



## English as an Additional Language

Working with EAL learners in  
the Early Years

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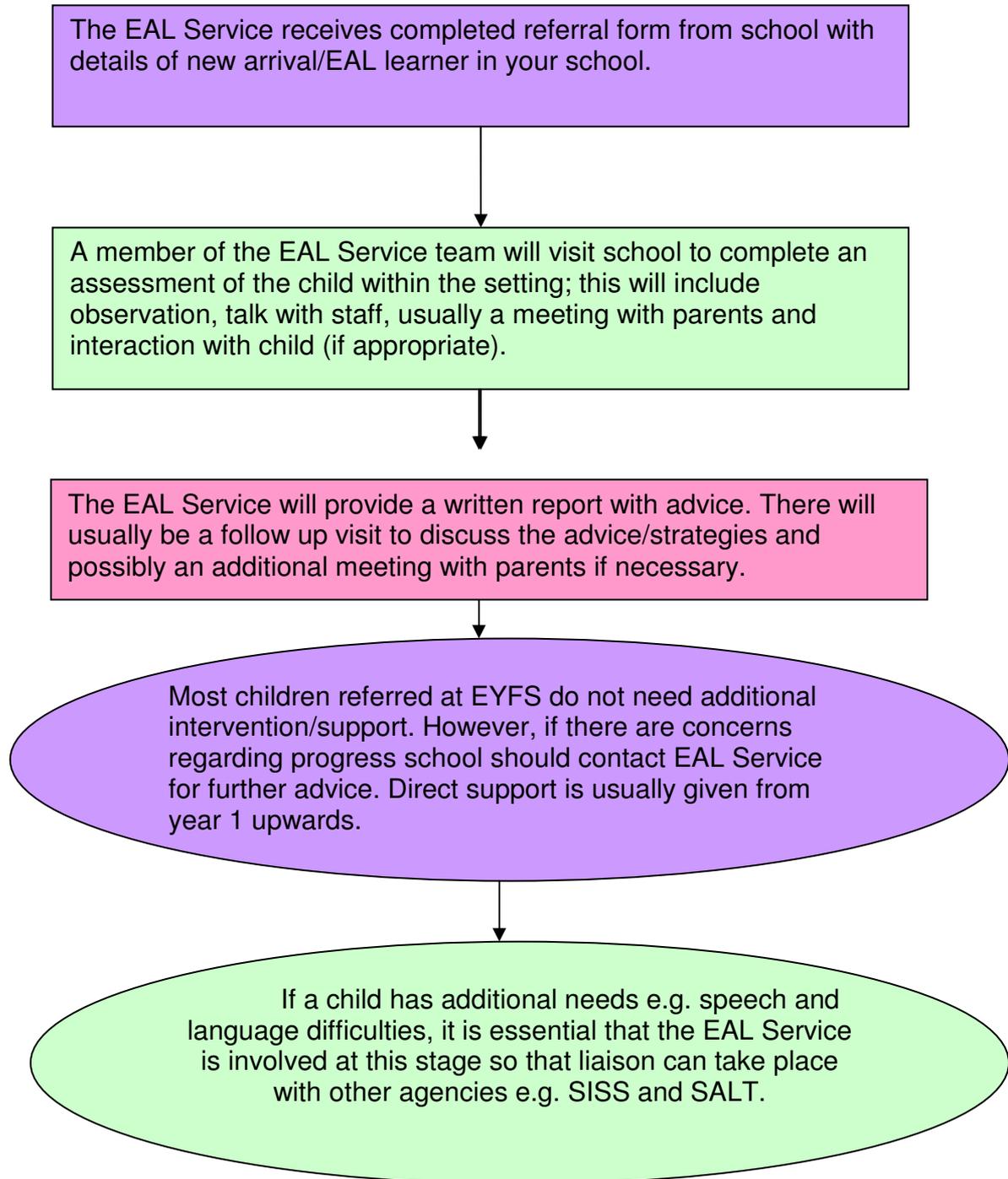


