

# Identifying Children who are Learning English As An Additional Language(EAL) and who may also have Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities (LDD)

Guidance for Early Years Foundation Stage Practitioners  
on Assessing and Supporting Young Children

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## Learning EAL in the Early Years

This pack contains information aimed at supporting all young children who have English as an additional language, and helping practitioners in the Early Years Foundation Stage to decide whether a child has EAL and LDD.

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## Section 1

### Principles and Best Practice

The following best practice principles and guidelines will support all children's developing speech, language and communication skills. The strategies that you should provide for all children will also support children learning EAL.

## Section 1: Learning EAL in the Early Years

Supporting Children who are learning English as an Additional Language

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### Principles

- All children are entitled to equal access to the whole curriculum.
- Partnership with parents and carers is fundamental to a child's learning and development.
- Learning and using more than one language is an asset and is a learning opportunity for both children and adults in the setting.
- Good development of a child's first language has a positive affect on the development of other languages.
- Children learn language in social situations, by interacting with adults and other children.

### Practitioners

#### Do we:

- Refer to 'Best Practice to Support Young Children's Development of Speech Language and Communication' and ensure that this is in place for children and families for whom English is not their first language?
- Value language diversity and understand the importance of the development of the home language in a child's learning, well being and positive self image?
- Recognise that children new to English may need additional adaptations to the learning environment?

### Structure and Staffing

#### Do we:

- Ensure we have structures and practice that promotes general best practice in supporting and developing young children's speech, language and communication?
- Ensure correct spelling and pronunciation of children's and parents' names?
- Ask on application form for home language(s) and religious/cultural information and find out what sort of learning experiences the child has had at home?
- Have in place systems to support staff in accessing interpreters etc?
- Offer a home visit where parents may feel more relaxed and able to talk about their child's strength, interests as well as a full range of language skills and experiences?
- Know what to do if the child's language does not develop or we are concerned about the child's development?

## Section 1

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### Family and Community

#### Do we:

- Encourage parents that use of home language will support their child's learning, well-being and self image and encourage them to continue using it?
- Encourage parents that the child's continued use of home language in the setting will support their child's developing communication skills and language, including English?
- Provide positive imagery, ensuring children's home languages and experiences are reflected in the settings resources, eg CDs, story tapes in the child's first language, books in the child's first language, puzzles, role play resources, creative resources, pictures and posters? (When a child is new to learning English, do not mix the languages too closely, eg read the story through in the child's first language then read it through in English.)
- Allow children new to English some period of time when they may just listen before they respond, whilst all the time talking to them, observing and monitoring their progress. Silent periods can vary in length, but it important that adults continue to talk and communicate with the child?
- Provide lots of experiences and activities that promote language through play, embedding language in the actual and concrete?

### The Child's Voice

#### Do we:

- Listen to child's attempts at communication, encourage and attempt to 'interpret' what they have said?
- Plan for times when the child can be involved which require little or no English – eg sharing out drinks at snack time?
- Repeat key phrases in play, requests and books to reinforce key messages?
- Offer activities to provide appropriate learning opportunities that challenge children?
- Explore using multi-lingual staff and encourage parents from a range of linguistic backgrounds and cultures to come in and enrich the setting?
- If possible, use a buddy system, linking older children who may share the same language; allow children to communicate in their first language?
- Record observations of all the child's communication skills, including non-verbal and other signs of understanding and keep language profile records involving regular discussion with parents?
- Offer support to access some activities in the setting, eg whole group times, taking child to different areas to play alongside them?
- Use lots of opportunities to model new experiences and expectations?

## Section 1: Learning EAL in the Early Years

### Best Practice to Support Young Children’s Development of Speech, Language and Communication

- Welcome all children and parents using correct names, showing them around the setting and encourage time for parents to stay and settle their children.
- Try and learn some key words in the child’s language (see Language of the month at: [www.newburypark.redbridge.sch.uk/langofmonth](http://www.newburypark.redbridge.sch.uk/langofmonth)).
- Create a learning environment that celebrates diversity and its richness.
- Ensure that children and parents can access and refer to a daily timetable with pictures, which can help the child and family to become aware of the routines and structures of the session.
- Encourage children to explore all areas of play and activities.
- Help children to feel safe and secure by use of gestures, smiles and support in order to encourage the confidence to ‘have a go’.
- Ensure familiar resources are available to positively reflect children’s life experiences and community/ ethnic group.
- Always allow time for a child to observe other children/adults during sessions, modelling resources that may be unfamiliar.
- Praise and encourage all attempted communication both verbal and gesture and adapt and expand as appropriate.
- Use symbols, signs and gesture regularly to aid children’s understanding of spoken language.
- Use photographs to define particular activity areas, eg photo of child painting, and have boxes of toys and equipment clearly labelled with words and pictures depicting the content.
- Display key vocabulary to prompt adults to use target words when playing alongside children.
- Observe how the child communicates and track progress with parents and staff (see Section 2 Identification and assessment of additional needs).
- Play alongside, commenting on what the child is doing, using short simple sentences and limiting questions (See Section 3 Support materials).
- Speak at a pace the child/children are able to follow and always allow sufficient time for the child to think and respond.
- Ensure that books and stories shared with children have clear illustrations and supported by props, eg puppets.

