

FAQ on State and District Response to COVID-19 Outbreak

What are some specific practices used to support English learner (EL) students and their families?

Regional Educational
Laboratory
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From the National Center for Education Evaluation at IES

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English learners face [inequitable access to learning](#) in many formal educational contexts, and those inequities are exacerbated by the demands of [virtual learning](#). Teachers are working to find ways to help English learners continue their English language development as well as learn content, and there are many existing online resources that English learners and their families can access. For those students who have internet access, districts, state departments of education, and EL-focused organizations have compiled resources that both teachers and parents can use.

- The New York City Department of Education provides [guidance on what parents and family members can do at home with ELs](#). They can:
 - [Read to their child in their home language](#). Research shows that children who are read to in their native language will have an easier time learning to read in the second language.
 - [Think Aloud](#) as they read together with children. This is a method in which the parent talks through their thoughts as they read. For example, they can connect the book to their child's own life experience: "This book reminds me of the time my mom took me swimming. Do you remember the time we went swimming?"
 - Have their child [do some writing at home](#), such as: writing a letter to a family member, read a part of the book and have their child write their own ending to the story or having their child illustrate the story by drawing part of the story and then writing a few sentences below the drawing that tells them about the picture.
- The [Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education](#) provided a list of resources for educators and parents of English Learners on how to work with English learners remotely. Some examples include:
 - [Abriendo Puertas](#) (Opening Doors) has several resources and activities that parents can do with their child at home during the COVID-19 crisis. The website is available in Spanish as well. Some activities include:
 - Weekly [science activities using household supplies](#), for example: learning how to make emulsions and other culinary science focused activities.
 - [Sample schedules](#) that parents can implement at home for their children that includes academic time, creative time, chore time, quiet time, afternoon, and morning walks.

- Additional organizations have provided resources to support ELs learning at home:
 - [Colorín Colorado](#) has free information, advice, and activities for families. This site is bilingual in English and Spanish.
 - [Reading Rockets](#) has resources and activities for families to use at home, specifically for English learners. They have [Reading Tips for Parents](#) available in 13 languages.
 - [BrainPop](#) offers videos and quizzes to students at no cost to families during the COVID-19 crisis. Resources available for ELs include: [BrainPOP ELL](#) (focuses on grammar and vocabulary) and [BrainPOP Español](#) (for Spanish-speakers who are learning English).
 - [Khan Academy](#) provides some supports to parents and educators for all grade levels in 40 different languages.
 - [Edutopia](#) has a number of resources available on [engaging families of ELs](#).
 - New America has compiled [EL-focused resources](#).
 - The U.S. Department of Education has provided [resources for parents in English and Spanish](#).

For students who do not have access to technology or do not adapt easily to the new online learning context, students and their families can focus on [opportunities to maintain and increase their children's innate curiosity](#), provide ideas for [non-technology home learning opportunities](#), encourage a [love for learning in the midst of educational upheaval](#), [individualize learning](#) for each child, and acknowledge the [multiple ways in which this crisis affects the learning community](#).

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