



english for **NEW
BOSTONIANS**

ESOL for Parents and Caregivers Curriculum

Supporting Children's Learning: **Unit 1 *You Are Your Child's First Teacher***

Activities:

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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!

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ACTIVITY #1: UNIT INTRODUCTION: YOU ARE YOUR CHILD'S FIRST TEACHER

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

Rationale:

That parents are the primary teachers of their children is a new idea to many of our students who do not view themselves in any way as teachers. We want parents to accept and take pride in this concept, and also to learn new tools to help them be more conscious about their teaching role.

Student Objectives:

- Students will be able to explain the meaning of the statement *You are your child's first teacher*.
- Students will build listening comprehension skills.

Materials:

- One minute YouTube video: “ [Kindergarten Readiness-Your Child's First Teacher.](#)”

Activity Outline:

1. Explain objectives.
2. Write on board: *You are your child's first teacher*. Ask whether anyone has ever heard this statement. Ask what students think the statement means.
3. Vote with your feet: designate Agree and Disagree corners of the room. Re-read the statement, *You are your child's first teacher*, and ask students to go stand in either the Agree or Disagree corner. Ask for volunteers to explain their reasoning.
4. Point out the double meaning of “first.” First means at the beginning, before your child starts school. This is a particularly important time because from birth to age three is the period of the greatest brain development in the life of a human being. It also means first as in primary or most important, even after your child starts school. Make this point by doing some simple math on the board with the class:

How many hours per day are children in school? 6

How many hours per day are children at home? 18

How many hours per day do children sleep? 8

If you subtract 8 from 18, you get 10. Do students spend more hours awake at home or at school?

Point out that this doesn't include all the weekends, school vacations and summer

time children spend at home with their families, not their teachers.

5. Watch the YouTube one minute video: ["Kindergarten Readiness- Your Child's First Teacher."](#) While the English narration is not easy for beginning students, the visuals of parents with their children demonstrate the points being made. Watch this video through several times so students understand increasing amounts of the content. Have them note vocabulary they don't understand to ask about afterwards. Remember anytime you show a video you can slow down the speed and put English captions on to make it more comprehensible.
6. Have student list on the board what they saw parents doing with their children in the video. For each action listed, ask what the parent are teaching the child.
7. Explain the concept of brain development.
8. Preview this unit: explain you will spend several classes that relate to this important idea that you are your child's first teacher. Write the topics to come on the board:
 - Talking with your child
 - Your home as a learning place
 - Family activities
 - Story telling

ACTIVITY #2: TALKING WITH YOUR CHILD

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

Rationale:

Having conversations with children is a primary way in which parents serve as teachers of their children. It helps children develop their language and thinking skills. It builds a host of social/emotional skills and connections between parent and children.

Student Objectives:

- Students will be able to give at least two reasons why it is important to talk with their children.
- Students will increase the amount of time they spend talking with their children.

Materials:

- Handout: How much time do you spend talking with your child?
- YouTube Video: [Boston Basics Series Video #3: "Talk, Sing, Point."](#)

Activity Outline:

1. Explain objectives.
2. Elicit from the class thoughts about the question: *Why is it important to talk with your child?* List reasons given on the board. Focus on those reasons which fall into the "language development" or "social and emotional development" category. If you want the students to have additional writing practice, have them copy the reasons listed.
3. Explain the assignment students are about to do. They are going to guess or estimate how much time a day they spend actually talking with their children. Then they are going to think back to the day before and go through the day hour by hour, estimating how much time during that hour they actually spent talking with their children.
4. Give examples through very short role plays of what is meant by talking with your children to underscore the point that giving a command does not count. Write on the board: *Is this talking with your child?* Ask for a volunteer to come up and play the role of your child.

Example: Ask the volunteer to go out in the hall. Then call after her in an annoyed voice: "Jennifer, come eat your breakfast. We have to leave for school in five minutes!" Ask, *Is this talking with your child?*

After each role play, repeat the question, *Is this talking with your child?* Ask for a show of hands Yes or No. Feel free to make this funny and dramatic. Students love it when their teachers ham it up. After you have done a couple of role plays demonstrating things that do not count as talking with your child, ask for student volunteers to do a couple more.

