

Crossing the Street

Lian: I'm going to the Pre-K school tomorrow, Aunt Chunhua.

Chunhua: Do you have a job interview?

Lian: No, not a job interview. I'm going to speak with the director about becoming a Pre-K teacher in the future.

Chunhua: That is good. You're making connections and getting your foot in the door.

Lian: I really want to work there someday if I get a chance.

Rafaela: Are you taking Isabel to the school to enroll her today?

Martin: Not the school. I am going to a place called the Family Welcome Center.

Rafaela: That sounds like what you need.

Martin: Yeah, I've made a list of questions. I hope they can answer them.

**Family
Welcome
Center**

Receptionist: Welcome. Please sign here.

(Martin signs in with Isabel and goes to speak with a Counselor.)

**Family Welcome
Center
Counselor**

(William): Pre-K is free for every New York City resident. It is a very important part of a child's education.

Martin: What will Isabel learn in Pre-K?

William: Isabel will learn about the world around her and about herself too. She will have lots of fun and make friends in Pre-K.

Martin: That sounds great, but who are the teachers in Pre-K? Can I trust them with my daughter?

William: The teachers are very well-trained. They know a lot about children and they really care about them.

Martin: I like that. Another big question I have is, I just moved here with my daughter to join my mother and sister... School has already started. Is that a problem?

William: No problem. The only requirement is to be a New York City resident when school starts.

Martin: So she can start right away?

William: Many schools are already full, but we will find a great Pre-K for you.

Martin: I heard about the Niño Contento Pre-K. It's close to where we live. There are a lot of Spanish-speaking families who have children at the school.

William: Let's see if there's space there.

**Martin
(speaking
to Isabel):** We're going to find a great school for you.

**William
(speaking
to Isabel):** That's right. We are.

(William turns to Martin and speaks with him.)

William: The school that you mentioned is full. But, not far from there, there's another great Pre-K - the Zhang Li Sunrise Pre-K. It would be a really good school for Isabel too. If

you're not sure, you can visit the school. I think you'll really like it.

Isabel (talking to her grandmother): Where is papi taking me today?

Alicia: To a school. You're going to be a student soon.

Isabel: Are you coming with me?

Martin: Today it's just you and papi. Grandma has to go to work.

Lian: I want to become a Pre-K teacher in the future. What should I know about pursuing the career?

Ms. Lin: First of all, Pre-K is the start of a child's school life, and being a Pre-K teacher is an important job. Before you can become a Pre-K teacher, you need to get the training to meet the needs of young children.

Lian: Where do you recommend that I get training?

Ms. Lin: I recommend one of the CUNY community colleges to get the training to be an assistant teacher. And if you want to be a lead teacher, you will need to get a bachelor's degree.

Lian: Actually, I'm taking a course in early childhood education at a community college right now.

Ms. Lin: That's a wonderful start. Do you have any experience working with children?

Lian: I read a lot about children and how they grow and learn, and I helped raise my little cousins back in China. It was fascinating to watch my cousins figure things out and learn



new words and concepts. That's why I want to become a Pre-K teacher someday.

Ms. Lin: My advice is to continue your studies. And if you can, volunteer at a Pre-K. That would be a great way to get some working experience, and it will be good for your resume too.

Lian: Are there any volunteering opportunities here?

Ms. Lin: At the moment we are full, but I have a friend who is the director of a Pre-K close to here that has a lot of Spanish-speaking families. I can give you her contact information. You can tell her that we met.

Lian: Thank you very much, but I don't know anything about Latin American cultures.

Ms. Lin: That's why it would be a great experience for you. It's important for people who want to become teachers to know about different cultures.

(Martin and Isabel enter the room where Lian and Ms. Lin are talking.)

Ms. Lin: Hi, are you Martin?

Martin: Yes.

**Ms. Lin
(to Lian):** It was great to meet you. Let's stay in touch.

Lian: Thank you very much for your time.

Ms. Lin: Martin, I want to show you a classroom.

Ms. Lin: We serve breakfast and lunch and two snacks during the day, and it's all free.

Martin: Is the food Chinese?



Ms. Lin: We serve many kinds of food and the children love it. Sometimes we have a Chinese snack.

**Isabel
(to her
father,
in Spanish):** Tengo hambre, papi. [I'm hungry.]

**Martin
(to Isabel,
in Spanish) :** Comeremos pronto. [We'll eat soon.]

**Martin
(to Ms. Lin):** I want Isabel to always remember Spanish – her mother tongue. Also, she needs to learn English.

Ms. Lin: I understand. Most of the families in this school speak Chinese, but we teach in English here, and we have some families from many other countries too.

Martin: Will that be confusing for Isabel?

Ms. Lin: No, it won't. Children are amazing people. They love to learn. I think if you choose our school, your daughter will be happy here. She will get very good preparation for her elementary school education.

Martin: Thank you very much. You gave us a lot to think about. Right, Isabel?

Isabel: Sí. [Yes.]

Rafaela: So, what are you going to do?

Martin: I haven't decided yet.

Rafaela: Maybe it'll be good for Isabel.

Martin: Maybe. It's another world, but so close to where we live.



Chunhua: So, are you going to contact the director of that school?

Lian: I'm not sure, Auntie.

Chunhua: Why, what are you afraid of?

Lian: I'm not afraid of anything. I'm just... I really don't know anything about the culture.

Chunhua: You love to learn.

Lian: I do.

Chunhua: I think you should do it.

Chunhua: Can I help you?

Martin: Yes, thank you.

Chunhua: Try an egg tart. Fresh from the oven. Lian, please take care of this customer.

Martin: Excuse me, but I think I saw you at the Sunrise Pre-K yesterday?

Lian: You were with your daughter, I think.

Martin: Yes, with Isabel. We met with the director.

Lian: Does your daughter go to school there?

Martin: No, we were just taking a look at the school.

Lian: The Sunrise is a great Pre-K. I would like to work there someday.

Martin: Are you a teacher too?

Lian: No, not yet. Maybe one day.

Chunhua: You haven't ordered anything. Here, here...

(Aunt Chunhua puts some fresh egg tarts in a bag for Martin.)

Chunhua: They're delicious. A few for you and your wife and daughter too.

Martin: Thank you very much. I'm not married, but my mother and sister will love these and my daughter too. How much is it?

Chunhua: It's on the house.

Lian: My aunt is very generous.

Martin: That's my family's food cart. I work with my mother and sister too.

(Martin points at his family's food cart across the street from the bakery.)

Lian: We're neighbors.

Martin: Yes, please come and visit sometime. I'm Martin, by the way.

Lian: I'm Lian and this is my aunt, Chunhua.

Martin: It's a pleasure to meet you both.

Lian: I want to get experience with four year olds and learn new skills, so I can become a Pre-K teacher one day.

Pilar: What do you know about four year olds?

Lian: I love four year olds. They're so curious. They want to understand everything.

Pilar: That's so true, but how do you think you can help the children in our Pre-K?

Lian: Well, I'm Chinese, so maybe I can share my culture a little bit with the kids.

Pilar: That would be great. We do have some Chinese children here and also some children from other countries. But most of the children are from Spanish-speaking countries.

Lian: I'm interested in learning about those cultures too. I think it'll help me become a better Pre-K teacher in the future.

Pilar: I love your ideas and your passion. I would like to give you a chance to volunteer here. You would learn what a Pre-K teacher does and you will get valuable experience.

**Sunrise
Pre-K**

Volunteer: Hi, what's your name?

Isabel: Isabel Flores.

**Sunrise
Pre-K**

Volunteer: Here you are, Isabel. You're going to put that onto the welcome board.

**Ms. Lin
(to Martin
and Isabel):**

Good morning. We're so glad that you and Isabel are joining us.

Martin: We're glad to be here.

Ms. Lin: Martin, you are always welcome in our school to visit the class and join activities. We want you and Isabel to feel at home here.

Martin: Thank you.

Julio: (to a mother and her daughter, Mei): Good morning. Great to see you. Would you please sign in here?

Mother: Sure.

Julio: This is Lian. She is volunteering with us.

Mother: Nice to meet you.

Lian: Hi. Nice to meet you.

Julio
(to Lian): So, the children sign in every day.

(Mei starts crying.)

Mother: I'm so sorry, she doesn't usually cry when I drop her off.

Lian: What's her name?

Mother: Mei.

Lian: Hello, Mei. I know you're sad because you're going to miss your mommy. And she's sad too because she's going to miss you. But, she's going to come back later.

