

FAMILY PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL TUTORING (WITH A FOCUS IN ELL/MLL FAMILIES)



Maria Alvarez | Masters in Teaching | Washington State University, College of Education | Elementary Education

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

TPEP Alignment:

Criterion 7: Communicating and collaborating with families and the school community.

Topic Definition:

This topic will focus on the powerful roles that families play in their children's education, particularly for students learning the English language. Schools working closely with families and inviting them to participate in tutoring and learning support help build a stronger path for students to grow and succeed throughout their academic careers. Even simple moments of connection between families and schools can boost students' confidence and help them learn better.

This project looks at how inclusive tutoring programs and improved home-school relationships can help schools support multilingual students. Its foundation lies in constructivist and culturally sensitive education, emphasizing the development of open communication and trust with families.

As a future educator and a former English Language Learner, I have witnessed firsthand how crucial it is for families to feel accepted and included. Although many ELL/MLL families struggle with issues like language barriers or hectic schedules, students perform better when schools try to engage with families.

More than just academic assistance, tutoring can foster enduring bonds between families and schools. Every child and family feels seen, supported, and empowered in classrooms where teachers value the cultures, languages, and strengths of families.



<https://www.edutopia.org/article/6-tips-engaging-families-english-language-learners/>

INQUIRY QUESTIONS:

- What does it look like for ELL/MLL families to get involved in school tutoring?
- What tactics can educators and schools employ to encourage more families to tutor their children?
- How can educators foster greater inclusivity to make families feel seen and supported?



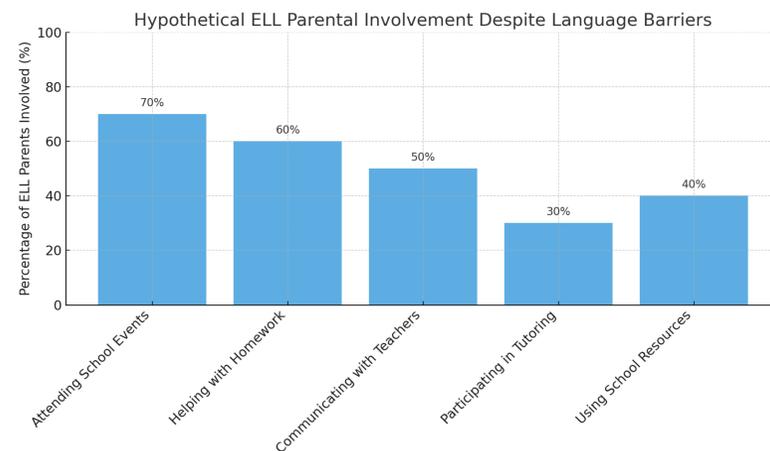
<https://www.latinoliteracy.com/innovative-back-school-strategies-reach-ell-parents/>

RATIONALE

I understand how difficult it can be for families to support their children's education when they encounter linguistic and cultural obstacles because I was once an English language learner. Although they didn't always feel secure or included, my own family wanted to help. I was motivated by that experience to investigate how schools can better engage ELL/MLL families in learning support and tutoring.

Helping with homework every night isn't the only way to involve the family. It can be as easy as asking questions, sharing stories, or demonstrating an interest in their child's education. Students feel more supported at home and in the classroom when schools acknowledge and celebrate the various ways families contribute.

This project aims to teach me how teachers can develop initiatives that give students and their families a strong sense of belonging, in addition to improving academic performance. My goal is to become a teacher who makes room for every family to feel heard, seen, and empowered. I think it makes a huge difference when students feel that families are welcome.



THEORY

Sociocultural Theory (Vygotsky, 1978): Highlights how social interactions and cultural context influence learning. When educators acknowledge and incorporate the cultural knowledge, language, and experiences of families, they become effective resources that enhance children's education.

Ecological Systems Theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979): emphasizes how children grow up in the context of multiple environmental influences. By bolstering support across settings, strong home-school partnerships—a component of the "mesosystem"—have a positive effect on student outcomes.

RESEARCH

- When schools grant access and trust, families engage in tutoring through in-person or virtual sessions, homework assistance, or academic planning.
- Families can assist with reading, math, and at-home learning activities with the support of language-accessible resources and training.
- When schools respect families' cultural strengths and communicate regularly, involvement rises (Brown, 2022; Vera et al., 2012).
- Provide translated instructions and a variety of flexible tutoring options, such as online or take-home kits.
- Regardless of English proficiency, conduct workshops on how to promote learning (Kessler, 2010).
- Establish trust through community gatherings, phone calls, and house calls (Pineiro, 2022).
- Honor family traditions, storytelling, and reading in any language as legitimate ways to support academic success (Vera et al., 2012).
- Employ culturally sensitive methods by incorporating family stories, home languages, and a variety of resources (Alias et al., 2024).
- Establish secure areas where families can freely express their insights and experiences.
- Provide communication in the languages that families prefer and interpretation services.
- Pay attention to what families have to say and modify school outreach to suit their requirements and capabilities (Panferov, 2010).

KEY FACTS

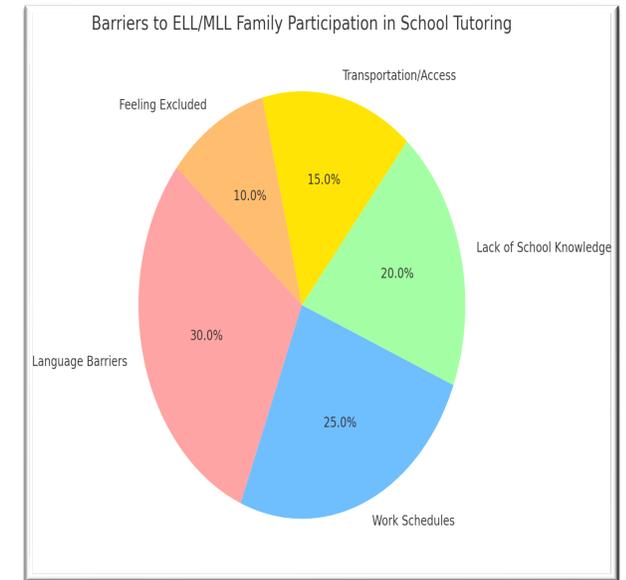
- Accessibility is increased through virtual tutoring and flexible scheduling (Brown, 2022).
- Materials that are bilingual and culturally appropriate help families flourish.
- Consistent involvement is increased by trust and open communication.
- It is imperative that teachers receive inclusive practice training.

ACTION PLAN

- Make visual and video-rich bilingual tutoring materials.
- Organize "Family Literacy Nights" with the assistance of interpreters.
- Establish early-year relationships by making house calls or phone calls.
- Incorporate cultural tales and customs into your lessons.



My Resources: Click here to view.



When attempting to participate in school tutoring, many ELL/MLL families encounter difficulties. Language is the largest obstacle; families might not comprehend school communications or know how to assist with homework. Parents find it difficult to attend sessions due to work schedules. Some families may feel uncertain or excluded because they are unaware of how the educational system operates. Others have trouble getting around or just don't feel accepted at the school. These obstacles highlight the significance of schools providing inclusive, adaptable, and language-friendly assistance.

WHY IT MATTERS?

- Helps students feel valued, included, and understood.
- Boosts engagement, confidence, and academic success.
- Recognizes and builds on students' language and cultural strengths.
- Brings diverse perspectives into the classroom.
- Promotes empathy and deeper understanding for everyone.



<https://www.istockphoto.com/illustrations/multilingual-students>