

Guidance to support multilingual children

English as an additional language:

'Speaking more than one language has lots of advantages for children. It is the norm in many countries around the world. Children will learn English from a strong foundation in their home language. It is important for you to encourage families to use their home language for linguistic as well as cultural reasons. Children learning English will typically go through a quiet phase when they do not say very much and may then use words in both languages in the same sentence. Talk to parents about what language they speak at home, try and learn a few key words and celebrate multilingualism in your setting'.

Development Matters (Published 3 March 2017 and last updated 4 September 2023)

[Development Matters - Non-statutory curriculum guidance for the early years foundation stage \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Help for early years providers – English as an additional language:

[English as an additional language \(EAL\) - Help for early years providers - GOV.UK \(education.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/english-as-an-additional-language-help-for-early-years-providers)

Background information	
Child's Name:	
Record how the child's name sound phonetically:	
Date of birth:	
Nationality:	
Languages spoken at home:	
Is an interpreter needed?	
Parents/ Guardians' name/s:	
Ask the parents, how many words and phrases the child is saying at home?	In their home language: In English:
It is good for the child to hear both their home language and English at home. How often do the family speak in their home language at home?	

Supporting a new multilingual child into the setting

A child needs to feel secure and valued before they can even think about developing their language skills. This is something we as EY Educators can pride ourselves on doing effectively and indeed do every day as part of the care and education, we provide to all children.

Settling in sessions –

The first place to start is an enhanced setting in period for multilingual children. They may need longer to settle than other children.

Ideas and tips to help settle –

- Meet with parents, establish how much English they use, what language they use at home and gather as much information to help the child settle.
- Welcome booklet that the child and family can keep, including a few photographs.
 - Setting
 - Keyworker and key members of staff
 - Toilets
 - Garden
 - Where they hand their coat/bag
- Introduce visual aid to use which all staff working with child will use (This can be on a lanyard, fan, keyring etc. Not too many to start with just a few to start to support the child's basic needs)

Top Tips

- Using visual aids to support children.
- Using repetition to support children (Reading the same stories, singing the same songs)
- Using visual timetables so children understand what is coming next and routines.
- Enhanced settling into a setting.
- Provide the child with a set of pictures or symbols, perhaps joined like a fan, to show when they need the toilet, are thirsty, feel sad etc.
- Provide a small book with photos of the setting to take home so that this can be discussed at home in their first language with them before coming to the setting.
- acknowledge and value children's home languages
- reassure parents that maintaining and developing the home language is important and will support learning English

The silent period

Children can present with what is known as the “silent period”, this may last a short time or can be months. This is a natural stage of language. This time is an opportunity to listen and tune into to language that is being spoken.

Reasons for the silent period-

- the child feeling safe enough to speak
- being shy
- having suffered trauma before arriving in school, for example, asylum seekers and refugees from war-torn countries
- Children choosing to be ‘elective mute’

How to support -

- It is important to not pressure them into speaking
- Continue to speak to a child even without a response
- Include the child in small group activities or experiences
- Support and model language around peers
- Model a variety of questions
- Accept and encourage non-verbal responses
- Using lots of praise with children
- Using repetition with words
- Using activities and play to support spoken language

English proficiency

New to English:

- May use first language for learning and other purposes.
- May remain completely silent in the classroom.
- May be copying/repeating some words or phrases.
- May understand some everyday expressions in English but may have minimal/no literacy in English and needs a considerable amount of EAL support.

Early acquisition:

- May follow day-to-day social communication in English and participate in learning activities with additional support.
- Beginning to use spoken English for social purposes.
- May understand simple instructions and can follow narrative with visual support.
- May have developed some skills in reading and writing.
- May have become familiar with some subject-specific vocabulary and needs a significant amount of EAL support to access the curriculum.

Developing competence:

- May participate in learning activities with increasing independence.
- Able to express self orally in English, but structural inaccuracies are still apparent.
- Literacy will require ongoing support, particularly for understanding text and writing.
- May be able to follow abstract concepts and more complex written English

Competent:

- Student's oral English will enable successful engagement with lessons and activities.
- Can read and understand a wide variety of texts in English.
- Their written English skills may lack complexity or contain frequent errors in grammar.
- Still needs some EAL support to use complex material and tasks

Fluent:

- Operates without EAL support across the curriculum.
- Can operate across the curriculum to a level of competence that is equal to a pupil who uses English as their first language.