5. Distribute the handout: How much time do you spend talking with your child?
When students have completed it, have them share their answers to the last question on the handout: What did they learn? Review the reasons students listed that it was important to talk to your child. Point out that talking to your child, in whatever language you feel most comfortable, is a good way to build a child's vocabulary and overall literacy skills.
6. As a group, watch the three minute video, part of the Boston Basics Series, called [Talk, Sing, Point.](#) Watch it through several times for better comprehension. Students could also watch it individually on mobile devices, assuming they have headphones. Ask parents to give examples they remember from the video of what parents were doing with their children. List those on the board. For each one, ask *"What is the parent teaching the child?"*

Handout: How much time do you spend talking with your child?

- 1) Choose one of your children. Write the child's age: _____
- 2) **Guess** how many minutes (or hours) you spend on a school day talking with that child.
Write your guess here: _____
Number of minutes per day
- 3) Fill out the Talking Log below. See how many minutes you actually talked with your child yesterday.

HOW MUCH TIME DID I SPEND TALKING WITH MY CHILD YESTERDAY?

	Number Minutes Spent Talking with Child
7:00-8:00 am	
8:00-9:00 am	
9:00-10:00 am	
10:00-11:00 am	
11:00-12:00 am	
12:00-1:00 pm	
1:00-2:00 pm	
2:00-3:00 pm	
3:00 -4:00 pm	
4:00-5:00 pm	
5:00-6:00 pm	
7:00-8:00 pm	
8:00-9:00 pm	
Total Number of Minutes	

4) Look back at your guess. Compare your answer with the total number of minutes recorded on your Log. Was your guess right? **Yes** or **No** Almost Right? **Yes** or **No**

5) What did you learn? _____

ACTIVITY #3: HOME AS A LEARNING PLACE: TOOL KIT FOR LEARNING AT HOME

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

Rationale:

It is important to help parents view their home as a learning environment and to see themselves as teachers. As always, it is preferable to have students start with their own ideas, in this case what they would define as educational tools.

Student Objectives:

- Students will be able to name at least five educational tools they have at home.
- Students will be able to describe at least one activity they do with their children using an educational tool they have at home.
- Students will build oral language skills.

Materials:

- Collected shoe boxes, or similarly sized boxes for every student
- Art materials to decorate the boxes (markers, stickers, pictures, fancy paper, etc)
- Handout: Is Your Home a Learning Place? A Survey
- Supplemental Texts:
 - Booklet: [Families Learn and Grow Together](#), produced by the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, available as a PDF in English, Spanish and Portuguese..
 - Calendar:, [30 Days of Families Learning Together](#) available in English and Spanish, from the National Center for Families Learning,

Activity Outline:

1. Explain objectives.
2. Opening discussion questions:
 - a. *Do your children learn at home? What kinds of things do they learn?*
 - b. *What tools do you have at home to help your children learn?*
3. Make and fill a learning at home tool box: This is an arts and crafts activity to help build an appreciation for educational materials that students already have on hand at home or which they could have at home to make the home environment more educational.
 - a. Ask students to bring in a shoe box or other box about shoe box size. You may want to collect some boxes yourself to bring in.
 - b. Have each student decorate the tool box with markers, stickers, pictures from magazines, wrapping paper, photos, their name, etc. and label the box "Learning at Home Tool Box."

4. Tell students that their homework is to look around their homes and put into the decorated box items which they have and which they view as educational tools for teaching their children. Show a couple of examples, for instance a measuring cup or a spool of thread or a family photo. Their task is to bring in the tool box the next class filled with at least three educational items they found in their homes. You might want to do this and share as well if you have children at home or grandchildren near by.
5. Show and Tell: Students go around, taking items out of their Tool Box and explaining how they use these items they to teach their children. Make a list of these items and their uses on the board as students show what they brought. Leave the list visible for students to refer to when they do the next step, a survey of educational items that might be found in the home.
6. Alternative to Individual Tool Boxes: Rather than ask students to bring in objects from home, make an “ideas box” together in class, filling it with materials and images of everyday objects to use at home.
7. Distribute the handout Is Your Home a Learning Place? A Survey. It asks students to check off whether or not they have at home common educational materials like crayons, puzzles, paper. It also asks them to add in other educational items they may have from the previous Show and Tell activity. Read the survey aloud together, treating it as a vocabulary list before students begin to fill it out individually. If you have beginning students, have on hand an example of each of the tools to show or re-create the written educational tools list with a picture list.
8. Have students share with the whole group the sentence they circled at the end of the survey. Ask them to turn in the completed surveys so you have a sense of needs.
9. Group Brainstorm: Make a list on the board of activities parents could do at home with each of the tools listed on the survey. For more writing practice, have students copy the list in their notebooks.
10. Homework: Students do at least one activity with their children at home and report on it the next day in class.

