

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Supporting children with EAL

It is important for children to be able to speak their home language with their family this gives them a sense of identity and community.

Having access to resources or others who can speak the same language will aid their learning.

Some worry that children learning more than one language will be unable to communicate fluently in both languages, however, this is not the case.

Some children may switch between languages when communicating this is known as code-switching. Other children may use language in certain situations e.g., English within the setting and their first language within the home.

Learning more than one language has significant advantages on their cognitive skills, self-esteem, and identity.

Initial stages and behaviours

- Some children will begin copying those around them
- Children will start to use two- or 3-word phrases
- Children may use resources such as visuals, objects of reference or body language to support their communication
- Some children go through a silent phase, and this can last for as long as 6 months
- Children may feel isolated and struggle to interact with those around them and others may play alongside and try to engage in their activity
- Some children may appear to ignore/push the boundaries due to limited understanding and expectation of them

Advice and Strategies:

Working with parents with EAL

- Work collaboratively with parents to find out what languages are spoken and the key words the child understands. Ask parents to teach you certain phrases the child responds to.
- Get to know the family in greater depth
- Ensure you pronounce the parents and child's name correctly
- Find out which method of communication they would find more beneficial and do they requires information translating/sharing in their first language e.g., letters, posters etc
- Ensure English language is clear and be prepared to use other forms of communicating e.g., body language, visual aids etc.
- Encourage the family to continue to use their home language both in the home and setting
- Encourage the family to discuss the routine of the setting in the child's first language to support their transition
- Consider implementing a half termly/termly school community hub for bilingual parents to positively support their home language and their development of English. The ideology of a community hub is for schools to work collaboratively with families to support language development. The hub enables families to share their home language as a resource to support their child's development. Community hubs support the inclusion of bilingual communities, encouraging families to seek support within their wider community.



Where needed consider a translator or interpreter, access to a member of the school/setting community that speaks the same language may be beneficial.

Supporting children in the setting

- Use clear, simple, concise wording when communicating
 - Provide dual language story books for parents and bilingual adults to share with the child in the classroom and at home (available from [Mantra Lingua](#)). This gives EAL learners access to understanding a range of well-known stories for young children and enables their parents to share the same stories with their children.
 - Include multi-lingual labelling and signage around the classroom, such as days of the week, months of year (free from [schoolslinks](#)). This provides a visual recognition of the diversity within the classroom.
 - Use visual support throughout the day (e.g., visual timetables; instructions; to accompany teacher talk; story telling; word mats; flashcards; labelling). Visual support can make the difference between an EAL learner participating through full or partial understanding or not understanding at all.
 - Consider using visuals around the room to support understanding e.g., photos on toy boxes, labelling displays in both English and the child's first language etc
 - Use Google Translate. For young children, the Google Translate speaker button can be an effective tool. The teacher and the child can input verbally and then listen back to the translation.
 - Consider implementing intervention daily to support the child's speech on a 1:1 basis in a quiet space.
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- <https://ican.org.uk/training-licensing/i-can-programmes/early-talk-boost/>
 - <https://www.teachneli.org/>
 - <https://www.leicspart.nhs.uk/services/help-support-resources/?v=12927>
 - Adapt the environment to ensure communication friendly- see [ICAN checklist](#).
 - School/setting to liaise with parents to support assessment/levelling to reveal what the child can do in the security of their own language.
 - Consider completing '[The Bell Foundation Assessment](#)', this document is to recognise pupil language achievements and needs.
 - Position children who are New to English (B and A) last in turn-taking games so that they become familiar with the vocabulary and language structures required for the game (see The Bell Foundation Assessment.)

Available training:

- [English as an Additional Language for Early Years Practitioners](#)
This e- learning toolkit is for practitioners working with children and young people. It is a resource to provide information and to help you reflect on your practice and provision. These modules provide guidance on the following areas: The stages of early language learning, Importance of home language, Bilingual Support, Role of the adult, Getting to know and supporting children and their families, Transitions, Gypsy, Roma Traveller children & families and Effective Teaching Strategies.
- Training and Events hosted by '[The Bell Foundation](#)' to support staff who are supporting children with English as an Additional Language.



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