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**Stabilization Funding -
Enhanced Program Support
(EPS) Funding for Special
Needs Resourcing in Licensed
Centre Based Child Care
Programs for Children 0–4
years of age
2022 Guidelines**

**Early Years and Child Care Services
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Guideline provides licensed centre based child care programs with information regarding Enhanced Program Support (EPS) funding to support children 0–4 years of age. Providers are required to review this guideline alongside the Early Years and Child Care Services (EYCCS) Stabilization Funding Agreement.

Overview

The Region of Peel provides special needs resourcing (SNR) support to licensed centre based child care programs delivering child care services to families and children in Peel between 0 to 12 years old. Providers should review this guideline to learn more about the funding opportunity, eligibility criteria and process.

Children with special needs are defined under the Ontario Regulation 138/15, as a child whose cognitive, physical, social, emotional or communicative needs, or whose needs relating to overall development, are of such a nature that additional supports are required for the child.

The Peel Inclusion Resource Services (PIRS) service delivery model is built on the foundation of access, inclusion, participation and belonging delivering three layers of supports within licensed centre based child care programs:

- **Universal Support** which supports and enhances inclusive practices for all children (i.e., universal tools, child care provider awareness, general consultation, etc.).
- **Child Specific Support** which involves resource consultation and supports for children with special needs.
- **Intensive Support** which provides funding to licensed centre based child care programs to acquire additional support to ensure all children are included in child care.

EPS funding in licensed centre based child care programs will enable providers to hire new program support staff and/or extend hours of existing staff. These program support staff will:

- Work collaboratively with the program team to help all children to fully participate in child care
- Not be included in the minimum Child Care and Early Years Act ratio requirements

*Programs must reference protocols outlined in the most recent version of the [COVID-19 Enhanced Health and Safety Protocols for Licensed Child Care Centres](#) document (updated on the website as protocols evolve). This includes ensuring that Program Support staff are trained on the mandatory protocols for licensed child care noted below:

- Daily Active Screening for COVID-19
- General Sanitary Precautions and Physical Distancing Measures
- Outbreak Management for COVID-19 Related Symptoms

See [Appendix 1](#) for EPS staff position responsibilities and recommended requirements.

Outcomes

The desired outcomes of EPS funding include:

- Programs are enhanced due to additional staff resources
- All children are supported in licensed centre based child care programs
- Children feel an increased sense of belonging and enjoy positive social relationships in licensed centre based child care programs (see [How Does Learning Happen?](#))
- Families can access and maintain child care placements

GovGrants

EYCCS uses GovGrants to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of reporting and service system management. Providers will use GovGrants for the following:

- Execute the Stabilization Enhanced Program Support Funding Agreement
- Request EPS top-up funding, if eligible and as needed
- Submit all key performance indicators and financial reporting
- Communicate directly with EYCCS staff

GovGrants uses [electronic signatures](#) compliant with electronic signature regulations and industry standards called DocVerify. DocVerify will be used by authorized GovGrants users to digitally sign contracts generated through the system. GovGrants resources are available on our [external website](#) to help Service Providers with navigating the technology.

2.0 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To receive EPS funding, providers are required to meet the following criteria:

1. Be a 0-4 licensed centre based child care program in Peel Region with a signed Early Years and Child Care Services Fee Subsidy and Funding Agreement.
2. Meet the Region's Authentic Participation requirements:
 - a. Inclusion of children in receipt of fee subsidy;
 - b. Continuous quality enhancement; and
 - c. Inclusion of children with special needs by participating in Peel Inclusion Resource Services (PIRS)
3. Have business management practices which align with the Region's priorities identified in the [Early Years and Child Care Service System Plan 2019-2024](#)
4. Compliance with Early Years and Child Care requirements including no active holds on funding.
5. Staff complete virtual learning opportunity entitled 'Together we are One –The Role of Educators and Program Support Staff Working Together' available through [Child Development Resource Connection Peel \(CDRCP\)](#) See [Section 6.0\(A\)](#) for further information.

3.0 FUNDING APPROACH

Notional Allocation

Providers will receive an annual notional allocation based on a formula which considers factors such as the Provider's operational capacity and the percentage of children with special needs who may require EPS.

The minimum allocation amount a Provider will receive is \$5,000, which will allow programs to purchase approximately 20 hours of support per week for 12 weeks at the median personal support worker hourly wage rate in Peel (i.e., \$21.11/hour including benefits).

Providers will be notified of their annual allocation via memo. Providers may choose **not** to accept their notional allocation by emailing PIRS@peelregion.ca (see below for sample email) to notify the Region. Providers who choose to opt out will not be eligible to access EPS funding for the remainder of the calendar year.

Providers whose annual allocation amount is less than \$12,000 will receive a one-time payment. Providers whose allocation amount is greater than \$12,000 will receive monthly payments.

Declining Allocation – Sample Email:

I am declining the 2022 Enhanced Program Support Funding for Special Needs Resourcing in Licensed Centre Based Programs for children 0-4 years of age.

