
GUIDANCE FOR EARLY YEARS PRACTITIONERS ON SUPPORTING CHILDREN LEARNING ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL).



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Introduction

We can do a lot to support children who are learning EAL in our Early Years settings. These days there are many instances of bilingualism and multilingualism within our settings, and it is our job to support these children in communicating effectively with adults and peers, and to ensure they are progressing well within all areas of learning.

Bilingualism and multilingualism in very general terms are about the coexistence and co-use of two or more languages in and by individuals and communities. If you are bilingual, you use two languages and if you are multilingual, you use more than two. Raising multilingual or bilingual children can create strong family and cultural bonds and it is good for children's learning. Bilingualism is an asset, and the first language has a continuing and significant role in identity, learning and the acquisition of additional languages.

At present, data shows that children with EAL under perform in the EYFSP compared with children whose first language is English. We therefore need to follow the specific guidance in the [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage](#) (EYFS).

For children whose home language is not English, providers must take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home. Providers must also ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language during the EYFS, ensuring children are ready to benefit from the opportunities available to them when they begin year 1. When assessing communication, language and literacy skills, practitioners must assess children's skills in English. If a child does not have a strong grasp of English language, practitioners must explore the child's skills in the home language with parents and/or carers, to establish whether there is cause for concern about language delay (1.13).

How do we know if a child is EAL?

Below are official definitions of EAL by the DFE and OFSTED, accompanied by guidance as to interpret them. If you consider a child to be EAL, then you must record their home language code on the school census (see appendix 2)

EAL - The Department of Education definition

A pupil's first language is defined as any language other than English that a child was exposed to during early development and continues to be exposed to in the home or community. If a child was exposed to more than one language (which may include English) during early development, a language other than English should be recorded, irrespective of the child's proficiency in English.

EAL - The Ofsted definition

English as an additional language (EAL) refers to learners whose first language is not English.

These definitions therefore cover the following:

- Pupils arriving from other countries and whose first language is not English
- Pupils who have lived in the UK for a long time and may appear to be fluent, but who also speak another language at home. These pupils are often not entirely fluent in terms of their literacy levels.
- Pupils who have been born in the UK, but for whom the home language is not English (e.g. Bengali children who are born in the UK, but arrive at school with very little English due to having spoken only Bengali at home and within the community)
- Pupils who have a parent who speaks a language other than English and the child communicates with in that language (ie. bi-lingual children)

It is important therefore to recognise that:

- Children who have British citizenship can still be EAL.
- If parents write on their child's admission form that the child speaks English as a first language, when it is clear that one or both of these parents is a speaker of another language, the child is very likely in fact to be EAL, and it will be necessary to check this.

Principles and Best Practice

The following best practice principles and guidelines will support all children's developing speech, language and communication skills. The strategies you should provide for all children will also support children learning EAL:

- All children are entitled to equal access to the whole curriculum.
- Learning and using more than one language is an asset and is a learning opportunity for both children and adults in the setting.
- Good development of a child's first language has a positive effect on the development of other languages.
- An atmosphere where being able to speak other languages should be truly valued as a positive skill.
- The use of stories, books, rhymes and songs are a vital part of worldwide cultural and linguistic heritage.



Working with parents

However, although the association between parental involvement and a child's academic success is well-established, evidence in the [EEF's Toolkit](#) suggests that there is surprisingly little robust evidence on which approaches are most effective in improving parental engagement, particularly for disadvantaged families. Parental involvement is effective in supporting children's learning overall and some families may exhibit some reluctance to work in partnership and it is important to consider the reason for this. Is it due to disinterest or maybe due to embarrassment?

There are potential challenges for parents of EAL children, especially those who have low levels of English, and they can face a range of specific barriers including a lack of understanding of the English setting/school systems (transitions to a new setting, funding that is available, admissions into school) and, therefore, face difficulties in supporting children with things such as out of school opportunities and homework.

Parental involvement is crucial for children; however, parents can be difficult to engage and settings and schools should be optimistic about the potential for involving parents but prepared to review and monitor activities to ensure they are having an impact.

Below are some tips on how to maintain effective communication with parents of learners with EAL, helping them to understand what goes on in the setting/school and to allow them to support their children with any out of school activities:

- Send translated versions of letters on recurrent topics to parents.
- Hold drop-in coffee mornings at regular intervals for parents where they can socialise with other parents in an informal setting. Invite other staff to join you whenever possible.
- Communicate children's progress to their parents in-between parent evenings. Where English language is less of a barrier, call home for a more personal contact; if not, send letters written in simple and clear English. Ensure that your communication includes both praise and areas for improvement for the child.
- Celebrate cultural and religious events at the setting/school and invite parents to participate in the celebrations.
- Invite minority ethnic group parents to the school to give talks and/or answer children's questions.
- Establish which of the parents might benefit from ESOL classes and, where possible, provide classes for them to attend. Manzoni and Rolfe (2019) identified that some schools found ESOL classes helpful in conveying information about the school's policies and practices to parents who were less likely to engage with the school in other ways.

Promoting multilingualism

Maintenance of the first language has been found to accelerate the process of learning a second language (Cummins, 2017; Baker, 2001; Dressler & Kamil, 2006). However, both settings/schools and parents of learners with EAL might benefit from being reminded of the importance of bilingualism or multilingualism, and continuing to use their home language. This can be achieved by:

- Providing parents with booklets about the importance of bi- or multilingualism, such as the booklets available from EAL Highland, translated into several languages (see further information).
- Holding dedicated sessions in setting/school about the importance of home language.
- Encouraging parents to read at home in the first language.
- Promoting the variety of languages spoken by children at your setting/school and involving parents of learners with EAL in some of the activities. An excellent resource that can be used for this purpose is Newbury Park Primary School's Language of the Month website

(which provides video recordings of children speaking basic phrases in several different languages and associated worksheets and activities). For instance, a parent could be invited to tell a story or teach several words in their language to an entire class of learners.

Parents in the setting/school

It is important that parents' first impressions of the setting/school and its staff are positive, and that the parents feel valued and respected from day one. Here are some concrete and practical ways in which settings/schools can support parents in the initial days:

- In the cloakroom or where parents will arrive, ensure there is a "welcome" sign translated into several languages. One such multilingual "welcome" poster is available from EarlyLearningHQ (see further information), but there are many such posters available online.
- Provide parents with information about the setting/school – with many visuals and ideally translated into major languages – this will serve to make sure that the parents feel included the moment they step through the school door.
- Multilingual signs need not be restricted to the welcome area. Parents and their children will notice these on setting/school tours and will feel included and welcomed. Multilingual signs are available from Little Linguist.
- During registration/admission meetings, when information is collected from the parents about their background, consider using the SEGfL's online background collation tool for new arrivals. Translated into 17 languages, it allows you to present some of the questions such as "What is your religion?" and "When did you come to the UK?" in their own language. You can then print the answers in English. No sensitive data is held online. If parents are not literate, ask a member of staff who shares the same language to help. Alternatively seek to use a translation and interpreting service where possible.
- If you provide welcome booklets to children on their first day, introduce this to the parents as well, explaining the structure of the day and rules while doing so. One such booklet is available from the Learning Village website. Mantra Lingua has also produced a tool that could allow you to create multilingual welcome booklets for parents, and Hounslow Language Service has produced welcome booklets translated into seven languages, although these are not free.

Practitioners and Learning

Things to consider

Practice and provision:

Do we?

- Ensure we have structures and practice that promotes general best practice in supporting and developing young children's speech, language and communication?
- Ask on our application form for home languages and religious cultural information, and find out what sort of learning experiences the child has at home?
- Ensure correct spelling and pronunciation of children's and parents' names?
- Offer a home visit where parents may feel more relaxed and able to talk about their child's strength and interests, as well as a full range of language skills and experiences?
- If possible, assess a child in their first language, and involve the parents in the assessment process?
- Do we value children's first language in print, and children's early attempts in mark making in different scripts?

- Recognise that children new to English may need additional adaptations to the learning environment (PECS, visual timetable, signing)?
- Support staff to find resources, and to find interpreters to support children and families with EAL? (e.g.; google translate for newsletters/information, link with language schools, or other families with the same language).
- Provide lots of experiences and activities that promote language through play, embedding language in the actual and concrete?
- Ensure children learn language in social situations by interacting with adults and other children?
- Offer differentiated and challenging play activities to support language development (storytelling with props)?
- Provide positive imagery ensuring children's home languages and experiences are reflected in the settings resources in order to develop a child's well-being and positive self-image?

The child:

Children with EAL might have to learn:

- A new set of sounds and sound groupings
- New intonation patterns
- A new script or alphabet
- A new set of sound symbol relationships
- New vocabulary
- New grammar
- New non-verbal signals
- New rules about social conventions and language
- Ability to relate to people and express feelings and emotions in a new language

Do we?

