

2024 NSW Disability and Inclusion Program Guidelines

Disability Inclusion Team
Access and Inclusion, Early Childhood Outcomes

NSW Department of Education





Acknowledgement of Country



We recognise the Ongoing Custodians of the lands and waterways where we work and live. We pay respect to Elders past and present as ongoing teachers of knowledge, songlines and stories.

We strive to ensure every Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander learner in NSW achieves their potential through education.

The NSW Disability and Inclusion Program

Provides funding and support for community preschools to ensure children with disability and additional needs can participate on the same basis as their peers

The Disability Inclusion Program (DIP) supports NSW community preschools to include children with disability and additional needs.

The program consists of four streams, each targeting a different barrier to inclusive access and participation in early childhood education.



High Learning Support Needs (HLSN)



Inclusive Environments (IE)
formerly Minor Capital Works (MCW)



Sector Capacity Building Program (SCB)



Inclusive Scholarships

Key Change #1: Provisional prepayment of Quarter 1 2024 HLSN funding

- Eligible providers can opt in for a provisional prepayment for children eligible for annual HLSN funding in Quarter 4 2023 and who are identified as returning to the service in 2024.
- Providers will still need to submit an individual application for 2024 HLSN funding for each child.

The department will contact eligible Providers to notify them of the opportunity to opt in for a provisional prepayment.
Please note the opt in process is voluntary.



The provisional prepayment will be calculated based on the number of support hours requested for continuing children for Quarter 1 2024.
The provisional prepayment will be made outside of the regular payment schedule.



Providers are required to submit their opt in form by 10 November 2023.
To receive the provisional pre-payment, Providers must first sign the 2024 Early Childhood Education Funding Agreement Terms and Conditions in ECCMS.



Payments received in December will be offset against payments made in Quarters 1 to 3 2024.
Any provisional prepayment funding not subsequently approved for eligible 2024 HLSN funding applications will be required to be returned as part of Quarter 3 adjustments or refunds.

Key dates for the provisional prepayment of Quarter 1 2024 HLSN funding

Eligible Service Providers who wish to opt in for a provisional prepayment must:

Complete the opt in form(s) including the declaration statement and return it as an Excel spreadsheet to ece.accessandequity@det.nsw.edu.au by **Friday 10 November 2023**

Sign the 2024 Early Childhood Education Funding Agreement Terms and Conditions in Early Childhood Contract Management System (ECCMS) **Friday 8 December 2023**

Submit an individual application for 2024 HLSN funding for children for whom a provisional prepayment is requested by:

- the Quarter 1 application cut-off date - **Friday 8 December 2023**

OR

- the Quarter 2 application cut-off date - **Friday 8 March 2024**

Applications must be submitted by **Friday 8 March 2024**

Key Change #2: Simplified applications for continuing children

A simplified application is available for children who were assessed as eligible for annual HLSN funding in Quarters 1 to 4 2023 and who continue to have high learning support needs in 2024.

Simplified applications for eligible children:

- should reflect the child's current functioning in the community preschool and must state the current adjustments and supports required, and
- will be found in ECCMS.



Up to date information about the child's high learning support needs is required for an application to be considered eligible for funding. Applications consisting only of information copied from 2023 applications may be assessed as ineligible.

Questions for 2024 HLSN funding applications



To be completed for new applications only (for new children or children who were ineligible for annual funding in 2023)

1. How does the child function in the preschool environment?
2. What adjustments would enable the child to participate in the educational program on the same basis as their peers?
3. Is there anything else that you would like us to know about the child when considering this application? (Optional)

To be completed only for returning children whose application was eligible in 2023

4. To be eligible for High Learning Support Needs (HLSN) funding for 2024, current information needs to be provided to verify that the child continues to require constant and ongoing support, and significant adjustments, to enable participation in the preschool program on the same basis as their peers. This information cannot be copied and pasted from the child's 2023 application.

Please describe how this child is functioning in the preschool environment and the adjustments required to enable participation on the same basis as their peers in 2024.

Key Change #3: Inclusive Environments

The Minor Capital Works funding stream will be renamed to “Inclusive Environments”.

This change will:

- make it clearer that the **scope of the program is broader than minor capital works**, as it includes funding for the purchase of specialised equipment and furniture
- better distinguish it from the Start Strong Minor Capital Fund to avoid confusion
- reflect the broader scope of the 2024 program, which includes a trial of service-based inclusion readiness funding.



