Practical activities to support children in Early Years learning English as an Additional Language (EAL)
These activities will help practitioners to:

- Create enjoyable practical activities
- Target next steps in children’s learning of English
- Ensure the children learning EAL have the best possible start

Activity outline:
- Include plenty of actions, gestures, pictures and object cues with each activity to aid the child’s understanding.
- Include all children in the activities, as children learning EAL pick up most of their new language from their peers

Remember to:

- Observe the children in a variety of contexts and over several sessions to identify their next steps.
- Inform parents of the importance of speaking their first language at home.

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**Definition of a pupil whose first language is a language other than English:**

- A first language other than English should be recorded where a child was exposed to the language during early development and continues to be exposed to this language in the home or in the community. If a child was exposed to more than one language (which may include English) during early development the language other than English should be recorded, irrespective of the child’s proficiency in English.

- In the case of an older pupil who is no longer exposed to the first language in the home, and who now uses only another language, the school should consult with the pupil or parent to determine which language should be recorded.

**Data and Statistics Division, School Census 2012 for Primary Schools (including Academies) in England, Preparation and Guidance, Department for Education.**
Messy Play

This activity will help the child to:
- Learn new vocabulary to describe actions.

Activity Outline:
- Pick two or three key words that you want the child to learn and repeat through practical play e.g. pouring, rolling, squeezing, poking, wet, dry, sieve etc.
- Play alongside the child as a play partner, modelling, copying and commenting on yours and their play.

Remember to:
- Observe how the children play alongside their friends and what language they have learned.

Kim's Game

This activity will help the child to:
- Increase their auditory and visual memory (remembering names).
- Understand turn taking.
- Increase vocabulary.

Activity Outline:
- Show the children up to 7 items on a tray, e.g. cups and plates, animals, toys etc.
- When the children have named the items with your support, cover with a cloth.
- Remove one item and remove the cloth.
- Can the children identify the missing item?

Remember to:
- Include prompts such as pictures or duplicate objects to help the child remember the items on the tray.
- Increase the difficulty as the child becomes better at identifying the missing item. This can be adding more items or taking more away.
Sensory Games

This activity will help the child to:
- Learn different vocabulary linked to senses,
- Learn how to describe.

Activity Outline:
- Using a variety of sensory objects, focus on the language used to describe touch, smell, taste and sounds.
- When playing with different sounds use pictures for the child to show their understanding.
- See Letters and Sounds for many more activities.

Remember to:
- Repeat activities to give the child confidence.
- Use a variety of language in your everyday speech.

Instruction Games

This activity will help the child to:
- Understand and use preposition e.g. under, on, next to, beside, in, on top of, near etc.

Activity outline:
- Use small world objects, dolls, teddy bears, puppets and animals that fit in and under objects, such as furniture and dolls houses.
- Give instructions in a turn taking game asking the children to put objects in different places, (this will need modelling first)
- When the child is more confident, they can instruct you.

Remember to:
- Make this game active and enjoyable, and use lots of actions and gesture to reinforce your instructions.
- Note the words the child understands and those they are unsure of.
Building Together

This will help the child to:
- Understand and use language to describe position.

Activity Outline:
- Using puzzles, train track and construction resources, model how to build using the appropriate language e.g. on top of, beside, next to etc.
- Use gesture and actions and copy to reinforce.
- Using favourite characters such as ‘Bob the builder’ will engage children in these activities.
- Link in colours and counting where possible.

Remember to:
- Take direction from the children by letting them lead the play.
- Note favourite construction themes to include in other play opportunities.

Using Puppets

This activity will help the child to:
- Gain confidence to speak aloud.
- Will help the child to make friends, by learning words such as please, thank you and excuse me (social conversations)

Activity Outline:
- Play turn taking games with the puppets and add voices
- Model the language you want them to use.
- My name is
- I like to play with
- Make sure that you include other children in the activity who can give a good model of the language you want to teach.

Remember to:
- Note when and how the child uses the language from this activity into their play.
Sorting Games

This activity will help the child to:
- Learn the words associated with colour, size, shape, texture and categories such as animals and body parts.

Activity Outline:
- Using a selection of coloured objects and model how to sort them using the correct words. "This is a blue car" "This is a big blue pencil"
- Add variables as they become more confident e.g. sorting farm and wild animals.
- Make this a group activity and allow children to explore the objects after the activity has finished.

Remember to:
- Note good words they are using as this provides good progress evidence

Animal Activities

This activity will help the child to:
- Learn animal vocabulary such as names and body parts.
- Learn categories such as farm animals.

Activity Outline:
- Using a variety of animals, dinosaurs and bugs to teach them key words.
- Encourage the children to describe the animals and the similarities and differences they can see and feel.
- Model and copy and reinforce.

Remember to:
- Link to favourite stories and songs.
- Provide opportunities for their new language to be used again by having resources available during free play.
Number Rhymes and Action Songs

This activity will help the child to:
- Tune into sounds in English
- Recognise words
- Make sense of sentence structure

Activity outline
- Sing a variety of nursery rhymes, action songs and number songs.
- Include plenty of actions and gestures.
- Repeat regularly e.g. sing at the beginning and end of each session.

Remember to:
- Include the child even though they may not sing the words as they will quickly learn the actions and join in the words they know.
- Make a note of the songs they enjoy the most

What’s in the bag?

This activity will help the child to:
- Use describing words for everyday objects.
- Reinforce sensory language

Activity outline:
- Start by modelling how you describe objects by feel.
- Have identical pairs of objects, one in the bag and one out of the bag. This will help the children when listening to descriptions of the objects.
- Focus on key words you want to teach the child e.g. big/small, rough/smooth

Remember to:
- Note the language that the child uses confidently and those that need more teaching.
- Link to stories and rhymes e.g. Goldilocks and the Three Bears.
Role Play

This activity will help the child to:

- Learn different domestic vocabulary e.g. cup, plate, fork and spoon.
- Hear and use simple sentence structure “Can I have..?”
- Play alongside other children to take turns and negotiate.

Activity Outline:

- Provide a role play area which is suitably resourced with objects that will help the child develop their vocabulary.
- Change and introduce new items that will gain the child's interest.
- Ensure an adult engages with children in the role area to model appropriate language.

Remember to:

- Note when the child is confident to role play independently and which friendships are being formed.
- Observe these sessions as the child often uses more language than normal in this area.