## Contents

<b>Contents.....</b>	<b>page 2</b>
<b>EAL Service Process.....</b>	<b>page 3</b>
<b>Stages of learning for the EAL child.....</b>	<b>page 4</b>
<b>Working with parents of EAL learners.....</b>	<b>page 5</b>
<b>Early days in the classroom.....</b>	<b>page 6</b>
<b>Developing Early Vocabulary.....</b>	<b>page 7</b>
<b>Pre-teaching language and vocabulary.....</b>	<b>page 8</b>
<b>Creating an inclusive classroom environment.....</b>	<b>page 9</b>
<b>Creating a positive talking environment.....</b>	<b>page 10</b>
<b>Creating a positive listening environment.....</b>	<b>page 11</b>
<b>Tracking progress.....</b>	<b>page 12</b>
<b>Action Songs and Rhymes.....</b>	<b>page 13</b>
<b>Story books.....</b>	<b>page 14</b>
<b>Phonics and the EAL learner.....</b>	<b>page 15</b>
<b>Frequently asked questions.....</b>	<b>page 17</b>
<b>Dual language books.....</b>	<b>page 18</b>
<b>Further Reading/ References.....</b>	<b>page 21</b>



## EAL Service process





## Stages of learning for the EAL child

Children learning English as an additional language may

- Be silent
- Mix words from different languages (“code switch”)
- Make many grammatical errors

These aspects of language are all quite normal when children are acquiring a new language and do not indicate a delay or a speech and language difficulty. The table below outlines possible strategies used to support children with EAL at different stages of language development.

<b>Stages of learning for the EAL child.</b>	<b>What we can do to help.</b>
<p><b>Chatters in home language</b> Child wants to communicate but does not fully realise that others do not understand his/her language.</p>	<p>Keep talking and involving the child in activities with other children and adults. Use actions and visuals to convey meaning. Talk one to one in context and use familiar phrases e.g. “Wash your hands.”</p>
<p><b>Silent Period</b> Child uses gestures, nods and smiles but is not confident yet to try and communicate in the new language.</p>	<p>Keep talking and involving the child in activities with other children and adults. Teach words and phrases and reinforce phrases from routines. Use auditory song cues e.g. “<i>Hi ho, hi ho it’s time to...</i>” Songs and rhymes are easier to remember and help the EAL learner to relate a tune with an activity. Accept any attempts to speak.</p>
<p><b>Single word/routine phrases</b> Child practises the vocabulary learned through play as well as the familiar routine phrases e.g. “Tidy up”.</p>	<p>Use what the child says to extend and model language e.g. “Car”, “Yes, you’ve got a car!”</p> <p>Remember to use lots of visual and verbal praise.</p>
<p><b>Making own phrases/sentences</b> Child uses learnt words to construct his/her own phrases e.g. “Ali want to do cars”.</p>	<p>Accept all that the child says and re-model without criticism e.g. “Yes, Ali, you may play with the cars.”</p> <p>Remember to use lots of visual and verbal praise.</p>

The stages of learning may take several years. For children entering a setting where a different language is spoken it can typically take three months before they begin to understand. It may take them 2 years to become conversationally fluent and can take up to 7 years to develop a full cognitive understanding of the new language. During this time it is therefore crucial that they maintain their first language.



## How to work collaboratively with parents of EAL learners in EYFS

### Gathering Information

- **Set up an initial meeting to gather information on language development in first language**
  - Use online tool to help collate information <http://newarrivals.segfl.org.uk/>
  - If necessary use an interpreter in the initial meeting to complete a full profile
  - Find out the child's full name and how to pronounce it correctly- Chinese families often give children an additional English name to be used outside home
  - Find out which languages are spoken and with whom
  - Note down religions and religious festivals observed, dietary requirements
- **Give clear indication to parents that use of their own language will assist their child's learning (*Bilingualism leaflet EAL Service*)** Parents should be encouraged to speak their home language. This builds a firm foundation for the second language. Without this foundation, both first and second language can be delayed or disrupted.
- **Consult parents on a regular basis about development in first language:**
  - Home visits can play a valuable role in building up relationships with families of EAL learners
  - Invite parents to short stay and play sessions and encourage use of first language. Interactions between the child and their parent can be observed and insights into the child's abilities may be more evident.
  - Mobile phones can be used by parents at home to record short videos of their child, or to take photos which may provide evidence for the Profile.

