

EAL and/ or SEN ? - Filter Questions

Use these questions to decide the most appropriate first point of assessment for a particular bilingual pupil.

These questions are for initial assessment only. As a pupil has further exposure to English, Special Educational needs may become apparent.

It may be appropriate to follow both courses of action for some bilingual pupils. All answers should be based on good evidence collected in a variety of circumstances over a period of time. All evidence should be accurately recorded and dated.

1. Lack of Response:

•Has the pupil had less than 6 month's exposure to English?

YES → EAL Assessment

NO

•Does the pupil respond through body language or physical actions?

YES → EAL Assessment

NO

•Is the language used by the teacher appropriate for the pupil's stage of English development?

NO → EAL Assessment

YES

Special Educational Needs Assessment

2. Problems with listening:

•Is the language used by the teacher appropriate for the pupil's stage of English development?

NO → EAL Assessment

YES

•Is the content of the discussion culturally familiar to the pupil and within their experience?

NO → EAL Assessment

YES

•Can the pupil listen well in the language(s) of home?

YES → EAL Assessment

NO

Special Educational Needs Assessment

3. Lack of Oral Expression over a Range of Skills :

- Has the pupil had less than two years exposure to English? **YES** → EAL Assessment
NO
- Could the pupil feel threatened by or ill at ease with the classroom situation **YES** → EAL Assessment
NO
- Are the inaccurate structures used by the pupil usual for those learning English as a second language? **YES** → EAL Assessment
NO
- Are the inaccurate structures used by the pupil possibly influenced by other languages used by the pupil? **YES** → EAL Assessment
NO
- Can pupil use their other language(s) over a range of language skills as appropriate for their age and educational experience? **YES** → EAL Assessment
NO
- Special Educational Needs Assessment

4. Difficulty in progressing in areas of the curriculum other than English:

- Are instructions and explanations given in language appropriate for the pupil's stage of development in that language?
YES → EAL Assessment
NO → EAL Assessment
- Can the pupil understand the task(s) when supported by visual materials or if the task is language free?
YES → EAL Assessment
NO
- Is the pupil capable of understanding the task when it is explained in a home language?
YES → EAL Assessment
NO
- Has the pupil had experience of the essential stages leading to the task?
YES → EAL Assessment
NO

5. Slow or little progress with reading :

•Does the pupil lack sufficient English vocabulary to make a meaningful start? **YES** → EAL Assessment

NO

•Has the pupil had little exposure to English text / letter forms? **YES** → EAL Assessment

NO

•Has the pupil had sufficient time to experience the stages of reading and assimilate them **NO** → EAL Assessment

YES

•If appropriate, does the pupil read text in a home language in a manner suitable for their length of education in that language? **YES** → EAL Assessment

NO

•Are the books used to assess reading skills in English, suitable in terms of cultural familiarity, content, idiomatic language suitable for level of oral skills? **NO** → EAL Assessment

YES

Special Educational Needs Assessment

6. Difficulties with writing for a variety of purposes :

- Does the pupil need or receive support with oral English as a second language
NO **YES** → EAL Assessment
- Can the pupil sequence events and ideas orally or pictorially?
NO **YES** → EAL Assessment
- Are the difficulties in writing a reflection of difficulties with word order, word omissions, tenses etc in oral skills?
NO **YES** → EAL Assessment
- Are spelling mistakes consistent and showing a growing awareness of spelling patterns in English?
NO **YES** → EAL Assessment
- Does the pupil have a vocabulary and understanding of grammar and idiom equal to that of their peers?
YES **NO** → EAL Assessment
- If appropriate, is the pupil able to write in a home language at a level appropriate to age and education in that language?
NO **YES** → EAL Assessment

Special Educational Needs Assessment

7. Difficulties with handwriting :

•Is the pupil familiar with English script in printed and hand-written form?

NO → EAL Assessment

YES

•Has the pupil had previous formal schooling which included opportunities to write?

NO → EAL Assessment

YES

•Has the pupil written a script with a different orientation?

YES → EAL Assessment

NO

•Has the pupil written a script with different positioning?

YES → EAL Assessment

NO

Special Educational Needs Assessment

8. Behavioural, emotional or social difficulties :

- Is the pupil experiencing confusion with a new culture?
YES → EAL Assessment
NO
- Has the pupil had only a short experience of formal education of any sort?
YES → EAL Assessment
NO
- Has the pupil come from an educational experience significantly different from the current - class size etc?
YES → EAL Assessment
NO
- Is the pupil's lack of skills in oral English causing frustration or preventing self expression?
YES → EAL Assessment
NO
- Are problems caused by the pupil being asked to carry out activities beyond their previous experience or against cultural/ religious beliefs e.g. drawing faces, changing for PE etc?
YES → EAL Assessment
NO
- Does child feel pressured to respond orally?
YES → EAL Assessment
NO
- Could the pupil's behaviour/ anxiety be the result of other peoples' racist attitude or behaviour?
YES → EAL Assessment
NO
- Are the tasks chosen appropriate for the pupil's language level?
NO → EAL Assessment
YES
- Are the tasks chosen appropriate for the pupil's language and cognitive development?
NO → EAL Assessment
YES
- Special Educational Needs Assessment

This has been adapted from 'Bilingual pupils and special educational needs: A teacher's guide to appropriate support and referral', by Susan Shaw.