



IMMIGRANT CONNECTIONS

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CATALOG

*...because supporting English Learners
is about more than just language.*



A BETTER EXPERIENCE

See for yourself why Immigrant Connections is the premier choice to help you meet the needs of immigrants, refugees, and English Learners in your school district or organization.

“ I really enjoyed Laura’s training. It was thorough, backed by data, but also had good, real-world examples that help me understand what various English Learners go through. I have worked with the immigrant community for 10 years now and still learned a lot from her training, from the educational laws that talk about translation to various programs that already exist to meet the needs of these communities. Laura’s teaching style is well-paced, clear, and anecdotal, which I like.”

— Adriana Salcedo, School Social Worker

“ Laura’s online class on immigrant family engagement was so interesting, enjoyable, and immediately relevant to my current work. I completed the course with a ton of valuable resources to share with fellow teachers, staff, and families! Thank you SO much!!!

— Educator in Delaware

“ I am planning on asking for a meeting with the new Assistant Superintendent once school is up and running. I have learned way too much in this PD that I need to ask questions on a district level to see what our district is already doing and then offer some information that I have learned.”

— Assistant Principal in Massachusetts

“ I will enter the classroom tomorrow morning with a veil lifted in terms of awareness of who my students are.”

— Principal in Virginia

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Immigrant Connections provides professional development, training, and coaching to teachers, special educators, school counselors, psychologists, social workers, family engagement staff, principals, central office employees, and more. Professional development, training, and coaching can all be done face-to-face or online.

ELEVATING THE VOICES OF IMMIGRANTS

Immigrant Connections has a team of multicultural consultants and trainers and also partners with a number of speaker bureaus and immigrant/refugee organizations around the country. This allows us to incorporate and elevate the voices of immigrants and refugees in our workshops, which are often co-facilitated by immigrants and refugees themselves.



Supporting EL & Immigrant Students & Families: It's More than Just Language

Students who are learning English are more than just language learners – they are usually members of immigrant families who are navigating the complexities of acculturation, trauma, resettlement, and/or isolation while also building on their strengths and developing resiliency. In this session, we will examine our students' and families' strengths and needs with a holistic, social-emotional lens. In addition we will consider the importance of building the capacity of ALL staff to support and instruct immigrant and English Learner students so they are cared for by a whole team.

Objective 1: Describe the countries and backgrounds of immigrant students and families in one's school district and community.

Objective 2: Gain awareness of the strengths and challenges immigrant students and families face as they interact and engage with their school and community.

Objective 3: Explain 4 core stressors of immigrant children and families and describe strategies for how educators can support those experiencing such stressors.

Objective 4: Acquire information on the various systems immigrant and refugee students and families interact with, such as the U.S. Refugee Program and the system that handles unaccompanied immigrant children.





UNDERSTANDING BACKGROUNDS



Understanding the Backgrounds of Refugee Students & Families

While refugees are typically a small percentage of English Learners in U.S. schools, those that we do have often have complex backgrounds and needs. The main refugee populations resettled by the U.S. government in recent years are from Afghanistan, Congo, Bhutan/Nepal, Burma, Syria, Iraq, and Somalia. This training provides valuable information on how educators can support refugee students and families as they integrate and adjust to school.

Objective 1: Demonstrate a basic understanding of the U.S. refugee program as well as the Refugee School Impact program.

Objective 2: Examine best practices and strategies for refugee family and community engagement, including partnering with refugee resettlement agencies.

Objective 3: Identify the primary refugee populations being resettled by the U.S. government as well as sociocultural and educational characteristics of each.



Understanding the Backgrounds of “X” (Afghan, Central American, Indigenous Maya, Congolese, etc.) Students & Families

Do you have a specific population of immigrant or refugee students you would like more information on? In addition to our team of multicultural consultants and trainers, we partner with a number of speaker bureaus and immigrant organizations around the country. Through these partnerships, we are able to put on workshops about immigrants/refugees from particular countries, which are co-facilitated by individuals from those countries. Note: we are also open to partnering with immigrant/refugee parents or community leaders from your area to co-facilitate professional development. We properly compensate all parents and community partners for their time.

