

Playgroup Funding Handbook

The Playgroup Funding Handbook provides information about how playgroup funding is calculated and the conditions which need to be met to receive funding in accordance with section [548 of the Education and Training Act 2020](#)([external link](#)).

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Related downloads

- [Playgroup Funding Handbook \[PDF, 175 KB\]](#)
- [Playgroup Special Grant Application Form \[PDF, 245 KB\]](#)
- [Playgroup Special Grant Factsheet \[PDF, 192 KB\]](#)
- [PG3 Playgroup Funding Claim Form \[PDF, 475 KB\]](#)
- [RS2 Change of Playgroup Bank Details \[PDF, 134 KB\]](#)

Introduction

This handbook sets out the conditions for funding payments to playgroups.

Information about eligibility, the conditions that govern the funding and applying for these funding types can be found in this Handbook.

Who is the Handbook for?

The *Playgroup Funding Handbook* applies to all playgroups funded by the Ministry of Education. In particular, it is intended for the management committees of these playgroups.

Funding Types

There are two types of funding for playgroups:

Playgroup Operational Funding – a general grant available to all eligible playgroups to assist with ongoing operational costs

Playgroup Special Grant – a discretionary grant available to assist playgroups to meet large costs that cannot be met from other funding.

More information

Contact an education advisor at your regional Ministry of Education office.

[Local Ministry offices](#)

Playgroup Operational Funding

Playgroup operational funding is intended to assist playgroups to meet their ongoing operational costs.

Eligibility

To be eligible to receive playgroup operational funding a playgroup must:

be certificated (that is hold a valid interim or full certificate) and
meet the conditions for payment of funding set out in this Handbook.

Funding Rate

The funding rate for all playgroups is \$1.83 per hour per child. Playgroup Operational Funding is GST inclusive.

Funding Dates

Playgroup operational funding is paid twice per year.

The funding periods are from 1 January to 30 June and from 1 July to 31 December.

A payment advice notice will be emailed to all playgroups that receive funding confirming the amount they will be paid.

Updating Contact Details

It is important the Ministry of Education has the most up-to-date contact details for each playgroup. If your playgroup's funding contact person, email address, postal address or bank account details have changed please notify your Education Adviser as soon as possible. Incorrect playgroup details may result in delayed funding.

Playgroup Operational Funding Conditions

Objectives

Funding is provided to support playgroups to meet the following objectives:

to enable a community-initiated response to increase participation in early childhood education
to support playgroups to provide quality educational programmes consistent with any curriculum prescribed by the Minister of Education, and
to assist playgroups to be sustainable over time.

Report on met Objectives

Playgroups are required to provide the Ministry of Education with a report on how the funding received has been used to meet these objectives. See the [Playgroup Funding Report](#) page in this handbook for further details of this requirement.

Guidelines for Expenditure

Playgroups must ensure that the use of their playgroup operational funding is allocated appropriately to meet the three objectives.

Example 1: Inappropriate Spending

It would not be appropriate for a playgroup to spend their entire allocation on paying for a playgroup coordinator if there were inappropriate or inadequate curriculum resources.

Example 2: Inappropriate Spending

It would not be appropriate to use the majority of funding for overheads and transport costs if there was insufficient equipment for children.

Expenditure Justification

Playgroups need to carefully consider the rationale and justification for any expenditure. This information can then be used to complete the [Playgroup Funding Report \(PG5\)](#).

Objective 1: Increase ECE Participation

Objective 1 spending is for premises and facilities or ensuring children's health and safety.

The following examples support this objective

to assist with the playgroup's operating costs, such as rent and electricity
to support children's health and safety by installing products like safety matting and sunshades, and
to make or contribute to repairs or additions to the building used by the playgroup as appropriate.

Objective 2: Quality Educational Programmes

Objective 2 spending is for learning opportunities and experiences that support the prescribed curriculum framework (see [Education \(Playgroups\) Regulations 2008\(external link\)](#)).

the following examples support this objective:

to purchase curriculum resources and a range of children's equipment
to purchase language and culturally-specific resources

to improve learning spaces used by the playgroup, and
to support training programmes relevant to the playgroup.

Objective 3: Sustainable Playgroups

Objective 3 spending is for the playgroup's management and administration costs.

The following examples support this objective:

to purchase resources for the sound financial and administrative management of the playgroup
to recruit and maintain membership to ensure the ongoing success of the playgroup
to pay wages or fees to a playgroup coordinator, and
to promote the availability of the service within the community.

Administrative Requirements

To receive funding playgroups are required to:

maintain a separate bank account either in the name of the playgroup or the affiliated organisation
have two signatories to sign off all expenditure
maintain accurate and verified records of income and expenditure and make these available to the Ministry of Education on request
complete the **Playgroup Funding Report (PG5)** to account for the expenditure of government funding, and
maintain enrolment and attendance records and make these available to the Ministry of Education on request.

Conditions on Closure

Funding is provided to playgroups on the condition that, upon closure:

all remaining funds received from the Ministry of Education are returned to the Ministry of Education, and
all equipment purchased with Ministry of Education funding may be reclaimed by the Ministry.

Restrictions on Funding

Funding must not be claimed for:

children enrolled in a licensed home-based service who attend the playgroup with their home-based educator, or
children over the age of six or who are enrolled in school.

Claiming Playgroup Funding

Maximum to be Claimed

There are no restrictions on the number of days or hours a certificated playgroup can operate during a week. However, no child may attend for more than four hours per day, and no playgroup may claim funding for more than four hours per day for any child attending.

