**A Guide to Working with Children whose English is an Additional Language**



# Introduction

**This booklet** aims to provide **information** and **practical help** for staff when a child arrives with little or no English.

Whilst we may encounter some anxieties during the initial settling in period, working with bilingual / emerging bilingual children is a most rewarding experience which will enhance and enrich our setting.

The booklet is divided into the following sections:

1. **Gathering information**

1. **Cultural differences to look out for**

1. **Creating a welcoming environment**
2. Early Days in the Classroom

1. **Providing a language learning environment**

I) Receptive language and Communication ii) Games for EAL Learners

iii) Books for EAL Learners

1. **Partnership with parents and carers**

1. **Frequently Asked Questions**

What is the

**pupil’s**

**correct name**

and

**how**

is it

**spelt /**

**pronounced?**

**Where**

exactly

is the family

from?

Who is the

**primary**

**carer?**

Are there any

**special**

**circumstances ?**

*eg Is the pupil an*

*asylum seeker / adopted*

*/ from war zone*

What

**language(s)**

are

**spoken**

at

**home?**

What is the

**parent’s / carer’s**

**knowledge**

of

**English?**

What

**previous**

**experience**

does the

child have of

**pre school**

in UK or

elsewhere?

Does the pupil have

**older / younger**

**siblings**

? Are they

living at home /

elsewhere?

Are there

**other**

**family members /**

friends living

nearby?

