



English as an additional language policy (EAL)

Written in accordance with the Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (2025):
Learning and development requirements

English as an Additional Language

1.14 For children whose home language is not English, providers may take reasonable steps to provide opportunities for children to develop and use their home language in play and learning, supporting their language development at home.

1.15 Providers must ensure that children have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English language during the EYFS, ensuring children are ready to benefit from the opportunities available to them when they begin Key Stage 1. When assessing communication, language, and literacy skills, practitioners must assess children's skills in English. If a child does not have a strong grasp of English language, practitioners must explore the child's skills in the home language with parents and/or carers, to establish whether there is cause for concern about language delay.

Little Squirrels we recognise and value the linguistic and cultural diversity of all children and families. We are committed to ensuring that children who speak English as an Additional Language (EAL) are supported to access the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum and achieve their full potential.

We believe that children's home languages are an important part of their identity and learning. We promote an inclusive environment where all languages and cultures are respected and celebrated.

This policy is in line with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which states that providers must support children in developing and using their home language while ensuring they have sufficient opportunities to learn and reach a good standard in English.

Aims

The aims of this policy are to:

- ♥ Provide equal access to learning opportunities for children with EAL
- ♥ Support children to develop confidence and competence in English
- ♥ Value and promote children's home languages and cultural backgrounds
- ♥ Work in partnership with parents and carers
- ♥ Ensure staff understand how to support children learning English as an additional language
- ♥ Promote inclusion, equality, and positive self-esteem

Definition of EAL

A child is considered to have English as an Additional Language (EAL) if a language other than English is spoken at home or if English is not their first language.

Children learning EAL may be:

- ♥ New to English
- ♥ Developing fluency in English
- ♥ Fluent in more than one language

Being bilingual or multilingual is recognised as a positive skill and asset.

EYFS Principles

In accordance with the EYFS framework, we will:

- ♥ Support children to develop their home language in play and learning
- ♥ Provide opportunities for children to develop and use English in a meaningful context
- ♥ Ensure children have opportunities to communicate, express themselves, and feel included
- ♥ Monitor children's progress to ensure they are making good developmental progress

Practice and Provision

At Little Squirrels staff will:

Create an Inclusive Environment

- ♥ Welcome and value all languages and cultures
- ♥ Use visual aids, gestures, objects, and pictures to support understanding
- ♥ Provide bilingual books, labels, songs, and resources where possible
- ♥ Celebrate cultural festivals and traditions respectfully

Support Language Development

- ♥ Speak clearly and model correct language
- ♥ Use repetition, simple language, and consistent routines
- ♥ Encourage communication through play and interaction
- ♥ Give children time to listen, process, and respond
- ♥ Support children's confidence in speaking English without forcing participation

Value Home Languages

- ♥ Encourage children to use their home language alongside English
- ♥ Recognise that strong development in a home language supports English learning
- ♥ Include key words from children's home languages where appropriate

Work with Parents and Carers

- ♥ Gather information about the child's language background on admission
- ♥ Encourage parents to continue speaking their home language at home
- ♥ Share strategies and progress with families regularly
- ♥ Use translators or interpretation support where needed and available

Observation and Assessment

Children learning EAL will be observed and assessed according to the EYFS in the same way as all children, while recognising that:

- ♥ Limited English acquisition does not necessarily indicate a learning difficulty
- ♥ Children may go through a "silent period" as they absorb language
- ♥ Assessment will take account of skills demonstrated in the child's home language where possible

Staff will monitor progress carefully and seek additional support if concerns arise about overall development.

Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

EAL is not considered a Special Educational Need. However, if staff have concerns about a child's development beyond language acquisition, appropriate procedures will be followed in partnership with parents and relevant professionals.

Staff Responsibilities

The Nursery Manager and staff are responsible for:

- ♥ Implementing this policy consistently
- ♥ Creating an inclusive and welcoming environment

- ♥ Attending relevant training where appropriate
- ♥ Working collaboratively with families and outside agencies

Equal Opportunities

We are committed to equality of opportunity and anti-discriminatory practice. No child or family will be disadvantaged because of language, culture, ethnicity, religion, or background.

Policy updated by Kylie Jones and the Little Squirrels team **May 2026**.