



## Early Years Inclusion Fund guide– 2024 changes

### Introduction

There is a statutory requirement within Local Authorities to establish an Early Years SEN Inclusion fund. Lambeth Early Years SEN team have been allocated a budget from the Department of Education, which is due to be confirmed at the start of the financial year. The funding has been separated into different bands and we are using it to support Early Years Providers.

### Purpose

- To support 2, 3 and 4 year olds with emerging SEN needs.
- The Early Years Inclusion Fund is intended to support providers to address the needs of individual children with SEN and support with strategies to support learning and development.
- National guidance states that the fund should be targeted with lower or emerging SEN.
- The Early Years Inclusion Fund applies to children attending settings in the relevant Local Authority area and will not take into account where they live.

### Aim

- To promote inclusive practice across all settings ensuring that they have a good understanding of the SEND Code of Practice 2015 and the Equality Act 2010.
- For professionals to be confident in identifying needs early and gather information in order to make further referrals (if needed)
- For Early Years settings to focus on counteracting underachievement and removing the barriers to learning and development with the view of improving outcomes.

### Eligibility

- From April 2024, 2 year olds will be able to access the Inclusion fund in addition to the 3 and 4 year olds. As of September 2024, 9 month olds will be able to access the Inclusion Fund.
- The child **must** be attending a Lambeth Early Years Setting.
- The fund is for children who are attending an Early Years Provider that is **not** a Reception class, but can be a Nursery Class within a School.
- The fund is targeted at children who have lower or emerging levels of need which is affecting their ability to access education and make progress in their learning and development.
- Children who are in receipt of a final EHCP will **not** be eligible to access the fund.
- Where the child accesses more than one Early Years Provider, any SEND inclusion funding will be shared on a pro-rata basis, even if it is only one provision making the claim or in need of the equipment/resources.



## How the Early Years SEND Inclusion Fund can be used

The inclusion fund can be used in four ways:

1. *To buy in specific training/interventions:* we have provided a list of recommended training providers (appendix 3) that you can contact to buy in training. It is not compulsory that you use the providers on the list and support can be sourced elsewhere. The funding can also be used to cover staff who are going on the training. Online training platforms may also be available.
2. *Funding:* as a contribution towards enhanced staffing for those children with a higher level of need. Funding should not be used for constant 1:1 support but can be used to enhance ratios when needed throughout the day.
3. *Funding:* as a contribution towards setting up groups for specific students with similar needs to provide additional support to development and learning
4. *Resources/equipment:* can be purchased with the fund to support the child's individual needs. A list of example retailers and resources are provided in appendix 4.

## Before you start your application

Before starting the application please consider the following:

- Have you received parental consent prior to making this application?
- Have you started an Individual Education Plan (IEP) or a SEND Support Plan? (See appendix 1 for example)
- If you are applying for a higher band of funding, have you shown evidence that the targets in the IEP or SEND Support plan have been reviewed?
- Have you got evidence that you have made a referral to relevant professionals?
- If the child has already been referred to relevant professionals, have you got the referral/report ready to upload? If you have not made a referral but have had the intention to, please state in application.
- If you are applying for a higher band of funding, have you completed a costed provision map? (see appendix 2 for example)
- Has the Setting Manager reviewed the information on this form? They need to agree that all information is accurate as applications are subject to audit.
- Have you sought support from the Quality Improvement Team, Early Years SEND Team, Early Years Area SENCo or SENCo if you are a school?
- For Band 3, have you started collating the evidence for an EHC Needs Assessment application?

Without all of this evidence, it is unlikely that your application will be approved and may have to be returned to a later panel.

## How to apply for the Inclusion Fund



The Local Authority will consider requests where there is evidence of a child that is working below their expected levels in 2 areas of their development, preferably the prime areas (Personal, Social and Emotional Development, Physical Development, Communication and Language).

It is important to submit the relevant evidence alongside the application.

Applications will not be processed without consent from parents/carers. Parents must be involved in the decision to apply for the SEND Inclusion Fund and in agreement with the privacy notice (appendix 5).

To see the level of support currently in place for the child, it would be helpful to see how the provider is currently using their resources to support the child's needs, e.g. equipment, groups, staffing ratios, visuals, referrals to professionals/reports from professionals.

To manage the number of applications coming through, you will be able to apply all year round until the Spring Term. The panel will meet once a month on a Thursday and paperwork will need to be submitted the Monday before the panel. Decisions will be issued the following week.

Term	Submission Deadline	Panel Date	Decisions released
<b>Spring 2024</b>	15 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	18 <sup>th</sup> January 2024	w/b 22 <sup>nd</sup> January 2024
	26 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	29 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	w/b 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2024
<b>Summer 2024</b>	22 <sup>nd</sup> April 2024	25 <sup>th</sup> April 2024	w/b 29 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
	3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2024	6 <sup>th</sup> June 2024	w/b 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2024
<b>Autumn 2024</b>	14 <sup>th</sup> October 2024	17 <sup>th</sup> October 2024	w/b 21 <sup>st</sup> October 2024
	9 <sup>th</sup> December 2024	12 <sup>th</sup> December 2024	w/b 16 <sup>th</sup> December 2024
<b>Spring 2025</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	27 <sup>th</sup> February 2025	w/b 3 <sup>rd</sup> March 2025

The application for the funding is online and can be found here: [Early Years Inclusion Fund new application and renewal \(lambeth.gov.uk\)](https://lambeth.gov.uk/early-years-inclusion-fund-new-application-and-renewal)

There will be a maximum of 30 cases discussed at each panel, this will be on a first come basis. If there are more than 30 cases; applications will either be considered at the next panel date or in exceptional circumstances, an additional panel may be added.

