



Leicestershire  
County Council

# Celebrating Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

A Toolkit for Practitioners working with  
children and young people.



# Introduction

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This guidance has been written for practitioners working with children and young people, as a tool for them to reflect on inclusion within their practice and to enhance their provision ensuring that each child's entitlement is met during their time in childcare settings including, those delivering the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Out of school (OOS) and holiday play schemes.

This guidance supports the four guiding principles that shape practice in early year's settings. These are:

- every child is a **unique child** who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured;
- children learn to be strong and independent **through positive relationships**;
- children learn and develop well in **enabling environments** in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers; and
- children develop and learn and develop in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early year's provision including children with special educational needs and disabilities.

*Statutory guidance for the EYFS (2014)*

This toolkit provides examples of effective practice (including top tips) and encourages practitioners to reflect on the quality of their provision, ask questions and find solutions. There is an audit at the end of each section which can be completed and used to inform planning and the further development of effective provision for equality and diversity in childcare practice in early years settings.

'Children learning English as an additional language are as able as any other child, and the learning experiences planned for them should be no less challenging'.

## The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) summary

The Convention applies to all children whatever their race, religion or abilities; whatever they think or say, whatever type of family they come from. It doesn't matter where children live, what languages they speak, what their parents do, whether they are boys or girls, what their culture is, whether they have a disability or whether they are rich or poor. No child should be treated unfairly on any basis.

Minority or indigenous children have the right to learn about and practice their own culture, language and religion. The right to practice one's own culture, language and religion applies to everyone.

'Every child has the right to learn and use the language, customs and religion of their family whether or not these are shared by the majority of the people in the country where they live'.

*Article 30 The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) summary*

# Case Study

## Supporting non English speaking children

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This is the experience of a pre-school setting:

“When we heard we had four Polish children starting who couldn’t speak any English, we didn’t know what to do. Especially as we hadn’t had any experience of non-English speaking children and families before. We looked for some help, and spoke to the Early Learning and Childcare Service who put us in touch with an Improvement Advisor, who came out to visit our setting.

She brought lots of useful resources, ideas and strategies to engage the children and to help us make them feel settled, secure and included in the setting, such as; some dual language Polish/English storybooks with familiar stories such as, Dear Zoo and the Very Hungry Caterpillar for us to share with all the children. This helped as it raised awareness and started the process of understanding the Polish children’s language and culture.

We worked hard to build links with the children’s parents/ carers, and invited them in to help the children feel part of the setting. They brought traditional Polish sweets and met all the pre-school staff. By getting to know the parents we discovered a child in the village had a Polish Au Pair who was happy to help us at the pre-school. She shared stories, games and rhymes with the children in Polish and English and after a few sessions with her we found that all the children at the setting had learnt how to count in Polish. Very soon we had all learnt to count from one to ten!

All the children and staff really enjoyed learning about all things Polish, so we arranged a trip for all the children to a local Polish shop, and to the local supermarket where we bought ingredients to make traditional Polish cakes. All the children contributed to a wall display about our trip to the shops, we wrote labels in both English and Polish.

By the end of the year we realised that the Polish children had acquired a good knowledge and understanding of the English language which we found very positive as we felt they really had made progress.



To help with the children’s transition to school we arranged for them to spend time there so they would feel comfortable when they started. They had lunch at school, went to assemblies and met their new teachers. Their transition to school went very smoothly and they have now all settled well in their new surroundings.

Although the experience was challenging it has enriched the provision and we now look forwards to caring for all children from all cultures.



# Unique Child

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## Collect cultural, religious and linguistic background information on all children.

- Just how much do you **really** know about all the children in the setting?
- Ensure that parents/carers have support and opportunity to access information and complete forms. Take time to find out the most useful way for them.
- It may be helpful to ask parents/carers to bring along a friend or relative who may be able to translate for them.

## Reflecting on Practice

- Are you aware of the different languages/dialects spoken within the families of all the children attending your setting?
- Have you remembered to check spellings and pronunciation of the names of all the children and parent's/carers? Find out what a child likes to be called.
- Review your admission forms and processes. Do you record cultural and religious information, including customs, and are you sensitive about diet, festivals and important events?
- Have you given parents/carers the opportunity to share with you their children's daily routines, comforters, likes and dislikes regardless of linguistic ability?
- Do you consult with all children and young people?

