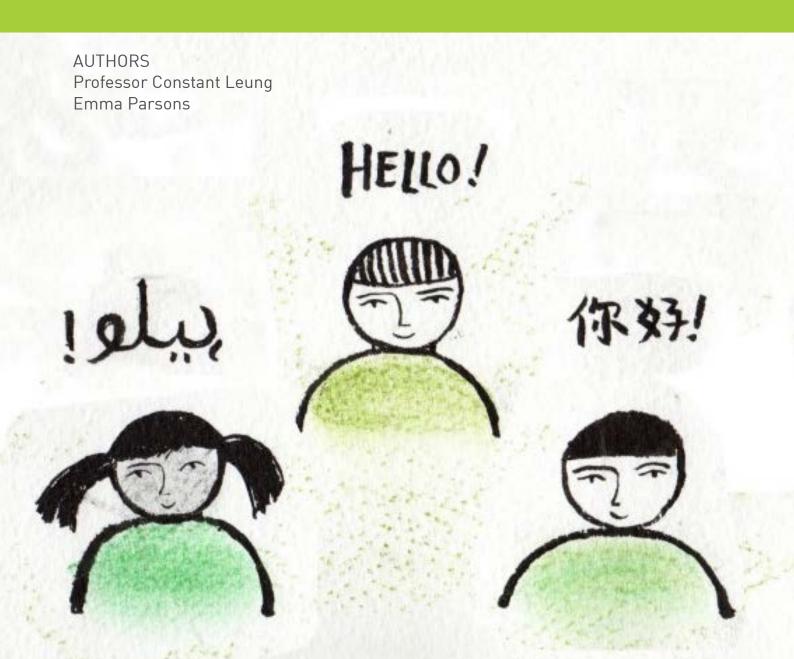# Guiding principles and strategies for practitioners working with learners who use English as an Additional Language (EAL) in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) settings

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About The Bell Foundation

The Bell Foundation is a charity which aims to overcome exclusion through language education by working with partners on innovation, research, training and practical interventions. Through generating and applying evidence, we aim to change practice, policy and systems for children, adults and communities in the UK disadvantaged through language.

The Foundation works in two key areas:

- The EAL Programme aims to improve the educational outcomes of children with English as an Additional Language in the UK to benefit the individual child and society as a whole. The Foundation works in partnership with a range of organisations across the education system to provide training and resources in order to build capacity, develop and evaluate models of good practice, and provide thought leadership.

- The Criminal Justice Programme seeks to break down the language barrier to accessing justice and rehabilitation for individuals in contact with the criminal justice system for whom English is an additional language. In 2017 the Foundation developed a long-term strategy for its work in the sector, with a focus on both victims and offenders of crime. The Foundation works through interventions in research, policy, practice and service support.

About this document

The guiding principles and support strategies outlined in this document are designed to support policy makers and practitioners in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) settings in meeting the needs of their learners who use English as an Additional Language (EAL).

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Contents

Guiding principles for EYFS practitioners working with learners who use English as an Additional Language (EAL)

This document is designed to support policy makers and practitioners in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) settings in meeting the needs of their EAL learners. It is intended to help schools shape and implement policy regarding the assessment of English language proficiency and support of their EAL learners in EYFS. It underpins the *Classroom Support Strategies: Working with EAL Learners in EYFS settings* which can be found below on pages 10-17.

International policies and principles regarding Early Years Education[1] are reflected in the principles and themes that inform practice in EYFS settings in the UK. The four core principles of the EYFS Statutory Framework (*a unique child, positive relationships, enabling environments and children develop and learn in different ways and at different times*), provide the backbone of effective policy and practice for all children, including EAL learners. Understanding and applying the four core principles of the EYFS Statutory Framework (below)[2] when it comes to EAL learners will help practitioners support the language development and assessment of English language proficiency of those learners.

1. EYFS principle - A unique child

Every child is a unique child, who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.

1.1 Every EAL learner has a unique profile

EAL learners come from different linguistic, learning and socio-economic backgrounds, and have a wide variety of family circumstances. For example, some learners are UK-born, others are children of migrants who have come to the UK to work, and some have fled persecution or war. Therefore, EYFS practitioners should know about the background of each EAL learner.[3]

1.2 Children enter EYFS at different points in their language development

In EYFS all children are developing language. For some this language development has taken place in an English-only language environment, while others are developing a language or languages other than English, with English being added to their linguistic repertoire. These learners use more than one language to understand and express their understanding of the world around them. It follows, then, that EYFS practitioners should know about the language/s of each EAL learner. Practitioners are better able to support EAL pupils if they have some knowledge of the pupil's home language and the difficulties they may face in acquiring English.[4] This can not only help to ascertain a learner's academic trajectory, but can also signpost the possible need for a more thorough speech and language assessment further down the line if the learner appears to be taking much longer than expected to acquire English.

Initial profiling of all areas of learning and development, including in a child's home language, should reveal strengths as well as areas of need.

1   National Academies of Sciences. (2017). *Promoting the educational success of children and youth learning English: Promising futures.* Washington, DC: The National Academies Press. (Attention: Chapter 5)

2   Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework: https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2017/03/EYFS_STATUTORY_FRAMEWORK_2017.pdf?

3   For points to consider see https://ealresources.bell-foundation.org.uk/school-leaders/diversity-eal-learners

4   For more on this, see https://ealresources.bell-foundation.org.uk/school-leaders/countries-cultures-languages-and-education-systems

2. EYFS principle - Positive relationships

Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.

2.1 Positive relationships with peers support language development

Positive relationships (both with peers who share the same language/s and fluent monolingual English speakers who do not) encourage the confidence to communicate.

2.2 Positive relationships with adults support language development

All adults working with learners in EYFS settings need to understand the reason for and benefits of effective EAL strategies. Bilingual adults in the EYFS should be encouraged to share and use their linguistic skills to build positive relationships with EAL learners and their families.

3. EYFS principle - Enabling environments

Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences are pre-planned on the basis of their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and/or carers.

3.1 Access to languages other than English supports the development of English

Children from diverse language backgrounds often have complex and rich language repertoires. Their total language knowledge is often much more than what they can use and show in school contexts. This is because in school the language used is predominantly English. It is important to recognise that the ability to use English to speak and write is only one part of a child's knowledge of English. It is often the case that they can understand more spoken and written English than they can speak and write. At the same time, if children are provided with access to the meaning of the classroom activities through their other language/s, they may be able to then use their emerging/developing English to join in and to engage with others. For these reasons when children's English language proficiency is assessed, teachers should be mindful that they may only be getting a partial picture in contexts where English is the sole medium of communication. For teachers to get a fuller picture of their pupils' total language repertoire and their understanding of what is going on in the classroom it may be necessary for EAL learners to use the other language/s they know.

3.2 Involving parents supports their child's learning

EYFS settings are required to involve parents in their child's development, learning and assessment. Settings should have systems in place to ensure parents of EAL children have the same access to school involvement as all parents, for example, by using interpreters, and targeting parents for drop-ins and parent workshops.

3.3 Language role models support EAL pupils

In addition to having access to home-language buddies and adults, English language learning is also enabled when EAL pupils are placed next to or grouped with pupils whose English can provide useful models of language use. Teaching vocabulary or prior explanation of the topic in the EAL pupil's home language can make these pairings/groupings more effective for both the EAL learner and the role model. In EYFS, such pairings and groupings can encourage long-term friendships, which then naturally facilitate the development of language outside the classroom.

3.4 EAL learners benefit from play-based learning

Providing plenty of opportunities for play-based learning enables EAL children to practise what they have learned.

4. EYFS principle - Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates

In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice.

4.1 Every EAL learner should achieve his or her full potential

In EYFS, ongoing (formative) assessment is an integral part of the learning and development process. Currently, assessment involves practitioners observing children to understand their level of achievement, interests and individual differences, and to then shape learning experiences for each child reflecting those observations. Practitioners in EYFS should be very aware of the potential progression trajectory of their EAL pupils. Given appropriate assessment opportunities in all areas of the curriculum, including those not directly associated with the 'communication, language and literacy' Early Learning Goal (ELG), EAL pupils can show both rapid progress in some areas and ongoing needs in others.

4.2 The use of languages other than English supports the assessment of EAL pupils

Practitioners should be mindful of the fact that currently it is only development in the 'communication, language and literacy' ELG that is expected to be assessed in English only. As other ELGs do not require pupils to evidence their understanding via English, opportunities should be provided for EAL learners to hear and use their home language to show their understanding and progress in the ELGs for other areas of learning.

