



Early Years Inclusion Funding (EYSTAR)

This guidance contains a summary of what EYSTAR Funding is, information about Individual Applications, Group Applications and Reviewing Funding.

Every Local Authority must have a Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) inclusion fund to support early years providers in meeting the needs of individual children with emerging additional needs and SEND. In Northumberland, inclusion funding is known as Early Years Short Term Additional Resource (EYSTAR).

What is EYSTAR funding?

Northumberland Early Years Inclusion Fund (EYSTAR):

- Is for 2-, 3- and 4-year-olds who are taking up funded entitlement in any setting providing early years education (schools, Private, Voluntary or Independent Settings (PVI's) or childminders).
- Is to support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) or emerging additional needs who require support above what can be provided with Quality First Teaching.
- Is paid in 10-week cycles. Schools and settings can apply for up to 3 cycles of funding per age-related entitlement for a child (for example, if a child receives 2 rounds of EYSTAR funding when they have 2-year-old funding, you can apply for up to another 3 rounds once they receive 3- and 4-year-old funding).
- Is decided at a panel which takes place monthly during term-time. Panel members will use the criteria in Appendix 1 of this document to make decisions about whether funding will be awarded and to what level.
- EYSTAR funding is paid at a maximum of 50% of a child's funded entitlement (for example if a child is funded for 15 hours, you can request a maximum of 7.5 hours of additional support).
- Is **not** intended to provide a '1:1 support worker' to be with the child at all times. It is intended to provide specific support tailored to the child's needs and their individualised learning targets. This could include enhanced adult ratios at specific times of day or for specific interventions.
- EYSTAR Funding is paid at £15.45 per hour minus the child's base rate. For example, if you applied for 7.5 hours of additional support for a child with 3- and 4-year-old funding you would receive an additional £10.25 per hour for 7.5 hours per week for a 10-week period.



Panel Dates and Paperwork Deadlines

The following table lists the dates that the EYSTAR panel sits along with deadlines for submitting paperwork to be considered at that panel.

Paperwork which is incomplete and/or lacking sufficient detail will need to be resubmitted and the application will not be considered until an Early Years Inclusion Consultant has approved it.

EYSTAR Panel date	Deadline for paperwork	Review date	Deadline for review paperwork
02.10.23	18.09.23	08.01.24	11.12.23
06.11.23	23.10.23	05.02.24	22.01.24
04.12.23	20.11.23	04.03.24	19.02.24
08.01.24	11.12.23	25.03.24	11.03.24
05.02.24	22.01.24	29.04.24	15.04.24
04.03.24	19.02.24	03.06.24	20.05.24
25.03.24	11.03.24	01.07.24	17.06.24
29.04.24 - Final date applications for children moving to Reception will be considered	15.04.24	N/A	N/A
03.06.24	20.05.24	N/A	N/A
01.07.24	17.06.24	N/A	N/A

Reviewing EYSTAR Funding

Reviewing EYSTAR funding is explained on page 9 of this document.

How to Apply for EYSTAR Funding

All EYSTAR applications must be made in consultation with an Early Years Inclusion Consultant.

To apply for EYSTAR funding, you will need to show that you are implementing the graduated approach and what reasonable adjustments you have made to support the child. You must have some targets in place for the child which are above and beyond that which can be met with quality first teaching.

To apply you will need to have the following paperwork for the child (these are expanded on in the following pages):

Paperwork
1. An assessment of the child using the Northumberland School Readiness Passport
2. A parent/ carer views form
3. An 'All About Me' for the child (either on your own format, or on the School Readiness Passport)
4. One set of reviewed targets for the child
5. A second set of targets, which is not yet reviewed
6. Any reports from professionals involved with the child

Blank copies of all paperwork can be downloaded from the Northumberland Education website: <https://northumberlandeducation.co.uk/sendsupport/>

All of the above paperwork needs to be uploaded to the 'documents' section of the child's Passport.

Assessing the child using the Northumberland School Readiness Passport

You must first assess the child using the School Readiness Checker, and then using the SEND Support Checker.

If you are unfamiliar with using the Passport for children with SEND, please watch this video: [Using the Passport for children with SEND - YouTube](#)

Gathering the views of the child and the child's family

The SEND Code of Practice states that:

“Children and young people and their parents or carers will be fully involved in decisions about their support and what they want to achieve”.

The Child's views

You may have your own All About Me document in which case you can submit this. If not, you can use the All About Me section of the School Readiness Passport (see video above for further support on how to complete this).

Parent/carer views

It's vital that parents and carers are involved in all decisions made about their child, especially if you are concerned about their child's progress.