Playgroups can be funded for a maximum average of 25 children between birth and six years of age for each

playgroup session (when averaged over the ten week period).

Calculating Playgroup Funding

Playgroup operational funding is calculated using the formula below:

The funding rate X the average number of children attending X the hours per week the group operates X weeks of operation over the six month period.

Example

Happy Days Playgroup has an average of eight children and operates 20 hours per week. The playgroup expects to operate for 19 weeks over this six month period.

They could claim: $\$1.83 \times 8 \times 20 \times 19 = \$5,563.20$.

Statutory Holidays

Playgroup operational funding can only be claimed for statutory holidays if the playgroup was operating on that day and children attended.

Notional Roll

Where a playgroup has an average number of children attending that is greater than zero but less than five, this will be rounded up to five.

PG3 Playgroup Funding Form

To claim Playgroup Operational Funding, playgroups should register for access to the Education Resourcing System (ERS). ERS is a funding system for early learning services and schools that allows funding applications to be submitted online. It allows users to track the status of current funding applications and review their funding history requests

Access to ERS

You will need to have an Education Sector Logon (ESL) to access ERS.

To obtain an ESL logon to access ERS complete sections 1 and 2 of the ESL 61 Form - ECE user request for playgroups. Send the completed form and proof of identity to your regional Education Advisor who will send you an invitation to create an account.

[ESL 61 Form - ECE user request for playgroups](#) (external link)

Applying for funding

For guidance on how to request funding using ERS, see the training material and user guides available on the Education Applications and Online Systems website.

[ERS – Education Applications and Online Systems\(external link\)](#)

Timelines

Your Education Advisor will let you know when funding requests are due. The cut-off dates for submission in ERS are:

30 June each year for the period 1 January to 30 June of the calendar year.

31 December each year for the period 1 July to 31 December of the calendar year.

Requests cannot be submitted after the cut-off dates. Any request submitted after the cut-off dates will be processed as a request for the next funding round.

Paper funding forms

We encourage all playgroups to use ERS to submit their requests for funding. But if you need to submit a paper form a PG3 Playgroup funding claim form can be downloaded from our website and should be returned to your regional Ministry of Education office.

[PG3 playgroup funding claim form\[PDF, 475 KB\]](#)

Playgroup Special Grant

The Playgroup Special Grant is a discretionary grant to assist a playgroup to cover large costs that cannot be met from other funding. The Special Grant may contribute to or meet the full costs of what is applied for.

There are two grant rounds per year.

As this is a discretionary grant, the applicants are not guaranteed to receive funding applied for.

Eligibility

Playgroups eligible for Playgroup operational funding are also eligible to apply for the special grant.

Special Grant Uses

Playgroup Special Grant Funding is available for:

- setup costs for new playgroups
- addressing health and safety issues
- increasing participation in quality ECE in priority communities, and
- addressing extraordinary circumstances (like damage to equipment by an extreme weather event).

If funds permit we will also consider applications for resources or activities that will directly benefit children at the playgroup and cannot be funded from operational funding.

Special Grant Conditions

Playgroup Special Grant is available on the conditions that:

the grant is used only for the purpose identified in the application
the playgroup informs the Ministry of Education as soon as possible in the event of any changes that affect the immediate use of special grant money
any special grant funds unspent after one year are returned to the Ministry of Education
the use of special grant funding is reported in the playgroup's annual Playgroup Funding Report for the year it was granted, and
equipment purchased with Ministry of Education funding may be reclaimed by the Ministry when the playgroup ceases to operate.

Applying for the Special Grant

Receiving the Form

The Playgroup Special Grant Application Form (PG4) and a supporting Factsheet can be obtained from your Regional Education Advisor or from the [playgroup funding handbook](#) section of our website.

Returning the Form

The completed Playgroup Special Grant application form PG4 should be returned to your [Regional Ministry of Education office](#).

Grant Amount

The playgroup special grant can be claimed for up to a maximum of \$5000. The maximum granted to a playgroup in a 12 month period cannot exceed \$5000.

Timeline

Applications can be submitted at any time.

Playgroups will receive confirmation from their regional Education Advisor about whether or not their application has been successful. Payment will be made following a successful application and a payment advice notice will be emailed to you from the Education Resourcing System (ERS).

Assistance

Your Education Advisor is available to offer advice and support about applying for a special grant.

Playgroup Funding Report

Every year playgroups are required to complete and return a Playgroup Funding Report (PG5) to the Ministry of Education. This report needs to show the funds the playgroup has received from the Ministry of Education and how this money has been spent.

Process

Playgroup Funding Report forms are sent to all playgroups that received Ministry of Education funding the previous financial year. It is important the Playgroup Funding Report is completed and returned to your [Regional Ministry of Education office](#) for checking and recording.

Note: for the purposes of playgroup funding, the Ministry's financial year runs from 1 July to 30 June in the following year.

Timeline

Playgroup Funding Reports for the previous financial year are due at your Regional Ministry of Education office by 20 July each year.

Further Funding

A annual Playgroup Funding Report is required before a playgroup can receive further funding in the next financial year.

Assistance

An Education Advisor can help your playgroup to complete the Playgroup Funding Report. The advisor will check that the funding has been used to meet the objectives of Playgroup Funding and the playgroup has met all the Ministry of Education funding rules.

Contact an education advisor at your [Regional Ministry of Education Office](#).