

Myths and Misconceptions: Newcomer Parental Involvement

School Council
January 16, 2023



Demographics

The Lethbridge School Division has over 1000 ESL Students from countries all over the world.

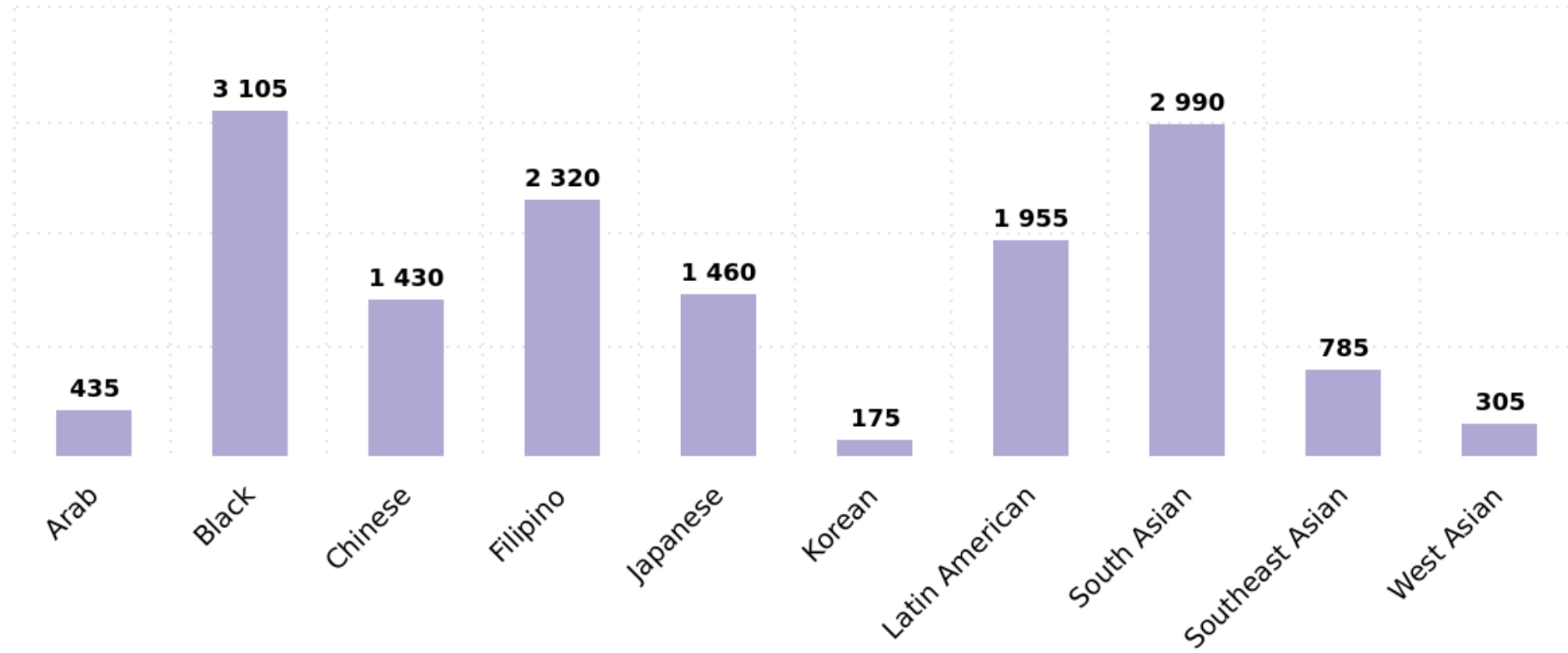
Lately, many newcomer families are arriving from Ukraine, Philippines, and various African countries.

Since September, our ESL Team has welcomed and assessed 122 new students who speak English as an additional language.





Visible Minorities in Lethbridge



Total Visible Minorities
14,960

The Importance of Parental Involvement



What We Know:

Parental support is critical to children's education outcomes.

"Parental involvement is an important predictor of educational achievement in the general population (Hardwick & Frideres, 2004). Research indicates a great deal of variability in familial and community support for recent immigrants (Salili & Hoosain, 2001). Programs designed to involve immigrant parents in their children's school activities and educational programs are very important to support their academic achievement."

The Positive Impact of Parental Involvement

Parental involvement
**reduces student
absenteeism,**
improves
academic achievement
and encourages better
life choices.



Barriers to Collaborative Involvement



- Parents of English language learners may appear to be among the hardest-to-reach members of a school community.
- Concerted efforts and creative ways of reaching ALL parents are needed and will vary from school to school.
- This may involve recruiting bilingual community members to act as liaisons between the school and students' homes or scheduling meetings when parents are most available, such as evenings and weekends.



