



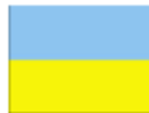
# Equality & Diversity Team



GRT children in EYFS



## EYFS EAL Pupils



# **Provision for Gypsy Roma & Traveller children in EYFS**

## **The Early Years Foundation Stage statutory guidance states:**

All children, irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties or disabilities, gender or ability should have the opportunity to experience a challenging and enjoyable programme of learning and development.

## **Useful background information**

### **Who are our Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children in Lancashire we have the collective grouping that include:**

The majority of the Travellers in Lancashire fall into three main ethnic groups these are:

- Travellers of Irish heritage have a unique culture and language distinct from Gypsies and other Travellers but are often confused with Gypsies because both groups can be seen travelling around the county in caravans. Irish Travellers are hardworking and closely guard their family values.
- Roma have migrated to the UK from across Europe. Unlike UK Gypsies, Roma do not usually seek accommodation in caravans or on sites but prefer to live in houses.
- Gypsies a recognised ethnic minority with an identifiable culture and language which is unique to the UK

### **Other Traveller groups you may come across may include:**

- Scottish Travellers or Gypsies
- Welsh Gypsies
- Circus families Some speaking another language and families travel for most of the year with children often attending different schools every week or fortnight. Some children travel with distance learning packs.
- Show people Fairground families travel from place to place from early spring until late autumn. Showman families are long established in England and there are showmen yards in many locations across the county.
- New Travellers the newest group of Travellers, comprising a group of people who have elected to leave the aspects of society they disdain to live a freer, simpler life travelling.
- Bargee or canal boat families live on canals and can only stop at a mooring for a short period before having to move on.

## **Some cultural information**

There is diversity in all community groups so whilst it's impossible to make generalisations which apply to all families you may find the following useful.

- Families are usually extended and very close knit. They often live and work together.
- Important times – birthdays, weddings, funerals, horse fairs and first communions are considered very important, and children may be absent during these times.
- Languages such as Romany may be spoken at home.
- Interests – China such as Crown Derby is highly valued, as is crystal glass.
- There may be a flexible attitude to time which may cause confusion to a young child when asked to tidy up/pack away a task before it is completed.
- Horses, dogs and chickens may be kept.
- Animals are not usually kept as pets; they are often kept outside the home due to hygiene codes.
- Cleanliness of the home is very important.
- Sports such as fishing, boxing, and horse riding are likely to be popular.
- Gold is a sign of status and being valued within the community; young children may wear earrings and bracelets made from gold.

## **Home languages**

English is spoken and is most likely to be spoken by the GRT children in Early Years settings. However, the exceptions to this being European Roma, who may record their home language as the predominant language of their country of origin. Many Gypsy and Irish Traveller families will use their own language amongst themselves, usually interspersed with English and with varying degrees of fluency. Some children entering Early Years settings may use words and phrases that are unfamiliar to their peers and practitioners.

Languages:

Roma - Romanus

Gypsies - Romany

Irish Travellers - Gammon or Shelta

EYFS staff may not understand what these children are saying and may not recognise that it is another language. Where language is a barrier use the strategies, you would apply when planning for children with English as an additional language (EAL).

## What do practitioners need to do?

***“Practitioners should enter into genuine partnerships by creating a space for dialogue – listening to the voices of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and their parents.”***

The National Strategies | Early Years Building Futures: Developing trust – A focus on provision for children from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds in the Early Years Foundation Stage 2009

Ensure you provide a learning environment in which Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and their families feel welcomed, respected and valued.

Provide a rich learning environment with relevant, culturally reflective resources and creative and challenging learning opportunities.

Recognise that good teaching is a vital ingredient in achievement and ensure that Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children experience good role-models in all areas of learning and development.

Keep careful records of children’s progress from entry to the setting, ensuring that expectations and progress of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children is in line with other groups, and investigating possible causes where difference arises.

Reflect honestly on personal attitudes, feelings, preconceptions and tendencies to stereotype, challenging negative attitudes within the setting (this is both possible and necessary).

Establish genuine partnerships by creating a space for dialogue – listening to the voices of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children and their parents. Talk with parents on the playground, giving specific information, responding to queries, sharing good news, pre-warning about topic areas, themed work, school trips etc.

Include positive role-models where possible from the Traveller community to be involved in the setting.

Consider assessment procedures – checking that observational assessments of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children are fair, honest and free from influences of stereotyping.

Develop patience, understanding, respect, adaptability and flexibility and be prepared to think of different ways to engage with families and to meet their needs. Sometimes GRT parents may struggle to attend a parents’ evening for many reasons. We would recommend the class teacher have a discussion with individual parents to arrange a mutually convenient time to discuss their child’s progress.

Organise informal workshops, learning or games activities eg telling stories, leading craft activities, sharing experiences, contributing to assemblies alongside their children, attending sports days, and fundraising events. GRT parents would like to be invited to such events within the school, an approach that will help make them feel they are valued members of the school community. This could in turn lead to better communication and attendance.

