

Resources for Parents Who Don't Speak English

ESL Classes: Call the Adult Literacy Hotline at 800-447—8844. They will connect you with an adult basic education (ABE) program near the home of the parent. Wait lists can be long; however, encourage the parent/s to sign up by reminding them that a year can go by very fast. These classes are generally free and of very high quality. You can also find a program near the home of the parents by going to <http://acls/doemass.org>.

It takes you directly to the Adult and Community Learning system- a cluster of the Mass. Department of Education. This is a good website to keep on your “favorites” list – there are notices of job training programs, for example, and other educational opportunities for adults.

Another idea is to see if the school would sponsor an ESL class on site after school hours. Many parents are willing to pay for classes if they are held in a convenient place that they know. Some teachers are interested in making a little money and will teach the class – it's also convenient for them to do it in the place where they work during the day. All it needs is someone willing to do the arranging and the advertising.

General Information: Research has shown that what is important is that parents are involved in their children's' education. When parents are involved, children go farther in school and the schools they go to are better (Henderson and Berla). Even if parents don't speak English, they can read to their child/ren in their native language. Children benefit from the modeling of reading, hearing stories, and gaining background information. The Boston Public Libraries are a great resource for books for children in languages other than English. Most libraries stock books in Spanish or bilingual (English/Spanish) books. Through inter-library loans,

they can access books in other languages if a particular branch doesn't have them in a language other than English and Spanish.

Some Activities for parents Who don't Speak English

- 1) Find someone (a parent, a school staff person, another parent) to translate.
- 2) Library Visit – Make it an Event – A library card sign-up for Parents and children.
- 3) Invite the local Adult basic education program (ESL too) to make a presentation to the parents.
- 4) If you speak one of the native languages of the parents, offer a workshop in that language where you talk about the importance of reading books to children and demonstrate how to do it. If you don't speak the language, find someone to translate.
- 5) Organize a parent-child book club.