

## GETTING READY TO LEARN (GRtL)

Improving the Home Learning Environment

# Application Pack - Guidance

### Early Intervention Transformation Programme

#### Getting Ready to Learn

There is a wealth of evidence about the benefits of increased parental involvement in early learning, which is found to have a greater impact on children's wellbeing and achievement than any other factor, such as family income, parental education or school environment. The home learning environment is a term used to describe activities (e.g. reading with children, painting and drawing) that parents undertake with their children, which have a positive effect on their development (Field, 2010).

The Department of Education in conjunction with the Education Authority seeks to support pre-school education settings with DE-funded places to:

- encourage and develop parental involvement in children's early learning to ensure maximum parental contribution at a crucial time in children's early brain development;
- support parents<sup>1</sup> to improve their young children's home learning environment

Funding is available to support in establishing support programmes that once embedded, can be sustained with little or no cost.

**We would strongly encourage all settings to apply.**

<sup>1</sup> Where reference is made to 'parent' in terms of the Getting Ready to Learn project and engagement, this includes the child's primary caregiver.



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## What is the Early Intervention Transformation Programme?

The Early Intervention Transformation Programme (EITP) is a Northern Ireland Executive/Atlantic Philanthropies Delivering Social Change Signature Programme, funded jointly by the Delivering Social Change fund, DoH, DE, DoJ, DfC, DfE and the Atlantic Philanthropies. EITP aims to improve outcomes for children and young people across Northern Ireland through embedding early intervention.

There are various workstreams under the EITP Programme, the Department of Health (DoH) leads on the overall EITP programme, the Department of Education (DE) leads on the 'Getting Ready to Learn' element of Workstream 1.

Please see attached links for more information:

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/articles/early-intervention-transformation-programme>

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/early-intervention-transformation-programme-newsletter>

## What is Workstream 1?

Workstream 1 seeks to equip, support and empower parents to provide their children with the best start in life. It is made up of three separate components:

<b>Getting Ready for Baby</b>	Focused on transforming maternal care, both hospital and community based, from the initial GP appointment to delivery.
<b>Getting Ready for Toddler</b>	Focused on embedding early intervention in core health visiting, with a focus on improving the social and emotional development of children attending pre-school.
<b>Getting Ready to Learn</b>	Focused on improving outcomes for children in pre-school by engaging and empowering parents to help them create and sustain positive home learning environments.

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## What is Getting Ready to Learn (GRtL)?

The Getting Ready to Learn (GRtL) project within Workstream 1 seeks to support pre-school education settings with DE-funded places to encourage and develop parental involvement in children's early learning to ensure maximum parental contribution at a crucial time in children's early brain development.

The project has been based on research and evidence of best practice in parental engagement. Account has also been taken of the results of an online survey with health and education practitioners and workshops with parents. All of the findings concluded that parents would benefit from knowing more about:

- ☑ how children develop, including attachment and brain development;
- ☑ the importance of parent-child relationships for the child's development and behaviour;
- ☑ the importance of childhood education and learning; and
- ☑ the importance of healthy lifestyles and diet.

The majority of pre-school settings already have programmes in place to support both induction and transition. Getting Ready to Learn focusses on raising parent's awareness of how they can support children's learning at home through-out the pre-school year. A key focus is on sharing practice across the Early Years Sector, so that practitioners can learn from, and support each other, in establishing effective programmes of support for parents.

Settings are invited to participate by developing a programme of support for parents around four key themes:

- Education Works in Pre-school
- Happy Healthy Kids
- Ages & Stages, 3-4
- Big Bedtime Read

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Settings may be:

- introducing new practice
- developing existing practice to increase parental awareness of how to support children more effectively in the home

In all cases, the focus is on transforming 'how things are done'; making a real difference to the lives of young children.

Settings will be required to set out in detail, what they propose to do and how they propose to do it. It should be clear from the application how the proposals will transform practice e.g. enhancing staff capacity, engaging parents more effectively etc. It should also be evident how the programme will be embedded and sustained when funding is no longer available.