If the deadline is missed for the final spring panel, the application will be considered within the next financial year and decisions will be based on new budgets.

If you have applied previously for a child and would like to renew the application, you can use the renewal form, which is shorter than the full application and will need to be submitted after 3 Terms of support for the child. The renewal application will require evidence that targets have been reviewed and an indication of the progress that has been made, an updated provision map will also be needed to demonstrate the support that has been given to the child.

### **Allocation of funding**

Applications will only be discussed by the panel members when the application period is open.



Decisions will be ratified and communicated to providers in writing via email within the week after the panel. This will include information regarding any funding that has been agreed, the expectations in terms of ongoing monitoring and evidence gathering as well as any further information.

	Process	Additional professional support available	Evidence required
<b>Band 1a – Universal Offer</b> Children with 6+ months delays, working below their expected level in 2 areas of development. <i>This is for children who are new to the setting and will only be allocated for one term</i>  <b>£350 – one off payment</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Settings identify <u>a child</u> with additional needs.</li> <li>2. Settings to go to their Quality Improvement Officer/Area SENCo to confirm their identification, discuss the process and ensure they have the correct evidence.</li> <li>3. Setting applies online for the fund</li> <li>4. The application is discussed by the panel and agree the band of funding to be awarded</li> </ol>	- Quality Improvement Team - Early Years Area SENCo - Early Years SEN Manager	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Able to provide evidence that needs have been identified</li> <li>2. Able to provide an IEP or SEN Support Plan</li> <li>3. Evidence of EYFS levels</li> <li>4. Evidence of parental consent and SENCo support</li> </ol>
<b>Band 1b – Universal Offer</b> Children with 6+ months delays, working below their expected level in 2 areas of development. <i>This is for children who have been in the setting for more than one term</i>  <b>£450 per term</b>			
<b>Band 2 – targeted support</b> children who are 12+ months delay in development.  <b>£650 per term</b>			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Able to provide evidence that needs have been identified</li> <li>2. Able to provide an IEP or SEN Support Plan</li> <li>3. Evidence of IEP levels</li> <li>4. Evidence of referral to professionals (report if already accessing)</li> </ol>



<p><b>Band 3 – Enhanced Offer</b> Children who need above and beyond universal and targeted offer of support – setting will be considering applying for an EHC Needs Assessment</p> <p><b>One off payment of £2500</b></p>			<p>Same as Band 2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Costed Provision map</li> <li>2. Evidence that setting are preparing for an EHC Needs Assessment</li> </ol>
<p><b>Band 4 – group banding</b> There are a group of no more than 5 children with up to 12+ months delay who will need targeted support</p> <p><b>One off payment of £1200</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Settings identify a <u>group</u> of children with additional needs.</li> <li>2. Settings to go to their Quality Improvement Officer/Area SENCo to confirm their identification, discuss the process and ensure they have the correct evidence.</li> <li>3. Setting applies online for the fund</li> <li>4. The application is discussed by the panel and agree the band of funding to be awarded</li> </ol>		<p>Same as Band 2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Costed Provision map</li> <li>2. Group plan with SMART Targets</li> </ol> <p><i>Provider will need to submit evidence at the end of the academic year to show the impact of the group</i></p>

Funds will be paid on a termly pro rata basis.

Funding will be calculated based on how long the child has left of the academic year. Funding will not be backdated.

Settings must accept the decision of the Panel but may re-apply after a further term of evidence has been collected. It is essential when applying for a renewal that the application evidence how the previous funding has been used.

**Please be aware that the Early Years Inclusion Fund is a set amount of Government funding allocated for a financial year. Once the budget has been allocated, we will be unable to process any further applications.**

**Do I need to reapply?**



At the end of three terms, to renew the level of funding you are receiving, you will need to evidence how the funding has been spent and its impact; either through reviewed targets or demonstrating progress made. You will not have to submit a whole application but rather, submit the renewal form and evidence.

If you feel that the funding allocated was not sufficient, you will need to complete a new application to evidence the review of targets, a costed provision map to show how the money was spent and evidence as to why additional funding is needed.

### **How additional professional support will be allocated**

In addition to the financial support from the banding, support can be sought from the Early Years SEN Manager, Early Years Area SENCo and the Quality Improvement Team.

Applications will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, the evidence submitted and the support requested. Please note, not all applications will receive the funding requested and alternative funding/support will be offered.

### **Early Years SEN Manager**

The Early Years SEN Manager can offer 1:1 sessions at the Early Years SEND drop-ins which happen once a month and are held virtually. You will have the opportunity to discuss children you may have concerns about, SEN Processes, support plans as well as what is available within the Borough.