'Factors positively and negatively affecting achievement are essentially the same for black children as for all children'.

*Building Futures Believing in Children 2005 page 5.*



## All children and families should feel a sense of belonging within the setting.

- Take great care not to make assumptions about children and families, due to their particular linguistic, cultural, social or ethnic background.

## Reflecting on Practice

- Do you welcome all children young people and families without prejudice?
- Do all adults provide a positive and welcoming ethos?
- Look closely at your practice. Reflect on your provision and on your own knowledge of children and families, their cultures, lifestyles and languages spoken? Is it equitable for all families?
- Have you found out if there are any Traveller families with young children in your area?

## English should not replace the home language; it will be learned in addition to the language skills children are acquiring.

- Having another language is an asset. A child's family language has a continuing and significant role in identity, learning and the acquisition of additional languages. If children go through a 'silent period' when they first enter an early years setting they will be trying to relate previous knowledge to new contexts. It is important that children should not feel pressurised to speak until they feel confident enough to do so. It is important that adults continue to talk to them, and involve them in activities during this time as they will be watching and listening and internalising the language and relating it to their new, unfamiliar environment. Children will usually understand far more than they can say.

### Reflecting on Practice

- Do you reassure parents/carers that the use of their home language in the setting will support their child's acquisition of English?
- Do you find out about the child's competency in their family languages?
- Do you enable and support the child to use their family language within the setting?
- Do you display languages other than English around your setting?
- Do you spend time talking to all children to develop their vocabulary?
- Do all adults and children respond positively and encouragingly to children's non verbal responses?
- Do you support 2 year olds and their families ensuring they receive the most appropriate support to develop speech and language?
- All children have an equal right to be listened to and valued in the setting.
- The principles of good practice for children learning English are the principles of good practice for all children. Effective practitioners include all children by meeting their needs.



‘1.7 For children whose home language is not English, providers must take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home. Providers must also ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language during the EYFS; ensuring children are ready to benefit from the opportunities available to them when they begin Year 1’

*EYFS framework 2014*

**All practitioners should develop their knowledge and understanding of diversity, including meeting the needs of English as an additional language, minority ethnic and Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and families**

Leaders and managers need to provide opportunities for all practitioners to access training and information sessions to support their practice.

‘Children learning English as an Additional language are as able as any other, and the learning experiences planned for them should be no less challenging’.

# Case Study

## A Unique Child

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This pre-school have found that a home visit from a key person provides an excellent opportunity for parents/carers to share information about their child; they do this in the form of an “All About Me” document and through general conversation.

Finding out about a child’s culture, religion and special events that are celebrated within the home is really important, this helps us to provide a continuous and informed experience for children and their families. We ask parents/carers if they will need linguistic support prior to a home visit to ensure that all information is shared and understood from an equality stance.

We have also discovered that home visits are important in allowing us to learn about environmental factors within a child’s home, for example types of soft furnishings and religious and cultural artefacts which are on display; we consider these issues as an important aspect when thinking about smooth transitions, familiarity and providing a sense of belonging. Our setting has been created to reflect the families which we serve. We have a variety of cultural artefacts, wall hangings, art, posters, dual-language books and literature which represent a rich diversity of cultures. These effects form a framework and are a continuous and integral part of our setting.

We found that undertaking the ‘I CAN’ accreditation as a team has provided us with the opportunity to reflect on our practice, a consequence of which has been that we are now using visual aids far more effectively to support all children’s understanding. We have become far more aware for the need to give bi-lingual children time to process language and respond in their own time and have developed our personal skills to be more in tune with children’s body language and eye contact. The impact of the ‘I CAN’ training has been positive, we have noticed that our children’s confidence has increased and that parents/carers are commenting on how their children are sharing with them what they have done in pre-school than ever before.





