



Welcoming a New Arrival

A one-page checklist for the first days — the small moves that help a multilingual learner settle fastest, before they even sit down and through their first week.

• Before They Even Sit Down

- ☐ Learn to say their name **correctly** — ask, listen, and practise before they arrive if you can.
- ☐ Prepare **one welcome phrase** in their home language. Even a mangled sentence tells them you tried.
- ☐ Choose a **low-pressure first task** — sorting, matching, drawing — so they can join in without needing to speak.
- ☐ Pick a seating spot with a **kind, patient neighbour**.
- ☐ Have a simple **visual timetable** ready, so they know what happens next without needing language to find out.

• The Words Worth Teaching First

Basic needs	Toilet, please. I'm finished. Water, please.
When stuck	I don't understand. Can you help me? Again, please.
Joining in	My turn? Can I play? Yes / No / Maybe.
Feelings	I'm okay. I'm tired. I need a break.

Teach these with gesture and repetition, not a worksheet, and revisit them daily until they're automatic. A child who can say "*I don't understand*" has more power in your classroom than one who has memorised twenty nouns but stays silent when confused.

TRY THIS WEEK

Keep a small note of one moment your new arrival surprises you — a word they knew, a connection they made. By Friday, you'll have the start of a picture built on evidence, not assumption.

• A Buddy, Without a Whole Programme

- ☐ Choose **one settled, patient classmate** — briefed in thirty seconds: "Can you help show [name] what we're doing, and sit with them at lunch this week?"
- ☐ If another child shares a home language, even partially, that pairing is worth its weight in gold for the first fortnight — not as a translator, but as an anchor.

• Protecting the Quiet

- ☐ Let a new arrival answer with **pointing, matching or a nod** for as long as they need to.
- ☐ Never demand speech on the spot — silence at this stage often means active listening, not disengagement.
- ☐ When they do volunteer a first word, treat it as the milestone it is — quietly.

• Say This

To the learner (with gesture): "Show me." / "Point to it." / "It's okay, take your time."

To classmates: "[Name] understands lots already — they just don't have all the English words yet. Show them, don't just tell them."

To a worried parent: "Right now we're focusing on [child] feeling settled and confident. The English will come — we're not worried about the pace yet."