

Teacher Parent Conversation about Linguistic Diversity

Teacher: I wanted to discuss your child's progress in English. We recently conducted an assessment, and it indicated that while your child is doing well in many areas, there is a need for some additional support to help them develop their academic English skills.

Parent: Academic English? What does that mean?

Teacher: Academic English is the language used in school and educational settings. It includes the vocabulary, grammar, and expressions necessary for understanding complex texts, engaging in class discussions, and completing written work. It's different from everyday conversational English and dialects of English, which might be what your child is more familiar with at home.

Parent: What is wrong with the way my child speaks, are they not speaking proper English?

Teacher: Not at all. Your child speaks English well, but there are differences between the informal English we use in daily conversations and the formal, academic English used at school. Our goal as an educational team is to help your child become comfortable and proficient in both.

Parent: What is the benefit of receiving support? Why can't my child continue on as they are?

Teacher: Proficiency in academic English can greatly enhance your child's ability to learn and perform well across all subjects in school. It's not about changing the way they speak at home or with friends, but about expanding their language skills to succeed in school and beyond.

Parent: How will this support be provided?

Teacher: We are happy to offer small group literacy intervention for 3, 20-minute sessions a week. Your child will be placed in a group with a few other students that is led by our school's learning support teacher. In group, they will engage in targeted vocabulary lessons, reading comprehension activities, and practice with writing in an academic style.

Parent: Will this take away from their other subjects and/or class time?

Teacher: No, we plan for the group to take place during down-time activities like silent reading - we don't want to overwhelm the students or take away from other learning opportunities. The skills they develop will actually help them perform better in all subjects.

Parent: How long will this support last?

Teacher: It varies for each student. We'll monitor your child's progress regularly and adjust the support as needed. Our aim is to ensure they are comfortable and proficient in academic English by the time they reach the next grade level.

Parent: I just want to make sure this won't make my child feel singled out or embarrassed.

Teacher: That's a valid concern, and we are very mindful of that. The support will be provided in a way that feels natural and part of the regular learning process. Many students receive similar assistance, and we strive to create an inclusive environment where all students feel confident and encouraged. I have found that most students enjoy the change of pace, and look forward to the small-group setting.