

Family Questions

Conversation Cards for Building Trust

Purpose: The purpose of this resource is to have ideas for questions that educators can use with families of multilingual learners to help build trust and collaborative relationships. This is not a comprehensive list of questions but a list of ideas. The questions are intended to be used with the WIDA Conversation Card Template.

Instructions: Choose a few questions that fit best with your context or create your own. You do not need to use all the questions. Write the questions you'd like to use in the Conversation Card Template, and then print them out for your conversation. For example, the conversation cards could be used during an open house, a home visit, a visit to a community organization, a conference, or another formal or informal event or conversation.

Considerations for Use With Students, Families, and Community Members

- **Current level of trust:** Consider the strength of your relationships as you use and share the conversation cards. Forcing a question-and-answer format in early interactions with students, families, and community members may unintentionally create pressure, making them feel uncomfortable rather than supported.
- **Trust happens in a variety of ways:** Consider small gestures that make multilingual students, families, and community members feel welcomed and valued. Use simple greetings in their home languages. Share your own experiences if you are an English learner or migrant; express humility, value in families' languages, and a learning stance if you are not. This helps build empathy and relatability. Even small efforts can go a long way in making them feel seen.
- **Trust happens over time:** Show that you are open and welcoming, and value where multilingual students, families, and community members are at with engagement. This means listening to their stories and needs, responding to their feedback and ideas, connecting in places they prefer, and offering opportunities to collaborate. Make relationship-building an ongoing practice.

Questions for Educators to Use With Families

Beginning Relationship Building

Your Family

1. What kinds of things does ____ [child's name] like to do? What do you like to do as a family?
2. What family or cultural values are important to you? Could you share a story or example of this?
3. What experiences have you had that we should know about to better support your family?
4. What else would you like us to know about ____ [child's name] and your family?

School Connections

5. What do you expect from our school? What would you like to know about our school?
6. Could you share an example of someone at our school that you really trust and why?
7. What do you hope ____ [child's name] will learn this year? What are your language goals for ____ [child's name]? What are your learning goals for ____ [child's name]?
 - a. What is ____ [child's name] great at? What do you think ____ [child's name] needs to work on?
 - b. What is the best way we can support ____ [child's name] in their language development and learning?
With social-emotional development?
8. What can we do to make sure you and ____ [child's name] feel welcome in our school/classroom?
9. How can we help ____ [child's name] thrive at school?

Community Connections

10. Is there someone in your community or an organization that that you really trust and has been helpful to you?
Can you share an example of how you developed trust?
11. What community resources do you currently use that could be helpful to share with other families?
12. What community or other resources would be helpful to you?

Ongoing Relationship Building

Your Family

1. How has ____'s [child's name] interests changed since we last talked, if at all?
2. The last time we talked, you said _____. How has this changed, or is it still the same?

School Connections

3. How are things going with ____? (Share a specific school connection you've discussed in the past.) What can I do to support?
4. How have your learning, language, and/or cultural goals for ____ [child's name] changed since we last talked, if at all?
5. What has been working well in our collaboration so far? Can you share an example?
 - a. What can we do differently to make you feel heard/welcome?
 - b. How am I doing at answering your questions or meeting your needs?
 - c. How could we make our relationship more collaborative?
6. Do you think the school is meeting your expectations? What could we do better?
 - a. What changes would you like to see to continue to build a culture of trust and respect between the school and multilingual families?