



Bridging Refugee Youth & Children's Services

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Educational Handbook for Refugee Parents

International Rescue Committee

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New York, NY

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Educational Handbook for Refugee Parents

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Produced by the International Rescue Committee © 2006



Acknowledgements

Portions of the material in this manual were taken from the Boise Independent School District's Parent Handbook written by Dr. Ann Farris and Molly Jo de Fuentealba, M.Ed.

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Parents' Educational Rights and Responsibilities

I. Parents' Educational Rights and Responsibilities

Parents have a RIGHT to:



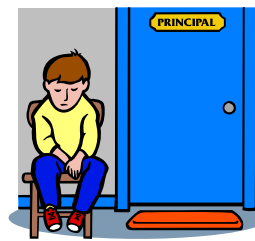
Know how your child is doing in school



Know what school programs and activities can help your child



Meet with teachers about your child's school work



Know if your child gets in trouble in school and how the school responds



Know what your child learns in school



Go to school meetings



Ask the school for help if your child has a hard time seeing, hearing or learning school lessons



Have help talking with your child's teachers



Know what school papers mean before you sign them



Apply for fee waivers and the free lunch program if you do not have a lot of money

Parents' Educational Rights and Responsibilities

Parents are RESPONSIBLE for:

Making sure your child goes to school every day, unless they are sick.



When your child is sick, don't send them to school. Keep them at home

When your child is sick, you need to call the school. Tell the school secretary that your child will not be there.

Making sure your child does homework everyday.



Making sure that your child is:

Clean



Fed



Wears clean clothes



Sleeps well



Parents' Educational Rights and Responsibilities

Making sure your child understands how to act in school and follows the rules made by the teacher.



Children stand in line and walk together in school



Children listen to the teacher and do what the teacher tells them



Children raise their hands to speak



Children do not steal from school



Children do not hit or fight



Children do not threaten other children



Children do not use bad words



Children work with others



Children are on time to class



Children finish their homework and bring it back to school

II. US School System



Every child has a right to go to school. No one can tell you or your children that they cannot go to public elementary, middle, junior high or high school.

1. *Where do children go to school?*

There are schools for children of different ages. Here are the types of schools:

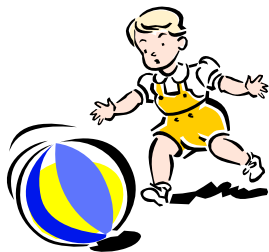
- Pre-school
- Elementary
- Middle school and junior high school
- High school
- College
- Vocational school

Schools can be public or private. Public schools are free. Private schools can cost a lot of money.

Children learn new things each year in school. Children take classes or subjects. (Subject is another word for class.) Young children take a small number of classes. Older children take more classes.

Children can have the same subjects each year, but every year the classes become more difficult. For example, young children learn simple math, like $5 + 0 = 5$. Older children learn more complicated skills, like algebra $5x + 10 = 5$.

2. *What do children learn in pre-school?*



Pre-school is for children 3 or 4 years old. At pre-school, children learn how to follow school rules. Children participate in activities that will help them to learn how to read, write, understand and speak English. Pre-school is not required and not every child can go to pre-school.

US School System

3. What do children learn in kindergarten?

Kindergarten is for children 4 or 5 years old. Kindergarten is 5 days a week. This school is for a full day or a half day. In kindergarten, teachers help children learn basic skills and good behavior. Good behavior is when children follow school rules. By the end of kindergarten, children should know their ABCs, numbers and colors.



4. What do children learn in elementary school?



Elementary school is for children who are 5, 6, 7, 8, or 9 years old. Children go to school five days a week. Children in elementary school may have homework. This is work that they must do at home. Elementary schools are free.

In **elementary school**, children learn English and math every day. Also, they learn how to read and write.

Your child will learn what numbers mean and how to use them each day.

Two to five times a week in elementary school, children learn:

Health. Health is how to keep your body well. It is about what to eat and how to feel better when you are sick.

Science. Science is about how things work.

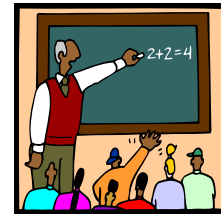
Social studies. Social studies is the study of history, geography, religion and people.

One to two times a week in elementary school, children go to:

Art. In art class, children learn how to make things. Art can help your child develop fine motor skills—which means that it can improve their writing.



Gym or PE (Physical Education). Gym is a time for children to play and exercise.



US School System

The library. The library is where children can look at books.



At the library, children can also work on computers.



Music. Children learn how to play instruments, sing and work together.



5. What do children learn in middle school and junior high school?



Middle school or **junior high school** is for children who are 10, 11, 12, 13 or 14 years old. Children go to school five days a week. Children have homework. Public middle and junior high schools are free.

In **middle** and **junior high school**, children learn:

- English - reading and writing
- Health
- Science
- Social studies
- Other languages like Spanish or French
- Music
- Math
- Computers
- Art
- Gym

If junior high school is hard for your child, ask the teacher for extra help. You can also talk to the guidance counselor. A guidance counselor is

US School System

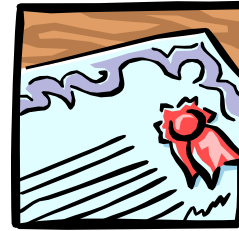
someone at school who can help your child be a better student. A guidance counselor can also help your child prepare for college or work.

6. What do children learn in high school?



High school is for kids who are 15, 16, 17, or 18 years old. In many states, kids have to go to school until they are 16. High school classes help kids find good jobs or go to college. Many high schools are free.

It is important that your child finish high school so that he/she can find a job that pays well. Also, your child needs a high school diploma to go to college. A diploma is a piece of paper that shows your child finished high school.



In high school, there are classes children need to take. These are called required classes. Students need to pass these classes to graduate high school. English and math are required classes.

In high school, children can also choose the classes they want to take. These are called elective classes.

In high school, classes can be basic or advanced. Basic classes are easy classes. Advanced classes are harder.

High school students can take the following classes:

Literature is the study of poems, essays, biographies and fiction



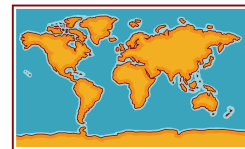
Science is the study of how things work



American history is the story of America

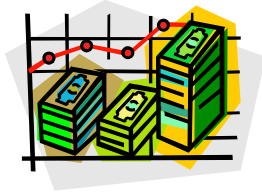


World history is the story of the world



US School System

Business is the study of companies, managing people and making money



Art is the study of painting, drawing and photography



Social Sciences is the study of people



Computers and information technology



Languages, like French



Applied Technology is how to make things work



Family and consumer science is how to pay bills and make sure your family has what it needs



In 10th and 11th grade (when your child is 16 or 17 years old), your child needs to plan what he/she will do when he/she finishes high school. Will your child go to college? Will your child work?

Some jobs require skills. Skills are things your child learns to do for work. Many jobs require a college education. This means that your child must finish high school and college. You and your child need to know what kind of college will teach your child the skills he/she needs.

US School System

A guidance counselor at school can help your child plan for college or work. You child can schedule a meeting with the guidance counselor. You can go to this meeting too.

7. What do children learn in college?

College is for people who finished high school and have a diploma. Students in college take hard classes. They learn skills that they will need in their jobs.



For example, if student wants to be a doctor, the student should study science.

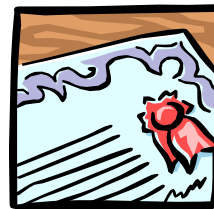
8. What if my child does not finish high school?

If your child does not finish high school, there are some classes your child can go to.

Evening classes let children and adults go to class after work.



GED classes are for people who do not finish high school. Classes are in the day and evening. The GED is like a high school diploma. A GED is important for getting a good job or going to college.



Your child can also take English classes. If your child does not graduate high school, knowing English can help your child find a job that pays well.

US School System

9. What if I do not understand what my child is learning?

You can request a meeting with your child's teacher. (See [Appendix 3](#) for help requesting a meeting.) At the meeting, talk with your child's teacher about your questions and concerns. Ask the teacher about your child's classes and lessons. Remember to request an interpreter if you need one.

10. Sometimes, I feel that school teaches my child things I do not agree with. What can I do?

Talk with your child's teacher about the lessons. Sometimes, children do not understand what they learn. Children can tell you the wrong things. The teacher can explain it so that you can correct your child.

Children also learn things from other children. Sometimes the things they learn from other children are not good. They can learn bad words and behaviors you do not like. They may show you disrespect.

Here are some things you can do:

Talk with your child about school. Learn about your child's classes and friends.

Schedule a meeting with the teacher to talk about your concerns. Concerns are things that worry you.

Explain to your child what you think about what they learn. Tell your child the words and behaviors you do not like.

EXAMPLE:

Son, the words you speak are bad words. I do not want you to use them. They show disrespect to me, your mom and your brothers. I expect that you will not use them.

Remind your child about the rules of the house. Explain how you want your child to act. Explain what will happen if your child does not obey you.



US School System

EXAMPLE:

Son, I do not want you to use those words. That is a rule.
If you use those words, you will not be able to play with your friends this weekend.

