

EAL Checklist for Early Years Settings

Children with EAL might have to learn:

- ❖ A new set of sounds and sound groupings
- ❖ New intonation patterns
- ❖ A new script or alphabet
- ❖ A new set of sound-symbol relationships
- ❖ New vocabulary
- ❖ New grammar
- ❖ New non-verbal signals
- ❖ New rules about social conventions and language
- ❖ An ability to relate to people and express feelings and emotions in a new language

Do all staff:

- ❖ Allow children some time to listen before they respond?
- ❖ Continue talking with children even if they don't respond in words, praising minimal efforts to communicate?
- ❖ Record observations of children's communication skills, including non-verbal gestures and body language?
- ❖ Include children with EAL in small groups with English speaking children?
- ❖ Use varied questions, language conventions such as please and thank you, idiomatic language, language in context?
- ❖ Encourage child-child interaction – in group work, role play, indoors, outdoors, in exploratory and co-operative play, in their first languages as well as in English?
- ❖ Provide activities which reinforce language through role play?
- ❖ Develop visual support and resources and provide activities which help develop listening skills?
- ❖ Model, rephrase and extend children's language rather than focusing on mistakes?
- ❖ Provide additional language support, such as repetition, modelling varied questioning?
- ❖ Give children roles and tasks which enable them to join in activities using little or no spoken English? eg. sharing out food at snack time.

Julie Cigman is an experienced Nursery teacher, writer and consultant. She offers conference workshops and presentations and bespoke training and consultancy to Early Years practitioners in schools, day nurseries, pre-schools, children's centres and childminders. You can find out more on her website: <http://juliecigman.co.uk> . You can also contact her at: jcigman@hotmail.co.uk.

- ❖ Support the child to join in with the full range of activities?
- ❖ Learn some key words and phrases in the child's first language(s) if possible and encourage family members to talk to children in their family language(s) to help develop a strong linguistic base on which to build English as an additional language?

In our setting do we:

- ❖ Encourage home-school partnerships?
- ❖ Make home visits to children before they start in our setting, taking account of family's linguistic, religious and cultural needs?
- ❖ Develop ways of communicating with families with EAL – e.g. through other family members or other members of the different communities?
- ❖ Check the spelling and pronunciation of children's and parents' names?
- ❖ Reassure parents that it is important to continue to use their first language at home?
- ❖ Work with bilingual staff if possible, or bilingual members of the community, to provide positive role models, information and advice about different cultures/religions, and to support home-school links?
- ❖ Record children's language background and skills on admission to our setting?
- ❖ If possible, assess a child in their first language and involve the parents in the assessment process?
- ❖ Record cultural and religious information at admission eg. diet, festivals, customs?
- ❖ Provide opportunities for children to play and work bilingually?
- ❖ Use dual language books?
- ❖ Choose resources which reflect a child's experience and have positive and authentic images?
- ❖ Make dual language books, tapes, resources?
- ❖ Value children's first language in print – display different scripts around our setting?

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- ❖ Value child's early attempts at mark making in different scripts?
- ❖ Value developing literacy skills in other languages?
- ❖ Ensure that we don't over-emphasise phonics – children need to learn to link symbols with meaning?
- ❖ Establish a translation service for the main languages: for newsletters, general information, stories and tapes*
- ❖ Invite parents in to share their stories and experiences, and to help with activities?
- ❖ Have curriculum workshops, with translators if possible?

Do staff, parents, carers and other members of the community:

- ❖ All contribute to policy development and implementation?
- ❖ Learn about, and share different religious, cultural and language needs through open communication?
- ❖ See bilingualism and cultural and religious diversity as an asset to the community?
- ❖ Share information about the early years curriculum and support each other's contribution to children's learning?

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