## Who can apply?

All settings delivering the NI Pre-School Education Curriculum<sup>2</sup> in the 2017/18 academic year to target-age (3-4) children, namely:

- Nursery schools
- Nursery units within primary schools
- Private or voluntary settings with PSEP places
- Primary schools may also apply if they are delivering the NI Pre-School Education Curriculum to pre-school children in a reception class
- Special schools

<sup>2</sup> *Curricular Guidance for Pre-School Education*

## Is there information on / guidance for each theme?

Guidance and resources will be made available by EA to provide support for staff in preparing for and facilitating the sessions ([www.gettingreadytolearn.co.uk](http://www.gettingreadytolearn.co.uk)). Local cluster groups will also be facilitated as the programme progresses to provide opportunities for training and dissemination of effective practice.

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## What funding is available for GRtL and what does it include?

Some funding is available to enable settings to establish practice, for example, purchasing resources for home-lending packs and guidance material. The funding is specifically aimed at enabling settings to engage with parents: therefore funding will **not be available to purchase generic pre-school equipment, or IT hardware/software.**

Essential session costs may also be included. **However, as this is short-term funding settings will be need to confirm how such costs will be met after March 2019, when funding is no longer available.** The intention is that the programme will become embedded in practice and be sustained in future years. Settings should therefore carefully consider how the programme will be maintained with 'low-cost' or 'no-cost'.

Within the GRtL Framework for Funding Applications (attached at Appendix 1), there is an indicative maximum amount of funding available per setting and per theme. The level of funding for each approved application will be determined by DE and the Education Authority (EA) based on factors such as the number of applications, the number of proposed themes, the number of children per class, the estimated number of parents taking part and value for money.

Settings will need to detail the costs required to implement the theme(s) and proposed costs should be realistic and based on the specific needs of their setting. Settings will also be required to detail any other funding source they currently have to avoid the risk of duplicate funding.

**Proposals must adhere to the principles of value for money, namely to enhance the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of activities, and a commitment to future sustainability when funding under the initiative is reduced or ends.**

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## Can the setting use the funding to pay for external facilitators?

Funding **should not be used to pay for external facilitators.** The aim of Getting Ready to Learn is to build the capacity of staff within pre-school settings to engage effectively with parents, Therefore Early Years' practitioners are required to deliver the workshops / sessions in their setting based on their own expertise and delivery of the NI Pre-School Education Curriculum.

Settings may wish to arrange visits to local libraries throughout the year, or invite people to read stories to children or talk about their professions. However, such sessions should be in addition to Getting Ready to Learn workshops and no costs should be incurred through this funding stream.

## How will applications be assessed?

All applications for funding will be assessed by an application panel. The panel will include DE officials, EA officers, school managing authorities and representatives from health.

This is a universal programme and application panels will take into consideration the following when assessing overall funding requirements:

- the number of target-age children enrolled in the setting in 2016/17 and estimated enrolment in 2017/18;
- inspection findings – in terms of the setting's capacity to deliver high quality activities for parents, or the capacity to introduce new and varied activities with support;
- previous experience – many settings may have already adopted successful strategies for parental engagement and parenting education;
- value for money;
- availability of other funding to the setting to support similar activities;
- local evidence of specific or additional need for parenting support (i.e. reasons for chosen theme(s) to deliver);
- sustainability of the proposed approach i.e. will the setting be able to deliver similar services in future years with less or no additional funding; and
- the total number and value of applications received.

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Where appropriate, applicants may be asked to provide further information, either written or verbal, to support their application.

Applicants will then be informed of the funding decision and the funding will be allocated by the EA.

## When will settings receive the funding?

The EA will notify settings in June of the amount of funding they will receive effective from September 2017. Funding will be allocated to settings in September and **must be used by the end of the financial year i.e. 31 March 2018.**

Further funding will be available for 2018/19 academic year.

## How will GRtL be monitored and evaluated?

DE/EA will be using the Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) framework for overall evaluation and monitoring. Settings will be provided with standard reporting templates and timescales for completion.

## What is Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA)?

OBA is the framework used across EITP and many other Delivering Social Change initiatives to monitor progress and success. It is a proven approach to planning services and assessing their performance that focuses on the outcomes that the services are intended to achieve. It is also much more than a tool for planning effective services as it secures strategic and cultural change through moving organisations away from a focus on outputs and processes as key measures of success towards making better outcomes the primary purpose of their organisation.

