global professional association that works to ensure excellence in English language teaching to speakers of other languages.

PUBLICATIONS

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Freeman, D. and Freeman, Y. (2001). *Between Worlds: Access to Second Language Acquisition.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Genessee, F. (Ed.). (1994). *Educating Second Language Children: The Whole Child, the Whole Curriculum, the Whole Community.* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Gibbons, P. (2002). *Scaffolding Language, Scaffolding Learning: Teaching Second Language Learners in the Mainstream Classroom.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Herrell, A. and Jordan, M. (2004). *50 Strategies for Teaching English Language Learners (2nd Edition).* Boston, MA: Pearson Education.

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Samway, K. and McKeon, D. (1996). *Myths and Realities: Best Practice for Language-minority Students.* Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.

Short, D. (1999). *New Ways in Teaching English at the Secondary Level.* New Ways in TESOL Series II: Innovative Classroom Techniques. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

Tomlinson, C. A. and McTighe, J. (2006). *Integrating Differentiated Instruction & Understanding by Design: Connecting Content & Kids.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Wiggins, G. and Tighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by Design: Expanded 2nd Edition.* Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision Curriculum and Development.

PUBLISHERS

The following publishers provide extensive resources to meet the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse learners, including materials designed for all students and those specific to second language learners of English. This list is not exhaustive, nor an endorsement of any particular company or product.

Non-fiction and fiction leveled and chapter books:

Benchmark Education
www.benchmarkeducation.com

Hampton Brown
www.hampton-brown.com

MONDO Publishing
www.mondopub.com

National Geographic
www.ngschoolpub.com

Newbridge
www.newbridgeonline.com

Pacific Learning
www.pacificlearning.com

Rosen
www.rosenclassroom.com

Content resources:

AGS Publishing
www.agsglobe.com

Ballard & Tighe
www.ballard-tighe.com

Globe Fearon
www.pearsonlearning.com

Great Source
www.greatsource.com

Longman (Pearson Education)
www.longman.com

Options Publishing
www.optionspublishing.com

Rigby/Steck Vaughn
www.steckvaughn.harcourtachieve.com

Wright Group – McGraw Hill
www.wrightgroup.com

Chapter 5: Student Assessment

WHY IS STUDENT ASSESSMENT AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION?

Assessment is at the core of any effective education program. At every level, educators should be asking: *"What do we want students to know and be able to do, and how will we know we have accomplished our goals?"*

Teachers, administrators and program developers need to determine if what they are doing works, and schools and districts need to assure the public that all students have the opportunity to achieve to their maximum potential. A strong assessment program flows from well-articulated goals that are understood and supported by all stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers and administrators. And when immigrant students are part of the school population, all decision makers must understand the assessment issues unique to this population and incorporate them into the overall plan.

In the current era of high stakes testing, many issues arise when immigrant students and second language learners are represented in the student body. In the current system, schools are rated on how many students reach particular benchmarks – little credit is given for the growth students make over time. For the most part, these ratings are designed to measure the achievement of native English speakers representing the dominant culture. Immigrant students and second language learners are often perceived as "bringing down the scores," or lowering the quality of instruction in the schools they attend when aggregate scores come out lower than prior to their arrival. Tensions grow when it appears that second language learners and immigrant students aren't achieving, or that teachers are perceived as falling short of their responsibilities.

Not only are most immigrants second language learners of English, but they also come from widely varying backgrounds and levels of academic preparation. This can lead to the false conclusion that students are in need of special education services because their behaviors may resemble those of native English speakers with cognitive challenges or learning disabilities. Because of the differences in where such students begin their experience in U.S. schools, it is even more critical that teachers document exactly where they are when they enter, how they progress, where they need to go next and if there are any underlying processing problems to be addressed. Additionally, there are legal requirements for the identification of second language learners of English, the provision of appropriate services and a process for redesignating them as fluent in English.

To create a comprehensive and inclusive assessment system, it is necessary to put the needs of linguistically diverse students at the center of the planning process to account for the needs of all students. Positively, a system designed with the needs of second language learners in mind will also provide additional ways for students who are native English speakers to demonstrate their academic achievements and progress toward meeting high standards.

WHAT IS THE LAW?

According to the CDE's *Guidebook on English Language Learners,* to develop comprehensive English language acquisition and academic programs for ELLs, schools and districts must first have accurate knowledge regarding the number and characteristics of the population to be served. The school district must establish an effective and systematic procedure to identify all ELLs. All of the procedures are designed to protect the civil

rights of the child to an appropriate education. The identification, assessment and placement procedure must include:

- **Home language surveys (HLS)** to be completed as part of the registration process for all students to identify those whose Primary or Home Language is Other Than English (PHLOTE). Once completed, all surveys should be filed and easily accessible by school and district staff, and available for state audits.
- **Colorado English Language Acquisition (CELA)** Placement to be administered to all students who are new to the districts and identified as PHLOTE within 30 days of arrival to determine English language proficiency.
- **Parent notification** for students identified for placement in a Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP).
- **Placement in LIEP** services for students identified as ELLs.
- **Ongoing assessment** to monitor language and academic growth (including the CELA Proficiency Test).

To determine when students can be redesignated as Fluent English Proficient (FEP), there are two state-mandated standardized assessments that must be administered: the CELA Proficiency Test is used to measure language proficiency and the CSAP Reading or Writing Tests are used to measure academic content achievement. Scores on these measures (CELA overall score 4.5 or 5 and CSAP Partially Proficient on English version) should then be used in conjunction with a larger Body of Evidence (BOE) that teachers collect to support their conclusions about the language proficiency and academic achievement of ELLs. The BOE can include evaluations by district review committees, observation protocols, diagnostic tests, logs or journals, district native language assessments and student performance portfolios, as well any additional language proficiency and academic achievement measures.

WHAT DOES RESEARCH TELL US ABOUT "BEST PRACTICE"?

Educators who work with immigrant students need tools to build a comprehensive assessment plan that is flexible enough to be adapted to virtually any kind of programming for linguistically and culturally diverse student populations. A strong plan recognizes that assessment is done at different levels for different purposes, all of which are valid, and that there is a strong interaction among teaching and learning, program goals, standards for learning and assessment measures. Further, to gain an accurate profile of student learning, teacher quality and program effectiveness, summative state and district assessment should be complemented by formative measures that are implemented and supported at the local level.

It is critical that – across grade levels, schools and districts – common types of information are collected and analyzed to provide an appropriate basis for comparison. When educators agree on common assessments and evidence of student learning, they can follow students over time, working from a shared understanding of achievement and indicators of academic development needs. Additionally, to understand both student achievement and program effectiveness, data must be disaggregated along multiple dimensions, including the nature of the instructional program, or the literacy and academic background of students when they enter a school. This information can then be used to better examine and evaluate student performance.

