

MEETING:	SCHOOLS FORUM
DATE:	1 OCTOBER 2010
TITLE OF REPORT:	PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES AGAINST EARLY YEARS SEN GRANT SPENDS
OFFICER:	EARLY YEARS CONSULTANT

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To inform School's Forum of the current position regarding additional funding to pre-school settings for children with significant specific educational needs.

To request that School's Forum continue to provide additional funding for pre-school settings for children with significant special educational needs

Recommendation(s)

THAT the Committee:

Continue to provide additional funding for pre-school settings for children with significant special educational needs at the 2010/11 funding level; provisionally and subject to the 2011/12 DSG settlement

Key Points Summary

- Early Years Inclusion Funding ensures the inclusion of children with SEN into pre-school settings.
- The majority of pre-school settings could not afford to pay for an appropriate level of support, training and equipment/resources from their own budgets.

Alternative Options

- 1 That Early Years Inclusion funding ceases. This would mean budget savings, but would **significantly reduce the capacity** of pre-school settings to include children with SEN. This, in turn, would have a serious impact on children's developmental levels when they start school, as early intervention would be much reduced. It would also have a serious impact on the quality of information currently provided by pre-school settings to schools on transition.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Sue Sharp and Early Years Consultant on (01432) 261741

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 The Early Years Inclusion grant enables pre-school settings to successfully include children with a wide range of SEN. Without the funding, fewer children would be able to access pre-school settings, or make the most of their opportunities for learning and development.
- 3 The demands on this budget are increasing. At present an extra £10,000 per year is provided for children under 3 years of age from the SureStart grant. It is uncertain whether this will continue from March 2011. At present the Inclusion grant provides funding for up to 12.5 hours of support a week, in line with the entitlement for Nursery Education Funding. From September 2010 NEF will increase to 15 hours per week which will mean many children will increase their hours at pre-school. It is very likely that children with severe and complex SEN will require additional support hours, adding to the demands on the Inclusion grant. Also, grant funding for support hours was paid at £6 per hour in 2003. This has gradually increased over the seven years to the current rate of £7 per hour in-line with the average hourly rate in pre-school settings.

