

## GOOD PRACTICES FOR PARENTS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

1. Knowing two languages is a gift you can give your child. Many children lose the ability to speak and read in their native language. With encouragement from you, your child can become fluent in not just one language but two. Continue speaking your native language with your child. Discuss events around the home in both your native language and in English. This helps to make the home an enriched language environment. Research shows that children that read and write in their first language perform much better in school than children who are not literate in their first language. Encourage your child to become bilingual.
2. Encourage reading in the home/native language and/or in English.
3. Share oral histories and traditional folk tales from your native country. Participate in cultural activities and celebrate various holidays to show that all cultures have value.
5. Discuss school activities with your child. Provide a time and place where homework can be done.
6. Take time to listen and ask questions when your child is expressing ideas or telling stories.
7. Take this opportunity to learn English along with your child. Ask to see your child's books, assignments, and tests. Help your child with schoolwork and become involved at school.
8. Remember that you are your child's first teacher. Encourage your child to do well in school.

## COMMON QUESTIONS

### *Why should my child participate in this program?*

Acquiring social and academic (school) language is a complex process. On the surface your child may appear fluent in English yet struggles to read and write. ELLs are constantly facing the challenge of learning an additional language as well as mastering grade level content standards. As your child progress through school the language content and skills continue to get more difficult. Although your child may gain proficiency in spoken communication in a few years, attaining full academic proficiency in English often takes 5 to 10 years. The ESL Program provides the bridge that your child needs for academic success.

### *How can I help my child?*

Parents are encouraged to be partners in the education of their children. You can help by:

- Visiting the classroom and the ESL teacher.
- Taking part in school activities.
- Working together on school assignments.

### *How long does it take to learn English?*

Students learn at different rates. They may receive instruction from one to eight years.

### *Should I stop speaking my native language at home and speak English only?*

No. Children are encouraged to continue to develop their first language as they acquire English.

# DoDEA

## English as a Second Language Program

## Guide for Parents



## Department of Defense Education Activities

For more information on DoDEA programs, visit [www.dodea.edu](http://www.dodea.edu)

## WHAT IS ESL?

Students entering our schools represent many nationalities and cultures, and many of these students arrive with little or no English language skills. Some have developed a high level of oral skills, but are performing below grade level due to their limited ability to read and write in English. A supplemental educational program is required to help these students become successful in the regular classroom. DoDEA provides ESL, a language acquisition program designed to teach English language learners (ELLs) social and academic language skills needed to succeed in the grade-level classroom as well as the cultural aspects of the English language necessary to succeed in an academic environment. ESL teachers work with classroom teachers to help children develop more sophisticated English language skills, cultural awareness and learning strategies that they will need in order to work successfully within the DoDEA content curriculum.

## WHAT ARE THE GOALS OF THE ESL PROGRAM?

DoDEA's ESL Program is designed to teach English to students with limited English language skills. DoDEA's ESL Program overall goal is assisting your child to acquire a level of achievement in language and reading which will enable them to succeed in the regular educational program; and develop an understanding of and the appreciation for diverse cultures.

## HOW DOES THE PROGRAM WORK?

- 1 The student selection process
  - a Students are identified through the Home Language Questionnaire (HLQ), or by teacher or parent referral.
  - b Students are screened and assessed, if indicated. \*
  - c Based on assessments and a review of student records, the ESL student team (ESL teacher and classroom teacher) at each school makes recommendations for the student's program.
  - d Eligible students are enrolled in the ESL program. \*
- 2 The ESL instructional program
  - a Students are provided a sequenced curriculum to develop and refine listening comprehension, oral expression, reading, writing, and thinking skills.
  - b Students may receive ESL instruction within their regular classroom from the ESL teacher, on a pullout schedule outside the regular classroom, or directly from the classroom teacher who consults with the ESL teacher on a regular basis.
  - c Students are evaluated annually and these results, as well as information collected from the classroom teacher and other educators, are used to determine the next steps in the student's program.

- 3 Program completion \*
  - a Student demonstrates the ability to meet grade level performance standards in all content areas, and
  - b Student is recommended by the classroom teacher and ESL teacher

\*Parent approval required

## WHO PARTICIPATES?

All students identified as having limited or no English language proficiency are eligible to enroll in the ESL program at their school. Language proficiency skills may range from no English skills to advanced English skills. Parents of English language learners have the right to waive ESL assessment or program services.

## RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

### Colorin Colorado

<http://www.colorincolorado.org>

A bilingual site for families of ELLs.

### ESL Kid Stuff

<http://www.eslkidstuff.com/>

ESL children's resources for English teachers and parents.

### Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL)

[www.tesol.org/](http://www.tesol.org/)

Professional organization for ESL teachers.