Welcoming refugee children in Oxfordshire



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Advice for early years and childcare providers in Oxfordshire who are supporting children in their families who are refugees and those seeking asylum.

Everyone is welcome

The aim of this document is to provide further advice and considerations for early years and childcare providers who are welcoming children and their families who are refugees and those seeking asylum. It is hoped that the information included will serve to raise awareness of relevant issues and provide practical ideas for strategies activities and contacts.

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Newly arrived in Oxfordshire.

* Many early years and childcare settings are welcoming new children who may have arrived in the UK and Oxfordshire as refugees or seeking asylum.

* Lots of families are currently arriving from Afghanistan and Ukraine.

* Many of these families will need extra support and guidance from the people they meet.
* Children will have experienced loss and upheaval and they may have experienced trauma.
* Some children may have missed out on play opportunities in countries where there has been conflict or during prolonged and hazardous journeys to safety.
* On arrival in the UK some children may be living in temporary accommodation and may not have space to play.
* Families experience of early years provision may differ and in some countries there is no formal early years provision.
* Time taken to show families how the [Early Years Foundation Stage](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2) (EYFS) is delivered will help them to understand how their children will learn through play.
* Young refugee children can benefit greatly from access to high quality early years provision and the avenues of support and care provided will help them to feel safe and secure. It will also help to develop confidence and promote their language and communication skills.



Early Education Funding and Childcare

* Early Years children of refugee families are able to access two year old funding, and universal and extended three and four year old funding (subject to meeting usual criteria).
* Children will need to be added to your headcount in the same way as you would add any new starter.
* To assist funding and advisory teams, when a refugee child joins your setting email: [earlyeducation@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:earlyeducation@oxfordshire.gov.uk)
* Please ensure families are fully aware of any additional charges that may be incurred and how their entitlement is delivered.
* Please direct families to [Funded Early Education | Oxfordshire County Council](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/children-education-and-families/early-years-education/free-education-3-4-year)
* Further information regarding childcare entitlements: [www.childcarechoices.gov.uk](http://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk)
* Oxfordshire [Family Information Service](https://fisd.oxfordshire.gov.uk/kb5/oxfordshire/directory/families.page?familieschannel=0) (FIS) offers support and information to families. This website gives users the choice to alter the language by selecting the **Language** option at the top of the page and changing to the preferred option. FIS can be contacted by telephone: 01865 323332 or email: [fis.enquiries@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:fis.enquiries@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