Students' language proficiency, as demonstrated by their growth in language development, is distinct from their academic achievement and their attainment of conceptual skills and knowledge. As shown in the table below (Gottlieb and Nguyen, 2007), assessment of language proficiency and academic achievement depend on unique measures specifically crafted to fulfill specific purposes.

Purposes for Assessment of Language Proficiency and Academic Achievement in Language Education Programs

LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY	ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
• Contribute to the identification and placement of ELLs. • Monitor the progress of ELLs English language development to inform teaching and differentiate instruction. • Document growth of language development over time for state accountability. • Contribute to the reclassification of ELLs when deemed language proficient. • Contribute to the evaluation of language program services.	• Monitor students' content knowledge and skills to inform teaching and differentiate instruction. • Determine if students are 'proficient' in grade-level expectations or standards. • Contribute to the evaluation of the overall educational program.

One instrument cannot accomplish all these goals – so, to counter the ill effects of a high-stakes assessment, local assessments must become part of the process. That is, a comprehensive assessment program requires the use of more than one type of measurement; multiple data sources are requisite for educational decision-making.

Educators' greatest challenge is meeting benchmarks for all children while simultaneously providing the kind of instruction that will help students succeed and progress from wherever their education begins. To meet this challenge, teachers of immigrant students require a multifaceted assessment plan that relies on the collaborative efforts of educators at all levels to create a comprehensive and inclusive approach that considers all students.

WHAT STRATEGIES WILL PROVE MOST EFFECTIVE?

Key to a strong assessment plan is that it documents both the attainment of benchmarks and the actual growth that students make toward them. A comprehensive system includes a process for intake and initial assessment; a process to decide when ELLs can function independently (i.e., no longer in need of specialized instruction) – and are ready to be transitioned to a different type of programming, or are ready to be redesignated/reclassified as a student who is fluent in English; and ongoing formative and summative assessments to measure achievement in content area classes.

Suggestions for intake and initial assessment

- Establish consistent procedures from school to school within a district and conduct intakes in a centralized manner when feasible.
- If possible, begin with informal assessments over a period of days. Conduct an oral interview that progresses from simple informational questions to more complex questions.
- Identify someone to assist with primary language assessment.
- Ask students to produce a writing sample in their first language – not necessarily to score it, but rather to see how a student approaches the task.
- Review students' academic records, recognizing that grading systems and the order in which topics are taught may vary (especially math). **NOTE:** *There are agencies that can assist in reviewing transcripts in languages other than English.*
- Show students math textbooks from various grade levels and ask them to indicate familiar concepts; because the sequence in which such concepts are introduced may differ from

country to country, encourage the students to skip around.
- Allow students to sit in for a day or two before they are assigned to a schedule or a homeroom.

In the classroom

- Use multiple strategies to assess students' learning and document progress, including pen-and-paper tests, projects, dioramas, oral presentations and small group demonstrations.
- Gather data about learners' prior language and literacy experiences. Use self-assessments, interest inventories and surveys to determine what students know and how they learn best.
- Monitor students' development across listening, speaking, reading, writing and understanding content using curriculums developed for this purpose.
- Observe students interacting informally across different settings and in both languages, if possible.
- Observe students reading, writing and listening. Note the strategies they use and how they can best express what they know.
- Monitor students' comprehension – ask them what they think they have learned and listen carefully to their responses.
- Create performance assessments in which students can demonstrate their understanding of content concepts in multiple ways besides pen-and-paper tests.
- If it seems that a child may have learning difficulties or be in need of special education services, follow the district procedures that have been developed to prevent inappropriate referrals.

RESOURCES

Center on Instruction
www.centeroninstruction.org/resources.cfm?category=ell&subcategory=&grade_start=&grade_end=

The Center provides materials and resources to improve instruction and intervention for English Language Learners, including exemplary delivery models and professional development for teachers in content and language areas.

- Book 1 (2006): *Research-based Recommendations for Instruction and Academic Interventions*
- Book 2 (2006): *Research-based Recommendations for Serving Adolescent Newcomers*

Colorado Department of Education English Language Acquisition Unit
www.cde.state.co.us/cde_english/index.htm

Colorado Department of Education Unit of Student Assessment
www.centeroninstruction.org/resources.cfm?category=ell&subcategory=&grade_start=&grade_end=

The Unit manages and oversees the development, administration scoring and analysis of the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP), Colorado Student Assessment Program Alternate (CSAPA), Colorado English Language Acquisition (CELA), Colorado ACT (COACT) and the Colorado National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)
www.tesol.org

TESOL is a global professional association that works to ensure excellence in English language teaching to speakers of other languages.

PUBLICATIONS

Colorado Department of Education. (2005). *The English Language Development (ELD) Continuum.*

www.cde.state.co.us/cde_english/download/eldstandardsapril2005.pdf

This continuum provides both regular classroom and ESL teachers with a set of indicators reflective of students' developing English abilities in four areas: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The continuum provides guidance to teachers in planning instruction that is appropriate

to the needs and behaviors typical of second language learners.

Gottleib, M. (2006). *Assessing English Language Learners: Bridges from Language Proficiency to Academic Achievement.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

This publication includes several evaluation instruments for assessing students, helping educators to understand the pros and cons of different types of assessment measures. The author helps teachers adjust assessments to different language proficiency levels, and then appropriately evaluate language proficiency and content learning.

Gottlieb, M. and Nguyen, D. (2007). *Authentic Assessment in Language Education Programs: Balancing Internal and External Accountability.* Philadelphia: Caslon Press.

This book synthesizes theory and practice and provides a rational and durable framework for orchestrating the competing demands on educators for accountability, program improvement and appropriate classroom instruction. It includes a wealth of worksheets and other supporting documentation in the form of graphic organizers, timelines, common assessment reference charts and checklists aligned to the framework to help bring the ideas to life. All of the supporting documents are designed to stimulate discussion and analysis of individual schools and districts, and provide the basis for an interactive process that can be used in virtually any setting.

Hamayan, E., Marler, B., Sanchez-Lopez, C., Damico, J. (2007). *Special Education Considerations for English Language Learners: Delivering a Continuum of Services.* Philadelphia, PA: Caslon Publishing.

This comprehensive volume provides educators with the tools and strategies to assess ELLs' learning difficulties; gives suggestions for how to collaborate in gathering information and providing services; and describes how to create a continuum of interventions and measure students' response to those interventions.

National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition. (2006). *Resources About Assessment and Accountability for ELLs.* Washington, DC. **www.ncela.gwu.edu/resabout/ells**

This site provides language instruction, educational and related programs for limited-English proficient children. Priority is given to information on academic content and English proficiency assessments and accountability systems.