4.3 Every EAL learner should know that the setting has high expectations for him or her

Given that the ELG assessment statements for 'exceeding expectations' require a child to express their understanding of an ELG, not just to demonstrate it, practitioners need to keep a close eye on an EAL learner's achievement and potential and communicate this to parents. Even if a child has not met the overall expected 'Good Level of Development' (GLD) at the end of EYFS (due to not meeting the level in 'communication, language and literacy'), parents of EAL learners should know they may be meeting or exceeding expectations in other ELGs.

4.4 EAL pupils benefit from ongoing formative assessment of English language proficiency

Research has consistently shown that Proficiency in English (PIE) provides valuable information about an EAL pupil's likelihood to attain in school and their potential need for support[5]. *The EAL Assessment Framework for Schools* is designed to support teachers in assessing pupils in primary and secondary schools in English language proficiency within the context of the curriculum. It provides a five-level scale across the four skills of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Viewing, and Writing from A (New to English) to E (Fluent). Assessment of English language proficiency helps teachers to understand the specific language needs of their EAL pupils; this knowledge can then inform planning and enables teachers to set targets so that their EAL learners can acquire the language necessary to achieve at or above expected levels. The *EAL Assessment Framework for Schools* (Primary version) can also be used alongside the current statutory EYFS assessment system for all pupils to arrive at a best-fit judgement of proficiency in English for EAL pupils in EYFS. Given that in EYFS language development is driven by speaking and listening, assessors should bear this in mind when arriving at a best-fit judgement using the *EAL Assessment Framework for Schools*.

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5   Strand, S., Demie, F (2005); Strand, S., Malmberg, L., Hall, J. (2015), Strand, S., Hessel, A. (2018)

Guidance to assessing proficiency in English

A recent report[6] urges schools to assess and record the proficiency in English of their EAL pupils and to use the data to identify need and target support. The EYFS profile results 2017 to 2018[7] show that across every region of England pupils with a first language other than English achieved below the level of those learners who have English as first language on all of the 17 early learning goals. This data further reinforces the need for schools to assess the English language proficiency of their EAL learners and to embed targeted support to promote development.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), it works well using an evidence-informed assessment framework, such as The Bell Foundation's **EAL Assessment Framework for Schools** (free to download) alongside the 'Communication and Literacy' Early Learning Goal (ELG) descriptors. Many of the descriptors from New to English (Band A) to Fluent (Band E) are appropriate for any age. This will help with arriving at a best-fit judgement of an EAL learner's stage of proficiency in English. However, be mindful that a best-fit judgement for children in EYFS will largely be based on Listening (Understanding) and Speaking, not Reading & Viewing and Writing. Looking closely at an EAL learner's ELGs for literacy alongside the EAL Assessment Framework for Schools will help to avoid making a 'false/elevated' judgement.

The EAL Assessment Framework for Schools supports EYFS practitioners in understanding and identifying the English language skills that their EAL learners need to develop; the descriptors can then be used as English language targets.

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6   English as an Additional Language, proficiency in English and pupils' educational achievement: An analysis of Local Authority data, Strand, S., Hessel, A. (2018)
7   https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results-2017-to-2018

Classroom support strategies: working with EAL learners in EYFS settings

Research shows that English language support is most needed in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage 1 and that proficiency in English is the best predictor of educational outcomes for EAL learners.[8]

The EAL Guiding Principles for EYFS Practitioners above are underpinned by the four core principles of the EYFS Statutory Framework[9] (*A unique child; Positive relationships; Enabling environments; Children develop and learn in different ways and at different rates*).

EYFS settings lend themselves to enabling good and frequent communication, which is at the core of language development. As all children in EYFS are developing language, the following strategies provide some practical ways of putting the guiding principles into practice within the classroom setting. They contribute to good practice for all children, while some are specific to EAL learners.

These strategies are designed to be used by teachers, teaching assistants (TAs) and other practitioners within EYFS settings to help EAL learners develop the levels of English proficiency needed to be successful in accessing the curriculum. The classroom support strategies are organised under five headings:

Classroom Organisation – The strategies in this section consist of often small but significant adjustments to daily classroom management, which can make a huge difference to the learning of a pupil who uses EAL. Many of the strategies under this heading require no special preparation or materials.

On-going Differentiation – Some of the strategies in this section refer to ways of adjusting how we communicate with the learner and present information to them, others suggest adaptations to learning content, materials and resources which take place at the lesson planning stage. Most of these adaptations are likely to benefit other learners in the class by making learning content more accessible. This section also covers how to provide opportunities for the learner to experience and practise English in different situations.

