

English as a Second Language Video

Translation/Transcript from Video: Dan Hurst Productions

(At the airport)

Maribel: The airplane's already here. I'm so excited!

Vincente: Remember how we used to play football every Sunday with Felipe?

Maribel: How could I forget? That's the only thing you all thought about, football. You always left Maria and me with the children. Hey, do you remember when we first arrived five years ago?

Vincente: How could I forget? We came out okay! Maria Luisa and Felipe's children should be about the same age as our children, right?

Maribel: I think so. Rosa Linda should be about 7 years old and Pablo about 9.

(School board representative, Sergio Mery, appears)

CHYRON: Pennsylvania School Board Representative

On behalf of all of Pennsylvania's public schools, I'd like to extend a warm welcome to your new country and to your new state. My name is Sergio Mery, and as a Pennsylvania School Board representative, it's a privilege for me to have this opportunity to greet you. We hope that Pennsylvania will be the very best place for you and your children.

We want to provide you with the very best education possible and serve all of your educational needs. We will do all that we can to make that happen. We invite you to join us in this effort so that together we can achieve this end.

With your help, together, Pennsylvania schools will have a positive impact on your child. To begin this process we have prepared this video you are now watching. We hope that it will help you get to know and familiarize with Pennsylvania Public Schools.

Now let me invite you to meet a family that is just arriving in our state. They, like you, have many questions. On the other hand, Maribel, Vincente, and their children have already been in this country for five years and are now waiting for their friends at the airport. Watch and listen to what happens.

(Back to the airport)

[Greetings, laughing and hugging]

Vincente: How are you doing Felipe?

Maria Luisa: How are you? Glad to see you. I'm so happy.

Maribel: Let me look at you, you look exactly the same as you did five years ago! How are you?

Maria Luisa: Thank you. Well, I'm a little scared, but happy too.

Maribel: Scared? Why?

Felipe: Well we've never been over here. We don't know anyone. We don't speak English.

Vincente: We understand. Don't worry.

Maria Luisa: It's a big change for us. Didn't you feel like this when you first got here?

Vincente: Well yes, we understand. Look at how these children have grown!

Girl: I'm 7 years old and I know how to count in English...one, two, three.

Boy: Oh sure, me too...one, two, three. Ha! Ha! Ha!

Maribel: All right now, that's a good start. Are you both happy about going to school here?

Pablo: I don't want to go to school here.

Rosalinda: If he doesn't go, I won't go either.

Maribel: You're really going to like school. Jose Antonio and Teresita didn't speak English either when we first got here. But they learned quickly and you'll see, soon you'll meet lots of people that want to help.

Vincente: When we first got here we were scared, too. We didn't know where to go or who to call when we needed help or anything. Things are different now. There's a lot more help available. Besides, you have us.

Felipe: Thank you, thank you very much!

Maribel: The first thing you need to do is register the children in school.

Maria Luisa: What do we need to do to register them?

Rosalinda and Pablo: Mom, Dad, the suitcases are here.

Vincente: The only things you have to have are proof of a local address and an immunization card. Because you will be staying with us you already have an address.

Maria Luisa: I brought the immunization cards with me.

Maribel: Good! We're so happy you're going to stay with us. We have a lot to tell you about the local school system. Now, let's go home.

(School representative again)

"Vicente is right!" (and immediately after this you only hear his voice) ...

Narrator (off camera): "All you need is proof of a local address and immunizations. However, not yet having the proof of local address at the time of enrollment should not prevent students from starting school. You just have to make sure to bring one into the school as soon as you have one. This can be a rental receipt or a salary stub. You're not required to provide Social Security numbers for your children."

(Shown on screen are examples of what can be used as proof of residency)

CHYRON:

- If your children don't have a social security number, it doesn't matter.
- It can't be required for registration, nor do you need to provide any information regarding your immigration status.
- All students have a right to an education.

The schools should help them [learn to] read and write English fluently.
This is the key to a successful education.

(Spoken and on screen)

- All children are surveyed about the language they use, to determine which is their native language, their level [how well they use it], and to see if another language is used in the home.