## Section 1: Best Practice; Support Material

| Supporting children learning EAL: Audit  |   |                             |
|--|---|-----------------------------|
| Adapted from the IDP: Supporting children with speech, language and communication needs  |   |                             |
|  | Do you as a practitioner:   | What do we want to develop? |
| <b>A Unique Child</b><br>Every child is a competent learner from birth who can be resilient, capable, confident and self assured                             | <input type="checkbox"/> have a thorough knowledge of child development and how children learn EAL?<br><input type="checkbox"/> have a good picture of children’s communication and language in their home language and English outside of the setting?<br><input type="checkbox"/> take account of the fact that some children will understand considerably more language than they use?<br><input type="checkbox"/> recognise and support the different methods of communication that children use?<br><input type="checkbox"/> recognise that some children may be shy and reserved but have more receptive and expressive language than they are using?<br><input type="checkbox"/> think about the language skills that are involved in the activities you are providing and ensure that all children can access them? |                             |
| <b>Positive Relationships</b><br>Children learn to be strong and independent from a base of loving and secure relationships with parents and/or a key person | <input type="checkbox"/> reflect on the communication methods that you use with parents and ensure that they are appropriate?<br><input type="checkbox"/> discuss children’s language and communication skills in English and their home language with parents?<br><input type="checkbox"/> value and use the information that parents contribute to their child’s learning record?<br><input type="checkbox"/> demonstrate good listening skills and support children to develop their own listening skills?<br><input type="checkbox"/> use specific words, signs or symbols to indicate to children that you want them to ‘listen’?<br><input type="checkbox"/> give children time to respond to questions or have their turn in a conversation?   |                             |

## Section 1: Best Practice; Support Material

|  | Do you as a practitioner:   | What do we want to develop? |
|--|---|-----------------------------|
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> sensitively provide the correct form of words rather than correcting children?<br><input type="checkbox"/> recast (repeat) what children have said and extend the language?<br><input type="checkbox"/> adapt your language to meet the children's needs?<br><input type="checkbox"/> ask open questions?<br><input type="checkbox"/> value and acknowledge children's non-verbal communications and reflect on your own non-verbal communication skills?  |                             |
| <b>Enabling Environments</b><br>The environment plays a key role in supporting and extending children's development and learning | <input type="checkbox"/> carry out, record and analyse observations of children's development of EAL?<br><input type="checkbox"/> discuss children's progress with parents?<br><input type="checkbox"/> take account of the environment, including noise levels, when planning activities to ensure that it suits the needs of children learning EAL?<br><input type="checkbox"/> ensure that you are aware of individual children's needs and know how to support their language and communication?<br><input type="checkbox"/> use shared and consistent names for times in the day, story time, tidy up time, to help children to learn the vocabulary and understand the expectations?<br><input type="checkbox"/> check that children have understood instructions?<br><input type="checkbox"/> use a visual timetable to help children to understand the sequence of activities?<br><input type="checkbox"/> use picture and written labels on resources to encourage independence?<br><input type="checkbox"/> plan to meet children's individual language and communication needs during the transition process into and from your setting? |                             |

