

# Wellness Check for Multilingual Learners Administration Guide

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## Purpose

Personal connection and relationships are critical in being a culturally responsive educator and as a gateway to engagement in learning. Transitions may be difficult for Multilingual Learners/English Language Learners (MLs/ELLs) returning to school-based learning. This guide includes a structure and questions for one-on-one check-in to begin to build connections with students and families as part of the New York State Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL) Special Administration taking place from August 1- September 30, 2021. This component should precede the administration of the Speaking session NYSITELL for each student during the NYSITELL Special Administration and during summer administration; where possible, administer the wellness check and the Speaking session prior to any other sessions. As best practice, schools may also use this guide to conduct wellness checks for MLs/ELLs prior to the NYSITELL administration for any student.

## Administration Overview

**Step 1:** The school supervisor overseeing this initiative **gathers information about social and emotional supports and resources** available at the school and in the community, especially community-based organizations (CBOs) that partner with the school. All staff who support the wellness check should be familiar with available supports and resources. (Approximately 2-3 hours prior to the start of the NYSITELL Special Administration). For more details, see [Step 1: Gather Social and Emotional Resources](#).

**Step 2:** The teacher administering the test should initiate proactive **communication to families or caretakers** to gather information about the student and begin to develop a home-school relationship by completing the family/caretaker protocol below. As the teacher greets families or caretakers, ask if they would be able to individually connect for ten minutes so the school could learn more about how things are going. If the family member is not interested or family is unavailable, proceed to Step 3. Communication must be completed by staff fluent in the families’ preferred language or with the support of an interpreter ([information](#) on interpretation). The teacher completing the protocol should take low-inference notes of only what families say or do without making judgments. As necessary, the teacher may provide the family or caretakers with the

supports and resources available at the school and in the community (prepared in step 1) as relevant. (Approximately 10 minutes) For more details, see [Step 2: Communication with Family or Caregiver Protocol](#).

**Step 3:** Once the family or caretaker protocol is completed (unless the family refused), complete the grade-level appropriate “**Feelings Check-In**” or similar tool used by the school (e.g. Restorative Circles’ “Feeling Barometer;” The Ruler’s “Feelings Check-In Chart”) in the student’s preferred language. The teacher administering the check-in should utilize [Appendix A](#) to take low-inference notes of only what students say or do without making judgments. This will provide additional documentation in case follow-up is needed for any individual student. (Approximately 15 minutes) For more details, see [Step 3: Students Feelings Check-In Grades: K-5 Protocol](#).

**Step 4:** For each student **share documentation** of key takeaways from (1) family or caretaker protocol, (2) student check-in, and (3) indicate if further follow-up is recommended with the family by pertinent school staff in the log included below. This log should be provided to the school supervisor overseeing this activity before the end of each day, allowing sufficient time for supervisors to review and respond to urgent matters. Teachers should highlight urgent concerns. Documentation should be maintained in the folder of critical ELL documents that is kept in a locked location for the school. (Approximately 5 minutes)

**Step 5:** The school supervisor **reviews** the log provided by each teacher and checks if any teacher has indicated that follow-up is recommended. If necessary, capture additional information from the teacher about the case that has been flagged and follow-up with the family/caretaker. Follow-up should be conducted by the school supervisor, or a staff member trained in risk identification such as a social worker, guidance counselor, or psychologist and records maintained.

## Step 1: Gather Social and Emotional Resources

**Time Required:** 2-3 hours

**Directions:** Prior to the start of the NYSITELL Special Administration, the school supervisor overseeing this initiative gathers information about social and emotional supports and resources available at the school and in the community, especially community-based organizations (CBOs) that partner with the school.

For school-based resources, consider the availability of roles such as 12-month staff like parent coordinators, as well as other staff such as social workers, guidance counselors, and school psychologists who can serve as resources once school starts in September. Supports may include components of schools' [multi-tiered system of support](#) (MTSS) plan.

For community-based resources, consider local supports like the [NYC Benefits Navigator](#) with resources for families seeking information about food insecurity, housing, health care, or job supports. Additionally, explore the Division of Multilingual Learner's [map of community based organizations](#) that support linguistically and culturally diverse students for organizations near your school.

Next, the school supervisor should consider how the resources will be shared with families. If materials are shared in print, use [interpretation resources](#) to provide the resources in families preferred language of communication.

The school supervisor should invite school stakeholders to review and contribute. All staff who support the wellness check should be familiar with available supports and resources.

## Step 2: Communication with Family or Caregiver Protocol

Adapted from [Bridge to School](#).