# Audit - Unique Child

Unique Child	Developing	Establishing	Enhancing	Comments
Have you remembered to check spellings and pronunciation of all children and parents and carers names?				
Have you checked what name each child likes to be called? Review your admission form.				
Do you record cultural and religious information, including customs and are you sensitive about diet, festivals and recognising important events for each child and family?				
Do you find ways for all parents and carers to share with you their children's daily routines, comforters, likes and dislikes regardless of linguistic ability?				
Do all practitioners welcome all children and families without prejudice and without preconceived ideas?				
Do all practitioners always provide a positive and welcoming ethos in the setting at all times?				
Look closely at your practice. Reflect on your provision and on your own knowledge of English as an Additional Language families. Is it the same for all families?				
Do you reassure parents and carers that the use of their home language in the setting will support their child's development and the acquisition of English?				
Do you find out about the child's competency in family languages?				
Do you enable and support the child to use their family language within the setting?				
Do you display languages other than English around your setting?				
Do you spend time talking to all children to develop their language skills?				
Do all practitioners respond positively and encouragingly to children's non- verbal response?				

# Positive Relationships

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The purposes of education, and literacy is (in all its senses and experiences) the role of parents and carers in relation to education and learning, and the role of the setting in their lives and the lives of their children.

## Communicate with parents and carers and the wider community

- What we say and how we say it, our body language, gesture, facial expressions and tone of voice will convey important messages and be a key part of our shared communications.

### Reflecting on Practice

- Have you considered providing information in a variety of formats, face-to face, text, e-mail, pictures, notices and newsletters?
- Have you considered getting information translated? Do you know where to get information translated?  
**Remember to check before providing information in an alternative language that you have the right language and that parents and carers or members of the community can read in that language.**
- Do you ensure that children and parents opinions and views are shared irrespective of their language and culture?



## Encourage your parents and carers to share their cultural background, individual skills and experience within the setting.

- Make sure the key person has the opportunity to meet and greet parents and carers and get to know the families well to gather and share information about the child. **Don't be afraid to ask questions.**

### Reflecting on Practice

- Do you ask parents and carers what events and activities happen in the community and find ways of involving the setting?
- Does your setting welcome people from the community to share their experiences and unique skills?
- Do you gather information from parents and carers to help plan for individual learning?
- Have you considered having a parents and carers skills workshop, when all adults and family members can come and share skills with each other?



**The key person needs to find out about each child and family to ensure that the setting; reflects the child's previous experiences, responds to the child's daily routines, and builds on what the child knows and can do.**

- Securing and trusting relationships with a key person are vital to a child's ability.

### **Reflecting on Practice**

- Do you give parents and carers time to communicate their anxieties and needs in their own way?
- Have you considered asking parents and carers to share any familiar songs or stories that can be used at rest times or as a comfort when needed?
- Have you asked parents and carers to share with you words and phrases of a child's home language showing that you are interested in them?

'It is essential that a bridge is formed between the language and cultural practice of the home and community and the new environment of the school'

*(Suraj-Blatchford and Clarke 2007)*



# Case Study

## Positive Relationships

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This committee run playgroup has found a number of ways to link with parents/carers and the wider community. They encourage them to share their cultural background, individual skills and experiences in the setting.

We have organised fundraising events to involve parents/carers in the running of the group. These have included dressing up for Children in Need and a Duck Race to celebrate the group being open for 25 years and to raise funds to purchase a canopy for the outdoor area. The latter was held at the local pub and involved the local community with a fun filled day for the whole family. The event raised £1,500 and helped promote the importance of outdoor learning to the parents/carers.

I invited the grandma of an Asian child into the setting when it was the festival of Diwali. She showed the children a Diva lamp and to talked about the story of Rama and Sita. It was far more informative and interesting coming from a Hindu as she has a better understanding of the festival of Diwali.

The father of a child in the setting came in to the setting to show the children how to style the practitioner's hair. He had his own hairdressing salon and was happy to share his talent.

Parents who are nurses, policemen, policewomen and airline attendants have also been into the setting to talk about their jobs. They have provided lots of equipment for the children to handle.

A parent of a child who had just had a new baby came into the setting and bathed the baby during the session. The children were absorbed as they watched and the sibling of the baby was extremely proud.

