

Practical tips on allocating Early Years Pupil Premium funding

**Guidance from the Learning
Together About Learning
project, funded by the
Department for Education**

Online version



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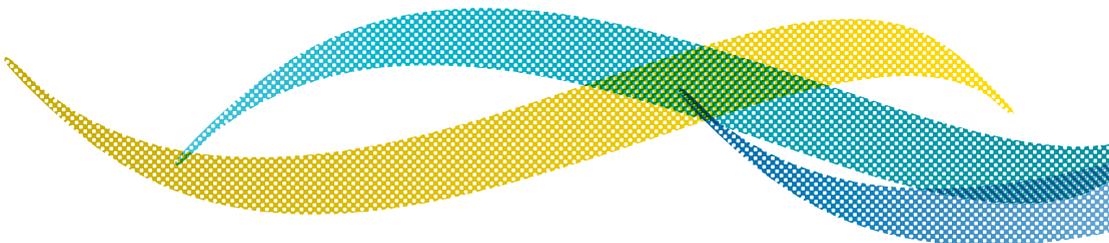
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Contents

About the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)	2
Why claim the funding?	2
Claiming the funding	2
Consulting parents on allocation of funding	2
Allocating funding	4
Broad themes to think about when allocating funding	7
Training	7
Developing the home learning environment	8
Widening life experiences	9
Making the funding go further	11
Measuring the impact	11
Accountability to Ofsted	13
In conclusion	14
References and further reading	15
Appendix 1: Example data collection sheet	16

About the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

Early Years Pupil Premium was introduced by government in April 2015 to help early years providers try to close the attainment gap between the most disadvantaged children and their peers. At the end of Reception, 19% fewer children eligible for Free School Meals achieve a “good level of development” (GLD) than children who are not eligible, and this gap has not closed significantly over the last few years (Ofsted, 2015:19). EYPP is intended to make a difference by having extra targeted strategies for the rate of progress these children make, and by ensuring practitioners focus specifically on these children’s progress.

Why claim the funding?

Providers currently receive roughly up to £300 per year per eligible child for 15 hours funded entitlement. While this is not a large amount, it can be used creatively to make a difference through improved staff training, resources or support for children. Early Education’s Learning Together About Learning project provides examples of how it has been used effectively in a wide range of ways in different types of setting (a number of examples are given in the project newsletters, and case studies will be available from the website at the end of the project – see www.early-education.org.uk/eyp for details).

Even if you don’t claim the funding, Ofsted will expect you to demonstrate how you are providing additional support for eligible children – so it makes little sense not to claim the funding that would support that activity.

It’s also likely that if EYPP is claimed widely and used effectively, the sector will be better able to argue the case for increasing it to a similar level to schools’ pupil premium in future. Whereas, if the sector doesn’t use it, it may lose it.

Claiming the funding

Who is eligible?

There are eligibility criteria families need to meet in order for their child to receive the funding. These can be found at www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-pupil-premium-guide-for-local-authorities.

How do we claim the funding?

Each local authority has their own processes for claiming, so you will need

to check these directly with your local authority. Some procedures involve separate forms for claiming EYPP, some combine with the job centre and others with the head count form. Parents will need to provide their date of birth and national insurance number so that eligibility can be checked for all children.

In order to encourage parents to provide their details so eligibility can be checked, it will be important to provide information about how their child will benefit from the extra funding. Providing the same information to all parents may help reduce the stigma and maximise take up.

Your local authority will also take a view on whether or not EYPP funding needs to be paid to the next setting if a child moves mid-term, so check with them if eligible children arrive or leave part way through a term.

How often should children's eligibility be checked?

Children's eligibility needs to be checked annually.

If your local authority checks termly and you have children who stop having the funding mid-way through, it may be worth referring them to the DfE guidance listed above and to ask for the funding to be re-instated.

Consulting parents on allocation of funding

Try to include parents in the planning/decision making process for EYPP. You can do this through:

- individual conversations either through formal opportunities such as parents evenings or informally at transition times
- displays of how the money has been spent previously and its impact
- or giving a choice from a range of potential strategies.

Parents who understand the process and thinking behind the EYPP funding will be in a good position to help identify possible strategies for spending the EYPP funding and if there is involvement from them needed in the chosen strategy, they are more likely to have some buy in, and the impact will therefore be greater. A strategy some settings have found useful is to give parents a choice between a small number of options.

You know your families well and you know which means of communication work best for them. You may need to employ a range of strategies in order to meet the needs of all of your parents.

Allocating funding

The purpose of EYPP funding is to ensure those children who are inexperienced make accelerated progress to close the gap between their progress and that of their less disadvantaged peers. It could also be used to ensure those EYPP children who are currently where they are expected to be in terms of attainment and progress, are enabled to be more experienced in some areas of learning.

When deciding how to spend the funding, it may be sensible to think about timescales that match the funding rather than terms, unless your local authority is one of the few which pays the EYPP funding at the beginning of term. If it comes to you later, say at or near half-term, see the period as being October to February, February to May and May to October. This should help with not having to potentially fund strategies before the money comes in.

When deciding how to use your funding think about:

- the number of eligible children you have and the amount of funding
- the long term impact of how you will use it – will it only benefit your current cohort, or will the impact continue for future children?

Remember you have a sound knowledge of the context of your children, families and setting and what will make a difference to the outcomes of these children.

It is important to keep in mind that there are no stipulations on how the EYPP funding must be spent. This is because you know your children and their context and are trusted to make decisions. It is important to be clear about why you have made the decisions you have and the impact they have had on outcomes. Below are some suggested steps you may follow when allocating your EYPP funding:

Step 1. Identify the needs of the eligible children using your professional knowledge, data, observations, information from outside agencies or comments from parents.



Step 2. Identify any possible trends amongst the eligible children. If you have several children with a similar need, their funding or part of their funding could be pooled, this can result in the funding going further.



Step 3. Consider what you might do with the funding, what you expect the impact to be, and how you will monitor that.



Step 4. Consult with parents.



Step 5. Allocate the funding and implement the chosen strategy/strategies.



Step 6. Measure the impact. This can be used to feed into the next cycle.

There are proformas you could use or further develop at www.early-education.org.uk/framing-your-thinking-spending-your-eypp-funding

The Education Endowment Foundation has developed a toolkit (see References) which gives information about the research evidence supporting the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of a range of possible strategies. Whilst it is based on research it does stress that your contexts may lead to different outcomes.

In addition there is quite a body of evidence drawn from the schools pupil premium. This includes a report by the National Audit Office (2015) into the impact of pupil premium (see References). The main messages that came from this report are that additional staff do not always lead to improved outcomes and that strategies which require little or no funding, such as peer-to-peer learning can be really successful in improving outcomes.

The pupil premium awards could also be a source of inspiration for ideas.

Another report by Macleod et al (2015) on supporting the attainment of disadvantaged pupils (see References) identified seven building blocks to success. These are:

1. Promote an **ethos of attainment for all pupils**, rather than stereotyping disadvantaged pupils as a group with less potential to succeed.
2. Have an **individualised approach** to addressing barriers to learning and emotional support, **at an early stage**, rather than providing access to generic support and focusing on pupils nearing their end-of-key-stage assessments.
3. Focus on **high quality teaching** first rather than on bolt-on strategies and activities outside school hours.
4. Focus on **outcomes for individual pupils** rather than on providing strategies.
5. **Deploy the best staff to support disadvantaged pupils**; develop skills and roles of teachers and teaching assistants (TAs) rather than using additional staff who do not know the pupils well.
6. **Make decisions based on data and respond to evidence**, using frequent, rather than one-off assessment and decision points.
7. Have **clear, responsive leadership**: setting ever higher aspirations and devolving responsibility for raising attainment to all staff, rather than accepting low aspirations and variable performance.

Broad themes to think about when allocating funding

It may pay to think about the following three broad themes when making your EYPP decisions to ensure the funding will have a long lasting impact:

- training
- developing the home learning environment
- widening the life experiences of the child and family

Training

Training that is designed to upskill practitioners and improve practice should impact positively on outcomes for children and especially this group of children. There should also be a longer term impact as the developments become embedded into everyday practice. It could also benefit those children who do not attract EYPP funding but have similar needs.

If staff who attend training cascade their newly acquired knowledge then all the staff should benefit. Alternatively, commissioning bespoke training to take place in-house means that the whole staff team hears the same messages at the same time and can work collaboratively together towards a common goal. Collaborating with other settings who have similar areas for development in your locality or neighbouring ones, will help your funding go further.