You can find a parent/ carer views form here: <https://northumberlandeducation.co.uk/sendsupport/>. If you have recently completed a request for an EHCP for the child, you can submit the parent/carer views section from this form with your EYSTAR application.



Setting targets for the child

You must have the following in place for the child to apply for EYSTAR funding:

- One set of targets that you have reviewed
- One set of targets that the child is currently working on and will continue to work on during the time they receive EYSTAR funding - this will illustrate to the panel what the funding will be used for.

Targets for children can be on any paperwork and do not need to be in a specific format, however they must be legible and easily understood by the panel.

For some ideas on how to write targets for children, [watch this video](#).



Gather reports from any professionals involved with the child

Gather any recent reports from professionals involved with the child such as Speech and Language Therapists, Portage or Paediatrician. It should be evident that you have taken into account any recommendations made by professionals when setting targets for a child.

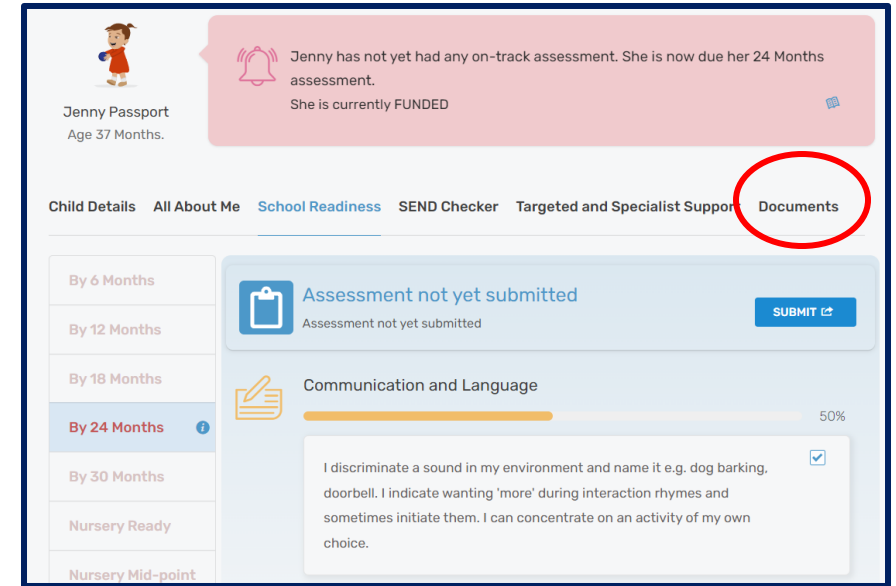
You only need to include the most recent report and reports should be no more than 1 year old. You can still apply for funding if the child does not have any professionals involved.

Please **do not** include minutes of Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings, Early Help Assessment (EHA) meetings, or any other meeting minutes which include family details. This is for safeguarding and GDPR purposes.

Upload all of the above paperwork into the 'documents' section of the child's passport

1. Select 'documents'
2. Select 'upload a new document'
3. Select a document type and title the document
4. Click to select a file – find the file on your computer
5. Select 'upload the file'

The video on page 5 of this guidance also talks you through how to upload documentation to the passport.



The screenshot shows a user interface for a child's passport. At the top, there is a notification banner for Jenny, stating she is due a 24-month assessment and is currently funded. Below this, a navigation menu includes 'Child Details', 'All About Me', 'School Readiness', 'SEND Checker', 'Targeted and Specialist Support', and 'Documents', with 'Documents' circled in red. On the left, a vertical menu lists assessment milestones: 'By 6 Months', 'By 12 Months', 'By 18 Months', 'By 24 Months' (selected), 'By 30 Months', 'Nursery Ready', and 'Nursery Mid-point'. The main content area shows a 'Communication and Language' section with a progress bar at 50% and a text box containing a checklist item: 'I discriminate a sound in my environment and name it e.g. dog barking, doorbell. I indicate wanting 'more' during interaction rhymes and sometimes initiate them. I can concentrate on an activity of my own choice.' There is a 'SUBMIT' button in the top right of the assessment section.

Fill out the EYSTAR Request Form

Follow the link below to fill out the EYSTAR request form. This form will ask you for your details and the child's details. It will also ask you for your reasons for requesting EYSTAR funding and how much support the child requires to be effectively included within your provision. You **must** be as detailed as possible about this as it will inform the panels decision.

Once you have clicked 'submit' on the form, your Early Years Inclusion Consultant will confirm that they have received it and whether they need any additional information before taking your request to the Early Years Inclusion Panel.

EYSTAR Request Form: <https://forms.office.com/e/qsK0TqCCjG>

Group EYSTAR Funding Applications

If you have 3 or more children with SEND or emerging additional needs attending your setting, you can apply for Group EYSTAR Funding.