### Providing Information

- **Show an interest in languages used at home and different cultures by:**
  - Asking parents to bring in materials from home to use in 'Chatterbox' activities
  - Creating displays on languages  
[www.newburypark.redbridge.sch.uk/langofmonth/](http://www.newburypark.redbridge.sch.uk/langofmonth/)
  - Using dual language books [www.mantralingua.com](http://www.mantralingua.com)
  - Creating learning environments such as 'home corners' with a range of artefacts, cooking utensils, & dressing up clothes which will allow an EAL learner to express him/herself
- **Use a Home/School communication book/notice boards to inform parents of daily timetable/weekly events/non uniform days**
- **Share key language covered in topics**
- **Ensure that parents and carers are invited into the classrooms on a regular basis**
  - Set up a coffee morning for all parents with a 'language' focus.
  - Ask parents to record key phrases in home language using talking postcards/recorder pens.
  - Share the importance of language and play  
<http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/parents>
  - Inform parents of the importance of letter sounds and phonics. (Translated information on phonics in a range of languages is available from EAL Service)  
<http://www.ngfl-cymru.org.uk/vtc/ngfl/ngfl-flash/alphabet-eng/alphabet.htm>



## Early days in the classroom

Basic words and phrases to enable the newcomer to function day to day and express immediate needs in the first few days and weeks:

- Hello
- Yes
- No
- Please may I have...a drink?
- Thank you
- Goodbye
- I need to go to the toilet
- I like...
- I don't like...
- Where is...
- I don't understand
- I feel ill

With a buddy the EAL learner can label things in the classroom to help remember new words

Start an alphabet word book with pictures; add new words as they are learned.

Play circle games which allow participation with minimal speaking.

Ask classroom assistants to take a small group to do an activity such as cooking, book making, games etc

Provide magazines and catalogues to cut out pictures to sort and categorise

Start an *All about Me* topic book. Take photos around school to illustrate places, activities and daily routines. Send topic book home to share key language with parents.

The EAL learner will be **watching/listening** to the adults and the children around him/her. It is really important to **support talk with visuals/ materials/ actions/ gestures** wherever possible to help convey meaning.



## Developing Early Vocabulary

These words are a guide showing the type of vocabulary that the EAL child in the Early Learning Setting will need exposure to. They are not in any particular order of learning.

### Personal Language

My name  
My family  
My teacher  
My class  
My friends  
My favourite ...  
I like/ don't like

### Prepositions

In  
On  
Under  
Above  
Behind  
In front of  
Between

### Everyday Nouns

In school...  
Door Window  
Chair Table Toilet  
Book Lunch  
Outside school...  
Road House Car

### Questions

Where?  
Who?  
What?  
Which?  
How?  
Are you?  
Do you like...?

### Everyday Verbs

Listen Look Sit  
Stand Watch Eat  
Drink Jump Hop  
Skip Throw Catch  
Run Walk Go

### Assertions/Negatives

I am/am not  
I like/don't like  
I want/don't want  
You are/you aren't  
You can/you can't  
He/she is/isn't

### Numeracy

Counting – ordinals and cardinals  
Grouping into sets – colour, size, shape, number  
Matching/Order  
Time – Days of week

### Other Early Vocabulary

Colours  
Singular/Plurals  
Pronouns (he, she, it, we, they)  
Simple  
adjectives/opposites – happy, sad, tall, short

### Sand/Water

Fill/empty  
Pour  
Wet/dry  
Container – small/big  
Language of estimation

### Vocabulary related to role play areas e.g. home corner

Names of food  
Items of clothing  
Names of utensils  
Names of electrical appliances

### Time Vocabulary

Days of the week  
Months  
Seasons – weather  
Before/after  
Today  
Yesterday  
Tomorrow



## Pre- teaching language and vocabulary

Pre-teaching vocabulary is an essential component in allowing EAL learners to access the curriculum. Identifying key vocabulary and language is essential for helping an EAL learner understand what is written and spoken about in the classroom.

There are several ways that teachers can approach this, and finding which works best for each learner is a matter of trial and error and depends upon factors such as:

- Knowledge of literacy in first language
- Parents' knowledge of literacy in either language
- Parents' willingness and/or ability to contribute to their child's formal learning
- Personality etc of the pupil involved

### Ideas for pre-teaching key vocabulary

Send home a few key words a week, supported by visuals, for pupils to look at with parents/carers and discuss in any language. Using L1 can help form links between the languages and between home and school. Allowing the EAL learner to make links between English and his/her stronger home language will help him/her retain the new language and make it more meaningful. Forging good home/school links is important as often parents of EAL pupils feel isolated from their child's learning.

