



Family Interviews during Distance Learning

Summary

In the wake of COVID-19, “family partnership” has taken on increased significance and meaning. In fact, teachers and families know that now, more than ever, the education of the child happens in partnership. In the past, family interviews or questionnaires may have only scratched the surface, especially if designed for teachers to get the most important information they need. This one-way approach can severely limit effective partnerships between family and school. Teachers are recognizing that all families and students have abundant “funds of knowledge” that can be built upon for concept and skill development. But, in order for educators to leverage this background, they must intentionally engage in regular conversation with families.

Implementation

As the new year kicks off, teachers will want to be sure to meet the most important needs of the families so students are equipped to learn. This will include ensuring access to internet, devices, and quiet learning space, as well as food security. Once the commotion of the first two weeks of school subsides, teachers should schedule Family Interviews. The template below is designed to support conversation that will aid in uncovering each family’s “funds of knowledge” so teachers can design a culturally responsive and sustaining approach to instruction.

There is no one right way to conduct these interviews, but there are a few things to keep in mind:

- Teachers may not speak the primary language of the families. Schools **MUST** support these interviews. Some ideas include partnering with teachers who may speak that language and conduct the interview together, training cadres of college teacher candidates to support as translators, or leveraging district resources to hire interpreters. (Caution: It is ill-advised to put students in the position of being the translator for their parents.)
- If the family has multiple children in the school, schedule interviews so that all teachers are present, minimizing the burden on the family to meet multiple times.
- It is important to build a mutually trusting relationship before asking direct questions about their funds of knowledge. Consider sending the questions you’d like to ask in advance so caregivers have time to reflect.
- You may not have time to ask all the questions in one session, and that is perfectly fine. Don’t hesitate to find times to continue conversations throughout the start of the year, even returning to some questions.



Family Interview during Distance Learning

COVID-19 has been very challenging for all of us. The goal of this interview is for me to learn about your family, what’s important to you, and what makes you and your child unique and special. This will help me welcome _____ and your family into our classroom community and lessons, and it will give me a chance to discover how we can help each other so that _____ has the best possible year in _____ grade.

Family Members	<i>e.g., who lives in the house, ages of siblings, pets, etc.</i>
Home Languages	<i>e.g., Arabic, Italian, Navajo, Spanish, etc.</i>
Family Values & Traditions	<i>e.g., holiday celebrations, religious beliefs, work ethic, etc. / COVID impact?</i>
Family Outings	<i>e.g., shopping, beach, library, picnic, museums, walk in neighborhood / COVID impact?</i>
Friends and Family	<i>e.g., visiting grandparents, barbecues, sports, etc. / COVID impact?</i>
Caregivers	<i>e.g., during the day, in the evening / COVID impact?</i>
Household Chores	<i>e.g., sweeping, dusting, dishes, etc.</i>
Family Occupations	<i>e.g., fishing, office, construction, homemaker/caregiver, etc. / COVID impact?</i>
Science/ Math/History Knowledge	<i>e.g., recycling, construction work, exercising, health, etc.</i>
Child’s Interests	<i>e.g., topics, activities, sports, etc.</i>

Is there anything I can do for you to make the school year go well for _____?

Adapted from González, N., Moll, L., & Amanti, C. (Eds). (2005). Funds of knowledge: Theorizing practices in households, communities and classrooms. Mahway, NJ: Erlbaum.



Entrevista familiar durante el aprendizaje a distancia

COVID-19 ha sido muy desafiante para todos nosotros. El objetivo de esta entrevista es que conozca a su familia, lo que es importante para usted y lo que los hace únicos y especiales. Esto me ayudará a dar la bienvenida a _____ y a su familia a nuestra comunidad y lecciones en el aula, y me dará la oportunidad de descubrir cómo podemos ayudarnos mutuamente para que _____ tenga el mejor año posible en _____ grado.

Miembros de la familia	<i>quién vive en la casa, edades de hermanos, mascotas, etc.</i>
Idiomas del hogar	<i>árabe, italiano, navajo, español, etc.</i>
Valores y tradiciones familiares	<i>celebraciones festivas, creencias religiosas, ética laboral, etc. / ¿impacto de COVID?</i>
Salidas familiares	<i>compras, playa, biblioteca, picnic, museos, paseo por el vecindario / ¿impacto de COVID?</i>
Amigos y familia	<i>visitando abuelos, barbacoas, deportes, etc. / ¿impacto de COVID?</i>
Cuidadores	<i>durante el día, en la tarde / ¿impacto de COVID?</i>
Tareas del hogar	<i>barrer, espolvorear, platos, etc.</i>
Ocupaciones familiares	<i>pesca, oficina, construcción, ama de casa / cuidador, etc.. / ¿impacto de COVID?</i>
Conocimiento de Ciencias/ Matemáticas/ Historia	<i>reciclaje, trabajos de construcción, ejercicio, salud, etc.</i>
Intereses del niño	<i>temas, actividades, deportes, etc.</i>

¿Hay algo que pueda hacer para que el año escolar vaya bien para _____?

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