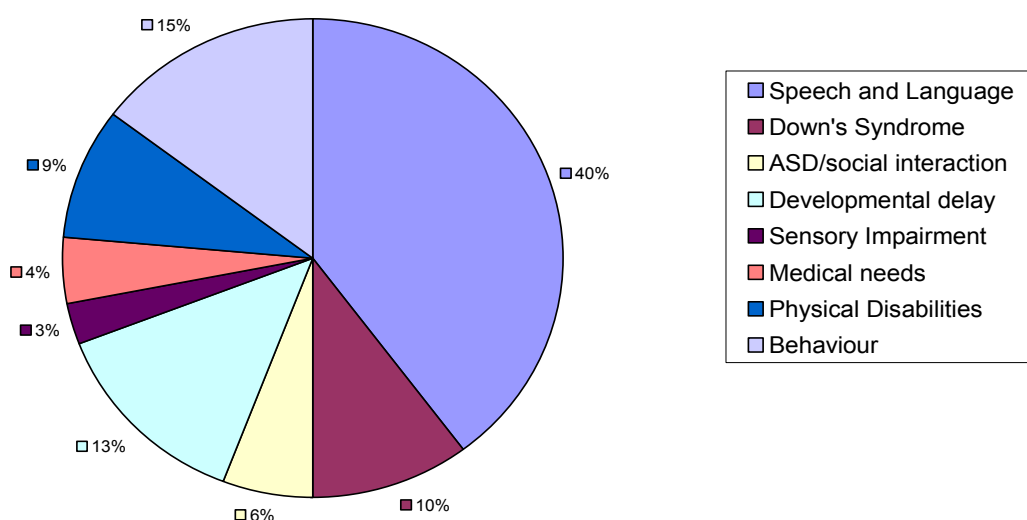
Introduction and Background

- 5 Herefordshire LA has provided inclusion grant funding since 2003. This funding is designed to assist pre-school settings to meet the needs of children with special needs. The grant is used predominantly to provide a contribution towards extra staffing. It can also fund staff training, resources and equipment in order to improve the setting's capacity to include other children with special needs in the future.
- 6 £58,380 was provided 09/10 through DSG to support the effective inclusion of children aged three to four with special education needs (SEN) into private, voluntary and independent mainstream pre-school settings and also into the 13 LA Nursery classes. An additional £10,000 is funded through the SureStart Grant for children with SEN under 3 years old. The Early Years Consultants (School Improvement Service) support the settings within their localities to identify these children, decide on appropriate early intervention and further referral if appropriate, and judge whether the setting should apply for grant funding.
- 7 Settings apply for funding each term, which ensures that the provision is regularly reviewed. They use a form which details how the funding will be spent and what impact this will have on the child. They provide evidence of this impact, if reapplying the following term, through Individual Education Plans and 'Talking Matters' profiles. They also provide details of their accounts to demonstrate that they do not have the funds to provide this extra support themselves. The grant is intended to be a contribution towards the cost – not to pay for it all.
- 8 A panel of Early Years Consultants assess all applications to ensure all details are correct and that the child meets the criteria for grant funding. The amount granted to each setting is based on a standard grant of 5 hours per week, at present paid at a rate of £7 per hour. Grant funding is for term time only. If there are exceptional circumstances where a child has severe and complex needs the number of hours can be increased to a maximum of 12.5 per week in line with Nursery Education Funding. (This will increase from September 2010 to a maximum of 15hours) The Early Years Consultants work with the setting to agree an appropriate number of hours support for the child based on the needs of the child; the number of hours attended, and whether support assistant time could be combined to support other children with SEN within the setting. Resources, equipment and training can also be included in the grant application if appropriate.
- 9 Parents have been very pleased that support can be provided for their child in their pre-school and realise this does not necessarily mean that their child will receive support in school.

Key Considerations

- 10 Early identification and intervention for children with SEN is stated as a key priority in the C&YP Directorate Plan 2009-11 - 'To focus on early years so that children and young people have the best possible start in life'. It is also a priority to improve achievement and 'narrow the gap' across the EYFSP particularly in Communication, Language and Literacy and in Personal, Social and Emotional Development. The Inclusion grant has been vital in supporting children in these two areas (speech and language difficulties/social interaction and behaviour difficulties - see chart below for percentage of grant used for supporting these areas)
- 11 Children with SEN have a right to be included in their local mainstream early years provision (as stated in the DDA 1995 and SEN Code Of Practice 1996) Pre-school settings have an extremely positive attitude towards their duties under these regulations and are welcoming to children with a wide range of additional needs and their families. They recognise that it is their responsibility to provide support for children with SEN. However most pre-schools have very small budgets and very little funding available to provide extra support hours for these children, staff training, extra equipment or resources. There is a delicate balance between remaining a sustainable business and charging fees that are affordable for parents. The LA has recognised this by providing the grant from DSG for the past seven years.
- 12 In this financial year, 2010, the inclusion grant has supported 68 children across 43 different pre-school settings. The average grant per child per year is £860, or, per setting per year £1361. However some children will only access the grant for one or two terms – some will make good progress and no longer require extra support, others will move on into school. The grant has supported children with a wide range of SEN with the largest category being children with speech and language difficulties.

SEN categories supported by Early Years Inclusion Grant 2009/10



Community Impact

- 13 The grant funding has a huge impact on the ability of local mainstream pre-schools and nurseries to include children with a wide range of additional needs. The range includes

children with severe and complex disabilities through to those with higher incidence needs in speech and language or challenging behaviour. It enables effective early intervention by staff to help each child make progress and also to pass on useful information at the point of transition into school. When this early intervention takes place effectively there is a positive impact for the child's Primary school. Parents are already aware of the difficulties faced by their child and how the setting and school can work with them to maximise the child's progress. High quality information on the child's stage of development and progress is passed on in the form of written records and transition meetings. The school can then be fully prepared and have all necessary provision in place before the child starts.

- 14 The impact on individual children's progress is difficult to measure. There is no way to compare a child's progress without the funding, against their progress when funding is provided, as there are so many other developmental variables. However, the key worker and SENCO carefully monitor each child's progress in the setting through Individual Education Plans and developmental profiles, and the Early Years Consultant monitors the use of the funding and ensures appropriate next steps are taken. The table below shows examples of outcomes for a range of children who accessed funding during the spring term 2010.

