



english for **NEW
BOSTONIANS**

ESOL for Parents and Caregivers Curriculum

School Involvement: Unit 1 *Parent Involvement: Expectations and Opportunities*

Activities:

- #1: Parent Engagement Checklist (b)
- #2: What Did Your Parents Do at Your School?
- #3: U.S. Schools Expect Parents to be Partners
- #4: Using the Infinitive to Think About the Family/School Partnership
- #5: Talk to Your Children About School (b)
- #6: Before Your Child Starts Kindergarten (b)
- #7: Parent Leadership

Developed by Susan Klaw

© English for New Bostonians 2022



About English for New Bostonians

English for New Bostonians (ENB) invests in the future of our region by fostering a high-quality ESOL system that prepares immigrants to pursue their educational, economic and civic aspirations. Through grant making, training teachers, and building public awareness, ENB expands the number of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) seats, improves program quality across agencies, customizes curricula to diverse subpopulations, and leverages private and public resources. Founded in 2001 by the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement (MOIA), immigrant leaders, and local foundations, ENB now involves several city departments, approximately 20 public and private funders, and numerous community organizations.

About the ESOL for Parents and Caregivers Initiative

Through ESOL for Parents and Caregivers, ENB guides ESOL providers and immigrant-rich schools in building partnerships to facilitate parent engagement in schools, enabling parents/caregivers to improve their English and digital literacy skills, navigate school systems, and understand expectations and opportunities for school involvement and ways to optimize children's learning. At the same time, ESOL for Parents helps adults prepare to pursue their own educational and employment goals, *while supporting children's learning – aiming to eliminate multigenerational poverty.*

About Susan Klaw

Susan Klaw has directed, taught in, and developed original curriculum materials for Boston-based parent ESOL programs since 1991. She has delivered extensive training locally and nationally on various aspects of Family Literacy and been named a "Literacy Champion" by the Massachusetts Literacy Foundation, Parent Educator of the Year by the Children's Trust Fund, and Adult Educator of the Year by the Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education.

About the ESOL for Parents and Caregivers Curriculum

The Curriculum (on ENB website and available free of charge) gives ESOL teachers background materials, lessons and activities designed to help immigrant parents learn English and become more effectively involved in their children's education. Selecting curriculum units and lessons relevant to their classes, ESOL teachers can orient immigrant parents to the U.S. school system and provide practical skills such as interpreting report cards, participating in teacher conferences, advocating for children, and supporting children's learning at home. While some information is Boston specific, much can be used in any locale. ENB can assist in adapting materials for school districts. Additionally, ENB offers a Companion Middle/High School Guide, as well as a Digital Learning Guide to support online instruction.

Using the ESOL for Parents and Caregivers Curriculum

All materials are intended to be downloaded and widely used. Please cite English for New Bostonians and credit English for New Bostonians on all reproductions. We welcome feedback and stories on how you and your students are using the ESOL for Parents and Caregivers Curriculum!

Thanks to the many public and private funders that have supported this project, especially the Highland Street Foundation, Shipley Foundation, Hamilton Foundation, Moses Kimball Foundation, Plymouth Rock Foundation, Blum Shapiro Foundation and the Mayor's Office for Immigrant Advancement's *We Are Boston Gala*.

Contact us at info@englishfornewbostonians.org
or visit us online at www.englishfornewbostonians.org

ACTIVITY #1: PARENT ENGAGEMENT CHECKLIST

(Can be used/adapted for use with beginning level students)

Rationale:

We want to concretize what it means for parents to be engaged in their children's education. This simple checklist, which parents keep in their notebooks throughout the time they are in the class, serves as a reminder of what it means to be a partner in their child's education.

Student Objectives:

- Students will do each of the activities on the Parent Engagement Checklist at least once while they are in the Parent English class.

Materials:

- Handout: Parent Engagement Checklist

Activity Outline:

1. Explain objectives.
2. Copy handout Parent Engagement Checklist on bright paper and distribute. Explain the assignment and tell students they will keep this checklist in their notebooks and fill it out each time they complete one of the items on the list. When their list is complete, they should hand it in to you. Ideally you can post them on a bulletin board in the classroom.
3. Go over each of the items to clarify. Note that the second and third activities are in addition to attending a parent –teacher conference. In the blanks, students are encouraged to fill in additional activities they did which relate to parent engagement.
4. Periodically remind students to update their checklists. If you hear a student refer to something they did at their child's school, ask *"Did you record that on the checklist?"*

Handout: Parent Engagement Checklist

We want you to be engaged in your child's education. During this year while you are in the parent English class, we expect you to do each of the following activities at least once. Please keep this sheet in your notebook and record the dates when you meet these goals. When you have completed all these activities, show this to your English teacher.

Activity	Date (you can record more than one)
Attend a parent-teacher conference	
Go to an event at my child's school	
Talk in person, by text or on phone to my child's teacher	
Attend a parent council meeting	
Go to a Boston public library with my children	
Go to a museum with my children	
Other	
Other	

ACTIVITY #2: WHAT DID YOUR PARENTS DO AT YOUR SCHOOL?

Rationale:

Expectations of parents in relation to their children's schools and schooling vary from culture to culture. In this first of three activities about expectations of parents, students reflect on ways in which their parents were involved in their education and what the schools they attended expected of their parents.

Student Objectives:

- Students will be able to name and share ways in which their parents were involved in their education.
- Students will show understanding of the concept of expectations by being able to name one expectation their schools had of their parents.
- Students will be able to ask questions of a partner and report their answers back to the group.

Materials:

- Handout: What Did Your Parents Do at Your School?

Activity Outline:

1. Explain objectives.
2. Explain that you want students to remember what their parents at their schools when they were young. Assign partners and distribute the handout What Did Your Parents Do at Your School? Explain that you will stop after Part I and students will report to the group what their partner said. The handout instructs students to "take notes" on what their partner says to facilitate reporting back. Students may need examples of what taking notes mean.
3. Have students complete the handout which asks them to list three things their parents did in relation to their schools. (If a student is having trouble with this, they could do a list instead of things their parents did **not** do.) Go around the class and have students share their lists, making sure to note what country they are from. Encourage them to tell stories about something their parents did or didn't do. Ask whether there seem to be differences depending on the different home country.
4. Write key word expectations on the board and explain it. A simple explanation is that it means what you want and believe someone will do. Stress that in different countries and cultures, there are different expectations for parents in relation to their children's education. Have parents complete and then read aloud to the group the following sentence:

When I was in elementary school, the school expected my parents to _____.

Follow-up:

- For more practice with the meaning of “expect”, write on the board three sentences in which you outline your expectations of your students. For example:

I expect you to come to class at least 75% of the time.

I expect you to do your homework.

I expect you to call me when you can't come to class.

Ask students to write three sentences about what they expect of you, as teacher.

- Encourage students to tell their children stories about what it was like when they went to school.

Handout: What Did Your Parents Do at Your School?

Part I: Discuss with your partner the following questions. Then you will report back to the group what your partner said. Make notes on what your partner says. This will make it easier to report back to the group.

Did your parents ever go to your school? _____ What did they do there?

Did your parents help you with your homework? _____

Did your parents meet with your teachers? _____

Did your parents care if you went to school every day? _____

Who took more interest in your school, your mother or your father? _____

Report back to the group what your partner said.

Part II: Write a list of three things your parents to help with school.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

ACTIVITY #3: U.S. SCHOOLS EXPECT PARENTS TO BE PARTNERS

Note to Teachers: Because it is a crucial concept, this activity has many parts and will take a number of classes to complete in full if all the materials listed are used.

Rationale:

Many countries that our students come from expect parents to pay for their children's uniforms, books, supplies, and perhaps even for school itself. They don't necessarily expect that parents will help their children improve their academic skills. In the U.S., schools expect parents to not only help their children with their homework, but also to help them review and practice material they are learning in school. The catch phrase used is "parents as partners" and the theory, supported by considerable research, is that when parents are involved in their children's learning, children do better in school and in life.

Student Objectives:

- Students will be able to name at least two of the expectations U.S. schools have of parents.
- Students will be able to name at least two examples of parents as partners in their children's education.
- Students will increase their reading fluency.