Some settings extend training out to the parents as well as the staff. If parents have a deeper understanding of how young children learn then they will be better able to support their child and any subsequent children.

Training can take a range of formats from face to face discussions or sessions to professional reading or watching of DVD material.

Developing the home learning environment

There has been much research done, including the EPPE and EPPSE projects (see References), showing the positive impact of the home learning environment on outcomes for children. The benefits impact on the children, families and staff of the setting.

Children benefit by having a wider range of experiences with a wide range of interested adults, more opportunities to consolidate or refine skills and concepts or develop their ideas further, more opportunities to explore and be supported by an interested adult. They are also better able to see the connections between their home life and their life in the setting.

Parents benefit because their knowledge of how young children learn will be deepened, ideas of ways of supporting their child are integral to developing the home learning environment. Common language is built up between the families and the setting and parents feel more involved in their child's learning. Families remain more engaged and feel valued which in turn impacts on how well children do throughout their educational career. If there are subsequent children, these all benefit as well.

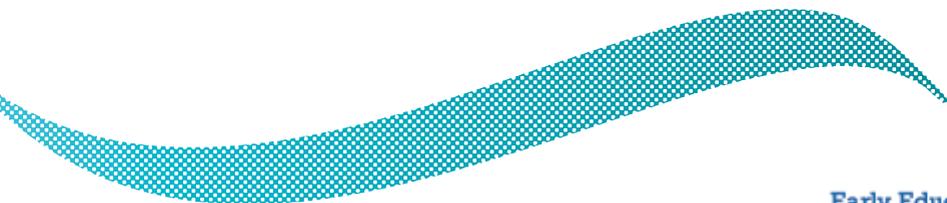
Staff teams benefit by having to explain the learning process which enables practitioners to become better at articulating their knowledge. Closer relationships are built up with parents as meaningful dialogue results when returning loans or making new choices. Practitioners build up self-reflective strategies as they review and monitor their practice. Parents and practitioners can explore their different viewpoints together to find ways to overcome challenges. Settings can share out responsibility for certain strategies, giving some career progression for staff members.

Widening life experiences

Children and families can sometimes have limited life experiences due to a range of factors such as poverty, limited knowledge or lack of transport etc. Finding out about the breadth of each family's world is a worthwhile activity for the key person. By extending these experiences a broader horizon opens up for these children and families, which can provide greater opportunities for children to learn and develop. Trips and visits can have a long-lasting impact on children's learning within the setting, extending their interests and providing a focus for further activities.

By including families as well as the children at the setting, this can have a wider impact. Settings can raise families' awareness of what is possible and how it can benefit their children. Parents and children can talk about shared experiences from the activities and even make mementos together in the form of books, songs or games etc. Parents may need support and guidance to be able to maximise the learning opportunities these offer.

If settings include families in the organising of trips etc this may help them develop the knowledge and confidence to use public transport or arrange lift shares for themselves in future.



Ideas for spending following the broad themes

Staff training

- Based on the identified needs of the EYPP children such as language development
- Utilise training supplied by LA
- Utilise training from other sources such as health
- Utilise consultancy based support eg Early Education, NEYTCO, Local Authority or independent
- Develop collaborations with local settings with differing strengths
- There are further specific examples in the Learning Together About Learning newsletters and at www.early-education.org.uk/possible-ideas-spending-eypp-funding

Developing the home learning environment

- Training for parents based on the needs of the child and family in a manner that suits the family
- Lending libraries that explain how young children learn as well as having opportunities to spend time together. Think about how these will be stored and presented to the families.
- Discussion time with key person and family based on supporting the child's learning
- Displays that focus on the process of learning
- Utilising the transition times to ensure families and children feel included in the learning process

Widening life experiences

- Providing meals
- Providing experiences the child wouldn't otherwise have due to distance, expense or past history eg swimming etc
- Providing extra sessions
- Trips that reflect the child's interests and related support materials such as photo books of the trip which are duplicated to offer consistent experiences at home as well as in the setting
- Ascertain the breadth of the child's world and then offer experiences that will broaden the child's world.

