



ELLIC
English Language Learning
for Indigenous Children



Language for Littlies

What

How

Why

A handbook about how to add English when young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children speak other languages at home with their families or carers.

Every child has a language story. Every family has one too.

Language for Littlies

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Book cover on page 18: *I'm the biggest thing in the ocean*, by Kevin Sherry, published by Penguin Random House.

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Author

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Illustrator

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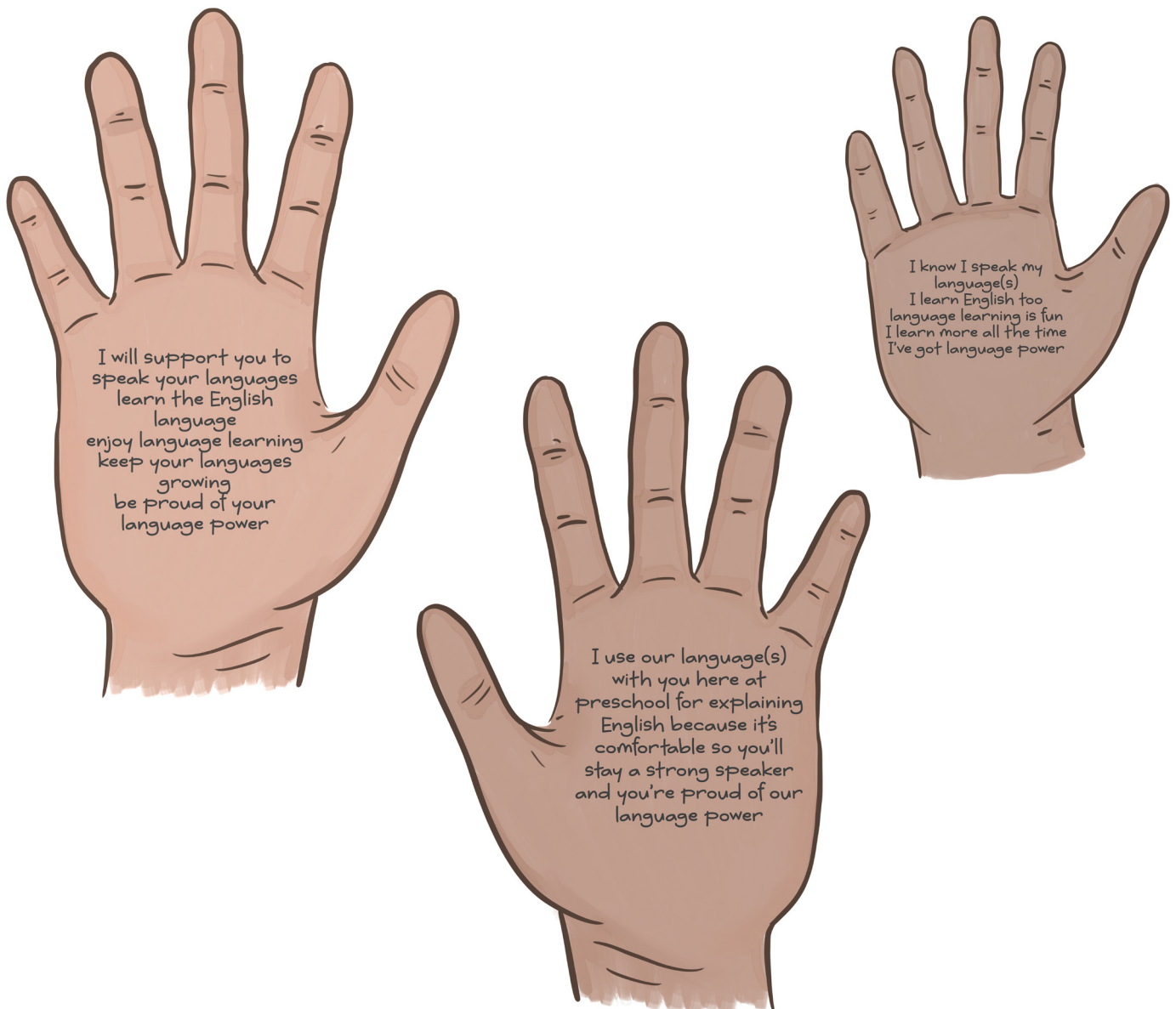
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Principles

This handbook is a practical guide for Early Childhood Educators about how to support young children's language learning as they extend their learning journeys beyond their home and family.

The approach is based on basic language and learning rights for young children.

1. I have the right to speak my languages.
2. I have the right to support as an English-language learner.
3. I have the right to enjoy language learning.
4. I have the right to know that language learning is a journey.
5. I have the right to be celebrated for my growing language power.



Note

We have designed this book to be an accessible starting point for anybody involved in Early Childhood Education who wants to support Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners on their way to adding English to the other languages they bring with them. For this reason, we have chosen to use plain, everyday English wherever possible. We have tried to keep specialist terminology to a minimum. We hope we have avoided being too wordy too.

However, this booklet addresses some complex language terrain, so we have had to make some choices. For example, we use the term 'English', a single word, to refer to the standard varieties of English, such as Standard Australian English, which we typically hear in mainstream media and find represented in books. We refer to 'traditional languages' (also known as First Languages), and 'new languages', which include contact languages like the creoles Kriol and Yumplatok. We use 'Indigenised Englishes' to explicitly include both Aboriginal English(es) and Torres Strait Islander English, and to contrast with 'English'.

Children's languages and dialects represent – as all languages and dialects do – unique and specific cultural conceptions and perspectives. They deserve, as the co-design communities of the ELLIC project urged, to be valued, along with the acquisition of (Standard Australian) English.

Learning languages

Young children learn the languages spoken to them by their families and carers

Children might hear just one main language spoken in their family or they might hear a few different languages. Where several languages are spoken, young children learn what they hear of them. Quite often they will know more of one language than of the other languages they hear. This is perfectly normal – it reflects the way each language is used around them and with them. The first and main language learned from birth is called a first language – we call this ‘L1’ for short.


Learning your first language (L1) from birth

Whether learning one or more languages from birth, young children move through particular stages. They start with saying one word, then move on to putting a couple of words together.

Gradually they learn more words and, importantly, they learn how to put words together with the ‘extras’ their language needs, like connecting words, endings, markers, etc. Even when children are surrounded by their own language it takes them around five to six years to learn these basics.