Set up a pre-teaching group in the classroom to look at key words before sessions in class so that pupils are introduced to the language in a small group. Ensure that visuals are used to help EAL learners access the new language and that examples are given of how the vocabulary is used in the context of a sentence. Allow pupils to experiment by using the new language through games/pair-work activities. EAL pupils often feel more equipped going into a lesson having pre-visited key language.

Use word mats (with pictures), washing lines, word banks and displays to reinforce key words. Involve the children in making these resources.



**Subtract....moins...**

**Ah ! Maintenant je**

**comprends!!!**



## Creating an inclusive classroom environment

Include displays, books, labels and notices in the children's home languages. Use audio clips on the Interactive whiteboard to help a new arrival settle into their new surroundings (<http://www.newburypark.redbridge.sch.uk/langofmonth/>)

Involve parents and people from the wider community who might support children's needs and learning.

Ensure displays reflect a multi-cultural world. Choose books that show positive images of all children and avoid stereotypes. (<https://www.mantralingua.com/uk/home.php>)

Acknowledge and celebrate a diverse range of festivals e.g. Chinese New Year, Eid, Hanukkah etc

Provide a variety of multi-cultural toys, puzzles and games.

Plan the role play area to reflect other cultures e.g. familiar cooking equipment etc

Learning should be supported by visuals and gestures as much as possible. Visuals could include:

- school routine cards/photographs to support children with everyday routines e.g. washing hands, putting on coats etc
- staff photographs
- visual timetables
- emotion cards



## Create a positive talking environment

- Encourage children to use their first language.
- Expect and respect a silent period when children are listening and tuning in to a new language.
- Teach the class some words in the other languages used in the classroom.
- Children learn best from each other; ensure that children are placed among good role models.
- Direct specific children to work alongside EAL pupils and explain how to support them e.g. by teaching them words and phrases.
- Simplify other children's talk by reiterating complex speech in an accessible way for all children.
- Model new language structures in the way you want children to use them e.g.  
    Adult: Let's feel the apple. It feels smooth. Jamila, feel it.  
    Jamila: Feel smooth
- Repeat back what children have said; this will both acknowledge and clarify what the child has said. It supports the child's choice of words and will encourage him/her to produce more language. Use puppets to model responses.
- Self talk; provide a commentary on what you are doing using key words.
- Support children's play through paired activities such as dolls house, block play, snap, barrier games. Rehearse language.
- Use masks, role-play corner etc. to allow children to independently experiment with new language in a safe environment.
- Re-cast/re-model language rather than correcting errors e.g. "We wented swimming" could be re-stated as "You went swimming did you?"
- Songs, stories and rhymes will reinforce the patterns of language and help with fluency.
- Identify topic related language; e.g. farm, garage, zoo (nouns, verbs, prepositions).



## **Create a positive listening environment**

- Children with EAL should be carefully placed at the front of the classroom where they can see and hear the teacher.
- Maintain contact with children during whole class teaching sessions by using children's names and using key phrases/gestures to remind them to look and listen.
- Use the same vocabulary for specific tasks, accompanied by the same gesture if possible. Set phrases for "tidy up time", "line up" "snack time" etc are helpful and often easily learned this way.
- If possible try to create a quiet (but not silent) learning atmosphere where children can hear and tune into language.
- Provide a variety of games and activities where the focus is on listening (e.g. music, singing games, audio tapes and sound and picture recognition)
- Support listening activities with props and visual materials (pupil/teacher fans, story sacks/ language tubs).
- Use simple songs, rhymes and raps with memorable refrains to encourage listening for pleasure.
- Read and tell a wide variety of stories and involve the children as much as possible in patterned responses.



**Tracking Progress**

Liaise closely with parents to complete EY Profile.

Track progress according to achievements in home language. Remember only ELGs have to be assessed in English.

Record what language is produced including non-verbal gestures/sounds.

Note concerns with language development in first language.

Refer to EAL Service for Initial Assessment as appropriate.

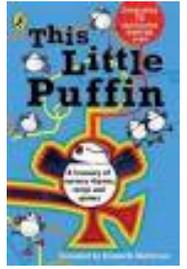
Use development matters and EAL guidance to produce a code for the census each January.



