



I Tried Bringing My Baby to School

Suellen Liñan

BEFORE YOU READ:

1. Have you ever tried bringing your child or children to school? What was that like?
2. What does the phrase “piece of cake” mean? Try using it in a few sentences.

Not a Piece of Cake!

Last fall, I started taking English classes. But it was not *a piece of cake* to make this possible! It took time and hard work.

My husband and I have a new baby, and we are on a tight budget. I decided to search for a place where I could study English for free and where they would let me bring my baby. I found an English class at the Church, and I signed up. At the beginning, I was very enthusiastic, but later I realized that it is difficult to pay attention to the English class when you have a classmate who is your baby!

Nothing Worked

While I was in class, my baby couldn’t sit still in her stroller because she needed my attention. I tried different things to make it work. For example, I brought her to class while she was napping. I gave her food and toys during the class. I tried to find a friend to play with her. Nothing worked, so I decided not to attend the class.

Getting Help

My husband and I had a conversation. I told him that I felt frustrated because I always had our baby. I said that I loved her but I need a little time only for me. My husband asked his academic advisor for help. The advisor told him that the university has some scholarships for daycare. We applied and we got some money to help pay for daycare.

We were very happy to receive the scholarship. Now our baby could go to daycare twice a week. However, when I applied to a new English class, they told me that there is a long waiting list. Fortunately, a few months later, they called to say that they had one spot for morning English class.

Finally, my baby went to daycare and I went to English class *at the same time!* It took a while for her to adapt to the new place, but it was worth it. Being able to attend English class without my baby was wonderful. I had a good teacher and classmates who wanted to learn the language. This environment motivates me to keep studying English. Also, I learn about my classmates’ countries, which is very enriching. They are from China, Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Egypt, Haiti, Malaysia, Japan, Brazil, and Chile.

Childcare in the U.S.

Out of the 41 richest countries in the world, the U.S. ranks 40th in terms of access to paid parental leave and access to affordable quality childcare. Click on this [link](#) and

study the graphic published by UNICEF. Write several true sentences about it.

| Country | Rank | Leave | Access | Quality | Affordability |
|-------------------|------|-------|--------|---------|---------------|
| Luxembourg | 1 | 5 | 3 | 19 | 16 |
| Iceland | 2 | 12 | 5 | 1 | 15 |
| Sweden | 3 | 9 | 4 | 17 | 10 |
| Norway | 4 | 8 | 12 | 20 | 8 |
| Germany | 5 | 11 | 21 | 9 | 8 |
| Portugal | 6 | 12 | 19 | 18 | 12 |
| Lustria | 7 | 16 | 24 | 2 | 7 |
| Denmark | 8 | 27 | 2 | 5 | 17 |
| Republic of Korea | 9 | 4 | 10 | 26 | 14 |
| Estonia | 10 | 3 | 32 | 17 | 8 |
| Finland | 11 | 13 | 19 | 4 | 24 |
| Lithuania | 12 | 7 | 25 | 11 | 22 |
| Switzerland | 13 | 10 | 23 | 22 | 6 |
| Malta | 14 | 22 | 17 | | |
| Italy | 15 | 24 | 28 | 14 | 1 |
| Greece | 16 | 29 | 26 | 6 | 11 |



Describe what you see in this photo. Do you think federal policies in the U.S. should ensure that all children have access to free or affordable daycare? Why or why not? Gather information about how to access free or low-cost daycare in your community and make a poster, a flyer, or a Google doc to share it with other students in your program. Start by looking at <https://childcare.gov/>. Photo by Jenny via [Flickr](https://www.flickr.com/photos/jenny/), CC 2.0.

In summary, a lot of things had to come together for me to be able to study English. I tried one way – bringing my baby to class – and that didn’t work. So, my husband and I found another way. Studying English makes me feel that I am doing something for myself. I feel very happy, grateful, and lucky to be part of this community that has English classes and daycare so moms like me can attend.

AFTER YOU READ:

1. What are the various ways Suellen and her husband navigated and used information?
2. Do the activities listed in the box on p. 24 and in the caption above.

Suellen Liñan is a student at the Community Learning Center in Cambridge, MA. She is from Peru and she has a lovely two-year-old daughter. She moved to Boston in June 2022 due to her husband’s studies, but before embarking on this new adventure she worked at a bank in Chile.