Mother: I'll be back later, Mei, and we'll go home together.

Lian: And your mommy has a very important job for you.

(Lian whispers to the mother.)

Lian: Give her something to take care of today, like a photo or a pencil.

Mother: I need you to take care of this comb for me.

Lian
(to Mei): It's a very important job, so when Mommy comes back later she can comb her hair.

(Mei takes the comb. She stops crying.)

Lian: Oh, fantastic! Thank you Mei.

Mother: Thank you

Lian: It looks like you're ready to say goodbye to your mommy.

Mei: Bye.

Mother: Bye.

**Mother
(to Lian
and Julio):** Thank you so much

Julio: Thank you

Lian: Hi, Martin.

Martin: Hello, Lian. And Chunhua. This is my sister, Rafaela.

Lian: Hi, nice to meet you.

Rafaela: It's nice to meet you too.

Martin: Thank you so much for coming.

Lian: Thank you for the invitation.

Chunhua: It was time we came and tried your food.

Martin: Well, welcome. (to Lian) I enrolled my daughter at the Sunrise Pre-K. She likes it a lot.

Lian: That's great! I have some news too. I'm volunteering at a Pre-K with a lot of families from Latin America.

Martin: How do you like it?

Lian: I really like it. I'm learning so much.

Chunhua: You guys can keep talking about Pre-K. But I'm hungry.

(They all laugh.)

Martin: What can I get you?

(Lian and Aunt Chunhua look at the menu, but they're not sure what to order.)

Martin: I know, I'll make a mix of different things.

Lian: Uncle, your work is beautiful!

Chen: Thank you, Lian. You are becoming a talented baker too.

Lian: Thank you, uncle. I told the children about my uncle who makes beautiful cakes and can write beautifully too. They want to meet you.

Chen: Okay.

Julio: Good morning. Today, Lian and her uncle Chen are going to teach you a little bit of Chinese culture.

Chen: Today, we're going to learn how to count in Chinese from one to ten. Are you guys ready?

Class: Yes.

Chen: Okay... This is one. We're going to say 'e'.

Class: E!

Chen: Good. Number two is 'er'.

Class: Er.

Uncle Chen: Excellent. 'Su'.

Class: Su.

Chen: Good. That's four. Number six is 'lio'.



Class: Lio.

Chen: Excellent. And number nine is 'gio'.

Class: Gio.

Chen: Are you ready for the last one? Number ten is 'shuh'.

Class: Shuh.

Chen: That's number ten. There you go. You guys just counted one to ten in Chinese. Let's give you guys a hand!

Ms. Lin: This is Isabel's father, Martin. He's going to show us some things about Mexican culture.

Martin: Everyone, this is a balero. Can you say it?

Class: Balero.

Martin: Balero, okay. And this is a Mexican toy called voladores de papantla.

Class: Whoa, that's cool!

Martin: Hi, neighbor.

Lian: Hi, chef.

Martin: You know I went to Isabel's school today and I showed the kids a little Mexican culture.

Lian: I'm sure they loved it.

Martin: They did.

Lian: My uncle and I showed the kids a little Chinese writing.

Martin: Did they like it?

Lian: I think so. They're learning to write in Chinese.

Martin: Wow. I don't know if I could do that.

Lian: I can teach you a little.

Martin: Really? I think it's too difficult for me.

Lian: Wait a second.

(Lian picks up a piece of paper and a pen. She writes some Chinese letters on the paper.)

Martin: What does it mean?

Lian: It means neighbor - linju.

Martin: Linju?

Lian: Very good.

Martin: Let me try.

(Lian shows Martin how to write 'neighbor' in Chinese.)

Lian: From top to bottom. And left to right.

Martin: Lian? Would you like to... I would like to take a walk with you in Sunset Park. Would you like to do that?

Lian: Yes, I would. That would be fun. I would like that very much.

Lian: Maybe we could write a book about the city.

Martin: In Chinese.

Lian: And in Spanish.

Martin: And English too. But what's the story?



Lian: Maybe a story about Sunset Park. A New York City folktale. It starts once upon a time...

Martin: ...People lived together in a place called New York City. They lived side by side...

Lian: ...in beautiful communities.

Martin: They were adventurous. They wanted to know and understand each other...

Lian: They crossed the street to meet.

We Speak NYC is a production of the City of New York.