## Action songs and rhymes

Action songs and rhymes are good for learning the vocabulary of a new language because they:-

- **teach language in context**
- **are fun**
- **involve everyone in the activity**



Here are some ideas for songs and rhymes, which are already widely used in Early Years settings and have clear, repetitive language. They can be planned into everyday routines and be enjoyed by all the children...

- Head and shoulders, knees and toes
  - One finger, one thumb keep moving
  - Here we go round the mulberry bush
  - The wheels on the bus
  - Old MacDonald had a farm
  - I hear thunder, I hear thunder
  - Peter hammers with one hammer
  - Tommy Thumb where are you?
  - I'm a little teapot, short and stout
  - 5 currant buns in the baker's shop
  - 5 little ducks went swimming one day
  - If you're happy and you know it
  - Walking through the jungle
  - I love to row in my big blue boat
  - I went to school one morning
  - Wind the bobbin up
  - A tall thin man walking along
  - Can you walk on 2 legs, 2 legs, 2 legs?
  - Clap your hands
  - I went to visit a farm one day
  - Two little eyes to look around
  - I can knock with my two hands
  - An elephant goes like this
  - Can you walk on tiptoe?
  - Roly, poly, roly poly, roll your hands
  - Wink, wink, blink, blink, blink
  - These are grandma's glasses
- Send a copy of the words home with children learning EAL, maybe with a tape/talking pen.
  - Introduce language slowly and clearly at first, showing what the actions mean. Use pictures or props to support the actions. Visuals will help contextualise the new language and make it more meaningful for the children.



**Story Books**

- Use story books which have clear, simple, repetitive language, good illustrations and a particular vocabulary focus.
- Story books are easier to understand and ‘come to life’ when they are used with puppets or props.
- Use dual language books with Recorder pen.

<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Author</u></b>	<b><u>Publisher</u></b>	<b><u>Dual Language</u></b>	<b><u>Vocabulary Focus</u></b>
Where’s Spot?	Eric Hill	Heinemann	Roy Yates	Position, furniture, animals
Brown Bear, Brown Bear	Bill Martin Jr	Puffin Books		Colours, animals
Elmer	David McKee	Andersen Press	Milet	Colours, weather
Peace at Last	Jill Murphy	Macmillan	Ingham Yates	Rooms, furniture, garden
The Very Hungry Caterpillar	Eric Carle	Puffin Books	Mantra lingua	Days, food, number
Rosie’s Walk	Pat Hutchins	Bodley Head		Position
Noisy Farm	Rod Campbell	Campbell Books		Farm animals, baby animals
Dear Zoo	Rod Campbell	Puffin Books	Mantra Lingua	Zoo animals. descriptions
Splash!	Flora McDonnell	Walker Books	Mantra Lingua	Animals
Walking through the Jungle	Debbie Harter	Barefoot Books	Mantra Lingua	Actions, animals
The Boo Hoo Baby	Cowell & Godden	Macmillan	Mantra	Actions, animals
Baby Goz – When I grow up	Steve Weatherill	Frances Lincoln		Animals, colours, position
Handa’s Surprise	Eileen Browne	Walker Books	Mantra	Fruit, animals
Handa’s Hen	Eileen Browne	Walker Books	Mantra	Counting
One Smiling Grandma	Anne Marie Linden	Mammoth		Counting
Head, shoulders, knees & toes	Annie Kubler	Child’s Play	Mantra	Body



## Phonics and EAL learners in EYFS

EAL doesn't have to be a barrier to learning phonetically. Although the sounds of the first language are imprinted very early in the child's development, most EAL children very quickly tune into different sounds. They are practised in listening to and differentiating between different sounds. Listening is a very important aspect of learning any language, and it is important that EAL learners are listening carefully before beginning any activity.

### Tuning into sounds

EAL learners will have had lots of speaking and listening practice in their first language but they need the chance to do the same in English. It is important to have a strong emphasis on speaking and listening activities to prepare children to hear English sounds, enunciate sounds, blend sounds together and segment words into their individual sounds.