Supporting the well-being of children

**The Oxford Brain Story -** [BUILDING BRAINS FOR LIFELONG HEALTH](https://www.oxfordbrainstory.org/)

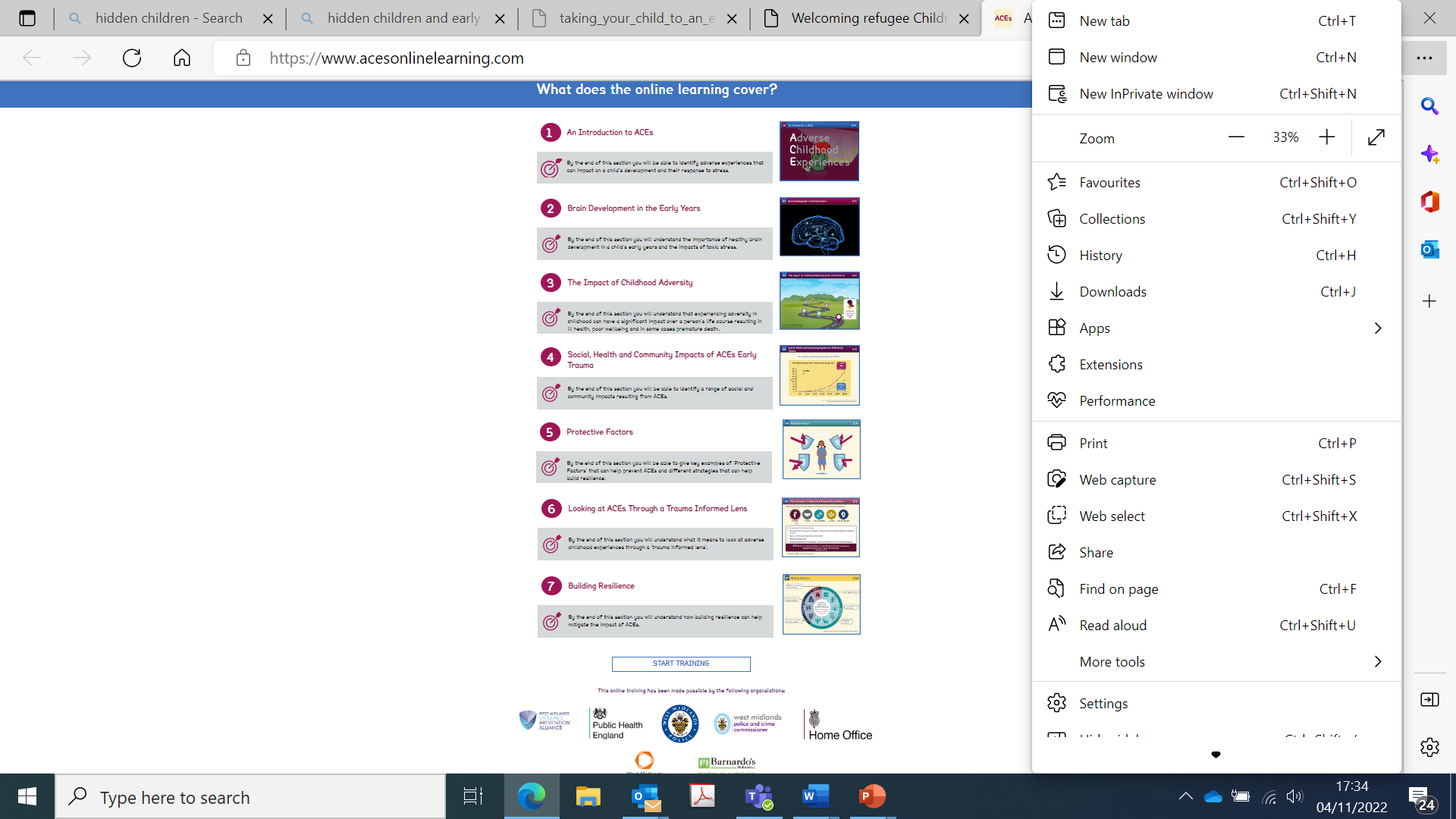
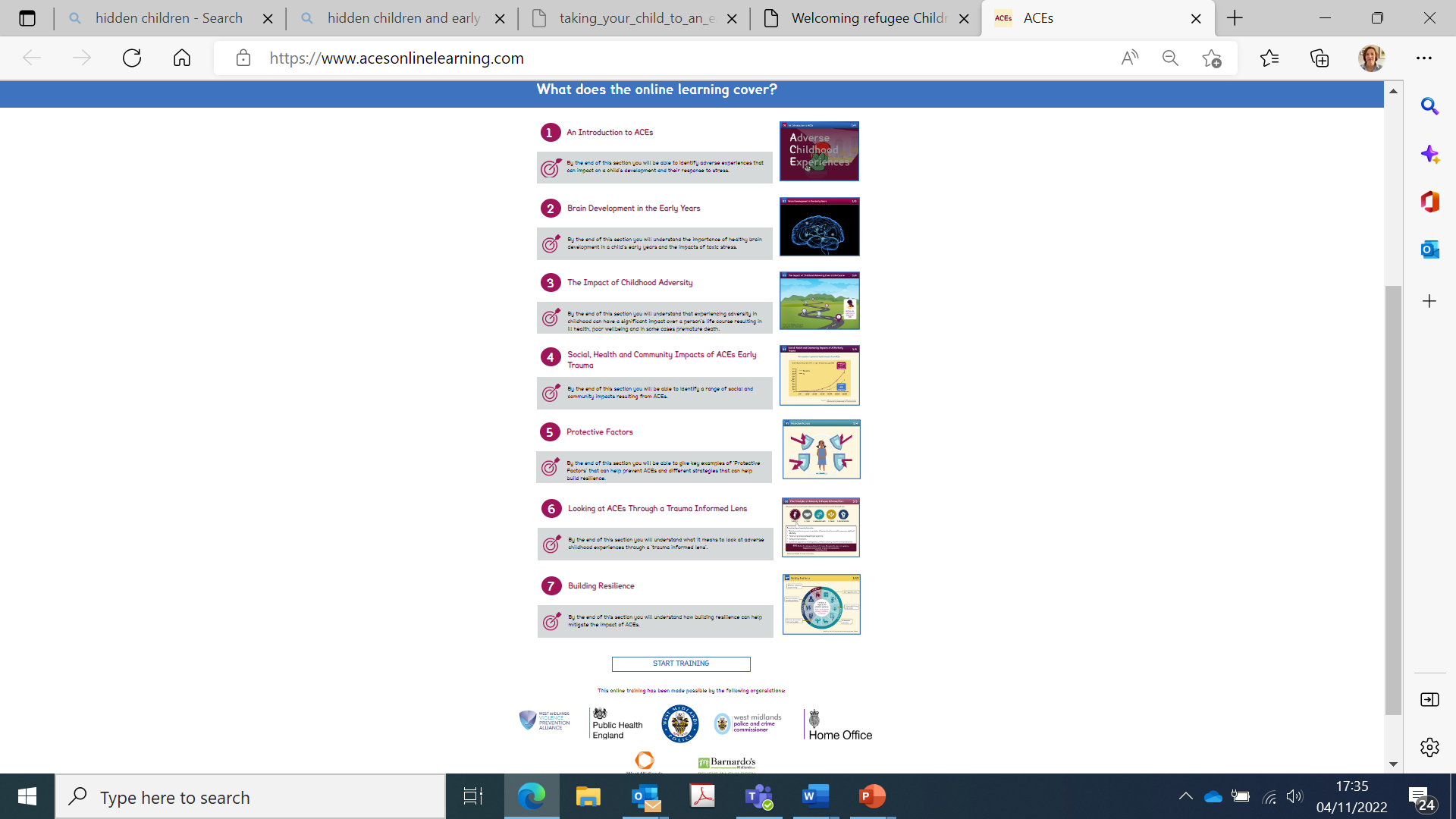
The University of Oxford, in partnership with the Alberta Family Wellness Initiative, is working to share knowledge about the science of brain development for families and professionals. This is important information for everybody to understand how our earliest experiences can affect our long-term mental and physical health. For more information click [here](https://www.oxfordbrainstory.org/)