In EITP, application of OBA to projects will focus on the following questions:

- ✔ How much did we do?
- ✔ How well did we do it? and
- ✔ Is anyone better off?

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A standard reporting template will be provided by the EA to all participating settings. Settings will be required to use this format for reporting progress and will be required to:

- ✔ gather performance information e.g. via pre and post programme questionnaires;
- ✔ share qualitative data, for example, photographs and comments from parents, children and staff
- ✔ send completed data collection tools/questionnaires to EA for quality assurance, analysis; and reporting to DE and the EITP Programme Board.

The EA will:

- ✔ monitor the implementation of the programmes to ensure they are delivered to a high standard;
- ✔ support and monitor data collection and outcomes and ensure effective governance and accountability systems are in place;
- ✔ collate outcome data at a local and regional level;
- ✔ audit / verify expenditure, settings should note that the GRtL funding will be subject to audit and settings must retain records of expenditure e.g. invoices;
- ✔ evaluate the programme at the end of each year; and
- ✔ disseminate high level learning from good practice.

The ETI, during their normal inspection activity, will evaluate the quality of parental engagement and if a GRtL programme is operating.

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## What is the role of the Department of Education (DE)?

DE worked with colleagues across early years' education and health on the development of GRtL. DE will continue to have a role in overseeing the implementation of GRtL including monitoring and strategic oversight of the Getting Ready suite of programmes in liaison with health colleagues. DE will also have a role in overseeing the application process.

## What is the role of the Education Authority (EA)?

The EA will provide leadership, strategic direction and operational support to pre-school settings taking part in the GRtL programme. The EA will ensure consistency and quality of service, so that pre-school children and their families benefit from the additional funding provided.

The EA will administer the programme and manage the application process. The EA will work with settings in receipt of this funding to facilitate local quality assurance requirements.

The EA will provide the standard reporting templates for settings to complete and the EA will monitor and evaluate the outcomes.

## Where can I access the application form?

Application forms are available to download from:

[www.gettingreadytolearn.co.uk](http://www.gettingreadytolearn.co.uk)

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## What is the deadline for applications?

Application forms must be received by 5pm on **Friday 28 April 2017**.

Please email your form to: [grtl@eani.org.uk](mailto:grtl@eani.org.uk)

If internet access is not available please post to:  
Hilary McEvoy, Education Authority, 40 Academy Street, Belfast, BT1 2NQ.

Settings should retain a copy of their application form for their own records.

## Can I contact anyone if I have any questions?

Please contact the Getting Ready to Learn Team by email at [GRtL@eani.org.uk](mailto:GRtL@eani.org.uk),  
or:

Hilary McEvoy (Programme Manager EA)	028 9056 4047
Rebecca Gamble (Programme Administrator)	028 9056 4155
Nicola Mitchell (Research and Development Officer)	028 3831 7050

For any other queries relating to The Early Intervention Transformation Programme,  
please contact the Department of Education:

Margaret-Ann Corbett (DE)	028 9127 9272
Bryan Lavery (DE)	028 9127 9413

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## Glossary

<b>AP</b>	<b>Atlantic Philanthropies</b>
<b>DE</b>	<b>Department of Education</b>
<b>DEL</b>	<b>Department of Employment and Learning</b>
<b>DOH</b>	<b>Department of Health</b>
<b>DOJ</b>	<b>Department of Justice</b>
<b>DFC</b>	<b>Department for Communities</b>
<b>DFE</b>	<b>Department for the Economy</b>
<b>GRtL</b>	<b>Getting Ready to Learn</b>
<b>EA</b>	<b>Education Authority</b>
<b>EITP</b>	<b>Early Intervention Transformation Programme</b>
<b>ETI</b>	<b>Education and Training Inspectorate</b>
<b>OBA</b>	<b>Outcomes Based Accountability</b>
<b>PEAG</b>	<b>Pre-School Education Advisory Group</b>
<b>PSEP</b>	<b>Pre-School Education Programme</b>

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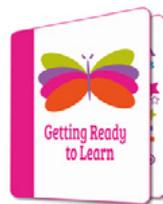
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