

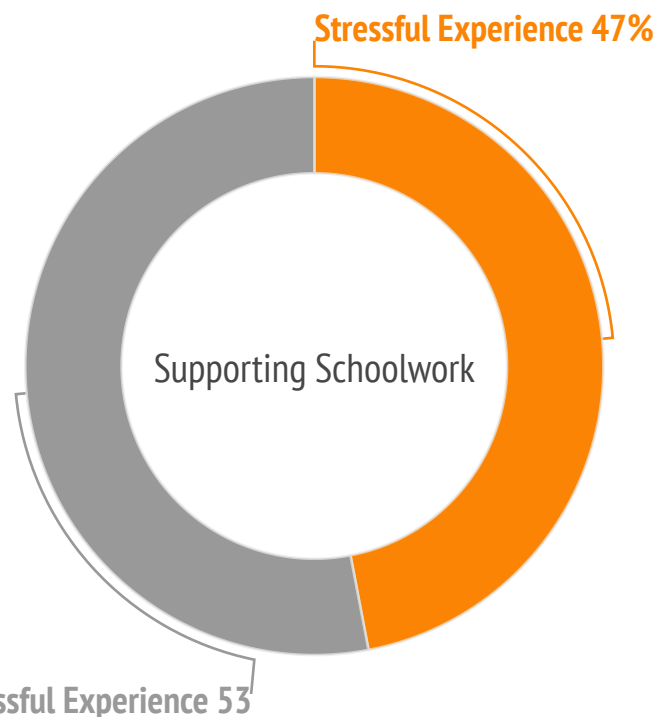
Feeding Their Minds

In California, nearly half of adult caregivers said they've had a very stressful experience helping their children with schoolwork during the pandemic, according to a 2021 survey released by the Lucile Packard Foundation for Children's Health.

Kelly Leibrock, an ESL teacher serving parents at Elkhorn Elementary, certainly can empathize with that sentiment, given her teaching experience. Her adult students, which in this diverse community can include people whose first language is Spanish, Chinese, Russian, and Arabic, used to take class in person when their kids were in school. But like so much else, the pandemic ripped apart that convenience.

Now, Kelly says, many of these families are sitting beside their children as they do school from home, trying their best to help their kids with academics, even though they are not fluent in English. In addition, Kelly notes, some of the parents whom she teaches work the graveyard shift, in order to be with their kids during the school day. "When do they sleep? Make dinner? Have time for an extra [ESL] class," Kelly asks. "It's upended their lives," she says about the pandemic.

For many CA parents, helping kids with schoolwork during the pandemic was a stressful experience.



Kelly tries her best to replicate online the community she built in her in-person classes. A few years ago, for example, Kelly hosted a classroom baby shower for one of her students, where educational activities included making invitations and playing games in order to learn English.

But, alas, it's hard to mimic that type of experience in an online teaching environment, and building community while teaching English online to understandably distracted parents has been quite challenging. Kelly had the good idea to provide a food basket to her students along with recipes that students could cook from home during class time. Following directions in recipes, Kelly notes, is a "fun, social way to test comprehension," and the Health Education Council provided the funding to help bring this program to fruition.

Facebook Posts from Kelly to Her Class



Kelly Leibrock shared a link.



Oct 20, 2020 · 🌐

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Kelly Leibrock shared a link.



Oct 12, 2020 · 🌐

If you picked up your Farmers to Families food box today, check out this website! It has quick, easy, and healthy recipes that you can search by ingredients!

Technology, however, has proven to be a barrier to language comprehension. When you're in-person in class, Kelly observes, you can walk behind a student and point or gesture about what to do. That's harder to do online, especially given that Zoom was new to many of her students who may not even understand introductory emails that Kelly sends prior to class.

Kelly is deeply committed to finding a solution that will work. The compassion she feels for her students' situation leads her to innovate new ways to support them. "This is the most rewarding thing that I've done with my time," Kelly says about her job as an ESL teacher. Like any good cook, Kelly is planning to tweak the recipe for remote learning to find a way to keep parents engaged, both with her and with each other, as they learn English.