Materials:

- Foto-Novela: [Get Involved](#). This booklet is available as a bilingual English/Spanish PDF from the National Center for Families Learning, <https://www.familieslearning.org/pdf/novel1.pdf>
Free copies are available of this and two other Foto-Novelas for the price of shipping. There is a video option which allows students to listen to the text as they view the pictures or as they read along. There is also a useful Practitioners Guide free to download.
- Handout A: [U.S. Schools & Schools in Your Country—Expectations for Parent Participation](#).
- Handouts B and C: [Tell Us About Your Involvement](#)
- Handout D: [You Are a Partner in Your Child's Education](#)
- Handout E: [What Should I Do?](#) (For additional contextualized practice with the modal should.)
- Colorin Colorado website <https://www.colorincolorado.org/>

Activity Outline:

1. Explain objectives.
2. Review the meaning of **expectations**, referring to Activity #1, and add the key concepts **parent involvement** and **partners**. Use a variety of examples to explain

the concepts.

3. Do a group brainstorm: *What does your child's school expect you to do?* List responses on the board.
4. Distribute Get Involved and begin to read it slowly. Alternately share your screen and read together. You will pause every couple of pages for discussions and exercises around content. Before starting, give students a brief background on the characters:

Celia Morales is a mother from El Salvador. She has two sons, Roberto (11 years old) and Jaime (8 years old). She and the children have only been in the U.S. for 8 months so the school system is still very new to them. Her husband Ramon has been in the US longer and works as a furniture maker. Carmen is her very nice Cuban neighbor who has lived in the U.S. for more than 15 years. Both Carmen's children are now grown up.

Read to the top frame on page 5. Pause frequently to ask questions that help students make connections between the story and their own experience.

5. Pause when you get to page 5 and distribute Handout A: U.S. Schools & Schools in Your Country. It asks students first to list what schools in their countries expect of parents. Then they list what expectations American schools have of parents based on what they have just read in Get Involved. Pair students up, with a partner from a different country, if possible to share what they have written. Circulate to help make corrections.
6. Return to Get Involved. Review briefly the first five pages, then read together up to the top of page 9. Do a quick Yes/No vote by raising hands. Ask, *Are you a teacher to your children?* If there is a difference of opinion, have students defend their positions.
7. Group Discussion: *What does it mean when the teacher Mrs. Porter says, "Parents are their children's first teachers"?*

Note to teachers: There is an entire unit in this curriculum titled *You Are Your Child's First Teacher* (Topic 3, Supporting Children's Learning, Unit 1). Activity #1 in the unit references video and print resources, as well as additional class activities on this topic.

8. Stop at the end of page 11. Distribute Handouts B and C: Tell Us About Your Involvement. The first handout (B) asks students to write a list of ways they have been involved with their child's school. The second one (C) asks students to write a paragraph on the same topic. Beginning students can just do Handout B. Intermediate students can be directed to choose one of the examples they have

listed in Handout B to develop into the paragraph (Handout C.) After students have corrected their paragraphs, invite them to share their stories with the class.

9. For additional reading practice, have student read the foto-novela aloud in pairs up to page 11. Assign each pair several pages to practice. Circulate to help with pronunciation. When students feel comfortable with their assigned sections, have them perform their sections in sequence for the whole class.
10. Distribute Handout D: What Does it Mean to be a Partner in Your Child's Education. First do a mini grammar lesson on the meaning of the modal should if it hasn't been covered. Then have parents complete it individually (or do as homework). Read each statement aloud and do a **vote with your feet** exercise. Put an AGREE sign up in one corner of the room and a DISAGREE sign up in another. Read each statement aloud and have students go stand in the Agree or Disagree corner. If the classroom is too small for this technique, ask for a show of hands for Agree/Disagree. Where there are differences of opinion, have students explain their viewpoint.
11. Play **Telephone** with some of the statements about parents as partners from Handout D to practice listening/speaking skills and to reinforce the content. Divide students into teams of four or five and have each team stand in a line. Whisper the statement you have chosen to the first person in each line. They then repeat it to the next person, etc. The last person in line says what they heard. Write it on the board and compare with the original statement which you also write on the board. Let the group decide which team wins, e.g. which team ended up with a statement which was closest to your original. Play this several times, modifying the difficulty of the statement depending on the level of your group and encouraging parents to modify their line-up if they want.

