

Assessing the needs of EAL families in the transition to primary one

Louie Larkin

Background

- Pilot summer 2007, Burnbank Family Centre
- Introduction to curriculum, outings, language development
- 4 weeks, 2 workers
- Recommended longer input

Background

- Late 2007, ICS secures funding
- Mid January 2008, ICS contacts all 37 early years establishments to identify EAL families
- End January, two project workers recruited to Transition Support Project
- February/March, staff interviews
- April/May parent interviews
- June/August sessions with families

Report Aims

- To review the needs of EAL families in their transition year
- To inform the work of the Transition Support Project
- To inform the priorities of future EAL work in the Early Years Transition sub-group
- To review the support and resource needs of Early Years staff working with EAL families

Returns

- 37 EY establishments contacted
- 17 nil returns [46%]
- 20 positive returns [54%]
(includes 5 pre- or post-transition)
- 15 establishments visited [40%]

EAL children identified

- **50** initially identified
- **30** in transition year [60%]
- **11** identified with support needs [22% of all 50 - 36% of 30 'transition' children]
- **6** Polish families attend summer programme

Report recommendations

- Clear process of needs assessment of EAL families identified and circulated.
- The role of EAL and Bilingual Team to be clarified and circulated.
- Staff should know of the *Learning in 2+ Languages report*.
- Staff should know who and how to access official translating and interpreting services.

Report recommendations

- Staff should have understanding of language development of bi-lingual children.
- The Transition Document should record and validate the home language.
- Staff should have access to EAL resources.

Report recommendations

- Staff development:

EAL team to lead sessions on bi-lingualism, assessment skills
communication skills

Capacity building of expertise

Sharing anxieties and good
practice.

Report recommendations

- The work of the Transition Project Group and EAL and Bilingual team should be better aligned with the transition return of EAL children.
- Learning opportunities of families thus developed earlier in year -rolling programme in six-week blocks, including assessment.
- Community Learning to strengthen links with Early Years – eg ESOL classes, community classes, ‘Buddies’.

And finally ...

- Using the internet for translating signs requires a note of caution.
- A Polish parent approached staff to tell them they had made a mistake. Under the English **FIRE EXIT** sign the Polish sign read ...
- ***“This way out. You’re fired!”***