Meet your child's friends and their parents. Learn which children behave well and which children misbehave. You can decide if you want your child to play with these children.

Provide a safe place for your child to be with their friends. This place should have an adult that can watch them and correct bad behavior. You can ask the teacher if they know where kids can go and be safe after school.

11. How can schools help my child learn English?

If your child qualifies as limited English proficient (and needs English classes), your child will have an educational learning plan that outlines his/her English language goals, classroom and testing accommodations. This may also be called an Individual Educational Plan or IEP. This is a document that parents need to review and sign.

Children who are learning English can take ESL (English as a Second Language) classes. ESL classes teach students how to read, write and speak English. Some classes cover math and science. Children learn the English words about math and science.

12. What can schools do to help if my child needs extra help or has special needs?

There are classes for children who need extra help. Talk to the school if your child has trouble:

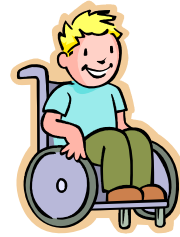


US School System

Seeing



Walking



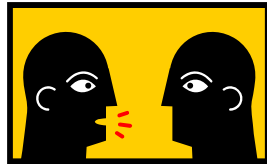
Hearing



Learning



Talking



Obeying the rules



Here are some things you can do if it is hard for your child to see, hear, talk, walk, learn or behave:

- Ask the teachers what they can do to help your child
- Work with the teachers to help your child
- Ask for an interpreter if you need one
- Keep all the papers your child's teacher gives you

13. What is an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)?

An Individualized Education Plan is a plan that a teacher makes with parents for a child who has special learning needs. The plan might highlight that a child has difficulty hearing or seeing, or does not speak English well. The plan will also describe things that the school and parents can do to provide extra support for the child.

14. If my child is very smart, are there special classes my child can take?

There are classes for children who are very smart. These classes have more difficult work. Colleges like students who take these classes. Talk with the teacher if you think your child needs to be in these classes.



School Calendar and School Days

III. School Calendar and School Days

1. When do children go to school?

School starts in August or September. Children go to school until May or June. The school day can be 5 or 7 hours long. School is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. School is not open on Saturday or Sunday.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	School	School	School	School	School	

2. When do children stay home from school?

Children do not go to school on Saturday or Sunday.

Many children do not go to school in the summer. This means that children may not go to school at the end of June, all of July or at the start of August.

There are special days in the school year when children do not go to school. These days are called holidays:

- 1st Monday in September, Labor Day **NO SCHOOL**
- 4th Thursday in November, Thanksgiving.... **NO SCHOOL**
- December 25, Christmas.... **NO SCHOOL**
- January 1, New Year's.... **NO SCHOOL**
- 3rd Monday of January, Martin Luther King Jr. Day.... **NO SCHOOL**
- 3rd Monday in February, President's Day.... **NO SCHOOL**
- Last Monday of May, Memorial Day.... **NO SCHOOL**



There may be other days your children do not go to school. The school will send you a calendar. The calendar will show you the days that children do not go to school. See the end of the chapter for information on your school's calendar.

Children may not have religious holidays off. If your child misses school for a religious holiday, you need to call the school secretary. Tell the secretary how many days your child will be absent and the name of the religious holiday. Your child will need to make up his/her school work.

School Calendar and School Days

Sometimes the school will close when the weather is very bad. This means that your children will not go to school, or if they are in school they will come home early. The school will make this decision. They will list school closing or late start on the TV and radio. There may also be a phone number you can call to hear if the school is closing.

3. How do children go to school?

Children who live close to the school can walk. Children who cannot walk to school can take the school bus. Only students take the school bus.



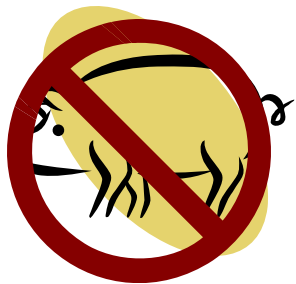
If your children take the bus, you need to know:

- The number of the bus ...
- Where your children get on and off the bus...
- The time your children get on the bus...
- The time your children get off the bus...

If your children walk to school, make sure they have the right clothes for the weather. For example, if it is very cold your children need boots and a coat.

4. What do children eat for lunch?

Children can bring lunch from home. They can also buy lunch at school. Children who eat lunch at school have choices for lunch.



If your child has dietary restrictions, or cannot eat something for religious reasons, your child can tell the school and they will provide a different lunch.

School Procedures

IV. School Procedures

Schools have ways of doing things. These are called procedures. There are procedures for telling the school about a child who will be late to school, for scheduling a meeting with the teacher or requesting an interpreter.

School procedures protect your child. When you call the school to let them know your child is sick, they know where your child is. Your child is safe at home with you. If they do not hear from you and your child is not in school, it could mean that the child is in trouble. It is very important to communicate with the school and follow school procedures.

The important people at school are:

- The teacher – who works with your child on lessons
- The secretary – who works at the school office, answers the phone, and can answer your questions
- The principal – who is in charge of the school

Each school year, you need to write down the name of your child's teacher, the secretary and the principal. You also need to know the phone number of the school.

Teacher's name: _____

Secretary's name: _____

Secretary's phone number: _____

It is also important that you fill out an emergency contact card each year.

1. What is an emergency contact card?



The emergency contact card is a card that has the name and phone number of person the school can call when your child is has an emergency.

School Procedures

This person has your permission to pick your child up from school. An emergency contact card helps keep children safe so that they do not leave school with a person you do not know.

For the emergency contact card, you need to give the school:

- Your telephone number
- The name of the person who speaks English and who you trust with your children. This can be a family member (not a child) or a friend.
- This person's phone number
- The name and number of your child's doctor
- A list of your child's special health needs

If the names or telephone numbers on this card change, you need to tell the school secretary the new names and phone numbers.

If you move, you need to give the school your new address and telephone number.

2. How can I request an interpreter?

You have the right to communicate with the school about your child's education. Schools should provide you with an interpreter who speaks your language or someone who can translate for you.

The school should **NOT** request that your child translates for you, or that you pay for an interpreter.

Each school has its own way of scheduling interpreters. Sometimes, teachers ask for the interpreter. Other times, you need to remind the school that you need an interpreter. See the end of this chapter information on your school's procedures for requesting an interpreter or ask the school to explain it to you.

You can ask for an interpreter for meetings with your child's teacher or other school personnel. You can ask for papers to be translated before they are sent home to you.

Please see the **Appendices 1 and 2** for ways you can communicate with the school about an interpreter.



School Procedures

3. When is my child too sick to go to school?

Sick children can make other children sick. Do not send your child to school if:

The child has a fever



The child threw-up at night



The child is coughing a lot



The child has rashes or sores



The child has lice



The child has a bad sore throat



There are other times when children should not go to school. Talk with your doctor or school teacher about these times.

4. What if my child is too sick to go to school?

It is important that you tell the school that your child will stay home because he/she is too sick to be in school. This helps keep your child safe. Your child's teacher may worry about your child if he/she is not in class and you did not tell them your child is home sick.



School Procedures

Call the school secretary. Tell her:

- The name of your child
- Your child's teacher
- When your child will return to school

See the [Appendix 4](#) for an example of how you can let the school know you have a sick child who will not be in school.

You must also write a note to give to the teacher telling them why your child was sick. The note is called an absence excuse. Your child can take it to the teacher when he/she goes back to school. See the [Appendix 5](#) for a sample letter that you can use.

Sick children need to finish the homework they missed.

5. What if my child needs to take medicine in school?



You will need to tell the school nurse or the school secretary if your child needs to take medicine in school. See the [Appendix 6](#) for an example of a conversation you may have with the school about your child's medical needs.

Also, you need to show the school a doctor's note for your child to take medicine in school.

The doctor's note should have:

- The child's name
- The teacher's name
- The name of the medicine
- How much medicine to give to the child
- When to give medicine to the child



Ask the doctor to write a note for your child. Ask him to tell you what the note says.

6. What if my child becomes sick in school?

The school will call the person listed on the emergency contact card. This person can call you or can pick the child up and bring the child home. You may need to take your child to the doctor.

School Procedures

7. What if my child is late for school?

Being late is also called “tardy.” Your family should try very hard to make sure your child is at school on time. The number of times your child is late will be listed on their report card. Your child can fail a class if he/she is late many times in a school year. Your child will have to take this class again.

You need to tell the school if your child is going to be late. Call the school secretary. Tell her:

- The name of your child
- The name of your child’s teacher
- The time your child will arrive at school
- Why your child is late



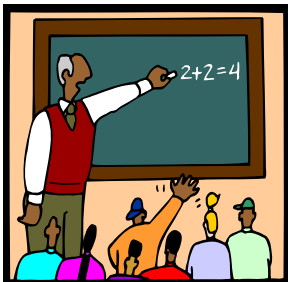
Or, you can write a note to the school. This note should say why the child was late.

See the **Appendices 7 and 8** for examples of how you can tell the school your child will be late.

8. What do I do if my child needs to leave school early for a doctor’s appointment?

You need to tell the school that your child has a doctor’s appointment and needs to leave school early. This is called early release. You can call the school secretary or write a note. See the **Appendix 9** for a sample letter you can use to tell the school that your child needs to leave early for a doctor’s appointment.

