

Some children will avoid eye contact with teachers – in some cultures this may be a mark of respect and does not indicate that they are not listening.

Some children may seem aggressive in the playground or may show other behavioural patterns. This is sometimes because their English is limited and their only form of communication with their peers is non-verbal.

Cultural differences

Some children will avoid physical contact for cultural reasons. For example, Muslim women and girls do not shake hands. On the other hand young African children may be accustomed to more physical contact than is the norm in English classrooms.

Some children will not answer unless they know the answer – an incorrect answer or a guess may mean losing face.

Some children may nod their heads to acknowledge you but this does not necessarily mean that they understand you.

Some children may feel written work is the most important part of their work and may pay little attention to oral based activities.

Some children may be uneasy at the more liberal approach of some classroom activities in schools in this country. When they are used to a more formal teaching style, they need to learn how to work co-operatively and the boundaries of behaviour expected in the class.

Some children may not use knives and forks for eating. Using hands is a skilled and proper way of eating in some cultures.