



English As An Additional Language (EAL) Policy

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Introduction

This policy details Acorn Childcare Centre's (the Centre) arrangements to recognise and meet the needs of children who are learning English as an additional language. That is, children who have a home language other than English and who are in the process of learning to use English as an additional language through immersion in the curriculum and the broader life of the Centre. Throughout this policy, and in other related policies and documents, these pupils are referred to as EAL pupils.

English As An Additional Language: Some Key Principles

All EAL children are different: they will have a huge variety of first languages, home backgrounds, previous experience of education and life in general. EAL children's needs are linguistic; EAL is not synonymous with SEN. New languages are learned most easily when:

- They are in a positive, secure and helpful environment
- They are interacting with others
- The language items they are expected to use are clear and focused
- New language items are presented to them in a meaningful context
- They hear the new language items repeated several times
- They have the opportunity to repeat and use the new items themselves
- Every attempt at speaking is praised
- The rules of the language are modelled naturally
- There are interesting things and events that stimulate language
- Gesture, body language and facial expression reinforce the spoken word

The support for a child's first language at academic levels makes an important contribution to academic success in the second language. Conversational ability will develop much more quickly than mastery of the language needed to succeed in the curriculum. It can take up to ten years for EAL pupils to acquire academic English at the same level as their peers.

Statement of Commitment

At the Centre, we are committed to ensuring that every child succeeds and reaches their full potential. We are dedicated to raising the achievement and attainment of pupils with EAL enabling them to do the best they can within a positive, supportive, secure and safe learning environment. Through a quality parent partnership, rigorous assessment and monitoring, the Centre will identify individual pupil's needs and recognise and build on the skills they bring into the Centre. Through quality first teaching based on experiences and talk, the Centre aims to meet the language needs of all its learners.

Context

The Centre has a very low number of EAL children, who generally come from a small range of ethnic groups, are generally from a range of backgrounds and generally have different linguistic backgrounds. Our EAL pupils generally arrive at the Centre having had some exposure to the English language and culture but with little or no literacy skills in their home language.

Our Aims

At the Centre we aim to:

- Provide a welcoming environment in which children will learn most effectively.
- Provide support to pupils with EAL needs.
- Plan and teach lessons using learning styles most appropriate to EAL learners.
- Provide an inclusive curriculum.
- Promote home languages in the Centre and in our rooms, and to use these to aid pupil learning. (Children must maintain their first language at home; it is vital to their cognitive development.)
- Assess pupils and set achievable targets.
- Ensure pupils are making progress and are able to access the curriculum.
- Support pupils who are at risk of under-achieving.
- Celebrate pupils' achievements.

Roles and Responsibilities

There is a collective responsibility, held by all staff, to identify and remove barriers that stand in the way of the learning and success of our EAL children. The Centre Manager is responsible for co-ordinating, monitoring and maintaining an overview of this aspect of the Centre's work. Responsibilities include identifying EAL children, notifying room staff of EAL children, ensuring that EAL children are fully integrated into the Centre and have full access to the curriculum, and regularly reviewing EAL children's progress, putting into place any interventions where progress is not satisfactory. The Centre Manager will liaise regularly with the parent/carer of EAL children and will engage an interpreter to do this if necessary.

Admitting New Pupils

The Centre follows an admission procedure for new arrivals and also collects and records information relating to the child's country of origin, date of arrival in the UK and details of languages spoken together with the child's and family's proficiency in English. Parents/carers and pupils are taken on a tour of the Centre and introduced to their child's Room Manager and EYPs. Care is taken to ensure we know how to say names and how to address parents and children appropriately.

Placement in Rooms

The Centre recognises that EAL pupils, who may be new to English and to the UK, need continuity and security as they start school. The Centre aims to ensure that EAL children:

- Have access to the whole curriculum
- Are taught with their peers
- Are placed in groups where they will see models of good behaviour

- Are placed in groups with fluent English speakers
- Are not automatically placed with Learning Support pupils

Teaching and Learning

The Centre will:

- Plan for and provide appropriate stimuli for language development.
- Encourage EAL children to use English by generating opportunities for active participation in lessons.
- Consider our own language use and provide suitable contextual clues for EAL pupils.
- Be aware that our culture and environment (for instance procedures, routines and practices) may differ from the school culture with which EAL children are familiar.
- Plan for and provide specific time for pupils with EAL needs.
- Be aware that an EAL child's social language (normally acquired in around two years) may be much more advanced than their academic language (which can take seven to ten years to reach native-speaker levels).
- Be aware that children may understand more language than they are able to produce.
- Be aware of the "Silent Period". This is an important stage in language acquisition. It is active and not passive, though it may appear that the child is not interacting with the person who is speaking to them. Continue to involve the child, but do not insist on a response. If the silent period extends beyond a year then further investigation is needed.
- Teach topic/subject relevant vocabulary where appropriate and provide curriculum-related opportunities to develop listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.
- Provide good language role models for social interaction in learning activities.
- When necessary, provide spoken and written, curriculum-specific, language models for instance writing frames.
- Provide a secure, but intellectually challenging learning environment.
- Support language development through sensitive and informative feedback. See specific strategies below.
- Re-cast sentences, eg if a child says "I goed to London" you would respond by remodelling the sentence and say, "Oh you went to London". Do not deliberately point out errors, genre features and characteristics (narrative, reports, etc).
- Promote language, study skills and attitudes which enable EAL children to become independent learners.
- Encourage parent/carer participation in their EAL child's learning.

Specific Strategies To Develop Communication In English

- **Self-talk:** label and describe what **you** are doing, demonstrating how to communicate about an activity.
- **Parallel talk:** you describe the child's activity as you interact with him/her. The language has meaning for the child because it concerns something he/she is interested in.
- **Repeating:** listen carefully to the child, and then repeat back all or part of what he/she said. This clarifies and serves as an acknowledgement of the child's speech, and encourages the child to continue talking because it shows interest in what they have to say.

- **Restating:** when the child makes a language error, repeat what they have said in a corrected form without drawing attention to the error. You will be modelling standard language in a positive, non-threatening form that facilitates communication.
- **Expanding/Extending:** a natural conversational technique in which the adult adds new ideas to the discussion, encouraging children to expand their thinking or to develop new vocabulary.
- **Modelling:** children need to learn new language structures in meaningful contexts many times before they can use them. One way to accomplish this is to model the language by using it in just the way we want them to use it.
- **Using Open-ended questions:** asking questions which have more than one 'right' answer stimulates more language use, affirms children's ideas and encourages creative thinking.

Resources

Resources will be made available to support EAL pupils. These include bilingual dictionaries, dual-language books, and sight words in other languages, games and audio tapes. In addition to this, children who are capable of taking part in everyday activities may have special arrangements made such as reference material in their home language, posters and support materials. These resources are in place to help children learn and cater for visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners.