

Addressing well-being issues of newly arrived children with English as an additional language

The school environment presents a wide range of challenges to a newly arrived child as so many aspects can be outside their previous experience and expectation.

The child's primary concerns relate to:

- anxiety about separation from home and parents
- confusion in a strange environment and where expectations are unclear
- feelings of isolation and frustration from inability to communicate or understand
- Social alienation in lessons and social interaction at break and lunch time
- Noise
- Food – knowing what and where to eat, also when to eat and drink
- Lesson routines and expectations

Some strategies for reducing anxiety in newly arrived children



1. Create areas of familiarity and security:

- Dual language signage in key areas: classrooms, main hall, toilets, lunch area, play areas, corridors - and visual signage that is culturally appropriate.
- Access to first language/culturally relevant books.
- A designated place that can be used for "time out" and quiet time when they need it.
- Designated people the pupil can contact.
- Building in treats and rewards. Use parental discussions to discover the child's likes and dislikes and try to work some of these into the day: "golden time" slots, lunch time and after school activities, themed language work such as football, food, fashion computer games.
- An established "Buddy" system.

2. Empowering the child

- Pupil makes a welcome video, slideshow or book.
- Pupil directs his/her learning (e.g. history, geography of own country) - personalisation of learning.



3. Allow the child to assimilate and not actively participate. It is important, sometimes, to allow newly arrived children to watch and listen without the added pressure of having to generate a talk or writing outcome.

4. Use signing (i.e. BSL/makaton) to establish key lines of communication; and while teaching, "sign and say" important commands, actions and nouns - encourage pupil to do likewise.



5. Build in inclusive activities that have a non-verbal dimension (e.g. picture sequencing and sorting, ranking and prioritising activities, choral speaking, actions and expressions to accompany (for example) story telling, role-play and drama techniques, etc.).