There are further specific examples in the Learning Together about Learning newsletters and at:

www.early-education.org.uk/possible-ideas-spending-eypp-funding

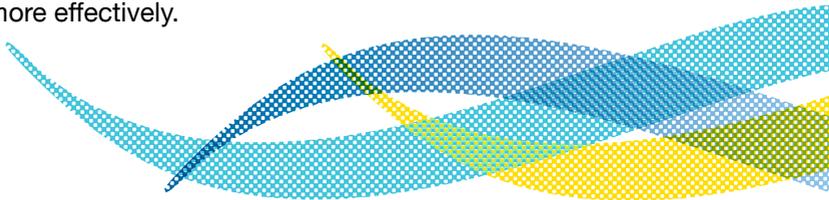
Making the funding go further

The EYPP funding is currently 53p per hour, which equates to £302.10 across the year for a child who receives the 15 hours Early Education entitlement. It is important to maximise the impact of this funding as you are accountable to Ofsted for it. The following points should give you some suggestions for how to make the funding go further:

- Where you identified shared needs between several children, pool a portion of each child's funding to fund the chosen strategy.
- Develop collaborations with other local settings so that training or resources can be bought in more economically.
- Use local expertise to support developments in practice.
- Use strategies that will leave a legacy for future children and families such as training etc.
- If a family has more than one child who is eligible for the EYPP or pupil premium funding, liaise with other schools/settings which the children attend to see if there are areas of overlap. If there is a common focus between the settings families can feel supported. If the foci are divergent, families could feel got at. In addition, hearing the same message but in different voices can be helpful to realise developments are important.

Measuring the impact

There are many ways to monitor the impact of the EYPP funding. Remember this is a process and it will be refined over time as the EYPP becomes more embedded in your practice. You will already have a wide range of ways to monitor and these may only need refining to show the impact of EYPP. Different interventions will lend themselves to different styles of monitoring or even a range of monitoring strategies. Sometimes it can take time for the impact to be seen, but if the impact is too minimal it may be sensible to try alternative strategies. If this is an area you feel needs further development, consider using some of your EYPP funding for training so you can become more confident in monitoring and tracking the impact of your EYPP spending in order to use it more effectively.



Monitoring strategy	How it shows impact of EYPP
Tracking progress of individual children	- shows the progress a child has made over a given period of time and the analysis of this could refer to the EYPP strategies implemented over that time period
Tracking progress of cohorts of children	- shows the progress of groups of children and can be used to work out the proportion of children who have made progress as well as the amount of progress. - allows trends to be identified so that you can identify training needs, put in place tweaks to the learning environment and engage in professional dialogue to ensure the whole staff team have ownership of developments.
Tracking elements of practice eg parents spoken to over a given period of time, types of interactions children experience over a given period of time	- gives a starting point and when repeated shows the difference an intervention/ strategy has made
Tools to track progress in depth of a given area of learning eg ECAT tools	- shows the start point and end point following an intervention
Recordings of the children or staff	- shows the difference between two points in time and allows reviewing to be done from a range of perspectives and with a range of adults
Comments from parents, staff, children or outside professionals	- shows the difference between two points in time from a range of perspectives
Reports from outside professionals	- gives an outside view of the development of a child or practice of the setting

As part of the Learning Together About Learning project we developed a data sheet that the project members completed. This allowed participants to focus on rates of progress. For the project purposes, data was collected at two points, but for your own use this model could be used with an additional collection point added so that it is completed termly. A blank version has been included here with guidance in Appendix 1. You can adapt it as needed eg converting it to a spreadsheet. Alternatively, consider whether your current system could be tweaked to focus on the progress made (if it doesn't already do this).

Accountability to Ofsted

Ofsted have been given the responsibility of deciding whether the EYPP funding has been spent wisely and with maximum impact. This will be done during inspections primarily through the discussions with the key person, as Ofsted inspectors will track at least one EYPP child if there are any present, and during the leadership and management interview. The references to EYPP in the OFSTED CIF can be found in the handbook and evaluation schedule. They are compiled into a list at www.early-education.org.uk/eyp-pp-references-ofsted-s-common-inspection-framework where there also some reflective questions you and your staff could ask yourselves.

If all the staff and parents are involved in the decision making process about using EYPP, they will be able to talk about it with greater authority when Ofsted completes their inspection. This in turn could lead to a better outcome as the inspector will have greater confidence about the thought which has gone into the allocation of EYPP funding.