- Allow children new to English some period of time when they may just listen before they respond, whilst all the time talking to them, observing and monitoring their progress?
Understanding is almost always in advance of spoken language; it is important that children should not feel pressurised to speak until they feel confident to do so. It is essential that adults continue to talk to the children, respond to their non-verbal responses and involve them in all aspect of the Early Years setting.
- Plan for children to be included in smaller groups which include children who are fluent English speakers?
- Plan for times when the child can be involved which require little or no English e.g. giving out snacks or drinks at snack time?
- Listen to a child's attempts at communication, and encourage and attempt to interpret what they said?
- Ensure children know survival language? e.g. toilet, hello, goodbye, yes, no, drink, unwell.
- Ensure ALL children have access to all adults (teacher, bilingual workers etc)
- Constantly model language in a variety of situations (formal and informal) and give a running commentary during activities, to support children's understanding and access to appropriate vocabulary.
- Praise ANY attempt by the child to join in conversations (non-verbal, verbal - and give correct words).
- Explain social contexts to children in their own language (through interpreters) so that they feel comfortable with routines and cultural differences when they start at the setting.

The Family:

Do we?

- Ensure the family still use the home language regularly so that they support their child's learning, well-being and self- image, as well as their developing communication skills in both languages.
- Ensure that parents and families are involved in the setting, community, and share their culture and language with the setting (use bilingual skills for storytelling, labelling, sharing information and artefacts/skills).
- Encourage the sharing of bilingual books between settings and home. Sharing songs and rhymes in home languages reinforces similarities in patterns of languages and fosters home to settings links. Parents and bilingual staff can help translate favourites such as “twinkle, twinkle, little star” and “heads, shoulders, knees and toes” as well as sharing traditional rhymes and songs.
- Link older siblings so that younger children still have access to their home language within the setting (translation).
- Provide them with information – times, attendance, holidays, lunch/snack, policies, home/setting links – and know that they understand this information.
- Celebrate our children's family's festivals
- Know about family customs, religion, dress code
- Ensure we know the pronunciation and spelling of family names.
- Ensure we have an effective method of communication with the family
- Use the family to gain information to help the child settle – likes/dislikes, routine, strengths/weaknesses (All about me)
- Show properly that they are welcome and make just as much time for them as we do for English speaking families.
- Ensure parents are given information/made aware of all grant entitlements (NEF, 2yr old funding etc....)

The Key Person:

Do we?

- Explain what the key person system is, and the benefits of it, to parents
- Learn some key words in the child's home language to demonstrate we value it.
- Ensure we are aware of any cultural differences, festivals, or food requirements of the family/child, including different languages spoken/known etc, and by spending time with the family, getting to know them, and recording any pertinent information on the application form.
- Regularly keep parents informed about the child in the setting – progress, likes, dislikes, interests, skills etc. by keeping strong setting/home links.
- Spend time modelling language and supporting the child to progress with communication and language skills
- Offer a home visit where parents may feel more relaxed and able to talk about their child's strengths and interests, as well as finding out their full range of language skills and experiences.
- Parents are welcome and encouraged to spend time in the setting
- Track language development and know what to do if the child's language does not develop, or we are concerned about the child's general development
- Record observations of all the child's communication skills, including non-verbal and other signs of understanding, and keep language profile records involving regular discussions with parents.
- Use lots of opportunities to model new experiences and expectations.

- Track children's progress and attainment and put in interventions if needed. Ensure we discuss concerns about children's learning with managers during supervision meetings. If concerns are valid, we liaise closely with the family/parents and other professionals.
- Inform all other practitioners in the setting our plan for supporting specific children with EAL.



Statutory requirements in the Early Years.

[Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Guidance](#) states that:

Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential. Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances. A secure, safe, and happy childhood is important in its own right. Good parenting and high-quality early learning together provide the foundation children need to make the most of their abilities and talents as they grow up.

There are seven areas of learning and development that must shape educational programmes in Early Years settings. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected.

Communication and language

The development of children's spoken language underpins all seven areas of learning and development. Children's back-and-forth interactions from an early age form the foundations for language and cognitive development. The number and quality of the conversations they have with adults and peers throughout the day in a language-rich environment is crucial. By commenting on what children are interested in or doing, and echoing back what they say with new vocabulary added, practitioners will build children's language effectively. Reading frequently to children, and engaging them actively in stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems, and then providing them with extensive opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts, will give children the opportunity to thrive. Through conversation, storytelling and role play, where children share their ideas with support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate, children become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures

Personal, Social and Emotional Development

Children's personal, social and emotional development (PSED) is crucial for children to lead healthy and happy lives and is fundamental to their cognitive development. Underpinning their

personal development are the important attachments that shape their social world. Strong, warm and supportive relationships with adults enable children to learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others. Children should be supported to manage emotions, develop a positive sense of self, set themselves simple goals, have confidence in their own abilities, to persist and wait for what they want and direct attention as necessary. Through adult modelling and guidance, they will learn how to look after their bodies, including healthy eating, and manage personal needs independently. Through supported interaction with other children, they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably. These attributes will provide a secure platform from which children can achieve at school and in later life

Physical Development

Physical activity is vital in children's all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, co-ordination and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, co-ordination and agility. Gross motor skills provide the foundation for developing healthy bodies and social and emotional well-being. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye co-ordination, which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world activities, puzzles, arts and crafts and the practice of using small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.