[Barnardos: Supporting the well-being of children from Ukraine. The impact of trauma and how to foster resilience in early learning and care](https://youtu.be/aszW3RaGub8) - Video

Families who have experienced forced migration need responsive early years education who understand the impact of the experience of being displaced and the developmental effects of trauma and resettlement and how to strengthen children's capacity for resilience. Click [here](https://youtu.be/aszW3RaGub8) for more information.

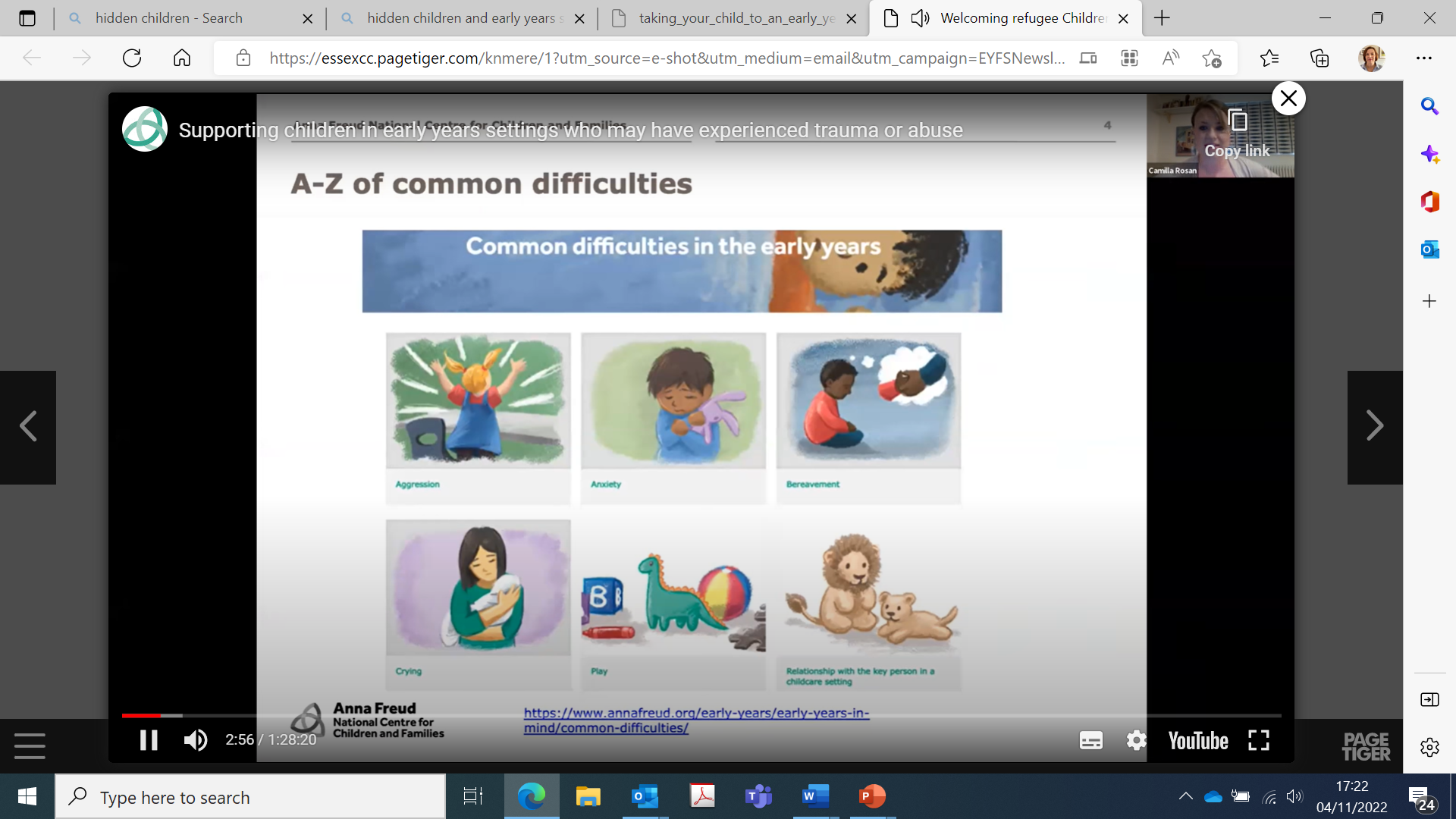
[Early Trauma Online Learning - Introduction to Adverse Childhood Experiences](https://www.acesonlinelearning.com/)

This course has been funded by the Home Office Early Intervention Fund.

[Anna Freud Centre - supporting children in early years settings who may have experienced trauma](https://youtu.be/XKJuBemELjI) – Video

Anna Freud Centre can help you manage a range of issues and have resources to support A-Z of common difficulties.



Attachments and Positive Parenting

Children can form attachments with more than one caregiver, but the bond with the people who have provided close care from early infancy is the most important and enduring (Bowlby, 1997). NSPCC have valuable information about attachment and how trauma can affect this. For further information click [here](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-health-development/attachment-early-years)

Managing behaviour in early years settings can be challenging and the Anna Freud Centre has developed a video to help early years professionals. Click [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EqpuY_It5X4) for more information.

Oxfordshire Health Visiting Service – Positive parenting and managing emotions.

Here are some helpful tips on managing children’s emotions and common difficulties in the early years <https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/hv/3-4/positive-parenting/>

Family Relationships Matter: The First Six Years - Adults shape the way children think, feel and act right from birth. Express care, challenge growth, provide support, share power, and expand possibilities. Click [here](https://youtu.be/VkRs4_0hiPQ) to see the video

Creating a haven of security

* children may show that response to the stress they have experienced in very various ways
* some children may experience painful separation anxiety
* supporting children to feel secure may require taking the child's lead on when they are comfortable for their parents to leave them

It is important not to make stereotypical judgments that all referee refugee children are traumatised. Many children's needs will be met through high quality provision of the EYFS and opportunities to experience stability, make friends and experience enriching play experiences. Early years settings can play a crucial role in helping refugee children and their families to feel welcome and part of their local community. Sign posting families to local services will help them find out important information and advice around a number of key issues including health housing and benefits.

