**Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.**

# Top tips: Meeting the Needs of EAL Learners

**Children with English as an additional language (EAL) do not arrive to our settings thinking of their language/s as a problem, so let's be curious about children's languages and recognise the richness they bring.**

Here are some tips to help you create an inclusive, supportive environment.

1. **Provide language acquisition training:** Ensure all staff receive training on inclusive practices and EAL strategies.  Provide information to help staff have an understanding of how to support children where English is an additional language such as the DfE - [Help for early years providers: English as an additional language](#)

2. **Have high expectations:** English language proficiency does not equate to cognitive ability so maintain high expectations. Keep cognitive challenge appropriately high through individual, targeted support (recognising that EAL children are not one homogeneous group, they are individuals with unique needs). Plan and offer opportunities for children to use and develop their home language. Use play-based learning to practise and reinforce new vocabulary

3. **Develop a language support policy:** This will acknowledge the language diversity of your setting's community and highlight the value placed on all the languages of your children and their families

4. **Model and promote effective strategies:** Support staff in using simple and clear language, avoiding idioms and complex sentences.  Encourage team members who speak another language, even if it's only a few words, to use it freely in the setting. This helps create an atmosphere of acceptance and celebration of all languages

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5.  **Create an inclusive environment:** Use visual aids, multilingual signs, and photo labels to make your environment welcoming and accessible. Provide a range of cultural resources and use images which reflect children's home environment throughout your setting. Ensure there is a variety of dual language books available. Free dual language books can be ordered from BookTrust

6.  **Cultural celebrations:** Incorporate cultural celebrations and traditions from the children's backgrounds into your curriculum

7.  **Engage with families:** Invite families into the setting to share songs, stories, customs, celebrations and skills, such as cooking or mehndi

8.  **Support your team:** Encourage your team to work together in planning and sharing resources for EAL support. Foster a culture of reflection where staff can discuss challenges, celebrate successes and share best practices.

## NDNA products to support you with these tips
- •  Online course - Vocabulary and Early Language Skills
- •  Factsheet - Children with English as an Additional Language in nurseries.

## And more resources at www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna