

Advice for Education Staff regarding children with Speech and Language difficulties for whom English is an additional language

Reasons why the child may be experiencing language difficulties:

- Limited experience of English
- Undiagnosed hearing difficulties
- Limited opportunities of play and language use
- Developmental delay / disordered language development
- Medical problems
- Environmental factors e.g. trauma, housing conditions
- Learning difficulties

Steps to take before referring to SLT

- Listen to parent/carer concerns
- Screen children using school framework “A language in common: Assessing English as an additional language”- national Curriculum 2000.
- Put into practice support mechanisms (follow the guidelines in the Code of Practise)
- Measure performance (baseline Assessments)
- Consider factors mentioned above and refer to appropriate services e.g. Audiology, Medical Assessment, Educational Psychology, Social Services.

Strategies:

- Use visual cues (facial expression, gesture, signs, symbols, pictures etc.) to support verbal message. This can help support and link languages across home and school.
- Use your voice to emphasize important words and information.
- Keep your language simple and context bound. Shorten your instructions and use familiar vocabulary.
- Extend the child’s language by introducing new vocabulary and concepts according to the child’s needs.
- Use repetition and reduce your rate of speech.
- Establish the child’s attention before you give instructions, e.g. by calling their name and making eye contact.
- Get down to the child’s level, so that they can see your face and see you’re listening.
- When using abstract language, consider the child’s level of proficiency in English.
- Advise parents to that it is okay to mix different languages in one sentence. However they should be **consistent** in their choice of words to name objects in a particular sentence.

- Children may benefit from small group work, targeting specific vocabulary and speech activities. However, the child will need to be totally immersed in a language-rich environment, i.e. the classroom.