Note to teachers: This is a good game to use to reinforce any content you want while building listening/speaking skills.

12. Have students explore the [Colorín Colorado website](#), the **For Families** tab. There is a wealth of material here, in both English and Spanish, about how parents can forge partnerships with teachers and help their children succeed in school.

Follow-Up Activities:

- If students are enjoying the foto-novela, finish reading it together aloud. It provides a useful review of school structure and school personnel, and it expands upon the idea of parent partnerships.
- For additional grammar practice following the Agree/Disagree exercise, two extension activities were developed by Lisa Garrone, Program Coordinator, ABCD/Southside Head Start.

- a. For practice with the modal “should,” use the contextualized case studies in Handout E: What Should I Do?
- b. Have intermediate students add on “because” clauses to each of the statements from Handout D which they agreed with.
Example: Parents should read with their children at home every day
because it will help them be better readers.

Handout A: U.S. Schools & Schools in Your Country

Expectations for Parent Participation¹

Directions: In the first column, write the name of your country. List some things that schools in your country expect parents to do. In the second column, list some things that Carmen says is expected of parents in the U.S.

My country: _____	United States
--------------------------	----------------------

¹ Adapted from the National Center for Families Learning, Practitioner Guide

HANDOUT B: Tell Us About Your Involvement (Fill out a Chart)

Directions: Fill in the chart below. Tell us about ways in which you were involved in your child's education and how your child felt about it. The first row is filled in for you as an example.

MY INVOLVEMENT IN MY CHILD'S EDUCATION

What you did	How your child felt about it
1. I went to Family Night at my son's school	1. He was happy we did activities together.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

HANDOUT C: Tell Us About Your Involvement (Write a story)

In the story, the teacher, Mrs. Porter, tells the mother, Mrs. Morales, that her sons will do better if she is involved with their education. Do you agree? How do your children feel when you come to their school? How do they feel when you ask them about school or you help them with their homework?

Describe a situation in which you were involved in your child's education. Write a paragraph about what you did and how your child felt about it.

Handout D: You Are a Partner in Your Child's Education

Directions: Read each of the statements below. Write whether you Agree or Disagree with each statement.

1. Parents should teach their children colors, shapes, numbers and letters before they start kindergarten.
2. Parents should teach their children to read before they start kindergarten.
3. Parents should start reading books to their children when they are about six months old.
4. Parents should read with their children at home every day.
5. Parents should only read to their children in English.
6. Parents should talk to their children's teachers once a year.
7. Parents should make sure children finish their homework every night.
8. If a child can't do his homework, the parent should do it for him.
9. Parents should allow children to watch as much television as they want as long as they finish their homework.
10. Parents should let their children participate in extra school activities.
11. Parents should make sure their children eat breakfast and get to school on time every day.
12. Parents should attend Parent-Teacher conferences.
13. Parents should only ask teachers about how their children behave in class.

Handout E: What Should I Do?²

Directions: Read each situation and then give advice by writing a list of sentences using **should** and **shouldn't**.

1. My son has always liked school, but lately he doesn't want to go. Every morning, he complains that he's too tired or doesn't feel well. He doesn't want to get out of bed. When he comes home from school, he's very quiet. I ask him, "What is the matter?" and he tells me that nothing is wrong, but I know there must be a problem. What should I do?
2. My daughter is 5 years old and is going to start kindergarten soon. The teacher and all the other children speak English. My daughter only speaks Amharic, the language of our country, Ethiopia. I'm worried about my daughter because she won't understand anything in school. How can I help her? Her preschool teacher says she is preparing the children to learn to read by reading to them. But the books are all in English, so my daughter will not learn anything. How can I help my daughter learn to read?

²Developed by Lisa Garonne, Program Coordinator, ABCD/Southside Head Start

ACTIVITY #4: USING THE INFINITIVE TO THINK ABOUT THE FAMILY/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Rationale:

This activity features a contextualized grammar lesson on using the infinitive. After teaching the form, it asks parents to think about what it takes for students to be successful in school by stressing the partnerships between parents, teachers and children.