O'Malley, J. and Pierce, L. (1996). *Authentic Assessment for English Language Learners: Practical Approaches for Teachers.* New York, NY: Addison Wesley.

This book provides a synthesis of the major strategies for implementing authentic assessment in the classroom, including procedures for establishing reliability and validity. It presents a combination of theory, description and abundant examples of assessment strategies and formats that accommodate the needs and challenges of second language learners.

Rhodes, R., Ochoa, S. and Ortiz, S. (2005). *Assessing Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students: A Practical Guide.* New York, NY: Guilford Press.

This book was written for school psychologists and provides a rational for creating a complex and integrated approach to understanding the performance of linguistically and culturally diverse populations. It presents a problem-solving approach and includes hands-on tools and techniques for assessment.

TESOL. (2001). *Scenarios for ESL Standards-based Assessment.* Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.

This source provides a process for measuring students' progress in attaining ESL standards and uses scenarios from the ESL Standards for Pre-K-12 students to illustrate how assessment can be integrated with instructional activities over an extended period of time.

Chapter 6: Early Childhood Education

WHY IS EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION?

In the United States, one out of every five children under age 6 is the child of an immigrant.[3] The number of children born to immigrant parents is growing at seven times the rate of children of native-born parents; however, children of immigrants are less likely to participate in early childhood education. Many families, especially those where at least one parent is an immigrant, are often unaware of the importance of early childhood education and how to access such a program; as well, they may hesitate to enroll their children because of their inability to communicate well with the adults caring for their children.

Schools can play an important role in supporting parents with the knowledge of how learning occurs in the youngest years. It is critical that educators reinforce to parents their role as their child's first and most important teacher; schools can provide resources to help parents in this role. Two issues that are particularly important to address regarding immigrant families are the manner in which early childhood education services are delivered, and how to best address the linguistic and cultural diversity that immigrant children represent.

WHAT IS THE LAW?

There are no legal mandates requiring children to attend early childhood education programs, although there are many government-funded programs to provide such opportunities. The Compulsory Attendance Law states only that every child who has reached age 6 on or before August 1 of each year, and is under age 17, shall attend public school for a minimum number of hours during each year. In Colorado, kindergarten is not compulsory and school funding is generally limited to half-day programs. But there are regulations designed to ensure the quality of care and safety of children.

Sometimes, immigrant families do not access early childhood education programs for fear of contact with governmental agencies. Schools can alleviate this concern by emphasizing the connection to permitted public education. For example, Head Start does not ask for the immigration status of enrolling families. As well, preschool programs funded through Title 1 of the No Child Left Behind Act do not document immigration status or a social security number. Additionally, funding for preschool children with identified disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is not dependent upon immigration status – services are provided to all children who qualify. And federal subsidies under the Child Care Development and Block Grant support children who are U.S. citizens, regardless of the status of their parents.

[3] Hernandez, D. (2004). "Demographic Change and the Life Circumstances of Immigrant Families." *Future of Children,* 14(2), 17-47.

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH TELL US ABOUT "BEST PRACTICE"?

Abundant research indicates that how well a child is prepared for kindergarten through literacy skills development, good health and motivation to learn directly impacts his or her academic abilities in the third grade.[4] Indeed, academic success in third grade has been shown to be the basis for future successes, both academically and financially. As such, influences before kindergarten greatly impact the behaviors seen in kindergarten.[5]

The Transatlantic Task Force on Immigration and Integration concludes in its September 2007 report: *The ideal early-education system [for immigrant children] is both integrated and differentiated, ensures common developmental and educational goals, is adaptive to individual needs and preferences, and works in both a child- and family-centered way.*

Specifically, program content should be:

- *Based on cooperation between peers and teachers in challenging, authentic, developmentally appropriate activities*
- *Made culturally relevant in regard to language, literacy, quantitative literacy and cognitive and social skills*
- *Tailored to the multiple needs of families and include parent education and family-support measures.*

The report suggests that early childhood education can serve as a bridge between home and school by involving parents and extending the program to the home environment, whenever feasible. The report further emphasizes the importance of integrating childcare, education and other services, and extending programs into elementary schools.

Delivery strategies

There are many ways that early childhood education is delivered in America, some of which are unfamiliar and perhaps uncomfortable for new immigrants – for example, center-based care may be contrary to a family's cultural values. An additional challenge lies in the nature of the workforce providing care to young children. For example, in preschools nationally, an average of only 22% of the instructional staff is culturally diverse,[6] limiting the ability of families and young children to connect with staff on a personal level.

Further, center-based early childhood education is often not financially feasible for many, including immigrant families – indeed, children of immigrants are 30% more likely to be living in poverty.[7] Parents often must alternate work schedules, or rely on friends or relatives to care for their children.

Schools can provide resources to help parents access the care they need, including financial subsidies – such as the Colorado Preschool and Kindergarten Program (CPKP), Colorado Childcare Assistance Program (C-CAP), Title 1 subsidies or other alternatives that allow children to enter school prior to kindergarten.

Home-based services may be needed to help create an educational environment where children receive care. But home-based care has its own challenges as immigrants – like other families –

[4] West, J., Denton, K. and Germino-Hausken, E. (2002). *American's Kindergarteners.* National Center for Educational Statistics 2000-070. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education.

[5] Pelletier, J. (2002). *Parents Come to Kindergarten: A Unique Junior Kindergarten Program for Four-Year Olds and Their Families.* Harvard Family Research Project. www.gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/fine/resources/digest/parents.html

[6] National Center for Education Statistics. (2003). http://nces.ed.gov

[7] Capps, R., Fix, M., Murray, J., Ost, J., Passel, J. and Herwantoro, S. (2005). *The New Demography of America's Schools: Immigration and the No Child Left Behind Act.* Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

may be unaware of the degree of regulation, licensing requirements and strict legal guidelines that apply to early childhood services. As such, efforts to incorporate immigrant youngsters into early childhood programs are most successful if they combine both center- and home-based opportunities. Because no single best practice exists, educators and parents rely on a variety of options and opportunities.

Linguistic and cultural diversity

A critical issue in early childhood education is helping families to understand how best to support their child's conceptual development at the same time that they are learning English. Because the language of instruction in the vast majority of early childhood programs is English, it is important that providers understand the dynamics of second language acquisition. While it is a popular belief that young children simply absorb a language, inappropriate practices in preschools can actually impede students' conceptual development, weaken ties with their families and lessen their readiness for school. As discussed in Chapter 3, what may help children in the short term may harm family stability over time.

To diminish the potential, if unintentional, consequences of immersing young children into all-English programs, there are steps that educators can take to counteract negative influences as detailed in a 1995 Position Statement of National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC):

For the optimal development and learning of all children, educators must accept the legitimacy of children's home language, respect (hold in high regard) and value (esteem, appreciate) the home culture, and promote and encourage the active involvement and support of all families, including extended and nontraditional family units.