Then you, as the parent, will need to sign the survey.

(Spoken and on screen)

- Also, each child is evaluated to determine the level at which they speak English.
- Depending on the results, the school should provide instruction about "English as a second language."

Instruction time varies from 2-3 hours per day for a student who doesn't speak any English to 1 hour per day for an advanced student.

(Spoken and on screen)

- The teacher providing this instruction should be properly trained in this type of education.

[For] other subjects teachers should adjust, modify and provide additional help so that the student can understand what he's being taught. Evaluation of each student's progress should be ongoing. Depending on the results, changes may be necessary.

(Spoken and on screen)

- If the student's parent doesn't speak English, an interpreter should be provided so that she can communicate.

There are times when it may be necessary to evaluate a student if there are indicators that special education or if specialized classes are needed. In these cases the school should make sure that the problem is not because of, or exacerbated by, problems with the English language.

The school should also facilitate these students' participation in all of the special programs that are offered, such as vocational training, gifted programs, and extra-curricular activities.

If your child needs additional English language help, the school should provide the necessary support. Language should not be an obstacle in the student's total integration into the educational community.

(Spoken and on screen)

- Also, Pennsylvania public schools should be well informed and respectful of the different cultures from which their students come.
- Discrimination is not tolerated.

(Maribel's house)

Maribel: I hope that we haven't confused you with so much information. But I know you will like living here.

Maria Luisa: Maribel, your house is lovely.

Maribel: Thank you!

Maria Luisa: Someday we'll have one just like it. Listen, I never imagined that we'd have so many rights in the educational system. I feel so much better.

Maribel: Good.

Maria Luisa: Children, would you like to go register now?

Pablo: No! I want to go outside and play.

Rosalinda: Me too!

Maria Luisa: Okay then, tomorrow. After all we did just get here.

Vincente: Teresita and Jose Antonio will tell you more about school. They'll convince you. Tonight at dinner we'll tell you more about it too. Now go on outside and play. Go on!

Felipe: Maribel, Maria Luisa can help you cook.

Maribel: Sure, of course.

Maria Luisa: I'll make the flan. Maribel, are you sure you have enough room for us to stay?

Maribel: Of course you can. You'll see how well we adjust.

Felipe: We'll just stay for a couple of weeks, until I get my first paycheck and we can get an apartment.

Vincente: Stop worrying, Felipe, you can stay with us for as long as you need to. The house is small but the heart is big. Tonight at supper, some friends are coming. We've invited them to share some of their experiences with schools. How does that sound?

Felipe: Thank you!

Vincente: You're welcome.

(Later at dinner)

Maria Luisa: The food is delicious, thank you. You all always make us feel right at home.

Maribel: Good. We're so happy to see you again.

Isabel: Listen, let's not forget desert. Would you pass the plate?

Vincente: Of course.

Felipe: After this tremendous meal will you be ready to tell us how to register the children?

Paco: Well, of course, Felipe. We should begin with the most important thing, going to the office at school. At the airport Vincente told you that the only documents you needed for registration were proof of a local address and the immunization record. Remember?

Maria Luisa: Yes.

Isabel: Most schools will ask for a child's social security number and a birth certificate, but if you don't have it, don't worry. Neither is required.

(School representative)

Some of the forms you will see include an emergency contact form, the application for free or reduced cost lunch, as well as others, depending in which school district you find yourself.

(Spoken and on screen)

- The application for free or reduced cost lunches asks for documentation of the monthly incomes of all working family members.
- If the combined monthly income is less than the federal government's estimate, your children may be able to receive their daily lunches totally free.
- The application is also available in Spanish.

After you have completed the forms for the office, the secretary will ask you to fill out other forms for the school nurse.

CHYRON:

- Medical history for each student

The school likes to have an idea of the general medical history on each one of its students. Especially if any of the students has a medical condition that requires special medical attention. Each school has its own nurse.