## **Some suggestions for building relationships with families.**

- Find out about the parents' experience and expectations of Early Years education and school.
- Chat to the parent about their child and their interests and how they spend their time at home.
- Chat to the parents about any fears and anxieties they may have about their child starting in the setting eg they may be worried about security and safety at the setting or what happens if their child has an accident
- Invite the parent to stay so they can watch their child settling and playing.
- Phone the parent when they first leave the child to reassure them, that they are okay.
- Use photos to show the parents their child's experiences in the setting, particularly when they are settling – assist parents with the app that photos are uploaded to.
- Offer to go through policies and letters with parents.
- Ask the parent about their culture.

Whether you have GRT children in your setting or school or not, it is good inclusive practice to positively include and reflect GRT culture. There are many resources available that can be used in a setting or school. You may choose to plan for specific activities about GRT culture, but you don't necessarily need to have separate activities.

## **Ideas and activities for all children which include and reflect GRT culture as part of good inclusive practice**

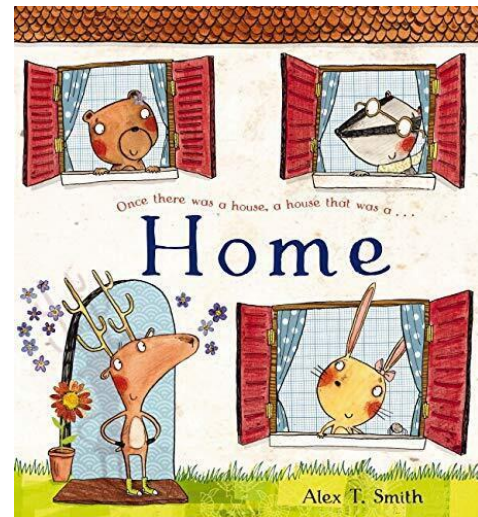
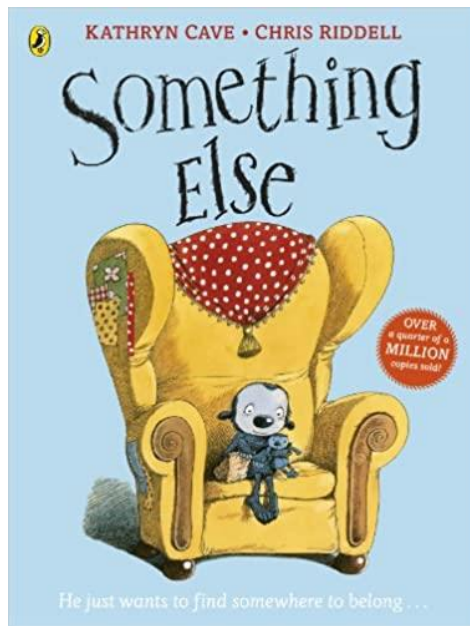
- Small group sound and number work
- Small world play. Have cars and trailers (caravans) in the car box and horses and dogs in the animal box. A Traveller site can easily be made using a large tray and gravel with cars, trailers, dogs, horses and play people.
- Lotto games - There are lots of pictures around homes on the internet. Using downloadable pictures reflecting Traveller culture, practitioners can make matching lotto games.
- Book corner/area Have books out which positively reflect Traveller culture that children can access independently.
- Story sacks - Make up story sacks for popular books reflecting Traveller culture.
- Home Corner Make your home corner into a caravan.
- Creative activities- Practitioners can use lace as threading material. Boxes can be used to make caravans. Crown Derby plates can be made using paper plates and paint.
- Persona dolls- Use a persona doll from a Traveller background. Persona dolls are an incredibly powerful for looking at difference in a positive way.

**Themes/focus within setting or reception class. These can be planned from following the child's interests;**

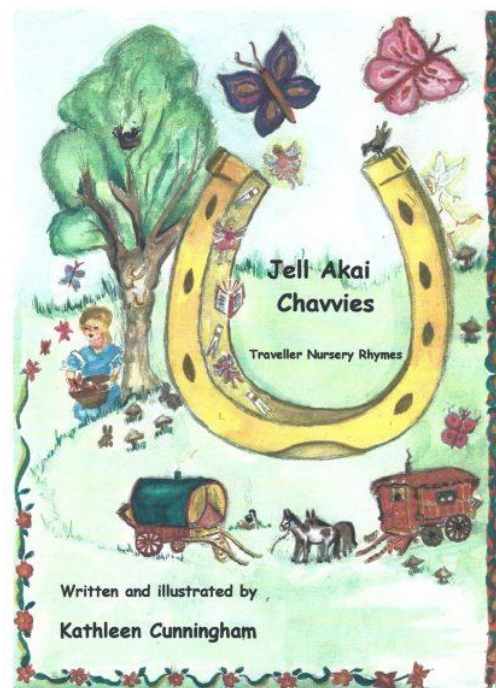
- homes
- ourselves
- animals
- transport
- wheels
- nursery rhymes
- fairgrounds
- circuses
- holidays
- weddings and other celebrations
- families

In all these areas Traveller culture can be incorporated using resources listed and printing pictures from websites as well as asking GRT families to come in and talk about their experiences and share their stories.

## Books



[Jell akai chavvies – ACERT](#)



Please contact our team for further information.

[equalityanddiversity@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:equalityanddiversity@lancashire.gov.uk)