Follow-Up:

- Learn and Grow Together is an excellent resource from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, (See above under Materials.) It can be used for a wide variety of follow-up activities on the topic of the home as a learning place or for supplemental independent reading for students. Available in English, Spanish and Portuguese, it describes interesting at home learning activities parents can do with their children, spanning ages from birth to 14.

Handout: Is Your Home a Learning Place? A Survey

Name: _____

Directions: Fill out the survey below. Write **Yes** or **No** if you have the tools listed in your house. Add in other educational tools you have at home. Remember what you and your classmates put in their tool boxes.

Educational Tools	Write Yes or No if you have these tools at home
Children's books	
Crayons or markers	
Pencils and pens	
Paper	
Family photos	
Scissors	
Glue	
Magnetic letters	
Playing cards	
Puzzles	
Board games	
Balls	
Other:	

Other:	
Other:	

Directions: Review your answers above. Circle the statement which is true for you:

I have many educational tools at home for teaching my children.

I think I should have more educational tools at home for teaching my children.

ACTIVITY #4: HOME AS A LEARNING PLACE: DAILY ROUTINES

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

Rationale:

Parents often do not realize that their everyday activities provide rich opportunities for teaching and learning. This activity validates the parents' role as their child's primary teacher by transforming a daily routine into a learning activity.

Student Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify learning opportunities that exists during the bedtime routine.
- Students will be able to use the simple present tense to talk about their bedtime routines with their children.
- Students will recognize that they are teachers.

Materials:

- Handout: My Bedtime Routines: A Learning Activity Worksheet

Activity Outline:

1. Explain objectives
2. Write on board and explain key concept: Daily Routine
3. Pair up students and have them describe to their partners their bedtime routines with their children. Tell them they don't have to write anything down, but to listen carefully to their partners because when the report back to the group, they will report on what their partner said.
4. Have students report back about their partner's bedtime routine. Record what they say on the board and highlight the use of the present tense.
5. Facilitate a group discussion about what learning activities could be incorporated from the routines parents have listed. Remind students that talking to your child is a learning activity.
Example: "I talk to my son about his day" could be added to the "take a bath" step of the bedtime routine.
6. Using the handout, have students write down their own bedtime routine, using the simple present in a list format and incorporating learning activities with some of the steps. With intermediate students, you can ask them to write in full sentences. They can work in pairs to help each other and you should circulate to assist. Before they start, write an example on the board which models the form of the worksheet.

Example: Bed Time Routine Steps Learning Activity I Do *My son puts on his pajamas. We talk about the colors in his pajamas.*

7. Homework: Ask students to try out their new routine. In the next class, have them report back how their “lessons” went.
8. Go through the same steps with another daily routine: Have students brainstorm a list of other daily routines, such as getting ready for school, doing homework, or eating dinner. Select one which all students have in common and repeat steps 3 through 7.

Handout: Bedtime Routines: A Learning Activity Worksheet

Bedtime Routine Steps	Learning Activity I Do.
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

ACTIVITY #5: FAMILY ACTIVITIES—THE FAMILY DINNER

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

Rationale:

For the last decade, research has suggested that children who eat dinners regularly with their parents are healthier, happier, do better in school and have increased chances of graduating from high school. Family dinners not only result in children eating healthier food, but provide opportunities for parents and children to talk with each other and learn from each other.

Student Objectives:

- Students will be able to identify at least two reasons why family dinners are beneficial.
- Students will learn different models for family dinners from their classmates and from role plays
- Students will practice note-taking, listening and speaking skills

Materials:

- Handout: Discussing Family Dinners
- Children's Book: Let's Eat, by Ana Zamorano.
- Handout: Role Play Cards
- Children's Poems: Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers—A Collection of Family Poems, by Mary Ann Hoberman,
- Food students have brought in to share (optional, but more fun), paper plates, plastic forks, cups, etc.