9. Can I go to my child’s school?



Yes, you can go to your child’s school. If you go during the school day, you need to get a pass. Go to the office and ask for a pass. Tell them your child’s name. Tell them the name of the teacher.

If you want to talk to your child’s teacher but do not have a meeting, you will have to schedule a meeting for another day.

School Procedures

10. What are the papers the school sends me?

The school may send important papers to you. These papers can tell you about

- Your child's work
- Your child's behavior
- School events

Sometimes the papers may tell you about your child's troubles in school. Your child may not want to tell you about his/her troubles. It is important that you do **NOT** ask your child to translate these papers for you. Sometimes your child may not understand what the papers mean. They may tell you something that is not right.

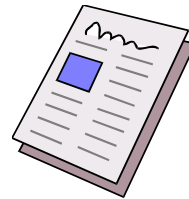
You can ask the school to translate these papers for you. Or, you can ask the teacher for a meeting. Remember to ask for an interpreter if you do not speak or understand English well.

Here are some of the papers that teachers send to you:



A **calendar** shows the days in a school year. It can tell you when you can go to school and meet the teacher. It can tell you when your child does not go to school.

A **newsletter** tells you what happens in school.



A **survey** will ask you to answer questions about school.

An **announcement** is a piece of paper that informs you about an event at school.



A permission slip is a piece of paper you sign to give your permission for your child to do something with school. For example, if you want your child to go on a school field trip, you need to sign the paper. Your child will take the paper back to his/her teacher.

Disciplinary paperwork tells you when your child misbehaves. Teachers want you to know when your child breaks the rules. You may have to sign the paper and send it to the teacher.

School Procedures

11. What is a report card?

A report card is a piece of paper that tells you about your child's school work. Report cards go to parents two or four times in a school year.

Report cards list each class your child takes. A report card also tells you how your child is behaving in school.

You need to sign the report card. Signing the card tells the school that you saw the report card. Give the card to your child to take back to the school.

If you do not understand the report card, talk to the teacher. Do not have your children translate the report card.

Report cards have grades. The grades tell you how your child is doing in school. Some report cards have letters. Some report cards have numbers.

- For very good work, you may see an **A**. You may see the numbers **91-100**. It means that your child understands the lessons.
- For good work, you may see a **B** or the numbers **81-90**. It means that your child understands the lessons but may have some trouble.
- For work that is only okay, you may see a **C** or the numbers **71-80**. It means that your child needs some help in class.
- For work that is not good, you may see a **D** or the numbers **65-70**. Your child needs extra help.
- If you see an **F** or numbers **smaller than 65**, your child failed the class. This means that your child needs to take the class again. Your child needs a lot of help with the class.

Sometimes, you may see a letter with a sign (+ or -). It may look like this: **B+** or **C-**. The **+** sign means that your child is better than the grade listed but not as good as a higher grade. For example a **B+** means that your child did better than a **B**, but not as good as an **A**.

The **-** means that your child's work is not as good as the grade listed. A **C-**, for example, is closer to a **D** than a **B**.

If you see a **C** or **D** (or the numbers **65-80**) on the report card, your child may need to stay after school for extra help or have a tutor. A tutor is someone who helps your child with school work. Talk with the teacher about how to help your child.

If you see a **D** or an **F** (or the numbers **smaller than 65**) on your child's report card, ask to meet the teacher. You and the teacher need to work together to



School Procedures

help your child. See [Appendix 3](#) for a sample letter you can use to ask for a meeting with your child's teacher.

12. How do children earn grades?

Teachers look at your child's school work, homework and tests. They also watch your child's behavior. Good work and good behavior means good grades. If you do not understand how the teacher chooses the grade, talk with the teacher.

13. What are progress reports?

Sometimes teachers give you news every few weeks. This is called a progress report. It tells you how your child is doing in school. If your child has a **D** or an **F** on a progress report, you and the teacher need to work together to help your child.

14. Do I have to pay for anything in school?



You may have to pay fees, or a small amount of money, for items your child uses.

For example, you may have to pay a **book fee**. This is a small amount that you pay for your child to use school books. If you do not have the money, you can ask for a fee waiver. A waiver means you can pay little or no money. You will have to tell the teacher why you want a smaller fee. Please see Appendix 10 for ways to request a fee waiver.

Your child needs to treat the books well. Some books need to be returned to the teacher. If the child breaks these books, it will cost you money.



Children can play sports or learn music after school. These can cost money, which may be called special **activity fees**. If your child plays a sport, the fee may cover a uniform, shoes or transportation. If your child wants to play an instrument, the fee may cover the cost of renting the instrument and lessons.

If you want your child to participate in sports or other activities but you do not have much money, you can talk to your child's teacher about the fees. You may be able to get a fee waiver or permission to pay a smaller amount.

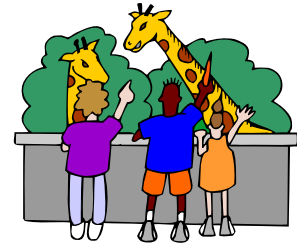
School Procedures

You may also need to pay a fee for your child to go on **school field trips**. Again, you can ask the teacher for a fee waiver or a smaller fee.

See the end of this chapter for school procedures on requesting a fee waiver. [Appendix 10](#) has examples of ways to communicate with the school about the fee waiver.



If your child needs to buy **lunch** at school, he/she will need money. Talk to your case worker or the school if you do not have money. Your child may be able to have free lunches.



The end of this chapter may have information on your school's procedures for applying to the free lunch program. [Appendix 10](#) has an example of how you can ask your school about applying to the free lunch program.

15. Who can I talk to if I have questions?

You ask your child's teacher or the school secretary questions. Remember to ask for an interpreter if you do not understand English. You have a right to an interpreter when you talk with the school or teachers.

Parent Participation

V. Parent Participation



In America, teachers and parents work together to help children be good students. Teachers expect that you will participate in your child's education. This means that you need to meet with teachers, talk with your child about school and support their studies.

Teachers want to meet you. They want you to visit the school. They want to hear what you say.

Here are things you can do to help your child become a good student:

- Set expectations
- Go to the school's orientation
- Go to parent-teacher conferences
- Enroll your child in after-school activities
- Go to school events
- Work with your child at home

1. How do I set expectations for my child's work in school?

Expectations are what you want your child to do. Children need to know that school is important. You can tell them that being a good student is important to you too.

The first thing you can do is tell your child what you expect your child to do in school. Here are some examples of expectations you may have for your child:

As a parent, I expect my child to:

- listen to all lessons in school
- finish all homework
- study for tests
- ask the teacher questions when he/she does not understand the lesson
- obey the teacher's rules
- treat the teacher with respect
- treat other children with respect
- tell me and the teacher when he/she has trouble with the lessons
- tell me and the teacher when he/she has trouble with other children

Parent Participation

Tell your child your expectations. Tell your child again when your child forgets. Go to the school and meet with your child's teachers. This tells your child how important school is.

2. What is orientation?



Orientation is when you are invited to go to your child's school at the beginning of the school year. You meet your child's teachers. It is sometimes called an "open-house."

You can see your child's classroom. You can see where your child sits.



You can also meet the school secretary. (This is the person you call when your child is sick or late to school.)

At orientation, you can talk with the teachers. Here are some questions you can ask the teachers at orientation:

- Where does my child sit?
- What does my child study?
- What happens during the school day?
- Can I see my child's school work?
- How can my child get help?
- How many other children are in this class?
- How many other children are learning English?
- How should my child act in class? Or, what are the classroom rules?
- How do you teach my child to behave?
- How can I help my child at home?

If you need help talking with the teacher, ask the school for an interpreter a few days before the orientation. See **Appendices 1 and 2** for examples of how you can request an interpreter.

Parent Participation

3. What are parent-teacher conferences?



Parent-teacher conferences are when parents and teachers meet and talk about the things children learn in school. They talk about the child's school work and if the child is a good student. They also talk about the child's behavior. This is a good time for you to ask questions about your child.

Here are some questions you can ask the teacher:

- What does my child learn in school?
- Can I see my child's work?
- Is my child a good student?
- What classes does my child like?
- What classes are hard?
- How can teachers help my child be a good student?
- How can I help my child be a good student?
- What can I do to help my child if I am also learning English?
- How does my child act in school?
- Who are my child's friends?
- What can I do at home to help my child behave in school?



If you do not speak or understand English well, you need an interpreter to go with you to the meeting. When the teacher schedules a meeting with you, ask the teacher for an interpreter. You have a right to an interpreter.

Please see **Appendices 1 and 2** for ways you can ask for an interpreter.



You can also talk with the teachers about your concerns as a parent. Concerns are things that worry you.

Here are some sample questions you may want to ask teachers:

- My child thinks he can say what he wants because he "is free" in America. He says bad things at home. What does my child learn in school? What if I disagree with these lessons?

Parent Participation

- My child says that she can do what she wants. If I try to stop her, she says she will call 911. Is this right?
- My child says she has no homework, but I think she does. How can you tell me when she has homework?
- My child does not sleep well at night and acts very mad. What can the school do to help?
- I do not understand my child's homework. I am learning English. What can I do at home to help my child?

