

Early Years

Inclusion Fund

Guidance Notes – revised January 2023

North East Lincolnshire Council aims to ensure support is available for settings so that children are given the opportunity to reach their full potential and achieve desired outcomes.

This information is intended primarily for schools, PVIs, including childminders, maintained Nurseries and other EY professionals.

The guidance includes:

* Additional funding available to support children with emerging special educational needs and/or disabilities in settings/schools for children receiving funded early years entitlements. This only covers a child’s funded hours;
* How to apply for that funding.

Available paperwork:

* EYIF Application – working document
* Weekly Evaluation Sheet
* **Request for Transfer of Specialist Equipment (Appendix A)**
* **EYIF checklist (Appendix B)**

**Early Years: guide to the 0-25 SEND code of practice**

All early years’ providers are required to have arrangements in place to identify and support children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and to promote equality of opportunity for children in their care.

North East Lincolnshire Council allocates Early Years Inclusion Funding (EYIF) to help to facilitate the above through the provision of ‘top up’ funding for individual children with SEND who may need additional provision to that which is ordinarily available in an early year’s setting/school.

The EYIF is not intended as an alternative for children who may need an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). If a child’s needs can be best met with an EHCP then the referral process needs to start with the collection of evidence to support. Settings/schools can still apply for EYIF before an EHCP is finally agreed.

**Who makes the decisions and how are they made?**

Decisions are made by a panel of education and health professionals. Decisions are reached through group discussion on the information provided and consideration of the most appropriate plan and funding stream. If the evidence is incomplete, the funding request may be declined or delayed pending the supply of further information.

**Who can apply?**

All private, voluntary, independent early years settings (including Ofsted and agency registered childminders), academies and maintained school nurseries can apply for EYIF where they have:

(a) funded 2-, 3- and 4-year-old children with SEND.

(b) detailed supporting evidence.

Funding is limited to the setting/schools which the child attends. If a child accesses their hours over two early years’ settings/schools, it is possible to **jointly** apply for funding over the two early years’ provisions. EYIF will not be given over more than two early years’ provisions for each child.

Additional support may be required for:

* Access
* Staff training
* Children requiring additional adult support to access activities
* Children with specific areas of difficulty requiring individual education programmes
* Specific interventions or equipment

When specialist equipment is funded via the EYIF then all EY settings/schools must submit copies of receipts. Any specialised equipment requested must show evidence that it has been recommended by an external professional. **Wherever possible equipment will be purchased through the local authority to keep the costs to a minimum.** Please ensure that you contact a member of the early year’s team to arrange collection of equipment when it is no longer used for the child. Should the child move on to another setting and still require any specialised equipment provided to them then an application to the panel must be made and an equipment transfer form completed. (Appendix A) If the setting wants to use equipment for another child this must be requested by the equipment transfer form. (Appendix A)

Where funding is used to enhance ratios:

* The EYIF must be used to free up skilled workers/early years’ staff who already have a relationship with the child to support the EYIF application outcomes;
* The funding must be used to buy in other staff to help run the session so that key early years’ staff support the child;
* Key staff supporting children must be named in the support/review plan with clear evidence of who/when/what the support will be.

Decisions about the level of adult support will be based on the provided evidence, within the context of the setting/school for each application period. The EYIF principles encourage the use of alternative ways of support but also recognises the potential need for enhanced ratios. There is no guarantee that any funding allocated for enhanced ratios will be granted for subsequent applications.

The Early Years Team reserve the right to monitor and scrutinise how settings have used any allocated funding.

**How frequently are applications considered?**

Early Years applications will be considered by the panel at arranged dates over the year. These dates will be placed on the Local Offer [NELC SEND Local Offer | Early years (nelincs.gov.uk)](https://sendlocaloffer.nelincs.gov.uk/early-years-professionals/) along with dates for EYIF surgeries where practitioners can ‘drop-in’ to discuss applications with a member of the EY team.

No funding will be given during school holiday periods but early years settings that operate during holiday periods can stretch EYIF to meet the needs of individual children.

**Is there a deadline when referrals must be received by?**

Applications for EYIF need to be received by the panel no later than two weeks (10 working days) before the meeting date. As agreed with the Co-Production working party; no applications will be accepted after the deadline. They are sent via secure email to Early Years Team:

earlyyearsnelc@nelincs.gov.uk

**When does the funding stop?**

Once children are in a Reception class (Foundation Stage 2) in a school/academy the funding ceases. If a parent wishes to defer entry to a reception class because of their child’s SEND and a setting/school wishes to receive funding for the continuation of nursery provision during this period, an application can be made for the statutory hours the child is attending the setting.

