

Holding An Effective ESL Parent Meeting

Overall objective: to hold an effective ESL parent meeting in order to help participants understand school culture & procedures; improving communication between ESL teachers, mainstream teachers, and parents

- Issues constantly come up between the school and the ESL parents
- Parents & teachers feel great frustration when they can't communicate
- Compassion fatigue - hard to see the parents & their individual concerns, as unique and specific to each one
- It is difficult to empathize when we do not share the same cultural experiences
- Parents have lost their frame of reference, it is all new & unknown
- Parents & teachers have different ways of achieving the same goal
- Reaching out to our ESL parents makes everyone's job easier
- An ESL parent meeting helps improve communication

How to Hold an ESL Parent Meeting

- Letters to teachers asking for concerns about ESL students
- Letters to ESL parents whose children are or were in the program
- Reminders to parents of date, time and place where meeting will be
- Handouts in English & translations of the gist of meeting
- Invite the principal, nurse, PTO representative, police/ community liaison

Topics to cover at the meeting

- Your school's ESL program & its benefits
- Criteria for placing & exiting students
- Clarification of school's procedures & culture – hidden curriculum
- Brief explanation of SLA – BICS & CALP
- State testing – school's & parents' expectations
- Report cards, study habits, parent/teacher conferences

After presentation:

- Divide parents into groups according to language
- Hand out pens & paper for them to write concerns & questions
- Use a more fluent parent to act as a translator/group leader
- Answer questions and keep papers for feedback to share with teachers