(Spoken and on screen)

- The nurse will ask you for an immunization record for each child.
- Your responsibility is to make sure that each child has received the immunization required by the Federal Department of Health.
- Many children that come to the United States from other countries are missing the measles vaccination or that of mumps and German measles [rubella].
- If your children are missing any of the required immunizations, you can ask the nurse for the name and telephone number of the closest [health department] clinic.

- The sooner they receive the necessary immunizations, the sooner they can start school.

(Back at dinner)

Maria Luisa: Oh my God, so many forms!

Isabel: Yes. We also need to tell you about the class attendance rules and appropriate clothes for this climate...

Maribel: How public transportation works, report cards, how to make an appointment to talk with school officials, and how to get to know the teachers. All of this is very important information.

(School representative)

(Spoken and on screen)

- Daily attendance at school is of utmost importance.

The Pennsylvania public school system is very strict on this matter.

(Spoken and on screen)

- If a student is not sick, doesn't have either a medical or dental appointment, the student should be at school.

The school does not excuse attendance because it's the student's birthday, because it's raining or snowing, or because the parents need a translator for an appointment.

(Spoken and on screen)

- When your children are absent from class because of illness, you must send a written excuse with them when they return to school.

It doesn't matter if the note is not written in English.

(Spoken and on screen)

- Don't forget to sign it!

The school day here is much longer than in other countries. From 6th grade on, the students don't go outside [for recess]. Elementary school children, on the other hand, have a brief recess in the morning and another in the afternoon. You will need to buy heavy coats and boots for your children because they will go outside even when it's cold.

Occasionally the school system will close schools for a day if there is a heavy snow. It is your family's responsibility to pay attention to the local news on the radio or television to find out if classes have been canceled or if buses are running.

Depending on where you live, many school districts provide transportation if you live far [enough] away.

(Spoken and on screen)

- If this is your children's case, make sure you know where your child's bus stop is located.
- The school district assigns a bus stop as well as a pick-up time at which a bus will pick up your child during the school year.
- Children begin the school year at the end of August or the beginning of September and finish school in mid-June.
- There are certain days in between when schools close for holidays.
- These days are indicated on the school district's calendar.

The students usually receive four report cards per year.

(Spoken and on screen)

- Usually the schools ask their teachers to have parent conferences after the first report card is sent home.

It's very important that you attend these conferences. It's an opportunity for you and your child's teachers get to know one another. During the remainder of the year, if you would like to meet with any teachers or with the principal you should call the school [office] to make an appointment.

(Spoken and on screen)

- It is not recommended that you go to the school or directly to the classroom without an appointment.
- You should also stop in the office first.

(Back to dinner)

Felipe: Oh, holy God, how are we possibly going to remember all of this?

Vincente: It will take you a little while. Remember we've already been here for a few years and you just got here. Don't worry!

Paco: Oh, we forgot to mention something very important. Schools don't tolerate any type of violence. [*Unintelligible, implied*: Not whether parents use physical punishment as a method of physical discipline] but that they won't accept any type of violence by the students.

(Spoken and on screen)

- Zero tolerance of violence means that under no circumstances do the schools allow their students to fight, to kick, have fist fights, hurt anyone or intimidate any other student.

(Also)

- Under no circumstance do the schools allow their students to carry weapons or any other object with which another student could be attacked.
- If a school official finds that a student has a weapon, that student will be taken to court.

The schools need to maintain a calm and healthy environment in which a student can learn. If one student is having a problem with another student, it is recommended that [they] talk with someone of authority at the school. Then those involved in the situation will meet and they will get help in resolving their differences. That way they can learn to manage their conflicts and get along.

Teachers ask parents to do the same at home. If your child doesn't abide by the rules you have at home, certain privileges can be withheld so that they can understand the consequences, for example, television privileges.

(Back to dinner)

Felipe: We really appreciate all your advice. Let me ask you a question. When we move to our own apartment, what will happen if they [the children] go to another school? Do we have to go follow this process all over again?

Vincente: If you move within the same city, the new school will request [a transfer] of the documents, as long as it's the same school district.