When early childhood educators acknowledge and respect children's home language and culture, ties between the family and programs are strengthened. This atmosphere provides increased opportunity for learning because young children feel supported, nurtured and connected not only to their home communities and families but also to teachers and the educational setting.

Children's education experiences should afford them the opportunity to learn and to become effective functioning members of society. Language development is essential for learning and the development of children's home language does not interfere with our ability to learn English. Because knowing more than one language is a cognitive asset [Hakuta, K. and Garcia, E. (1989)], early education programs should encourage the development of children's home language while fostering the acquisition of English.

Specific NAEYC recommendations include:

For children

- Recognize that all children are cognitively, linguistically and emotionally connected to the language and culture of their home.
- Acknowledge that children can demonstrate their knowledge and capabilities in many ways.
- Provide comprehensible input to foster learning.

For parents

- Actively involve parents and families in the early learning program and setting.
- Encourage and assist all parents in becoming knowledgeable about the cognitive value for children of knowing more than one language, and provide them with strategies to support, maintain and preserve home-language learning.
- Recognize that parents and families must rely on caregivers and educators to honor and support their children in the cultural values and norms of the home.

For programs

- Recognize that children can and will acquire the use of English, even when their home language is used and respected.

WHAT STRATEGIES WILL PROVE MOST EFFECTIVE?

- Investigate and promote home-based services when parents prefer home-based care to center-based care. This will help create an educational environment where the child spends the most time. Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) and Parents as Teachers (PAT) offer structured visits designed to support development of young children. Both are research-based and offer culturally-sensitive curricula.
- Create classrooms that reflect the cultures of participating students and the wider community. Schools can determine a classroom climate that encourages diversity by using instructional materials – books, dolls, games, food and clothing – that reflect the students' cultures.
- Incorporate an anti-bias perspective into the curriculum for all students.
- When English is the sole language of instruction, do not assume children will simply absorb the language. Utilize multiple strategies to help students, and be explicit about the connections between the language used and the concepts being taught – this will help students make sense of their surroundings and their teachers' expectations.
- Seek out parents' perspectives on childrearing and early childhood education.
- Conduct workshops about child development that are open to the community to allow participation by both parents and non-parents who care for children. As well, information related to child development can help prepare parents and non-parent caretakers to better fulfill their role as a child's first teacher.

- Conduct workshops that teach specific skills – such as dialogic reading – and provide parents with concrete steps to support their children's literacy development.
- Reaffirm to parents and children the importance of maintaining and developing their first language – encourage parents to talk to and read with their children in their first language.

RESOURCES

Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)
www.vanderbilt.edu/csefel

This five-year project is designed to strengthen the capacity of Head Start and child-care programs to improve the social and emotional outcomes of young children.

Center for Evidence-based Practice: Young Children with Challenging Behavior (CEBP)
http://challengingbehavior.fmhi.usf.edu

The Center promotes the use of evidence-based practices to meet the needs of young children who have, or are at risk for, problem behavior.

Colorado Department of Education, Early Childhood Initiatives
www.cde.state.co.us/early/early.htm

This section of the CDE website contains detailed descriptions and links to each of the state's early childhood programs, as well as extensive, downloadable resources in English and Spanish.

Colorado Preschool and Kindergarten Program (CPKP)
www.cde.state.co.us/cdeprevention/pi_colo_preschool.htm

CPKP provides funding to establish quality early childhood education programs that serve children eligible to enroll in kindergarten in the following year. A vital component of CPKP is to strengthen and support families as participants in their child's education. The number of children who can be served by the program, both at a pre-K level and in kindergarten, is capped by the state legislature.

Head Start
www.headstartinfo.org

Head Start is a federally-funded program that promotes school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other services to enrolled children and families. Materials in English and Spanish are available from the Head Start Information and Publication Center (HSIPC).

National Association for the Education of Young Children
www.naeyc.org

NAEYC's goal is to build support for equal access to high-quality educational programs that recognize and promote all aspects of children's development and learning, enabling all children to become competent, successful and socially responsible adults.

National Even Start Association
www.evenstart.org

Even Start Family Literacy Programs are school-community partnerships that help break the cycle of poverty and illiteracy by integrating early childhood education, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education into a unified family literacy program.

Qualistar Early Learning
www.qualistar.org/parents/ratings.php

Qualistar provides information about the quality of many child-care programs through a rating process.

PUBLICATIONS

Colorado Department of Education. (2007). *The Building Blocks for Reading and Writing* and *The Building Blocks for Mathematics.*
www.cde.state.co.us/early/early.htm

Both documents provide early learning guidelines for young children. Each begins with a list of the Colorado Content Standards for the K-12 system, coupled with information reflecting the types of experiences and interactions requisite for preschool learners.

Derman-Sparks, L. (1988). *Implementing an Anti-bias Curriculum in Early Childhood Classrooms.* NAEYC Anti-bias Curriculum Taskforce.

(A 30-minute film on the *Anti-bias Curriculum* is also available – Pacific Oaks, CA: Pacific Oaks Bookstore.)

By exploring how exposure to bias in society impacts attitudes toward self and others, the book and film describe how an anti-bias curricular approach is distinguished from the most common multicultural curricular approach – cultural tourism – in that it directly addresses how children develop identity in relationship to race, gender and disability.

Eggers-Piérola, C. (2005). *Connections and Commitment: Reflecting Latino Values in Early Childhood Programs.* Center for Children and Families Education Development Center, Inc.

This source provides specific examples and guidance of how to apply the following four core values to early childhood education: family, belonging, education and commitment.

Kendall, F. (1996). *Diversity in the Classroom: New Approaches to the Education of Young Children, 2nd Edition* (Early Childhood Education Series). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

This book addresses many aspects of anti-bias education – from the stages of child development to strategies for education of parents. The author promotes teachers' self-awareness, and provides guidelines for setting up multicultural environments and curricula.

Leseman, P. (2007). *Early Education for Immigrant Children.* Transatlantic Task Force on Immigration and Integration. Washington, DC: Migration Policy Institute.
www.migrationpolicy.org/pubs/lesemaneducation091907.pdf

This policy brief lays out the causes of disadvantages among children of immigrants and the different models of early education provision that are available to policymakers.

Tabors, P. (1997). *One Child, Two Languages: A Guide for Preschool Educators of Children Learning English as a Second Language.* Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing.

This guide, written for teachers, offers specific techniques for facilitating the natural progression of second language acquisition in young children. The guide contains suggestions for creating a supportive classroom environment for ELLs, including ways to measure progress, address individual differences and work with parents while acknowledging the importance of children's home languages and cultures.