(English proficiency of pupils with English as an additional language gov.uk Feb 2020)

New to English	
	Date
Is silent but able to follow some basic routines	
Can follow a simple instruction	
Can understand a few single words or phrases	
Will join in with or follow an activity	
Can show understanding through non-verbal gestures	
Can understand basic commands such as "sit on the carpet"	
Can respond to simple interactions' such as Hello	
Can speak or communicate in their home language	
Attempts to say single words eg Mummy	
Attempts to join in with action songs	
Points or leads adults to where they would like to go	
Responds in small group time either verbally or non-verbally	
Can select an activity with support	
Responds to visual/ pictures	
Support Ideas	
▪ Use visual aids to support the routine ▪ Praise children for communicating or responding even if non-verbal ▪ Use short phrases - "Thank you" or "My go" ▪ Use lots of non-verbal praise (clapping, smiling, nodding) ▪ Work with parents/careers (share what you are working on) ▪ Use lots of repetition ▪ Use simple books with one-word pictures, use lots of repetition (Ball, hat etc) ▪ Use props (Story sacks, song bags) ▪ Allow plenty of time ▪ Accept and praise non-verbal responses ▪ Model language ▪ Use songs and repeat regularly ▪ Have a quiet space for them to use/ go if it gets too much ▪ Small group times – Allow child to go last so can hear and understand the activity first modelled by other children	

Early Acquisition	
	Date
Can respond to simple instructions	
Can understand simple sentences	
Responds to routines	
Enjoys simple songs and rhymes	
Expresses likes and dislikes (eg snack)	
Beginning to put two words together	
Starts to name everyday objects (coat, table, cup etc)	
Beginning to recognise colours/ numbers	
Listens and sits for carpet time/ group time	
Developing concentration on an activity for longer periods	
Accesses the room/ setting more independently	
Will engage in some play alongside other children	
Makes marks	
Enjoys sitting and looking at books	
Can pick out a familiar story	
Support Ideas	
- Identify a few familiar stories and songs and re visit these regularly - Give choices to allow a verbal or non- verbal response (eg at snack would you like apple or banana) - Give plenty of time for children to respond - Ensure carpet time is kept short - Use lots of praise - Praise both communication in English and home language - Use simple games such as matching cards to expand language and communication - Model language in play such as making cups of tea in the role play area - Be present and on hand but encourage independent play	

Developing competence	
	Date
Listens and joins in with familiar stories and songs	
Can follow 2-part instructions	
Starting to understand more complex sentences	
Can ask simple questions	
Can communicate a few words in play with their peers	
Is confident in following routines	
Can put on own coat, shoes	

Responds in small groups/ carpet time	
Will copy words and communication that is modelled	
Support Ideas	
▪ Extend language (eg car, yes, a red car) ▪ Pair up with a peer and support communication ▪ Support role play situations to introduce language in play ▪ Using 2- and 3-part instructions allowing processing time	

Competent	
	Date
Is happy and willing to contribute to group situations	
Understands instructions	
Uses more complex sentences	
Confidently engages in play with their peers	
Initiates conversations with their peers	
Can express wishes and feelings	
Confidently accesses the setting and follows routines	
Can use sequencing in sentences in the correct order (I am putting the baby I the pushchair)	
Can listen at group times for a sustained period	
Can give context to a story	
Support Ideas	
• Check understanding • Play collaborative games • Support new vocabulary with visual aids and props. • Use games to teach, talk and respond – What's the time Mr Wolf • Give plenty of opportunities to work with good role- models.	

Fluent	
	Date:
Understand some basic prepositional language (On, over, next to)	
Can remember and retell basic information and events	
Can follow a story without pictures or prompts	
Actively engages in role play alongside others	
Is able to express past, future and present.	
Uses talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking	
Is confident to use their home language within the setting	
Shows enjoyment in reading experiences with others	
Can spell out some familiar words	
Can listen with concentration and attention	
Support Ideas	

<u>Other useful links</u> gov.uk Information/ Practice guidance English as an additional language (EAL) - Help for early years providers - GOV.UK (education.gov.uk) Tiny Happy People - Bilingual babies and speaking multiple languages at home Early Years Alliance information - Children Learning EAL (eyalliance.org.uk) Alliance launches toolkit to support the provision of care, education and support for multilingual early years alliance NALDIC (National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum) Sept 2011 NALDIC Response to EYFS revised framework Speech and Language uk website - Speech and Language UK: Information and support Introducing a second language or supporting those with English as an additional language
