

# Your Rights if English is Not Your Primary Language: Your Child's School and COVID-19



School buildings are closed for the rest of the school year due to COVID-19. You may be wondering what you should expect from your child's school to help your child continue to learn English and do schoolwork.

- » Children who are limited English proficient have rights.
- » The right to enroll in the local public school.
- » The right to learn English.
- » The right to participate in academics with peers, with extra help or changes to the work so they can learn.
- » Parents who are limited English proficient also have a right to communicate with the school in a language they can understand.
- » These rights for parents and children continue while school buildings are closed during the school year.

Your child's teachers and schools must engage with you and your child and communicate in a language you can understand. Communication with your school district and teachers might be different. It will likely be done through phone calls, texting, apps like TalkingPoints, video conferencing, online classrooms, or other technology.

Here are some examples of information the school should provide in your primary language:

- » Information on school buildings closing or re-opening
- » How the school is providing schoolwork to your child (online/packet of papers/ phone calls/etc.)
- » Help for your child to understand the directions for the schoolwork
- » Grades and Report cards
- » Information about your child's English Learner Program
- » If the school is giving out breakfast or lunch, how to get the meals
- » COVID-19 Health Precautions

Here are some ways you can speak up to help your child's education during the school building closure:

- » Ask your child's teacher or school to call in an interpreter when you call. Schools must provide qualified interpreters.
- » Tell your child's ESL/ESOL and other classroom teachers whether you like phone calls or texts or what apps you use.
- » Ask for teacher contact information (phone/email/text/app contact) so your child can ask for help.
- » Ask how the school District plans to help your child continue to learn English.
- » Ask for video instruction if you have a smartphone or computer.
- » Ask if the school can help with internet if you do not have it.
- » Ask if the school can help with a computer or device if your child does not have one.
- » Call your school District English Learner Coordinator or ESL Coordinator if you are not hearing from teachers. You can often find their contact information on the school website.
- » Call the Ohio Department of Education Lau Resource Center for English Learners, 614-466-4109, if you cannot find your school District English Learner or ESL Coordinator.
- » Ask how you can get your child's meals if the school is giving out meals and the times or sites do not work for your family.

**If you have concerns about your child's education or getting information in your primary language from the school during or after the COVID-19 closure, contact Legal Aid Line to apply for free legal help:**

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(888) 534-1432

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