There are a range of factors that can help you to be prepared for these conversations:

- knowledge of your children, families and staff
- tracking progress systems
- monitoring of practice
- notes from conversations with families
- notes from conversations with outside professionals
- training evaluations
- reports from outside professionals
- development plans
- supervision records
- EYPP spending plans

It will be sensible to articulate your decision making processes often, so that you feel more confident when you are being inspected. You could use staff members or colleagues from other settings as a sounding board. You could also collaborate by reviewing each other's spending plans and impact from past strategies.

Remember good practice is underpinned by a sound knowledge of child development and what makes a difference to children's learning and isn't just presenting something you think Ofsted want to see.

In conclusion

EYPP is primarily to be spent on improving outcomes for children from the most deprived 20% of the population. Funding can impact other children as well. There are no set ways to spend the funding. Settings are expected to use their professional knowledge and tools to make decisions which will close the attainment gap, if there is one.

If you aren't seeing an attainment gap in your data, and your EYPP funded children are performing as well as their peers already, consider developing strategies that will enable these children to become more experienced than expected. It's important to ensure that all EYPP children are achieving their full potential, which for some could mean being more experienced in some areas of learning.

Making best use of your funding entails making sure you receive the funding to which children are entitled. Be aware of the practicalities, such as that funding will be paid termly, but checking of eligibility needs only to be done annually. Most local authorities seem to allow settings to keep the funding for a term if a child moves setting within that term and the new setting will receive it the following term. Local authority funding mechanisms are still evolving as EYPP becomes more embedded, and so are settings' own processes for ensuring parents sign up for EYPP where necessary. Examples of good practice are available from the project.

Settings need to be accountable to Ofsted for how the funding has been spent in terms of impact. Your processes for doing this will be consolidated and refined over time. You will know what focus the expenditure needs to have and how it will be monitored.

Seek out opportunities to collaborate with local settings or professionals to enable the funding to go further. Participants in our project have found working together one of the most valuable parts of the project, with benefits that go far beyond the direct cost savings of pooling funds.

EYPP funding enables a focus to be on the most disadvantaged children so that their outcomes can be improved. It provides a good focus for developing practice and knowledge of staff and parents alike. The Learning Together About Learning project certainly found this to be the case. There are many examples of how the funding has been spent across the different areas and how settings have used the project to begin to collaborate together and these can be found on the Early Education website in the EYPP section:

www.early-education.org.uk/eyp

References and further reading

Learning Together About Learning project website resources including case studies, pro formas, tracking documents, etc: www.early-education.org.uk/eyp

DfE guidance on eligibility: at www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-pupil-premium-guide-for-local-authorities

Education Endowment Foundation Early Years Toolkit: <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/early-years/>

Findings from the EPPE and EPPSE projects: <http://www.ioe.ac.uk/research/66744.html>

Macleod, S., Sharp, C., Bernardinelli, D., Skipp, A., & Higgins, S. (2015). Supporting the attainment of disadvantaged pupils: articulating success and good practice: Research report November 2015. Available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-the-attainment-of-disadvantaged-pupils

National Audit Office (2015) Funding for disadvantaged pupils. HC 90. www.nao.org.uk/report/funding-for-disadvantaged-pupils/

Ofsted (2015) Ofsted Early Years Report available at www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445730/Early_years_report_2015.pdf

APPENDIX 1: Example data collection sheet from the Learning Together About Learning Project

Guidance

Step 1:

Using your current tracking system aggregate your children’s data into two groups – those eligible for EYPP and those who are not.

For each group record how many children fall into the different categories – inexperienced or below where they would expect to be (B), where they would expect to be (E) and more experienced or above where they would expect to be (A).

For the purposes of norm referencing and for this project, children who are in their third year would be expected to be identified as being in the 22-36 (W & S) age band in *Development Matters* and in their fourth year being in the 30–50 age band of *Development Matters*.

Example of completed data grid

Number of children	EYPP			Non-EYPP		
	B	E	A	B	E	A
Making relationships	2	2		2	15	2
Managing feelings and behaviour	1	2	1	1	17	1
Self-confidence and self-awareness	2	0	2	1	17	1
Listening and attention	1	3		3	14	2
Understanding	1	3		2	16	1
Speaking	3	1		3	14	2
Moving and handling		3	1	1	14	4
Health and self-care	1	3		1	18	

Step 2:

Using the grid, analyse your data to identify trends and areas of learning that could be focussed on and developed for those children.