Language Focus – As well as exposure to different varieties of English (e.g. regional varieties spoken at school and more Standard English variations expected within the Curriculum) through hearing, seeing and use in school, EAL learners require opportunities to actively develop their English language through explicit, targeted language development work. Much of this work can be undertaken whilst undertaking normal classroom activities, where the vocabulary, grammar, style, and pronunciation of the English language is presented within an authentic context.

Marking and Feedback – The classroom support strategies within this section focus on providing EAL learners with feedback to help develop their English Language proficiency. These strategies should help guide EAL learners to a better understanding of their strengths and help to identify areas that need further development.

Communication with Home - The classroom support strategies in this section signpost a number of easy ways to develop home language skills and aid English language acquisition.

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8   ibid
9   Early years foundation stage statutory framework (EYFS), March 2014 (last updated February 2018), DfE

Classroom Organisation

- Pronounce pupils' names correctly and ensure all adults in the classroom do the same; use pupils' names to alert them to what is being said and to check and prompt concentration. Adults should also encourage pupils to pronounce each other's names correctly.

- Sit the child near the lead adult in carpet sessions, in a position where they see the adult's face straight on. This will ensure that they can hear properly and also pick up clues from facial expressions.

- Pair EAL learners with same language peers to support collaboration in understanding (see EAL Nexus for more on this)

- Provide EAL learners with frequent, daily opportunities to work and play alongside peers who are supportive English language role models - this needs to be balanced with same language pairing

- Provide opportunities for someone who speaks the New to English (Band A) learner's home language (e.g. another class teacher, a teaching assistant, older child or family member) to visit and mentor the child in class. This will help to give the child a voice, make them feel secure in their new environment and will facilitate clarification of instructions and tasks.

- Position children who are New to English (Band A) last in turn-taking games so that they become familiar with the vocabulary and language structures required for the game

- Provide dual language story books for parents and bilingual adults to share with the child in the classroom and at home (available from Mantra Lingua). This gives EAL learners access to understanding a range of well-known stories for young children and enables their parents to share the same stories with their children.

- Provide resources and toys that reflect the variety of heritages in the setting (e.g. plastic fruit/food, dressing-up clothes). Children will relate to and enjoy playing with familiar items and pupils can learn from each other about items that are unfamiliar to them.

- Be mindful that listening to a new language can be very tiring and background sounds (e.g. music) in the classroom make it harder to discern words and sounds so children can be distracted from processing what is being said. For group work, provide as quiet and empty a space as possible in order to minimise both audio and visual distraction.

- Assign key adults to EAL learners and ensure that they are aware of the child's profile. This should include information about: circumstances that may affect the child's well-being and capacity to learn; whether or not the child is UK-born or newly arrived to the UK; the child's home language and their proficiency in that language.

- Label areas (inside and outside) and items that children are often directed to use or distribute (e.g. Lego, paper, pencils). Use visuals as well as words if the item is hidden from view (e.g. a drawer containing paper).

- Include multi-lingual labelling and signage around the classroom, such as days of the week, months of year (free from schoolslinks). This provides a visual recognition of the diversity within the classroom.

- Maintain a bank of photos of EYFS children performing typical classroom actions (as a learning activity, include EAL learners in the process of taking the photos). Label the photos (e.g. painting, cutting, eating). These can be used to support understanding, such as on interactive flipcharts when explaining a task.

On-going Differentiation

- Speak clearly and slowly, avoiding any unnecessary or idiomatic language (e.g. *put* (not 'pop') *this in your reading bag*)

- Allow EAL learner's thinking time. EAL learners need time to process what is being said and time to formulate a response.

- Make meaning clear by using facial expression, tone of voice, and body language (gestures, quick mimes)

- Use the same phrasing (preferably in the form of call and response songs) for frequent instructions and routines to reinforce understanding and for EAL learners to internalise the language structures

- Use visual support throughout the day (e.g. visual timetables; instructions; to accompany teacher talk; story telling; word mats; flashcards; labelling). Visual support can make the difference between an EAL learner participating through full or partial understanding or not understanding at all. Visual support is easy and quick to create with tools such as **Widgit online** or Widgit's networked version **Inprint 3** (these products were formerly known as Communicate in Print). Widgit also has an add on dual language/EAL package for creating visuals and text in a variety of languages. Ready-made visual support specifically for EAL learners can be found on **Twinkl.**

- Consider using Makaton signs only for New to English (Band A) learners to accompany frequently spoken questions/instructions (e.g. *where? finished*). This strategy is suggested for settings that already use and are familiar with Makaton. Used sensibly, it can be appropriate for EAL learners as the signs provide clear visual communication. However, Makaton is primarily designed for pupils with underlying communication difficulties.