Using your first language (L1) over a lifetime

By about 5 or 6 years old, children have learned most of the basics of making sentences in the main language (or languages) they use at home. Of course, as they get older and meet new situations and ideas, they add new words and meanings, and new and more mature ways of using their languages. We all know how very young children tell stories can be very different to older children!



By about 5 or 6 years old, children have learned most of the basics of making sentences in the main language (or languages) they use at home.

Language backgrounds of English-language learners

Young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have L1s other than English when their family ways of talking are not the kinds of English used at school, or in books, kids’ TV shows or movies. These young English-language learners do not come with years of speaking this kind of English at home, so educators need to support and encourage them as they start on their English-language learning journey. They learn English as an additional language power to what they speak with family and caregivers – which might be a traditional language, a new contact language and/or a different variety of English spoken by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples. Go to the Language Zone for more about language backgrounds: <https://www.ellic.edu.au/language-zone/>

Learning English as an additional language

Just like learning any language, learning the English language can’t happen all at once. It takes time. In early stages, English-language learners will remember words or phrases which they hear often, and which are easy to understand because of the context.

Right at the start, the new language environment might be overwhelming, and they might not say much at all – this doesn’t mean they are not learning. Since learners rely on familiar language, finding creative ways to revisit and recycle language is key. It’s a big leap when learners start trying to say their own sentences (known as ‘learner approximations’) – encourage them, even when it’s not always easy to understand. Be sure learners are encouraged to keep trying.

English-language learning in Early Childhood Education settings

When young Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learners enter Early Childhood Education settings, they might experience a number of firsts: moving outside their (extended) family for the first time, interacting with non-Indigenous people, encountering non-Indigenous ways of doing things, being spoken to in English, having all kinds of new things to play with. In all aspects, this is a big adventure for children who need your understanding and support.

In the area of English-language learning, take care to provide support for children's understanding.

You can do this through:

- routines
- physical context
- visuals
- gestures.

Supporting children's communication is important too.

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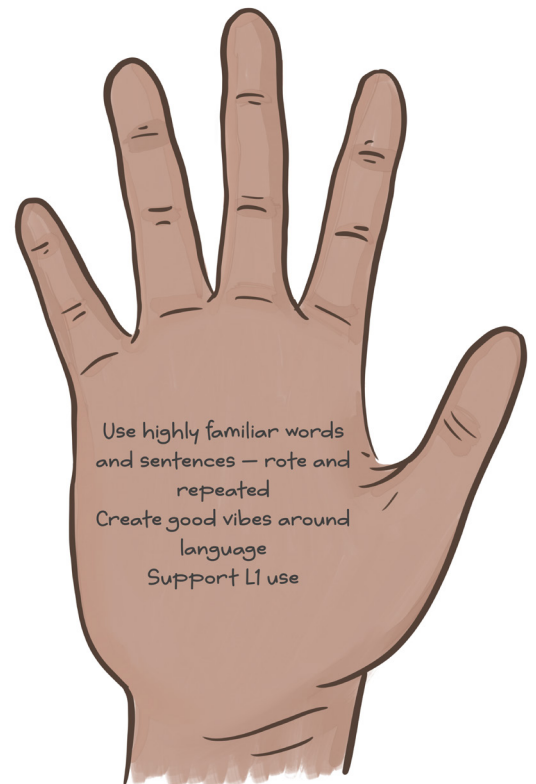




You can do this through:

- using highly familiar words and sentences (rote and repeated)
- providing a positive and welcoming classroom with 'good vibes'
- giving L1 support.

These children are still developing in their L1 so encourage them to speak it whenever possible, as well as developing their skills in speaking English.

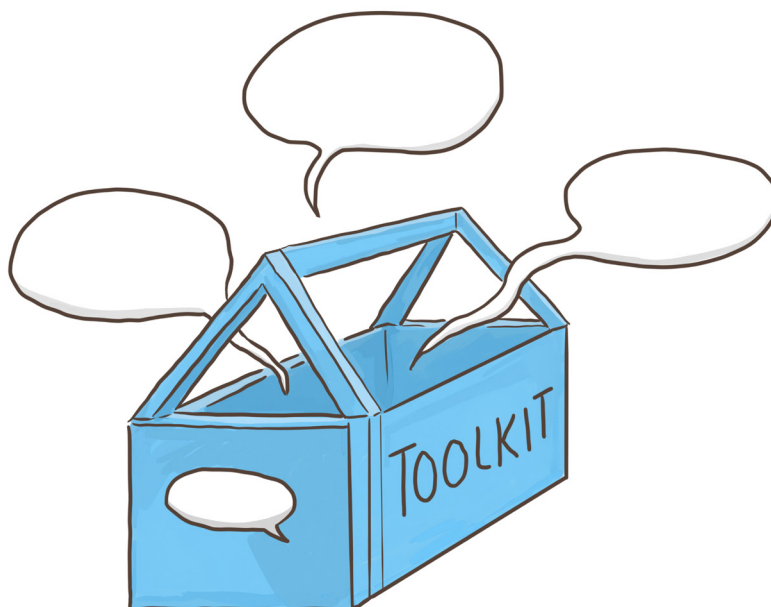


English-language toolkit for Early Childhood Educators

Most of us need to build up a teacher toolkit for young English-language learners. This handbook aims to help. Educators support young English-language learners by being mindful of English-language learning opportunities (MELLO) and making the most of them. We encourage young English-language learners by giving them positive feedback about language learning and trying more each day. This English-language learning journey should be exciting and positive.

More language power!

Educators support young English-language learners by being mindful of English-language learning opportunities (MELLO) and making the most of them.



More language power

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children need to use and build the languages they already have for talking with their family and other members of their language community. A shared language is a shared power for building and keeping relationships, for clearly communicating observations and experiences, for transmitting knowledge and culture across generations. Learning an extra language adds to the people, contexts and topics young children will be able to engage with throughout their lives. Knowing more than one language (multilingualism) has always been valued and purposefully cultivated by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples: **More language power!**

Family languages

Why start with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander languages in a handbook about English?

Respect

Putting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander family languages front and centre in children's education celebrates their families' language strength and resilience. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families deserve respect and support for their languages and cultures. A positive focus on the languages that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children bring with them supports their families' rights to maintain their own language and cultural identity.

Reality

Children communicate with their caregivers and learn about their world through language. The main language caregivers use with their children from birth does the heavy lifting. Caregivers use their main language to talk with their young children about what they are doing and how they are feeling. In this language, they can tell children facts and stories about things they haven't seen. In this language, caregivers and children can ask and respond and guess and wish together. Children's main language can carry a big load, which is why it is really important for their development that they keep using it.



Recognition

Across Australia, there is great diversity in the languages that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples speak with family members. If the language backgrounds of young children are well-recognised, they can be given support and encouragement both for the language(s) they bring from home, as well as for their English-language learning.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander language contexts

- Some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families speak a traditional language as their main language, like Murrinh-Patha, Djambarrpuyngu, Warlpiri, Wik Mungkan or Pitjantjatjara. Children in these communities learn English as an additional language.
- Some speak a new language, a contact language like a creole, such as Kriol, Yumplatok, Lockhart River Creole or Yarrie Lingo, or a mixed language like Light Warlpiri or Gurindji Kriol. Children in these communities learn English as an additional language.
- Some speak an Indigenised English, like an Aboriginal English or Torres Strait Islander English. Children in these communities learn Standard Australian English as an additional dialect.
- Some speak English. Children in these communities are speakers of English, at an age-appropriate level.

Sensitive conversations about languages

Some language backgrounds – especially new languages and Indigenised Englishes (such as Aboriginal English) – might not be straightforward. Some lack recognition and do not all have standardised names yet. For instance, Kriol has been named for decades, but Lockhart River Creole was only named recently. Some might still be thought of as not very good English. For such reasons it might take several sensitive conversations with families and caregivers and local staff to get the full language story.

English-language learners speak other languages

English-language learners speak languages that are entirely or mostly different from the kind of English used at schools, in books and on TV. The kind of English taught in schools is sometimes called Standard Australian English.

It is important to note that small differences – like some different words or a different accent – that do not get in the way of understanding each other don't require special English-language learning approaches. Note, too, that small differences might be a sign of identity, the way Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people from a particular place speak. Try to gain further context around language use by noticing and talking to people around you.

Adding English

The word 'adding' is used intentionally to flag that we want learners of English to keep speaking their L1s – English is an additional language, an extra language power. English should not replace children's L1s. Additive multilingualism is beneficial for children's development – suppressing and marginalising children's L1s is called subtractive multilingualism, and this isn't beneficial.

We want learners of English to keep speaking their L1s – English is an additional language, an extra language power.

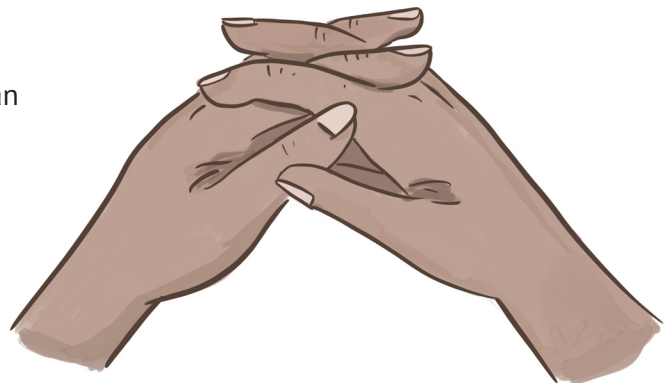
The goal is multilingual

Some past attitudes and practices have been punitive to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children's L1s, preventing children from using their own languages. Nowadays we know better. But there are subtler versions, generally because Australian education is still learning to work effectively for multilingual children. For example, some educators might still believe it'd be better if all parents just spoke English. This is problematic. There are always good reasons why families and caregivers don't 'just speak English'. It might not be their strongest or preferred language, all their education might have been in another language, they might feel less expressive in English, if it's not the language of their own childhood English might be less emotionally rich, they may have less attachment. Also, English might not work for everybody in the family – keeping culture and communication lines strong across the generations might only work in the family's home language.

Untangling languages that overlap

Many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children have rich and complex language backgrounds. They are immersed in a pool of language varieties and they soak them up like sponges!

As they gain more language experiences – probably hearing some varieties more than others – they associate some words and language features with particular people or contexts and not others. There can be some tricky bits in this journey. Some varieties in a child's language pool might be similar in some ways and 'overlap'. In sponge-mode, it all gets soaked up regardless. But some contexts use just one variety only. For example, many children will experience all or much of their schooling in Standard Australian English.



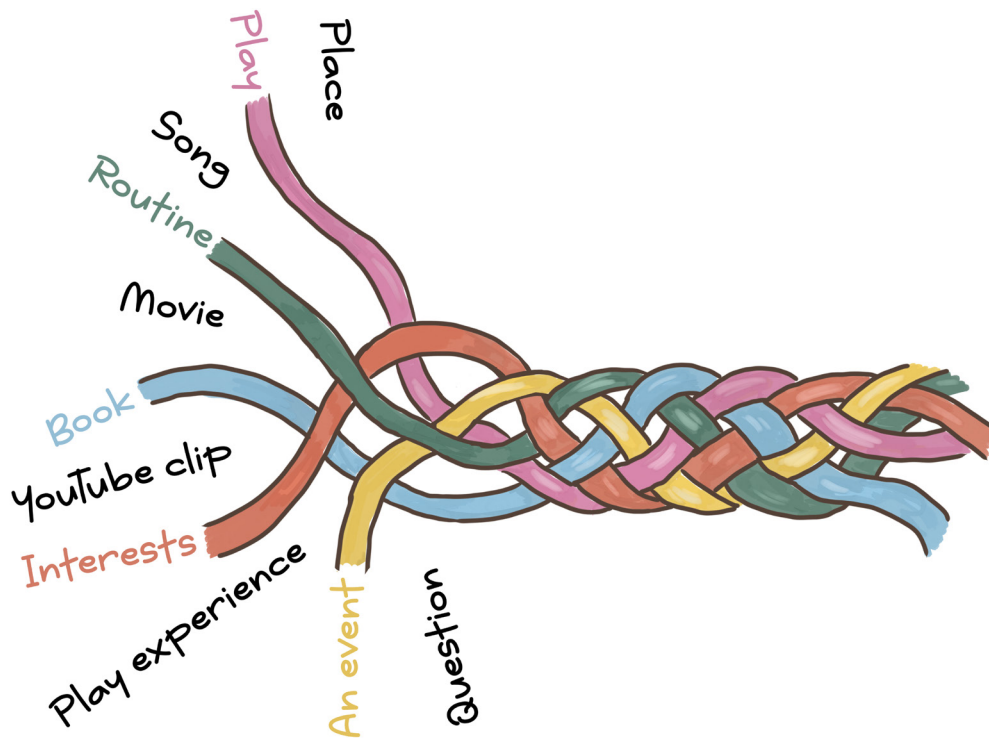
We can prepare young children for this by talking comfortably about different ways of talking and noticing what's the same and what's different, assisting their growing awareness. Casual chats about English give them some useful hints too. Be mindful of English-language learning opportunities (MELLO).

- Creoles, like Yumplatok and Kriol, contain a lot of words historically from English. Some might sound a bit similar, but are used differently or have different meanings.
- Dialects, like Aboriginal Englishes from different places, have even more words that sound like other Englishes, and some have different meanings.

Here's what it might look like:



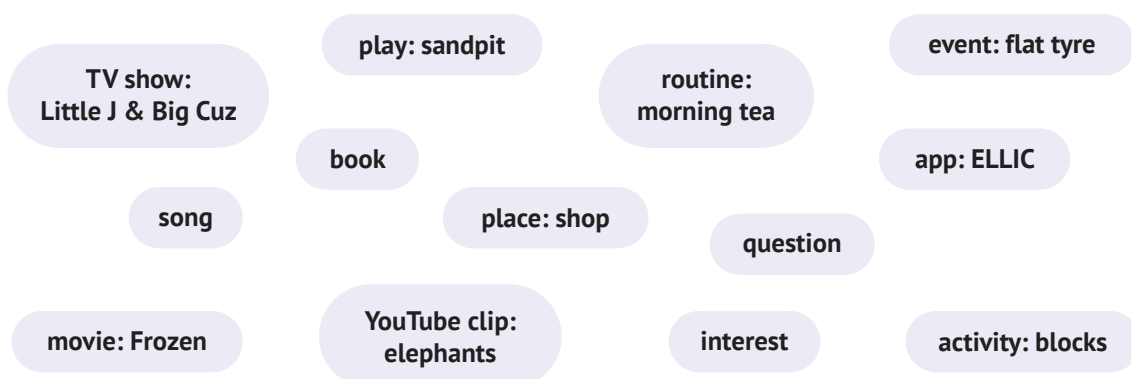
Mindful English-language learning opportunities (MELLO)



hook: a starting point

There are many English-language learning opportunities throughout the day.

They can be child-led, teacher-planned, part of a regular routine, or an unexpected event. Building on the interests and agency of each child is important.





focus: revisiting and recycling

Children become familiar with snippets of English language and language patterns when we to return to the same activity or experience again and again.



add: new English-language learning

Give children something extra, such as more vocabulary or a new take on a language pattern (like shifting from 'I'm hungry' to 'she's hungry').

Help children feel good about their English-language learning.



wind up

Recording: Make observations of English-language learning, make a video of children.

Moving on: Retain reminders of the language-learning focus so you and the children can revisit.

Revisiting: This can take many forms, for example, posters, photos, observations of children.



reflecting: thinking it over

What's new in children's language? Words? Sentences? Questions?

What does the data in the ELLIC app tell you about what children are learning?

How can we build on it? What can we improve?

Starting from a book hook



hook: a starting point

- Choose a book in English you think children will enjoy. There are some suggestions in the ELLIC booklists that can be found at this link: <https://www.ellic.edu.au/community-zone/reading-at-home/>
- Check the book has good visuals that support the story (this is important when children are new English-language learners) and not too much English language (so children aren't swamped).

Hint: can you imagine the children saying the sentences after you? If the sentences are too long, think about re-wording them. Stick the easier sentences over the originals. English-language teachers often have to do this because children's books are primarily written for children who speak English all the time.



focus: revisiting and recycling

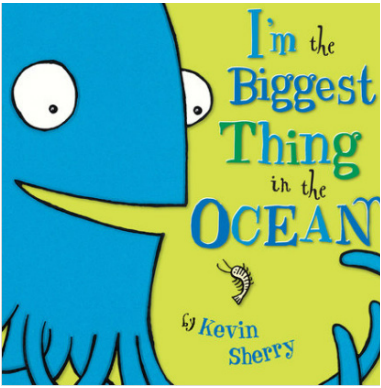
- Read the book again and again.
- Make meaning through actions, gestures, expressions or voices for characters and have children do them, too.
- Make the English language familiar: once they know the book, encourage children to join in saying words with you or after you (build up to a few words or even whole sentences).
- Play with the meaning and the language: don't say a word (whisper or mouth it) and invite children to say it. You can also do this with actions, gestures or expressions.
- Make sure there's a hard copy of the book for children to look through.
- Display pictures or pages from the book so children can talk about it, tell the story in English and/or in their L1.





add: new English-language learning

- Shift it up a notch by taking an idea from the book and do it in your preschool or kindy.

Sample storybook	Language points and activities
<p><u>I'm the biggest thing in the ocean</u></p> 	<p>The phrase 'I'm bigger than' is repeated throughout.</p> <p>There are lots of nouns like 'shrimp', 'clams' and 'jellyfish'.</p> <p>The story is in first person: 'I'm ...'</p> <hr/> <p>Invite children to paint sea creatures and play 'I'm bigger than ...'</p> <p>Provide props (e.g. plastic toys or soft toys) of sea creatures and invite children to retell words or phrases from the story or make a frieze with all the animals featured, or make a squid sock puppet.</p> <hr/> <p>As you play, you'll change your English, for example, if we're all squids, we say 'we' and 'squids'. Notice this with the children: One squid says 'I'm a squid', more say 'we're squids'. Use your special squid voices!</p> <hr/> <p>If the children are keen on sea animals, invite them to make sea animals from playdough or collage materials or draw/paint an ocean frieze on cards.</p> <p>Practise saying basic animal facts: fish have fins, tail, no legs; shrimp/prawns have feelers, tail, lots of legs; clams have shells, no legs. Then practise sharing sea animal facts. You can all do actions as a prompt for saying each body part.</p> <hr/> <p>In the ELLIC app, you'll find a beach activity where children take photos of some of the animals and birds they see: https://www.ellic.edu.au/educator-zone/teaching-and-learning/app-2-where-i-am/activity-1-beach-walk/</p>



wind up

- **Language learning:** Have children name the things on a page. You could video them saying 'I'm bigger than ... [whatever they choose]', or you could record children saying or repeating a sentence from the book each or together.
- **Recording:** Take photos of children with squid puppets or in front of their ocean frieze, and print them out.
- **Moving on:** When you are ready to go on to a new book, keep the book you've read in a special basket, maybe with photos and the squid puppets/drawings so children can return to it and re-read.



reflecting: thinking it over

- What's new in children's language? Words? Sentences? Questions?
- How can we build on it?
- Could we improve?

Starting from a play hook



hook: a starting point

Every play experience that educators make available for children can be a great springboard for language learning. Play experiences give a meaningful, hands-on context for language learning.

- Cars on the mat: taking people places; going fast and slow; stopping; starting; racing.
- Painting: talking about what's in the picture, such as people or places; colours; sizes.
- Water play: filling and emptying; more and less; floating and sinking.
- Sandpit play: making tunnels, roads, hills, camps and houses.
- Playing with blocks: building towers higher and higher; making houses or roads. Sometimes children might sort blocks into big, small and in-between sizes or sort by shape or colour. They may also share them out, exploring the concepts 'mine' and 'yours'.



focus: revisiting and recycling

POV of English speaker	POV of L1 speaker (educator)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the Aboriginal educator and the children to talk with you in their L1 and in English about what they are doing with the play experience. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help children explain their activity. • Translate from L1 into English where needed.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the Aboriginal educator and children for their local words for the key elements of the experience. • Use the English words that the Aboriginal educator uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify some key words in L1. • Identify the English equivalents.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take photos of the children with the play experience and of the Aboriginal educator and the children talking about the experience as they play. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the play going. • Talk about what is happening using the language you feel comfortable using.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build up a photo display of the play experience. • Talk about each new photo in English. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build up a photo display of the play experience. • Talk about each new photo in L1 and in English.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practise L1 words, modelling being a language learner (if children and Aboriginal educator want you to). 	



add: new English-language learning

- What is the vocabulary associated with the play experience?
- What verbs (doing words) are relevant?
- Use the photos to create a short text to read aloud with children. Use gestures to represent the verbs. You might be able to do it in L1 too (by recording Aboriginal educator or family).



wind up

- **Recording:** children might want to talk about their play experience or in a fact book that has been created.



reflecting: thinking it over

- What's new in children's language? Words? Sentences? Questions?
- How can we harness it?
- Can we improve?

EXAMPLE

Getting the cattle in



hook: a starting point

Sarah observes the children in block play. The children are talking in their L1. They move blocks in and out of place. They are making mooing sounds. Marnie, the Aboriginal educator, tells Sarah that the children have built a cattle yard with a gate to let the cattle in.



focus: revisiting and recycling

- Marnie talks with the children in their L1.
- Sarah asks Marnie about the L1 words for 'yard', 'fence', 'gate', 'cattle/cows/bulls'.
- Sarah and Marnie choose Standard Australian English (SAE) words for each item and use these new words with the children.
- Sarah takes photos of the yard the children have built and of Marnie and the children talking about it.
- As Marnie talks and plays with the children they might open and close the gate, talk about the people who work with the cattle, how they round up the cattle (on horse or perhaps helicopter mustering).
- Sarah asks Marnie how the children know about working with cattle (perhaps because of a local station or historical connections). She and Marnie build up a photo display or a laminated 'photo bank' of cattle yards, stockmen, cattle truck, helicopter mustering etc. Marnie checks pictures to make sure they reflect the local context.
- Marnie talks about each new photo in L1 (or they might encourage children to talk to each other) and in English. Sarah could practise L1 words, modelling being a language learner (if children and Marnie are OK with that).
- If Marnie was not there, Sarah could show the picture of the block cattle yard to children's families – she could send the photo (email, SMS etc) or print it for the Talking Board at the drop-off area. She could ask the families to tell her a bit about cattle yards so she knows how to talk to the children about it. The families might like to come in and talk to Sarah and the children.



The Talking Board or Photo Board provides great opportunities to interact with families and to learn a little of the local language/s as photos are discussed.

EXAMPLE

**add: new English-language learning**

This type of event is so rich – bursting with vocabulary!

Sarah could focus on:

- doing words (verbs): round up, bring in, open/close gate, sort/separate, brand, load up, let loose, muster etc
- cattle-related words: cattle for a mob or group, cow for this kind of animal but also for a female cow, bull for a male cow, calf for a baby cow (and many more, including different breeds)
- station-related words: yard, fence, gate, truck, stockman.

Marnie uses the images to make a fact book with focused language. For example, 'The ringers round up the cattle. They bring them into the yard and close the gate. They put the cows on the truck.'

Marnie uses gestures to represent the verbs when she reads the story. She reads the story in L1 and in English.

**wind up**

Sarah records the children talking about their cattle yard using the photos that they have chosen.

Starting from a place hook

Re-creating places is a wonderful play-based way of generating contexts that are full of language-learning opportunities.

In children's lived experiences, some places are associated with people talking in English.

Other places are experienced entirely through children's L1 with family and caregivers. These are important for children – they occur in the language they understand fully with people most important to them. These experiences are children's strong ground. They will feature in their play and they will want to communicate about them – when this is with an English speaker, English comes into it. This is an important distinction to keep in mind.

Children might have encountered some places through the media in English language, such as watching movies, shows or clips, or playing games. If this happens at home, they might have also talked about them with their family in their L1.

Likely to be experienced in L1	Likely to be experienced in English (with caregivers speaking L1)	Imaginary or fantasy places – perhaps viewed in English media or triggered/augmented by an L1 experience/conversation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> at home out bush, at the river at the wharf, on the reef 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> at the shop at the clinic in town 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Underwater: prompted by a toy submarine, the film <i>The Little Mermaid</i> Rocket ship: prompted by a cartoon North Pole: prompted by seeing <i>Frozen</i> Life in an ant's nest, prompted by a trip out bush or a documentary

EXAMPLE



hook: At the clinic (child-led but could be teacher-planned)

Some children are playing healthcare worker/doctor and mum with a sick baby (doll). The healthcare worker is examining the baby whose mum says is crying all the time. The healthcare worker says the baby is sick and needs medicine.



EXAMPLE

**focus: revisiting and recycling**

- Ask to join in and be the pretend doctor, asking the healthcare worker what's wrong with the baby: 'Is she hot? Is she crying all the time? Is she eating and drinking anything?'
- Look in the baby's mouth and ears and listen to her chest.
- Take photo/s of the children examining the baby.
- Use pictures of places, and collections of real/pretend things for acting out. Talk about them and act them out with the children. If you have a play medical kit, use that.
- Invite someone from the local clinic to visit and act out a scene. Be sure to repeat some of the questions for the children to hear and act out, maybe with a stuffed animal or two, or some puppets.

**add: new English-language learning**

- In this example, there is a lot of new language: people and things at the clinic, feeling sick, body parts, pain, temperature, eating, drinking, weeing, pooing, accidents, falling, cutting, breaking.
- Questions are a real language feature of interactions at a clinic (your name, your symptoms). You could develop a short script with children in the clinic.

What's your name?

Are you sick? Are you hurt?

Sick: Temperature, ear, mouth, chest, medicine

Hurt: Where are you hurt?

Hurt: Here? Do you need a bandage?

- Connect with the ELLIC app that explores a range of states of being, including hunger and thirst.

**wind up**

- **Recording:** Video or record the children asking and responding to the questions in the script.
- **Moving on:** Create a resource box with the doctor's play kit, your script, photos and books about going to the clinic, and the play medical kit. Display photos of any visit on the Talk About board at the entrance for families.

**reflecting: thinking it over**

What's new in children's language? Words? Sentences? Questions?

How can we harness it?

If your children used the ELLIC app as part of this hook, what does the data tell you about each child's interests and progression of skills?

Can we improve?

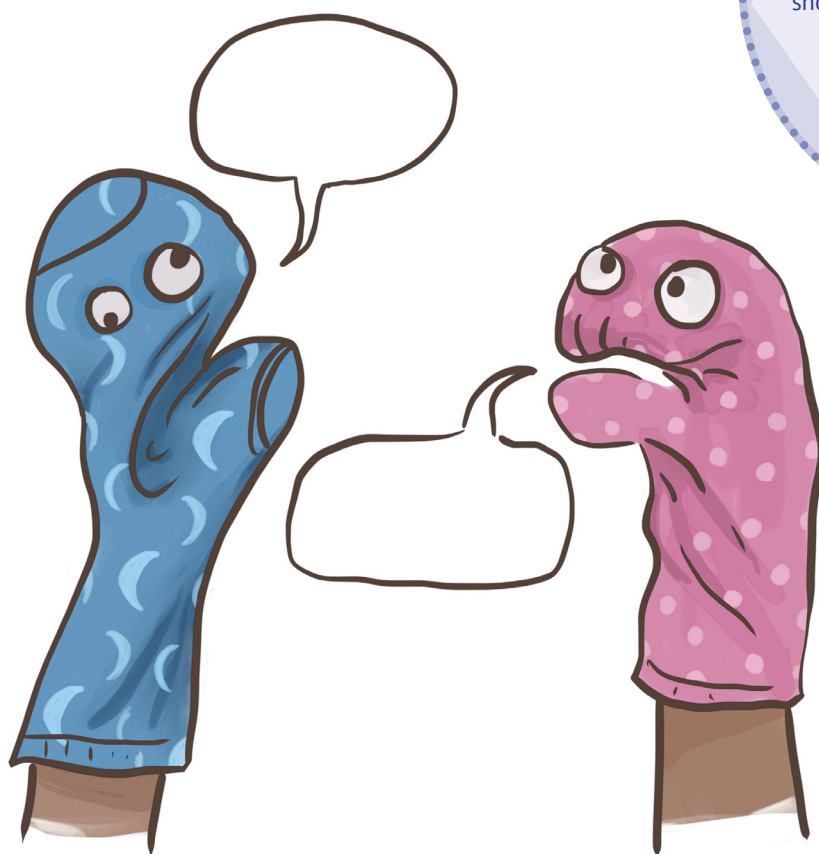
Starting from a routine hook

Routines that happen every day are a great tool when it comes to young English-language learners. Students will pick up words and phrases being used again and again in these settings, so be sure to use routines to their best language-learning effect by planning the language they will hear. Easy-to-follow instructions and short question-and-answer routines – taught and modelled (e.g., with sock puppets) – can easily be worked into each daily activity. On some busy days these occasions might be one of the few times children get to speak a little English with you.

Examples of routines that can easily be harnessed for English-language learning:

- coming in (or leaving)
- morning tea
- doing calendar and weather
- teeth cleaning or handwashing.

Be sure to use routines to their best language-learning effect by planning the language they will hear. Easy-to-follow instructions and short question-and-answer routines – taught and modelled (e.g., with sock puppets) – can easily be worked into each daily activity.



EXAMPLE

**hook: Morning tea (teacher-planned)**

There are just so many language opportunities at morning teatime! You will probably find you do some routines for a few weeks and then the novelty wears off.

**focus: revisiting and recycling**

- You could use morning tea to reinforce a current learning focus, for example, colours, by using colour-coded tables in class: 'Where are you sitting today?' 'At the *blue* table.'
- You could ask what fruit or snack they want today. And talk about how much they do or don't like things. (The ELLIC app has activities to support this focus: <https://www.ellc.edu.au/educator-zone/teaching-and-learning/app-1-this-is-me/activity-1-fruit-salad/>.)
- You could focus on quantities, using a picture showing 'a little bit', 'half' and 'full' and asking children, 'How much is in the cup?' 'Do you want more?' 'Do you want one or two pieces?'

**add: new English-language learning**

Keep a visual diary or daily reflection of the new words and language patterns that you practise with the children during morning tea. This will jog your memory when you revisit it. This is also a concrete way of showing the children just how much English language they have learned.

**wind up**

Recording: Use a checklist to record the children who use the language that you focus on and any that haven't (so far).

Moving on: Make a start on a new language routine at the start of the week. Model it with somebody or a puppet.

**reflecting: thinking it over**

What's new in children's language? Words? Sentences? Questions?

How can we harness it?

If your children used the ELLIC app as part of this hook, what does the data tell you about each child's interests and progression of skills?

Can we improve?

Starting from a nature clip hook



hook: a starting point

Most children are fascinated by animals – they like sharing what they know and learning more. Snippets of nature documentaries, children’s TV shows and other video clips are highly engaging material which can be revisited again and again.

Common topics are:

minibeasts: insects, spiders

dangerous animals: snakes, crocodiles, sharks

local animals: land or sea

animals from other countries: penguins, polar bears, lions, tigers, giraffes, elephants.

EXAMPLE



hook: nature scenario (child-led)

Butterflies: inspired by a butterfly outside, a drawing of a pretty butterfly, a child’s painting of a butterfly.

Find a short video clip of a butterfly and its life cycle to share with children. Here is one example: [What’s in your Backyard: Butterfly Life Cycle](#).





focus: revisiting and recycling

- Show the life cycle video each day. If there is too much English or it's too hard (this is often the case), turn the sound down and do a voice over yourself, for example: 'A caterpillar comes out of an egg. It eats leaves. It grows and grows. It turns into a pupa. A butterfly comes out of the pupa. It eats nectar. It lays eggs.' Some of the new language is very specific to this context ('pupa', 'nectar'), but some of the phrases can be recycled into other contexts ('It eats.' 'It grows.').
- Pause the video and encourage children to repeat what you say or join in with you (this gives them familiarity with this exact same language).
- Replay the video and do 'talk about' sessions, for instance, what the caterpillar/butterfly is doing. Be sure to do the actions together.
- Make a little fact book using pictures from the video and your voice-over words. Read it with the children.
- Make a beautiful Butterfly Corner with butterflies everywhere, which the children can make and paint. Talk about the parts of a butterfly as children create them. Put copies of the butterfly fact book there too. Print out photos of different kinds of butterflies and display them.
- Print out a diagram of a butterfly and talk about its body parts with the children. It has wings, legs, feelers, a body and a head. Label the parts with children. Do the same with a caterpillar.
- Display a diagram of the butterfly life cycle. Show children how it matches the video. Use the same words as the voice over.

Movement and gestures help reinforce language learning. Invite the children to act out the life cycle of the butterfly using key language for each movement change. Think about other opportunities to use movement or games to have fun with language and to extend existing word skills.



add: new English-language learning

- Give children something extra to think about by noticing some things about how English works.

For example:

- 'it' is short for 'a caterpillar' or 'a butterfly'
- when there's more than one insect, we make the s/z noise on (leg/s, wing/s, feeler/s, body/ies, head/s).
- Help children to feel good about learning by pointing out everything they can now say about butterflies.



wind up

Recording: You can ask children if they would like to make a video talking about butterflies or caterpillars. They could choose talking with you by themselves, they might want to 'read' the book, talk about butterfly/caterpillar body parts, say the life cycle voice over for video, show off a butterfly they've made or painted. Keep photos of individual children's work for their folios.

Moving on: Take photos of your Beautiful Butterfly corner. Print some out and laminate them. Decorate a box with butterflies and store the fact book.



reflecting: thinking it over

What's new in children's language? Words? Sentences? Questions?

How can we harness it?

Can we improve?

Starting from a shared experience or event hook



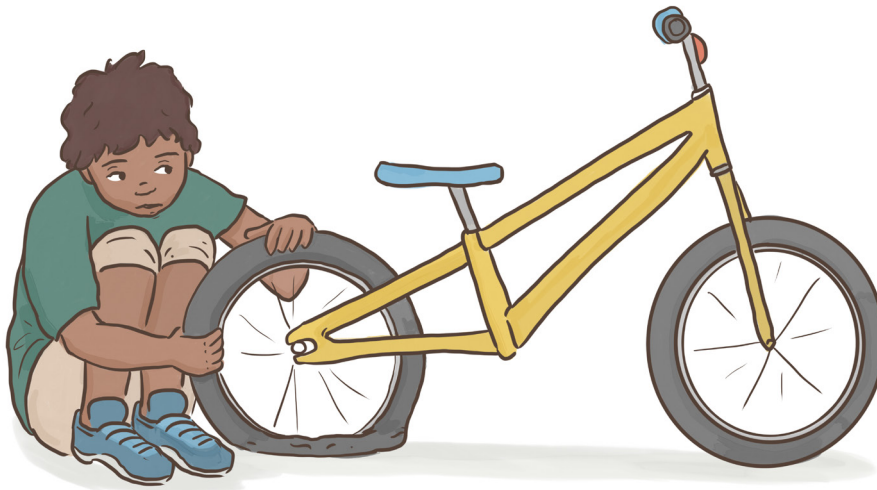
hook: a starting point

So many things happen during the day and in children's lives that they want to talk about.

Examples might include:

- a flat tyre on a bike
- seeing a tourist bus with people speaking another language
- getting a cut or graze
- picking a flower.

Example scenario: One of the children has a bike with a flat tyre.



focus: revisiting and recycling

- The language opportunities can focus on the states of 'before' and 'after'.
 - Look at the tyre with the children. It looks flat, feels too soft, it doesn't go properly (no bounce). Use this language with children.
 - Take a photo of 'before'.
 - When you get the pump, children can watch/feel the tyre expanding and getting hard again when it's being pumped up.
 - Take a photo of 'after'.
 - Talk about how the tyre is getting filled with air. Use balls and balloons as a comparison.
 - If children seem engaged, play with balloons: blowing them up, describing how they look and feel when they are empty compared to when we blow air into them. Take before and after photos.



add: new English-language learning

- What specific language is associated with the shared experience?
- Are there phrases or sentences that can be recycled around other activities?
- Pump up their tyres! Help children feel good about their English-language learning by noticing when they re-use language.



wind up

Recording: Make observations of English-language learning, make a video of the children.

Moving on: Keep reminders of the language-learning focus so you and the children can revisit.



reflecting: thinking it over

What's new in children's language? Words? Sentences? Questions?

How can we build on it?

Can we improve?

Starting from an app



hook: a starting point

There are many apps available for young children, but not many focus on young English-language learners: ELLIC is an exception.

Children often find ways to navigate apps, regardless of the English-language load, but this doesn't mean they are necessarily learning a lot of English. If children enjoy playing an app activity, consider adding ways to bolster their English-language learning offline. The ELLIC app data will help you identify some of the popular activities along with your observations as children use the apps.

