

## **Guidance to support multilingual children in Early Years settings**

This document sets out how to support children who speak more than one language. In addition, the Torbay assessment document has been designed to support practitioners in identifying the stage a child may currently be working at and what their next steps might be. Each area outlines what this may look like, provides space for date and comments and offers support ideas.

Transition is the first step for children who speak English as an additional language within your setting. A child learning English may mix words from the languages they know in the same sentence. Some children might feel overwhelmed, frightened, upset, isolated, lost and display unwanted behaviour if they can't communicate.

For the child, seeing their parent/carer welcomed and interacting with adults will help them to feel secure. This initial meeting offers an opportunity to find out and record as much information as possible:

How to pronounce the child's name. Write it down phonetically to ensure everyone uses the same pronunciation.

Which country did they originate from?

Does the family have a specific religion or culture? Explain the setting would like to celebrate any key festivals which link to this.

What does the child like to play with/what are their interests?

What language/s are spoken at home? Google the language if you are not sure of its name to clarify.

Is English spoken at home? Emphasise that it is OK to just speak in home language/s

Does the child speak well in their home language/s? What can they say?

Do the family have access to public funds?

Who lives at home?

With permission take some photos of the family visiting the setting to make a welcome book e.g. playing; eating snack; outside; pointing to the bathroom

A visual support document could show start and finish times; what the child needs for different seasons; any food they need to provide.

The key person may wish to learn some simple phrases e.g. hello/goodbye in the child's home language

Please ensure staff working with the child know the languages spoken, their religion or culture and which country they may have lived or have relatives living in.

## **Online resources**

Chat, Play, Read is a national initiative to promote the home learning environment crucial role in children's early development.

Information on Chat, Play, Read is available on:

Torbay Family Hub website Chat, Play, Read - Family Hub

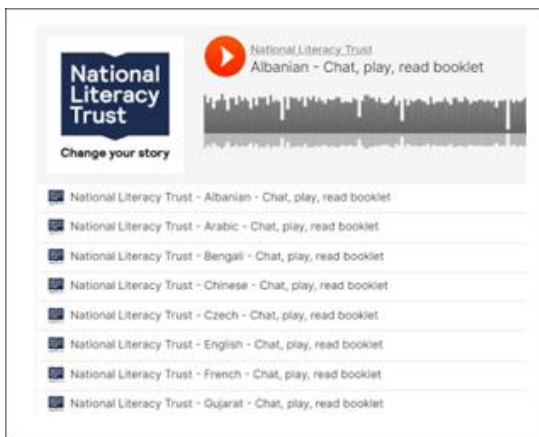
National Literacy Trust website:

Depending on the family's preference Chat Play Read information is available in English:

Chat, play, read booklets | National Literacy Trust

Also, it is available either in writing or orally in a range of languages offering translated information.

[Download Chat, play, read booklets | Words for Life](#)



[Download Chat, play, read booklets | Words for Life](#)

The Family hub has a function in the bottom lefthand corner, where you can translate it into many different languages so parents and families can access information. [Torbay Online Family Hub – Home - Family Hub](#)

CBeebies Tiny Happy People can also be translated into different languages. Select the page you want, right click and choose 'Translate to...' It will only translate the page you are on but can be a useful point of reference for parents. [Tiny Happy People](#)

## **Visual resources to support understanding**

A visual timetable introduced as it is happening.

Feelings or emotions picture cards so children can label their own and others' emotions.

Photographs of areas, resources, peers, and staff to support children with their understanding.

Story and song props used as often as possible.

### **Top tips for supporting multilingual children in Early years settings**

Engaging parents improves children's outcomes. Invite parents in to share and read a book in their own language. This can give the child a real sense of pride and help to make them feel part of the class. It is also a wonderful opportunity for the other children to experience a different culture first hand.

Use positive body language and facial expressions

Focus activities on what the child likes and can do- the more motivated they are in what they're doing/playing with, the more they are likely to learn the language linked to that activity.

Gain the child's attention before addressing them.

Use short simple sentences, give at least 10 seconds for them to respond. Don't rephrase until you are sure they haven't understood

Value and celebrate cultural diversity. Cultural learning experiences can improve awareness and appreciation and prevent social and cultural exclusion.

Use objects, pointing, gesture, visual support alongside spoken instructions

Use repetition to help show what you mean

Allow child to have solitary play to begin with, try not to overwhelm.

Offer opportunities for them to join in activities in their own time.

Use visual alongside verbal- talk while doing.

Praise any attempt to communicate, no matter how small. Accept nonverbal responses i.e. pointing, nodding, gesture, taking you by the hand to show.

