



EAL Statement of intent

At Spice childcare we undertake to include all children and welcome those who are not able to speak or understand English.

Our strategy to support these children and their families will be implemented by all members of staff, and temporary or new staff will receive support and information during their induction to enable them to promote the same strategies.

Children attending our setting may be monolingual in English or another heritage language, or bilingual and able to speak and understand equally in two languages.

It is important to identify the child's first language in the pre-admission stage, and to establish whether the parents are able to converse in English or whether they may need alternative support to understand the routines and learning environment that their child will experience.

To speak a language other than English or to be bilingual will be celebrated and not seen as a deficit or disadvantage for the individual children. It is the responsibility of staff to be flexible and creative to ensure that effective communication takes place.

Creating a positive environment

Children from different cultures may find our setting environment quite strange: it is important that we include pictures with which the children can identify. These may be of landscapes, houses, families or children playing.

We need to include labels and captions in alternative languages but these are only relevant if we draw the attention of the children to them.

Where possible, bilingual books will be displayed in the book area.

The role play area will reflect diversity and the adults are responsible for ensuring that the children respect and understand the function of the resources on offer.

Language rich environment

Communication involves speaking, listening and understanding: it affects the social as well as the learning outcomes for children.

A language rich environment will be provided for all children, and any strategies which we use to support EAL children will also benefit all the children, including those with special needs.

Staff must find ways of encouraging children to keep talking, even if they are unable to do so in English.

- We will work with parents to obtain key words in their spoken language, learning these to help with communication
- We will keep language simple and literal initially so that the child has the best opportunity to understand.
- We will give the instructions to the child individually and with eye contact as generalised instructions are hard to follow.
- We will give plenty of time for the child to respond – it takes time to translate.
- We will put any key words we learn onto the wall where staff unfamiliar with them can look them up and check them out quickly.
- We will use non verbal clues when working with the child
- We will choose stories which are simple, repetitive, but interesting.
- We will model correct sentences for the child when they have tried to communicate.

Alternative ways of communicating

Up to 80% of everyday communication is non – verbal and it is vital that this knowledge is used by all staff to facilitate communication.

Therefore all staff will engage with the EAL children using non-verbal communication alongside the verbal: this will involve the use of sign language, symbols, visual timetables, drama and drawing, as well as props for stories.

Different stages experienced by EAL children

We will all respect the different phases that EAL children may go through:

- Clinging/crying phase – like all new children the child may be frightened of being left in a new environment: parents will be welcome to stay initially, or leave the child for shorter periods. The child will have a named and consistent key person who will be able to facilitate and comfort the child during the initial settling in period.
- Watching/ silent phase – the child may not want to take part in group activities initially and should be allowed to watch and observe the other children until they are confident to join in.
- Noisy phase: some EAL children will go through a phase of shouting in order for themselves understood. We will encourage them to speak quietly but will acknowledge and praise their efforts to communicate.
- Physical phase: children who cannot communicate in words may become physical in their interaction with other children. We will intervene calmly and model appropriate words for the child to learn such as ‘I want to play with...’, ‘please can I play too’, ‘can I do that’

- Understanding/ not speaking phase: we will recognise that children understand a new language much faster than they can speak it and will therefore always use verbal instructions or comments alongside non-verbal ones.

Setting boundaries

All children quickly recognise the word or symbol for 'no' and we must all ensure that the children with EAL are given the same clear boundaries as other children in the setting.

If children consistently fail to understand these, the key person will approach the parent/carer and ask them to explain them to the child.

Working with parents

Parents/carers from other countries may have no personal experience of pre-school/early years education as we know it. It is important that sufficient time is given to explain to them the key principles of our system, and the routines the children experience.

It is crucial that whoever welcomes the parents/carers and fills in the admission form, takes down details of the country of origin, the religion, the languages and key cultural needs of the child. This may include dietary restrictions which should be shared with all staff to prevent misunderstandings.

Parents should be encouraged to contribute to the learning of the children by visiting, sharing significant events/festivals and doing activities such as cooking.

Assessment

No assumptions should be made of a child's ability and learning capability based solely on their ability to speak English.

Observations by staff members of what the child 'can do' will be part of a crucial learning record.

Where concerns are exposed through the regular assessment of the child, it will be the responsibility of the key person to discuss the child's first language competency with the parents. If this is not age appropriate, the key person should inform the setting SENCo with a view to referring to the area SENCo or speech therapist for further assessment.

When the progress of the child in their home language appears appropriate, they should discuss the needs of the child and whether they need to be encouraged to take up more learning opportunities which are not language dependant.

Resources

Whenever resources are being ordered they should be relevant for all the children including EAL children: all orders will be scrutinised by the setting ENCo to recommend, when possible, alternatives which are more culturally appropriate.

Responsibilities

All staff will be familiar with this protocol and be involved in seeing that it is carried out.

The manager will be responsible for sharing this protocol with all new or relief staff.

The key person will be responsible for liaising with the parents, and monitoring the progress of the individual child.