“I really learned so much, as I had no idea how anything occurred until the family arrived at my school to register. The struggles of leaving and the difficulties during the travel period are amazing and scary to consider.”

— Principal in Virginia



SUPPORT IN SCHOOLS



Supporting Unaccompanied Immigrant Youth in U.S. Schools

We continue to experience large waves of unaccompanied immigrant children crossing the Southern border. These youth are in the custody of the Office of Refugee Resettlement and then reunify with family members and other sponsors in our communities. What brings these youth to the U.S., what happens when they get here, and how do they end up in our classrooms? What type of education, if any, do they receive while in Office of Refugee Resettlement custody and how can we support these students when they enroll in our schools?

Objective 1: Describe who unaccompanied immigrant youth are, including basic demographic characteristics and their reasons for coming to the U.S.

Objective 2: Examine the Flores agreement and the role of Department of Homeland Security and the Office of Refugee Resettlement in the lives of unaccompanied immigrant youth.

Objective 3: Analyze what happens to children between the border and your classroom, including what is involved in locating a sponsor.

Objective 4: Explore the social-emotional, educational, and legal experiences of these youth as they reunify with family members, enroll in and adjust to school, and await their immigration hearings.



Immigrant Family & Community Engagement in Schools – Part 1

As demographics continue to shift in our communities, schools are grappling with how to best engage immigrant and English Learner families. Learn strategies for increasing the capacity of immigrant families and school staff for engaging in partnerships.

Objective 1: Acquire information on the Dual Capacity Building Framework and other theories from the field of family engagement.

Objective 2: Gain awareness of the journeys, strengths, and challenges of immigrant families, particularly in regards to their interactions with schools.

Objective 3: Increase knowledge of how to welcome and provide language access for immigrant families.

Part 2

Objective 1: Increase knowledge of how to orient English Learner and immigrant families to the U.S. educational system.

Objective 2: Discover strategies for increasing the capacity of immigrant families and school staff for engaging in partnerships.

Objective 3: Apply the Dual Capacity Building Framework specifically to English Learner/immigrant family engagement.

ENGLISH LEARNER FAMILIES



Cultivating Leadership Skills Among Immigrant & English Learner Parents

During this professional development we discuss programs and strategies for cultivating leadership skills among immigrant and refugee parents for engaging in decision-making and advocacy at the school and district levels. (Note: we highly recommend educators take at least one session of “Immigrant Family & Community Engagement in Schools” before taking this workshop.)

Objective 1: Increase knowledge of the importance of refugee and immigrant parent leadership in discussions around staffing and the school board budget, as well as committees on equity, bullying and more.

Objective 2: Gain awareness of programs being used in school districts to develop the capacity of refugee and immigrant parent leaders.

Objective 3: Learn about the relationship between family engagement initiatives and community organizing, particularly for refugee and immigrant families.



Engaging Immigrant & EL Families in a Virtual World

There's no doubt that COVID-19 school closures redefined relationships between families and schools. Many of the techniques used to engage families during COVID-19 were found to be so successful that they are being continued. This training is for teachers, counselors, parent liaisons, and anyone else looking for strategies to support their work in engaging immigrant and EL families virtually.

Objective 1: Explore tools and resources for English Learner and immigrant families to support their children's learning at home.

Objective 2: Examine the benefits of partnering with refugee and immigrant organizations in the community.

Objective 3: Review federal requirements for providing parents with information in a language they understand and how those can be met in a virtual environment.

Objective 4: Share solutions for connecting with English Learner and immigrant families who are hard to reach.



ENGLISH LEARNER FAMILIES



Creating a Welcoming Environment for Immigrant & English Learner Students & Families

We live in divisive times and unfortunately, one of the main concerns of immigrant and English Learner students and families is that they do not feel welcome in school. Recommit to supporting all students and families and learn about strategies and resources for helping everyone feel welcome! **(Note:** This workshop can be customized for secretaries and other front-office staff.)