Use questions with specific answers i.e. do you want the blue one of the green one?

Use the home corner to reflect different cultures

Use snacks/food from home country if appropriate at snack times.

### **Multilingual children and SEND**

Learning EAL is not the same as having SEND. Depending on their level of proficiency in English, multilingual children who are learning EAL may face linguistic challenges and will need targeted language support to help them learn both the language and all their subjects in English.

A small proportion of multilingual children will also have SEND. It is vital that children are identified as early as possible, so they can receive targeted and integrated support that addresses both their linguistic challenges, and their special learning needs.

There is insignificant evidence to show that being bilingual and ASD creates a significant barrier to developing communication. Some studies have shown that children with ASD exposed to a bilingual

environment use more functional gestures to communicate than monolingual peers. This means it is beneficial to continue to use Makaton, clear non-verbal communication, and visual cues to support verbal language, providing opportunities to bridge both languages.

There isn't a specific test to show whether a multilingual learner has SEND. Focused observations both in and outside of the classroom and feedback from all those who work with the child will help to build a picture of their needs and particular challenges.

### **Suggested resources**

Below is a list of resources collated from Torbay Home Learning Environment and Early Years Team. It is vitally important to include resources in your setting, even if you do not have any multilingual children. This will ensure sufficient learning of different cultures, and appreciation for lives different from their own. We have organised the resources into those that incur some cost and others that are free and should be easy to implement.

### **Free resources**

| Resource                                   | Where to find it?                                                                            | How to use it?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Objects of reference                       | Within your setting                                                                          | Where possible, use objects when communicating with children that relate to the conversation or instruction.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| Widget symbols                             | Online                                                                                       | You can use widget symbols printed to add to a lanyard or visual timetable. For communication, it would be more beneficial to use objects of reference.                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Objects and pictures from around the world | Your families/charity shops/pictures printed online                                          | Use objects from different cultures to incorporate into your environment e.g. using chopsticks in the home corner or Indian bangles and Saris in the dressing up. As well as providing a homely feel to your environment; photo frames around the room with pictures of different styles of houses and locations will be supportive of a multi-cultural environment. |
| A diverse menu                             | Your setting                                                                                 | A food menu with a variety of culturally diverse foods on offer.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| National Literacy Trust                    | <a href="#">Early years: resources and tools for early language development and parental</a> | National Literacy Trust has a range of resources for parents that can be translated into at least 19 languages. This could be useful for sending information                                                                                                                                                                                                         |

|  |                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                    |
|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <a href="https://www.literacytrust.org.uk/early-years">engagement   National Literacy Trust</a><br><br>literacytrust.org.uk/early-years | out to parents and ensuring it is accessible for everyone. It includes a Chat Play Read booklet which is another beneficial resource for families. |
|--|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### **Resources at a cost**

| Resource                                              | Where to find it?                                     | How to use it?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Cost        |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| Talking Pen                                           | <a href="https://tts-group.co.uk">tts-group.co.uk</a> | Can be used to support settling in and an easy way to communicate with the child and families. Books can be purchased at an additional cost and the Pen can read it in their language.                                                                              | £135 - £160 |
| Books with text from home language                    | Library to rent for free or Amazon Books              | Use these books to support your discussions around other cultures, and different texts. It will be comforting and supportive for children to see text from their home language, particularly if they use a different alphabet. Speak with families for suggestions. | £5 - £15    |
| Books of children in different cultures and countries | Library to rent for free or Amazon Books              | Use these books to support your discussions around other cultures and sharing the home culture of the children in your setting. It will support feelings of belonging and importance of their home culture.                                                         | £5 - £15    |
| Makaton                                               | Torbay Council iLearn                                 | Use it consistently in the setting as another form of communication. Using signs and symbols can support children with understanding outside of verbal communication.                                                                                               | £50         |

### **Book suggestions**

‘The Koala Who Could’ Rachel Bright and Jim Field. A story about facing change with courage and curiosity.

‘Where Are You From?’ Yamile Saied Mendez and Jaime Kim. A story about identity, belonging and self-acceptance.

‘The Snail and the Whale’ Julia Donaldson and Axel Sheffler. A story about friendship, determination, and adventure. A fantastic book for discussions around different countries.

‘Ten Little Fingers and Ten Little Toes’ Mem Fox and Helen Oxenbury. A celebration of baby fingers and toes and the babies they belong to.

[EAL: Why the home language matters | early years alliance](#)

[Understanding multilingualism in the early years | National Literacy Trust](#)

[Mantra Lingua UK | Dual language books and bilingual books and resources for bilingual children and parents and for the multi-lingual classroom.](#)