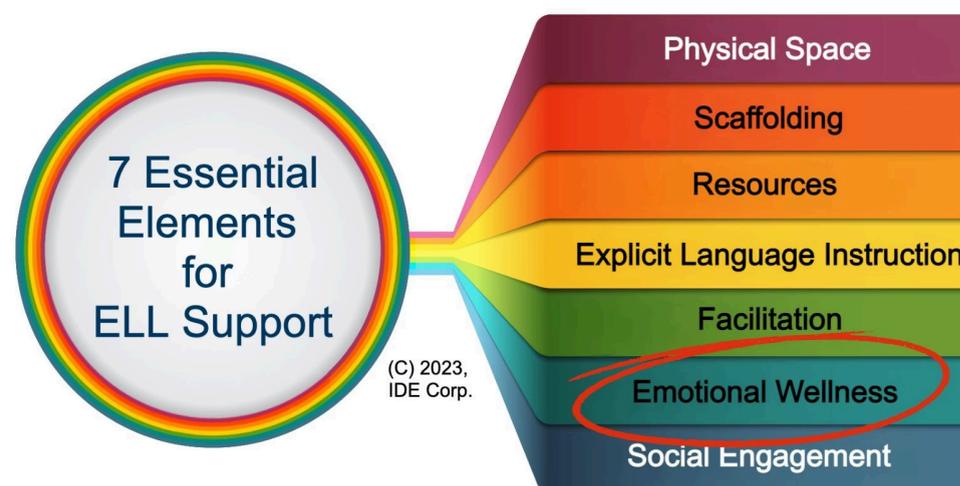


# Beyond Language: *Supporting the Emotional Needs of ELLs*

Emotional wellness is foundational for learning. Because stress can significantly hinder students' ability to engage and process new information, emotional wellness is one of IDE Corp.'s **7 Essential Elements for ELL Support**.



ELLs bring rich experiences and perspectives to the classroom, but many are also navigating significant transitions. Understanding the emotional realities some newcomers face helps educators create classrooms where students feel safe, supported, and ready to learn.

## What Students May Be Experiencing



### Culture Shock & Anxiety

Exposure to new norms, language, and social expectations can create significant stress for newcomers.



### Separation from Loved Ones

Many ELLs have left behind close family and friends, which can lead to grief and emotional withdrawal.



### Possible Trauma

Some students may have experienced violence during their journey or in their home country.



### Individual Differences

No two students share the same experience. Avoid assumptions — relationship-building is essential.

# 10 Strategies for Promoting Emotional Wellness

The strategies below provide practical starting points for supporting students across grade levels and language proficiency levels.

## 1 Honor the First Language

Affirm the value of multilingualism. Allow students to use their home language as a bridge to learning English — this reduces anxiety and builds confidence.

## 2 Respect the Silent Period

A student who is not yet producing oral language is still learning. Avoid calling on students to speak aloud, particularly in whole-class settings, before they are ready.

## 3 Build Genuine Relationships

Learn about students' lives, cultures, and interests. Incorporate culturally relevant examples into your lessons and engage students in conversations about their experiences.

## 4 Foster an Inclusive Classroom Culture

Actively teach all students to value linguistic and cultural diversity. Set community norms that celebrate difference and make newcomers feel genuinely welcomed.

## 5 Validate Student Experiences & Emotions

Let students know it's normal to feel nervous or frustrated when learning a new language. Affirm their experiences and emotions; familiarity is reassuring.

## 6 Establish Predictable Routines

Consistency reduces anxiety. Use visual schedules, clear procedures, and stable daily structures to give students a reliable sense of what to expect.

## 7 Teach Stress Reduction Techniques

Integrate stress reduction techniques, such as brief mindful moments, breathing exercises, or journaling into daily routines. These tools benefit all students, not just ELLs.

## 8 Use Strategic Peer Grouping

Create opportunities for students to work with bilingual peers (for language support) and native English speakers (for language modeling and social inclusion).

## 9 Promote Whole-Class Conversations About Inclusion

Talk openly with all students about what it means to welcome someone new. Normalize and celebrate the presence of multiple languages in the classroom.

## 10 Offer Multiple Modes of Expression

Reduce reliance on verbal participation. Allow students to demonstrate understanding through writing, drawing, gesture, or digital tools.