Key Change #4: IE applications can be made for all children with constant and ongoing support needs

Applications for Inclusive Environments (IE) funding will be available for all children with constant and ongoing support needs, regardless of whether they have an approved application for HLSN funding.

To be eligible for funding, the child/children need to "have constant and ongoing support needs and require significant adjustments to enable them to engage with the educational program on the same basis as their peers, or a temporary illness or injury that requires short term adjustment to enable participation in the educational program on the same basis as their peers".

However, it is no longer a requirement for the child/children to have an application approved for HLSN funding.

- Applications are specific to individual or multiple children.
- An application can constitute inclusive environment requirements for multiple children, where the environment adjustment/equipment/furniture relates to more than one child.
- Applications will be assessed against the IE funding guidelines



Key Change #5: Eligible services can apply for funding to improve inclusion readiness (trial)

Eligible community preschools can apply for funding to improve their capacity to include children with disability or additional needs in the future. Up to \$5,000 (ex GST) per community preschool per year is available for specialised equipment/furniture or minor environmental modifications.

To be eligible the community preschool:

- must not have previously received HLSN nor MCW funding and
- must not have any children with disability recorded as attending the service in the 2023 Annual Preschool Census.

When assessing Inclusion Readiness IE applications, a range of factors are considered. Factors include:

- the community preschool not previously receiving HLSN or MCW funding and not having any children with disability recorded as attending the service in the 2023 Annual Preschool Census.
- the degree to which the proposed project will support or improve the service's capacity to increase access and participation of children with disability or additional needs in the future.
- the extent to which the proposed project is the most economical and effective way to improve the service's capacity to include children with disability or additional needs in the future.

Please note:

The service-based funding to support preschools' inclusion readiness is a trial and the budget will be limited.

Due to budget constraints, applications for this funding can only be accepted until the budget allocation is reached.

HLSN and IE child-based funding application cut-off and payment dates



Complete the opt in form(s) including the declaration statement and return it as an Excel spreadsheet to ece.accessandequity@det.nsw.edu.au by **Friday 10 November 2023**

HLSN and IE child-based funding application cut-off and payment dates



Application cut off dates	Notification of Outcome and Payment
Submitted by 5.00pm Friday 8 December 2023	Quarter 1 - February 2024
Submitted by 5.00pm Friday 8 March 2024	Quarter 2 - May 2024
Submitted by 5.00pm Friday 24 May 2024	Quarter 3 - July 2024
Submitted by 5.00pm Friday 16 August 2024	Quarter 4 - October 2024
Submitted by 5.00pm Friday 11 October 2024	Final adjustments - December 2024*

*Funding for eligible applications will be paid in December and must be spent within the calendar year.

IE Inclusion Readiness service-based funding application cut-off and payment date



Application cut off dates

Notification of Outcome and Payment

Submitted by 5.00pm
Friday 8 March 2024

May 2024

Sector Capacity Building (SCB) program



In 2023-24, SCB providers are available to assist community and mobile preschools to:

- increase their capacity to include children with disability and additional needs on the same basis as their peers,
- increase their capacity to provide specialised transition to school supports for children with disability and additional needs,
- enable equitable education outcomes for children with disability and additional needs consistent with the five outcome areas of the Early Years Learning Framework (Identity, Connectedness, Wellbeing, Confident and Involved Learners, Communication),
- understand the external support options for children with disability and additional needs, and how these supports can be used to complement the preschool program.

SCB providers assist community and mobile preschools to meet the above objectives:

- by collaborating to identify their individual support and development needs re inclusion best practice,
- developing and delivering tailored support programs.

SCB providers also assist community and mobile preschools to develop individual learning plans and submit applications for HLSN and IE funding.

Sector Capacity Building (SCB) program

SCB Provider

Autism Spectrum Australia (ASPECT)
aspectscbteam@autismspectrum.org.au

Early Links Inclusion Support Service Incorporated
scb@earlylinks.org.au

KU Children's Services
kuscb@ku.com.au

Learning Links
scb@learninglinks.org.au

Orana Early Childhood Intervention and Education Project Inc
info@oeci.org.au

Regions

- Far West NSW
- Southern NSW
- Hunter New England
- Mid North Coast
- Northern NSW
- Central Coast
- Illawarra Shoalhaven
- Murrumbidgee
- Nepean Blue Mountains
- Northern Sydney
- South Eastern Sydney
- Sydney
- Western Sydney
- South Western Sydney
- Western NSW



Image source: [NSW Health](#)