

Early Years Special Education Needs and Disabilities Inclusion Fund

SENDIF

Guidance only

'The benefits of early identification are widely recognised – identifying need at the earliest point, and then making effective provision, improves long-term outcomes for children.' (Code of Practice 5.4)

Early Years SEND Inclusion Fund Information and Guidance

The Early Years SEND Inclusion Fund (SENDIF)

Local authorities and early years providers must have regard to the [SEND 0-25 Code of Practice \(2015\)](#) and be able to demonstrate how they are implementing a step-by-step approach to support all children with special educational needs or a disability to fulfil their potential.

As part of the early years funding formula, the government introduced new measures to support children with SEND or disabilities, one of which is an inclusion fund.

All local authorities are required to establish a SEND inclusion fund for 3- and 4-year-olds with SEND (not necessarily those with a diagnosis) whose parents/carers are taking up the free entitlement to a pre-school place. These are children who **do not** have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and are not attending a reception class.

The purpose of the fund is to support local authorities to work with providers to address the needs of individual children. This guidance is to inform all Early Years providers on how to access support for a child in their care who may have SEND and may require Early Years SEND Support.

Applying for funding

1. Eligibility- children

- The Early Years SENDIF is for **3- and 4-year-olds** who are taking up any number of hours of free early education entitlement (FEEE). Children are eligible to receive funding in the term after they turn 3.
- In Southwark we have extended the fund eligibility to include 2-year-old children who are in receipt of [Disability Living Allowance](#).
- Those children who are **not** eligible to access this fund are children who are in receipt of 2-year-old funding but not in receipt of Disability Living Allowance, children with a completed Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) and children who are in Reception class.

2. Eligibility- providers

All Ofsted registered early years providers in Southwark who are eligible to receive funding for the 3- and 4-year-old early education entitlement are also eligible to receive support from the SENDIF for children taking up their free entitlement.

Applications can therefore be made by:

- An Ofsted registered nursery or pre-school from the Private, Voluntary, and Independent (PVI) sector
- An Ofsted registered childminder
- A school where childcare falls outside of educational statutory provision
- A school providing registered nursery provision or a nursery school.

3. What type of needs are considered for SENDIF?

Most children with SEND **do not** require specialist resources or additional staffing to be successfully included in settings. Most settings meet the needs of children with SEND very well from within their existing resources and through their own best practice.

A delay in learning and development in the early years does not always necessarily indicate that a child has a special educational need that calls for special educational provision. Similarly, difficulties related solely to learning English as an additional language are **not** considered a special educational need.

We (the Local Authority) will consider requests where there is [information](#) that a child has:

- **A difficulty in any of the four areas of SEN (Special Educational Needs)** – these are communication and interaction, cognition and learning, social, emotional, and mental health and sensory and/or physical needs
- **A medical condition that significantly affects their access to, or development in, one or more of the prime or specific areas of the EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) in comparison to the expected outcomes for their age.**

4. Types of support available from the SENDIF

Applications may be submitted to request the following:

- Resources to support a child or children’s specific needs, for example visual aids, sensory or digital toys (tier one or group funding)
- Staff training specific to the child’s needs, for example, Makaton, understanding autism and working with children with physical needs. This may be on-site training from a local SEND professional, or off-site external training by a reputable training provider (tier one or group funding)
- A contribution towards enhanced staffing costs for those children with a higher level of need (tier two funding)

5. Making an application and the allocation of funding

- Application forms and any additional paperwork should be sent to the [SEN Finance Team inbox](#). [Application forms must be received by the agreed deadline](#). Any late applications will automatically be transferred to the following panel. Please see the [SENDIF process map](#) for a quick overview of the process from start to finish.
- The Early Years Special Educational Needs and Disabilities panel (EY SEND panel) for the SENDIF meets every half term. The panel includes representatives from the [Early Years Quality Improvement team](#), the [Early Years Schools Advisory team](#), [Inclusion and Monitoring team](#), [SENDIPs \(Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Inclusion Practitioners\)](#) and [Educational Psychologists](#).
- The EY SEND Panel Terms of Reference will be followed at the meetings and are available on the [Local Offer website](#).
- The last panel of the academic year is the **‘forward planning’** panel. This panel is for applications for children who will be joining the 2’s (where eligible) and 3 and 4’s age group or remaining in these age groups for the following year. Applications for children who will be leaving to attend Reception in September will only be considered in exceptional circumstances on a case by case basis.
- Decisions will be communicated to providers, in writing, **within 7 days of the panel meeting**. If funding has been agreed this will include information about the level of funding you will receive. In the case of higher-level funding this may also include information on what you may expected to do as part of the ongoing review process.
- **You must accept the funding decision of the SEND panel. If your funding request is declined, you have the option to apply again after a further term of [information](#) has**

been collected that suggests current resources and funding is inadequate to meet the needs of the child.

