

English as an Additional Language (EAL) Student Intake Checklist | Exemplar

When a new student arrives at your school, how do you determine if they are an EAL student? Here is a sample checklist:

Initial Registration in School Office

- ☐ **Canadian Immigration Documents - Foreign Born (301)** Student was born outside of Canada and their first language is a language other than English. Student will arrive with **one** of the following:
**Confirm latest policies. These can change without notice.*
 - ☐ Confirmation of Permanent Residence document and Permanent Resident Card (if available)
 - ☐ Visitor Record and Passport (student accompanying parent on work or study permit)
 - ☐ Work Permit and Passport (check expiration)
 - ☐ Study Permit and Passport (check expiration)
 - ☐ If the parent is on a study permit the following additional documents are required:
 - ☐ Parent letter of acceptance for post-secondary (must be provincially recognized and a minimum of two year full time diploma or degree or one year full time graduate or post-doctoral program);
 - ☐ Parent proof of enrolment and tuition payment for program.
 - ☐ Refugee Protection Claimant Document
 - ☐ Diplomatic Card, Visa, Passport
 - ☐ Parent only - Canadian Passport or Citizenship Card/Certificate or Canadian Birth Certificate
 - ☐ Status Identification Card
- ☐ **Birth Certificate - Canadian Born (303)** Student was born in Canada but their first language (L1) is a language other than English (see school registration form).
- ☐ **Refugee Status (640)** - Student was born outside of Canada and has entered Canada as a refugee as defined in the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act as someone who has been forced to flee their country due to persecution.

An eligible student must provide the school authority with current documentation from Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship Canada substantiating the student's refugee status.

From: <https://www.alberta.ca/k-12-education-funding-framework.aspx> - Funding Manual, Glossary Terms

- ☐ **English as an Additional Language (Unfunded) (302)** this may apply to international students and/or out of province students (e.g., attending an athletic program).
- ☐ **School registration forms** often include the question, “What language is spoken at home?”. If the family indicates a language other than English, this language is considered their L1 and the student is to be considered an English Language Learner. The question, “Where was the student born?” can also provide helpful background information.
 - ★ Some families may be reluctant to indicate that other languages are spoken at home for a variety of reasons, such as:
 - They may think it will reduce the chances of their child getting into post secondary;
 - They may speak some English at home already, so they do not acknowledge their home language;
 - They may believe that their child will not get the same opportunities as mainstream students;
 - They may feel a sense of shame in acknowledging that they do not speak or know English;
 - They may misunderstand the question.
 - ★ It is important to indicate to parents that having a better understanding of their child’s linguistic profile will help teachers in developing the language skills their child needs to be successful in school. The more information parents can provide about their child’s language, interests, and school experiences, the greater their child’s success.

School determines if the student is an English as an Additional Language (EAL) student

- ☐ **Face to Face in School Office** - If student accompanies parent(s) during registration, have an informal conversation with the new student.
- ☐ **Family Interview** - A designated school teacher or administrator conducts a family interview with the parent(s) to learn more about the child: past formal schooling, languages studied, medical history, interests, strengths. Gather past progress reports and any standardized assessments e.g., Psychological assessments.
- ☐ **Conduct an initial EAL Proficiency Assessment** (Note: student may be better able to demonstrate proficiency after an initial adjustment period; therefore, reassessing is advisable at a later date)
- ☐ **Code EAL either 301 or 303** (Note: typically, students who are coded as 640 will also carry a 301 code)
- ☐ **Determine best placement** - follow age-appropriate guidelines.
- ☐ **Inform teachers** of the arrival of an EAL students.
- ☐ **Plan for entry** - determine what supporting materials would be helpful (e.g, school map, transportation plan, school supplies, etc.). Schools may want to encourage a next day start to allow for a smoother transition.

Tour the School

- ☐ Map of the school
- ☐ Bell times
- ☐ Website and parent portal
- ☐ List of community supports (e.g. local library; newcomer services; settlement workers in schools)
- ☐ How and when to report absences
- ☐ School communications

In Classroom

Classroom teacher (and/or with support from Inclusive Education Team) assesses their EAL students both formally and informally on an ongoing basis. Here are **some** possibilities:

- ☐ **Alberta Education K - 12 EAL Proficiency Benchmarks** which assesses the four language strands
- ☐ **Fountas & Pinnell** reading and writing assessments for Grades 1-6 (if used by the district)
- ☐ **IDEA Proficiency Test (IPT)** for Grades 2-12
- ☐ **STAR Reading Screener** (Renaissance Learning)
- ☐ **Guided reading levels**
- ☐ Whole class **writing assignments** - provide a visual writing prompt (without support).
- ☐ **One on One oral conversation** with students to assess listening and speaking skills
- ☐ **Teacher observations**

Documentation of an assessment must be kept on file at the school/school jurisdiction that supports the need for additional English language supports. Annual assessment of a child's/student's language proficiency development is required to inform instructional planning and the provision of timely and appropriate learning supports.

A Few Considerations

***Canadian born EAL students** may enter schools and be less noticed than students who originate from a foreign country. Early Learning teachers need to be mindful that Canadian born EAL students may be thousands of words behind their peers and may require some additional support to build up their vocabulary so they do not 'slip through the cracks'.

***Reading Proficiency** - EAL students may read aloud, sound fluent and appear to be successfully developing English Proficiency. However, strong decoding skills can sometimes be misleading and cause us to falsely assume that students are understanding what they read. Comprehension is key so ask both closed and open questions following reading including questions that require inferencing and going beyond the text such as, "Why is this concept (in the book) important?". Only when students can decode *and* understand what they read are they showing the necessary progress.