- Allow the EAL learner extra processing time during listening activities as they won't be as 'tuned in' to the English sounds as their monolingual peers.
- Slow songs/nursery rhymes down and use additional visuals to help the EAL learner understand the words and correctly pronounce and join in with the words.
- Keep parents informed of new nursery rhymes you are learning and show them where they can listen to them with their children on the internet.  
<http://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/en/little-kids-songs>
- For children learning EAL, songs and rhymes are a particularly effective way of learning chunks of language. Be aware that they may internalise the language as a 'chunk' and may not hear where one word starts and another ends.
- Sharing songs and rhymes in home languages reinforces similarities in sounds and patterns of languages. <http://www.mamalisa.com/?t=eh>
- Even if they do recognise words in isolation, mistakes can be made. 'Next week/ necks weak'. Careful enunciation of words and phrases is important with appropriate gesture and expression.
- Songs and rhymes are a way of tuning into the rhythm and developing speech patterns of the language.
- Sympathetically re-model/re-cast speech when possible so that the EAL learner hears the correct English pronunciation.
- Group EAL learners with good role models of spoken English for independent activities such as the role-play corner where speaking and listening activities naturally occur.
- Barrier games can be effective. In these games, children have to listen carefully, usually in pairs, to instructions in order to complete a task with pictures or objects to match a task performed or set behind a simple barrier.



## Listening to and remembering sounds

- When linking initial sounds with objects/pictures, ensure that the EAL learner is familiar with the vocabulary.
- Have a sound box/bag. Make collections of objects with names beginning with the same sound. Ask parents to contribute to the box if words in the first language start with the same sound.
- Sing rhymes and songs with alliterative lines such as 'Sing a song of sixpence' and 'can you count the candles on the cake.'

## Oral segmenting/Oral blending

The EAL learner, having learnt the correct English pronunciation of words, will need exposure to the oral segmenting/blending games so that they become familiar with segmenting words into their individual sounds. This integral part of Phase One Letters and Sounds is important for the EAL learner

- EAL learners will need extra time listening to adults modelling oral blending (*It's time to get your coat, c-oa-t ! or Touch your toes, t-oe-s ! Who can touch their feet, f-ee-t?*) Remember EAL learners are learning new words and breaking the word into its sounds at the same time. They need lots of modelling of both.
- When introducing new vocabulary, model the word first and then model the word spoken in sound-talk.
- When children are used to the oral segmenting introduce the idea of counting the phonemes they can hear by using fingers to help.
- With the help of a sound-talking puppet play Phase One games such as 'Cross the river'/'I spy.' Ensure that your EAL learner is familiar with vocabulary used before orally segmenting it into its sounds.
- Because children learning EAL are used to tuning in to different speech sounds they will usually enjoy and succeed at games based on auditory discrimination but always place them in the middle of turn-taking.

## Making links between letter sounds and forms

Use multi-sensory approaches to phonics to help the EAL learner anchor letter shapes in his/her memory. If physical movement is involved (writing 'in the air', on the back of another child with a finger, on the hand or in the sand), together with the oral repetition of the sound, this reinforces the links between the letter sounds and the letter shapes.



## Frequently asked questions

**How do we communicate with parents when we are uncertain of their understanding?**

If you feel a phone call may not be understood, try to get a contact number of someone who will be able to translate e.g. work contact, neighbour, friend etc. Ensure that parents are happy with the contact for confidentiality reasons.  
Written messages are useful e.g. home-school diaries, as these allow families time to get them translated.  
Most families have contacts who can act as interpreters.

**Why won't a child talk to me when I have heard them talk freely to other children?**

Children may develop language for social communication quite rapidly; this is usually based on the language around them and may be based on echoing what they hear. Many children understand what they hear but are unable to formulate replies to questions and cannot "make conversation" themselves. Don't give up talking to them; they will begin to make sense of what you are saying and may even surprise you by uttering a complete sentence after months of silence!

**Should I put a child on the SEN register because he/she is learning EAL?**

EAL does not mean that a child has SEN. Children with EAL should not be assessed using p-scales and they should not be put on the SEN register unless they have been identified as having an additional need. However, it is important that children with EAL are carefully tracked and monitored so that any possible additional difficulties are not missed.



## Dual language books & dictionaries

### Grant & Cutler

55-57 Great Marlborough Street, London W1V 2AY

Tel: 020 7734 2012 Fax: 020 7734 9272

"The UK's largest foreign language bookseller". Good for dictionaries.

Catalogues available include: Languages of Eastern Europe & former USSR; Indian; Oriental; Middle East & Eastern Mediterranean; Scandinavia.

### Roy Yates Books

Smallfields Cottage, Cox Green, Rudgwick, Horsham RH12 3DE

Tel: 01403 822 299 Fax: 01403 823 012

Children's books & dictionaries. Contact him for lists of available resources, specifying the languages in which you are interested.