**Time Required:** Approximately 10 minutes per student

**Directions:** To ensure a successful start to the school year, it is critical that we hear from families, caregivers, and children about how they are doing and how our supports are working for them. Initiating proactive outreach to families in the first few weeks of school can help inform the social-emotional and wellness support that staff provides in the initial transition period and throughout the year. It will also help signal if students may require more intensive services right away.

Conversations must be conducted by staff fluent in the families' preferred language or with the assistance of an interpreter ([information](#) on interpretation). Below are some example questions for staff to use in conversation/reflection with families and caregivers; consider using 2-3 of these questions:

- How are you doing? (As your relationship allows, be empathetic and sensitive to the immediate needs the family may have as well as recognize the strength and resilience of each family. Note that while you may not be able to support these challenges directly, being aware of them can help ensure that the supports you provide are responsive to those challenges.)
- How is your child doing? Is there anything you would like to share with me about how they are adjusting to all the changes around them?
- What have we offered that was helpful to your child and your family during remote learning? (Follow-up questions may seek feedback about specific things that teachers tried, children's engagement, and how the child and family or caregiver experienced them.)
- How can we best support your child and your family in the days ahead?
- Do you have any social or emotional concerns about your child that I should share with our support staff?

The teacher should record their low-inference notes of only what families say or do without making judgments on a copy of [Appendix A: Wellness Check for Multilingual Learners Family and Student Check-In](#). Translations of the example questions are available in [Appendix D](#) to support the teacher and/or interpreter.

### Grades K-5 - Step 3: Students Feelings Check-In Protocol

Adapted from Division of School Climate and Wellness Early Childhood [Feelings Check-In](#) and [CASEL](#).

**Time Required:** Approximately 15 minutes per student

#### Summary of Activity




Teachers can check in with students to see how they are feeling before starting the NYSITELL. For younger students, we use five emojis or pictures to show different feelings. Then, we talk about why we are feeling that way at this point in the day and how our mood can change over the day. This helps people to feel okay that their moods go up and down, and it is normal. Schools may also use their own tools instead such as Restorative Circles' "Feeling Barometer", The Ruler's "Feelings Check-In Chart".

The primary purpose of the check-in is to hear about your student's experience and perspective so that you can know them as an individual, be responsive to their needs, learn from them for the benefit of the class and school, and build relational trust. If you feel the impulse to share your own story, pause and consider whether your sharing will advance this purpose or if it risks distracting from it.

Conduct the conversation in the students' preferred language. Avoid correcting language during the conversation in order to make the student feel comfortable.

#### Resources or Materials

Emoji handout or drawn out on cards.

0	1	2	3	4	5
					

#### Directions

**Open** – Show that they are important to you and you care about them. You may use one of the prompts below.

- "I'm glad to have the chance to for the two of us to talk."
- "I'm excited to have you in my class/group this year."
- If you already know something about their lives, bring it up as appropriate. For example, "Your sister is back from college now, right? How has it been having her home?" or "Normally you would be into baseball season already. Have you found ways to keep practicing?"

#### Personalize

**Step 1:** Look at the six pictures and numbers

- Zero means you are feeling AWFUL.

- Five means you are feeling SUPER.

**Step 2:** Teacher models by saying the number for how they are feeling RIGHT NOW and why they are feeling that way.

**Step 3:** Student shares the number for how they are feeling RIGHT NOW.

- If they want to, they can explain why they are feeling that way.
- The teacher can remind the student that moods change and that it can go up and down throughout the day.

**Invite Feedback** – Show your student that you value their perspective and are open to making changes based on their input.

- What would you like to see happen this school year?
- What do you need most right now from me (and your other teachers)?
- What do you think our school/class is getting right so far this year? (Ask if conducted once school has started)
- What do you think our school/class should be doing differently? (Ask if conducted once school has started)

**Close** – End on an optimistic, forward-thinking note.

- What is the best thing you have seen today?
- What is keeping you going/giving you energy/making you happy right now?

Here are some additional phrases to draw upon as needed:

- **Probe:** “Tell me more about that.” “What does that look like?” “I want to make sure I understand what you are saying. Can you explain a little more?”
- **Communicate care and a calm emotional state:** “Your teachers care a lot about your success.” “Your teachers all want to make sure you are getting your needs met.”
- **Validate emotions:** “That must be so difficult. I see you and I am here for you.” “I can only imagine how much that impacts you.”
- **Stay solution-oriented:** “It sounds like a lot has been happening that is out of your control, and that sounds frustrating. What are some things you do have control over – something small you can do to start to make things better?”
- **Wind down the conversation:** “You have given me some things to think about. I am going to take some time to think about what you told me, and we will make some time to talk again in a few days.”