The key person needs to find out about each child and family to ensure the setting reflects the child's previous setting and daily routines. I encourage the parents and carers to complete information sheets about the children before starting at the setting, which provides details about the family, the home environment, other settings attended and behaviour. Children's interests are noted and toys and equipment that are listed are put out to help children to settle.

The setting has created a series of media boxes built on the current interests of the children and reflecting their toys in their home environment. These include Peppa Pig, Fifi, Roary and the Racing car, In the Night Garden, Thomas the Tank Engine and Bob the Builder. One little boy comes in and finds the Thomas puzzles every session that he completes and then he is happy to participate in the other activities in the room.

Children visit the setting with their parent/carers to meet their key person before they start. This was very important for a child with albinism as the mother could talk about his needs during the session e.g. saying who someone is before talking to him.





# Audit - Positive Relationships

Positive Relationships	Developing	Establishing	Enhancing	Comments
Have you considered providing information in a variety of formats, face to face, text, e-mail, pictures, notices and newsletters?				
Have you considered getting information translated? Do you know where to get information translated?				
Do you ensure that children and parents and carers opinions and views are shared irrespective of their language and culture?				
Does your setting welcome people from the community to share experiences and unique skills?				
Do you ask parents and carers what events and activities happen in the community and find ways of involving the setting?				
Do you gather information from parents and carers to help plan for individual learning?				
Have you considered having parents / carers skills workshops when all adults and family members can come and share skills with each other?				
Have you as a child's key person, asked and recorded parents and carers knowledge about their child including their full range of language skills and experiences?				
Do you give parents and carers time to communicate their anxieties and need in their own way?				
Have you considered asking main carers for any familiar songs or stories that can be shared at rest times or as a comfort when needed?				
Do you ask parents and carers to share with you words and phrases of a child's home language to show you value in their language and culture?				

# Enabling Environments

## Emotional environment

- Allow time as a key person to get to know each child and their parents and carers. Make time to discuss the child's development, share progress made at home and within the setting, and carefully plan the next steps together.
- Find out about the young child's previous experiences so you can build on those in the setting.
- Find out about a young child's skills in their home language. Get to know which language/languages they hear and, may have heard being spoken in their early months and years. Find out what languages are spoken in their family and community.
- Be aware that children may hear and be spoken to in a number of languages by different members of their family or community.

## Reflecting on Practice

- As a key person do you provide a role -model for language for that child?
- Do you find out about the experiences of all new children, so that you can build on their prior learning?
- Do you use the child's Learning Journey to support sharing information with parents and carers?
- How much time and consideration do you really give for parents/carers who have limited English language skills and/or literacy skills to contribute the 'parents and carers voice'?



## Spend time working with parents and carers to find out about the child's daily routines, toileting and sleeping.

- Understanding young children's daily routines, particularly around meal times toileting and sleep are essential in order to meet individual needs. Parents are almost always ready to discuss what is best for their children and will therefore appreciate your interest.

## Reflecting on Practice

- Have you thought about what additional time and support English as an Additional Language learners may need in order to access routines activities and equipment?
- Do all practitioners use the same words/terminology to describe routines in the setting?



## Physical environment

- Provide a wide range of toys and equipment both indoors and outdoors which inspire a positive reflection of cultural diversity and are actively available to all children.
- The physical environment should also include play and learning resources that positively reflect the children's cultural and linguistic identity and experiences.

## Reflecting on Practice

- Are all practitioners aware of the importance of checking that toys and equipment provide a positive message about diversity?
- Do children have the opportunity to see traditional roles carried out by men and women through pictures posters, books and puzzles? Do you invite a variety of people to come to the setting and share their skills (men and women)?
- Do you use local and community resources of toys to help widen the range equipment you are able to offer?
- Do you use your local library to ensure dual language books are available in your setting? Do you share these with parents and carers and in group sessions to promote them?
- Is your environment well labelled with pictures and words?



## Create displays that reflect cultural and linguistic diversity

- Displays should celebrate children's work and be used as a teaching tool, referred to regularly.