Supporting the whole family

**Libraries**

All children and their families can register for a Library Ticket so they can borrow books, including dual language books. Libraries also run groups and events [Libraries | Oxfordshire County Council](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/leisure-and-culture/libraries)

**Information for Oxfordshire Parents**

[Information for parents | Oxfordshire County Council](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/children-education-and-families/information-parents)

Challenging discrimination

You may encounter colleagues or parents who hold negative views about refugees and asylum seekers, often fuelled by reports in the media. An understanding of correct information can help to dispel common myths, making it easier to stand up for the rights of refugees and asylum seekers. Information facts and figures on the truth about asylum can be found by clicking on [here](https://www.refugeecouncil.org.uk/information/refugee-asylum-facts/the-truth-about-asylum/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIzrzX-OOq-AIVDO7tCh3PQwrpEAAYASAAEgL0vPD_BwE).

Definition of terms

* The term refugee is widely used to describe displaced people all over the world
* An asylum seeker is a person who has left their country of origin and formally applied for asylum in another country but whose application has not yet been decided
* A refugee is someone whose asylum application has been successful and who is allowed to stay in another country having proved they would face persecution back home
* Failed asylum seeker is a person whose application has failed an who has no other protection claim awaiting a decision. Some refused asylum seeker returned home voluntary, others are forcibly returned after some, it is not safe or practical for them to return until conditions in their country change.
* Economic migrant is someone who has moved to another country to work.

BBC learning seeking refuse series

Ali’s story the moving story of a child refugee in his own words and pictures click [here](https://youtu.be/GnZXzvWIoIY) to watch the video

Books about refugees and asylum seekers (younger children)

Since asylum can be a confusing issue for children (and even adults), here are some books that explore what it really means to flee your home and must start your life over. These books are mainly aimed at younger children. However, you can also see the list for older children and teenagers. Click [here.](https://www.booktrust.org.uk/booklists/b/books-about-refugees-and-asylum-seekers-younger-children/)

Supporting children new to learning English

In many ways the needs of refugee children are very similar to those of any other new arrivals with English as an additional language (EAL), therefore, settings should adopt the same EAL good practise for these children as they would any others. It is important to find out as much as you can from the families about the new children and to learn about their individual needs.

A home language profile template.to support you with this is below.

Language Profile (additional “All about Me” information)

To support the development of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Home Language/s

NB: To be completed by Key Person through conversation with the family

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| My full name is… |  |
| I like to be known as… | What do the family call the child at Home? Would they also like this to be used in the setting? |
| This is how you pronounce my name | Write this phonetically (how it sounds)and say it back to the parent/carer to check your pronunciation. |
| This is who I live with | Who lives in the child’s home? (record ages of siblings). |
| These are the name(s) of language(s) that we speak at home |  |
| These are the people who speak my home language with me | *Parents/grandparents/family members that are seen regularly* |
| These are the people who speak English with me | As above |
| This is who to contact first if you need to speak about me | Suggest that if one parent is more confident speaking English,  they can be the 1st point of contact to speak about the child |
| When I speak my home language, my parents are concerned about… | Use this opportunity to discuss if the parents have any concerns about a delay in the home language |
| These are the traditions that are important to me and my family | Ask about family celebrations that the child enjoys that can be shared in the setting |
| This is the name of the religion we follow |  |
| This is how you can support my religion in the  setting? | Is there anything that is importance to be aware of, for example, dietary observations? |
| **Checklist** |  |
| Importance of home language leaflet given |  |
| Important /survival words  asked for |  |
| Requested family photos |  |

Open stages of learning a new language

* Silent Period

Many bilingual children go through a silent period when they first enter an unfamiliar setting. This can last for up to six months or longer. It is not a ‘passive’ stage. Children will be watching, actively listening, and exploring their environment, trying to understand new experiences and to develop new meanings. It is important that children should not feel pressurised to speak until they feel confident enough to do so.