Does the family

**read /**

**write**

in the

**home**

**language?**

What is the

**family’s**

**religion?**

Is there a

**dress**

**code**

or

**dietary**

**requirements?**

**?**

**?**

**?**

**?**

**?**

**?**

**?**

**?**

**?**

**?**

**?**

**?**

**?**

What is the

**child’s**

**knowledge**

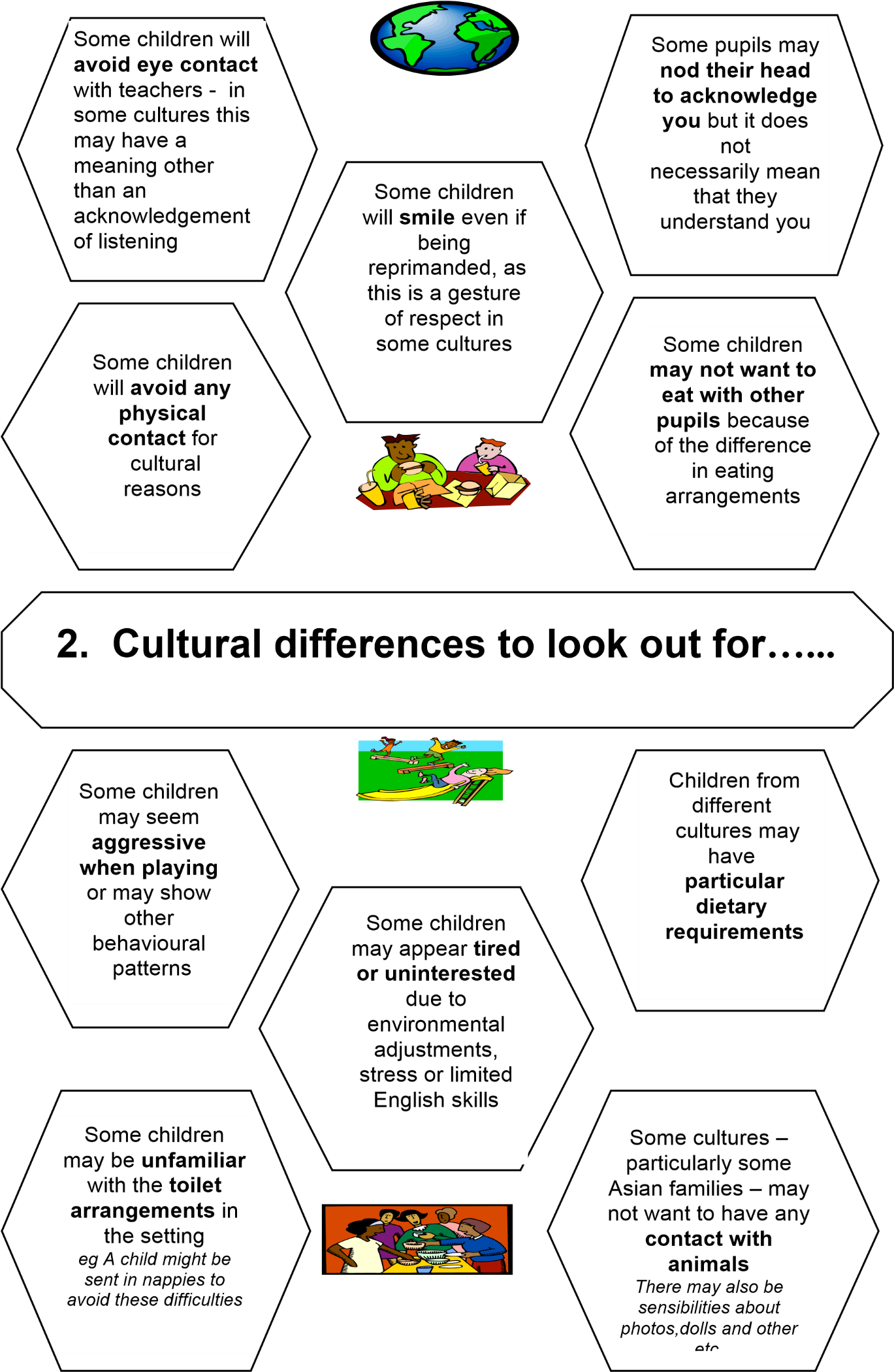
of

**English?**

**1. Gathering Information**

*This co*

*uld be achieved using the Registration Form*



Have

**examples**

of

**writing**

*eg*

***labels, notices***

that the

child may recognise from

home to show that their

**language is valued**

and to help other children

to learn to value other

languages and

scripts

Establish

a

**consistent**

**set of**

**routines**

*eg snack*

*time, circle ti*

*me*

and

**provide**

**cues**

such as to

what happens when

*eg a frieze showing*

*daily routine in*

*pictorial form- visual timetable*

**3**

**. Creating a welcoming environment**

Ensure

that the EAL child’s

**home life**

is reflected in

the setting

*eg include*

***familiar cooking***

***equipment***

*/*

***food***

***items***

*in the role play*

*area*

*\*See appendix for*

*example*

Have some

**dual**

**language books**

for parents / carer

and

others to share.

Share some

**rhymes**

in

other languages.

**Learn to count**

in other languages

**Explain**

to the children that some

children speak other

languages.

**Encourage**

them to

**interact**

with

them. Help them to

understand that

**non**

**respo**

**nse**

is not social

rejection but lack of

comprehension

Have

**Welcome Posters, and**

And

other visuals around the

walls to

**reflect different**

**cultures**

.

Display children’s own

**named photoes**

to give

everyone a

**sense of**

**belonging**

# 3i) Early Days in the Classroom

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Essential language**    Basic words and phrases to enable the newcomer to function day to day and to express immediate needs in the first few days and weeks    **Hello**  **Yes**  **No**  **Please** may I have…  **Thank you**  Goodbye  I need to go to the **toilet**  I like..  I don’t like  Where is……  I don’t understand | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| With a ‘buddy’ the  EAL learner can **label** different **things**  **in the classroom** to help him /her remember the words | | |  | Start an alphabet/ topic **word book** with pictures and add to it as a new word is learnt | | |  | Play **Circle games** or **Simon Says** which allow  participation with the minimum of  speaking | | |  | Have a **box of**  **resources** ready to dip into eg. PECs, pictures, now and next board, wordless  books, toys, visual support, bilingual  story books + tapes  **\*see resource page** | |
| Staffto run a **small group** to work on extending their vocabulary and developing language | | |  | Provide **magazines** and **catalogues** to  **cut out pictures** to **sor**t and **categorise** for word books, displays | | |  | Make our **own Nursery book** . Take **photos** around the centre  to **illustrate**  **places, activities**, **daily routine** | | |
| |  | | --- | | Be prepared for children to spend **long periods in solitary play** at first | | | | | | | |  | | --- | | Children need opportunities to **start to interact with others** through  conversation. This can be in planned  learning opportunities or informal situations | | | | | | | | |
| |  | | --- | | By **watching** others involved in an learning opportunity children have access to good language and will be **tuning in to the language** around them | | | | | | |
| |  | | --- | | Think carefully about **using questions that will include the information**  **needed in a response.**  *eg Ask “Would you like a green one or a blue one? rather than “Which colour would you like?”* Use gestures to reinforce | | | | | | | | |
| |  | | --- | | When **planning sessions**, make a **note** of how the **learning opportunities can provide**  **language learning opportunities** for the EAL children | | | | | | |
| |  | | --- | | Provide opportunities to **share books**  **1:1** with EAL children to allow them to encounter **“book” language** | | | | | | | | |

