

Learning Literacy as a Newcomer

Elkhart Elementary School

Aurora, CO



COLORADO
Department of Education

Elkhart Elementary School welcomes second language students and families throughout the school year. As students are learning English as a second language, parents have an opportunity to attend workshops and literacy classes.

Classroom teachers lead the workshops. A Learning Source literacy instructor leads the literacy classes. Grade level teachers plan activities for parents that align with the instruction students receive in the classroom and delivered with the same pedagogy techniques used for students learning English for the first time. Every session is interpreted for families in attendance.

Family feedback for more supports was the impetus for the classes and workshops. Both programs have supported building relationships, trust, and belonging between parents and the Elkhart Community.



Elkhart's welcoming environment has been a key element in parents participating in the planned activities at each workshop. It is essential to have hands-on activities to engage parents in the workshops. Staff use Title I funds for the workshop materials. Parents are encouraged to use the materials to enhance their students' learning at home.

Teachers personally ask their students to invite their parents to each workshop. Parents receive invitations from their students and personal telephone calls and emails from teachers. The invitations include a clear purpose for each workshop. The personal invitations

and the clear purpose of the workshop support engagement, attendance, and positive outcomes for the event.

Elkhart's family liaisons shares: "When planning parent activities, it is always important to take into consideration the time of the event and weather conditions. We have found inclement weather and time of the event can affect parent participation, as well as if parents are not allowed to bring their younger children. Seeing the pride and love parents have in learning while participating in these parent programs have been truly rewarding!"