* Echoing

Many children may begin to ‘echo’ single words and some short phrases used by adults and peers. All attempts at speech should be encouraged and praised. If you offer a biscuit and say ‘would you like to take a biscuit?’ the child may echo the question with ‘biscuit’ or ‘take a biscuit.’

* ‘Formulaic’ language

Formulaic language may come next. This is ‘chunks’ of meaningful social speech e.g. ‘Mummy come soon’, ‘My turn’. This can be supported by encouragement and reaffirming, ‘Yes, Mummy will come back soon’.

* Joining in with refrains.

Children may begin to join in with story refrains and repetitions in songs. Learnt by copying others. Support this by planning for these opportunities.

* Using Questioning words

For the purpose of making sense of their surroundings e.g. ‘Me play?’

* Independent phrases and longer sentences

Children will then begin to generate their own ‘telegraphic’ sentences, using two or three word utterances. Function words are likely to be omitted, the main concern being the communication of meaning. Non-verbal gestures will often accompany speech. Holistic phrases (a development of ‘chunking’) will continue during this stage.

* Longer sentences

Children will begin to use extended phrases or simple sentences; these may contain errors for some time until children understand the use of different grammatical structures in English, which may be very different from their home language

**Top tips for supporting the inclusion of children with EAL**

* You should provide visual timetables with real photos of the settings routine
* Photo books of the setting for children to take home to talk about with their family
* Photos on drawers and boxes to show what resource is inside
* Photos of key areas and activities in a book or a key ring to help children choose
* Lots of encouragement and a smile

Early years inclusive environments good practice audit

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **First impression** |  | **Yes** | **No** | **Comment / action** |
| Do you have “Welcome” signage that includes the home languages of the families in your setting and in your local community? |  |  |  |  |
| Do the images on posters, signs and leaflets reflect diversity of ethnicity, family groups and ability? |  |  |  |  |
| Are families greeted in their home language? |  |  |  |  |
| Is the information that you provide written in plain English, without jargon and with visual images to support understanding? |  |  |  |  |
| **Around the setting** |  | **Yes** | **No** | **Comment / action** |
| Do the pictures, photos and posters displayed for children reflect diversity of ethnicity, family groups and ability and do they show people in non-stereotypical situations and roles?  Do you have words and signs around your setting in the home languages of the children who attend, and do you check with parents that these are correct and relevant?  Do you ask bilingual parents to help to write signs in their home language (welcome, goodbye)?  Do you encourage children to bring photos of their families into the setting to display and to include in their Learning Journeys?  Do you provide a visual timetable to support understanding of the setting’s routine? |  |  |  |  |
| **Home Corner** - Do you provide real cooking utensils and packaging for domestic play to reflect children’s family lives and communities? |  |  |  |  |
| **Dressing up** - Do you provide non- gender specific outfits and clothing that reflects cultural background?  Do you provide a variety of material lengths and prints to encourage open ended role-play?  **Dolls and small word figures -** Do you have a range of dolls and figures representing difference in ethnicity, culture, gender, age and ability?  Do you provide opportunities to explore the message that families live in lots of different dwellings (flats, caravans / trailers)? |  |  |  |  |
| **Books and puzzles**  Do they promote positive messages and encourage reflection about similarities and difference?  Do they represent images of difference in ethnicity, culture, gender, age and ability?  Do they provide images of a range of family groups and of people in non-stereotypical situations and roles? |  |  |  |  |
| **Creative resources**  Do you always provide paper, paints, crayons and pencils in skin tone shades to ensure children are able to represent their family and friends in creative activities? |  |  |  |  |
| **Activities** |  | **Yes** | **No** | **Comment/Action** |
| **Celebrations** - Is the celebration of festivals and special days based on those that are important to the families in your setting to ensure they are meaningful, relevant and respectful? |  |  |  |  |
| **Snack-time, cooking activities and meal times .**  Are all staff members aware of cultural and religious food observations and practices?  Do you provide food that is both familiar and unfamiliar to broaden children’s experiences?  ~  Do you provide the relevant food to reflect the cultural celebrations of your families? |  |  |  |  |
| **Music, rhyme and story time**  Do you listen to music, play instruments and sing songs and read stories that reflect the cultural backgrounds of the children in your setting?  Do you use props, puppets and actions to support understanding and participation in rhymes and stories? (only 7 per cent of communication is verbal) |  |  |  |  |
| **Supporting children with English as an additional language (EAL)**  Do you know the names of the languages spoken at home and by whom? Do you ask if parents / carers also read these languages?  Do you gather a list of the important words used by the child in their home language (hello, goodbye, mummy, daddy, thirsty, hungry, favourite things, toilet etc)? |  |  |  |  |
| Do you provide dual language books for children to take home to share with their families? |  |  |  |  |
| Are parents / carers encouraged to contribute to their children’s learning journeys in their home language?  Are parents and carers invited to share information about their child’s language development in their home language (for the 2-year progress check and ongoing assessment)? |  |  |  |  |
| **Team awareness** |  | **Yes** | **No** | **Comment/Action** |
| Do all members of staff understand their responsibilities to be inclusive? Do they have an awareness of the Equality Act 2010 and the Protected Characteristics covered by the act?  Are members of staff encouraged to find opportunities to talk about similarity, difference and unique qualities during everyday practice?  As a team, do you treat one another with respect and value each other’s diversity?  Inclusion starts with the team! |  |  |  |  |