Literacy

It is crucial for children to develop a life-long love of reading. Reading consists of two dimensions: language comprehension and word reading. Language comprehension (necessary for both reading and writing) starts from birth. It only develops when adults talk with children about the world around them and the books (stories and non-fiction) they read with them, and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together. Skilled word reading, taught later, involves both the speedy working out of the pronunciation of unfamiliar printed words (decoding) and the speedy recognition of familiar printed words. Writing involves transcription (spelling and handwriting) and composition (articulating ideas and structuring them in speech, before writing).

Mathematics

Developing a strong grounding in number is essential so that all children develop the necessary building blocks to excel mathematically. Children should be able to count confidently, develop a deep understanding of the numbers to 10, the relationships between them and the patterns within those numbers. By providing frequent and varied opportunities to build and apply this understanding - such as using manipulatives, including small pebbles and tens frames for organising counting - children will develop a secure base of knowledge and vocabulary from which mastery of mathematics is built. In addition, it is important that the curriculum includes rich opportunities for children to develop their spatial reasoning skills across all areas of mathematics including shape, space and measures. It is important that children develop positive attitudes and interests in mathematics, look for patterns and relationships, spot connections, 'have a go', talk to adults and peers about what they notice and not be afraid to make mistakes.

Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children to make sense of their physical world and their community. The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to meeting important members of society such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their

understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

Expressive Arts and Design

The development of children's artistic and cultural awareness supports their imagination and creativity. It is important that children have regular opportunities to engage with the arts, enabling them to explore and play with a wide range of media and materials. The quality and variety of what children see, hear and participate in is crucial for developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts. The frequency, repetition and depth of their experiences are fundamental to their progress in interpreting and appreciating what they hear, respond to and observe.

For children whose home language is not English, providers must take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home. Providers must also ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language during the EYFS: ensuring children are ready to benefit from the opportunities available to them when they begin Year 1.

When assessing communication, language and literacy skills, practitioners must assess children's skills in English. If a child does not have a strong grasp of English language, practitioners must explore the child's skills in the home language with parents and/or carers, to establish whether there is cause for concern about language delay.

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. Three characteristics of effective teaching and learning are:

- playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'
- active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements
- creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things

Assessment plays an important part in helping parents, carers and practitioners to recognise children's progress, understand their needs, and to plan activities and support. Ongoing assessment (also known as formative assessment) is an integral part of the learning and development process. It involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and learning styles, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. In their interactions with children, practitioners should respond to their own day-to-day observations about children's progress and observations that parents and carers share.

Progress check at age two

[The EYFS Progress Check at Age Two](#) will help you to make an accurate assessment of children's development, health and wellbeing. This involves working closely with parents and other professionals involved in the child's life. After completing the progress check at age two, parents and practitioners can take appropriate actions in the best interests of the child. It will also reduce unnecessary workload. Practitioners do not need to spend a long time away from the children to complete the check.

The progress check at age two has three main purposes:

1. Partnership with Parents: While practitioners and other professionals can support children's development and wellbeing individually, they can achieve so much more by working together.
2. Action for every child: Writing down observation and sharing reports do not help children. Practitioners need to listen to the child, talk with each other and then plan together. Working together makes a difference.
3. Early identification: Some children need extra help for a while as they grow and develop – for example, with their communication. Other children may have long-term developmental needs. Some families may struggle and need support. Whatever the circumstances, sensitive early intervention can make a big difference. Children develop rapidly between the ages of two and three – practitioners need to be quick to support and identify help where it is needed.

There is no prescribed format for the EYFS progress check at age two summary. Each setting can decide on its own progress check format, but as a minimum it must include a short-written summary of the child's development in the prime areas; the summary must identify the child's strengths and areas for improvement. There is an example format in the [appendices](#).

