



# Tips for Conducting a Family Interview

## 6 Things to Do Before the Interview

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The interview can look very different depending on the family, the interviewer and the interview platform. The following suggestions may help you plan and conduct a family interview.

**1. The purpose of the Interview** is to validate/verify the response (s) provided on the Home Language Survey (HLS). A district is looking for evidence that there is another language influence other than English in the household.

- Review the Home Language Survey, HLS, and the answers that were provided on the survey. Which question (s) were answered with a language other than English?
- Note any other information that was provided on the HLS. Take notes to help you create questions that you will ask during the interview.

**2. Learn as much as possible about the family** before the interview.

- Does the Family need an interpreter?
- Who does the student live with?
- What is the cultural background of the family?
- Are there any other children/siblings in the family that attend the school or district?
- Was the student identified as an EL in any other school/district/state?
- Were transfer records received for the student?
- Is there Wyoming information in the EL Status Manager under “enrollment” or EL Status Manager under “Testing History” that shows the student has EL identification/history in Wyoming.
- Contact Antoinette Hallam at [antoinette.hallam@wyo.gov](mailto:antoinette.hallam@wyo.gov) or 777-5217 for more information.

**3. Identify the different Interview Platforms** in which the family may participate in the interview;

- In person,
- Phone,
- Zoom, etc..
- How will you communicate with the family about the interview?
  - In person when the family is at the school..
  - Phone call to schedule an interview.
  - Email requesting an interview..
  - Letter sent home.

**4. Identify/plan an interview environment** in a quiet and comfortable setting where an interview can be conducted with no interruptions.

- What room (s) are available for a family/caregiver interview?
- Consider putting a “Do Not Disturb” sign on the door before the interview.

**5. Brainstorm as many Interview Questions** you can think of and write your interview questions down before the interview. Look at the “Family Interview Example Questions” for ideas, which may be found in the EL Status Manager and EL Guidebook Appendix.

- Your questions should be short and easy to understand.
- Put your questions into similar categories and narrow down the questions you would like to ask from your list of questions.
- Encourage your Interviewee to talk as much as possible, but ask questions in a way that your Interviewee will not feel pressured to answer.
- When possible and depending on the situation, consider asking questions that require more than a one-word answer & may begin with the Five “W’s and “H” (Who, what, when, where, why and how) or statements that start with Tell me about or describe...
- Can be developed individually and/or developed and shared in a Language Team.
- Additional questions may be developed based on the Interviewees response (s).
- If possible can be shared with the Interviewee ahead of time to help them think about the questions.

**6. Create an Interview Script** that will help you stay organized and comfortable during your interview.

- Know your questions before the interview and practice if needed.

## During the Interview

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The interview can be the beginning of building a relationship with your family. This may be an opportunity to gain information such as the extent of the language influence & ability of the student to understand and speak the language. The family/caregiver may share information about who in the family uses the language, family culture, students’ hobbies, strengths, interests etc. If your interviewee goes off on a tangent, try to get them back when there is a pause.

### 1. Beginning of Interview:

- Introduce yourself; Name, Job Title, and a little background of what you do in your job.
- Purpose: What is the purpose of the Interview?
  - Make sure the Interviewee knows what the meeting is for.
  - Provide information about EL Services and what it will do for their child and what being an Active EL means.

### 2. Middle of Interview:

- Ask Interview questions. This is where you will use the HLS questions that were answered with a language other than English and ask if the family/caregiver can elaborate on the language influence listed).
- The interview may be a quick 5 minute interview, or may be longer if the family shares a lot of information about their child and responses promote additional questions. Remember that you want the family to talk longer than you. This is their time to share.
- Use the script (questions) you created, but try not to read the script word for word, but as a guide more than a script. Try to be as natural as possible when questioning (gestures, tone etc.).
- Try to have natural conversations, which will help the interviewee respond as naturally as possible.
- The interviewer can take notes during the interview, or perhaps after the meeting so everything is still fresh on your mind still.
- Try not to speak too fast as it may make it hard for people to understand.

- Note that sometimes English proficiency, cultural backgrounds etc.. may make the Interview hard to understand.
- Most of your questions will be during the middle of the interview.

### **3. Ending the Interview:**

- End on Time
- Wrapping up the interview & asking any last minute questions.
- Ask if the family/caregiver has any questions,
- Thank the Interviewee for their time,

## **After the Interview**

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Your interview questions/answers will be attached to the Home Language survey. A district will determine where that will be, with a student's records, and or with the English Learner records.