Student Objectives:

- Students will be able to write grammatically correct sentences using the infinitive
- Students will be able to state in writing their ideas about what parents, students and teachers need to do so that children are successful in school.

Materials:

- Handout: School Success and Using the Infinitive
- Attachment: sample summary of class ideas

Activity Outline:

1. Explain objectives.
2. Distribute the Handout: School Success and Using the Infinitive. Go through the examples, stressing that the infinitive is always To and the root form of the verb; it doesn't change. Have students work individually on the first page and a half of the handout and circulate to help make corrections as they go along. Tell students to stop before they start writing their ideas about school success.
3. Have students share some of their sentences in which they have used the infinitive with the verbs like, want and need. Allow time for discussion and comparisons.
4. Introduce the second half of the handout, where students begin to write their ideas about school success, by passing out index cards and asking students to answer the question, *Who is responsible for a child doing well in school?* Go around the room and have students share their answers. Hopefully what will emerge is that parents, teachers and children are all responsible; they have to work together as a team.
5. Have students complete the rest of the handout in which they write sentences about what parents, students and teachers need to do to promote school success. Use whatever structure will work best for the students to do this. First drafts could be done as homework, for example, or ideas (and grammar) could be compared after each section is finished. Students could share their sentences with a partner or small group to make corrections, only showing them to you for a final edit.
6. Once everyone has completed and corrected sentences, attention should shift to sharing the ideas themselves. Sentences can be written by either the teacher or the students themselves on easel paper or on the board. As the process progresses, ask

students to share only those sentences which contain a different idea. Discuss the ideas, asking, for example, how many agree or disagree that this is important.

7. Final step: take all the student sentences and type them up. A sample from a recent parent ESOL class is attached for teachers to see. It is probably better not to show these sentences to your students as you want them to come up with their own ideas. Hand the class back their ideas and read over together. For more practice writing, some of the sentences could be used in a dictation exercise.

Follow-up:

Show student work by doing a bulletin board with the class ideas about what parents, children and teachers need to do in order for a child to be successful in school. Visually represent the concept of working as a team. One teacher did this by having each group be one branch on a big tree.

Handout: School Success and Using the Infinitive³

When you have two verbs close to each other, the second one is usually the infinitive. In English you form the infinitive by using the word TO in front of the root form of the verb. Never put ING, S, ED, or any other ending on the infinitive.

Here are some examples. The verbs are underlined.

1. I like to listen to the news in English.
2. When I was little, I needed to wear a leg brace.
3. My son hopes to get a bicycle for his birthday.
4. I really want to buy my own home someday.

➤ **Now you write some sentences using some of the following words, followed by an infinitive.**

(What do you like to do? What do your kids like to do? What did you like to do when you were very little? What would you like to do in the future?)

like: _____

likes: _____

liked: _____

would like: _____

(What do you need to do in order to reach your goals? What do your children need to do in order to be good students? What did parents, children and teachers need to do when you were a young child in your country?)

need: _____

needs: _____

needed: _____

³Lesson developed by Alice Levine, former Family Education Curriculum Specialist, Department of Family and Student Engagement, Boston Public Schools.

What is something you want to do someday? What are some things that your children want to do in the future? What did you want to do or what did you want to be when you were little?

want: _____

wants: _____

wanted: _____

➤ Now that you've practiced writing sentences, write about your ideas about school success. Remember to use the infinitive where necessary.

In order to be successful in school, what are things that children need to do?

1.

2.

3.

In order to help their children to be successful in school, what are some things that parents need to do?

1.

2.

3.

In order to help their children to be successful in school, what are some things that teachers need to do?

1.

2.

3.

Sample: It Takes a Team: Our Class Ideas About Promoting Success in School

In order to be successful in school, what are some things children need to do?

- Children need to do their homework.
- They need to pay attention in class.
- Children need to read a lot of books at home.
- They need to have good attendance.
- They need to have good relationships with their classmates and teachers.
- Children need to read at least 30 minutes every night.
- Children need to ask questions and to participate in class.
- Children need to organize their desks and backpacks.
- Children need to share their opinions.

To help children be successful in school, what are some things parents need to do?