## Section 1: Best Practice; Support Material

|   | Do you as a practitioner:   | What do we want to develop? |
|---|---|-----------------------------|
| <b>Learning and Development</b><br>Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates and all areas of learning and development are equally important and interconnected | <input type="checkbox"/> help children to build up a varied collection of words that they can use and understand?<br><input type="checkbox"/> sometimes give a running commentary of the play children are involved in?<br><input type="checkbox"/> create opportunities for children to experience communicating for a wide variety of purposes and in creative ways?<br><input type="checkbox"/> use a wide range of stories, rhymes and songs with children and support these with objects, actions and puppets?<br><input type="checkbox"/> give children time to tell their own stories, share their experiences or just talk to each other?<br><input type="checkbox"/> set up play activities, with appropriate equipment, linked to a story, giving children the opportunity to reinforce their learning in their play?<br><input type="checkbox"/> support and challenge children's thinking by getting involved in the thinking process with them?<br><input type="checkbox"/> show genuine interest, offer encouragement, clarify ideas and ask open questions, which support and extend children's thinking and help them to make connections in their learning?<br><input type="checkbox"/> give children time to explore and develop their ideas, encourage them to discuss what they are doing and what they want to achieve?<br><input type="checkbox"/> reflect on how you can make sustained shared thinking work with children learning EAL?<br><input type="checkbox"/> plan the steps each child should be making and support their learning by breaking down those steps in to smaller, achievable ones?<br><input type="checkbox"/> record and analyse children's progress and achievements in learning EAL? |                             |

## Section 1: Best Practice; Support Material

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Peer observation prompts for children learning EAL: adapted from The Inclusion Development Programme. Supporting children with speech, language and communication needs. pp.29-36

- Do you give children time and space, to think and to respond?
  - Do you provide the correct form of words sensitively, rather than correcting children directly?
  - Do you 'recast' when talking with children – modelling the correct form and extending vocabulary?
  - Do you adapt your language to the child's needs?
  - Do you ask open questions as well as some closed supportive questions?
  - Do you value and respond to non-verbal communication?
  - Do you give children choices if they are reluctant to express preferences, e.g. 'Do you want to play with the cars or the train set?'
  - Do you use 'here and now talk' about what is currently happening and keep talk about the past or the future to a minimum?
- Do you speak slowly (but not unnaturally so) and clearly, repeating important information as necessary?
  - Do you try not to ask too many questions of children learning EAL?
  - Do you give lots of praise each time children attempt to communicate?
  - Do you provide the 'social oil' to show that you are interested in keeping the conversation going, e.g. 'Oh that's interesting, yes, mmm'?
  - Do you observe what children are interested in and model the key vocabulary in these areas?
  - Do you follow the child's lead and provide a 'running commentary' on what they are doing?

## Section 2: Learning EAL in the Early Years

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### Identification and assessment of additional needs

Most children learning EAL will make good progress if best practice principles and guidelines are in place. The following section will help you to assess all children's progress in language and communication and identify children who might need additional support in this area.

The following forms should be used with all children learning EAL, alongside EYFS observational assessments, in the child's first language and in English, and the child progress record.

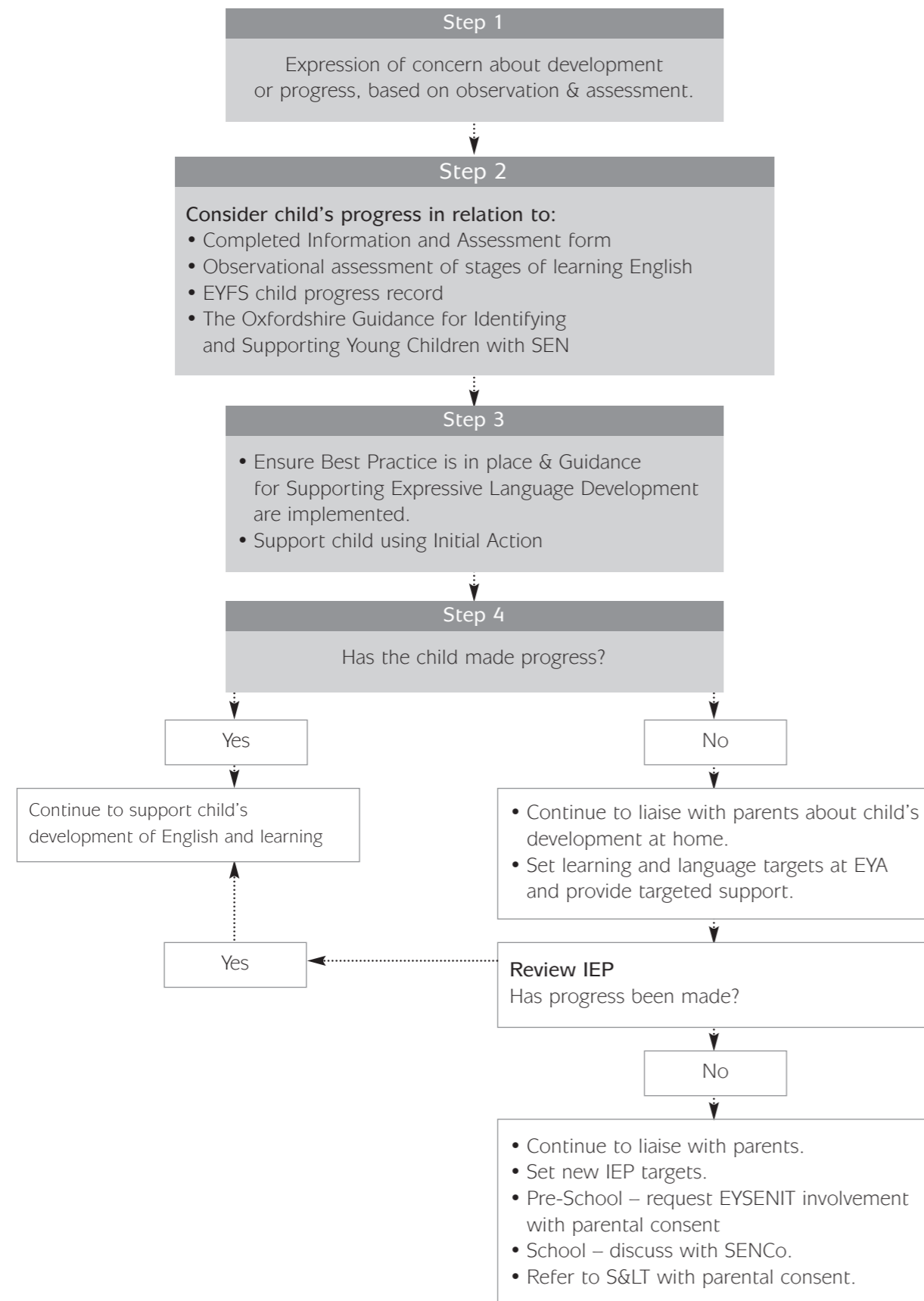
The "Information and Assessment form" will help you to understand the child's experience of play, exposure to English and parents' view of their child's development.