You can talk with the teacher about the good things your child learns. Here are some things you may want to ask teachers:

- My child says her homework is easy. She also says likes school a lot. What can I do to support her studies?
- My child likes to help his brothers with their homework. What can he do in school that encourages him to help others?
- What school programs or activities do you think my child may like? What can I do to enroll my child in these programs?
- My child wants to be a doctor. What programs does the school have to help prepare him?
- My child wants to go to community college. What can the school do to help? What can I do?

It is important for you to ask what the school can do to help or encourage your child. It is also very important for you to learn what you can do.

Parent-teacher conferences are scheduled one time in the fall and one time in the spring. Teachers will call you or send you a note to schedule a time. Parents can ask for a meeting with the teacher at any time in the year. Remember to ask the school for an interpreter to help you speak with the teacher.

You may want to talk with the teacher about:

- Your child's work or report card
- Your child's behavior
- Lessons your child learns at school
- Something that happened with your child at school

[Appendix 3](#) has an example of how you can ask request a meeting with the teacher.



Parent Participation

4. What are after-school activities?

When the school day ends, there are many things your child can do. These are called after-school activities. An adult will be in charge of the activity. The adult may not be your child's teacher. The adult may be a coach. A coach is an adult who teaches students about a sport.

Here are some of the activities that your child's school may have:

Sports – like
football



Tutors who help
your child with
school work



Clubs, which are
groups of
children who like
to do the same
things



Dance or theater



Music

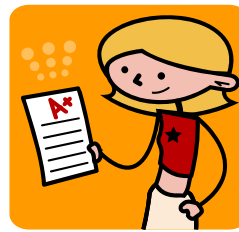


Parent Participation

After-school activities are good for children and for parents. Children in after-school activities:



Meet new friends



Learn new things



Prepare for college

Some parents like after-school activities because they provide a safe and supervised place for children.

Parents need to ask questions about after-school activities:

- How much money does it cost?
- How will the child arrive home from after-school activities?
- How do parents' enroll a child in an after-school activity?



Cost

Some after-school activities cost money. This is called a fee. For example, you may have to pay for a uniform or new shoes. Or you may have to pay for music lessons.

Ask the school how much money an activity costs. Also, ask if you can pay a smaller fee for your child. See [Appendix 10](#) for ways you can request a fee waiver.



Transportation

Many activities are scheduled after-school. Parents need to ask how the child will go home from the after-school activity. The school may have a bus. The school may give your child a pass to ride the city bus. Or, someone may need to pick up the child.

Parent Participation

If your child needs to be picked up, ask when the activity ends and where your child will be.

Enroll

You need to enroll your child in an after-school activity. This means that you need to sign papers that your permission for your child to participate. Make sure you understand what the papers mean before you sign them.



If you have trouble reading the papers, have the teacher or coach explain it to you. You can ask to have it translated.

You need to tell the school who to call in an emergency. Give the name and the phone number of the person you trust. Only this person can pick up your child.

5. What are school events?

Schools may have football games or concerts. These are called events. Many of the events are free or cost a little bit of money.

If your child plays football and there is a game, it is important for you to go.



You show your child that you support him/her and that he/she can do new things well.



Your child learns confidence and respect. Confidence is when your child thinks they can do something. Respect is when your child thinks of other people first.

Also, you can meet other parents and your child's friends.

6. How can I help my child at home?



Children like it when you ask them questions about school. Your questions show that it is important for your child to be a good student.

Try to ask questions that help you talk with your child. Stay away from questions that your children can answer with a "yes" or "no."

Parent Participation

Here are some questions you can ask your child:

- What did you learn in school today?
- What was the best part of your day?
- What was the hardest?
- What homework do you have?
- How can I help you with your classes?

If you do not understand what your child learns in school, ask the teacher to explain the lesson to you.

Have your child tell you about their homework. Your child's homework can be:

- Work that they started in school. Your child needs to finish the work at home.
- Practice at home what they learned in school.
- A report or project. A report is when your child writes about what they learn. A project is when your child tells the class about what they learn.
- To study for a test.

Remind your child to empty their backpack. Sometimes children loose work in a backpack that is full of old papers.

7. How can I help my child with their homework if I do not speak English well?



Make time for homework at home. This time can be right after school or before dinner. It should be the same time every day. Children need to do homework every day.

Tell your child that this time is for homework only. Turn off the TV or radio. Your child needs a quiet place to do his/her work.

NO



NO



Make sure your child sleeps well at night. This means no TV, music or play late at night.

Parent Participation

Look at your child's homework. Ask them to tell you about their homework. Sometimes children see the things they did wrong when they talk about their homework.

~~Kat~~ Cat

Notice if your child has problems with homework. Your child may be frustrated. Talk to your child about problems he/she has with the homework. If you cannot help, talk to the teacher. When the teacher knows your child needs help, the teacher can find time to help your child.



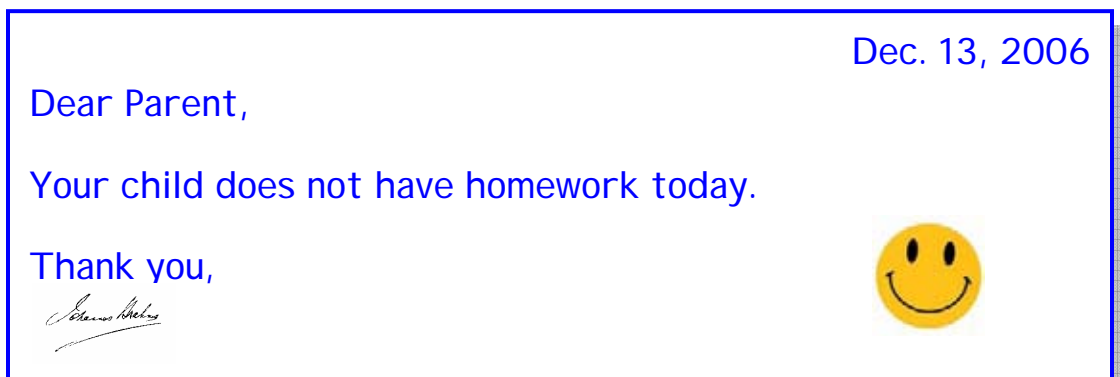
See [Appendix 3](#) for ways you can request a meeting with the teacher to talk about problems your child has with his/her lessons.

Sometimes, children do not want to do homework. They want to play or watch TV. They may tell you that they do not have homework. If your child does not do his/her homework, your child will have trouble in school.

Ask the teacher to write a note to about your child's homework everyday. If the child does not have homework, the teacher can tell you this in a note. If you do not read English, ask the teacher to draw a picture for you and sign his/her name.

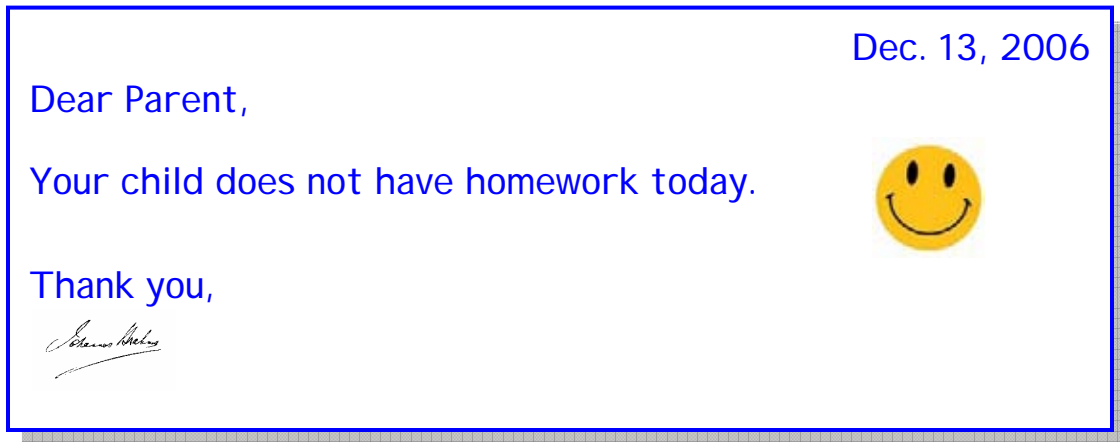
For example, a note from the teacher when there is no homework may look like this:

(English)



Parent Participation

(Translation)



Learn English with your child. Children who read at home learn English fast. Parents who know English can help their children with homework. (Learning English can also help you find a job that pays good money.)



Make time to read at home. You can read to your child, or your child can read to you.

8. What other things can I do to help my child be a good student?

Ask the teacher or school secretary if they have an outreach worker. An outreach worker is person who works with families and students. They can schedule an interpreter for you. They can help you learn about the school and classes. They can answer your questions.



Ask if the school has a Guidance Counselor. A guidance counselor is a person who can help your child plan for college or for work. They can answer your questions. If your child is having a hard time in school or misbehaves, the counselor can help.

Use the example in [Appendix 3](#) to request a meeting with the guidance counselor.