To apply for Group EYSTAR Funding you need all the paperwork outlined on page 4 for each child, but you only need to complete 1 application form.

In addition to individual paperwork, you will need to show how you intend to support the group of children across the week and how much additional staffing is required for this. You can do this with a provision map or timetable such as the one below. This is just an example; you can adapt this or use your own.

Provision Map			
For confidentiality, please ensure you remove children's names from this plan before sharing it with parents.			
Name of setting:	Little Buds Nursery	Children being supported:	Mustafa, Abbie, Chelsea
Staff:	Vicky McClure, Stephanie Bates, Danny Clive	SENCO:	Vicky McClure
Date:	January 2023		
Session & timings	Additional Support Required	Staffing	
Circle time 09:00 – 09:15	Mustafa and Abbie – Sit with an adult at circle time Chelsea to join circle time independently	Vicky to support Mustafa and Abbie	
Child initiated play 09:15 – 10:30	Children to be supported to work on individual communication targets during child-initiated play	Danny to work with children for 15 minutes each during session	
Snack time 10:30 – 10:45	Chelsea to complete sensory circuit before joining snack table Chelsea to be supported to sit for 2 minutes and touch 1 piece of fruit Mustafa and Abbie to join snack independently	Stephanie to support Chelsea	
Child initiated play 10:45 – 11:45	Children to be supported to work on individual targets in a small group (children to go to the quiet room to complete targets if needed)	Stephanie to work with children for 15 minutes each during session	
Story time 11:45 – 12:00	Mustafa and Abbie – Sit with an adult at circle time Chelsea to join circle time independently	Danny to support Mustafa and Abbie	

Once you have completed and uploaded all relevant paperwork, please email your provision map to your Early Years Inclusion Consultant and fill out the Group EYSTAR Request Form: <https://forms.office.com/e/ZfP4FuhYb2>

Group EYSTAR Funding is paid at an additional £15.45 per hour based on the support outlined on the provision map. In the example provision map above, the setting is asking for an additional staff member for 2 hours and 15 minutes per day to support the 3 children, this would be allocated for a 10 week period.

Notification of Panel Outcome and Reviewing EYSTAR Funding

You will be notified of the outcome of your application within 5 working days of the date it was discussed at panel via an email from the Early Years Admin Assistant.

PLEASE NOTE – You WILL NOT be reminded to review your EYSTAR funding. If you wish to review the funding, it is your responsibility to submit review paperwork to ensure no funding gaps. Funding will not be backdated if deadlines are missed.

Review dates and paperwork deadlines can be found in the table on page 3 of this guidance. These dates will also be included in your notification letter.

To review EYSTAR funding you will need to do the following:

Paperwork
1. Reassess the child/ren using the Northumberland School Readiness Passport (watch the video on page 5 for guidance on how to do this)
2. A reviewed parent/ carer views form
3. Review the child/ren's current targets and write new ones
4. Upload all of the above paperwork to the 'documents' section of the child/ren's passport along with any new reports you have received from professionals

For Individual EYSTAR Reviews, complete this EYSTAR Review Form: <https://forms.office.com/e/1EaEQMHTQn>

For Group EYSTAR Reviews, you will need the above information for all children, along with a reviewed provision map (please email this to your EY Inclusion Consultant). You can then complete this Group EYSTAR Review Form: <https://forms.office.com/e/YLQZpKkWiH>

APPENDIX 1 – Information about the Early Years Inclusion Panel

Decisions with regards to spend from the Early Years Inclusion Fund (EYSTAR) are made by the Northumberland Early Years Inclusion Panel. Decisions are reached through group discussion on the information provided. All applications for EYSTAR funding must be endorsed by an Early Years Inclusion Consultant.

The Early Years Inclusion Panel is made up of professionals both internal and external to the Local Authority, including representation from schools, PVI's and Early Help along with other agencies. The role of panel members is to review and decide upon the outcome of EYSTAR applications and to provide support and challenge to practitioners around meeting children's needs.

The Panel will make one of the following decisions:

- Agree the application.
- Recommend and support the implementation of alternative intervention approaches or support from professionals.
- Decline the application.