Objective 1: Recognize the role that each member of the school community plays in welcoming all students and families.

Objective 2: Demonstrate strategies and resources that can be utilized to create a welcoming environment at the school and classroom levels.

Objective 3: Examine the role that language access (providing interpretation and translation services) plays in creating an equitable and welcoming environment.



Interpretation & Translation Services for Families: Ensuring Equity through Language Access

Federal law requires that parents receive information from their children's school in a language they understand, which involves providing interpretation and translation services. This session will focus on language access and its role in equity for students and families.

Objective 1: Acquire information on language access laws and requirements for interpretation and translation services for parents in schools.

Objective 2: Increase knowledge of the role language access plays in equity.

Objective 3: Gain awareness of the various access points for families in communicating with their child's school.

Objective 4: Discover strategies for providing language access in specific settings such as parent-teacher conferences, parent workshops, and Back to School Night.





“This PD has systematically changed how I intend to interact with my families for the upcoming school year. My next steps include intentionally becoming a resource to these families instead of a barrier.”

— Educator in Maryland

MENTAL HEALTH



English Learner Teachers & Setting Boundaries

Most teachers are in education because they care about students. Teachers of English Learners in particular are known for going above and beyond when it comes to helping students. While it's great to support students, if some boundaries aren't put in place, many teachers will burn out.

Objective 1: Examine typical boundary issues of EL teachers.

Objective 2: Analyze the role we each play when we overwork and lack boundaries.

Objective 3: Gain awareness of how doing everything for EL students and families could actually be doing them a disservice.

Partnering with Immigrant Families & Communities to Support Students' Mental Health

Many immigrant and refugee students endure trauma and other core stressors before migration, during migration, and after arriving to the U.S. Yet, it is important to recognize that there are many different ways that mental health is conceptualized around the world and it is often not addressed at the individual level, but rather in the context of family and community. Join this session to learn about how to partner with students' families and communities to support their mental health.

Objective 1: Examine the four major categories of stressors immigrants and refugees face (traumatic stress, acculturation stress, resettlement stress, and isolation).

Objective 2: Recognize that there are many different ways that mental illness and trauma are conceptualized around the world.

Objective 3: Demonstrate how to increase protective factors and reduce risk factors for immigrant and refugee students, families, and communities.

CULTURAL IMMERSION



Cultural Nature of Child Development

Learn about and reflect on how culture influences the development of the children you work with. Through case examples, video clips, and discussion, reflect on this crucial topic that greatly impacts instruction.

Objective 1: Gain awareness of one's own culture.

Objective 2: Recognize the impact of culture on child development.

Objective 3: Examine case examples from cultures different from one's own.

Objective 4: Implement new strategies to be more culturally responsive.

Building Relationships with Immigrant Communities through Local Cultural Immersion

Many educators would love to visit the countries their students are from to learn about their cultural backgrounds, but this is not always possible. What is the next best thing? Cultural immersion right in your own community! This five-week professional development involves readings, videos, and discussion, but more importantly, it requires each participant to engage in cultural immersion experiences in their community. This professional development may be facilitated face-to-face in the Washington, DC or Cleveland, OH areas. It may be facilitated online in other areas. It is customized for your area and is developed in partnership with local immigrant parent and community leaders. This professional development experience requires at least 25 participants.

Objective 1: Acquire information on the demographics/characteristics of students and teachers in the U.S. and the cultural gap that exists.

Objective 2: Increase understanding of how reducing the cultural gap between students, families, and educators facilitates student achievement.

Objective 3: Gain awareness, understanding, and empathy for English Learner / immigrant students and families for what they experience in school and the community.

Objective 4: Gain awareness of one's own culture, particularly in relation to what is experienced in the immersion activities.