Activity Outline:

1. Explain objectives.
2. Write key concept Family Dinner on board and make sure students understand the concept. Note that family dinners would include anyone in the household, not just parents and their children, but other relatives and friends too.
3. Read the book Let's Eat, by Ana Zamorano, aloud to the class. Currently out of print, used editions of this picture book are available on Amazon and also at public libraries. There is also a Spanish edition. The book details with humor the efforts of a mother of a large extended family to get everyone together for family dinners. If you can't get multiple copies of the book, can use a YouTube [Read Aloud of Let's Eat](#)
4. Pair up students to discuss their experiences with family dinners, using the Handout: Discussing Family Dinners to guide their discussions. Tell them that they will report back to the group what their partner said. They may want to take notes

on what their partner says. Show an example on the board of what it means to take notes, e.g. if your partner says “My family eats together on Friday and Saturday nights” you just write down Friday and Saturday. You don’t have to write every word. Notes are just to help you remember.

5. As students report back, keep a list on the board/newsprint of what students talk about at family dinners. This is a key question on the handout. Review this list with the class once everyone has had a chance to report back.
6. Write the following statement on the board: ***Research says that when families eat together, children are happier, healthier and do better in school.*** Have students think about why this may be true. To facilitate this, put up three separate pieces of newsprint. Each one will have a different heading: Happier, Healthier, Do Better in School. Have the group brainstorm possible reasons in each category and list those reasons under the appropriate heading.
7. **Role play** a family dinner using Role Play Cards. This will only work with intermediate level students. Depending on the size of the class, everyone can be in the role play, or the class can be divided in half, with one half doing the role play and the other half as audience and then switching. Do the role play around a table or set of grouped desks to simulate a kitchen table. Actual food will make it more fun and realistic, so use food or snacks parents have brought in and have them set the table and put the food on it before you begin.
8. Once the group is seated around the table, distribute the role play cards. Explain to students this is who they will be in the role play. Give them a few minutes to read about their character and then have students go around and read their role cards aloud, so that everyone knows who they are.
9. Tell students to start, pretending that this is a real family dinner and actually eating. Circulate and whisper cues to various characters if necessary to help move the role play along.
10. After the role play, ask, *Was this anything like your actual family dinners? What was the same? What was different?*
11. Make copies, distribute and read together the humorous poem “Dinnertime” from Fathers, Mothers, Sisters, Brothers—A Collection of Family Poems, by Mary Ann Hoberman. Between the verses and the illustrations, a very funny chaotic scene of a family dinner is depicted.

Follow-up:

- In the next couple of weeks, during each class, ask for volunteers to share a story of a family dinner they have had. Use the same discussion questions on the handout as

prompts if necessary.

- See Topic 3, Unit 3: Reading with Children, Activity #9: **Having a Family Reading Night** for another important family activity to introduce to students.

Handout: Discussing Family Dinners

Directions: Talk with your partner about family dinners. Ask the questions below. Ask anything else that you are interested in. Listen to what your partner says. You can take notes if you wish to help you remember. Make sure you understand what your partner says. When you report back to the class, you will describe your partner's experience with family dinners.

Questions to guide your discussion:

Do you eat all together as a family? How often? Which days?

How many people eat together when you have family dinners? How long are the dinners? What do you usually eat?

What do you talk about?

Who talks the most? Who talks the least?

Is the television on or off when you eat dinner?

Role Play Cards

You are the mother. You try to cook healthy meals. You are taking English classes. You work on the weekends at MacDonalds. You want your children to eat more vegetables. At family dinners you like to ask your kids about what they are doing in school.	You are the father. You work in a restaurant. You love to play soccer on the weekends. You are worried about your mother in Mexico who is sick. You do not like it when your teenage daughter wants to text her friends while she is at the table. At family dinners, you like to tell talk about the restaurant where you work.	You are the grandmother who lives with the family. At family dinners, you like to tell stories about when you were a child in your country.
You are the teen-age daughter. You are 16. You like to play volleyball. You have lots of friends. You like to text with your friends all the time. You want to get a part time job after school. You also want to go out with your friends on the weekends. At family dinners you try to convince your parents to give you more independence.	You are the 12 year old son. You are in middle school. You just joined the soccer team at your school. Math is your favorite subject. You don't like doing homework. You don't like vegetables. You wish your family would eat at MacDonald's more. At family dinners you like to express your opinions.	You are a 9 year old girl in 4th grade. You love school and you love to read. At family dinners you like to ask your grandmother and your parents about the schools they went to when they were little. You also like to talk about your teacher who is very nice.
You are a three year old girl. You don't like to sit still at the table. You like carrots but you don't like cooked vegetables. You like dessert best. At family dinners you always ask a lot of questions.	You are the Uncle who lives with the family. You used to live in Los Angeles. You are new to Boston. You work as a house painter. You like music a lot and play guitar. At family dinners you like to tell your nieces and nephews about Los Angeles.	

