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Teaching young learners

This unit looks at

- how children **acquire** their first language
- how we can help children acquire English as a second language
- opportunities for using English when starting lessons, changing activities, and ending lessons
- the differences between teaching young learners and very young learners.

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LANGUAGE FOCUS

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PRONUNCIATION POINT

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Sounds /tʃ/ and /ʃ/

1.2 Starting your lessons in English

LANGUAGE FOCUS

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Ways of starting lessons

1.3 Organizing your classroom

LANGUAGE FOCUS

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1.4 Ending your lessons

LANGUAGE FOCUS

Ending lessons

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LANGUAGE FOCUS

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Asking questions

TOPIC TALK

Introducing yourself

1.1 First language – second language

Knowing how children learn their first language can help us teach them a second language.

All children can speak at least one language when they come to school. Think about how they learn this first language. Think about babies and young children. Most mothers talk a lot to their children.

Babies

- hear voices from the time they are born
- respond to the voices of their mother, father, or carer
- listen to a lot of sound
- play with sounds and practise making sounds
- begin to associate the sounds with what they can see and understand
- begin to use language to interact with others and get what they want.

Young children

- say what they hear others saying
- pick up the accent of those around them.

Read this transcript of a mother talking to her little child of 16 months. Notice how much language she uses and how she talks about what is happening to the child.

- o⁺ a How many phrases does she actually say? And how many words does the child say?

MOTHER: Now we're nearly dressed ... OK now over your head ... good boy ... put in your other hand ... now shoes. Where are your shoes?

CHILD: Sus ...

MOTHER: Yes. Your shoes. Where are they?

(Both look around for the shoes.)

MOTHER: Oh there. Look ... your shoes ... on the chair.

CHILD: Sus. Sus.

MOTHER: Yes shoes.

