

Helping your child learn

Guidance for parents of students who use English as an Additional Language (EAL)

Why read this?

Here you can find practical ideas for you on:

1. Getting involved with school life
2. Helping your child to learn

1. Getting involved with school life

Schools in the UK want parents to be actively involved in school life and will help you to get involved if you are not confident in English or have work commitments.

Here are some ideas to help:

- Tell the school if you find some texts difficult to understand e.g. school letters or the school website



- Tell school staff if they are speaking too fast for you or use words that you don't know. Here are some polite phrases you can use for this:

- *Could you speak more slowly, please?*
- *Could you say that again? I didn't understand.*
- *I'm sorry, but I didn't understand you. Could you please repeat that?*
- *Could you please tell me what _____ means?*
- *Could you repeat that word, please? I don't know what it means.*
- *Could you speak louder, please? I cannot hear what you said.*

- Tell the school what will help you understand school communications better e.g. translations of spoken communications



- Tell the school when the best **time**  is to contact you, and the best **contact number** 

- Tell the school if there is another family member who is better in English and can help communicate with the school

- Ask the school for information about the school and your child’s learning. Ask for this information to be translated into your home language. You should ask about:



The school timetable



Your child’s homework



Exams and tests (these are sometimes called ‘assessments’)



Attendance



The curriculum and Key Stages

- Join a parent group with other parents who speak the same language as you. If the school does not have a group, ask them to start one.

- Attend parents’ evenings. If you are worried about your English, you could request a one-to-one meeting with a teacher to talk about your child’s progress. You could also ask the school if an interpreter can be there to help you.

2. How to support your child’s learning

Schools in the UK expect children to do homework and parents to help and encourage home learning.

Here are some ideas on how you can help your child to learn:

- Ask your child’s school for their ‘homework policy’ so you know what the school expects, and you can then help your child with their homework
- To help children with homework:
 - Ask questions and talk about the topics studied in your first language
 - Encourage your child to use a bilingual dictionary to translate words
 - Encourage your child to write down any new words in English and/or their first language to help them remember them
 - Encourage your child to ask their teachers if they do not understand something
- Read with your child at home. You can do this in your first language and talk about the pictures and what is happening in the story. With older children you can listen to them read and ask them to guess words if they don’t know what they mean. These websites have stories in lots of different languages, and they are free: **World Stories** and **Unite for Literacy**.
- Join a class to help you improve your English. Some schools run English classes for parents so ask if this is available. You can also find ESOL classes in your local Further Education College. If you can’t join a class, or want to learn independently, you can find free English practice from the **British Council**.

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