- They have to have a regular schedule at home for their children.
- Parents need to help their children with their homework.
- They need to listen to them, to talk about their progress and to support them.
- Parents need to talk to their children's teachers about how the children are doing
- Parents need to help read books with their children.
- Parents need to watch educational TV programs with their children.
- Parents need to participate in their children's schools.
- Parents need to talk to their children about college.
- Parents need to teach their children to be responsible about school.

To help children be successful in school, what are some things teachers need to do?

- They need to pay attention when the children ask something about the class.
- The teacher needs to have patience with the children.
- The teacher needs to explain slowly.
- The teacher needs to encourage the students to express their opinions.
- The teachers need to support them and help them with their difficulties.
- Teachers need to set a good example for the children.
- Teachers need to know their subjects well.

ACTIVITY #5: TALK TO YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT SCHOOL

(Can be used/adapted for use with beginning level students)

Rationale:

A very important way parents can be partners in their children's education is to talk to their children about school every day.

Student Objectives:

- Students will talk more often with their children about school.
 - Students will gain new insights into their child's experience in school. ▪
- Students will be able to correctly use the third person singular in speech.

Materials:

- Handout: Learn About Your Child's School as the Year Begins
- Handout: Talk to Your Child About School

Activity Outline:

1. Explain objectives.
2. Opening class discussion question: Why is it important to talk to your children about school? List reasons students give. Explain that one important way they can be partners in their children's education is to **talk to them every day about school**. It shows you are interested, that you value school, and it is a good way to learn about your child's school. Stress that students who do not have children can and should talk to their young relatives about school.
3. Assign the two handouts as homework, perhaps one or two weeks apart, depending on how often the class meets. When students have done the assignment, which they typically enjoy because it involves their children, they report back to the whole group what they have learned.
4. Before students share orally what they have learned from their children about school, review or teach the third person singular, past and present, and review or teach pronouns. Students will be using those grammatical forms to report on what they learned from their children. For example: "He has 20 children in his class," or "She did a science experiment in school today."
5. Summary discussion question: *When is a good time to talk to your children about school?*

Follow-Up:

- Use the two questionnaires as the basis of a writing assignment: students interview their children and use the answers to write a biography about their child's

experience in school.

- The second handout, Talk to Your Child About School, could be given as homework several times over the course of the school year.
- Generate as a class good questions to ask children about school. Type up those student generated questions and use them for a new “Talk to Your Children About School” assignment.

Handout: Learn About Your Child's School as the Year Begins

Directions: Choose one of your children to talk to. Or use a separate form for each child. Ask them these questions. You can talk to them in whatever language you want. Write and practice the answers in English. Tell us what you learned in our next class.

1. What grade are you in?

2. What is your teacher's name?

3. What is your room number?

4. How many children do you have in your class?

5. What do you do first period?

6. What is your favorite subject? Why?

7. Do you like school this year? Why or why not?

Handout: Talk to Your Child About School

Directions: Choose one of your children to talk to. Or use a separate form for each child. Ask them these questions. You can talk to them in whatever language you want. Write and practice the answers in English. Tell us what you learned in our next class.

1. What did you do in school today?
2. Tell me about one new thing you learned today?
3. What did you read today?
4. What was easy for you today?
5. What was hard for you today?
6. Tell me a question you asked the teacher today?
7. What was your favorite part of the day?

ACTIVITY #6: BEFORE YOUR CHILD STARTS KINDERGARTEN

(Can be used/adapted for use with beginning level students)

Rationale:

Kindergarten has become increasingly academic in the last decade. There is a commonly recognized set of skills schools want children to have before they start kindergarten. This is referred to as kindergarten readiness. If you google "What should my child be able to do when he starts kindergarten?" numerous very similar lists appear. Because of cultural differences, many immigrant parents don't realize what they are "supposed" to teach their children at home, even though the vast majority of them are fully capable of doing so.

Student Objectives:

- Students will be able to name three things American schools expect children to know when they start kindergarten.
- Students will recognize that they can teach their children these skills at home.
- Students will be able to repeat at home several learning activities that build kindergarten readiness.