The "Observational assessment of stages of learning English" will help you to decide if the child is making good progress through the stages of learning English as an additional language.

These forms should be used alongside the "Oxfordshire Guidance for Identifying and Supporting Young Children with SEN", available from the EYSENITs (see References and further information). You will be able to decide if the child needs additional or specific support and whether this support should be at Early Years Action or Early Years Action plus.

## Section 2

### EAL/LDD Identification and Assessment Flow Chart



## Section 2: Learning EAL in the Early Years

### Information and Assessment for Children who have English as an Additional Language

|  |                        |           |         |
|--|------------------------|-----------|---------|
| <b>Child</b>                                 |                        |           |         |
| Given name:                                  | M/F                    |           |         |
| Family name:                                 |                        |           |         |
| Date of Birth:                               | Date form completed:   |           |         |
| Name of pre-school setting:                  |                        |           |         |
| Date child started attending:                |                        |           |         |
| Name of contact person:                      |                        |           |         |
| Address:                                     |                        |           |         |
| Telephone Number:                            |                        |           |         |
| Child's keyperson:                           |                        |           |         |
| <b>Family Information</b>                    |                        |           |         |
| <b>Mother</b>                                |                        |           |         |
| Given name:                                  | Family name:           |           |         |
| <b>Father</b>                                |                        |           |         |
| Given name:                                  | Family name:           |           |         |
| <b>Siblings</b>                              |                        |           |         |
| Name:  | M/F                    | D.O.B:    | School: |
| Name:  | M/F                    | D.O.B:    | School: |
| Name:  | M/F                    | D.O.B:    | School: |
| <b>Other important family members</b>        |                        |           |         |
| Name:  | Relationship to child: | Language: |         |
| Name:  | Relationship to child: | Language: |         |
| <b>Languages spoken at home</b>              |                        |           |         |
| mother to child:                             | father to child:       |           |         |
| mother to father:                            | father to child:       |           |         |
| child to mother & father:                    | siblings to child:     |           |         |
| Does anyone at home have any spoken English? |                        |           |         |
| Country of origin:                           | Arrival date in UK:    |           |         |
| Are the family refugee or asylum seekers?    |                        |           |         |
| Any other useful information:                |                        |           |         |

## Section 2

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### Information from parents/carers

Child's strengths and interests; experiences of play outside pre-school; language skills and social interactions at home; preferred play activities; attention and listening at home etc.

### Any parental concerns

Hearing etc; can parent understand the child in home language? Can others understand the child? Can the child follow instructions?

