

Early Years SEN Inclusion Fund (SENIF) Criteria

The Early Years Inclusion Fund is provided to support early years settings to include children with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND). The money is for use in the setting that the child attends and will be given to the provider to be used to support the needs of individual children with SEND.

Eligibility From April 2024

- All two-year olds and three & four-year olds identified with a level of SEND, attending an early years setting in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham that are eligible for government childcare funded places.

From September 2024

- The term after a child is 9 months old, attending an early years setting in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham that are eligible for government childcare funded places.
- Presenting with additional needs in the moderate to severe delay range. Please refer to Early Years Ordinarily Available Provision Guidance document.

From September 2025

- **ALL** eligible working parents will be able to claim 30 hours of government-funded childcare a week, over 38 weeks of the year, all the way through from the term after the child is nine months old up to their child starting school.

Who is not eligible to access the SEN Inclusion Fund

- Four-year olds in reception classes
- Hammersmith & Fulham children attending out of borough provision
- Children attending specialist provision
- Children with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)
- Children in receipt of contingency funding
- Children of age-appropriate development or presenting with a mild delay

For children with emerging needs, please contact the Early Years Team (EYT) or School Effectiveness Team (SET) for support and guidance.

How funding will be allocated

In 2025/26 there is approximately £801,000¹ available for settings. The SEN inclusion fund will be administered via the same termly payments which govern funding for funded 9 months- 2 year extended entitlements, 2, 3, and 4-year-old places. Settings submit a SEN Inclusion Fund application form to the Early Years Team according to the below schedule. This will determine the final level of funding

¹ This figure is subject to change and available budget, this will be monitored on a termly basis and will determine allocations and payments.

available to settings for that term and will inform the normal termly financial reconciliation process.

Application deadlines

Please note applications **will only** be considered in line with the application windows below. If you have missed an application window, please submit this in the **next** window. Any applications sent outside of these windows will **not** be considered at panel.

Term Applied For		Application Window Dates	Approximate Date for Decision Notification
Summer term	1 st window to send applications (first half of term)	Monday 28 th April – Friday 9 th May 2025 by 5pm	Week beginning 19 th May 2025
	2 nd window to send applications (second half of term)	Monday 23 rd June – Friday 4 th July 2025 by 5pm	Week beginning 14 th July 2025
Autumn term	1 st window to send applications (first half of term)	Monday 29 th September – Friday 10 th October 2025 by 5pm	Week beginning 20 th October 2025
	2 nd window to send applications (second half of term)	Monday 24 th November – Friday 5 th December 2025 by 5pm	Week beginning 15 th December 2025
Spring term	1 st window to send applications (first half of term)	Monday 12 th January – Friday 23 rd January 2026 by 5pm	Week beginning 2 nd February 2026
	2 nd window to send applications (second half of term)	Monday 16 th February – Friday 27 th February 2026 by 5pm	Week beginning 9 th March 2026

SEN Inclusion Funding by Band

Band A is now supported by Early Years Ordinarily Available Provision Guidance [Early Years OAP Guidance June 2024.docx](#) and the Early Years Team and School Effectiveness Team.

Band	Level of need	SEN category	Funding per term*
B	Moderate	High Needs	£1,250**
C	Severe	Complex Needs	£2,000**

* Based on the child accessing their full entitlement of 15 or 30 hours per week

** Band values are subject to change and available budget

Band	Criteria
B	<p>Moderate Category (Targeted)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional involvement from at least 1 or more external child development professional from education, health or family support that evidences developmental delay / additional needs. Detail should be provided about the type of involvement, date of involvement, including any written reports. Please see EY OAP guidance document Appendix to support this. In exceptional circumstances, we understand that some waiting lists are currently very long. In this case, we would accept referral letters which evidences ongoing need for support in the setting. This will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the panel, taking into account all information available. To further support a decision, a visit may be arranged with the Early Years Team to gather more information. This would be considered as professional involvement. Applying plan/do /assess/review 6 weekly cycle and graduated response model- see EYS OAP guidance for support . More complex needs in one or more areas of learning which are impacting on overall development, access and inclusion. Requires targeted SEN support with an SEN Support Plan in place.