Top tips for including children’s home language in their play and learning (EYFS 1.13)

* Dual language books - Encourage parents to borrow these so they can read to their children in their home language
* greetings in children’s home languages and encourage other children to use these too
* Include words around the room and signs in home languages (check with parents)
* include welcome signs made by families
* Internet and apps for translations (check with parents)
* Invitations for families to play and talk with their child in the setting
* Nursery rhymes songs in the child's language (talk to parents And search the internet)

The importance of the home language

Many families hope at that time in the UK is temporary and many children will therefore eventually receive their education in their home language.

Encourage families to talk and read to their children in their home language everyday to ensure that learning is not left behind.

70% of the world's population are bilingual or multilingual and there is a huge benefit to academic achievement when a child speaks more than one language.

The home language provides:

* a link to a child's culture
* a sense of belonging
* a link to their wider family
* [The Importance of Home Language- A Leaflet for Parents](https://eycp.essex.gov.uk/media/1399/g-early-years-provider-website-contents-5-delivering-the-eyfs-1-eyfs-documents-for-new-website-4-promote-equality-and-inclusion-eal-ecc_language-leaflets-ecc_home-language_uk-version_d1b.pdf)
* [Time together - support for multilingual families | National Literacy Trust](https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/time-together-multilingual-families/)

Further resources

* Refugee resource - [Refugee Resource – Oxfordshire](https://livewell.oxfordshire.gov.uk/Services/3125/Refugee-Resource)
* All Refugee Resettlement Support - [Refugees in Oxfordshire – Connection Support](https://www.connectionsupport.org.uk/refugees-oxfordshire/)
* How to talk to children about war - [How to talk to children about war | early years alliance (eyalliance.org.uk)](https://www.eyalliance.org.uk/how-talk-children-about-war)
* Free resources for Ukrainian refugees - [Free resources for Ukrainian refugees | National Literacy Trust](https://literacytrust.org.uk/about-us/ukraine-war-support-and-resources/)
* Refugee and Migrant stories booklist - <https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/refugee-and-migrant-stories-booklist/>
* Young refugees and migrants - [Young Refugees & Migrants | The Children's Society (childrenssociety.org.uk)](https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/young-refugees-migrants)
* Refugees and Asylum Seekers - [Refugees and Asylum Seekers - The Bell Foundation (bell-foundation.org.uk)](https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/eal-programme/guidance/diversity-of-learners-who-use-english-as-an-additional-language/refugees-and-asylum-seekers/?utm_source=e-shot&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=EE26-21-3-22)
* They can really fly’: how to teach a refugee child - [‘They can really fly’: how to teach a refugee child | Schools | The Guardian](https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/apr/27/they-can-really-fly-how-to-teach-a-refugee-child)

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Bowlby, John (1997) Attachment and loss. Volume 1: attachment. London: Pimlic

We would like to acknowledge Essex Early Years team, whose documents were referred to during the preparation of this guidance. October 2022