## Reflecting on Practice

- Do you display work from all the children in your setting, giving all children and adults the chance to see work displayed and valued?
- Do you display real world pictures of children, families and real-life representations?
- Do you add labels and symbols from a variety of cultures and traditions to your displays ?
- Observe children so that you can respond to their interests and unique learning styles.
- All planning starts with observing children in order to understand and consider their current interests, development and learning.



# Case Study

## Enabling Environments

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I am a newly qualified childminder and had only been childminding for six months when I was approached by a Polish family asking me to look after their four year old boy. The families' first language around the home was Polish and the mother could understand some English. She has an elder daughter of eight who helped with translations during the initial visits. After a few settling in sessions I noticed the little boy wasn't shy, but he didn't speak much English and his way of communicating with me was to point at things. His mother wanted me to promote English in my setting.

For him to engage in all the learning experiences I knew I had to support his acquisition of English and devised a support plan and put it into action. I started by visiting my local library to get some English/Polish stories and dictionary picture books. I thought this would be helpful not only for the child, but for myself to learn some basic Polish.

The little boy and his sister have been helping me with my translation of the words and this has become a fun topic to do together. Next I went to his playgroup and spoke to his key person and asked how he was settling in. I requested a look at his journal and noted that he is quite a budding artist and draws many pictures. He can count to 10 in English and understands simple commands like 'wash hands'. I agreed with the playgroup that we would now share information and work together to support this little boy and his family.

I made some counting cards 1-10 with English numbers in the centre. The English number is written at the top and the Polish number is written at the bottom. I regularly get the cards out and play a game with him; he has quickly learnt the numbers in English and Polish. He is enjoying it so much we may move on to the numbers 11-20.

I spoke to an Improvement Advisor from my local authority, who sent me lots of useful information, including basic translations, the Polish alphabet (which I put on

my wall next to an English alphabet), height charts in Polish and English and some additional resources. I also contacted the Improvement Advisor who sent me some catalogues to order more Polish/English books. I also looked on the internet as you can find a translator dictionary for most languages.

I contacted the Measham Neighbourhood Support Officer and arranged for them to visit my setting. When she arrived she spoke to the little boy and reassured me that I shouldn't worry if he has quiet periods as this is quite normal for a child learning English as an Additional Language as they are adjusting to their new environment. She also reassured me that his knowledge of English will increase rapidly once he goes to school and advised me to carry on with the support I was giving him, sharing the English language with him as we go about everyday things. Before she left she gave me tickets for a local Polish Festival to give to the family.

The little boy has now settled in marvellously and we have great fun playing games and doing craft activities. I collect his sister from school and now learn a new Polish word each week. I have found learning some Polish has been beneficial and I now feel confident to greet Polish parents in their own language when I meet them at playgroup or school. I have made many new friends, even if it is just a smile and a friendly wave.

I have greatly valued the advice and support I have received and it is comforting to know that you don't need to be afraid of welcoming children who speak another language to your setting.



# Audit - Enabling Environments

Enabling environments	Developing	Establishing	Enhancing	Comments
Do you find out about the experiences of all new children so that you can build on their prior learning?				
Do you use the child's learning journey and learning stories to support sharing information with parents and carers?				
Do you make extra time and give consideration for those parents and carers who have limited language/literacy skills to contribute to the 'parents and carers voice' in the learning journey?				
Have you thought about what additional support EAL learners may need in order to access routines, activities and equipment?				
Are there links with the home environments of all the children?				
Are there quiet places for children both inside and out?				
Do all practitioners use the same terminology to describe routines in the setting?				
Do you audit carefully all the toys and equipment in your setting for messages of diversity?				
Do children have the opportunity to see traditional roles carried out by men and women through pictures, posters books and puzzles?				
Are dual language materials and books an integral part of continuous provision?				
Do you ensure dual language books and stories are shared with individuals and groups in your setting?				
Do you use local sources to help widen the range of toys and equipment you are able to offer?				



