

Inclusive Practice

English as Additional Language 1 (EAL) - Supporting a new child.



Celebrating EAL

Some children will grow speaking one language (monolingual) other children may speak two (bilingual) or three or more languages (multilingual). Some children may also use a sign or symbol language.

Some people worry that when a child learning to speak two or more languages they will be confused or unable to communicate effectively in either language. This is not the case. Children develop fluency in both languages, although they may at times switch between languages in the same sentence. This is called code-switching. Children may also use the languages they speak in different situations e.g., English in a childcare setting and their home, or first language at home.

Being able to speak more than one language is extremely advantageous. It can enhance a child's self-esteem and identity, as well as developing and enhancing cognitive and thinking skills.

This is a message that should be communicated to all practitioners and parents, and you can help do this. Particularly when a child is starting a setting for the first time.

Task 1

Below are some key points to ensure the transition for the child is a supportive one. Here are some specific preparations a setting can do when receiving a new child with EAL. Use these prompts to reflect on the child's journey when starting your setting and how you involve the children and parents.

- Prepare the current children for the new arrival- ask them for ideas of how they could help. Let them ask questions they may have about ethnicity and language openly, and discuss them sensitively, perhaps using some books and pictures.
- Find out about special celebrations or festivals which may be coming up for the child, and how you could help celebrate too, but please don't assume that all children from a country will wish to celebrate the same (or any) festivals.
- Make sure all staff in the setting know the child's name, language strengths, needs, likes, dislikes and other relevant experiences.
- Source some extra dual language books and other resources in the languages spoken by your learners with EAL.