The DfE have also published a [vodcast](#) to explain the new guidance to early years practitioners and a [blog](#) that highlights why the progress check is important now, more than ever as we support children to bounce back from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Assessment of education provision

In making assessment judgements about the progress of children over time, it is crucial also to evaluate the impact of the setting's education provision and teaching methods.

Here are some key points to consider:

1. Are the home languages of children reflected in the displays that celebrate their multilingual identities and cultural experiences?
2. Do curriculum resources reflect a multinational perspective or are they Eurocentric in images and content, to the point of unwitting bias and exclusion?
3. Are the learning contexts and social groupings enabling or intimidating?
4. Are key words from the child's home language used to foster a sense of belonging and achievement in knowing more than one way of speaking?

5. Is the power of visual, auditory and kinaesthetic opportunity exploited in all areas of the foundation stage curriculum to benefit all learners?
6. Are all staff aware of, and sensitive to, the need for process time for children, as they manage the new compositional challenges of thinking and talking in a new language with new vocabulary and grammar?
7. Are there activities planned that offer and extend children's knowledge of particular forms of English usage, for example descriptive language development when taking a visual walk with a camera, expressive language when playing shops or in dramatic replay of a story, or positional language while building with blocks or planks outdoors?
8. Do practitioners track (and use as evidence) children's developing oral competence in English by noting specific vocabulary and chunks of language that children are acquiring and using over time?
9. Does the setting's assessment procedure take account of the cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of all its children, including those learning English as an additional language, and ensure all parents' contributions are respected, valued and used?
10. Do practitioners plan activities that encompass children's communities' key places, festivals, holy days, special customs and observances?
11. Are all staff aware of what may be different cultural conventions in (and expectations of) education, play/work, behaviour, self-care, and independence for boys and girls, for families learning English?
12. Are the areas of learning planned with examples of other cultures' scripts, number systems, and traditional stories so that learning activities are meaningful and inclusive

Factors to consider

Some children will avoid any physical contact for cultural reasons. For example, Muslim women and girls do not shake hands. In Nepal, the head is considered sacred and even small children should not be touched on the head.

Some children may not want to eat with other pupils because they are only used to eating with members of their own family.

Some children may seem aggressive in the playground, or may show other behavioural patterns. This is sometimes because their English is limited and their only form of communication with their peers is non-verbal.

Some children may appear tired or uninterested due to environmental adjustments, stress or limited English skills.

Some Children will not answer unless they know the answer – an incorrect answer or a “guess” may mean ‘losing face’.

Some children may nod their head to acknowledge you, but this does not necessarily mean that they understand you.

Some children will **smile** even if being reprimanded, as this is a gesture of respect in some cultures

Some children will avoid eye contact with teachers – in some cultures this may be a mark of respect and does not indicate that they are not listening.

Some children may be **unfamiliar** with the **toilet arrangements** in the setting *eg A child might be sent in nappies to avoid these difficulties*

Some cultures – particularly some Asian families – may not want to have any **contact with animals**. *There may also be sensibilities about photos, dolls etc*

Some children may feel recorded written work is the most important part of their work and may pay little attention to oral based activities.

Some children may be uneasy at the more liberal approach to foundation stage activities in this country. When they are used to a more formal teaching/ learning style, they need to learn how to work co-operatively, and the boundaries of behaviour expected in the setting.

Strategies for supporting/developing communication in English:

Self-Talk: Young preschool children frequently talk out loud to themselves as they play and explore the environment. This self-directed talk is known as private speech. Children's private speech is used for self-direction and this language is the foundation for later complex mental activity. Also known as inner language, self-instruction or self-talk, it serves to link words, actions and ideas, and facilitates planning, critical thinking and executive functioning. Practitioners may 'self-talk' through activities with which they are engaged, so that they are giving children a commentary on their actions, for example 'I'm putting the banana on the plate, now you can help me cut it',

Parallel talk: This is where the practitioner provides a commentary on what the child is doing. This strategy can be very helpful for short periods but should not be extended to the point where it becomes intrusive or inhibiting.

Repeating: Repetition is important, not only in stories, songs and finger plays, etc., but repeating and confirming children's own attempts at speech. By showing your interest in this way you will encourage children to continue in their attempts to speak. By repeating and adding to the child's spoken language you will be scaffolding their language learning, consolidating and adding to their knowledge of language structure.

Modelling: This is important for introducing children to new language structures and vocabulary. Children need to hear language used in a meaningful context before they can rehearse and use it themselves. Much of this is what practitioners and parents will do naturally to encourage children's language learning. It is important to be encouraging without being demanding and to use modelling to correct mistakes rather than tell children they are wrong – this will only serve to inhibit their attempts and damage self-esteem.