**What evidence should be included?**

Application forms must be completed in full to be considered by the panel.

Applications must be accompanied by relevant evidence (see checklist in EYIF application and review). Reports included must be the most recent (preferably within the last 6 months) and relevant to the current needs of the child.

Outcomes in the child’s plan should reflect the area of need. Outcomes need to be SMART (Specific Measurable Achievable Realistic Timed) and identify who will be working with the child, how often and for how long. The outcome reflects what the child can do as a result of the intervention/support. If there has been specialist support from an outside agency, their outcomes should be used. It is important to note that all applications must be reviewed using the one document (in different colours to establish reviewing outcomes) unless this is an initial application where this does not apply.

 If any professionals have already been consulted, any reports or advice given should be included and be visible in the outcomes.

When submitting an application, the setting/school must ensure any documentation is securely delivered. The EY team cannot accept responsibility for paperwork delivered late or paperwork that has gone astray. When paperwork has been received by panel, an acknowledgement will be sent. If you do not receive acknowledgement by the panel date, please contact a member of the EY team.

**Allocation of funding**

The Panel uses the evidence provided to determine not only whether to allocate funding but also the type of funding. Each case is looked at on its merits in the light of the evidence submitted by the early years setting/school for a particular child or as a setting for the settings request form.

Letters will be sent out to settings via email. If the request is declined the letter will give a brief reason for this decision.

The initial funding will be determined from the date of the panel meeting. The letter will give details on the period covered by the funding and when a review is required if the setting/school wish to apply for further funding.

It is the setting/school’s responsibility to re-apply for EYIF for a child whose funding may be about to ‘run out’. No reminders will be sent so early years settings/schools are advised to make a note of the dates for which funding has been given and apply in plenty of time.

The panel may ask if policies/procedures and practice have been adapted to meet the needs of the child to inform the decision of the application.

The funding should not be relied upon and whilst the funding pot is a small allocation to the local authority, there will be no further allocation of funds for the rest of the financial year once the money is spent.

**What decision may be determined for an application?**

• Agreed

• Not Agreed

• Alternative Outcome

• Deferred (usually concluded when an application is incomplete or insufficient evidence is provided)

If a setting/school disagrees or has a dispute with the outcome, they should firstly put their concerns/queries in writing with an explanation of the appeal and send it to a member of the EY Team.

A member of the team will then be in contact to discuss this further with you at an agreed time/place/date.

If funding is no longer required for the child in the setting/school, please submit the final review to the Panel.

When a child is transitioning to a new setting/school a final review must be submitted to the panel and to the child’s future educational setting.

For further information please contact:

Andrea Clark: andrea.clark@nelincs.gov.uk

Cleo Fulton: cleo.grey@nelincs.gov.uk

Karen Murphy: karen.murphy@nelincs.gov.uk

Corrinne Wilson: corrinne.wilson@nelincs.gov.uk

Please find the dates below:

[NELC SEND Local Offer | Early years (nelincs.gov.uk)](https://sendlocaloffer.nelincs.gov.uk/early-years-professionals/)

**Appendix A**

**Request for Transfer of Specialist Equipment**

**Please complete and email to** andrea.clark@nelincs.gov.uk

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name and Address of Early Years setting where equipment is currently being used:** |  |
| **Initials of child that equipment was originally purchased for:** |  |
| **Type of equipment that needs to be transferred eg Chair, Standing Frame, Toileting Aid** |  |
| **When does the equipment need to be transferred?** |  |
| **Name and Address of Setting/School that equipment needs to be transferred to:** |  |
| **Name of the child equipment is to be used with:** |  |
| **Name of external professional currently supporting/making recommendations for the child:** |  |
| **Name and position of person making this request:** |  |
| **Signature** |  |
| **Date:** |  |
| **Name of person responsible for transfer:** |  |

**Appendix B**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Checklist** | **Included** | **Explanation if not included** |
| **Early Help Assessment/Plan/Access Pathway Referral/Plan** |  |  |
| **2yr Progress Check (within last 6m)** |  |  |
| **ASQ.SE/ ELIM/WELLCOMM** |  |  |
| **Evidence of graduated approach if different to above (E.G My Plan)****(must be included for request to be considered)** |  |  |
| **Specialist health Reports/Recommendations E.G Physio, OT, SLT, Paediatrics.** **Specialist Educational Reports/Recommendations E.G EP, Area SENDCos, CDC** |  |  |
| **Other (E.G Social Care)** |  |  |