### **Early Years Area SENCo**

The Area SENCo can provide specialist support and strategies to support children who have additional needs. You can make requests for training on specific issues that might be needed within your provider such as toileting, strategies for support, identifying needs.

### **Quality Improvement Officers**

The Early Years Quality Improvement Team and the Schools Educational Consultants provide specialist support, advice, guidance and training to the maintained, private, voluntary and independent sectors working with children aged 0-5 years old. The team provide high quality support to settings with regard to a range of issues including safeguarding and welfare, inclusion, SEND, Learning and development.

### **Contact information**

If you have any queries about the inclusion fund, please do not hesitate to contact us on:

[inclusionfund@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:inclusionfund@lambeth.gov.uk)



If you have any queries about finance payments, please contact Babatunde Omotosho on:  
[bomotosho@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:bomotosho@lambeth.gov.uk) or 02079269947.

If you would like to book onto the Early Years SEND Drop ins or have any queries about the application process,  
please contact the Early Years SEN Manager on: [earlyyearssen@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:earlyyearssen@lambeth.gov.uk)



## Appendix 1 – example of SEN Support Plan IEP

### Individual Education Plan and Review for SEND support plan      Name of Setting: \_\_\_\_\_

Child Name:	DOB:	Other Agencies Involved  Speech and Language Therapist
People contributing to IEP: SENCo, Parents, Keyworker	Date of IEP: February 2024	
People contributing to Review: SENCo, Parents, Keyworker	Date of review: April 2024	

Area of concern & SEND category	Target <i>(Think about keeping the targets SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Timebound)</i>	Intervention / strategies  <i>What will we do and who will do it?  (think about school, home &amp; community and remember to include allocated resources)</i>	Success/Exit Criteria  <i>How will we know it's been successful?</i>	Review of interventions  <i>What worked/what didn't/why?</i>
<b>1 - Communication and Language</b>  <i>XXX does not respond to their name.</i>	By the end of April, XXX will respond to their name 3 out of 5 times	Staff at Nursery to give XXX up to 10 seconds to respond to name.  Staff and family will use interventions from Speech and Language Therapy to build on	XXX will start to look in the direction of voice when hearing their name.	<b>April 2024 review</b>  XXX started to look in the direction of the person calling their name 1 out of 5 times.





		<p>XXX communicating with people around them.</p> <p>Staff at Nursery will do name games at circle time to build on XXX understanding name.</p>	<p>XXX will stop what they are doing for 5 seconds when name is called and look in direction of voice.</p>	<p>XXX stopped what they were doing briefly when name was called 2 out of 5 times.</p> <p>XXX joined in the circle time 1 out of 5 times.</p>
<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>Personal Social Emotional Development</b></p> <p><i>XXX has not formed a relationship with adults/peers in Nursery</i></p>	<p>By the end of April, XXX will have formed a relationship with their key worker.</p>	<p>Staff at Nursery to share a social story with XXX and their family that will be read once a week at Nursery and once a week at home.</p> <p>Key worker will engage 1:1 in an activity of XXX's choosing for 15 minutes each day</p>	<p>XXX will recognise key worker when coming into Nursery</p> <p>XXX will seek out keyworker when needing something</p>	<p><b>April 2024 review</b></p> <p>XXX recognised keyworker 4 out of 5 times when coming into nursery.</p> <p>XXX engaged in 1:1 activities for 15 minutes 3 out of 5 times</p> <p>XXX sought out keyworker when upset.</p>



<b>3</b> <b>Personal Social Emotional Development</b> <i>XXX has not formed a relationship with adults/peers in Nursery</i>	By the end of April, XXX will show an interest a small group of their peers at Nursery	Staff at Nursery to identify group of 3-4 children who have similar interests to XXX and start a group focus activity that will happen 3 times a week.	XXX will show an interest in the group and their peers.  XXX will participate in group for 50% of the time.	<b>April 2024 review</b>  XXX did not show an interest in the group and played using the resources separately to their peers.  XXX did not participate in the group even with keyworker reassuring them/modelling how the group works
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Parent signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix 2 – example of Costed Provision map

Identified Need	Professional Assessment and Specific Intervention	HR Requirement	Special Equipment	Cost
<i>As identified in the child/young person's SEND Support Plan</i>	<i>For example – EP or SaLT. Details of the activity – standardised assessments, observation, feedback</i>  <i>Named evidence-based programmes. Who recommended? Reasons for recommendation?</i>	<i>For example – 1:1 support as detailed in the SEND Support Plan, staff training needed to carry out intervention or provide support.</i>	<i>For example – specialist toys</i>	<i>Expenditure x Frequency = Cost</i>
XXX does not respond to their name	SaLT intervention – therapist to provide the training for keyworkers to carry out the intervention	1 off SALT training on answering to name £200  1:1 support from Keyworker for 15 minutes a day (£350 a term)  1:8 group for circle time daily (£150 a term)	Toys from Nursery for attention	350 x 3 (terms) = £1050  150 x 3 (terms) = £450
			<b>Total</b>	<b>£1700</b>