# 4. Providing a positive and encouraging Language Learning Environment

***Support this through pictures, symbols and gestures wherever possible***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Speak clearly,** EAL learners **need to hear English spoken**  **as normally as possible** – if sentences  are over simplified or loudly stressed this may make understanding more difficult |  | Use **gestures / visuals / props / puppets / other adults or children as**  **models** in order to help explain what  you are talking about |
| **NARATE EVERYTHING**  **“Talk while doing”** to model appropriate language *eg while playing a game or putting a coat on* |  | Accept any speech without correcting, praise and then **model**  **words** for children – encourage but do not require repetition of models |
| Use the **home corner** to reflect **different cultural backgrounds** and encourage  talk about familiar activities *eg cooking,*  *eating* |  | Use **songs and rhymes** to provide a learning opportunity to **join in** a few words and **extend** their **language** in a encouraging and positive environment |

# 4i) Receptive Language and Communication

The **EAL Beginner** will be **watching / listening** to the adults and other children around him / her – it is **really important** to **support talk/ communication with visuals / materials** / **actions / gestures/ resources** wherever possible to **help convey meaning**. Here are some examples of **language areas** that can be **developed quite naturally** during the course of **everyday activities** in the setting.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Greet** people, **respond** to greetings | *Hello….How are you?*  *Fine, thank you….OK* |
| Express **agreement / disagreement** | *Yes….No…..*  *I like / don’t like* |
| **Identify** objects and people | *What’s this? Who’s this?*  *This is a….. It’s…...*  *They’re…...* |
| Answer and ask questions about **physical characteristics** and **feelings** | *I’ve got black hair.*  *She is tall.*  *I’m cold / hungry / happy / sad* |
| Answer and ask questions about **number** | *How many pencils?*  *I’ve got two sisters*  *There are six boys* |
| Answer and ask questions about **possession** | *I’ve got a …….*  *This is my bag.*  *Whose coat is this?* |
| Answer and ask questions about **where things are** | *Where’s the book?*  *(It’s) in / on / under / behind*  *The chair is by the table* |
| Express simple **actions** | *What are you doing?*  *What is s/he doing?*  *I’m…...ing S/he’s…..ing* |

Basic Topic Areas

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Ourselves** | Personal details Family Feelings / Needs Home Clothes Food Parts of the Body |
| **Setting / Centre** | The Environment *eg rooms, gardens,* f*urniture, toys*  People who work with us |
| **Mathematical**  **Development** | Numbers Shapes Size Money Time |
| **Other Topics** | Colours Animals Transport In the Town / Country Occupations Shopping Weather |

# 4ii) Games for EAL Learners

***Games introduce new vocabulary, new concepts, use of number, social***  ***language. Remember*** *to* ***include children*** *in the* ***group*** *who will* ***provide good language***  ***models***

Examples:

Many of these games will be well known in the setting.

This is by no means an exhaustive list and you will no doubt know others and have particular favourites, but it serves to illustrate how to find language learning opportunities among readily available resources

**Language / Vocabulary Focus** Colours, dice, your / my turn, throw, board, put common nouns

Common nouns

Common verbs and nouns

Common nouns

Positional language, Where…? Home / In the street

Parts of the body, clothes, animals

Food, like / dislike

Instructions, parts of the body

Common nouns, language of size Front / back, push / pull, over /under

Common nouns, food, transport, animals

Colours,

Colour, parts of house, shape

Common nouns

Various common scenes – school, home, farm, shop, seaside

Book language, common nouns, Names of people

Physical descriptions- any set of objects eg toys, equipment / animals / vehicles

Common supermarket items

Directions, counting, taking turns

**Games**

*Match –a – Balloon*

*Picture Lotto / Matching Pairs*

*Picture Snap*

*Sound Lotto*

*What Belongs Where ? (Spectrum)*

*Animal / People Jigsaw Puzzles*

*Tummyache Game*

*Simon Says*

*Size Lotto*

*Teddy Bear Opposites ( Orchard*

*Toys)*

*The If….Game (Philip and Tacey)*

*Teddy Bears Colour Match Express*

*(Orchard Toys)*

*The house that Jack Built*

*Picture Dominoes*

*Press & Peel*

*Magnetic Storyboard with story packs*

*Guess Who?*

*What’s in the Bag?*

*The Shopping List Game*

# 4iii) Books for EAL Learners

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

**The best stories, rhymes** are those with **repetitive** or **predictable storylines / refrains.**

**Choose books that relate to children’s experience** which provide positive images and value cultural diversity.

**Wordless Picture Books** are ideal for “reading” in any language. They can be used to introduce new words or explore culture specific references.