York, S. (2003). *Roots and Wings: Affirming Culture in Early Childhood Programs.* St. Paul, MN: RedLeaf Press.

This source provides a practical introduction to multicultural and anti-bias issues in working with children and families in early childhood settings. The author includes activities, practical examples and recommendations for professional development to address the increasing complexity faced by early childhood educators.

Chapter 7: Programs For Middle and High School Youth

WHY ARE PROGRAMS FOR MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH AN IMPORTANT ASPECT OF IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION?

One of the challenges in serving immigrant students at the secondary level is the range of their linguistic and academic preparation when they enter U.S. schools. Students arrive every day with great differences in their prior schooling experiences, their circumstances of arrival and their feelings about being here. Whether because of political strife or economic necessity, some students may have had their schooling interrupted for brief or extended periods of time.

Some questions that are relevant to immigrant students at the middle and high school levels include:[8]

- What sorts of responsibilities do they have at home?
- Are they considered children or adults?
- Are they recent immigrants, have they lived here for several years or were they born here of immigrant parents?
- Have they attended formalized schooling before or is this their first experience?

Fourteen-year-olds without formal academic preparation or literacy skills in their first language present a formidable challenge to a system designed around textbook learning and Carnegie Units. Most people recognize the importance of not only a high school diploma, but the need to attend college in preparation for a 21st-century career. Yet Latino students, many immigrant students among them, have the lowest graduation rate in Colorado.

Even students with strong academic backgrounds, who have had some exposure to English in their home countries, can find it difficult to keep up with their English-speaking peers who are learning content in English. Often they can't look to their parents or families for help:

"Four out of five [limited English proficient] children who are foreign-born live in families where the parents are also considered limited English proficient. For foreign-born children who are not [limited English proficient], about half live in families where the parents are limited English proficient."[9]

Students who are undocumented immigrants face additional barriers – for example, they may feel discouraged about trying hard in school knowing that they may be unable to receive college tuition assistance.

WHAT IS THE LAW?

The laws that apply to middle and high school students are the same as those at the elementary level. Compulsory Attendance Law dictates that students under age 17 must attend public school for a minimum number of hours during each year. Further, older teens who have not yet received a secondary school diploma in their own country, and who wish to complete high school, may attend a U.S. public school at no cost until age 21.

[8] Lucas, T. (1997). *Into, Through and Beyond Secondary School: Critical Transitions for Immigrant Youth.* Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

[9] Morse, A. (2005). *A Look at Immigrant Youth: Prospects and Promising Practices.* Denver, CO: National Conference of State Legislatures.

Schools who serve these students receive the same per pupil allocation from the state as for any other enrolled student.

WHAT DOES RESEARCH TELL US ABOUT "BEST PRACTICE"?

Teenage immigrants are at a time in their lives when, developmentally, they want to be like everyone else. In the United States, that typically means establishing independence and breaking family ties. Immigrant students often feel marginalized at school because of differences in language and culture – but when they try to act like the other kids, their families are likely to perceive them as disrespectful and disobedient. These students can get caught between the norms of two very different worlds, and attempting to integrate with American culture can create heightened tensions between teens and their parents. To compound the situation, immigrant teens are often called on to advocate and interpret for their families, something that native English speakers seldom have to do. As discussed in Chapter 3, this can lead to conflicts and feelings of inadequacy on both sides, as well as increased school absenteeism.

As possible interventions are considered, other realities about adolescent learners must be taken into account as their interests outside the classroom typically take precedence over school-related concerns. Identity, engagement and motivation are important factors to take into account for all students of this age.

New arrivals – age 16 and older – may not realize the need for a high school education, thinking that they need to learn only enough English to enter the workforce; they may not understand that a college education has become almost imperative to achieving economic success and stability in this country. These teens may also be unaware of attendance laws and/or the variety of options that are available to help them succeed in school and beyond.

Research has shown that secondary schools that take the following proactive steps can help increase the academic achievement of the language-minority students that attend them:[10]

- Value students' languages and cultures.
- Communicate high academic expectations to language-minority students.
- Encourage parents of language-minority students to become involved in their children's education.
- School leaders make the education of language-minority students a priority.
- School staff members share a strong commitment to empower language-minority students through education.

Additionally, school leadership is critical. Lucas[10] proposes the following list of priorities for principals who wish to better serve immigrant students:

- Encourage and support teachers and others to learn about students and their communities.
- Cultivate caring, engaged relationships with students and their families.
- Provide information about the educational system and the larger U.S. society.
- Build collaborative relationships with other agencies and institutions that serve the students and their communities.
- Support professional development to build knowledge, skills and appropriate dispositions for teaching ELLs.
- Facilitate and participate in collaboration to bring about educational change.

[10] Lucas, T. (1997). *Into, Through and Beyond Secondary School: Critical Transitions for Immigrant Youth*. Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

A report to the National Conference of State Legislatures[11] also suggests that the following steps be taken to help immigrant students overcome low levels of schooling, low literacy, and cultural and communication barriers:

- Provide school-based community centers to support integration of immigrant families through ESL courses, parent workshops, computer training, translations and referrals.
- Provide newcomer programs that offer intensive language development, and academic and cultural orientation.
- Bring together educators and medical personnel with religious and cultural leaders in the community to plan programs for immigrant families.
- Establish a five-year high school plan for immigrant students arriving too late to complete requirements in four years, or who require additional English language training.
- Provide specialists to assist teachers – for example in literacy, special education and ESL courses.
- Create team teaching between general and special educators, and ESL teachers.
- Provide alternative certification programs for immigrants who worked as teachers in their countries of origin.

In part, such measures are intended to compensate for the shortage of certified bilingual and ESL teachers, as well as the scarce availability of resources for parents.

WHAT STRATEGIES WILL PROVE MOST EFFECTIVE?

Recommendations fall into two areas: the regular school setting and the development of unique alternatives to meet the needs of immigrants. In both cases, students must learn the English language and subject area content, thereby requiring ESL and content area instruction that is comprehensible and includes opportunities for practice.

The regular school setting

The following suggestions for instruction also apply to secondary schools, with the difference that – given their increased maturity, cognition and experience – middle and high school students are in a better position to use what they know in their first language to assist them in learning both the English language and their content area subjects:

- Encourage and allow students to use their first language to learn more about the topics of instruction, either in or out of school.
- Make available picture dictionaries, bilingual books and other resources – such as Internet sites – that allow students who are already literate to continue to build on what they know as they are learning English.
- Have students write about and share their stories of arrival and adjustment, thereby using their own experiences to understand the

[11] Morse, A. (2005). *A Look at Immigrant Youth: Prospects and Promising Practices*. Denver, CO: National Conference of State Legislatures.

larger issues covered in many of their classes. For example, most social studies units on immigration pose such questions as *What motivates people to pull up roots and undertake often dangerous journeys to new places? How do they choose where to go? How does their leaving affect the places from which they come? How does the presence of immigrants shape the society into which they integrate?* Engaging students and their families in these types of discussions offers them the opportunity to participate and contribute in conversation and learning. However, not all immigrants are comfortable sharing their stories and they should not be forced to do so.