The teacher should record their low-inference notes of only what students say or do without making judgments on a copy of [Appendix A](#): Wellness Check for Multilingual Learners Family and Student Check-In. Translations of the example questions are available in [Appendix D](#) to support the teacher and/or interpreter.

## Grades 6-12 - Step 3: Students Feelings Check-In Protocol

Adapted from Division of School Climate and Wellness [Feelings Check-In Grades K-5](#) and [CASEL](#).

**Time Required:** Approximately 15 minutes per student

### Summary of Activity

Teachers can check in with students to see how they are feeling at this moment—not the whole day. We use the number line from -5 up to +5 to show the range of moods we can be in. Then, we talk about why we are feeling that way at this point in the day and how our mood can change over the day. This helps people to feel okay that their moods go up and down, and it is normal. Schools may also use their own tools instead such as Restorative Circles’ “Feeling Barometer”, The Ruler’s “Feelings Check-In Chart”.

The primary purpose of the check-in is to hear about your student’s experience and perspective so that you can know them as an individual, be responsive to their needs, learn from them for the benefit of the class and school, and build relational trust. If you feel the impulse to share your own story, pause and consider whether your sharing will advance this purpose or if it risks distracting from it.

### Resources or Materials

Number line or handout:

Worst Moment				Neutral			Best Moment			
-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5

### Instructions

**Open** – Show that they are significant to you and you care about them. You may use one of the prompts below.

- “I’m glad to have the chance for the two of us to talk.”
- “I’m excited to have you in my class/group this year.”
- If you already know something about their lives, bring it up as appropriate. For example, “Your sister is back from college now, right? How has it been having her home?” or “Normally you’d be into baseball season already. Have you found ways to keep practicing?”

### Personalize

**Step 1:** Look at the number line.

- Negative five (-5) means you are feeling AWFUL and it is the worst moment.
- Positive five (+5) means you are feeling SUPER and it is the best moment.

**Step 2:** Teacher models by saying the number for how they are feeling RIGHT NOW and why they are feeling that way.

**Step 3:** Student shares the number for how they are feeling RIGHT NOW.

- If they want to, they can explain why they are feeling that way.

- The teacher can remind the student that moods change and that it can go up and down throughout the day.
- Teachers can also ask: What could you do to feel better today? Or what can you do to stay in a good mood?

**Invite Feedback** – Show your student that you value their perspective and are open to making changes based on their input.

- What would you like to see happen this school year?
- What do you need most right now from me (and your other teachers)?
- What do you think our school/class is getting right so far this year? (Ask if conducted once school has started)
- What do you think our school/class should be doing differently? (Ask if conducted once school has started)

**Close** – End on an optimistic, forward-thinking note.

- What is the best thing you have seen today?
- What is keeping you going/giving you energy/making you happy right now?

Here are some additional phrases to draw upon as needed:

- **Probe:** “Tell me more about that.” “What does that look like?” “I want to make sure I understand what you are saying. Can you explain a little more?”
- **Communicate care and a calm emotional state:** “Your teachers care a lot about your success.” “Your teachers all want to make sure you are getting your needs met.”
- **Validate emotions:** “That must be so difficult. I see you and I am here for you.” “I can only imagine how much that impacts you.”
- **Stay solution-oriented:** “It sounds like a lot has been happening that is out of your control, and that sounds frustrating. What are some things you do have control over – something small you can do to start to make things better?”
- **Wind down the conversation:** “You have given me some things to think about. I am going to take some time to think about what you told me, and we will make some time to talk again in a few days.”

The teacher should record their low-inference notes of only what students say or do without making judgments on a copy of [Appendix A](#): Wellness Check for Multilingual Learners Family and Student Check-In. Translations of the example questions are available in [Appendix D](#) to support the teacher and/or interpreter.



Appendix A:

## Wellness Check for Multilingual Learners: Family and Student Check-In

**Directions:** This section to be completed by the teacher conducting the special administration of the NYSITELL and maintained on file. Translations of the example questions are available in Appendix D. Refer to Steps #2-3 of the administration guide for more details.

**Teacher Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Student Information

Requested Information	Details
Student Name	
Student ID	
School DBN	

### Communication with Family or Caregiver Protocol (10 minutes)

Requested Information	Details
Name of family member or caregiver	
Relationship (to student) of the person providing information	
Interpretation Language(s) Provided	

### Example Questions:

- How are you doing?
- How is your child doing? Is there anything you would like to share with me about how they are adjusting to all the changes around them?
- What have we offered that was helpful to your child and your family during remote learning?
- How can we best support your child and your family in the days ahead?
- Do you have any social or emotional concerns about your child that I should share with our support staff?