# Audit - Enabling Environments

Enabling environments	Developing	Establishing	Enhancing	Comments
Is your environment well labelled with pictures and words?				
Do you display children's work, giving all the children the chance to see their work displayed and valued?				
Do you add labels and symbols to your displays from a variety of cultures and linguistic backgrounds?				
Do you ask parents and carers to share current interests about their child?				
Have you used website materials to support sharing interests and events that children experience at home?				
Do observations view the whole child so that you can respond by providing learning experiences that will inspire the child?				
Can you demonstrate that all the children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those learning English as an Additional Language are making progress towards their early learning goals?				

# Learning and Development

'1.10 In planning and guiding children's activities, practitioners must reflect on the different ways that children learn and reflect these in their practice. Three characteristics of effective learning are:

- Playing and exploring - children investigate and experience things and 'have a go'
- Active learning - children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically - children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things'.

*Statutory framework EYFS 2014*



## Ensure children have first-hand experiences and learn in a meaningful context.

- Remember that activities should always reflect cultural diversity no matter what the backgrounds of children and families represent. Additional visual support is vital for children acquiring English language skills and using practical methods, illustration and real objects will support and enhance the learning experiences.

### Reflecting on Practice

- Do you provide all children with many first hand experiences every day?
- Do you use photographs and pictures to support learning?
- Are visual cues used to support access to the curriculum/daily needs? By sharing these with parents and carers, everyone can be involved and captions can be added.
- Do you always provide a variety of materials and activities that will stimulate children's imagination and provide choice?
- Do you vary the way that activities and equipment are presented?
- Are resources used in relation to particular festivals and special times utilised during other activities throughout the year?

## Use practitioners to model language for all children in the setting.

- Use the child monitoring tool to assess all children's speech language and communication.
- Modelling is important for introducing children to new language structures and vocabulary. Children need lots of opportunity for repetition, and need to hear language used in a meaningful context before they can rehearse and use it themselves. ([www.leics.gov.uk/ECAT](http://www.leics.gov.uk/ECAT))

## Reflecting on Practice

- How do you ensure that practitioners have the skills to re-model children's phrases to correct inaccuracies in speech, rather than telling children they are wrong?
- Do all adults talk to children as they play alongside them?
- Do you provide opportunities that encourage child-to-child conversations?
- How do you encourage children to use their home language in a variety of situations throughout the day?
- Are children and families encouraged to share rhymes and songs from their home/culture?
- Do children have opportunities to share songs and rhymes in their home language?
- Do you engage parents and carers to translate favourite rhymes and songs?
- Are there opportunities for all children to experience Listening to storytelling in home languages? Try asking parents and carers to come into the setting to read or share a story or a book with children.
- Do you use clear illustrations, drama, visual support, and props to bring stories and narratives to life?
- Are there opportunities for children and adults to tell stories rather than read books?



'A child's world is fresh, new and beautiful,  
full of wonder and excitement'.

*Rachel Carson*



# Case Study

## Learning and Development

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Working in a school with a mainly white, Christian catchment area, it has always been a challenge to develop children's awareness of other cultures and languages in a meaningful and relevant way without being stereotypical.

In our September intake we welcomed one child who has English as an Additional Language, with home languages of Bulgarian and Polish, and another child who is Muslim. We were instantly very aware that we would have to develop our multi-cultural and inclusive practice for these children to gain a real sense of belonging to our setting. Advice from our Improvement Advisor was very helpful and she pointed us in the right direction.

The child with English as an Additional Language gave us some concern at the beginning of term as she was withdrawn, anxious and seemed vulnerable. She understood and spoke very little English and we could imagine what a bewildering place school must be for her, especially as everyone else there was English speaking.

The first thing that we wanted to achieve was to develop staff relationships with her. By developing a feeling of trust we felt that we could quickly develop her sense of well-being at school. We found that the most effective way of achieving this was to spend time alongside her as she played, using gesture and facial expression to engage her. She responded well to these interactions and some conversation began to develop. Any talk that was successful was always about something that was happening at the time or about an object that was in front of us. This approach allowed us to develop her vocabulary and understanding through first hand experiences in a meaningful way. She enjoys repeating back our words to us and she often picks up new vocabulary in this way. Staff are very careful not to correct any mistakes that she may make in her language but just model the correct version back to her as a natural part of the conversation.

