



## TLC STRATEGY

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### Getting to know English learners: Home visits

**Purpose:** Home visits provide a great basis for teachers to learn about their students, and their home environments, families, neighborhoods, and cultures. Teachers also establish a relationship with parents that may not otherwise be possible. Home visits should be done toward the beginning of the year, so that the instructional benefits are realized as early as possible.

**Procedure:** Because many teachers have done home visits at some point in their training or career, this activity may be very short. Discuss previous experience of home visits. What benefits to their instruction did teachers experience? How might they be of use with English learners in particular? How might the practical challenges involved – such as time, safety, language -- be addressed? Encourage teachers to consider integrating home visits into their classroom inquiry projects.

During a home visit the teacher engages the children's parent(s) or guardian(s) in a conversation about the family background, community background, child's background, and the parents' view of school. The goals of the visit are: (a) to develop understandings of the social, cultural, political and economic contexts of the child and how those contexts relate to and impact on the school context, and (b) to learn about the ways of knowing existing at the child's home and how they were transmitted to the child.

Below is a sample question in each category:

- Family background: How did your life in your community or country differ from your life here?
  - Community background: When you need information (e.g., about health, jobs), who do you talk to or where do you go?
  - Child's background: How do you involve your child at home? What things do you teach him/her?
  - Parent's view of schooling: What does 'best educated' mean to you?
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