Encourage parents that it is important to continue using the home language at home. If parent is concerned about the Child's development of first language, then refer to Speech and Language Therapist

### Information from pre-school setting

Observations; information from EYFS; stage of learning English.

## Section 2

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### Evaluation of child's progress

Strengths:

Concerns:

Action plan:

Review Date:



## Section 2: Learning EAL in the Early Years

### Observational Assessment of Stages of Learning English

|                 |                            |             |
|-----------------|----------------------------|-------------|
| Name:           | D.O.B:                     | Year group: |
|                 |                            |             |
| First language: | Exposure to English since: |             |
|                 |                            |             |

Fill this in to observe, assess and track progress for all children with English as an Additional Language. Complete the assessment about a month after entry to your setting and repeat about every 3 months. Use the following score system to rate communication behaviours:

- ① rarely
- ② sometimes
- ③ consistent

|  | Speaking, Listening and Understanding   | Entry<br>+1 mth | +3 mths | +6 mths |
|--|---|-----------------|---------|---------|
| <b>Stage one</b><br>New to English                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes contact with another child in the class</li> <li>• Joins in with other children but may not speak</li> <li>• Uses non verbal gestures to indicate meaning – particularly needs, likes or dislikes</li> <li>• Watches carefully what other children are doing and often imitates them</li> <li>• May talk in first language to other children who share it, or in play</li> </ul>   |                 |         |         |
| <b>Stage two</b><br>Becoming familiar with English         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listens attentively for short periods of time (see EYFS 30-50m)</li> <li>• Uses non verbal gestures to respond to greetings/questions about self</li> <li>• Joins in repeating language in a story or rhyme (see EYFS 30-50m)</li> <li>• Echoes words and phrases of other children and adults, particularly used in social interaction</li> <li>• Shows confidence in speaking in first or other language</li> <li>• Able to express self in English, using one or more common words</li> </ul> |                 |         |         |
| <b>Stage three</b><br>Becoming more confident with English | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands simple conversational English</li> <li>• Understands more words than can express</li> <li>• Listens and responds to classroom instructions and explanations where there are non-verbal cues and illustrations (see EYFS 30-50m)</li> <li>• Copies talk that has been modelled and begins to use short phrases</li> <li>• Spoken language shows English word order</li> </ul>   |                 |         |         |

## Section 2

|   | Speaking, Listening and Understanding  | Entry<br>+1 mth | +3 mths | +6 mths |
|---|--|-----------------|---------|---------|
|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pronunciation can generally be understood</li> <li>• Can name a range of common objects in the home/school environment</li> </ul>   |                 |         |         |
| <b>Stage four</b><br>Threshold            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can speak about matters of immediate interest in familiar settings, using 4-5 word sentences</li> <li>• Can convey meaning through talk and gesture</li> <li>• Can answer simple questions about self and objects around</li> <li>• Uses some personal pronouns correctly eg he/she/I</li> <li>• Can extend what they say with support</li> <li>• Increasingly confident in taking part in activities with other children through English</li> <li>• Listens attentively during whole class teaching time (see EYFS 40-60m)</li> <li>• Uses some common prepositions correctly eg in, under, on, next to, behind, in front</li> </ul> |                 |         |         |
| <b>Stage Five</b><br>Becoming more fluent | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses basic sentences with a widening range of vocabulary and some correct grammar eg articles(a, the) plurals, possessive adjectives (her, his)</li> <li>• Able to follow and understand what others say in a group discussion</li> <li>• Can speak confidently to individual, friends and small groups about things that are of interest</li> <li>• Can ask questions to clarify understanding</li> <li>• Can describe an event/personal experience using simple sentences</li> </ul>  |                 |         |         |
| <b>Stage Six</b><br>Secure                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can tell a familiar story in simple language and in correct sequence to a small group</li> <li>• Is beginning to use appropriate tenses in speaking</li> <li>• Use of connectives such as “when” or “because” to express relationships between ideas and sequences of events</li> <li>• Can make verbal inferences</li> <li>• Uses language to solve problems aloud</li> <li>• Can explain why something happened or might have happened</li> <li>• Can justify predictions and decisions</li> </ul>  |                 |         |         |

Adapted from: 'Assessment Schedule' from OCC Advisory service for Ethnic Minority Achievement 2000

## Support Materials

|  |
|--|
| Name of child:   |
| Name of observer:  |
| Time of observation from: _____ to: _____                              |
| Context e.g. where? Alone or in a group? Child-initiated or adult-led? |
|  |
|  |

|                    | Speaking, Listening and Understanding   | Observational notes |
|--------------------|---|---------------------|
| <b>Stage one</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Makes contact with another child in the class</li> <li>• Joins in with other children but may not speak</li> <li>• Uses non verbal gestures to indicate meaning – particularly needs, likes or dislikes</li> <li>• Watches carefully what other children are doing and often imitates them</li> <li>• May talk in first language to other children who share it, or in play</li> </ul>   |                     |
| <b>Stage two</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listens attentively for short periods of time (see EYFS 30-50m)</li> <li>• Uses non verbal gestures to respond to greetings/questions about self</li> <li>• Joins in repeating language in a story or rhyme (see EYFS 30-50m)</li> <li>• Echoes words and phrases of other children and adults, particularly used in social interaction</li> <li>• Shows confidence in speaking in first or other language</li> <li>• Able to express self in English, using one or more common words</li> </ul>                           |                     |
| <b>Stage three</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understands simple conversational English</li> <li>• Understands more words than can express</li> <li>• Listens and responds to classroom instructions and explanations where there are non-verbal cues and illustrations (see EYFS 30-50m)</li> <li>• Copies talk that has been modelled and begins to use short phrases</li> <li>• Spoken language shows English word order</li> <li>• Pronunciation can generally be understood</li> <li>• Can name a range of common objects in the home/school environment</li> </ul> |                     |

## Section 3 Learning EAL in the Early Years

### Child Observation

|            | Speaking, Listening and Understanding  | Observational notes |
|------------|--|---------------------|
| Stage four | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can speak about matters of immediate interest in familiar settings, using 4-5 word sentences</li> <li>• Can convey meaning through talk and gesture</li> <li>• Can answer simple questions about self and objects around</li> <li>• Uses some personal pronouns correctly e.g. he/she/I</li> <li>• Can extend what they say with support</li> <li>• Increasingly confident in taking part in activities with other children through English</li> <li>• Listens attentively during whole class teaching time (see EYFS 40-60m)</li> <li>• Uses some common prepositions correctly eg in, under, on, next to, behind, in front</li> </ul> |                     |
| Stage Five | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses basic sentences with a widening range of vocabulary and some correct grammar eg articles(a, the) plurals, possessive adjectives (her, his)</li> <li>• Able to follow and understand what others say in a group discussion</li> <li>• Can speak confidently to individual, friends and small groups about things that are of interest</li> <li>• Can ask questions to clarify understanding</li> <li>• Can describe an event/personal experience using simple sentences</li> </ul>  |                     |
| Stage Six  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can tell a familiar story in simple language and in correct sequence to a small group</li> <li>• Is beginning to use appropriate tenses in speaking</li> <li>• Use of connectives such as “when” or “because” to express relationships between ideas and sequences of events</li> <li>• Can make verbal inferences</li> <li>• Uses language to solve problems aloud</li> <li>• Can explain why something happened or might have happened</li> <li>• Can justify predictions and decisions</li> </ul>  |                     |
| What next? |  |                     |

## Learning EAL in the Early Years Guidelines for Supporting Expressive Language Development

### At all stages

- it is important to model language, while playing alongside a child. Use descriptive commentary – talking about what you or the child is doing. **Modelling language and using descriptive commentary should make up about 80% of your interactions, and no more than 20% should be direct questioning**
- allow time for children to formulate responses

### How can adults support and extend language?

- ① Continued talking even when children do not respond
- ② Persistent inclusion in small groups with other children
- ③ Use of varied questions
- ④ Inclusion of other children as the focus in the conversation
- ⑤ Use of the first language
- ⑥ Acceptance of non-verbal responses
- ⑦ Praising of minimal effort
- ⑧ Expectations to respond with repeated words and/or counting
- ⑨ Structuring of programme to encourage child to child interaction
- ⑩ Provide activities which reinforce language practice through role play

Clarke, (1992 p.17-18)

|  | Speaking, Listening and Understanding   | Language used by the child   | Examples of what you might hear   | What support can the adult give?   |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| <b>Stage one</b><br>New to English                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Makes contact with another child in the class</li> <li>Joins in with other children but may not speak</li> <li>Uses non verbal gestures to indicate meaning – particularly needs, likes or dislikes</li> <li>Watches carefully what other children are doing and often imitates them</li> <li>May talk in first language to other children who share it</li> </ul>   | <p>Greetings and simple social conventions</p> <p>Yes/No</p>   | <p>Raza was looking for a missing piece of a puzzle – “Butterflies?”</p> <p>Rafiq gestured when he wanted an adult to do up his zip – “Please?”</p> <p>Hajira pointing, when offered a choice of cups – “That one.”</p> | <p>Use visual prompts such as visual timetables, and props to support stories. Use descriptive commentary</p> <p>Model simple sentence structure in routines and activities: It’s snack time now. Come and sit down.</p> <p>Talk about routines, what is happening or has just happened. “You’re doing a puzzle.” Name the pictures on the puzzle in descriptive commentary: “Butterfly, balls, cats...”</p> <p>Model gestures and actions and respond to child’s gestures. “Shall I do your zip up?”</p> <p>Respond and extend – add to the child’s language. “Now you can go in the <b>garden!</b>”</p> <p>Few questions at these stages: ask simple questions in context, that can be responded to with gestures or single words. Offer forced alternatives and use gestures to show what you are referring to. “Do you want the <b>red cup</b> or the <b>blue cup?</b>”<br/>Where’s? e.g. Where’s Mummy Bear?<br/>Who? e.g. Who broke the chair?<br/>What? e.g. What is Goldilocks eating?</p> |
| <b>Stage two</b><br>Becoming familiar with English | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listens attentively for short periods of time (see EYFS 30-50m)</li> <li>Uses non verbal gestures to respond to greetings/questions about self</li> <li>Joins in repeating language in a story or rhyme (see EYFS 30-50m)</li> <li>Echoes words and phrases of other children and adults, particularly used in social interaction</li> <li>Shows confidence in speaking in first or other language</li> <li>Able to express self in English, using one or more common words</li> </ul> | <p>Naming single objects or actions that can be seen</p> <p>Naming something seen in immediate past using visual clues</p> |   |  |

|  | Speaking, Listening and Understanding  | Language used by the child   | Examples of what you might hear  | What support can the adult give?   |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| <b>Stage three</b><br>Becoming more confident with English | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understands simple conversational English</li> <li>Understands more words than can express instructions and responds to classroom instructions and explanations where there are non-verbal cues and illustrations (see EYFS 30-50m)</li> <li>Copies talk that has been modelled and begins to use short phrases</li> <li>Spoken language shows English word order</li> <li>Pronunciation can generally be understood</li> <li>Can name a range of common objects in the home/school environment</li> </ul>  | <p>Naming objects and adding a simple description</p> <p>Describing things that are the same and things that are different/describing pictures</p> <p>Recalling simple information</p> <p>Talking about number, possession and feelings</p> <p>Talking about where things are</p> <p>Expressing simple actions</p> | <p>Hamsa was making playdough cakes with candles – “You one, not four, you one.”</p> <p>Safah was doing a puzzle – “Where this go? Raza, where’s numbers?”</p> <p>Hamsa replied to a question: “Has your bear got arms?” – “Yeh, he’s got.”</p> <p>Ikram was looking at a book alone - “This Thomas! Funny, funny this. Funny, funny, funny Thomas!”</p> | <p>Simplify the language so the child can respond/copy, emphasising the key word and modelling sentence structure.</p> <p>“Holly’s got one candle, and Hamsa’s got 4 candles!”</p> <p>“One... two butterflies. Where’s the number 2?”</p> <p>Model the sentence structure and extend the vocabulary (descriptive)<br/>“Your bear has got furry arms.”</p> <p>“Thomas is stuck in the snow!”</p> <p>Some questions requiring a verbal answer or gestures that show child’s comprehension:<br/>Who? What? Where?<br/>Snack time: Where’s the red cup?<br/>Reading a story: What is Goldilocks doing? Which is Daddy Bear’s chair?<br/>Cooking: What did we put in our cakes? Who are you going to play with?</p> |
| <b>Stage four</b><br>Threshold                             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Can speak about matters of immediate interest in familiar settings, using 4-5 word sentences</li> <li>Can convey meaning through talk and gesture</li> <li>Can answer simple questions about self and objects around</li> <li>Uses some personal pronouns correctly e.g. he/she/I</li> <li>Can extend what they say with support</li> <li>Increasingly confident in taking part in activities with other children through English</li> <li>Listens attentively during whole class teaching time (see EYFS 40-60m)</li> <li>Uses some common prepositions correctly e.g. in, under, on, next to, behind, in front</li> </ul> |  |  |  |