- Make extra efforts to get immigrant students involved in extracurricular activities; assigning peer mentors can be helpful in this regard.
- Involve newcomer students in the development of newcomer guides and/or welcome videos that also explain to other students the kinds of issues that immigrants face and how to help ensure success for immigrant students in U.S. schools.
- Inform and encourage students who are considering dropping out or not attending high school to benefit from alternative paths to a high school diploma (e.g., GED and Adult Basic Education) to help prepare them for a successful work life.

Alternative programming

Newcomer programs are increasingly being introduced in school districts as an innovative approach to meeting the unique language and academic needs of recent immigrant students – these programs typically offer a combination of opportunities to complement students' academic background. The three critical components of newcomer programming are:

- Intake and assessment to accurately identify students' prior level of schooling, literacy and academic development to make appropriate program placements.
- ESL and content area instruction in English, as well as in the students' first language – as necessary and feasible.
- Orientation to U.S. schools and culture, including a community outreach component (e.g., health care, mental health services, career counseling or tutoring).

These program building blocks can be organized in a variety of ways, and programs range from a specialized course or strand within a school to a completely separate school that offers programming of up to five years.

Most students attend these programs for one or two years, for part or all of the school day. Indeed, an advantage of newcomer programs is the flexibility they provide in addressing students needs. For example, for students who have interrupted schooling or little prior literacy instruction, it may be more effective to teach them to read at an academic level in their first language before scheduling them into subject area classes taught in English in a comprehensive high school.

Finally, college-bound immigrant students may also have a need to learn English and become familiar with – and acclimated to – U.S. schools. For these students, newcomer programming can help them to become aware of the range of higher education options – from technical schools and community colleges to comprehensive universities – and provide information about financial aid and potential scholarship opportunities, as well as address any other potential roadblocks to their continued studies.

RESOURCES

Colorado Gear Up Program
www.coloradogearup.org

This federally-funded program is designed to engage, enable and support low income and academically disadvantaged students toward college access and success. Included are print materials (many in Spanish) that can be downloaded for parents of middle and high school-age students, such as grade-by-grade checklists and worksheets.

Paths to Scholarships: A Guide for Students to Successfully Apply for Scholarships
www.needcollegemoney.com

This website, developed by June McBride, educator and author of *Paths to Scholarships,* offers step-by-step guidance for locating and applying for scholarships.

Post Secondary Access for Middle Grade Students (PALMS) Project
www.palmsproject.net

The PALMS Project seeks to improve the life chances of Latino youth by opening doors to postsecondary education. Of particular interest on this website is the *Toolkit for School Leaders: Tools for Latino Family Outreach.*

SOAR Curriculum
www.childrenandyouth.org

This resource promotes development and leadership programs for youth ages 14 to 18, including a free Multicultural Youth Leadership curriculum module.

NOTE: *The United States is not the only country faced with issues of immigrant integration. A Canadian resource, New Moves: An Orientation Video for Newcomer Students, features 14 students talking about their adjustment to school in Canada and what helped them to become successful. The students reflect on the differences in behavior expectations, teaching methods and in communicating with teachers and other students. Their voices are complemented by the comments of school administrators and dynamic images of life in Canadian schools. www.newmoves.ca*

PUBLICATIONS

Genesee, F. (Ed.) (1999). *Program Alternatives for Linguistically Diverse Students.* Education Practice Report #1. Center for Research on Education, Diversity & Excellence (CREDE), University of California, Santa Cruz.

This source provides a concise overview of program models, including newcomer program descriptions, components, common features and necessary resources and local conditions.

Short, D. (1999). *New Ways in Teaching English at the Secondary Level.* TESOL Series II Innovative Classroom Techniques.

As its introduction states, this book "offers an international collection of best practices that address the particular interests and demands of working at the secondary level. Activities are classroom tested and student approved." As well, the proposed activities focus on both the integration of language skills and content area learning.

Short, D. and Fitzsimmons, S. (2007). *Double the Work: Challenges and Solutions to Acquiring Language and Academic Literacy for Adolescent English Language Learners – A Report to Carnegie Corporation of New York.* Washington, DC: Alliance for Excellent Education.

This report focuses on adolescent literacy development by identifying major challenges,

potential solutions and extensive descriptions of successful literacy programs around the country.

Short, D. and Boyson, B. (2004). *Creating Access: Language and Academic Programs for Secondary School Newcomers.*

This book is designed to help create newcomer programs and enhance existing programs. The authors identify important implementation features and offer a checklist for developing new programs, practical advice for strengthening existing programs and in-depth case studies of three successful, long-term newcomer programs.

Walqui, A. (2000). *Access and Engagement: Program Design and Instructional Approaches for Immigrant Students in Secondary School.* Topics in Immigration Education Series. Center for Applied Linguistics and Delta Systems Co. Inc.

www.eric.ed.gov/ericdocs/data/ericdocs2sql/content_storage_01/0000019b/80/16/14/70.pdf

Challenges faced by immigrant students in secondary schools are often a result of the school structure. Problems include fragmented schools and instructional approaches, complex course systems, demanding graduation and college entrance requirements, and placement and tracking methods. To provide school staff with insight and solutions for these challenges, this source provides in-depth profiles of six immigrant high school students who come from diverse backgrounds. The author describes four current programs that are developing responsive approaches for the students, and identifies 10 characteristics of schools and programs that foster effective teaching and learning for immigrant youth.

Chapter 8: School-based Adult ESL and Family Literacy

WHY ARE ADULT ESL AND FAMILY LITERACY IMPORTANT ASPECTS OF IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION?

Learning English is a top priority for most immigrants. However, for many adults there are considerable obstacles to achieving this goal, including lack of time for – or access to – classes in a convenient, reachable location.

Adult education opportunities are critical to immigrant integration and the more they are supported by the public schools, the more successful these efforts will be. Yet few people outside of the field realize the diversity of programs offered and the variety of models available for adult English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. A better understanding of the opportunities for adult immigrants – and how such opportunities are being developed in Colorado – will help all educators see how these programs can benefit their own schools and students. For example, Adult ESL teachers are often the first or only resource for parents regarding public schools, and are a key to encouraging more parent participation in their children's education.