- Always point to the object, picture or key word that you are referring to

- Use Google Translate. For young children, the Google Translate speaker button can be an effective tool. The teacher and the child can input verbally and then listen back to the translation. However, it is important to check the accuracy of translations. For example, a student might be reading a story about a river, and decide to translate the following sentence 'she ran up the bank'. In this case, bank means river bank. However, Google translate may not understand this and might interpret 'bank' here as a financial institution.

- Keep providing New to English (Band A) learners with opportunities to speak and respond to questions even if they are not talking (a non-verbal period is normal)

- Provide EAL learners with plenty of 'joining in' opportunities that do not rely on them having to understand what other children and adults are saying but will still support language learning (e.g. rhymes, songs, shared construction activities)

- Include EAL learners in questioning by pitching questions at their level of English proficiency. New to English (Band A) learners may be able to answer simple differentiated yes/no questions or 'choice' questions (e.g. *Did the hungry caterpillar eat oranges? Did the hungry caterpillar eat four oranges? Did the hungry caterpillar eat watermelon or mango?* (looking at a photo) *Is this your mummy or your auntie?*).

- Offer choices to prompt a 'spoken' response at the same time as checking for understanding (*Do you want the blue pencil or the red pencil? Do you want the orange or the banana? Is your coat inside or outside?*)

- Use plenty of songs with actions to reinforce language structures, teach vocabulary, and enable an EAL learner to join in an activity with their peers. EYFS settings use a lot of songs as children enjoy them and it is well known that repetition of words attached to tunes and actions are a good memory aid. EAL learners will benefit from songs for teaching specific vocabulary (classics such as head, shoulders, knees and toes can be adapted to teach additional vocabulary).

- Use puppets for checking understanding and to model language (e.g. the adult can double-check the puppet has understood the task; the EAL learner can 'teach' the puppet what they have learned; the adult can use the puppet to model and practise talking in different 'persons' (e.g. Freddy the puppet says: *I like bananas*. Adult asks: *What does Freddy like*? Answer: **He** *like***s** *bananas*).

- Use ready-made, or created, story props and visuals in addition to pointing at the pictures in stories. EAL learners will benefit from characters and items being introduced before a story is told and after a story is told to support discussion, questioning and play around the story. Many well-known stories have accompanying merchandise, or use what is already in the classroom (a toy tiger, tea cup and plastic food will enhance The Tiger who Came to Tea for example). There are also plenty of visual resources to accompany well known children's stories (from sites such as **Twinkl,** or EAL-specific resources, such as those for **Handa's Surprise** on EAL Nexus). Participation and understanding are also aided by associating story characters with their own gesture/sound (e.g. pig – grunt; wolf – baring teeth).

- Use picture sequencing activities. Ordering and reordering pictures (either with/without accompanying text) is good for checking understanding, recounting routines, retelling a story, practising verbs and tenses and generating talk in pairs and groups. (**Twinkl** has several examples of sequencing activities suitable for EAL learners in the EYFS).

- Use substitution tables for verbal substitution exercises and for writing. These give EAL learners a scaffold to support practising different sentence types. (For more on this, see Great Idea: **Substitution Tables**; and for an example of an EYFS substitution table, see the EAL Nexus lesson on **Winnie the Witch**).

- Prepare EAL learners for reading and writing activities with collaborative talking activities (such as predicting what will happen in a text by looking at, and talking about the pictures; developing ideas and practising letter sounds, words or sentences verbally before writing them down).

- Use recording devices to help EAL learners retain words and sentences they plan to write down (**talking tins** can be useful for this)

- Have a mini white board on hand for quick on-the-spot visuals (drawings; numbers and number representations; choices; to reinforce key words)

Language Focus

- Repeat daily social language exchanges with New to English learners (e.g. *Hello, how are you? Good morning*) and model by repeating the same exchanges (using exactly the same language) with other children

- Model *'please'* and *'thank you'* for EAL learners - languages express politeness in different ways and many do not have separate words for *'please'* and *'thank you'*

- Provide regular activities (e.g. circle games) that build on developing the language needed for social skills, such as the language of sharing and making polite requests

- Learn some basic greetings and words in an EAL learner's home language to show awareness and value of the other language/s in a child's life. Parents can help with this and it may reassure a New to English (Band A) EAL learner that even teachers sometimes find it hard to learn something new.