Paco: If you move out of the city, like Isabela and I did, then you will have to go through the process again because you would then be in a different school district.

Isabel: Speaking of moves, each time that you move within or out of the city, it's very important that you notify the school. If you don't and there is an emergency with one of your children, the school won't know how to contact you.

Paco: We know that you all want your children to learn to speak English, but it is very important that you continue to speak to them in Spanish so that they don't forget their first language. We know a few people that stopped speaking Spanish to their children, and after a few years they can barely understand when they speak to them.

Isabel: It makes me sad when this happens. When Paco and I got here we decided to instruct our children to always speak to us in Spanish. They have lots of opportunities to practice their English with their friends at school and when they come here to play.

Vincente: You know Isabela, Maribel and I thought the same thing. We think it's a great idea that our children know more than one language.

Maribel: For sure. Remember what the teachers told us during one of our first parent teacher conferences?

Vincente: I remember well. They told us that Teresita and Jose Antonio had a firm grasp of the Spanish language and that that was helping them learn English faster.

Maria Luisa: That's good to know. We still have a lot of questions, but it's getting late and it's been a long day.

Isabel: Besides it's time for us to go. The children need to go to bed.

Felipe: You all have been a big help. We hope one day to be able to return the favor. Thank you, thank you very much!

Felipe: You're quite welcome. One day it will be you going to the airport to pick up your friends. You'll bring them to your home and help them. It's been a pleasure.

(School board representative)

Those of us who work in the Pennsylvania schools want you to know how important your children's education is to us. Our hope is that your experiences are successful ones. But you can help too. It is much more effective when parents work alongside the teachers and school personnel as partners in the education of their children.

Being a partner means working with your child on work he brings home and maintaining good communication with the teachers and the school principal. There are some ideas that may help. In addition to homework, all children, like yours, will have to get used to new people and new places [like Maria and Felipe's did].

They have to learn the school and classroom rules. They'll have to learn a new language and use it to do their schoolwork. This will not be easy, but is in no way impossible. Many students have been successful in the past and continue to do so now. Your children can achieve success as well if we all work together.

One of the strategies that helps children learn a new language is one where the parents ask the teachers for [flash] cards that have a picture with the corresponding word in English.

CHYRON:

- Parents, ask the teachers for [flash] cards that have a picture with the corresponding work in English.

That way you can place them alongside these objects at home.

- Then you can review these with your child, or turn it into a game.
- Repeating these words will accelerate the process of learning the language.

Another good idea is to have a special place at home where your child can do his homework every night. Have a desk or dining table with a good light, and is [a] calm [place to work]. Keep the work schedule consistent from day to day. Ask your child to show you his homework and have him explain it to you. When you express interest in his work, your child will be encouraged to move ahead.

To create good reading and writing habits, in general, it's good for children to see their parents reading. In the case of small children it will be necessary for the parents to read to them. Older children can read to you. Allow the children to pick their own books. It doesn't matter if the book is in English or in your own language.

One of the goals that all children in Pennsylvania public schools must achieve is that of the [State Academic Standards.] In Pennsylvania all students must be able to demonstrate their knowledge in certain subjects. Each child will be administered a test in each subject in grades 5, 8 and 11.

(Spoken and on screen)

- These are called the [Pennsylvania State Standard Assessments]—PSSA in English.

In order to graduate from high school, each student must meet the state's requirements. All of this information can be found in a document called the [Pennsylvania State Standards of Learning]. You can get a copy from your child's school.

In Pennsylvania, we believe that your child will be successful if we all work together. We will support both you and your children. We recommend that you get to know your school's principal and its teachers. Don't hesitate for even a second in seeking their help.

Our desire is that we become partners in this very important phase in your child's life. In addition to the time they spend with you, your children will spend the majority of their time and will be concentrating a great deal of energy at school and on school projects.

All of this combined will be the key to their success as adults. Let's work together to make this a happy and rewarding time.

Thank you for the time you've given us to watch this video. Watch it again if you still have questions.

One more thing, on behalf of the whole state of Pennsylvania and its residents, welcome.