Please refer to the [Steps for making an application](#) for guidance about applying to the SENDIF.

6. Group applications

It is possible to make a group application for funding where there are several children with similar emerging needs that can be addressed as part of group activities. Group applications may be made **for up to 5** children but there must be **at least 3 children**. Group applications are limited to a **maximum of 4** applications a year per provider. Children already in receipt of funding from SENDIF **should not** be included in group applications. Each group application should be for a different area of need to make the best use of the funding by providing a range of resources, training and interventions for the children. Funding for group applications is a one-off payment of £2,000 (actual amount). [Please apply using the separate application form that has been designed for group applications.](#)

7. Funding levels

The provision of funding from the SENDIF is a contribution towards the extra costs of meeting the needs of the child in your setting, such as the costs of providing resources or additional adult support. It will only be paid for the time the child or children are in your setting and up to an agreed period.

If a contribution is agreed by the EY SEND Panel, then it will be paid at the levels below:

	Annual Amount £	1 term of funding £
Tier one funding	1120*	373
Tier two funding	3450*	1150
Group application funding	One off payment 2240*	

*Please take note of section 8 [for actual amounts](#) of funding

The scheme runs on an academic year basis. Funds will be paid on a termly basis apart from successful group applications which will be funded as a one-off payment.

Funding will be allocated for the entire academic year in which the application is made, pro-rata to the term in which the application was submitted.

8. Administration costs and actual funding amounts

The Early Years guidance from the DfE (Department for Education) requires the scheme to pass funding on a case-by-case basis. To do so requires a significant amount of administration. Schools Forum agreed approval to charge a **12% administration fee** on each funding award to cover the cost of central administration. Considering this the actual amounts will be as below:

	Annual Amount £	12% Admin Fee £	Actual Annual Amount £	Actual Termly Amount £
Tier one funding	1120	120	1000	333
Tier two funding	3400	364	3036	1012
Group application funding One off payment	2240	240	2000	

Steps for making an application

Step 1: The step-by-step approach- what you must do first

Children may demonstrate delay in their learning and development for reasons other than SEND. Most children with SEND do not need specialist resources or enhanced staffing to be successfully included and most settings can meet the needs of children with SEND through their own best practice and using the **assess, plan, do, review cycle**.

Before making an application

- Whilst trying to identify whether a child has SEND look for other reasons that may be impacting on a child's progress and causing a delay, such as having English as an additional language or family circumstances and then provide appropriate support.
- Where there are **still** concerns that the child may have SEND discuss these concerns with the parents getting their views and sharing any information gathered. They must be involved in the decision to apply for support from the SENDIF and agree with the application.
- Do all you can in partnership with parents and other professionals to identify and respond to the difficulties the child has, using different approaches, strategies, staff, and resources that are already available in your provision. You should record, monitor and review this individualised planning for effectiveness and keep evidence of this as you will be asked to provide information about how you have used your current resources and staffing to meet the needs of the child as part of answering the question '**what have you put in place so far to help the child?**'
- Gather [information](#) on the child's needs as you will be asked to provide this as part of answering the question '**what strengths and what needs does the child have?**' Where specialists are already involved their advice should be used to further develop an effective individualised response. Where the provision they recommend is intensive or significant you may wish to consider the need for additional funding.
- If your setting is a Private, Voluntary, and Independent setting, including childminders and you need advice for completing a **tier two funding application**, please contact your [SENDIP \(Special Educational Needs and Disability Inclusion Practitioner\)](#). If your setting is a nursery school or a school with a nursery class and you need advice for completing a **tier two funding application**, please contact the [Early Years Schools Advisory team](#) for advice.

Step 2: Areas and levels of need- what strengths and what needs does the child have?

