

FAMILY AND CAREGIVER ACTIVITY

September 2020

Supporting Young English Learners by Interviewing a Special Person

Regional Educational Laboratories
West, Northwest,
Northeast & Islands

From the National Center for Education Evaluation at IES

Families and caregivers, you play an important role in your child's language learning. The purpose of this activity is to help children develop their speaking, listening, and writing skills by interviewing a family member or friend and sharing what they learned. You will help your child prepare questions for the interview and think about how they will summarize the interview.

Keep in mind:

- You and your child can use your home language or English, whichever is strongest for you.
- Learning new words in your home language will also help your child with English.
- Enjoy this time with your child. Learning together is fun!

Why focus on speaking and writing?

Children strengthen oral and written language when talking with someone, taking notes, and summarizing what they learn.

Learning Goal: Children will strengthen their oral and written language skills

Grades: Kindergarten–5th grade

Suggested Materials: Writing paper, drawing paper, a pencil or a pen, crayons or chalk; consider a device to record the interview such as a cell phone

Let's get started!

Follow the steps below. See the back for additional language supports.

Step 1: Help your child **select a family member or friend**, and think together about what your child would like to know.



▶ **Step 2:** Help your child to **write interview questions**. Consider using the words **who, what, where, when, why, or how** as question starters. Perhaps watch an interview on TV together to see what kind of questions people ask.

Step 3: Have your child **interview a family member or friend**, in person or by phone. Encourage them to take notes as they ask the questions. Younger children may need your support in taking notes or remembering what was said.

Step 4: Have your child **summarize the interview**. For example, they can draw a picture or write a story about what they learned. You can offer writing support as they need it.

Step 5: Be sure to have them **present their writing** to you and the person they interviewed and have a conversation about what they learned.



Family and Caregiver Activity: Supporting Young English Learners by Interviewing a Special Person

Additional Language Supports

Consider having your child use the questions below as they interview an important person.

Suggestions for Interview Questions*
What was your childhood like? Who did you live with? Where did you live? What did you like to do?
What is your favorite memory?
Who is in your family?
Where else have you lived?
What experience did you learn a lot from?
Who is someone who has made a big difference in your life? Why?
What are some of your favorite foods? Sports? Animals?
What is your favorite game? TV show? Movie?
What do you do well? What is hard for you?
What kinds of jobs have you had?
If you could have one wish, what would it be?

**Note: Avoid questions that only have a yes or no answer.*

Offer your child the suggestions below for summarizing the interview in writing.

Ideas for Summarizing the Interview
Draw a picture of the person
Write a story or short description
Make a comic strip
Create a poster
Write a newspaper article
Write a biography
Tell somebody else the best things you learned