- Play classroom vocabulary games with New to English (Band A) learners to check understanding, e.g. Find/Where are? (find a red pencil; Where are the water cups?); pulling objects out of a bag (*What's this? It's ...*)

- Use puppets to rehearse/model language (for more on this see On-going differentiation strategies above)

- Encourage EAL learners in the direction of activities or talking spots where communication is more likely to take place. The teacher and other adults can collaborate on mapping the inside and outside space for 'talking spots' (i.e. some children chat more outside, some in enclosed spaces, such as play tents). Assign adults with responsibility for particular areas – this should include the adult encouraging language buddies to visit the talking spot to help EAL learners.

- Target EAL learners for frequent, daily talking moments (i.e. brief communication opportunities that are not necessarily part of the teaching and learning structures of the day). The teacher and other adults can collaborate on mapping these potential talking moments (e.g. arriving in the morning; hanging up a coat; transition from inside to outside)[10]. Plan the vocabulary and structures that can be developed during these informal talking moments (e.g. on arrival in the morning, in addition to reinforcing polite greetings, pick something to practise, such as the weather: *What's the weather like? It's a lovely day*; offer choices - *Is it cold or hot? Is it snowy or sunny?*) Ensure that the language used is clear, consistent, and at the appropriate level of support/challenge for the EAL learner.

- Ensure that the EYFS key adult assigned to an EAL learner is briefed to facilitate the use of talking spots and talking moments (above)

- Plan for, teach and model vocabulary and language structures needed for different topics/ tasks (for an example, see the language/literacy objectives in the EAL Nexus teaching notes for **Handa's Surprise**)

- Prepare EAL learners for the language that will be encountered on school trips (e.g. a trip to a farm- Nouns: cow, pig. Verbs: stroke, draw, feed. Structures*: Do you want to ....? Let's .... I Like + -ing - I like stroking the goat*).

- Teach EAL learners key words and phrases for topics in advance in small group work and/ or send words and visuals home in advance (see EAL Nexus **Great Idea: Introducing New vocabulary**)

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10   For more on mapping places and times when talking can take place, see Every Child a Talker: Guidance for Early Language Lead Practitioners, DCSF, 2008

- Consider using a daily vocabulary teaching resource, such as **Word Aware 2** designed by speech and language specialists specifically for the EYFS. This benefits all pupils, particularly EAL learners.

- Use technology to support children in retelling stories e.g. the **ChatterPix App** where children can use a picture they have taken, or a picture of a character in a book, then draw a mouth on the character, speak in the character's voice and retell a story or hot seat a story. Record the child speaking and play it back to them – this is empowering and a useful assessment tool.

- Extend language. Comments (*I like your tower; that is a tall tower*) can be more effective for extending language than questions (*what are you making?*) as they can generate chat and supply vocabulary (the child may not know that the word for what they are making is 'tower' for example)

- Teach nouns accompanied by verbs to New to English learners. Verbs plus nouns (e.g. eat an apple, do homework) are building blocks towards sentences and expressing what you want to say.

- Use new vocabulary frequently after initially teaching it and ensure that EAL learners do the same – children need to hear and speak words several times in order to retain them

- Repeat and rephrase instructions for a task to support EAL learners' understanding

- Recast rather than correct. Recasting models the correct way of saying something without discouraging communication (*I goed cinema; Oh, you **went** to the cinema. I **went** to the cinema too*).

- Use drama and role play. Children are often more talkative as someone else (e.g. a doctor, a teacher) and it provides opportunities to hear and use language in different contexts.

- Use repetitive stories (e.g. Brown Bear, Brown Bear what do you see? Dear Zoo; The Very Hungry Caterpillar) and get children to chime in with the repetitions. This will help EAL learners to internalise the language patterns.

- Use YouTube versions of well-known books. This is often easier in a whole class setting for all children to see the book and teachers can stop and pause to enable explanation and repetition.