Open ended questions: Use Open ended questions such as 'Why is he crying?' to provide opportunity to use language extensively.

Teaching survival language: The most frustrating and scary thing for children with EAL is not being understood when they are trying to communicate about something important. Help your newly arrived children settle by building up a range of 'survival language' materials.

Survival Language	Questions
Hello, Goodbye Yes, No Please? Thank you Toilet? I don't understand Where is the.....?	Where? Who? What? Which? Do you like? Are you? Am I?
Myself Language	Assertion and negatives
My name My family Where I live My keyworker is My nursery/pre-school is My friends I like/don't like	I am/am not I like/don't like I want /don't want You are/aren't You can/can't Is/isn't
Action verbs	Everyday nouns
Run Walk Sit Stand Eat Drink Look Jump Throw Catch Listen	In the setting: Door Window Chair Table Toilet Outside Inside Book Snack (time) Story (time) Outside the setting: Road House Car Crossing Lights

Appendix 1

UN convention on the Rights of the Child.

In 1989, governments across the world promised all children the same rights by adopting the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Convention says what countries must do so that all children grow as healthy as possible, can learn at school, are protected, have their views listened to, and are treated fairly.

Article 2

The Convention applies to everyone: whatever their race, religion or abilities, whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from.

Article 12

Every child has the right to have a say in all matters affecting them, and to have their views taken seriously.

Article 23

A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and independence, and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to provide support to disabled children.

Article 29

Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full. It must encourage the child's respect for human rights, as well as respect for their parents, their own and other cultures, and the environment.

Article 30

Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family, regardless of whether these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live.

Article 31

Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural and artistic activities.

To fulfil statutory requirements best practice needs, have regard to all the above points. Best practice could include the following:

Appendix 2

Best practice to support young children's development of speech, language, and communication

Good practice in the observational assessment of children who are learning English is good practice for the assessment of all children.

Assessment must distinguish between a child's English language acquisition and their development of knowledge and concepts across the six areas of learning, as outlined in the *Curriculum guidance for the foundation stage*.

Schools' EAL proficiency codes

State schools in England are no longer required to provide an English proficiency code for their EAL learners in the January school census return. However, the proficiency codes offer teachers a positive opportunity to review phase and/or subject provision for EAL learners, make links with other colleagues and contexts to enhance EAL provision and develop a deeper understanding of EAL learners and their varied needs. [English proficiency: pupils with English as additional language - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

It is important to be aware that the legacy DfE descriptors alone are not sufficiently detailed to help teachers choose the most appropriate strategies and resources for their EAL learners on a day-to-day basis, according to their varied needs at distinct stages of proficiency.

Fortunately, there is further support materials, for example [the Bell Foundation's EAL Assessment Framework for Schools](#) is available for free. It is aligned with the five DfE proficiency bands but with more detailed descriptors, as well as practical advice to help set language targets and ensure a systematic approach

How to identify and support EAL learners with Special Educational Needs

It is important to identify children who may need extra support due to a specific learning need. Early intervention is an effective policy for helping these children to achieve well. Practitioners should not assume that a lack of English language is linked to a learning problem or low intelligence. However, if a practitioner is unsure if there is a problem, then it is best to investigate to provide a timely intervention, as it could lead to difficulties becoming more challenging later.

Initially the child should be assessed for their competency in their home language – by talking to parents and by observing the child for a period. With formative assessments, general observations, a Learning Journey, language assessments and video recording of the child at home (with translation by parents) the child can then be assessed (Development Matters, Birth-5 matters or Foundation Stage Profile – depending on age of the child). Some assessments can be done alongside parents so that the assessor can also see how the child responds/understands in their home language.

When assessing children, it is important to rule out medical/health issues (such as hearing loss). At this stage practitioners should monitor and review the child's learning regularly to identify SEN (Special Educational Needs) at an early stage. Children under two with SEN are usually picked up through NHS interventions unless they attend Day Nurseries/Childminders where Nursery professionals will be able to assess developmental levels. Again, this can still be tricky if English is not the first language. Professionals can use the Early Support programme to help them set individual targets for specific children.

Most children start in settings at age two. At age two all children have a [Health Visitor check](#) as well as a progress check if they attend a setting. This is therefore another time when children who

may have SEN as well as EAL could be identified. It is important that staff work closely with parents at this stage to get their view on the child's development.

The other assessment point when children's development progress is clearly stated to parents is when the EYFSP is completed at the end of Reception year. This is another point when EAL children could be identified as having SEN. It must be remembered that most Early Learning Goals can be assessed in the child's home language, EXCEPT for Communication and Language, and Literacy.

