For English Learners in California Public Schools

Q: What is an English Learner?
A: An English Learner, also called an “EL,” is a student who has been deemed less than fluent in English or whose native language is not English, and who needs additional school services to successfully do class work in English. You do not have to be an immigrant to have a child who is an EL.

Q: How do I know if my child is an EL?
A: By law, your school district should send you a letter within 30 days after the start of the school year if your child is an EL. This letter should tell you why your child is an EL, how well your child uses English, and a description of how the school will help your child with his or her English. If 15 percent or more of the students in your child’s school speak the same language at home as you do, then you are entitled to receive all letters in both English and also in the language that you speak at home.

Q: I didn’t receive any letter. How do I know if my child is an EL?
A: If your child takes the CELDT (California English Language Development Test) each year, your child is an EL. The CELDT is an English language proficiency test given every year, usually around October or June.

Q: Why is it important to get EL services?
A: EL services are important to teach your child English, so your child can do well in school. It is very hard for your child to do well in school if your child does not understand what the teacher is saying and cannot read the textbooks. Speaking English with friends is very different from understanding English enough to do well in subjects like math, science, history, and language arts. EL services bridge this gap.

Q: How long should my child receive EL services?
A: Your child should receive EL services until the school tells you that your child is no longer an EL. Your child will no longer be an EL if he or she passes the CELDT (English proficiency test), does as well on standardized tests as other students in the same grade, the teacher agrees your child does not need special services any longer, and you agree that your child no longer needs special services.

Q: How will I know if my child is no longer an English Learner?
A: When the school is deciding whether to move your child out of the EL program, it is supposed to talk to you about it. The process of determining whether your child no longer needs
to be in the EL programs is known as “reclassification.” The school will send you a letter telling you when your child is no longer an EL.

**Q: What are my child's rights as an English Learner?**

**A:** As an EL, your child has a right to receive special services to help your child learn English and do well in other classes, like science, math, history, and language arts. It is not enough for your child to be in a regular class taught by a teacher who is licensed to teach ELs; your child is entitled to services. EL services include:

- **Structured English Immersion (SEI):** A separate class for students who do not speak English well, normally intended to last one year only.

- **English Language Development (ELD):** An English class for ELs.

- **Specially Designed Academic Instruction in English (SDAIE):** A class, such as history or science, where the teacher is using special techniques to make sure that EL students can understand the material.

Check your child's report card. If your child is an EL, does he or she have any classes labeled “SEI,” “ELD” or “SDAIE”? Usually, if your child is receiving EL language instructional services required by law, your child will have classes with one or both of these labels. See the sample report card below.

**Sample Report Card**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Course ID</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Teacher</th>
</tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>Eng 101</td>
<td>Period 1 Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
<td>ELD</td>
<td>Period 2 Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Biology SDAIE</td>
<td>Period 3 Teacher</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>P.E.</td>
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<td>Algebra</td>
<td>Period 5 Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>U.S. History SDAIE</td>
<td>Period 6 Teacher</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FOR MORE INFO ABOUT ENGLISH LEARNERS IN CA PUBLIC SCHOOLS, CONTACT THE ACLU OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA OR APALC:**

213.977.5225 (Spanish, Chinese, Korean, Thai, Vietnamese, English)
800.520.2356 (Chinese)
800.867.3640 (Korean)
213.977.5225 (Spanish)
800.914.9583 (Thai)
800.267.7395 (Vietnamese)