- Use wordless picture books as a stimulus for EAL learners to generate language by creating stories (see here for a list **wordless picture books**)

- Frequently indicate the relationship between spoken and written text when reading to EAL learners (pointing to a word *he **roared***; with labelled pictures, say *find the word* instead of *find the picture*)

- Encourage EAL learners to make good use of resources such as class word buckets that contain words and pictures related to what children in EYFS are learning, such as phonics (*can you find the word dog in the word bucket?*)

Marking and Feedback

- Praise any attempt at communication, including home language and mixed code (speaking in a mix of languages) and non-verbal communication (e.g. if a child is clearly listening or responding to an instruction, this can be praised through a look-and-a-nod, a smile, thumbs up, high five)

- Talk through language targets with EAL learners (if possible use a same-language adult to support this) – point to examples of work to help children gain an understanding of how to improve (e.g. marking and modeling letter formation)

Communication with Home

- Ascertain in advance whether or not parents will need an interpreter at parents' evenings and other meetings. Book an interpreter or arrange for the meeting to be attended by a same-language speaking member of staff, or a proficient-in-English family member or family friend.

- Promote clear communication with parents of EAL learners by making the regular EYFS communications accessible through use of clear language (unidiomatic, short sentences) and visuals

- Hold weekly drop-in sessions for families of EAL learners to help them to make sense of EYFS communications. This will help to ensure that EAL families know the meaning of commonly used educational acronyms and terms, particularly when there may not be a comparable meaning in the child's home language.

- Be aware of the English language proficiency of parents and older siblings so that communication with them can be pitched appropriately

- Keep parents informed of topics being covered in class and encourage them to discuss and research these in their home language/s

- Send home key words/phrases in advance of them being taught at school. A weekly EAL parent drop-in session is also ideal for reinforcing advance learning.

- Inform parents of their child's English language targets (taken from *the EAL Assessment Framework for Schools*)

- Ask parents for common words in the EAL learner's home language/s and words/family names (e.g. granny, auntie) that the child might often use. This may help a New to English (Band A) learner make themselves understood (e.g. if they are talking about 'mummy') and gives the adult the chance to strengthen the relationship by showing an attempt to communicate with the child using their home language.

- Send home visual vocabulary flashcards starting with school and classroom language (available from **British Council's Learn English Kids - flashcards**) and provide ideas for parents on how to play games with them (such as turn the cards over/ child picks a card; reveal a card slowly; hide the cards round the room; mime an action connected to the card; form a sentence using the flashcard word/s; pick cards out of parents' pocket/bag; name in English and home language; spot any similarities between the English word and language/s the child speaks)

- Provide parents with websites and apps for their child to use at home to support school work and practise English (e.g. British Council's **Learn English Kids website** (free) and the **Learn English Kids apps** (some free activities); plus a phonics website/app that supports the phonics scheme that the school uses). For other ideas for both adults and children on how to work on improving English see **Improving your English at Home and in the Community.**

- Provide parents who are new to the country/area with local information in plain and simple English which will help their child learn English (e.g. local library activities; stay-and-play clubs)

- Remind parents who are themselves learning English that they can support their child's language development by looking at books and discussing the pictures in their home language/s. Best practice is to run a workshop for parents with an interpreter who could model this activity in their home language and in English.

- Provide parents with 'how to help your child read' leaflets in plain and simple English and other languages (e.g. Rochdale Borough Council's free 1-page **Reading together in English** in fourteen languages: and Hounslow Language Services' **Parents and Children Sharing Books** leaflet in seventeen languages).

- Remind parents that it is important to continue speaking and reading to their child in the home language/s as research conclusively shows proficiency in the home language/s supports proficiency in an additional language (for more on this see **Speaking in your home language** on EAL Nexus)

More from The Bell Foundation

The Bell Foundation provides research, tools and resources which can be downloaded free of charge as well as research informed training programmes:

Research http://bit.ly/EALresearch

EAL Assessment Framework and Support Strategies for Schools, winner in the local innovation category of the British Council's ELTons Awards 2018: **http://bit.ly/EALassess**

EAL Nexus website hosts high quality resources and teaching materials: **http://bit.ly/EALnexus**

Language for Results is a long term, not for profit, evaluated training programme designed by The Bell Foundation and delivered by Centres of Expertise: **http://bit.ly/Language4Results**

If you would like to receive updates on the EAL Programme including the EAL Assessment Framework and support strategies, EAL Nexus resources, latest research, blogs, events and training opportunities please complete the contact us form on our website: **http://bit.ly/EALcontact**

The Foundation also posts updates on **https://twitter.com/BellFoundation** and on **https://www.bell-foundation.org.uk/**