Materials:

- Handout: Kindergarten Readiness Skills (good for both beginning and intermediate levels)
- Miscellaneous art supplies, dried beans for counting, children's books, paper bags
- Examples of children's picture books about shapes, numbers, colors.

Activity Outline:

1. Explain objectives.
2. Write the keyword **expectations** and its definition on the board: Expectations=what you want and hope someone will do.
3. Opening brainstorm: *What do kindergarten teachers in the U.S. expect children will already know when they start kindergarten?* List student ideas on board.
4. Distribute Handout: Kindergarten Readiness Skills. Have students guess what the term kindergarten readiness means and then read over list together. Demonstrate each of the items on the list as you read it.
5. Explain that many immigrant parents don't know that these are things Kindergarten teachers hope parents will teach their children at home before they start school. Refer back to previous discussions in Activity #1 about different expectations of parents in different countries.
6. Read the readiness skills listed on the handout again, one at a time, and ask the same

question after each one: *Can you teach your child this at home? Raise your hands if Yes.* Make sure to stress that they don't have to teach their children these things in English. If they teach their children how to do these things in their home language, they will quickly learn the English words once they start Kindergarten. Remind parents: You are your child's first teacher.

7. Have parents practice themselves some activities they could do at home to help children learn these early literacy/numeracy skills.

- **Example:** Show them how they could use a pile of dried beans or pennies to have their children count out 20 beans or do other simple grouping and counting activities.
- **Example:** Hand them something red (or rectangular) and ask them to find other things that are red (or rectangular) in the room.
- **Example:** Do a role play of a parent (you) reading to a child (a student). The parent asks the child questions about the story, has the child turn the pages, asks the child to describe what is happening in the pictures., and pauses to have the child count objects in the pictures or identify colors.

Follow-Up:

- A good resource for parents for activities with preschool children is the National Center for Families Learning toolkits, which are in both Spanish and English.
<https://www.familieslearning.org/resources/early-childhood>.
- Invite a kindergarten teacher in to class to describe what she would like children to know and be able to do when they come into her classroom.

Handout: Kindergarten Readiness Skills

Here are some of things Kindergarten teachers would like children to know before they start kindergarten. Parents can teach their children these things at home before they start school.

- Recognize upper and lower case letters.
- Know the sounds of letters that begin words
- How to write some letters, especially their own name
- How to read a book (not the actual words)

How to turn pages

Knows that words go from left to right and top to bottom

How to retell a story

- How to recognize some words they see a lot, like Stop or Exit
- How to count to 20 and know that numbers refer to objects
- Colors
- Shapes
- How to hold and use a crayon or a pencil
- How to use scissors
- How to pay attention to a story for 15 minutes or more
- How to follow simple directions
- How to express their feelings in words

ACTIVITY #7: PARENT LEADERSHIP

Rationale:

There are two main types of parental engagement: engagement in a child's learning and engagement in a child's school, here called parent leadership. The former is the more important in terms of supporting a child's success in school and has been addressed in the previous three activities. Here parents learn about parent leadership opportunities specific to their children's schools.

Student Objectives:

- Students will be able to name two different parent leadership opportunities in their child's school.
- Students will understand what a CORI is
- Students will complete a simple research project about their child's school
- Students will attend a parent meeting at their child's school

Materials:

- Description of School Councils from the BPS website. Go to <http://www.bostonpublicschools.org> and search for school parent councils
- Handout: Research What You Can Do to Help at your Child's School
- Handout: Attending a School Parent Council or Site Council Meeting
- Information from BPS website about Parent University
<https://www.bostonpublicschools.org/parentuniversity>
-

Activity Outline:

5. Explain objectives.
6. Write key phrase **Parent Leadership** on the board. Ask students what they think it means. A good way to explain Parent Leadership is to say it is when a parent gets involved in something which helps the whole school. Sometimes this is called parent involvement or parent engagement or parent volunteers.
7. Write Parent Council and School Site Council on the board. Explain that these are groups in all Boston schools which parents can participate in. Ask students whether any of them have ever gone to a Parent Council or School Site Council meeting at their child's school. If Yes, have them explain what the meeting was like.
8. Distribute the brief description from the BPS website of School and Parent Councils to read together. Some of the vocabulary will have to be explained. Or, go online to this thipage. If students do it from their phones or chromebooks, then students can read the text in their home language, so the activity works better with beginnstudents.
9. Explain to students that in addition to these Councils, each school has other ways

parents can help the school throughout the school year. For example, maybe parents can help with a Book Fair or a Teacher Appreciation breakfast or can be a chaperone on a school trip or read in the classroom. But stress that each school is different and it is good to find out what parent leadership (involvement/engagement) opportunities exist in their child's school.