Parent Participation

Here are some questions you can ask the guidance counselor:

- My child is having trouble in school. What can we do?
- My child has trouble at home. He/she acts like _____. What can we do?
- My child wants to get a job in _____. What does he/she need to do?
- My child wants to go to college. What does he/she need to do? How much will it cost? How do we pay for school?

Ask if the school has programs for families learning English. The school may have a meeting for parents of children learning English. They may have interpreters or outreach workers who can answer your questions.

Understand the papers the school sends you. The papers can tell you about your child's work and his/her behavior. They can tell you if your child is having trouble with the lessons, misbehaving or fighting with other students.

The papers can also tell you good things about your child. They can tell you that your child did a good job on a test, is helpful in class or is working on a special project.

It is important for you to know what your child is doing in school. If you do not understand the papers, ask the teacher for a meeting. Do **NOT** ask your child to translate the papers for you.

You can ask the teacher to explain the papers to you by requesting a meeting. See [Appendix 3](#) for a sample letter you can use to request a meeting with your child's teacher to discuss the papers sent home.



VI. School Rules and Discipline



Every school and classroom has rules that children need to obey. Rules tell children how they should behave in school. Rules also tell children what they cannot bring to school.

1. Why does my child need to follow the rules?

It is important that your child follows the rules. The rules keep children safe. The rules also help children learn their lessons.

Teachers tell the children the rules at the start of every school year. Parents learn about the rules from papers that the school sends home. Parents can learn about the rules during parent-teacher meetings or the school's open house.

2. What happens if my child does not follow the rules?

There are consequences when children break the rules. Children learn about these consequences at the same time they learn about the rules. Sometimes the consequence is a disciplinary action. **Question #7** in this chapter has more information about disciplinary actions.



3. What are some of the rules at school?

Some school rules are listed on **page 3** at the beginning of this manual. You may also find rules for your child's school at the end of this chapter.

If you do not understand the rules, talk to the teacher.

School Rules and Discipline

4. What are prohibited items?

Prohibited items are things that your child should **NOT** bring to school. Here is a list of some of the items.



NO beepers or pagers



NO Lighters



NO Cell phones



NO Squirt guns



NO Laser pens



NO chains on clothing



NO drugs or alcohol



NO knives



No guns



NO cigarettes

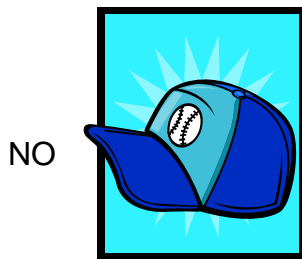
School Rules and Discipline

Many prohibited items are dangerous. If your child brings prohibited items to school, the school will take them away. Your child may go to the principal's office. Also, your child could be expelled. This means that your child can not go to that school anymore. This is very serious.

Your child's school may prohibit other items. The end of this chapter may have more information on prohibited items at your child's school. You can also talk with your child's teacher if you have questions.

5. What other things are not allowed?

Head coverings like a scarf or hat are not allowed unless your child has a religious reason for wearing it. In some schools, this means that children have to take off their hats.



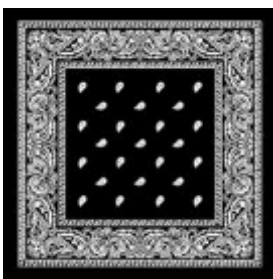
MAYBE YES



Talk with your child's teacher if you have questions about head coverings.

Any reference or support of gangs is not allowed. Some cities may have groups of kids and young adults that cause trouble. These groups are called gangs. Schools will not allow children to show support of gangs in school. This means that some types of clothing are prohibited in school.

Here are some examples of gang clothing that may not be allowed in your child's school.



Certain colored bandanas



Gang signs

School Rules and Discipline

No symbols are allowed that may upset other students. Symbols are pictures or signs that represent something. They may disrespect other students or the teacher. Ask the teacher what symbols are not allowed in school.

6. How will I know if my child breaks the rules?

The school may call you or write you a note if your child misbehaves. The school may ask to meet with you.

Many times, children do not want their parents to know that they disobeyed the rules. It is important that you do **NOT** ask your child to translate papers that the school sends you. Also, it is important that you do **NOT** ask your child to translate for you when you talk with the teacher.

Ask the teacher for an interpreter. You can also take a friend with you to meet the teacher.

7. What is disciplinary action?

Disciplinary action is the consequence of a bad behavior. It is what the school does when a child breaks the rules.

Here are some things schools may do when a child breaks the rules. The school may:

- Give the child a time out
- Take away privileges
- Send the child to the principal's office
- Ask to talk to the parents
- Give detention
- Suspend or expel the child

Your child's school may use other disciplinary actions. The end of this chapter may have more information on disciplinary actions used by your child's school.

8. What is a time out?

Time out is when your child sits quietly and thinks about what they did wrong. This works with young children.

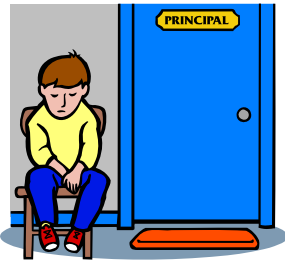


School Rules and Discipline

9. What happens when teachers take away privileges?

Teachers can also take away privileges. This means that they do not allow the child to do something the child likes. For example, a teacher will not allow the child to play during recess when he/she misbehaves.

10. What happens when a child is sent to the principal's office?



Sometimes children are sent to the principal's office when they are very bad. The principal has a lot of power in the school. The principal talks to the child and decides a consequence. Sometimes, parents need to meet with the principal about their child's behavior.

11. What is detention?

Detention is when a child stays after school. He/she sits in a classroom until the teacher tells him/her to leave. Children can do homework in detention. They cannot play or talk.



If your child receives detention, it is important that you talk with your child about what he/she did wrong. This is a good time to remind your child how you expect him/her to behave.

12. What is suspension?

Suspension is when your child cannot go to school for a few days. The child has to stay home and should not play.

The school may warn parents before suspending a child. Children can be suspended without warning when they are dangerous. For example, children may be suspended immediately if they take a prohibited item to school.

Suspension is serious. Children miss class when they are suspended. They must learn the lessons by themselves. They need to do all their school work

School Rules and Discipline

without help from the teacher. Suspension makes it difficult for children to be good students.

13. What is expulsion?

Expulsion is when the school decides that your child is dangerous and cannot return to school. The child is expelled.

Sometimes parents receive a warning if the child is going to be expelled. This means that the child needs to change their behavior or the consequence is expulsion. It is important for you to talk with the school if your child receives this warning.

Also, a child can be expelled without warning if the child does something very bad. A child may be expelled if they bring a weapon to school.

Expulsion is very serious. Expelled children have a hard time finding another school to go to, finishing high school or going to college. Expelled students may also have trouble with the police.

If a child breaks the rules a lot, the teacher will want to meet with the child's parents. Parents should work with the teacher to make sure the child understands how to behave.

Usually, the teacher will send a note to the parents asking for a meeting. Do **NOT** ask your child to translate the letter.

If the teacher requests a meeting with you, you should remind the teacher if you need an interpreter.



VII. Preparing for College

1. *What is college?*

College is a school, after high school, that helps prepare students for their careers. (A career is the type of work your child will do as an adult.)

Colleges can be two or four years. A two year college is called a community college. A four year college is called a college or university. Technical or vocational colleges are two year colleges that teach specific skills workers need.

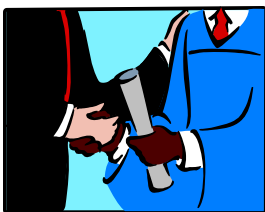
There are public colleges and private colleges. Public colleges cost some money. People who live in the state where they go to school are called residents. Residents pay less at state schools than students who are not residents.

Private colleges can cost a lot of money.

Colleges decide who attends their school. Students must first ask permission from the college to attend. Students who receive permission to go to the college are “accepted.”



2. *Does my child need to go to college to have a job?*



Your child does not need to go to college to have a job. Your child can work without going to college.

If your child wants a job that pays good money or requires specific skills, your child should go to college. Many good jobs require a college education. This means that students have to finish college to work in these jobs.

Talk with your children in junior and high school about what they want to do for a career. Then talk with the guidance counselor to find out if your children need to go to college. Guidance counselors are employees of the high school who can help your child prepare for work or college.



Preparing for College

3. Why is college important?

College is important because it can help your child find a good job. If your child does not go to college, your child may need to work two or three jobs to pay his/her bills. In America, many students who go to college make more money than students who do not go to college.

Students learn professional skills in college. These are skills that help employees do their job well.

4. How does my child apply to college?

First your child needs to complete an application. An application is a form that tells the college about your child. The application asks about the child's grades, behavior, sports and other things.

The child will send the application to the admissions department at the college. The admissions department is a group of people who decide which students can attend classes at the college.

Here are some of the other papers your child has to give to the college:

- High school transcript
- SAT or ACT scores
- Writing sample
- Application fee

The guidance counselor at your child's high school can help your child get these papers together. The guidance counselor can also answer questions about college and the application.

The image shows a sample of a college application form titled "COMMON APPLICATION 2003-2004". The form is for undergraduate admission and includes sections for personal data, contact information, and demographic information. It asks for details such as legal name, address, phone numbers, and whether the applicant is a first-generation student. There are checkboxes for various categories like ethnicity and language spoken at home.

