

h. Running a multilingual session



Presentations in multiple languages are crucial in fostering effective communication and engagement between school staff, teachers and parents, especially in multicultural communities. These presentations are beneficial during parent-teacher meetings, school assemblies, and celebratory events where parents are invited. By accommodating the linguistic diversity of parents, schools can ensure that all families feel included and informed, enhancing their ability to support their children's education. Multilingual presentations demonstrate respect for cultural diversity and promote a more inclusive school environment, strengthening the partnership between parents, teachers, and school staff.

It is also important to keep in mind that families who do not speak the school language are also coming from different cultures. The references that we would have may be completely unknown to them, so clear and simple explanations are a necessity.

Below are a few tips that can help to foster a more inclusive school community. These practical tips provide guidelines for organising multilingual presentation sessions. They help ensure that information is accessible to all parents, regardless of their primary language, thereby enhancing engagement and understanding between the school community and the parents. This helps to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment for students. By implementing these strategies, schools can better connect with all families, encourage active participation, and create a welcoming atmosphere for everyone involved.

Using an Interpreter

The school can contact an interpreter speaking the same language as the students/parents. The outside interpreter is a better option than a child or a connection of the family as he/she is neutral and not part of the families' circles.

Simplified and short wording/presentation

Using ([Plain Language](#)) or simple words can help parents whose first language is not the same as the presentation language to understand better. (Please note that while everyone's attention span is different it is proven that the average human is only able to focus and concentrate 15-30 min in his/her mother language - this decreases when the information is given in another language or for persons with various learning disabilities then around 10 min).

Using visuals/images.

Visual aids can help bridge language gaps and make the content more accessible.

Engaging by asking questions and providing answers with group activities.

Involve parents by asking questions and encouraging group activities.

This interactive approach helps ensure the understanding of the message and it keeps parents engaged.

Using examples.

Provide concrete examples to illustrate key points. This helps clarify information and make it more relatable. You must keep in mind that parents are coming from another culture and may not have the same references than you have.

Following up by sending the documents/ presentations by email.

Sending follow-up documents and presentations by email in multiple languages can be of help. This allows parents to review the information at their own pace and share it with family members who might not have attended. It can also allow for people to translate what they did not understand and /or was too embarrassed to ask for clarification.

Having breaks.

Schedule breaks during longer presentations in order to give parents time to process the information and ask questions.

Having smaller groups at once.

Organise smaller group sessions to facilitate better interaction and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to participate and ask questions. This also helps parents to feel more

comfortable and gain more confidence and not be embarrassed by their inability to understand.

Having few external distractions.

Choose a venue that has minimal or no external distractions such as construction nearby or train passing by etc. This will help parents to focus better on the presentation and what is being said.

Have extra 5 min for individual questions

If there are large groups and there is an extra minute for parents that do not understand to ask questions.

Use of Technology

The use of translation apps or programs such as AI can provide real time translation during the presentation. This is especially beneficial in large groups where it is difficult to address everyone in their preferred language.

Technology such as Zoom, Teams and Google Meets can also facilitate smaller groups online if it is the choice of the schools and be able to break out in different languages.