ACTIVITY #6: MORE FAMILY ACTIVITIES

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

Rationale:

There are many different enjoyable and educational activities families can do together. Here students explore what their classmates do in order to get new ideas to try with their own families.

Student Objectives:

- Students will get to know their classmates better.
- Students will be able to identify at least five family activities
- Students will identify one new family activity they will try.
- Students will practice asking their classmates questions.

Materials:

- Handout: Family Activities: Find Someone Who....
- Handout: More Ideas for Family Activities
- Clipboards and name tags(optional, but makes activity easier)
- Small prizes for the winners (optional)
- Index cards

Activity Outline:

1. Explain objectives.
2. Introduce activity by saying that everyone in the class does different family activities. Today students are going to learn from each other.
3. Give out the Handout: Family Activities: Find Someone Who..... If you have less than 15 students in the class, you should either reduce the number of questions or change the rules so that students can write down the same name twice. Read it over as a group, clarifying both the directions for the game and vocabulary. Make sure everyone understands what they will be doing before you start. Stress that they shouldn't write down the names of people who answer No to a question. If you want intermediate students to practice forming questions, you can spend time before you begin the game having students generate the question they would ask for each item.

Example: Item number one: Find someone who goes to the park at least once a month with their children

Question to ask: Do you go to the park at least once a month with your children?

If you do not want to take the time for a review of question formation, allow

students to ask the questions any way they can, or adapt the handout so that questions are listed that students can simply read aloud.

4. How to play: Start the game (On your mark, Get Set, Go!) and call Time whenever you want. It says 15 minutes on the handout, but end it or extend it as you wish. To determine the winner(s), work backwards from 15. Ask *How many people filled in names for all 15 items? Raise your hands.* If no one got all 15 items filled in, ask *How many people filled in names for 14 items? Raise your hands.* Etc. The winner(s) are the people who correctly filled in the most items. To check answers, the winners read aloud each item, using the name they wrote down. For example: "Olga goes to the park at least once a month with her children." You then confirm with Olga that that is true and continue down the list. If the winner(s) repeat any names, they are disqualified. Most classes enjoy competitions and winners. Small prizes are much appreciated. However, you can also decide to end the game more simply. Just congratulate everyone for doing a great job and learning more about family activities.
5. Distribute the second interactive handout More Ideas for Family Activities. Go over it briefly to clarify what students are supposed to do and have them complete it.
6. Hand out index cards. Ask students to write down **one** new family activity they will do. Go around the room, with students reading aloud the activity they will try. List these by name on newsprint to save so you can continue to display the list over the next couple of classes as a reminder.

Follow-Up:

In the next few weeks, ask students to share a new family activity they have tried.

Handout: Family Activities: Find Someone Who.....

Directions: Walk around the room and talk to your classmates and your teacher in English. Find someone who can answer Yes to each of the following questions. Write their names in the blanks. You **can't** write the same person's name twice. You **can't** write your name. After 15 minutes, the person with the most names filled in wins.

Find someone who.....

1. goes to the park at least once a month with their children_____
2. goes to the library at least once a month with their children:_____
3. goes out to eat at restaurants with their children:_____
4. goes to visit relatives with their children: _____
5. has family dinners at least once a week: _____
6. goes on picnics with their children: _____
7. goes to the movies with their children: _____
8. cooks together with their children: _____
9. does housework together with their children: _____
10. does arts and crafts projects with their children: _____
11. plays board games or does puzzles with their children:_____
12. watches TV together as a family:_____
13. explores Boston with their children:_____
14. went to the Children's Museum with their children:_____
15. went to the Science Museum with their children:_____

Handout: More Ideas for Family Activities

What Can Your Family Do Together?

List three family activities you do now:

1.

2.

3.

Talk to your classmates. What family activities do they do? Add three more ideas for family activities you want to try.

1.

2.

3.