5. What is a high school transcript?



The high school transcript is a paper that shows your child's high school grades. It also shows the type of classes your child took and if your child behaved. Your child will have to ask their high school to send the transcript directly to the college.

Preparing for College

6. What are SAT and ACT scores?

Each year, high school students take tests for college. These tests are the SAT and the ACT. Your child can take the SAT in the spring of their junior year (when they are 16 or 17 years old). They can also take the test again in the fall of their senior year (when they are 17 years old). Your child can take the ACT at five different times in the year.

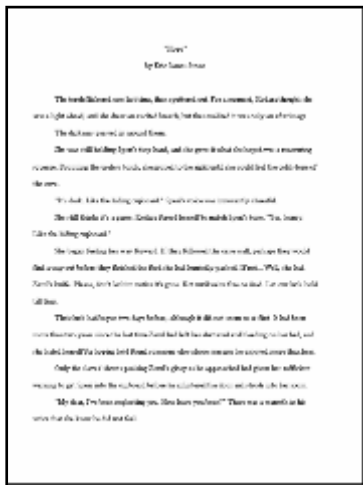
Country	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Albania	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Algeria	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Andorra	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Angola	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Antigua and Barbuda	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Argentina	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Armenia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Australia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Austria	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Azerbaijan	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Bahrain	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Bangladesh	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Barbados	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Belarus	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Belgium	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Belize	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Benin	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Bhutan	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Bolivia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Bosnia and Herzegovina	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Botswana	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Brazil	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Bulgaria	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Burkina Faso	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Burundi	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Cambodia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Cameroon	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Canada	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Cape Verde	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Chad	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Chile	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
China	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Colombia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Costa Rica	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Cote d'Ivoire	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Croatia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Cuba	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Cyprus	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Czechia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Dominica	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Dominican Republic	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Ecuador	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Egypt	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
El Salvador	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Equatorial Guinea	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Eritrea	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Estonia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Ethiopia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Fiji	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Finland	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
France	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Gabon	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Gambia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Germany	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Ghana	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Greece	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Guatemala	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Guinea	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Guinea-Bissau	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Haiti	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Honduras	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Hungary	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Iceland	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
India	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Indonesia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Ireland	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Israel	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Italy	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Jamaica	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Japan	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Jordan	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Kazakhstan	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Kenya	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Korea	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Kuwait	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Kyrgyzstan	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Laos	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Latvia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Lebanon	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Lesotho	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Lithuania	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Luxembourg	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Madagascar	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Malawi	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Malaysia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Maldives	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Mali	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Malta	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Mauritania	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Mauritius	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Mexico	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Moldova	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Mongolia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Montenegro	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Morocco	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Mozambique	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Myanmar	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Nepal	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Netherlands	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
New Zealand	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Nicaragua	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Niger	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Nigeria	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
North Macedonia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
North Korea	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Norway	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Oman	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Pakistan	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Panama	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Papua New Guinea	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Paraguay	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Peru	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Philippines	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Poland	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Portugal	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Romania	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Russia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Rwanda	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Saudi Arabia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Senegal	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Serbia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Seychelles	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Singapore	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Slovakia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Slovenia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
South Africa	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
South Korea	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Spain	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Sri Lanka	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Sudan	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Sweden	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Switzerland	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Taiwan	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Tanzania	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Togo	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Tonga	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Turkey	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Turkmenistan	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Uganda	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Ukraine	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
United Arab Emirates	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
United Kingdom	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
United States	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Uruguay	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Uzbekistan	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Venezuela	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Vietnam	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Yemen	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Zambia	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Zimbabwe	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0

These tests cost money. Your child may be able to receive a waiver for the SAT, you can learn more about fee waivers for the SAT online at: <http://www.collegeboard.com/student/testing/sat/calenfees/feewaivers.html>

Your child's SAT and ACT scores show how your child did. The college uses these scores to decide if your child should attend the college.

Some children take classes to help them get good scores on the SATs. Princeton Review and Kaplan offer classes that help students prepare for the test. These courses cost a lot of money. Have your child ask the school for a list of less expensive classes.

7. What is a writing sample?



Most colleges ask students to send them a sample of their writing. This sample can be from a paper your child wrote in high school. Or, it can be something new.

The writing sample shows your child's English skills and how they think.

Preparing for College

8. How much is the application fee?



Applying to college costs money. This money is called the application fee. It usually costs between \$50 and \$100. You can pay with a check or money order. You will not get this money back.

Ask the college about a fee waiver. More information about schools that offer a fee waiver can be found on-line at:

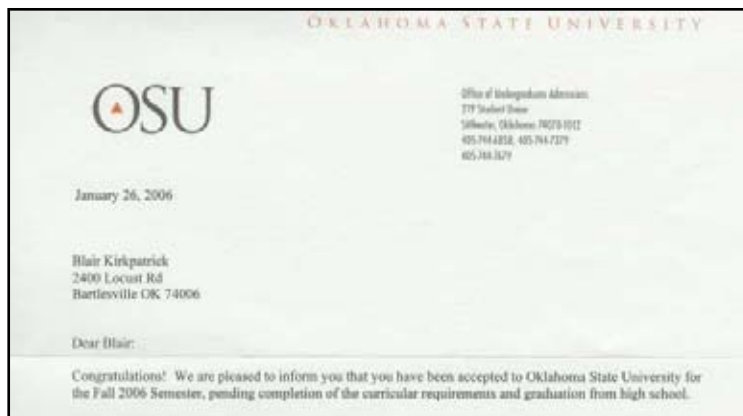
http://www.collegeboard.com/prod_downloads/student/testing/sat/sat_fee_waiver_directory.pdf.

9. What happens after my child sends these papers to the college?

The admissions department will look at your child's application. They look at your child's grades and behavior. They also look at the activities your child participated in outside of school.

The admissions department will review your child's writing sample. They may ask your child for an interview.

After a few months, they will decide if your child can go to the college. If they give your child permission to go to the college, then your child is accepted.



The college can also reject your child's application. This means your child cannot go to that college this year. They can apply again next year.

Preparing for College

10. What do admissions departments look for in the application?

Admissions departments look for good students. They like to see A's and B's on the transcript. This means that they like scores between 80-100. They also like to see hard classes. This shows that your child is a hard worker.

They do not like to see that your child misbehaved, was suspended or expelled from school. This will make it hard for your child to get into college. It does not mean your child can not go to college.

They also look to see if your child has special talents. Special talents are things your child does well. Here are some special talents colleges look for:

- Good at sports (like soccer or running)
- Plays an instrument (like drums)
- The number and languages your child speaks
- Artistic ability (like photography or painting)

Colleges also like students who work for their communities. This is called community service. They look for students who are in clubs, involved in their church, synagogue or mosque, or who help others without getting paid.

11. What happens if my child gets accepted to college?

If your child is accepted to a college, you need to tell the college's admissions department if your child will enroll. If your child enrolls, you need to send the school a deposit. A deposit is money that you pay the school. The deposit pays part of the cost of going to school.



12. How can my child choose the right college?

Choosing a college can take some time. It helps if your child knows what career he/she wants. Your child can start thinking about this in junior high school.

In junior high school, your child needs to meet with the guidance counselor and learn what classes are good to take for college. Your child needs to work hard in these classes.

When your child is in 10 or 11th grade, you and your child need to research colleges. You can look on the web for information about colleges. You and your child can go visit the school. You can talk to the teachers and students to decide if the school is right for your child.

Preparing for College

Here are some questions you can ask the admissions departments at colleges:

- What degrees does the college offer?
- What programs offer the best employment chances?
- How big is the school?
- How big are the classes?
- What other activities and programs does the college offer my child?
- How much does it cost per year?
- What scholarships can my child get?

It is important that your child chooses a college that can help him/her learn the skills he/she will need for a career.

It is also important to think about how your family will pay for college. If all the colleges cost too much money, your child can attend a community college. The community college will cost less money. After two years, your child can transfer to a university.

13. How much does college cost?

Each college cost a different amount. Community colleges and public colleges cost less than private colleges. Here are some of the costs for college:

- Tuition is the cost of taking classes
- Required fees are costs of going to college
- Room/housing is the cost for living at the college
- Meals
- Books and supplies
- Personal expenses like summer classes, sports or emergencies
- Transportation for the bus or car if your child lives at the college and needs to travel home

Every college has a financial aid department. These are people who work with you to help you find money to pay for college.

Preparing for College

14. How can we pay for college?

There are a few ways you can get money to help pay for college. Your child can receive:

- Grants or scholarships
- Work study award
- Loans

15. What is a grant or scholarship?



Grants and scholarships are money you do not have to pay back.

Your child can get a grant or scholarship if your child is a very good student or needs the money to go to school. Colleges look for A's on report cards and hard classes. Also, your child can get a scholarship if he/she has special talents. Your child may need to apply for the scholarship.