The Early Years Inclusion Panel will reflect on the questions for consideration on the following pages to inform their decision:

Applications	
Consideration	Possible Information Sources
Have reasonable adjustments been made to enable this child to access their full early years entitlement?	Child's support plan*; Professional reports; EYIC anecdotal reports; Provision maps.
Is this child accessing their full funded entitlement hours (where parents request it) to enable maximum gains of inclusive early years provision? If not and parents would like them to, is there a clear plan in place to increase attendance?	Application overview; Early Years Project Development & Business Manager reports.
Does evidence suggest that parents have been involved in the assessment, planning and review process?	Parent voice/views
Does assessment information indicate that the child is not on track within the prime areas of development?	School Readiness Checker
Do reports from other professionals suggest that the child would benefit from the requested level of additional funding?	Reports; Feedback from panel representatives.
Does the plan for supporting the inclusion of the child reflect the level of funding requested?	Child's support plan*
Are the strategies and approaches included within the child's plan appropriate and in line with the good practice principles outlined in the Ordinarily Available Provision guidance document?	Child's support plan*
Are the strategies and approaches included within the child's plan appropriate and in line with those recommended by multi-professionals i.e. Early Years Inclusion Consultant, Portage Home Visitor, Educational Psychologist, Speech and Language Therapist etc?	Child's support plan*; EYIC anecdotal panel reports
Has the provider used transition systems effectively to share/gather information about the child and the inclusive strategies and approaches which are effective in meeting their needs?	Passport transfers, reports shared by previous providers
For children attending more than one setting, is there evidence to suggest that providers are working in partnership to provide a holistic approach to supporting the needs of the child through consistent inclusive practices?	Child's support plan*; EYIC reports.

*Where 'child's support plan' is listed as a possible source of information, this will be in whichever format the setting uses for recording children's personalised targets and the actions. For example, an Action Review Record or Pupil Passport.

Reviews	
Consideration	Possible Information Sources
What has the impact of targeted approaches (supported by the inclusion fund) been on the child's progress?	Review form; Progress graph on SEND Checker; School Readiness Checker.
If progress is slow, are the targeted approaches (and therefore the use of the additional funding) appropriate or do they need to be reviewed and modified?	Review form
If progress is good and gaps are closing, can the level of targeted approaches in place (and therefore the level of inclusion fund) be reduced? Is there a plan to amend the level of targeted approaches in place, enabling the child to access entitlements through quality first teaching?	Review form; Progress graph on SEND Checker; School Readiness Checker.
What was the outcome of the previous round of additional funding: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan to amend the level of targeted support provided; • Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)? 	Review form; Targeted & Specialist Support section within Passport.

Setting Specific Finance Considerations	
Consideration	Possible Information Sources
Has more than one application (including reviews) been made this term for this child?	Early Years Project Development & Business Manager
Will this application supersede the setting's limit for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No more than 30 hours funded support for a group of 13 or less 3/4 year olds or mixed age range? • No more than 15 hours funded support for a group of 5 or less 2 year olds? • £10K cap (per age range for large settings)? 	Early Years Project Development & Business Manager Application form
Is this application within the 50% of funded hours rule?	Application form
Has the setting used other funding streams (e.g. notional and Disability Access Fund) where appropriate to support inclusive practice and reasonable adjustments prior to making the application for EYSTAR?	Early Years Project Development & Business Manager

APPENDIX 2 - Children who will likely go on to receive an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) and those not attending for their full entitlement

Children who will likely go on to receive an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

Where it is recognised by practitioners and parents that a child will require long term support (and therefore funding in the form of an EHCP), it is important to consider the sustainability of any additional support provided via EYSTAR before a child receives an EHCP. This is to ensure that, when EYSTAR funding comes to an end, the amount awarded on the EHCP does not create a budget deficit for settings moving forward.

If the child is under statutory assessment when you apply for EYSTAR funding, the panel will pay EYSTAR funding up to the child's 20 week date.

Please note: EYSTAR funding does not guarantee that a child will receive an EHCP, this is decided by a separate panel and has a separate application process. For more information about EHCP's and the process for applying, please see this website: <https://northumberlandeducation.co.uk/cosa/>

Children not attending their full entitlement

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits schools and settings from discriminating against disabled children and young people in respect of admissions for a reason related to their disability. For this reason, it is expected that all children with emerging additional needs and SEND should be attending for their full entitlement if this is the wish of their parents/ carers, regardless of whether the school or setting is receiving additional funding.

If a child is not attending for their full entitlement, you will need to show that this is through parent/carer choice, or that there is a transition plan in place and that has been agreed by parents/carers for the child to build up their time in your setting. If you cannot show this, your application for EYSTAR funding will be declined. **You must only claim early years base rate funding for the hours a child is attending during headcount/census week.**

APPENDIX 3 - EYSTAR Request Forms

Individual EYSTAR Request	https://forms.office.com/e/qsK0TqCCjG
Individual EYSTAR Review	https://forms.office.com/e/1EaEQMHTQn
Group EYSTAR Request	https://forms.office.com/e/ZfP4FuhYb2
Group EYSTAR Review	https://forms.office.com/e/YLQZpKkWiH