



Policy Document:

Supporting Multi Lingual Learners

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Policy Statement

At the Meadows we undertake to include all children and welcome those whose first language is not English.

Our strategy to support these children and their families will be implemented by all members of the staff. 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, that is, multi lingual learners. We seek to identify the child's first language at 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 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. Bilingual books will be displayed in the book area, and when possible, a parent will be asked to co-tell a bilingual story with the children, or record a simple story for the listening centre.

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 multi lingual learners will benefit all the children, including those with additional needs. Staff must find ways of encouraging children to keep talking, even if they are unable to do so in English.

- We will learn the question words in the child's first language and start sentences using these - the child is more likely to respond when they are aware that it is a question.
- We will keep language simple and literal initially so that the child has the best opportunity to understand.
- We will give 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 learn key words in the child's first language so they can tell us important things like needing the toilet, being thirsty, wanting to play with a toy.
- We will put any key words we learn on the wall where staff unfamiliar with them can look up and check them out quickly
- We will use non-verbal cues when working with the child.
- We will Buddy the child with an articulate "friend" for each session.

- We will use Talking Boxes or Spirals with the child, individually at first, then with a learning partner, and eventually with a small group at least twice a week.
- We will choose stories which are simple, repetitive, but interesting.
- We will build up a bank of stories with props which can be shared regularly with children.
- We will rehearse stories or activities with multilingual learners so they can join in with the whole group session.
- We will encourage the multilingual child to teach the other children the name of objects in their own language.
- Whenever possible, we will borrow resources such as comics, CDs or books from the parents to share with the other children.

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 multilingual 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.