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| <b>Stage five</b><br>Becoming more fluent  | <b>Speaking, Listening and Understanding</b>  | <b>Language used by the child</b>  | <b>Examples of what you might hear</b>   | <b>What support can the adult give?</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Uses basic sentences with a widening range of vocabulary and some correct grammar e.g. articles (a the), plurals, possessive adjectives (his, her)</li> <li>• Able to follow and understand what others say in a group discussion</li> <li>• Can speak confidently to individual, friends and small groups about things that are of interest</li> <li>• Can ask questions to clarify understanding</li> <li>• Can describe an event/personal experience using simple sentences</li> </ul> | <p>Talking about things, stories and events<br/><b>in context:</b><br/>Following a set of directions.</p> <p>Giving simple directions or explanations.</p> <p>Talking about events in the past and future.</p> <p>Sequencing pictures or recent and significant events and retelling in a logical order</p> <p>Predicting</p> | <p>Sammy – “We were just looking you. Can we come in please?”</p> <p>Vincenzo to a friend in a guided drawing activity.– “Look, don’t draw... look what you do.”</p> <p>Sammy – “There’s too much, you can’t eat all of that.”</p> | <p>Listening to understand what the child is trying to express, and giving time for the child to express complex thinking.</p> <p>Genuine conversations and discussion about what the child is doing.</p> <p>Questions such as:<br/>How did you come to school?<br/>What did daddy bear do next?<br/>Can you find some things that are yellow and put them in this box?<br/>Which car will go the fastest?</p> |   |

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| <b>Stage six</b><br>Secure  | <b>Speaking, Listening and Understanding</b>   | <b>Language used by the child</b>   | <b>Examples of what you might hear</b>  | <b>What support can the adult give?</b> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can tell a familiar story in simple language and in correct sequence to a small group</li> <li>• Is beginning to use appropriate tenses in speaking</li> <li>• Use of connectives such as when or because to express relationships between ideas and sequences of events</li> <li>• Can make verbal inferences</li> <li>• Uses language to solve problems aloud</li> <li>• Can explain why something happened or might have happened</li> <li>• Can justify predictions and decisions</li> </ul> | <p>Talking about things<br/><b>in abstract:</b><br/>Justify predictions</p> <p>Justify decisions</p> <p>Sequence events/elements of a story</p> <p>Explain why something happened or why it might have happened</p> <p>Solve problems</p> <p>Make inferences</p> | <p>Claudia – “Christmas give me an umbrella, I have, I have had it.”</p> <p>Hamsa, writing a story – “Everyone... children... they’re the teacher. They go play park. They sit in a big balloon, they go up there, they come down, they come home. Every night they go to sleep.”</p> | <p>Listen carefully to understand what the child is trying to express. Give time for the child to express complex thinking.</p> <p>Genuine conversations and discussion about what the child is doing.</p> <p>Talk about objects you can’t see/touch, recall/retell/early reasoning/use imagination</p> <p>Did Father Christmas give you an umbrella? That’s good, so you won’t get wet if it’s raining!”</p> <p>“I wonder what it’s like in a balloon up in the sky?”</p> <p>Develop reasoning skills further. Use questions ‘Why?’ ‘What if?’ (with future and conditional tenses). “What will happen to him if he eats all that fruit? Will he have a tummy ache, like the Hungry Caterpillar?”</p> <p>Why was Baby Bear upset? Where shall we put the seeds to help them grow?</p> <p>How do you think Goldilocks felt when she saw Daddy Bear?<br/>Why shouldn’t Goldilocks have gone to the bears’ house?</p> |   |

## Section 3 Learning EAL in the Early Years

### References

The following booklets may also be useful:

- **Primary National Strategy (2008)**  
Supporting children learning English as an additional language.  
DCSF publications: 00683-2997BKT-EN
- **The National Strategies Early Years (2008)**  
Inclusion Development Programme; Supporting children with speech, language and communication needs.  
DCSF Publications: 00215-2008BKT-EN
- **DfES (2004) Aiming High**  
Guidance on Supporting the Education of Asylum Seeking and Refugee Children.  
DfES Publications: DfES/0287/2004
- **OCA (2000) A Language in Common**  
Assessing English as an additional language.  
OCA/00/584

**Further training:**

See Step into Training:

- [www.oxfordshire.go.uk/earlyyearstraining](http://www.oxfordshire.go.uk/earlyyearstraining)
- 01865 816261

This Guidance was produced by a multi-agency team from Early Years SEN Speech and Language Therapists, Early Years Advisory Teachers and Early Years SEN Inclusion Teachers, with support from the Ethnic Minority Achievement Service and the Inclusion Consultants.

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01295 819179
- **Advisory Team for Inclusion:**  
01865 428022

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