



SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE (EAL) THROUGH THEIR TRANSITION TO STARTING SCHOOL

Did you know?

- It is important the children are fluent in their first language in order to become bilingual. So, encourage parents to talk to their children in the first language at home ([Britishcouncil.org](https://www.britishcouncil.org)).
- Non-verbal communication is really important, use pointing and gestures to support understanding.
- Children can understand a language long before they can speak it.

READY

- gather information to plan to meet the needs of the individual child

Universal Transition

- Conduct home visits and gather significant information. (Documents 29.1-32.2).
- Conduct previous setting visits to gather any relevant information (Documents 33.1-34.1).
- Use the transition level of need tool to identify level of support required. (Documents 5.1-5.9, 5a & 5b).
- Ensure the whole team are aware of any needs within the cohort and the strategies are in place to support them.

Enhanced Transition

- Contact any external agencies that maybe be involved.
- Identify home language(s) spoken and level of English acquisition.
- Be prepared with alternative ways to communicate where the immediate family have limited or no English.

STEADY

- use the information to plan ahead and offer guidance for parents/ carers on how to support their child to be ready for school.

Suggest home learning activities prior to starting school

- Connect families already in the school that speak the same language. Remember that confidential information should not be shared this way.
- Find out if there are any older siblings in the school that may be able to support with some translations. However, be mindful that this is not always the right strategy for every child.
- Learn key words in the child's language. Make these available to the whole team. Top tip - write these words phonetically to help you with pronunciation
- Consider any resources that may need to be purchased. For example, dual



language books that can be sent home or contact the library service (Documents 46.1-48.2)

- Provide the family with some suggested activities for the school holidays to help the child become familiar with school (Documents 58.1-60.1)

GO

- Have in place activities and resources to support the child through their first days at school

- Ensure action songs are embedded into your daily routine.
- Consider what your role play area is. For example, children play with what they know so consider keeping the role play area as a home corner for the first half term at least and ensure that the cultural capital in your cohort is reflected here.
- Keep changes to your daily routine/songs you sing minimal so that children can gain confidence and learn key vocabulary.
- Consider how all families are reflected in your environment. Consider having phrases from home languages visible to parents/carers and clear images for children to refer to as needed.
- Consider how you will support parents with EAL. For example, is there a member of staff that speaks the same language and therefore can translate for you? If you are using other family members to translate, consider whether they are the right person to use.
- Consider how the school/setting communicates with families. For example, are families more confident with their understanding than reading – maybe you just need to read a letter to a parent/carers.
- Ensure that books and resources reflect the home life / actual family experiences of in your cohort.
- Ensure that adults are providing high quality models of spoken English language.
- Set up visual cues and prompt cards to support communication. For example do you use a time line and refer to it as part of your daily routine 'now it is snack time, and then it is time to go outside'.
- Keep language appropriate and avoid 'sayings' e.g. it's raining cats and dogs
- Consider how your environment is set up. For example, can children see into drawers and see what resources are accessible to them.
- Consider pre teaching. For example, you can send a story book home the week before so that children can become familiar with the story using the pictures, offering them some exposure, before you cover it with the whole class.
- Consider the effective use of funding for disadvantaged and/or vulnerable children in order to support them and their families.

Remember:

- Make sure you plan challenging learning experiences for all children without limiting expectation for children with EAL. Start with what they can do.
- Use translation apps with caution, are you confident with what they are translating. Possible Apps – ([iTranslate Voice 3](#)) ([Google Translate](#)) ([Say Hi](#)).