C	<p>Severe Category (Specialist)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Professional involvement with 2 or more external child development professional from education or health that evidences developmental delay / additional needs. Detail should be provided about the type of involvement, date of involvement, including any written reports. Please see EY OAP guidance document Appendix to support this. Applying plan/do /assess/review 6 weekly cycle and graduated response model- see EYS OAP guidance for support . A high level of supervision is needed to support access and inclusion for example within some group activities, snack and mealtimes; free play, to extend interests or to support in outdoor play. Support is targeted to ensure medical/health needs are met. Please ensure a Health Care Plan is in place. The child's needs are significant and may require regular support and a higher level of personal/intimate care. Close and regular supervision and support is required in order to maintain the child's safety/comfort well-being in order to support them to access their EY entitlement in a way which is safe and positive.
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Evidence required for all bands to support SENIF application for each child:

- Evidence of professional's involvement is required, which should detail the developmental delay / additional needs of the child. Please ensure you attach reports to applications.
- Copy of child SEN support plan that is currently in place.
- Any further evidence, e.g., Early Years outcomes and/or any other relevant documents which may support panel decisions.
- Ordinarily Available Provision has been put in place. Please see the EY OAP guidance document Appendix to support this.
- Details of how you plan to spend the money (dependant on approval) for each child applied for.

Note: Please refer to the banding criteria band B for information on when a referral to external professionals may be considered.

Record keeping

Settings will need to maintain a minimum set of evidence for their own records for each child for which Inclusion Funding is being claimed for. Documents should be maintained for a minimum of 2 years from the last date at which funding was

received for a child and should relate to the time frame for which funding has been received.

Consent

Settings must obtain adequate consent from parents/carers before applying for Inclusion Funding on behalf of a child.

Individual child review

If you apply for SENIF funding two terms in a row, complete the Individual child review form and include a copy of their reviewed SEND Support Plan.

Setting Audit

If you apply for SENIF funding two terms in a row for the same child, your setting maybe audited. This will include looking at documentation showing how the money has been spent as well as documents detailed in evidence required above.

DAF Funding

Settings are reminded that DAF Funding may also be available. Please note that the child will need to be over 3 years old. Please contact the Early Years Team for further information.

SENCO Training

Training will be made available to EY SENDCOs on supporting the SEN Support needs of children in Early Years settings. This will include themes such as:

- Applying the EY OAP Guidance and writing/reviewing SEN support plans.
- When to refer to more specialist services
- How to apply for SEN Inclusion Funding, and how to correctly apply the banding criteria.

How the funding can be used

The funding is provided to support the inclusion of a child with SEND, promote early intervention and improve outcomes for the child.

Note: Where there is an application for a group of children with a similar category of need, targets or interventions, the panel may decide to allocate group funding dependent upon the number of applications.

Possible Uses for SEN Inclusion Funding

Note: These are suggestions for use of SEN inclusion funding, this is not an exhaustive list.

Band B

- Where there is an application for a group of children with similar targets or interventions, the panel may decide to allocate group funding.
- Differentiation of activities and resources to support specific targets included in SEN Support Plan or recommended by a professional
- Regular supervision and individualised and consistent behaviour management with behaviour plan for children with challenging behaviour
- Changes made to the environment or resources over and above what is expected under reasonable adjustments.
- Specialist equipment to support children with physical disabilities as recommended by health professional.
- Changes to staff deployment to enable small group work or individualised support for specific and planned activities
- Specific environmental adaptations for sensory needs
- Additional supervision and support at certain times in the day or during certain activities to ensure the health and safety of all involved.
- Specialist or one-off training to upskill whole team or staff member(s)

Band C

For the higher levels of funding, many of the strategies and interventions identified above will be in place. In addition, you will need to consider:

- Consistent support throughout the day for the child by increasing staffing ratios to meet the targets set for the child.
- Health Care Plans for children who require specific care outlined by a medical professional, delivered by staff with training.
- Intensive support for the child to meet Personal, Social and Emotional development (e.g., challenging behaviour, social interaction, self-esteem and positive relationships)
- Intensive support for basic hygiene and personal needs for children with complex special and care needs, with training undertaken or overseen by a community nurse
- Significant attention paid to provision and maintenance of a range of personal equipment and manual handling and hoist training for staff
- Positive Physical Intervention training where appropriate
- Specialist or one-off training to upskill whole team or staff member(s)

To discuss your application please contact the LBHF Early Years Advisory Team

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