Other places to find scholarships:

- Churches and other religious groups
- Civic Groups like the Rotary Club
- Parents' employers
- Veterans' Administration for children of parents who were soldiers
- Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- ROTC Scholarships if your child is part of the Reserve Officer's Training Corps for the military
- Foundations like the Coca Cola Foundation or Asthma Foundation
- Your child can also get a scholarship for sports, music or art.
- The guidance counselor at your child's high school should have a list of common scholarships offered to graduating seniors. Talk with your child's guidance counselor.

16. What is work study?

Work study is when your child works at the same time he/she goes to college. Your child works for the college. The money your child makes pays for classes. Talk with the financial aid department about work study.



Preparing for College

17. What is a loan?

A loan is money that needs to be paid back.

You and your child need to think about how much money you will owe. If your child can get a job after college that pays well, it may be smart to have a loan. They will make enough money to pay it back.

18. How can my child receive financial aid or a loan?



At the same time your child applies for college, your child needs to fill out an application for Federal Student Aid. This is called a FAFSA. Your child can do this on the computer or on paper. The website is www.fafsa.ed.gov.

Your child can also go to the college's financial aid office and ask for help filling out the FAFSA. See the end of this chapter for tips on filing for financial aid.

Children with refugee status are eligible for loans. Refugee youth applying for a loan have to:

- Complete and submit the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)
- Show that they are an eligible non-citizen (refugee or asylee) and present their I-94
- Show their Social Security Number
- Be enrolled at least half-time or accepted for enrollment in an eligible program and working toward a degree or certificate.
- Have a high school diploma or General Education Development (GED) Certificate, or pass a test approved by the U.S. Department of Education
- Make satisfactory academic progress
- Register with the Selective Service (males 18-25 only)
- Talk with the guidance counselor to see if your child needs to show additional papers as a refugee student.

The government will tell you if your child is eligible for a loan. They will also tell you how much money your child can borrow.

Preparing for College

What parents can pay + What child can pay = What family pays



They then look at how much school costs and how much the family can pay to determine the loan:

What school costs - What family can pay = loan



Remember, this money is a loan and needs to be repaid.

Your and your child need to understand how much school costs for one year. Ask the college for help if you don't know the amount of money your child will need.

Every year your child goes to school and needs money, your child needs to complete a FAFSA.

Please see the end of this chapter for two documents that can help you and your child file for financial aid:

- Steps for Completing a FAFSA
- Financial Aid Checklist

19. How can I start talking with my child about college?

When your child is in junior high school and high school, you should discuss what your child wants to do for work. In high school, you and your child should start researching and visiting colleges.

Preparing for College

Talk with your child about his/her dreams. Help them with their homework. Make sure your child is a good student.

Many children in high school start thinking about how much money they need to buy the things they want. This is a good time to talk with them about jobs, income and expenses. You want your child to make enough money to pay the bills, save for emergencies and pay for things they want. This may help your child decide on a career.

The amount of money an employee is paid in a year is called a salary. Salaries can be different because of the skills needed for the job. Salaries are also different because of the company and the location. Full-time positions usually have benefits, which include medical insurance, life insurance and savings plans.

Many times, starting salaries for students who have a bachelor's degree (from a four-year college) are higher than students who have an associate's degree (from a two-year college). These salaries are before taxes.

STARTING SALARIES BY DEGREE:

	Associate Degree ¹	Bachelor's Degree ²
Accountant	N/A	\$44,500/year
Teacher/education	19,000	30,000/year
Salesman		37,000
Computer programming/science	29,000	54,000
Health/registered nurse	35,000	39,000
Business management/Marketing	25,000	33,000
Security	27,000	N/A
Liberal Arts	22,000	27,000

Steps for Completing a FAFSA

Step 1: Get a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the appropriate school year you want to attend school.

You can use an online form or a paper copy. It is good to complete a

¹ "Starting Salary Expectations." JobWeb. Dec. 2006.

<http://www.jobweb.com/resources/library/Salary_and_Benefits/Starting_Salary_51_01.htm>

² "Lucrative Degrees for College Grads." CNNMoney.com. April, 19, 2005. Sept. 2006.

<http://money.cnn.com/2005/04/15/pf/college/starting_salaries/index.htm?cnn=yes>



Preparing for College

Pre-Application Worksheet to help you fill out your FAFSA.

Step 2: Fill out the FAFSA completely. Make sure you answer each question. Have someone help you. Call or come to the financial aid office if you have questions or need more help.

Step 3: Mail or submit your FAFSA. Do not send any tax forms or letters with your application.

The FAFSA you just mailed or submitted is your application for the Federal Pell Grant and is your first step in the process of receiving a student loan.

Step 4: After your application is processed, you will receive a Student Aid Report. The schools you listed on your FAFSA will receive the same information and will contact you if they need more paperwork to finish your financial aid. If you did not list any colleges on your FAFSA, it is up to you to send a copy of your Student Aid Report to your college.

Step 5: After your financial aid paperwork is complete and processed by the Financial Aid Office, you will be notified if you are eligible for the Pell Grant. If you are interested, you may also apply for a student loan.

Financial Aid Checklist

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Have financial need
- Working (or planning) on degree or certificate in an eligible program
- U.S. citizen OR eligible non-citizen (refugee or asylee)
- Have a valid Social Security Number
- Register with Selective Service (if required)
- Maintain satisfactory academic progress
- Certify that you are not on default on federal student loans or owe money on federal student grant
- Certify to use aid on educational purposes only
- Review your Student Aid Report (SAR)
- Confirm information on FAFSA – make sure it is right!
- Contains Your Expected Family Contribution (EFC)
- Contact the Financial Aid Office of the school(s) you want to attend to make sure you have all the papers you need



Preparing for College

THE FAFSA – STUDENT FINANCIAL AID FORM:

- Fill out an Application Online www.fafsa.ed.gov
- Fill out a Paper FAFSA. You can find the form through:
 - High School Guidance Office
 - College Financial Aid Office
 - Local Public Library
 - Federal Student Aid Information Center (1-800-4-FED-AID)
- To Complete a FAFSA, You Will Need:
 - Social Security Number
 - Driver's License Number (if you have one)
 - W-2 Forms
 - Federal Income Tax Return
 - Current Bank Statements and Records of Stocks, Bonds, and Other Investments
 - Records of Other Untaxed Income such as Social Security, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), or Work First.
 - Alien Registration Number
 - If You Are a Dependent Student, You Will Need Your Parent's Social Security Number and Income and Financial Records



Appendices

APPENDICES: COMMUNICATIONS

Communicating with the school can keep your children safe and help them be good students. This chapter will provide you with ways you can communicate in English with your child's school. (These examples are different from school procedures.) These examples are basic and can be used to communicate simple things. For discussions, you may want to request an interpreter

The examples in this chapter are divided into groups. The first example in the group is in your language. The second example is in English.

There are words and phrases in the examples you will need to fill in. These words and phrases are determined by your reason for contacting the school. In every communication, you need to give your name and the name of your child.

Using the following example, fill in your name and the name of your child.

Dear teacher,

My name is _____. I am _____'s
parent.

You will also need to tell the school your reason for writing the letter or talking with them. You may need to tell them:

- your child is sick and will not be in school,
- your child is having trouble with homework or
- that you want to schedule a meeting with the teacher and will need an interpreter.

Always tell them your phone number. You may want to remind them that you are learning English and an interpreter can help with communication.



Appendices

APPENDIX 1: Requesting an Interpreter

Follow your school's procedures for requesting an interpreter. The following example shows what you could say to the person who schedules interpreters.

You can use this example to request an interpreter for your meetings with the teacher or other school personnel. You can use this for phone conversations or when you go to the school.

1.A Conversation: Requesting an interpreter (T)

You: Hi, my name is _____. My child,
(your name)
_____ is in _____'s class. I need an
(child's name) (teacher's name)
interpreter for/to _____.
(why you need an interpreter)

Secretary: Okay. What language do you need?

You: I speak _____.
(your language)

Secretary: Do you know when your meeting is?

You: _____.
(yes/no)

Secretary: Okay, I will talk with the teacher and schedule an interpreter. What is your phone number?

You: My phone number is _____. Thank you.
(your phone number)

Secretary: You're welcome. Goodbye.



Appendices

1.B Conversation: Requesting an interpreter (English)

You: Hi, my name is _____. My child,
(your name)
_____ is in _____'s class. I need an
(child's name) (teacher's name)
interpreter for/to _____.
(why you need an interpreter)

Secretary: Okay. What language do you need?

You: I speak _____.
(your language)

Secretary: Do you know when your meeting is?

You: _____.
(yes/no)

Secretary: Okay, I will talk with the teacher and schedule
an interpreter. What is your phone number?

You: My phone number is _____. Thank you.
(your phone number)

Secretary: You're welcome. Goodbye.



Appendices

APPENDIX 2: Requesting an Interpreter

You can also request an interpreter with a note. The following is an example of how to write a note to request an interpreter.