### RDS (Reading Discounts for Schools)

8 Merton Road, London, E17 9DE

Tel/fax: 020 8 2521 6969

Sells: Mantra, Milet, Learning Design, Refugee Council, Harmony Publishing

### Mantra Lingua

5 Alexandra Grove, London N12 8NU

Tel: 020 8445 5123

Main publisher of dual language books. Also multilingual posters.

### Milet Ltd

PO Box 9916 London W14 0GS Tel: 020 7603 5477 Fax: 020 7610 5475

Specialise in Turkish dictionaries, dual language resources and books etc. about Turkey. Also supply dual language books and dictionaries in other languages.

### Mirage Children's Theatre Company

Park Walk School, London, SW10 0AY

Tel/fax: 020 7349 9969

Dual language audio plays: traditional stories retold in a range of languages including: Albanian, Somali, Sylheti & Tamil.

### The Refugee Council

Resources for schools including bilingual books

### Learning Design

(Tower Hamlets Education Directorate) English Street, London E3 4TA

Tel: 020 7983 1944 Fax: 020 7983 1932

Dual language books in Albanian, Bengali & Somali. Books about teaching pupils with these backgrounds/languages



## **Other specialist publishers & suppliers**

### African Books Collective

The Jam Factory, 27 Park End Street, Oxford OX1 1HU

Tel: 01865 726686 Fax: 01865 793298

Books from and about Africa. Thematic catalogues available including ones on children's books.

### Alpha Education, Nottingham

Tel: 0115 976 2821 Fax: 0115 840 3630

"Your Online, One Stop Shop for Multicultural Educational Books & Resources to Schools, Libraries, Nurseries, After School Groups and the Parental Market."

### BIS Publications

PO BOX 14918, London N17 8WJ

Tel: 0208 880 4066 Fax: 0208 880 4067

Educational materials about people of African descent.

### Central Books

Mail order supplier of books from smaller publishers eg. Bogle L'Ouverture and Human Rights Watch.

### Kids Like Me

49 Victoria Drive, Eastbourne, East Sussex BN20 8JU Tel: 01323 649 924

On-line supplier of 'Inspirational multicultural toys, books and educational resources for children aged 0-12.' Including DVDs, music CDs, posters, dressing up clothes, stationery, arts & crafts.

### Letterbox Library

71~73 Allen Road, London N16 8RY

Tel: 0207503 4801/3/4/8 Fax: 020 7503 4800

Specialise in multicultural & non-sexist books for children. School visits. Local representatives around the country.

### Open-Sez-Me Books

1 Winchester Street, Brighton, E. Sussex BN1 4NX.

Tel: 01273 272231 Fax: 01273 709040

Books on festivals throughout the year. Website also has useful information & ideas for activities.

### Soma Books

38 Kennington Lane, London SE11 4LS Tel: 020 7735 2101

Books for children & adults on Asian/African cultures, imports from India etc.

Dual language books.



## English as an Additional Language



### Tamarind Books

PO Box 52, Northwood, Middx. HA6 1UN Tel: 020 8866 8808 Fax: 020 88665627

Books which feature, mainly, African-Caribbean children.

### Willesden Bookshop

Specialises in multicultural books. Useful thematic booklists. On-line ordering and will invoice your school.

### World Language Books

Foreign language books for children and young adults.



## Further Reading/References

- An extensive list of approaches and strategies can be found on the NALDIC website: <http://www.naldic.org.uk/eal-teaching-and-learning/outline-guidance/early-years>
- To look at OFSTED's definition of good practice in EAL teaching <http://www.naldic.org.uk/eal-teaching-and-learning/outline-guidance/eal-ofsted>
- Equality Services: *Supporting Bilingual Children in the EYFS*
- Crosse Kay (2007) *Introducing English as an Additional Language to Young Children. A Practical Handbook* Paul Chapman Publishing, London.
- Smidt Sandra (2008) *Supporting Multilingual Learners in the Early Years Many languages- Many children*. Routledge, Oxon.
- DCSF Primary National Strategy (2007) *Supporting children learning English as an additional language Guidance for practitioners in the Early Years Foundation Stage*. Accessed at <http://www.teachfind.com/national-strategies/supporting-children-learning-eal>