



Buckinghamshire Early Years SEN Inclusion Fund (EY SENIF)

Essential guidance for applications 2025-26

All local authorities are required to have a SENIF for all children eligible for the entitlements and who have SEN, regardless of the number of hours taken. These funds are intended to support local authorities to work with providers to recognise and support the low-level and emerging needs of individual children with SEN who are taking up the entitlements.

Early Years Entitlements: Local Authority Funding of Providers Operational Guide 2025-2026:

Settings should always refer to the [Early Years Ordinarily Available provision](#) and other resources [SEND Resources | Early Years](#) to ensure quality teaching and an inclusive provision is at the heart of their offer to all children in their setting. A well-trained SENCO is essential to supporting your setting and is considered part of ordinarily available provision-funding.

Funding allocated is a contribution towards the cost of delivering specific, evidence-led interventions and/or provision identified to support children's emerging needs. Each decision is based on the information provided but we will also use information on training attendance and engagement with implementing any advice given as a factor in supporting these decisions.

It should enable individual children, or groups of children to achieve identified outcomes and be used in conjunction with any other funding received by the setting e.g., setting's own budgets, Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP), Disability Access Fund (DAF) payments etc.

EYSENIF is not for individual children in settings who have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), are under assessment or those in Reception classes.

Any training completed should have a continued impact on the setting's capacity to meet similar needs in the future. When using EYSENIF for training there is an expectation that learning will be shared and embedded within your setting and will be a key part of the evaluation process.

Each funding band is a contribution towards supporting a child or groups of children and is not intended to reflect actual costs of provision put in place for a child. Settings have a duty to ensure that appropriate provision is in place for any child on role at the setting and, as part of the Ofsted framework, will be judged on the progress made by all children.

Evaluations should include anonymised evidence of children's progress, effectiveness of interventions, attendance on training (including plans for sharing training amongst colleagues). It is important to refer to your **decision letter** when completing your evaluation and ensure the use of the funding matches.

We will only agree funding for resources when not considered ordinarily available provision and are part of a clear specific intervention.

It is not to be used to provide funding for professional assessments or for any capital projects.

2025 – 26 funding bands and descriptors reflect the current budget available, and has been agreed at Early Years Forum.

Early Years SEN Inclusion Fund (EYSENIF) – Decision Criteria and key dates for applications

Mon 8th Sept - 24th November 2025

Applications must be made within these dates to be given funding to cover both the autumn and spring terms. After each closing date applications will be considered for allocation in the following term if funding is still available.

25th Nov - Mon 2nd February 2026 - final spring term allocation (mainly for setting that have not previously had EYSENIF)

3rd Feb - Mon 11th May 2026 - final summer term allocation (mainly for setting that have not previously had EYSENIF)

To receive funding providers, agree to sign a new FE Provider contract before the 31st March 2026 and be compliant with the local and national statutory guidance, including any updates. The provider will also be required to keep the Staffing Portal up to date. Where a provider offers places for children under 3 years old, commit to prioritise admissions for Free Entitlement Funded places for children aged 2 who are in receipt of additional government funding and those with SEND

Important checks before applying.

All the following are considered as part of the decision process. Insufficient detail or applications which do not follow the guidance could delay consideration of the application while further information or an updated application is requested.

- ☐ Up to date and detailed [Local Offer information](#). It is important this is clear and has relevant information for families and shows your named SENCO.
- ☐ For any second applications (spring term) the amounts will be combined for evaluation in the purposes in the summer term.
- ☐ The application should directly support the funded children with low level and emerging needs in your setting – you should be able to describe what support you are already putting in place.
- ☐ The number of children receiving SEN Support/EYPP/DAF etc. should match the information on your funding claim. You should show how you are already using this additional funding in your application.
- ☐ Use the [Ordinarily Available Provision Document](#) and show strategies implemented.
- ☐ How much will the interventions/support cost? Record about how you will monitor it.
- ☐ **Most of the funding should be used to enable you to directly support children through specific interventions.** This could be in planned individual, paired, and small groups sessions or through additional levels of support during continuous provision.
- ☐ If applying for funding for training, give details and cost of training planned and how it will the learning be shared with other practitioners.
- ☐ Settings that have been allocated a significant level of funding for training or resources previously should not request funding for similar training/resources again. Impact of this funding should continue beyond the funding period.
- ☐ Please discuss your application with a member of the Early Years Team if unsure.