2.A Letter: Requesting an interpreter (T)

(date)
Dear _____,
(teacher's name)
I am _____'s parent. I would like to talk
(child's name)
to you about _____ but will need an
(what you want to talk about)
interpreter who speaks _____.
(your language)
Please schedule a meeting and let me know when I should
meet you. My telephone number is
_____.
(phone number)
Thank you,

(your name)



Appendices

2.B Letter: Requesting an interpreter (English)

(date)

Dear _____,
(teacher's name)

I am _____'s parent. I would like to talk
(child's name)
to you about _____ but will need an
(what you want to talk about)
interpreter who speaks _____.
(your language)

Please schedule a meeting and let me know when I should
meet you. My telephone number is
_____.
(phone number)

Thank you,

(your name)



Appendices

APPENDIX 3: Requesting a Meeting with the Teacher/School Personnel

- You need to schedule a meeting to see your child's teacher.
- You may want to talk about:
 - Your child's school work or behavior
 - Questions you may have about school
 - Helping your child prepare for college
- If you are learning English, you may need to request an interpreter too. Make sure to include your request in the letter. The following is an example of a letter you can use to request a meeting with the teacher or other school personnel.

3.A Letter: Requesting a meeting (T)

(date)

Dear _____,
(teacher's/school personnel's name)

I am _____'s parent. I want to meet you
(child's name)
to talk about _____.
(what you want to talk about)

Please schedule an interpreter who speaks
_____ for this meeting. Please have
(your language)
the interpreter call me to schedule a meeting. My phone
number is _____.
(your telephone number)

Thank you,

(your name)



Appendices

3.B Letter: Requesting a meeting (T)

(date)

Dear _____,
(teacher's/school personnel's name)

I am _____'s parent. I want to meet you
(child's name)
to talk about _____.
(what you want to talk about)

Please schedule an interpreter who speaks
_____ for this meeting. Please have
(your language)
the interpreter call me to schedule a meeting. My phone
number is _____.
(your telephone number)

Thank you,

(your name)



Appendices

APPENDIX 4: Absence Excuse

You need to tell the school when your child is sick and will stay home. The following is an example of a conversation you may have with the school when you call to tell them your child is home because he/she is sick.

4.A Conversation: Child is sick and absent (T)

You: Hi, my name is _____. My child is sick
(your name)
today.

Secretary: What is your child's name?

You: His/her name is _____.
(your child's name)

Secretary: Who is your child's teacher?

You: My child's teacher is _____.
(name of your child's teacher)

Secretary: How long will your child be out of school?

You: He/she will be in school _____.
(the date your child will return to school)

Secretary: Okay. I will tell the teacher. Your child can talk to his/her teacher about the work he missed.

You: He/she will. Thank you. Goodbye.

Secretary: Goodbye.



Appendices

4.B Conversation: Child is sick and absent (English)

You: Hi, my name is _____. My child is sick
(your name)
today.

Secretary: What is your child's name?

You: His/her name is _____.
(your child's name)

Secretary: Who is your child's teacher?

You: My child's teacher is _____.
(name of your child's teacher)

Secretary: How long will your child be out of school?

You: He/she will be in school _____.
(the date your child will return to school)

Secretary: Okay. I will tell the teacher. You child can talk to his/her teacher about the work he missed.

You: He/she will. Thank you. Goodbye.

Secretary: Goodbye.



Appendices

APPENDIX 5: Absence Excuse

When your child returns to school, you can also write a note to the teacher about your child's absence. This is called an absence excuse.

5.A Letter: Absence excuse (T)

<hr/> (date)
Dear _____, (teacher's name)
Please excuse _____'s absence. He/she was (your child's name) sick. He/she is better today.
Please talk to my child about the work he/she missed. Please also tell _____ when you want him/her to (child's name) finish the work.
Thank you, _____ (your name)



Appendices

5.B Letter: Absence excuse (English)

(date)

Dear _____,
(teacher's name)

Please excuse _____'s absence. He/she was
(your child's name)
sick. He/she is better today.

Please talk to my child about the work he/she missed.
Please also tell _____ when you want him/her to
(child's name)
finish the work.

Thank you,

(your name)



Appendices

APPENDIX 6: Sick Child Needs To Take Medicine In School

If your child is sick, he/she may need to take medicine in school. The school nurse will not allow your child to take the medicine unless he/she has a doctor's note.

You need to let the school know that your child needs to take medicine and that the child has a note from the doctor.

The following is an example of a conversation you may have with the school secretary about your child.

6.A Phone: Child needs to take medicine in school (T)

You: Hi, my name is _____ . My child,
(your name)
_____, is in _____'s class. The
(child's name) (teacher's name)

doctor says he/she needs to take medicine.

_____ has a note from the doctor.
(child's name)

Secretary: Thank you. Your son/daughter needs to show us the note. The nurse will call him/her to take the medicine.

You: Thank you.

Secretary: You're welcome. Goodbye.



Appendices

6.B Phone: Child needs to take medicine in school (English)

You: Hi, my name is _____ . My child,
(your name)

_____, is in _____'s class. The
(child's name) (teacher's name)

doctor says he/she needs to take medicine.

_____ has a note from the doctor.
(child's name)

Secretary: Thank you. Your son/daughter needs to show us
the note. The nurse will call him/her to take the medicine.

You: Thank you.

Secretary: You're welcome. Goodbye.



Appendices

APPENDIX 7: Late Excuse

If your child is late for school, you should tell the school. You can call the school or send a note with your child. You should tell the school why your child is late and when your child will arrive at school.

The following is an example of a conversation you may have with the school secretary about a late child.

7.A Phone: Late arrival of child (T)

You: Hi, my name is _____. My child,
(your name)
_____, is in _____'s class.
(child's name) (teacher's name)
He/she will be late to school today. We
_____. He/she
(why your child is late)
will be to school by _____.
(time)

Secretary: Thank you for calling. I will tell _____
(teacher's name)
your child will be in class at _____.
(time)



Appendices

7.B Phone: Late arrival of child (English)

You: Hi, my name is _____ . My child,
(your name)

_____, is in _____'s class.
(child's name) (teacher's name)

He/she will be late to school today. We

_____. He/she
(why your child is late)

will be to school by _____.
(time)

Secretary: Thank you for calling. I will tell _____
(teacher's name)

your child will be in class at _____.
(time)



Appendices

APPENDIX 8: Late Excuse

You can also write a note to the school secretary or teacher telling them why your child was late. Here is an example of a note.

8.A Letter: Late excuse (T)

_____ (date)
Dear _____, (teacher's/secretary's name)
Please excuse _____ for being late. We (your child's name)
_____ this morning. (why your child is late)
Thank you, _____ (your name)



Appendices

8.B Letter: Late excuse (English)

(date)
Dear _____,
(teacher's name)
Please excuse _____ for being late. We
(your child's name)
_____ this morning.
(why your child is late)
Thank you,

(your name)



Appendices

APPENDIX 9: Early Release

Your child may have to leave school early for a doctor's appointment. You need to tell the school when your child needs to leave, why and who will pick the child up from school. This is called a request for an early release. The school will not let your child leave early without a note from you. The school will not let your child leave if the person who picks him/her up is different from the person written in the letter.

The following is an example of an early release request.

9.A Letter: Early release request (T)

(date)
Dear _____,
(teacher's name)
My child, _____, needs to leave school early
(child's name)
today. He/she has a doctor's appointment. Please excuse
him/her at _____.
(time)
_____ will pick
(name of person)
him/her up from school.
Thank you,

(your name)



Appendices

9.B Letter: Early release request (English)

(date)
Dear _____,
(teacher's name)
My child, _____, needs to leave school early
(child's name)
today. He/she has a doctor's appointment. Please excuse
him/her at _____.
(time)
_____ will pick
(name of person)
him/her up from school.
Thank you,

(your name)



Appendices

APPENDIX 10: Requesting An Application For A Fee Waiver Or Free Lunch

Many schools can waive the fees for school activities. To receive a fee waiver or to free lunches for your child, you need to apply.

The following is an example of how you can request an application from the school secretary or teacher.

10.A Letter: requesting a fee waiver or free lunch application (T)

_____ (date)
Dear _____, (teacher's/secretary's name)
I would like an application for _____. (fee waiver/free lunch program)
Please send the application and instructions home with _____ (child's name)
Thank you, _____ (your name)



Appendices

10.B Letter: requesting a fee waiver or free lunch application (English)

_____ (date)
Dear _____, (teacher's/secretary's name)
I would like an application for _____. (fee waiver/free lunch program)
Please send the application and instructions home with _____. (child's name)
Thank you, _____ (your name)



Appendices

APPENDIX 11: Requesting Resources For Families Learning English

Some schools offer special assistance to families learning English. You can ask about these programs and services when you meet with school personnel or your child's teacher. Or, you can write a letter requesting more information.

The following is an example of a note you can write to ask about programs and services for families learning English.

11.A Letter: Programs or services for families learning English (T)

_____ (Date)
Dear _____, (teacher's name)
My family is learning English. Does the school have any programs for families learning English? We speak _____. (your language)
Please have an interpreter call us to tell us about these programs. Our phone number is _____. (your phone number)
Thank you, _____ (your name)



Appendices

11.B Letter: Programs or services for families learning English (English)

(date)
Dear _____,
(teacher's name)
My family is learning English. Does the school have any programs for families learning English? We speak
_____.
(your language)
Please have an interpreter call us to tell us about these programs. Our phone number is _____.
(your phone number)
Thank you,

(your name)

