



Supporting children with English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Information for Primary School Teaching Assistants

Children & Young People's Services



A guide for Teaching Assistants

Sometimes as a Teaching Assistant you may be asked to support a pupil with limited English skills. Some pupils may be new to the UK and may be feeling anxious. This leaflet offers practical suggestions on how you can help EAL pupils to settle in and achieve.

Why is the Teaching Assistant role so important?

As a Teaching Assistant you are often in a better position to empathise with the child's situation and have more time to build a relationship. Try to gather as much information about the child before working with them (refer to parental interview). They may have had experience in some subject areas in their own language which they can easily transfer to English.

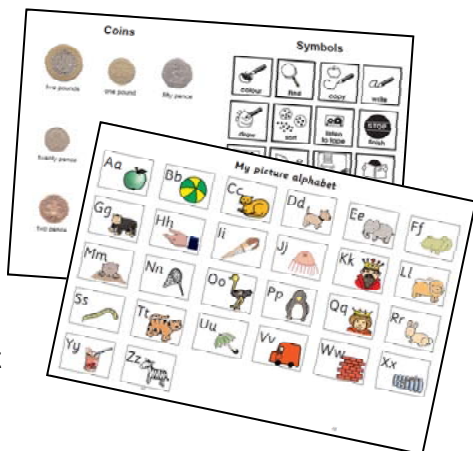
Find out about their dietary needs. For example, Muslim pupils may not eat pork products. There may also be cultural differences such as lack of eye contact or wishing to cover up in PE. Some EAL children are not willing to talk until they are confident in their use of English. They may start simply by echoing what is said to them or speak in short phrases. Try to settle a new child by ensuring you pronounce their name correctly, pairing them with a friend who is a positive role model, showing them basic classroom routines and using non-verbal clues and materials to help them to understand. A pupil will gain confidence more quickly when working closely with a friendly TA who greets them warmly with a smile and shows an interest in them and their learning.



Teaching tips

Adapt lesson materials to suit the pupil's level of English.

- Focus on the subject language, highlight key words and use images, mime or google translate to help pupils understand. If they are competent in their home language make sure the pupil has a bilingual dictionary/I i-pad and show them how to use it.
- Encourage the child to make a glossary of translated terms to refer to. Also find pictures or illustrations to give a visual clue to the topic.
- Use alternative tasks such as matching words with pictures, card sorting and interactive games.
- Regularly check their understanding, facial expression and body language to see if they are comfortable with the work
- Ask questions about the topic e.g. can you tell me three things about this?
- If materials given by teachers are too complicated, try to find simplified versions in English, particularly those with illustrations. Base your work on these materials.
- Check phonic knowledge and plan support in order to fill the gaps. Some useful resources for this are Lexia, Twinkl and Clicker.
- The pupil should be seated amongst competent and helpful peers where he/she can see/hear the teacher and also the board, real objects and any other visual support. If this is not the case you may like to suggest that the EAL pupil is moved.



Speaking and Listening

Often children will speak to their TA before any other adult. Prepare ways to encourage language and prompt children to speak by using open questions. Model the correct use of language and support their understanding using pictures and objects. Repeat phrases and names of things using gestures, actions and visuals. Take care to speak slowly and clearly, pronounce word endings and allow time for responses.

Reading

If the child is literate in their first language encourage them to read dual language texts using repeated sentence patterns and strong visuals. Make books with the child and send these home to share with their parents. Talk about the Illustrations, e.g. How many people are there? What are they doing?

Writing

Use writing frames with illustrations and topic related word banks for spelling prompts. Substitution tables are great. Give examples of sentence openers and other DARTs activities such as gap fill, multiple choice and matching activities. Use storyboards to encourage independent writing.

We hope you have found this leaflet useful. If you would like any further information or training please contact:

**EAL & Equalities on 03000 267 800
or email: eal@durham.gov.uk**