Importance of measuring *progress* in EAL children - The EAL child learns setting/school routines, rules, vocabulary etc. very quickly, therefore the extent of their language differences changes rapidly. A failure to *make progress* in functional language is an indicator of SEN difficulties. *Confidence* in using English and new vocabulary is also an indicator of language acquisition. Conversely, lack of confidence may indicate a difficulty with language.

Quality language stimulation is vital. Oxford has many international families, some very culturally different to UK, other European ones may appear more similar. A stimulating linguistic home-life is important to *all* children (whether English-speaking, EAL, SEN or normally developing). Normal advice for language stimulation (talk to your baby, action songs, simplified instructions, stories etc) applies to EAL families just as it does to English-speaking families.

When is a child with English as an additional Language not a concern regarding Special Educational Needs:

- Children with EAL may speak their home language to staff and other children while they are in the Early Years setting. This is part of finding out that different languages exist.
- Children learning EAL may mix two languages in one sentence. This is part of the learning process and should decrease over time.
- Children may go through a silent period before they feel confident to use English. This can last up to a couple of months
- Children may go through a period of not wanting to use their home language. This may be due to the influence of peers, the dominance of the majority culture or a change in the way that the community or family use their home language.

The WellComm Toolkit

The WellComm toolkit was purchased for every nursery setting in Oxfordshire in summer 2021. The toolkit is a universal screening tool which supports the early identification of children with a speech, language, and communication delay. This means every child can be screened as part of their universal provision. The toolkit contains a screening check and intervention activities so that you can act now to support the children in your care, whilst potentially waiting for a speech and language therapist appointment.

Appendix 3

Books for EAL Learners

Choose books with little text, but which are clearly supported by strong visual impact.

The best stories, rhymes are those with repetitive or predictable story lines/refrains.

Choose books that relate to children's experiences which provide positive images and value cultural diversity.

Wordless picture books are ideal for reading in early language. They can be used to introduce new words or explore culture specific references.

Audio books can be useful alongside the hard copy of the story.

More books are being produced in dual language text. These are equally valuable for sharing with children who speak one language. With simple books it is easy to make your own dual language version to support learning – this could be with the help of parents.

Examples of good Early Years books for EAL children.

Eric Hill Spot Books	Eric Carle Brown Bear, Brown Bear The Very Hungry Caterpillar The Grouchy Lady Bug	Rod Campbell Dear Zoo
Jill Murphy Peace at last	Pat Hutchins Rosie's Walk Titch	John Burningham Mr Gumpy's Outing The shopping basket
Shigeo Watanabe How do I put it on; How do I eat it?	Eileen Christelow Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed	Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault Chicka Chicka Boom Boom
P.D. Eastman Are You My Mother?	Deborah Guarino and Steven Kellogg Is Your Mama a Llama?	Sandra Boynton Blue Hat, Green Hat
Colin West I Don't Care! Said the Bear	Karen Schmidt The Gingerbread Man	

Games for Early Years EAL Learners

Games	Language/Vocabulary Focus
Match a balloon	Colours, dice, your/my turn, throw, board, put
Picture Lotto/Matching pairs	Common nouns
Picture Snap	Common nouns
Sound Lotto	Common verbs and nouns
What belongs where? (Spectrum)	Common nouns, positional language, where? Home/in the street
Animal/people jigsaw puzzles	Parts of the body, clothes, animals
Tummy ache game	Food, like/dislike
Simon Says	Instructions, parts of the body
Size Lotto	Common nouns, language of size
Teddy bear opposites	Front, back, push, pull, over, under etc...
Guess who?	Physical descriptions, clothes
The shopping list game	Common supermarket items
Picture dominoes	Common nouns
What's in the bag?	Any set of objects, e.g. animals, vehicles, food

Ethnic minorities

Identifying needs and relevant support for ethnic minority children is not enough. Involving families from minority ethnic populations is not always straightforward, and support needs to be adequate and culturally sensitive, so all families feel welcome and have a clear understanding of the process. The only way to do this is to work with the families themselves. Staff need to be aware of any cultural differences observed by children attending the setting particularly if English is not a child's first language. Ethnic minorities within the setting need to be valued and treated appropriately so that there is no discrimination (direct or perceived). Staff need to ensure the Key Person spends just as much time working with **all** families. Pictures should represent all children in the setting, as should any language labelling so that ethnic minorities have their culture valued. Make sure that children can play with resources familiar to their own home life.

Supporting refugee families

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. Below is a home language profile template to support you with this.