- You will need to explain and show [information](#) of the nature and severity of the child's difficulties, and how these impact on their development, learning and participation in learning for the panel to decide about funding.
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- Please see the [guide to types and levels of need](#) that apply in relation to the SENDIF. We recognise that every child is unique, and the grid should only be regarded as a guide to assist your application.

Step 3: Types of provision likely to be needed- what the child might need

You should consider the provision that is needed to help support the child that is **beyond** that which you have already put in place. It is likely that this additional provision will have been recommended by professionals supporting the child or you as the setting.

As part of the question ‘**what do you need to do next and how will funding help you do this?,**’ you will need to explain how the funding would be used to improve the support you already have in place to help the child. It is likely to include one or a combination of the following:

- A more personalised use of approaches such as visual timetables, objects of reference, picture exchange systems
- Further differentiation of activities and materials to support specific and individual targets
- Regular direct teaching sessions clearly planned for the individual child
- Small group work or individualised support for specific and planned activities
- Regular supervision and individualised and consistent behaviour management approaches and personalised reward systems
- Support to maintain concentration and participation
- Additional supervision when accessing activities or equipment for safety
- Support to manage personal care, mobility, or medical needs
- Support to gain positive relationships with peers
- Specialist equipment or resources
- Staff training to understand the area of need and how to support the child
- On-going support from a range of professionals through direct work, programme development, TACs etc.
- Increasingly intensive support/interventions requiring increased staffing ratios (**this does not mean the child needs 1:1 always**)

You should ensure that you are monitoring and reviewing the provision to ensure the child or children are making progress (this could include reducing or stopping provision where outcomes are met). You must involve parents and appropriate professionals in any discussions.

Step 4: Information to support your application- what we need to know

As part of your application, the panel needs to know what the child or children’s particular needs are. This helps the panel to make an informed decision about the funding. It is **not the quantity** of information that is important but the **quality** of information that you provide.

Essential information

The [essential information](#) on the child that you include in the application form is particularly important for allocating funding so please take time to complete this fully.

Tier one funding

If you are making an application for **tier one funding**, you should complete **the tier one funding** application form and include a completed [Development Overview sheet](#).

Tier two funding

If you are making an application for, **tier two funding**, you should complete **the tier two funding** application form and include a completed [Development Overview sheet](#) and **one additional piece of information** from the list below

- information from previous setting, KIDS, or portage
- progress reports, including from partner agencies
- health care plan, risk assessment or similar plans
- evidence of individualised assessment, planning, provision, monitoring and evaluation cycles
- evidence from professionals* involved including reports of assessments, consultation/involvement records programmes provided, referral form to external agency, TAC meeting minutes

*(*e.g., Paediatrician, Speech and Language Therapist, Health Visitor, Physiotherapist, Educational Psychologist, Early Years Autism Team, Social Care Services)*

[We have created an example of what a completed form for tier two funding could include.](#)

When referring to the example please note the following:

- The example form **must** be used alongside the guidance handbook
 - The example form was created to show that the quality of information is more important than the quantity. It should be used as a **guide only** and your application does not have to be set out in this way.
 - Other than the information requested there is no expectation to include lots of additional evidence, however you are welcome to include any other types of evidence that you feel are useful to help the panel make a decision.
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Guide to types and levels of needs

	Tier One funding level	Tier Two funding level
Attainment 2 years		Where a 2-year-old child is in receipt of DLA it is likely that they will have significant difficulties accessing learning opportunities and will be developing and making progress more slowly or less evenly than other 2-year-olds. They are likely to demonstrate significant and enduring difficulties in one or more areas below at a significant level compared to same age peers.
Attainment 3 years	Children at the age of 3 are showing skills and development below (6 months +) that of what could be expected for their age.	Children at the age of 3 are showing skills and development well below or significantly below (12 months+) that of what could be expected for their age.
Attainment 4 years	Children at the age of 4 are showing skills and development below (6 months +) that of what could be expected for their age.	Children at the age of 4 are showing skills and development well below or significantly below (12 months+) that of what could be expected for their age.
Learning	Mild to moderate difficulties in learning and or acquiring skills - short term or focussed interventions needed beyond those available within settings own practice	Moderate difficulties in learning and or acquiring skills (ongoing educational intervention and support needed) to severe difficulties/ learning acquiring skills (significant global developmental delay/impairment affecting most aspects of development and adaptive function to a severe degree)
Language	Mild to moderate phonological and/ language impairment or delay Mild social communication impairment Fluency; mild-moderate stammering expected to improve after intervention	Moderate to severely delayed or disordered language development causing difficulty in communication outside the home or speech supplemented by an alternative method of communication or inability to use speech in a socially interactive manner difficulties impact heavily on access to learning opportunities requiring a high level of differentiation to access curriculum, communication frequently