We felt that if we were introducing new words to her in this way we should use real objects whenever we could to make things as meaningful as possible. Although we encourage her to tell us the words she uses at home to name objects she is reluctant to share this with us - we know that all of the children would enjoy and benefit



from this language comparison and so staff are trying to learn a few common words of Bulgarian to give her the confidence to share her home language.

Her relationships with staff quickly developed and she became much happier to enter the classroom in the mornings.

We wanted to develop her relationship with the other children as she had made few meaningful friendships in the first few weeks. Following advice, we spoke to the class as a whole about how clever she was that she could speak three languages and we could only speak one. We were very careful when speaking to the children not to make her seem different and there was a concern that they may begin to speak down to her or mother her. We also explained that she may not speak to them yet as she didn't understand the words that they were using but that she was trying hard to learn. This gave the children an explanation for her silence which previously they may have interpreted as rudeness and bad manners. The children became fascinated by her for a time and her status within the group increased. She was chosen more by the others and was included more in their play. Some of the children began to notice and copy the way we interacted with her during play and this allowed her to become more verbally involved in activities. As part of our Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) work we developed some games that engaged children in talking to and working

closely with a partner. These focused on taking turns to speak, listening to their partner and then sharing what they said with someone else. By regularly swapping the partners the children gained access to and interacted with children that they may not have approached independently. She quickly gained a sense of belonging amongst the other children and became happier still.

Involving the parents was something that we were very keen to do but their understanding of English was quite poor. We wanted them to feel welcome and to gain a sense of belonging to the setting but they were avoiding communicating with us as they found it so difficult to understand what we were saying. We began to translate very important information for them using Google Translate and found this to be very beneficial. We also tried to make our classroom a multi language environment by purchasing and displaying posters and images written in more than one language. Through perseverance the parents are now happy to come into the classroom and converse with staff and other parents and carers.

Once she was happy and involved in activities we felt that the next step was to increase her involvement and understanding in the learning that was happening. When speaking to the children in a group we began to use as many pictures and visual props as we could to help her to understand what we were saying. Even when reading a story we try to have some props - this has increased all of the children's enjoyment and is also very beneficial for any children who have speech and language difficulties. Picture clues and reminders next to activities have allowed more independent learning from all of the children and a visual timetable has helped her to understand the structure of the day. Staff also repeat simple instructions to her individually when she is ready to try an activity.

We know how important it is for a child to see images and objects that they can relate to and that are familiar to them from home. We added to our multicultural resources to ensure that there were familiar objects and images around the classroom for both our child with English as an Additional Language and our child with Muslim beliefs. Most of these objects are permanently in the classroom to avoid just bringing them out at 'Festival time'. We include as many as we can in any role play area that we develop.



We have extended our environmental print to include words in Bulgarian and Polish. Although we already have dual language books we have added some Bulgarian and Polish stories. All of the children enjoy sharing these and our child with English as an Additional Language also enjoys taking these stories home. We have purchased fiction and non fiction books for the book area about different cultures and religions as well as books about different ways in which children live around the World - these have prompted some very interesting discussions when shared and have allowed all of the children to see that not everyone lives in the way that they do. We play music as the children come into the classroom in the mornings and we have extended our range to include music from a variety of cultures and countries.

We have been very aware during the build up to Christmas that not all of the children in the setting will be celebrating this Christian festival. As well as putting up our decorations, listening to the Christmas story and making cards we have been finding out how other children in the world may be celebrating at this time of year. The children became very interested in the Jewish festival of Hannukah since listening to a speaker in assembly and so we have been exploring this festival using the internet, artefacts and books.

Although we still have a long way to go, our practice has definitely developed and we feel that our classroom does feel a more inclusive place. We really do want all of our children to gain a sense of belonging and feel that their language or culture is as much a part of what we do as anyone else's.