Amount /Spring term	Need and age of child	Outcome
£1050	Downs Syndrome 3y6m	Achieved three IEP targets including learning to walk, increasing use of signalong and increased interaction with other children
£672	Emotional/behavioural 3y8m	Child now understands how her behaviour has consequences. Beginning to recognize emotions in others and understand social rules
£1008	Autism Spectrum Disorder 4y2m	Child is able to use photos to make choices and to help her follow the settings routine. Her imaginative play is developing – short sessions of sequenced role play 3-4 minutes
£336	Speech and Language 3y6m	3 IEP targets achieved – listening skills improving, Now using some 2-word phrases.
£420	Behaviour 2y8m	Staff have been able to implement a consistent behaviour management plan and support the child to interact with his peers encouraging turn taking.
£504 + £600 Equipment (nursery gym with steps and slide suggested by physio)	Physical disability – hypotonia 3y5m	Now able to use steps while holding on to rail. More aware of correct position when sitting on floor. Continuing to work on balance

£840	Global developmental delay	Child now more willing to
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	3y10m	engage with staff and other children and pre-school activities. Motor skills improving. Small increases in vocabulary – animal names, toys, family names
£1008	Hearing Impairment 4y	Child is now wearing hearing aid regularly. Accessing a wide range of activities. Increased use of signing. Uses photo time line to learn routines.
£1008 + £280 manual handling training	Visual Impairment, physical disability, epilepsy 4y2m	The child is now exploring his environment, starting to pull up to stand and use 2 word phrases. Staff are more compliant in physical management.
£840	Developmental delay 2y 8m	Progress in social skills – child now watching other children and beginning to join in with play. Starting simple sequences of role play. Using some signs to communicate

- 15 Pre-school settings are involved in CAF when appropriate and work as part of the Team around the Child with other agencies to provide an integrated package of support for the child and their family. The inclusion grant funding helps to provide relevant training e.g. manual handling; specialist feeding; Signalong, and also enables staff to liaise with other agencies effectively e.g. by attending Child Development Centre review meetings; visiting the child in other settings; meeting with other professionals e.g. physiotherapist.

Financial Implications

- 16 The cost of this proposal would be:

Recommendation a) provisionally continue present level of funding from DSG - £59,585 (2010/11 budget), subject to the 2011/12 DSG settlement and any efficiency targets therein.

Legal Implications

- 17 There are no legal implications identified.

Risk Management

- 18 If the proposals are agreed there would be commitment from DSG to maintain this funding level. There would be a commitment to regularly review the impact and outcomes achieved.
- 19 If the proposals are declined and the funding ceases there is a risk of serious impact on the early intervention programme, which would be contrary to the recommendations in the Children's Plan. Young children with additional needs would be significantly less prepared for entrance into school.
- 20 If the proposals are declined there is substantial risk that pre-schools and nurseries would be

unable to offer places to children with special educational needs, or that fewer hours would be offered. This would mean schools would have to take children with special educational needs into their reception classes who have had little or no experience of pre-school. They would have had little opportunity to:

- interact with other children and less familiar adults,
- learn independence skills
- learn routines and boundaries
- engage in a wide range of stimulating EYFS activities

- 21 This would mean these children would start school at a lower developmental level and be less prepared for school, which would have a serious impact on staff and the other children in their reception class.
22. Early intervention through pre-school settings supports parents to come to terms with their child's special needs and to understand some of the systems put in place to help their child to make progress. At present, early years setting and school staff, and parents and other relevant professionals, meet together during the summer term to review the child's progress and plan an effective transition into school. If the inclusion grant ceased this process would not start until the child entered school and would cause extra anxiety for the parents and extra work for the school SENCO.
23. There is no automatic correlation between a child receiving early years inclusion grant and then receiving banded funding in school. However, the school is able to use the information passed on from pre-school in the form of Individual Education Plans, developmental profiles, reports etc to help them apply for banded funding, if appropriate. If the child had not attended pre-school this process would be delayed and would mean children starting school with no banded funding in place. This would have financial implications for the school, which would have to fund any additional support required itself.

Consultees

- 24 Consultation has been carried out with the managers of a range of early year's settings to ascertain their views on the grant process. Copies of the evaluation feedback are listed as background papers

Appendices

- 25 None

Background Papers

Early Years Inclusion Grant Application Form

Early Years Inclusion Grant Criteria

Early Years Inclusion Grant Additional Information for Applicants

Review of Early Years Inclusion Grant Funding 2010

Client feedback questionnaires examples