Autumn 25/Spring 26 Bandings

Band	Concerns	Examples of Intervention/Provision
1 £1000 over two terms	An individual child is showing delay in one or more areas of development and support is needed to decide suitable interventions and 'next steps' or to support transition into the setting whilst assessments are shared with other professionals. A group of children significantly not on track in at least one area of development Enhanced transition into the setting whilst information and assessments are shared. High numbers of children needing additional support on transition as identified the previous term.	Adult support for some aspects of learning needed during the session for: - Individual/group programmes of work targeted on difficulties identified through detailed, individual assessments and recorded through SEN Support using Assess, Plan, Do, Review. - Support with personal & self- help skills. - Seeking, implementing, and monitoring other professional/specialist recommendations. Please note, EYSENIF is not to provide funding for professional assessments. - Enhanced transitions With all the above it will be important to reference what Ordinarily Available Provision is already in place
2 £1500 over two terms	Several children receiving SEN support. A group of children significantly not on track in at least one area of development. Additional cohort factors e.g., EYPP Specific specialist resources required to enable access and inclusion to the EY curriculum. Identified training need and implementation of training across the staff team to ensure consistency.	Greater adult support for some aspects of learning needed throughout the session for: Individual/group interventions/ support through guided play are planned to support areas of need identified through individual assessments and recorded through SEN Support using Assess, Plan, Do, Review. - Support with specific medical and/or personal & self- help skills. - Consult with external professionals, implement, and monitor other specialist /professional recommendations. Please note, EYSENIF is not to provide funding for professional assessments. Additional training courses to embed new skills, cascade the learning, and monitor the implementation and outcomes.
3 £2500 over two terms	A group of children are not on track within many aspects of development. High numbers of children receiving SEN support (recorded on the EY claims form). Training requirements for more than one area shown and clear plan in place to train, cascade and evaluate impact of training with other staff members. Specific specialist resources (clearly referenced) and required to enable access and inclusion to the EY curriculum.	Adult support for most aspects of learning needed throughout the day for: - Individual programmes of work targeted on areas of need. - Consult with any external professionals involved, implement, and monitor recommendation. Please note, EYSENIF is not to provide funding for professional assessments. - Enhanced Support with personal, self- help and independence skills - Medical needs which may also impact on learning. - Implement and monitor specific professional recommendations. - A variety of clear interventions planned and costed.

Band	Concerns	Examples of Intervention/Provision
4 £3500 over two terms	A range of specific planned interventions to meet the needs of children with diverse needs. Intervention types should be clearly recorded and impact on a specified group of children. Specific specialist resources required to enable access and inclusion to the EY curriculum. Training requirements for more than one area shown and clear plan in place to train, cascade and evaluate impact of training with other staff members.	Adult support for some children in all aspects of learning throughout the day for: • Additional liaison with multiple external professionals involved, implement, and monitor recommendation. Please note, EYSENIF is not to provide funding for professional assessments. • Specific specialist resources identified to support intervention that may not be part of Ordinarily Available Provision • Individual support targeted at emerging difficulties identified through detailed, individual assessment. • Support with specific personal, self- help, play and independence skills. • Implement and monitor professional recommendations. • A variety of clear interventions planned and costed.

There may be certain situations where a proportion of the band is allocated rather than the full amount. This may be due to demand of applications and budget implications, specifically costed resources and interventions, quality of provision, size of setting, children's attendance, and any additional financial issues within the setting.