# Audit - Learning and Development

Learning and Development	Developing	Establishing	Enhancing	Comments
Do you provide children with first hand experiences?				
Do you use photographs to support learning? Are visual cues used to support access to the curriculum daily needs?				
Do you always provide a variety of materials and activities that will stimulate children's imagination and provide choice?				
Do you vary the ways activities and equipment are presented both indoors and outdoors?				
Are resources used in relation to particular festivals and special times utilised throughout the year?				
How do all ensure all practitioners remodel children's phrases to correct mistakes rather than tell children they are wrong?				
Do all adults talk to children as they play alongside them?				
Do you provide opportunities that encourage child to child conversations?				
How do you enable children to confident to use their home language in a verity of situations?				
Do children have opportunities to share songs and rhymes in their home language?				
Do you ask parents and carers to share and/or translate favourite rhymes?				
Are there opportunities for all children to experience listening to stories in different languages?				
Do you use clear illustrations and other visual support, drama and props?				
Are there opportunities for children and adults to tells stories rather than read books?				

# Further Information

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- **EYFS 2014 / Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

- **National Strategies Early Years Publications**

Building Futures: Developing trust.

A focus on provision for children from gypsy, roma and traveller backgrounds in the EYFS

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130401151715/http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/00741-2009BKT-EN.pdf>

- **Supporting children with speech, language and communication needs: Guidance for practitioners in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20110202093118/http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/node/161358>

- **Supporting children learning English as an Additional Language**

<http://www.foundationyears.org.uk/2011/10/supporting-children-learning-english-as-an-additional-language/>

- **Resource suppliers**

[www.letterboxlibrary.com](http://www.letterboxlibrary.com)

[www.mantralingua.com](http://www.mantralingua.com)

[www.festivalshop.co.uk](http://www.festivalshop.co.uk)

[www.barefootbooks.com](http://www.barefootbooks.com)

[www.finesolutions.co.uk](http://www.finesolutions.co.uk)

- **Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Resources**

[www.natt.org.uk](http://www.natt.org.uk)

[www.naldic.org.uk/eal-initial-teacher-education/resources/early-years](http://www.naldic.org.uk/eal-initial-teacher-education/resources/early-years)

- **Resource Catalogues**

Barefoot Books: [www.barefootbooks.com](http://www.barefootbooks.com)

Community Playthings: [www.communityplaythings.co.uk](http://www.communityplaythings.co.uk)

Kids Like Me: [www.kidslikeme.co.uk](http://www.kidslikeme.co.uk)

Manta Lingua: [www.mantralingua.com](http://www.mantralingua.com)

Parrotfish Company: [www.parrotfish.co.uk](http://www.parrotfish.co.uk)

- **Early Years Play trailers – currently based at:**

**Warren Hills Children’s Centre**

Stamford Drive, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 4TA

Tel: 0116 305 5993

**Bagworth Children’s Centre**

Station Road, Bagworth, Coalville, Leicestershire LE67 1 BH

Tel: 0116 305 5055

- **For further advice contact:**

**Specialist Teaching Services**

Leicestershire County Council, Room 600 – Rutland Building, County Hall, Glenfield, Leicestershire LE3 8RA

0116 305 9400

**Leicestershire & Leicester City Multi Agency Travellers Unit**

Leicestershire County Council, Beaumont Lodge, Astill Lodge Road, Leicester LE4 1EF

Tel: 0116 305 8153

Email: [multiagencytravellersunit@leics.gov.uk](mailto:multiagencytravellersunit@leics.gov.uk)

**Early Learning and Childcare Service (0-5 Learning)**

For further advice and information contact us on 0116 305 7136 or email: [childcare@leics.gov.uk](mailto:childcare@leics.gov.uk)

# Appendix A

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## Defining terms

**EAL** stands for English as an Additional Language and recognises the fact that many children learning English in settings in this country already have some knowledge and/or experience of one or more other languages and are adding English to that repertoire.

**Bilingual** is used to refer to those children who have access to more than one language at home and at their setting. It does not necessarily imply full fluency in both or all of their languages.

**Minority ethnic group** is often used for all those groups other than the white British majority. Although children from these groups may well form the majority in some settings and communities, they are still members of groups in a minority nationally and will continue to be referred to as children from minority ethnic groups. Most children learning EAL are from minority ethnic groups