



Ethnic Minority



Achievement Service



EYFS EAL Pupils



Supporting EAL Learners in the EYFS



It takes time to develop EAL. The length of time a pupil will take to learn English as an Additional Language will depend on many factors such as pupil's temperament, their age, motivation, proficiency in their other language(s) and the learning environment in the school. Academic language is the language needed to succeed at school. Studies show that this typically takes 5 – 7 years. (naldic.org.uk)

What does good practice look like? Top Tips:

- Make sure everyone knows how to pronounce the child's first name correctly.
- Don't expect or insist on speech too early. The 'silent period' is a stage of development in learning EAL.
- Speak to the pupil every session, face the pupil when you are talking. Allow time for the pupil to process what you have said. Repeat if necessary.
- Keep talking to the child as you play alongside them, even if there is no response. E.g. "Can you give me the pencil, please?" "Where are the scissors? Here they are." By doing this you are modelling correct language for the child to listen to. Use short, simple sentences.
Talk about what you are doing, as you do it, so that the child hears good language, modelled in a context with visual support.
- Respond positively to all attempts to communicate. Do not correct errors but model the correct English in response.

Child: "This not want".

Practitioner: "You don't want a piece of banana. Do you want some apple?"

Child: "Want apple".

Practitioner: "Good. You want some apple? Here you are".

- Take care with questioning. Too much direct closed questioning e.g. "What's this?", "What colour is this?" can increase a sense of failure if the child doesn't know the answer.

- Use non-verbal gestures to help understanding – a high percentage of communication is nonverbal.
- Involve the child in 'hands on' practical activities so that new language can be learned in context. Provide situations where the instructions and the questions have a real purpose, e.g. cooking activities, movement activities, role play.
- Be consistent with simple instructions at the beginning. The repetition will help the child to learn. For example, don't say 'Get your coat, but first go to the toilet and then wash hands and have snack.' Instead keep your language simple, 'Adam, put coat on.' Adam will tune in if you say his name first.
- Follow the child's interests – talking about what they are doing, seeing, touching, smelling helps to keep them interested in the language you are using.
- Use stories, songs, and rhymes with repetitive chorus lines to encourage the child to join in. This will help in learning vocabulary and simple English structure. Children need to hear these stories, songs and rhymes again and again.
Encourage retelling of stories, using gesture, body language and tone of voice.
- Provide music opportunities where children can participate without using spoken language, e.g. through actions, playing a musical instrument.
- Ensure that there is a routine providing structure to the day. The structure can be relied upon when a child is faced with a confusing new environment, strange faces and a new language. This also helps to teach chunks of language for specific situations, e.g. sit on the carpet, let's go outside, tidy up time, put your coat on, etc.
- Routines can be learned by watching other children and adults. Use visual prompts such as fans and visual timetables so that the child knows what is coming next and can ask for e.g. the toilet by using the picture. Eg [www.twinkl](http://www.twinkl.com)
Use photographs to prepare and support children for outside visits.
- Create a language rich environment which includes and values first language. This will support language development.
 1. Role play develops expressive language
 2. Building with blocks develops positional language
 3. A visual walk develops descriptive language
 4. Physical development activities develop instructional language
 5. Storytelling, using puppets and props develops narrative language including tenses
 6. Ordering pictures/actions develops sequencing language
 7. Exploration of objects that have different properties develops comparative language - how are things the same, how are they different?

- Try to give bilingual children lots of opportunities to work in small groups- which are less threatening, and where children feel more able to contribute. Pair a child with a peer they feel comfortable with.
- Use games which support turn taking, introduce new vocabulary, introduce new concepts, encourage social language, provide motivation to listen and speak.
- Ensure that all the activities in the setting are suitable and can support language development. However, some children may have no experience of certain activities and may need to be shown what to do.
- Use ICT – computer, talking tins, talking pens, Easi-speak microphones, Tuff Cams, talking photograph albums, iPads, and interactive white boards.
- Make sure displays are culturally inclusive and promote positive images.
- Involve parents and families – encourage parents to still speak in their home language at home to maintain bi-lingualism. Research studies show that English language development progresses best where children use and develop their first language alongside English.
- Compile a list of 'survival' words in English and home language. For example if the child says 'viz' (pronounced 'wiz') in Hungarian then you know they are requesting a drink of water.
- Compile a list of words to console an upset child. For example, 'Mummy is coming soon' is 'Mama zaraz wroci' in Polish. Use transliteration to help you to pronounce words correctly.
- 3-4 year olds can still have difficulty with a small number of sounds for example, f/th and s/sh/ch/dz (www.talkingpoint.org.uk). This is not yet a sign of Speech and Language difficulties.



OFSTED guidance

www.foundationyears.org.uk/eyfs

1.7. 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.

For help explaining the Early Years Foundation Stage to parents refer to:

www.foundationyears.org.uk/2015/03/what-to-expect-when-a-parents-guide/



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