

Ethnographic Interview for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students

Purpose

The purpose of this interview is to gather 1) information regarding a student’s developmental milestones and language acquisition to help determine the level of exposure to the English language as well as 2) parent/guardian concerns prior to providing ESL services or referring an English learner (EL) for special education services. This interview can be given when more information is needed about the student beyond the Home Language Survey.

Directions

1. Explain the purpose of the interview to the parent(s) and/or guardian(s).
2. Administer the interview in person and in interview format. Arrangements for a translator should be made ahead of time for parents with limited English proficiency. Parents/guardians should not be expected to complete the ethnographic interview without staff support. Clarifying questions are allowable.
3. Complete the basic ethnographic interview fields for all students being referred.
4. For international adoptees, complete the additional questions for international adoptees.

Student Information

Student Name		Interview Date	
Date of Birth		Student Age	
Person Interviewed		Interviewer	
Relationship		Translator required?	Yes or No
District and School		Translator Name (if applicable)	
Grade		Student’s Teacher	
Student L1 (language other than English)			

The referral was recommended by: _____

Interview Questions

Cultural Expectations

1. What do you consider success for your child in school?
2. Have you had access to information on how to support your child’s English language development?

3. Have you noticed any differences in schooling in the U.S. as compared to schooling in the child's former school setting?
4. What concerns do you have about your child learning English as a second language?
5. What do you feel is the most important information to know about your child's cultural background and yours as parent or guardian (e.g., view of education, personal space, authority roles, punctuality, respect, eating customs, family, and/or holidays)?
6. Is there anything you would like us to know that we have not included here about you or your child's cultural background or experiences?

Family Language Limited English Proficient Family Language Background

7. What is the parent's level of proficiency in the English language, as self-reported by the parent/guardian and/or observed by the interviewer (e.g., speaking skills, understanding when being spoken to, writing skills, reading skills)?
8. Are the parents taking adult ESL classes or using other modes of learning English?
9. How does this child compare with their siblings and/or close relative children (if any) in their language development and acquisition of English? How are the siblings doing in school? Are they experiencing similar struggles?

Language Development

10. Which language did the child first learn to speak? How many years has the child heard his or her first native language?
11. How old was the child when he or she began to speak?
12. Since the child started attending school, what changes in the child's native language or use of English have you noticed?
13. Were parents concerned with language development prior to the introduction of English?

Language Usage

14. What language(s) does the child speak at home? What language(s) does the child hear at home?
 15. What languages does the child appear the most comfortable hearing? What languages does the child appear the most comfortable speaking?
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16. Does the child read and write in the native language?
17. Does the child appear to be mixing languages together (code switching)?
18. Does the child use one language more than the other?
19. Has the child been told by parents, teachers, or others that he or she cannot speak in a native/dominant language?

School History

20. Has the child attended school outside the United States (U.S.)?

If yes:

How many schools were attended?

In what language(s) was instruction provided?

Was the student enrolled in any special programs (i.e., early intervention, special education, etc.)? If the student had similar struggles in school in their home country, how were these addressed by the school?

21. Has the child's school attendance been interrupted? How long was the interruption to the child's education?
 22. What is the child's previous experience in preschool (i.e., pre-k program, day care, home, etc.)?
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Additional Questions for International Adoptees

1. What date did the child arrive in the U.S?
 - a. How long has the child lived in the U.S.?
 - b. Has time lived in the U.S. been interrupted due to the child moving back to his or her native country or another location?

 2. How old was the child at the time of adoption?

 3. Where did the child live prior to adoption?
 - a. What city and country?
 - b. What type of setting (i.e., in the immediate family home, with a family relative, in an orphanage, etc.)?

 4. Who was the primary caregiver there?
 - a. What language was spoken by the caregiver?
 - b. What was the quality of the language practices use by the caregiver and child (i.e., daily communication, communication limited to only commands to engage in tasks, etc.)?

 5. Were there any concerns about language, speech development, learning, social skills, emotional abilities, or motor skills prior to adoption?

 6. Did the child learn his or her native language? Was he or she ever able to communicate in his or her native language?

 7. Does the child continue to use their native language well while communicating requests, as well as engaging in everyday conversation?
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