10. Explain what a CORI is. Write **CORI** on the board. CORI stands for Criminal Offender Record Info. Anyone who works with children has to submit a CORI. This is for the safety of the children. The parent (or potential employee) fills out a form and BPS (or the potential employer) checks to make sure the parent has no relevant criminal record and is not a sexual offender. BPS schools require that parents submit a CORI before they can be a chaperone on a school field trip or volunteer in a classroom. It is not required to attend parent meetings, but it is required any time parents will be in contact with children. In some parent ESOL classes, the teacher will get the CORI form BPS uses and distribute it to students, collect the voluntarily filled out forms, and hand them in to the appropriate person in the school office. They do this to facilitate parents being able to get involved in their children's school.
11. Distribute Handout: Research What Can You Do to Help at Your Child's School?
 - Go over with students what they are supposed to find out. Practice the questions and elicit suggestions about how to get the information. For example, when parents bring a child to school in the morning, they could go into the school office and ask the school secretary or principal. Encourage them to explain that this is their homework for English class.
 - Give students a week to complete the assignment.
 - Have them share the results of their research with the class.
12. If your class is on-site in a school, another and easier way to get this information is to invite the principal or parent coordinator to the class to answer the questions posed on the handout. Again, students could practice asking the questions beforehand.
13. Give each student the assignment of attending a School Parent Council meeting or a School Site Council meeting in their child's school. Encourage parents from the class to go with a classmate. Give them the Handout: Attending a School Parent Council or Site Council Meeting and go over the assignment with them. Ask whether any will have a problem completing this assignment, for example, because of their work schedule, and if so, help brainstorm another way they could get the same information.
14. Schools typically have a regular monthly time and place for parent council meetings. Remind them in class about upcoming meetings and allow time for parents who attended the meetings to report back to classmates what was discussed.
15. Introduce students to the BPS Parent University through the BPS website. Numerous workshops for parents are offered on parenting, advocacy and leadership. Many of the workshops are on line, and several all day conference sessions are in person.. Explore the website together or give students a summary of what Parent University is and what it offers. Ask whether any parents in the class

have attended Parent University sessions in the past.

Follow-up:

- Invite to your class as speakers other parents who are active in school leadership roles. Have them share their experiences and encourage other parents to take on leadership roles. The parent coordinator at the school could help you identify parent leaders.
- Remind them about any upcoming Parent University sessions. Stress that Parent Leadership/Parent involvement is often a topic offered in workshops.

Handout: Research What You Can Do to Help at your Child's School

Your Name: _____ School Name: _____

Directions: *Ask the Principal, Parent Coordinator, School Secretary or other parents you know at your child's school. See if you can find out the answers to the following questions.*

- 1) When does the School Parent Council meet? Where does it meet?
- 2) How many parents usually attend Parent Council meetings?
- 3) What language is the meeting in? Is there translation?
- 4) When does the School Site Council (SSC) meet?
- 5) What other things can parents do during the school year to help the school? _____

- 6) What parent activities do I need a CORI for?
- 7) How do I submit the CORI?

Handout: Attending a School Parent Council or Site Council Meeting

Directions: Go to a Parent Council or School Site Council meeting at your child's school. After you attend the meeting, fill out the following worksheet and give it back to your teacher.

Name: _____ **Date of Meeting:** _____

I attended a school Parent Council meeting/School Site Council meeting. (circle one)

2) Approximately how many parents were at the meeting? _____

3) Did you know other parents at the meeting? _____

4) What language was the meeting in? _____

Was there translation? _____

5) List three subjects discussed at the meeting

• _____ •

_____ •

6) Were you able to understand the discussion? _____

7) Do you think you will go to these meetings in the future? Why or why not?