EXAMPLE



Example scenario

In your preschool, many children are playing with the ELLIC Delivery Bike app activity (App 2).



focus: revisiting and recycling

- Print out images from the Delivery Bike app such as the map (<https://www.ellic.edu.au/educator-zone/teaching-and-learning/app-2-where-i-am/activity-3-delivery-bike/>) and talk about what's going on. Use the Delivery Bike puppets to roleplay activities.
- Invite children to make delivery cars so they can deliver things too. Recycle some boxes and decorate them like cars with paper plate headlights.
- Name some parts of the preschool and make signs (shop, school, clinic, council). Children can deliver things to and from each place.
- The Delivery Bike Activity Guide (<https://www.ellic.edu.au/media/mrrjl2ch/delivery-bike-activity-guide.pdf>) has lots of ideas to extend the app into offline activities.





add: new English-language learning

- Give children something extra by:
 - noticing that English has some tricky little words: 'from' (move away); 'to' (go there). For example: 'Get something from the clinic.' 'Take something to the clinic.'
 - encouraging children to use prepositions by hiding one of the puppets. 'Where is Kim?' 'She is **on/under** the bench.' 'She is **behind/in front of** the tree.'
- Help children feel good about their English-language learning by noticing their use of new words, phrases and questions.



wind up

Recording: Take photos of the delivery cars, ask if they would like a video of their delivery work.

Moving on: Encourage children to do deliveries the next time they play with blocks and cars.



reflecting: thinking it over

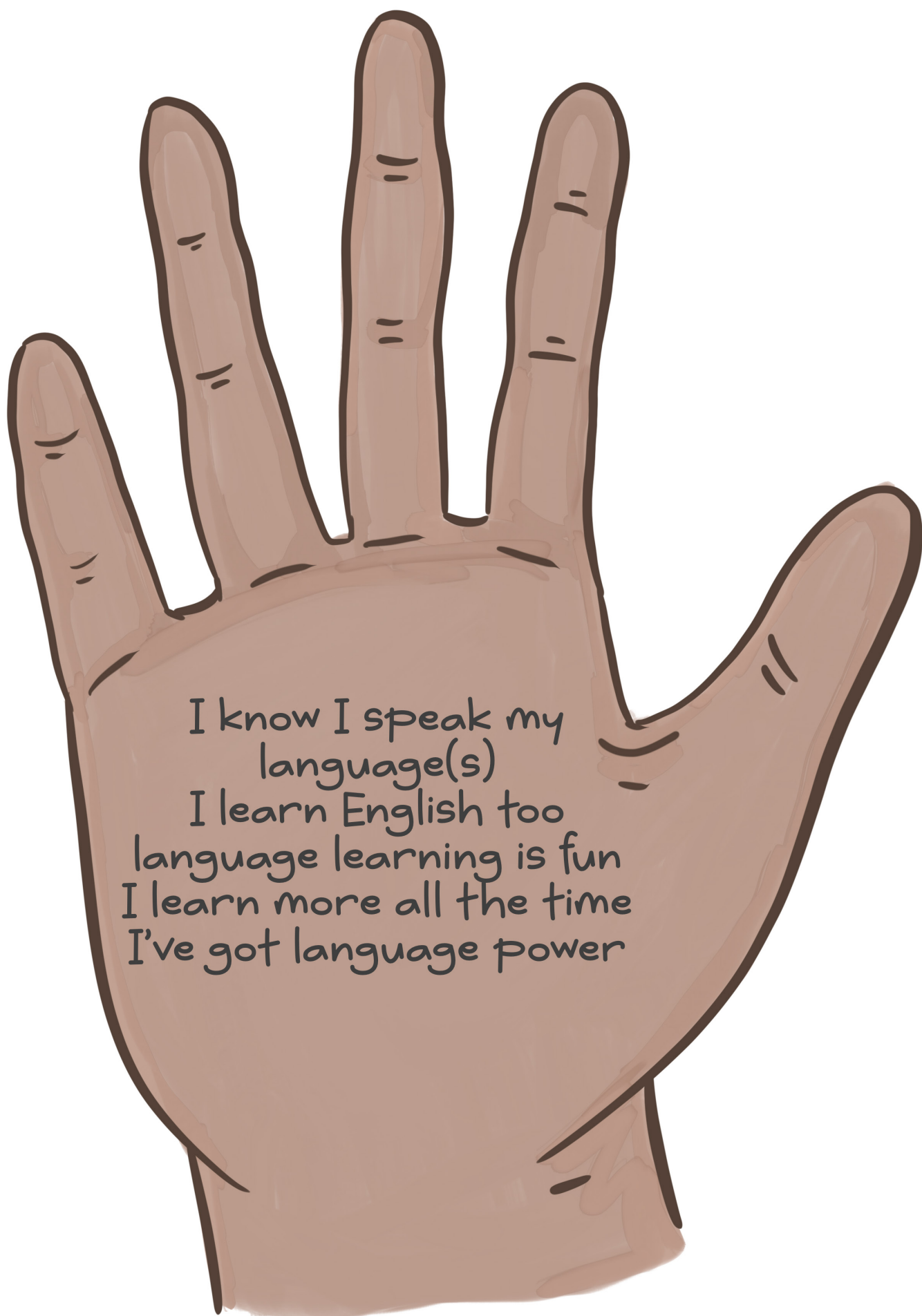
What's new in children's language? Words? Sentences? Questions?

What does the data from the ELLIC app tell you about each child's interests and progression of skills?

How can we build on it?

Can we improve?

Student profile		
← Cohort	Delete student	Update details
Alfie		
Lucy cohort		
Alfie has participated in the ELLIC program for 2h 10m . They have had 9 sessions, with an average length of 14m . Their last play session was on Monday 4th of July 2022, 4:03 pm .		
This is me	Play Count	Time
App sessions	6	1h 25m
Fruit salad	7	48m
Students help a chef create fresh fruit salad for hungry characters by selecting fruit and chopping it up. They listen to the characters' requests and watch the characters react to the fruit salad they served.	Highest level reached	lvl 4
Key language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Questions: eg What fruit do you want? Would you like more fruit? • Requests: eg I want/ I'd like/love some, Can I have...? • Preferences: I like/love, I'm keen on, I really like, I don't like/love, my favourite 	
EYLF links	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outcome 3: Children have a strong sense of wellbeing. • Outcome 5: Children are effective communicators. 	



I know I speak my
language(s)
I learn English too
language learning is fun
I learn more all the time
I've got language power