

EAL and SEN Can Coexist

Plan language access and identified learning support together when EAL and SEN needs coexist.

10 min preparation | Staff planning and review

Before you begin

Gather learning history, languages, access to teaching and evidence across settings.

Use it in four steps

1. Plan language access and identified learning support together when EAL and SEN needs coexist.
2. Check whether instruction, language access or unfamiliar schooling helps explain the pattern.
3. Provide appropriate support and gather responses across time and settings.
4. Where concerns persist, use the school's specialist referral process with the evidence gathered.

Worked example: EAL and SEN Can Coexist

Slow English writing alongside strong oral reasoning calls for language support and observation. Persistent difficulties across languages and settings may warrant specialist review; neither pattern by itself diagnoses or excludes SEN.

Teacher prompt: "Show the relationship and explain the choice you made."

Review the evidence

Does the support improve access, and what concerns remain despite it?

Review and refine

Adjust language scaffolds from evidence while maintaining any independently identified learning support.

Apply in your setting

Compare evidence from subject classes, EAL teaching and family learning history; avoid making one test decisive.

Adjust the language support

A1-A2 access: keep the subject goal; use visuals, a small word bank, pointing or drawing and partner rehearsal. Use a home language to establish meaning where helpful.

B1-B2 extension: ask for fuller explanations, precise subject vocabulary and qualifications. Reduce sentence openings when learners can organise the response independently.

These are starting points, not placement rules. Judge support from the learner's response to this task; proficiency can differ across skills.