Home 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	<i>Parents/grandparents/family members that are seen regularly</i>
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

It is important to know that only 7% communication is verbal therefore visuals okay to support children with English as an additional language.

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 also 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?			

<p>Dressing up - Do you provide non- gender specific outfits and clothing that reflects cultural background?</p> <p>Do you provide a variety of material lengths and prints to encourage open ended role-play?</p> <p>Dolls and small word figures - Do you have a range of dolls and figures representing difference in ethnicity, culture, gender, age and ability?</p> <p>Do you provide opportunities to explore the message that families live in lots of different dwellings (flats, caravans / trailers)?</p>			
<p>Books and puzzles</p> <p>Do they promote positive messages and encourage reflection about similarities and difference?</p> <p>Do they represent images of difference in ethnicity, culture, gender, age and ability?</p> <p>Do they provide images of a range of family groups and of people in non-stereotypical situations and roles?</p>			
<p>Creative resources</p> <p>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?</p>			
<p>Activities</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>No</p>	<p>Comment/Action</p>
<p>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?</p>			
<p>Snack-time, cooking activities and meal times</p> <p>Are all staff members aware of cultural and religious food observations and practices?</p>			

<p>Do you provide food that is both familiar and unfamiliar to broaden children's experiences?</p> <p>Do you provide the relevant food to reflect the cultural celebrations of your families?</p>			
<p>Music, rhyme and story time</p> <p>Do you listen to music, play instruments and sing songs and read stories that reflect the cultural backgrounds of the children in your setting?</p> <p>Do you use props, puppets and actions to support understanding and participation in rhymes and stories? (only 7 per cent of communication is verbal)</p>			
<p>Supporting children with English as an additional language (EAL)</p> <p>Do you know the names of the languages spoken at home and by whom? Do you ask if parents / carers also read these languages?</p> <p>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)?</p>			
<p>Do you provide dual language books for children to take home to share with their families?</p>			
<p>Are parents / carers encouraged to contribute to their children's learning journeys in their home language?</p> <p>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)?</p>			
<p>Team awareness</p>	Yes	No	Comment/Action
<p>Do all members of staff understand their responsibilities to be inclusive? Do they have an</p>			

<p>awareness of the Equality Act 2010 and the Protected Characteristics covered by the act?</p> <p>Are members of staff encouraged to find opportunities to talk about similarity, difference and unique qualities during everyday practice?</p> <p>Has an 'Equality Impact Assessment' and 'Access Audit' been completed for your setting and actions identified for a 'Single Equality Scheme' (Early Years Action Plan) and are all staff aware of these?</p> <p>As a team, do you treat one another with respect and value each other's diversity?</p> <p>Inclusion starts with the team!</p>			
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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](#)

[Time together - support for multilingual families | National Literacy Trust](#)

Useful links

Have you seen Oxfordshire's SEN local Offer?

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/special-educational-needs-and-disability-local-offer>

Have you seen the EY SEN web pages? <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/sen-support-providers>

[Bitesize CPD - Supporting children learning English as an additional language in the early years \(office.com\)](https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/information-providers/childrens-services-providers/support-early-years-providers/early-years-toolkit)

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/business/information-providers/childrens-services-providers/support-early-years-providers/early-years-toolkit>

Oxfordshire Schools Inclusion Team (OXSiT) <http://www.oxsit.org.uk/>

[Oxfordshire Libraries](#)

The Bell Foundation, EAL Assessment Framework <https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/eal-programme/teaching-resources/eal-assessment-framework/>

Other useful resources

[Supporting the Wellbeing of Young Children with EAL: Essential Ideas f \(routledge.com\)](#)

[English as an additional language | PACEY](#)

<https://soundcommunities.org.uk/>

<https://www.pengreen.org/a-celebratory-approach-to-send-assessment-in-the-early-years/>

[Supporting early intervention that works for minority ethnic families | Early Intervention Foundation \(eif.org.uk\)](#)

<https://www.earlylearninghq.org.uk/class-management/multilingual-welcome-poster/>

<https://literacytrust.org.uk/early-years/bilingual-quick-tips/>

<https://help-for-early-years-providers.education.gov.uk/get-help-to-improve-your-practice/english-as-an-additional-language-eal>

<https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/time-together-multilingual-families/>

[Parental Involvement - The Bell Foundation \(bell-foundation.org.uk\)](#)

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- EAL in the Early Years – Hundreds of ideas for supporting children with English as an Additional Language, Anita Soni, Featherstone Publication 2013
- Education Endowment Foundation: For EEF resources, research and for its Teaching & Learning Toolkit <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/>