**Many stories** have **audio taped** versions to enable the pupil to see and hear the language simultaneously. Talking books can be found on the internet, including some dual language texts. You can also make your own resources using different recording devices such as talking clipboards, talking pegs etc

More and more books are being produced in **dual language text**. These are equally valuable for sharing with children who speak one language.

**Home made books** are **easy** and **inexpensive to make** and can be used to **support the curriculum** in many ways. They can be both **fiction and non fiction**. They can provide an important **link** **between home / school**. **Bilingual versions** can be produced with help from home or other bilingual speakers

Here are some books for the EAL Beginner, but you will be able to think of many more that will be equally suitable

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Mr Gumpy’s Outing**  **The Shopping Basket** | John Burningham |
| **Dear Zoo** | Rod Campbell |
| **How Do I Put It On**  **How Do I Eat It** | Shigeo Watanabe |
| **Peace at Last** | Jill Murphy |
| **The Snowman** | Raymond Briggs |
| **A Dark, Dark Tale** | Ruth Brown |

**Spot** books Eric Hill

**Brown Bear, Brown Bear** Eric Carle

**The Very Hungry Caterpillar**

**Rosie’s Walk** Pat Hutchins

**Titch**

**Handa’s Surprise** Eileen

Browne

**Lima’s Red Hot Chilli** David Mills

## 5. Partnership with Parents and Carers

Parents, carers need to see how **supported play/activities/ learning opportunities** can provide **opportunities to model, rehearse and extend language.**

**Let parents’ to come into the setting and join inExplain newsletters/ notes verbally** if at all possible as this will enable you to be sure that the parents/ carers have understood the content and may help to avoid misunderstandings e.g notices about special events, requests for extra help/items needed for a particular activity etc.

**Information for parents may be available in other languages** – particularly the main community languages in Reading, however, not all people who speak a language are literate in it, so it is useful if you can find another **family member/friend** who can act as **interpreter** if necessary. It is also possible to **contact local community/ language groups** in the county.

Encourage **parents and carers to join in sessions.** This will give them the opportunity to experience what happens and to be able to share/talk about activities with their child in the first language. Remember, **parents/carers may be feeling isolated in the community** or have **little/very different experience of Early Years Education themselves**

# 6. Frequently asked questions

**Q. How do we convey an urgent message to parents where we are uncertain of their understanding?**

*A. If you feel that a phone message in English may not be understood, try to get a contact number of someone who will be able to translate – eg work colleague, parents, friends or community organisation.*

**Q. How do we find out about availability of interpretation?**

*A. Contact Katarina to arrange an interpreter if possible.*

**Q. Why won’t a child talk to me when I’ve heard them talking freely with other children?**

*A. Children may appear quickly to develop language for social communication ie for regularly encountered play situations. This may be largely based on echoing the language around them, until by trial and error, what they say achieves the desired effect. They will be beginning to understand some other talk directed at them, but may not yet be ready to produce a reply or “make conversation” themselves. Don’t give up talking to them; they will sooner or later begin to make sense of what you are saying, and may even surprise you by uttering a complete sentence after weeks or even months of silence!*

**Q. Should I put a child on the SEN register because he / she has EAL?**

*A. EAL does* ***not*** *mean that a child has SEND****.*** *However, refer to The Code of Practice and EYFS which can be found on our website.*

**Q. What do I do if children refuse to play with or make unkind / hurtful remarks about the EAL child ie about their inability to “talk properly”, about their skin colour or any other perceived differences?**

*A. Such incidents should be dealt with immediately in order to show that such behaviour is not acceptable. Above all, do not pretend that the problem will go away. Such behaviour is bullying and its hurtful effects should be acknowledged and dealt with.*

Above all

**BE FRIENDLY-** a welcoming gesture, smiling face, encouragement and positive praise can be worth a thousand words!

**Invest time getting to know parents and careers-** it may be difficult to build links if they have little or no English but it is important that they feel **valued** and **reassured** about the well being of their children.

Becoming **more familiar with the family** will help you a better understand potential cultural/religious/home circumstances that may need to be taken into account in planning an inclusive learning environment. The family’s Health Visitor/ Portage Worker may be a good source of information gathered over a period of time.

It is important that everybody realises that **the development of the child’s first language is vital in learning English**-talking about things in the child’s home language with parents/carers will really help them to make sense of the English around them and build on the language they are beginning to acquire.