What is your data telling you?	What are you going to do differently or more of?	How will you know it has made a difference?

There are some questions at the end of this document that you could ask yourself.

Step 3:

This information can then be used to develop an action plan. Once the interventions have been put in place and the timeframe for the next data collection point has been reached, the data should be collated again to see the difference the interventions have made. This might look something like the following example:

Number of children	EYPP			Non-EYPP		
	B	E	A	B	E	A
Making relationships		3	1		16	4
Managing feelings and behaviour		3	1		17	2
Self-confidence and self-awareness	1	1	2		17	2
Listening and attention		3	1	1	14	4
Understanding		4			18	1
Speaking	1	2	1	1	14	4
Moving and handling		3	1		16	3
Health and self-care		4			18	1

Step 4:

Analyse the differences between the two data sets. There are some questions at the end of this document to help with the analysis. Remember the reason EYPP funding is being given is so that these children can make accelerated progress. The two children eligible for EYPP who were identified in the example above as being less experienced or below where they would expect to be in making relationships have moved to being where they were expected to be, so the gap for those children has closed.

Step 5:

As EYPP is focussed on closing the gap it is important to think about how much progress children are making. EYPP children need to make more rapid progress than non-EYPP in order to close the gap. This step can be used to show the rate of progress children are making. It will also be important for non-EYPP children who are inexperienced or not where they are expected to be to make accelerated progress as well.

Taking the progress of one age band per year to be the norm, children following a “typical” trajectory should make three “steps” or “points” of progress across three terms or a “step” per term. A “step” or “point” will be moving in gradations within the band ie between “entering”, “within” or “secure” or “emerging”, “consolidating” and “established” (depending on the terminology used). Track the number of these steps to ensure children are making enough progress, and analyse trends to ensure your strategies have been successful.

Amount of progress made by	EYPP children				Non-EYPP children			
	0	1	2	3+	0	1	2	3+
Making relationships			1	1			4	
Managing feelings and behaviour		1	3			15	2	2
Self-confidence and self-awareness								
Listening and attention								
Understanding								
Speaking								
Moving and handling								
Health and self-care								

Step 6:

Record qualitative data which will also help show the impact of strategies which have been trialled/implemented. These can result from monitoring such as deployment of staff, contributions to Learning Journals from families, which parents have engaged with which parental engagement strategy, quotations from reports from outside professionals, comments from parents etc.

Example data collection sheet

This data sheet can be downloaded from www.early-education.org.uk/eypp

Data at first collection point:

Number of children	EYPP			Non-EYPP		
	B	E	A	B	E	A
Making relationships						
Managing feelings and behaviour						
Self-confidence and self-awareness						
Listening and attention						
Understanding						
Speaking						
Moving and handling						
Health and self-care						

Key:

B= below age-related expectations

E= at age-related expectations

A= above age-related expectations

Analysis:

What is your data telling you?	What are you going to do differently or more of?	How will you know it has made a difference?

Questions you could ask yourself:

- What are the areas of learning where the children are most experienced for all groups of children? Why might this be the case? Has there been any recent training, development to the learning environment or to the home learning environment, which could have contributed to this?
- What are the areas of learning where the children need more experience/ opportunities?
- What experiences could be offered to the children to develop their skills etc?
- What training opportunities could impact on the staff and families to develop these areas of learning?
- How will the impact be measured and what will the baseline be?
- What does the spread look like across the different groups of children? How many of your EYPP children could be more experienced/ above expectations with a focussed strategy or through widening their life experiences?

End data:

Number of children	EYPP			Non-EYPP		
	B	E	A	B	E	A
Making relationships						
Managing feelings and behaviour						
Self-confidence and self-awareness						
Listening and attention						
Understanding						
Speaking						
Moving and handling						
Health and self-care						

Progress data:

Amount of progress made by	EYPP children				Non-EYPP children			
	0	1	2	3+	0	1	2	3+
Number of steps:								
Making relationships								
Managing feelings and behaviour								
Self-confidence and self-awareness								
Listening and attention								
Understanding								
Speaking								
Moving and handling								
Health and self-care								

Other impact to note:

Groups impacted	What other differences have been seen?	What made the difference happen?	What else will you trial?
Children			
Families			
Staff			

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