	Tier One funding level	Tier Two funding level
		<p>does not meet needs, degree of social isolation because of SLCN.</p> <p>Moderate to severe social communication impairment</p> <p>Fluency; moderate to severe e.g., stammering</p>
Self-care	<p>Needs support and supervision to initiate, sustain and complete task. May require assistance with complex elements e.g., cutting food, buttons, bottom wiping</p>	<p>Able to contribute to process, although dependent on assistance to complete task to not yet aware or not consistently aware of self-care needs. Assistance required from carer throughout activity with a little assistance provided by the child.</p>
Vision and hearing	<p>Visual function is impaired (e.g., one eye defect) but does not require significant aids specialist advice and monitoring</p> <p>One sided severe hearing deficit; HL 20-40 dB, bilateral mild sensorineural hearing loss.</p>	<p>Visual function is impaired and will require specialist input</p> <p>Unable to see/read large print/ pictures/symbols without aids. Severe field defect with poor acuity; registered blind</p> <p>Hearing impairment, HL 41-70 dB Hearing aids issued</p> <p>Restricted learning and communication due to hearing deficit; HL 71-94dB</p>
Mobility/ co-ordination	<p>Independent but may have some coordination difficulties that require occasional use of aids or assistance/ supervision</p> <p>Has some difficulties manipulating tools in an age-appropriate way</p>	<p>Developing independence but uses aids for part of the day and needs some assistance to unable to walk without aids e.g., walking frame, leg splints or be a wheelchair user - may have extremely poor balance and require support to transfer and access certain activities.</p> <p>Handles tools/ objects with reduced quality and/or speed of achievement or difficulty, needs help to use tools or modified activities.</p>
Attention	<p>Needs some support for attention difficulties</p>	<p>Needs support to initiate and maintain attention to significant difficulties initiating and maintaining attention</p>

	Tier One funding level	Tier Two funding level
		needs frequent prompting/ motivators/ support
Social, emotional development	Frequent but not severe disruption /difficulties in social/behavioural functioning or delay in developing skills needed for emotional wellbeing, relationships	Difficulties or significant and persistent difficulties in social, emotional, and behavioural development - frequent and severe challenging behaviours, including some that may be harmful to themselves or others. Persistent problems causing dysfunction severe enough to need some extra support or supervision. Marked difficulty in relating to other children or adults' Extreme difficulties coping with group activities, and unable to relate well with peers or adults requiring support and supervision. May also present as severely socially isolated or withdrawn.
Medical e.g. Epilepsy, asthma, feeding, immune suppressed.	Has a medical condition that requires limited adult monitoring/support , and maintaining of a health plan <i>This on its own would not be sufficient to require funding unless there is an impact on other aspects of learning and development and CCG (Clinical Commissioning Groups) may fund training and support for this.</i>	Has a medical condition that requires regular adult monitoring, staff training and awareness, a health plan and is impacting on access to /progress in learning opportunities or significant adult input and supervision from trained staff, liaison with Health Care professionals and support to access learning opportunities.
	Tier one funding level	Tier two funding level

SENDIF Process

Child has an identified need. You have evidence that best practice has been applied and existing resources used but concerns persist.

Application for funding discussed with parents and parental consent received.

Equipment requests follow process already in place.

Application form completed with supporting information and emailed to [SEN Finance Team inbox](#)

Applications should be sent **no later than the agreed deadline**

Late applications will be automatically transferred to the following panel

Application placed on next available panel agenda

SEND panel meeting held and decision on funding made

Application for funding refused

Letter of explanation issued within **7 working days**

Application for funding agreed

Letter with details of funding issued within **7 working days**

This may include details of arrangements for the monitoring of provision, if applicable

Payment schedule sent by SEN Finance to you to confirm numbers/costs (before the end school term).

Funding will be paid at the end of the autumn, spring and summer terms.