WORKSHOP CUSTOMIZATION

All of our workshops are customized to some extent – particularly, in regards to the immigrant populations in your community. If you would like to combine topics from various workshop descriptions or need your workshop to be a unique amount of time, we can discuss your needs and send you a quote. We can also partner with immigrant and refugee organizations and contract with experts in various areas (i.e. attorneys who can speak to the legal journeys of immigrant students, experts who can speak to the instructional aspects of working with English Learners, etc.) so we may also be able to offer a workshop on a topic not listed here. Set up a call to discuss your needs!



PARTNERSHIP WITH ENGLISH LEARNER PORTAL

Immigrant Connections partners with English Learner Portal (ELP) for all of our online, asynchronous professional development. All of our courses with ELP are 5 hours long. Each course is a part of a larger “pathway” that leads to graduate credit through a partnership with University of Massachusetts Global.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COSTS

Workshops Available & Options for Each	2-HOUR* SYNCH	3-HOUR SYNCH	6-HOUR SYNCH	ASYNCH W/ ELP, SELF-PACED
	\$750 / \$1,000 Virtual / In-Person	\$1,500 / \$1,750 Virtual / In-Person	\$3,000 / \$3,500 Virtual / In-Person	\$75 Per Person
Supporting EL & Immigrant Students & Families: It's More than Just Language	X	X	X	
Understanding the Backgrounds of Refugee Students & Families	X	X	X	X
Understanding the Backgrounds of "X" Students & Families	X	X	X	
Supporting Unaccompanied Immigrant Youth in U.S. Schools		X	X	X
Immigrant Family & Community Engagement in Schools - Part 1		X	X	X
Immigrant Family & Community Engagement in Schools - Part 2		X	X	X
Cultivating Leadership Skills Among Immigrant & English Learner Parents	X	X	X	X
Engaging Immigrant & EL Families in a Virtual World	X	X	X	X
Creating a Welcoming Environment for Immigrant & EL Students & Families	X	X	X	
Interpretation & Translation Services for Families: Ensuring Equity through Language Access	X	X	X	X [†]
English Learner Teachers & Setting Boundaries	X	X	X	
Partnering with Immigrant Families & Communities to Support Students' Mental Health	X	X	X	
Supporting Parents & Caregivers Raising Children in a New Country	X	X	X	
Cultural Nature of Child Development	X	X	X	
Building Relationships with Immigrant Communities through Local Cultural Immersion	Call to Discuss			
Facilitating an Ongoing Professional Learning Community (PLC)	Call to Discuss			
Keynote	Call to Discuss			
Coaching or Consulting	Available virtually (Zoom) or by phone for \$175/hour			

Note: If your session will have more than 60 attendees and/or requires two trainers to be successful, there will be an additional cost. Also, the in-person costs only include the trainer's time. Travel costs are not included here and would be extra.

*We much prefer 3+ hour sessions in order to have time for small group work and discussions on how to apply the learning to one's setting, but we understand sometimes only 2 hour timeslots are available.

[†]This is not a part of any of the "pathways" on English Learner Portal that lead to graduate credit, but this course has been created for a particular school district and can be customized for yours as well.



MEET LAURA GARDNER

FOUNDER, IMMIGRANT CONNECTIONS

Laura has 20 years of experience working in education, refugee resettlement, and social work. While in education, she worked as a district level manager for immigrant family and community engagement as well as a school social worker. Laura also worked for Bridging Refugee Youth and Children's Services (BRYCS) managing their national technical assistance initiative to federal Refugee School Impact Grantees. Laura has facilitated professional development on building the capacity of teachers and school systems to engage immigrant families in their children's education, language access, cultural competency, equity, unaccompanied immigrant children, immigrant family reunification, refugee resettlement, socio-emotional well-being, and more. Laura holds a Master's degree in Social Work from Columbia University and a Bachelor's degree in Education. She founded Immigrant Connections in 2017.



IMMIGRANT CONNECTIONS

SUPPORTING EDUCATORS
AND ORGANIZATIONS

OUR MISSION

Immigrant Connections improves the lives of immigrant children and families by helping educators and other professionals better serve this population through training, coaching, and consultative services.

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