The most comprehensive approach to immigrant integration is to link services from early childhood to adults. Communication among Early Childhood, K-12 and Adult ESL educators enhances everyone's understanding of the system, and increases the likelihood of connecting newcomers to the support and services they need. School counselors and administrators especially benefit from increased knowledge of Adult ESL and other programs to better direct immigrant students and their families toward critical alternatives outside of the K-12 system.

"Non-traditional" students, such as immigrants ages 17 to 20, may be unable to attend high school programs because they are helping to support their families. They often leave the school system unaware of other avenues available to them for furthering their education. Unfortunately, even when school personnel are aware of these alternatives, they may resist offering them because they are not familiar with – or are misinformed about – the programs.

By starting or hosting an adult education program, educators can promote a broader understanding and availability of the variety of models for Adult ESL. Such increased awareness likely leads to more immigrant students under the age of 21 accessing beneficial resources. As well, this process enables educators to become more informed about the issues of funding and developing adult education programs, and to better evaluate existing adult education programs and whether they are a good fit for a particular school.

A Comprehensive Approach

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WHAT IS THE LAW?

For ESL programs funded through the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), students must be age 17 or older to participate.[12]

Individuals who come to the United States on an F1 visa (i.e., student visa) are required to participate in programs approved by the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).[13] AEFLA-funded programs are not included among USCIS-approved programs, and students here on an F1 visa are not eligible for AEFLA-funded adult education services.[14]

WHAT DOES RESEARCH TELL US ABOUT "BEST PRACTICE"?

Programs for adults fall into several general categories that sometimes overlap and usually complement each other. Some programs focus only on "teaching English," including intensive English classes designed for college preparation, or introductory conversation and grammar courses that provide a basic foundation for newcomers. There are also onsite workplace ESL classes tailored specifically to the needs of a particular business or field of work.

Additionally, Adult Basic Education (ABE) programs provide subject area instruction to adults who have not yet completed secondary schooling. These programs usually include courses designed to help learners prepare for a high school equivalency diploma (GED), and are offered in both English and Spanish. Family Literacy programs (see Chapter 3) combine different aspects of both kinds of programs, including components of ESL and adult education, parenting skills, and time for parents and children to interact. Family literacy programs that incorporate Adult ESL with elements of parent involvement are particularly strong models to adopt in schools, having demonstrated a positive difference in student achievement.

Adult ESL classes can also be extended to the larger community – for example, a middle school that offered English classes to members of the community redefined itself as an integral neighborhood center.

WHAT CAN EDUCATORS DO TO HELP AND ENCOURAGE PARENTS TO ACCESS ADULT ESL SERVICES?

- Know what Adult ESL programs are available locally. ESL programming is offered in a variety of venues, including churches, public libraries, community colleges and private language schools. To locate nearby classes, consult CDE's *Adult Education and Family Literacy Program Directory* at www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/aefldirectory.htm.
- Educate counselors and administrators about alternative programming for students ages 17 to 21. Find out what ESL classes are offered that target this population and make this information available to students who may not be able to attend a traditional high school program.
- Make information about programs for adults available in the school. For example, invite program representatives to share information at parent-teacher nights or open houses; post program information in the school office or hallways; or organize district- or school-wide resource nights that focus on immigrant needs.

[12] Colorado Department of Education. (2007). www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/adultedq&a.htm

[13] U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. (2007). www.f1studentvisa.com/maintaining.html

[14] Colorado Department of Education. (2007). www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/adultedq&a.htm

- Host already established programs at the school to facilitate immigrant parents' participation in Adult ESL classes. For example, in some communities the local library offers "Talk English" conversation classes in the public schools – the schools provide the space and the local library district provides the volunteers, training and screening.

WHAT ARE KEY CONSIDERATIONS IN DESIGNING EFFECTIVE INSTRUCTION FOR ADULTS?

Learner goals

Adults are goal-oriented and motivated by learning that moves them toward achieving their goals. As such, class or program goals and objectives must be well-defined and reflect learner needs and motivations.[15] Some examples of common goals are to learn basic English and strategies to become functional community members; to acquire communication skills; to become literate in English; to prepare for other educational opportunities; and to learn to negotiate "the system."[16]

Curriculums

Adult curriculums must also reflect the general needs of the population that is being served. The program focus may range from a life skills-based curriculum to a family literacy curriculum, or an emphasis on grammar or the workplace, depending on the needs of the learner community.

Relevancy

Adult learners want their learning to be relevant to their lives and learning goals. Therefore, to successfully acquire English language skills, activities must be based on meaningful, communicative interactions that are linked to students' real-life situations.

Affective filters

More than children, adults have fears, anxieties or preconceived notions about education and being a learner that may impede their ability to acquire a second language. These affective filters can be minimized through a positive and inviting classroom environment – from making the meeting space appropriate for adults to employing such strategies as cooperative learning groups to foster a sense of community responsibility for learning.[17]

[15] Knowles, M.S. (1973). *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species.* Houston, TX: Gulf.

[16] Condelli, L. (1996). *Effective Instruction for Adult ESL Literacy Students: Findings from the What Works Study.* American Institutes for Research. www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/bibliographies/literacy.html

[17] Cunningham Florez, M. and Burt, M. (2001). *Beginning to Work with Adult English Language Learners: Some Considerations.* National Center for ESL Literacy Education. www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/beginqa.html

Language acquisition

Adults acquire a second language in similar ways to children, though they are better able to make use of their knowledge about language itself to learn a new code. They make mistakes based on their preconceived idea of patterns and rules; they may apply these patterns and rules from their first language; or they may attempt to deduce them from the second language.[18] Such mistakes are to be handled with great sensitivity.

Role of native language

The use or non-use of the native language is a common debate in the field of Adult ESL.[19] Some studies demonstrate that adult learners benefit from judicious clarification in their native language and the ability to make sense of the instruction with their peers. How much native language is used will vary based on the class makeup – when the learners are from a diversity of language backgrounds, English will become the common language of communication and classroom activity; when students are from just one language background, it is often more challenging to motivate everyone to communicate with each other in English.

Professional development

An Adult ESL standard is that licensed K-12 teachers, certified ESL instructors and ESL volunteers all require continuous professional development. New research about instruction for adult learners is revealing innovative ways to approach Adult ESL and the design of classroom learning. In Colorado, professional associations – like Colorado Affiliate of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (CoTESOL) and Colorado Adult Education Professional Association (CAEPA) – offer opportunities for Adult ESL teachers to explore theory, learn new teaching approaches and see the newest teaching materials. Additionally, the Colorado Literacy Instruction Authorization (LIA) provides a state-issued credential for adult educators. www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/liaindex.htm

SUGGESTIONS FOR INSTRUCTIONAL PRACTICE IN ADULT ESL

Learning strategies

Adults want to learn in the easiest and most efficient way, but have not always learned skills to help them cope with the stresses of acquiring a second language. Teachers can model learning strategies and techniques that help students become efficient in their studying. For example, when learning vocabulary many students simply write down the word; a teacher may help them create personal dictionaries that not only record the word, but also include a definition or translation, a meaningful context and other related vocabulary.