Centre Name
Employee Name
Contact Number

Funding Announcement

Providers who have not opted out will be notified via GovGrants that the EPS funding agreement is available for signature. Providers are encouraged to accept their notional allocation by signing the EPS funding agreement when they receive this notification. The funding can be used at any point in the calendar year as program needs arise.

Providers who do not sign their EPS funding agreement by the deadline outlined in [Section 4.0](#) may be eligible to access funding later in the year, however, available funding may be prorated. Providers who do not sign the EPS funding agreement by the deadline but wish to access funding later in the year must email zzgeyccsgovgrantsadmin@peelregion.ca for the EPS funding agreement to be resent for signature.

Top-Up Funding

Notional allocation funding is expected to meet the majority of program needs for EPS. However,

there may be exceptional circumstances where there are complex needs in a classroom that require longer periods of additional support. Eligible Providers may access additional Top-Up funding for programs with complex needs. Providers must discuss the complex needs in the classroom(s) with the PIRS Resource Consultant (RC). The request for EPS Top-Up funding must be validated by the RC.

To be eligible for Top-Up funding, Providers must:

- Have received the minimum notional allocation of \$5,000 **OR**
- Be a single-site agency. **Note: multi-site agencies or single sites with same owner(s) and/or shared board of directors are not eligible for Top-Up funding.**

If the eligibility criteria are met, Providers must also:

- Identify that complex needs exist in the classroom that exceed the amount program supports acquired through use of their notional allocation funding
- Work collaboratively with the PIRS RC to support the needs in the program (i.e., Individualized Program Plan, child-specific brief consultation, general classroom consultation)
- Have ongoing discussions with the PIRS RC about the needs in the program and specifically about the complex needs that support the Top-Up funding request
- Have no existing sanctions related to Authentic Participation

Note: Eligible Providers can only request Top-Up funding once per calendar year. Once Top-Up funding is approved, Providers may use funding to manage needs in one or more classrooms. The maximum amount of Top-Up funding a Provider can receive in a calendar year is \$25,000, in addition to their annual notional allocation.

Top-up funding will be prorated every quarter and may be issued to Providers in a lump sum or monthly payments. The table below shows the pro-rated amounts of Top-Up funding available depending on the month in which the funds are requested. The deadline for receiving Top-up funding requests is October 31st, 2022.

Distribution of Top-Up Funding	
Top-Up Funding Request Received	Top-Up Funding Available
January – March, 2022	\$25,000
April – June, 2022	\$18,750
July – September, 2022	\$12,500
October, 2022	\$6,250

Top-Up Funding Request

To request Top-Up funding, Providers are required to complete the *EPS Top-Up Request Form* which is available on the [Region of Peel website](#). The completed form must be uploaded into GovGrants under the “Attachment” tab and the Provider must send an email to PIRS via the “Collab” tab in

GovGrants to notify the Region that Top Up funding is being requested.

Prior to submitting a request for Top-Up funding, Providers **must** discuss the program’s complex needs with their PIRS RC as well as the goal and strategies that the team of Educators will implement. **Before submitting a request for Top-Up funding, Providers must receive validation of the complex need from the PIRS RC.**

The Region will confirm validation with the PIRS RC prior to approving EPS Top-Up funding. The Region will respond to the Provider’s request within 15 business days of receiving the email notification that Top-Up funding is being requested.

If the Top-Up funding request is not approved by the Region and the Provider would like to discuss the Region’s decision, contact PIRS@peelregion.ca.

[Appendix 2](#) outlines the key steps in the process for accessing EPS funding.

4.0 KEY TIMELINES

Date	Action
November 22 nd , 2021	Funding memos released to Providers
December 3 rd , 2021	Provider deadline for emailing PIRS@peelregion.ca to opt-out of receiving their notional allocation.
December 8-10, 2021	Providers who did not opt-out receive a notification through GovGrants that the Funding Agreement is available for signature in GovGrants
December 29 th , 2021	Deadline for Providers to sign the Funding Agreement for payments to begin in February 2022 Note: Providers who don't sign the Funding Agreement by this deadline may still be eligible to access prorated funding
February, 2022	Providers begin to receive allocation payments
January – October 31 st 2022	Eligible providers may submit a Top-Up request (must be validated by their RC prior to submitting)

5.0 REPORTING AND RECONCILIATION REQUIREMENTS

Reporting Requirements

- Providers are required to submit reconciliation reports on key performance indicators and use of funding as outlined in the table below. The reports are required to be submitted through GovGrants. Providers who are reporting no data must provide a comment in the performance

narrative section of their GovGrants submissions.