Identifying Potential Barriers that Newcomer Families Continue to Face

- The concept of school involvement might seem foreign
- They may be unfamiliar with the Canadian School System
- They may be unable to communicate in English
- They may be unable to drive or negotiate public transportation
- They may feel uncomfortable approaching teachers or staff
- Past experiences may have been negative
- Parents may have conflicting work schedules
- Cultural Conflicts





Parental Perspectives





Myths and Misconceptions about Newcomer Families

Misconception	Reality
Families do not care to attend school functions or meetings.	Parents may not be able to attend school functions or meetings because they are working multiple jobs to support their immediate and extended family.
Families are not interested in receiving information from the school.	ESL families may have limited literacy levels in English and may not understand the information that is sent home.
Family members are not literate.	ESL family members may be highly educated, but in a different language.
Families do not value education.	Many of our ESL families value education so much that they have left their home country so that their children can benefit from greater levels of equity and education.





Creating Solutions to Welcome and Support Newcomer Families

Goal: Continue to support inclusion in school decisions and governance through school councils, committees, and parent organizations.



Being Mindful of Cultural Bias

Our expectations of parental involvement are culturally influenced.

The traditional, North American scenario of parental involvement includes:

- Regular attendance at parent/teacher interviews and school events
- Active involvement with home reading programs, learning projects, and homework support
- Direct advocacy for child's needs (communicating with the administration or teachers)

Powerful Practice: There are diverse ways that parents can demonstrate valuable involvement in their child's schooling depending on cultural background. It's important to adopt a broader, culturally informed, and positive definition of parental involvement in education



Translate Information into the First Language



Your child will enjoy hearing stories in your home language.

- It's fun to use different voices for story characters.
- Read to a certain point in the story and ask your child to predict what might happen next and why.
- Try a variety of books, including family photo albums, and picture books without words.



There are many activities in the community to enjoy with your child.

- Local libraries have special programs in different languages and in English.
- Cultural and community events provide many opportunities to use your home language.
- Playing with family and friends at the park helps children learn how to interact and co-operate with others.

TDSB Speaks Many Languages

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) is Canada's largest and most linguistically and culturally diverse school district. More than 50% of our students speak a language other than English at home and over 100 different languages are represented in the TDSB community.



Talk to your child in your home language throughout the day to build the skills for success at school.

Please visit the TDSB Website:
www.tdsb.on.ca

Developed by:
Department of English as a Second Language/
English Literacy Development
Speech-Language Pathology Services

Use Your Home Language

Building Skills with Young Children for School Success



您的孩子将很乐意听您用母语讲故事。

- 用不同的声音塑造故事人物是非常有趣的。
- 读到故事的某一处情节停下来，让您的孩子预测故事的发展并说明理由。
- 尝试阅读各种不同的书籍，包括没有文字的家庭影集和图画书。



在社区有许多活动可与孩子一起参加。

- 当地图书馆有用各种语言和英语开设的特别课程。
- 各种文化和社区活动为您使用母语提供许多机会。
- 与家人和朋友在公园游玩能帮助孩子学习如何与他人互动和合作。

TDSB可讲多种语言

多伦多教育局（TDSB）是加拿大最大和语言文化最具多元化的学校区。我们50%以上的学生在家讲英语以外的语言，在TDSB社区大家讲100多种语言。



全天使用您的母语跟您的孩子谈话，培养孩子的各种技能，帮助孩子获得学业成功。

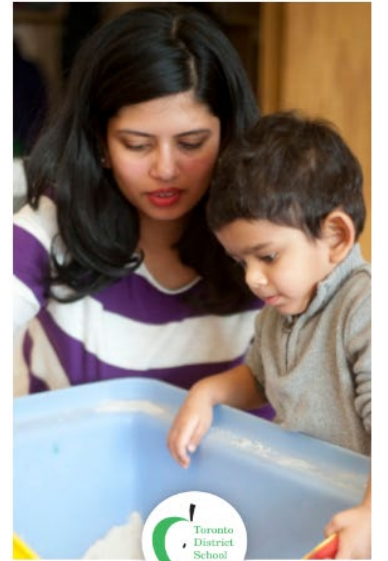
欢迎访问 TDSB 的网站：
www.tdsb.on.ca

本手册由
英语作为第二语言/
英语读写能力培养及
话语病理学服务部
编制

Chinese

使用您的 母语

与孩子一起培养技能，
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Positive Practices:

How Can Schools and School Council Welcome and Support Newcomer Families?

Communication Focus:

- Increase understanding of educational concepts by building background knowledge, using visuals, booking interpreters.
- use translators/translate pamphlets and documents into other languages
- Ensure that ESL parents are aware of school's parent-teacher advisory groups.
- Explore technology/ media that enhances school-home communication (reminders about school events and meetings).

School Focus:

- Encourage parents to get involved by attending school plays, field trips, literacy nights, celebrations of learning, sports events, parent/teacher interviews, fundraising events, and parent council meetings.
- Minimize feelings of discomfort for newcomer families so that all parents will feel comfortable and welcome in our schools.
- Invite parents to volunteer/support teachers in the classrooms (reading books in a different language to the students in class, guest speakers, field trips)
- Offer English Classes for parents or Coffee and Conversation Clubs

Community Focus:

- Better understand personal and cultural backgrounds by participating in community events outside of school building (Southern Alberta Ethnic Association, International Peace Pow Wow, Religious Celebrations)

Sources

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