Teaching strategies

Strategies must be as varied as the students in the class – similar to children and youth, adults benefit from strategies that address multiple intelligences and distinct learning styles. As well, activities should vary to incorporate kinesthetic, audio and visual techniques. Each class should also incorporate teaching reading, writing, listening and speaking skills in English.[20]

[18] Cunningham Florez, M. and Burt, M. (2001). *Beginning to Work with Adult English Language Learners: Some Considerations.* National Center for ESL Literacy Education. www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/beginqa.html

[19] Condelli, L. (1996). *Effective Instruction for Adult ESL Literacy Students: Findings from the What Works Study.* American Institutes for Research. www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/bibliographies/literacy.html

[20] Holt, G. M. (1995). *Teaching Low-Level Adult ESL Learners.* California Department of Education. www.cal.org/caela/esl_resources/digests/holt.html

Learner experience

Adult ESL learners come to class with a diversity of experiences, both in their lives and in education. The Adult ESL classroom environment should incorporate their life experiences into the learning structure, using each individual's talents and experiences to enhance the classroom atmosphere. Indeed, a key role of the ESL teacher is to foster a sense of trust and value for differences so that the classroom is a respectful place where individual culture, beliefs and experiences are acknowledged and accepted.[21]

FAMILY LITERACY RESOURCES

Colorado Family Literacy Training Center
www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/evenstartpd.htm

The Center's mission is to provide training and technical assistance to professionals who are interested in the field of family literacy. Training includes all components of family literacy, technical assistance and site-specific needs with follow-up support, assistance in establishing a new family literacy program or adding services to an existing program, and information on establishing partnerships and obtaining funding to support programming.

Family Literacy Program Model, Colorado Family Literacy Consortium and the Center for At-Risk Education
www.cde.state.co.us/cdeadult/download/pdf/famlitprogmodel0805.pdf

This article provides a general overview of family literacy programming in Colorado and is an effective tool for gaining a better understanding of this type of ESL program.

National Center for Family Literacy
www.famlit.org

This site explains the concept and mission of the family literacy program model, maintains a calendar of training events, and provides a variety of free resources for teachers and volunteer tutors of ELLs.

OTHER RESOURCES

Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFL)
www.cde.state.co.us/index_adult.htm

A guide for family literacy programs in Colorado.

EDU 134: Teaching English as a Second Language (ESL) to Adult Learners

This course is offered through several Colorado community colleges. Students are introduced to the development and implementation of a program to teach English to adults whose first language is not English. Topics range from assessment and placement to language acquisition theories. Students also cover a wide variety of methodologies, both group and individualized, that are aimed at teaching the non-English speaker the written and verbal skills necessary to successfully function in the United States.

[21] Knowles, M.S. (1973). *The Adult Learner: A Neglected Species*. Houston, TX: Gulf.

ESOL Starter Kit, Virginia Adult Learning Resource Center
www.aelweb.vcu.edu/publications/eslkit/eslkit_2002.pdf

This kit is designed to guide teachers and administrators in developing ESOL classes and programs. The chapters presented address teaching adults, establishing program procedures, accessing resources, lesson planning, classroom management, curriculum development and technology.

Parrish, B. (2004). *Teaching Adult ESL: A Practical Introduction.* McGraw-Hill ESL/ELT.

This teacher education textbook focuses exclusively on Adult ESL, including a variety of teaching approaches and program options. Chapters cover instructional techniques for all language skills – listening, speaking, reading and writing – as well as suggestions for writing lesson plans and managing ESL classes. Assessment practices, standards and accountability for AEFLA-funded programs are also described.

Practitioner Toolkit: Working with Adult English Language Learners
www.famlit.org/site/apps/nl/content2.asp?c=gtjwjdmqise&b=2042215&ct=2880829

Developed by the National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL), this free teacher resource provides support for adult education and family literacy instructors who are new to serving adult ELLs and their families. The toolkit contains background information about the ESL population in the United States, describes models of Adult ESL programs and provides extensive descriptions of classroom activities for novice ESL teachers. Also included is an overview of parent education in family literacy programs.

COLORADO PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

The following organizations provide professional development through conferences and online resources:

Center for Adult English Language Acquisition (CAELA)
www.cal.org/caela

As the national repository for all Adult ESL information, this site contains research articles, reports, briefs and digests pertinent to all facets of Adult ESL instruction and program administration.

Colorado Adult Education Professional Association (CAEPA)
www.caepa.org

This adult education community promotes best practices in life-long learning.

Colorado Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (CoTESOL)
www.colorado.edu/iec/cotesol

This website provides current information about the Colorado TESOL affiliate.

National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy (NCSALL)
www.ncsall.net

This site offers links to research and professional development opportunities for educators of Adult ESL and Adult ABE/GED.

Verizon Literacy Network
http://literacynetwork.verizon.org/english-language-instruction.111.0.html

The Verizon Literacy Network offers online training tutorials for ESL volunteers, teachers and administrators.

Conclusion

While schools' primary role is to educate all children in the community, they also serve as a key platform for promoting immigrant integration for the entire family. Indeed, when immigrant parents, and all parents, effectively engage with schools and advocate for their families, it sets the stage for other types of community engagement – including speaking up at school board meetings, participating in community forums, and the like.

At the same time, it's important to acknowledge that schools are already under tremendous pressure to maximize students' academic achievement. Increasingly rigorous classroom standards require administrators and school staff to constantly prioritize and reprioritize student needs and how to address them. In the short term, immigrant integration may not rise to the top of the list; however, in the long term, time invested in helping families to feel a sense of belonging to their school communities, learn new expectations and contribute their unique voices correlates to student success.

Educational achievement is a cornerstone for immigrant integration, representing the opportunity for every child to reach his or her own potential, no matter their race, country of origin or economic background. Indeed, only when immigrant integration is viewed as a two-way street, with adaptation by both newcomers and the receiving community, does a community benefit from the opportunities presented by the diversity of its inhabitants.

Immigrant Integration Through Educational Achievement

Educational achievement is a cornerstone for immigrant integration, representing the opportunity for every child to reach his or her own potential, no matter their race, country of origin, or economic background.

The Colorado Department of Education (CDE) is the administrative arm of the Colorado State Board of Education. CDE serves Colorado's 178 local school districts, providing leadership, consultation and administrative services on a statewide and regional basis. For more information, visit www.cde.state.co.us.

The Colorado Trust is a grantmaking foundation dedicated to advancing the health and well-being of the people of Colorado. To learn more about the foundation and its grantmaking, visit www.coloradotrust.org.

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