## Low-Inference Notes

### Students Feelings Check-In (15 minutes)

**Open** – Show that they are important to you, and you care about them. Examples:

- “I am glad to have the chance for the two of us to talk.”
- “I am excited to have you in my class/group this year.”

**Personalize** – Refer to administration guide for details on the feelings check-in. Use additional prompts as needed:

- **Probe:** “Tell me more about that.” “What does that look like?” “I want to make sure I understand what you are saying. Can you explain a little more?”
- **Communicate care and a calm emotional state:** “Your teachers care a lot about your success.” “Your teachers all want to make sure you are getting your needs met.”
- **Validate emotions:** “That must be so difficult. I see you and I am here for you.” “I can only imagine how much that impacts you.”
- **Stay solution-oriented:** “It sounds like a lot has been happening that is out of your control, and that sounds frustrating. What are some things you do have control over – something small you can do to start to make things better?”
- **Wind down the conversation:** “You have given me some things to think about. I am going to take some time to think about what you told me, and we will make some time to talk again in a few days.”

**Invite Feedback** – Show that you value their perspective and are open to their input. Examples:

- What would you like to see happen this school year?
- What do you need most right now from me (and your other teachers)?

**Close** – End on an optimistic, forward-thinking note. Examples:

- What is the best thing you have seen today?
- What is keeping you going/giving you energy/making you happy right now?

Low-Inference Notes

Appendix B:

### Wellness Check for Multilingual Learners Post-Conversation Reflection and Action Log

**Time Required:** Approximately 5 minutes per student

**Directions:** Reflect on the conversation to identify the key takeaways. What were the high points? What were the challenging points? After each conversation, add your notes to the log below. These notes should be shared daily with the school supervisor overseeing the special administration of the NYSITELL. Review Step #4 of the administration guide for more guidance.

Teacher Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name (Use a new row for each child)	Key Takeaways for Steps 1 and 2: Multilingual Learners' Family and Student Check-In	Is follow-up recommended from a staff member trained in risk identification?	Any urgent issue(s)?

Appendix C:

**Wellness Check for Multilingual Learners School Supervisor Follow Up**

**Time Required:** Will Vary

**Directions:** The school supervisor overseeing the special administration of the NYSITELL documents all follow-up conducted after the family or caretaker, and the student check-ins. Review Step #5 of the administration guide for more guidance.

**School Supervisor:** \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name (Use a new row for each child)	Name/ Title of Staff Member Conducting Follow-up	Date of Follow-up	Identified Next Steps

Appendix D:

## Translated Questions for Family and Student Check-In

**Directions:** Below are translations of questions and prompts to support the teacher conducting the special administration of the NYSITELL. These should be used while completing the wellness check for multilingual learners’ family and student check-in. Refer to Steps #2-3 of the administration guide for more details.

### Step #2: Communication with Family or Caregiver Protocol (10 minutes)

Questions to family member or caregiver:

- How are you doing?
- How is your child doing? Is there anything you would like to share with me about how they are adjusting to all the changes around them?
- What have we offered that was helpful to your child and your family during remote learning?
- How can we best support your child and your family in the days ahead?
- Do you have any social or emotional concerns about your child that I should share with our support staff?

### Step #3: Students Feelings Check-In (15 minutes)

Protocol for check-in with students.

**Open** – Show that they are important to you and you care about them. Examples:

- “I am glad to have the chance for the two of us to talk.”
- “I am excited to have you in my class/group this year.”

**Personalize** – Refer to administration guide for details on the feelings check-in. Use additional prompts as needed:

- **Probe:** “Tell me more about that.” “What does that look like?” “I want to make sure I understand what you are saying. Can you explain a little more?”
- **Communicate care and a calm emotional state:** “Your teachers care a lot about your success.” “Your teachers all want to make sure you are getting your needs met.”
- **Validate emotions:** “That must be so difficult. I see you and I am here for you.” “I can only imagine how much that impacts you.”
- **Stay solution-oriented:** “It sounds like a lot has been happening that is out of your control, and that sounds frustrating. What are some things you do have control over – something small you can do to start to make things better?”
- **Wind down the conversation:** “You have given me some things to think about. I am going to take some time to think about what you told me, and we will make some time to talk again in a few days.”

**Invite Feedback** – Show that you value their perspective and are open to their input. Examples:

- “What would you like to see happen this school year?”
- “What do you need most right now from me (and your other teachers)?”

**Close** – End on an optimistic, forward-thinking note. Examples:

- “What is the best thing you have seen today?”
- “What is keeping you going/giving you energy/making you happy right now?”