

# Sign Language in the EYFS

## Principles into Practice

### A Unique Child

#### 1.1 Child Development

##### A Skilful Communicator

'Children learn to communicate in many ways, not just by talking, but also in non-verbal ways such as gestures, facial expressions and gaze direction, in drawing, writing and singing, and through dance, music and drama.'

### Positive Relationships

#### 2.2 Parents as Partners

##### Communication

'All communication is important, including gesture, signing and body language. Actions can speak louder than words.'

'Posters, pictures and other resources on display will show the setting's positive attitude towards disability, and to ethnic, cultural and social diversity. They will help children and families to recognise that they are valued.'

#### 2.3 Supporting Learning

##### Listening to Children

'Talking with children may take place in English or in their home language, in signing or through body language and gesture.'

##### Challenges and Dilemmas

'Putting into practice a written policy of listening to children who are non-verbal, or who use an alternative communication system, or are learning English as an additional language, when time and resources are under pressure.'

## Learning and Development

### Personal, Social and Emotional Development

##### Enabling Environments

'Provide positive images that challenge children's thinking and help them to embrace differences in gender, ethnicity, language, religion, culture, special educational needs and disabilities.'

### Communication, Language and Literacy

##### Learning and Development

'Link language with physical movement in action songs and rhymes, role-play and practical experiences such as cookery and gardening.'

'Develop children's awareness of languages and writing systems other than English, and communication systems such as signing and Braille.'

## **Knowledge and Understanding of the World**

### Positive Relationships

'Help children to become aware of, explore and question differences in gender, ethnicity, language, religion, culture, special educational needs and disability issues.'

'Support children with sensory impairments by providing supplementary experiences and information to enhance their learning about the world around them.'

## **Practice Guidance for the EYFS**

### **Communication, Language and Literacy**

#### **Language for Communication**

##### Effective Practice – Birth -11 months

'Find out from parents how they like to communicate with their baby, noting especially the chosen language.'

##### Effective Practice – 30-50 months

'Support children in using a variety of communication strategies, including signing where appropriate.'

'When introducing a new activity, uses mime and gesture to support language development.'

### **Creative Development**

#### **Being Creative – Responding to Experiences, Expressing and Communicating Ideas**

##### Look, Listen and Note – 22-36 months

'Word play, signs, body language and gestures that young children use in response to their experiences.'