EPS Funding	
Key Performance Indicators	Measure
Number of hours of EPS (cumulative)	Total number of hours of Enhanced Program Support
Number of EPS hours staffed by new staff (cumulative)	*Number of hours of Enhanced Program Support delivered by a newly hired EPS staff
Number of EPS hours staffed by existing staff (cumulative)	*Number of hours of Enhanced Program Support delivered by existing program staff
Number of classrooms supported (cumulative)	Each classroom supported by Enhanced Program Support staff is counted only once in a calendar year
Number of children served (cumulative)	Total number of children in the classrooms that were supported by Enhanced Program Support staff. Each child is counted only once in a calendar year
Number of family-initiated placement terminations (cumulative)	Number of placements terminated where termination was initiated by the family
Number of provider-initiated placement terminations (cumulative)	Number of placements terminated where termination was initiated by the provider
Number of placements not supported (cumulative)	Number of placements unable to be supported due to complex needs (i.e., families turned away)

*The number of EPS hours staffed by new staff and number of EPS hours staffed by existing staff should equal to the Number of hours of EPS (total)

See [Appendix 3](#) for an example on how to report key performance indicators.

- Providers are required to reconcile actual expenditures to approved funding provided through GovGrants. **The only eligible expenditure for EPS funding is for Salaries, Wages and Benefits.**

Note: There are additional budget categories in GovGrants that are not applicable to this funding opportunity. Please ignore additional categories.

- If your agency's reconciliation reporting results in underspending, this will be recovered by the Region. You will be notified by email if a recovery is owing to the Region with further instructions.
- Providers may be required to report additional information as requested by the Region.

Reporting Timelines

The table below presents the required reports, reporting periods, due dates and method of submission by Providers.

Report	Reporting Period	Due Date	Submission/How to Submit
Key performance indicators	January - June	July 30 th	Submit through GovGrants
	July – December	January 30 th	
Financial Reporting	January – August	September 30 th	
	September – December	January 30 th	

6.0 ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

To monitor the performance and impact of EPS funding and ensure that funds are used appropriately and are aligned with the requirements outlined in this Guideline, the [PIRS Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) and your program's approved Inclusion Policy the following accountability measures will be implemented:

A. Training requirements

Together We Are One training is required for all staff (Supervisors, Educators, and Enhanced Program Support staff) working in a classroom in which program support will be added and must be completed by March 31, 2022 or within 3 months of accepting EPS Funding. It is strongly encouraged that all staff (Supervisors, Educators, and EPS staff) in programs accepting EPS funding complete this training. A review of the training for all staff should occur annually when new EPS funding is administered. Any new staff hired must view the webinar as part of their orientation. Verification of training may be requested by the Region. This webinar can be accessed at [CDRCP](#).

B. General Inclusive Practices Requirements

Providers must deliver inclusive programs as per the PIRS Memorandum of Understanding and their approved Inclusion Policy. Inclusive practices are evident when:

- All families have access to a child care program
- Days and hours of care are not limited, and Providers are committed to maintaining placements
- Ongoing environmental assessment and adjustments are made to meet the needs of all children in the program
- Providers and program staff (Educators and EPS staff) are authentically participating in PIRS and allowing RCs full access to the program
- Program staff (Educators and EPS staff) work together to support all children in the program

- If an individual child has complex needs requiring individual support:
 - All Educators and EPS staff share responsibilities
 - Include other children in activities when possible (i.e., mealtime, cloakroom, activities)

C. Requirements for use of EPS Funding:

Upon acceptance of EPS funds, the following activities related to the use of additional EPS staff will occur:

- Child care program staff (Supervisors, Educators and EPS staff) will have ongoing communication and collaboration with their PIRS RC to identify needs within classrooms.
- In partnership with PIRS RC, the program staff (Educators and EPS staff) will identify goal(s) and strategies for the use of EPS staff. Submission of goals to the Region will not be required
- Strategies provided by PIRS RC related to the use of EPS will be implemented.
- EPS hours will be adjusted in response to changing program dynamics and as goals are achieved. Planning for fading out use of EPS will occur
- EPS is a support for the entire classroom - **not** as a 1:1 staff for an individual child. Individual support for children is a shared responsibility for all program staff (Educators and EPS staff) and cannot be assigned to one staff
- Providers are expected to work with their PIRS RC to identify areas where professional development is required and seek out opportunities that will support their Educators knowledge and development related to the identified program needs, goals, and inclusive practices

If a program's complex needs change (i.e., previously validated complex needs no longer exist) use of EPS staffing must be adjusted.

Failure to utilize EPS as outlined in this Guideline may lead to enhanced oversight and impact future funding.

D. Enhanced oversight and accountability

As part of enhanced oversight and accountability for the use of EPS funding, the Region may conduct site visits and/or require Providers to submit documents that will support gross expenditures for hiring additional staff or extending hours of existing staff (i.e., staff schedules, attendance records, payroll, T4s) and other information to confirm that funding was used for the approved purpose. Additional audit requirements may be implemented on a case-by-case basis.

Failure to submit information on time, provide inclusive programs, comply with EPS funding guideline requirements, and/or misuse of EPS funding or staff may result in progressive penalties ranging from:

- Hold on EPS funding payments
- Hold on rate increases and delaying the effective date until compliance is met. Stop placement of children in receipt of fee subsidy
- Ineligibility for Special Purpose or any other funding. Reduction in current and future EPS funding allocation

- Propose to terminate or not renew agreement

Funding must be used for its intended purpose. **Non-profit** providers may not use their allocation to contribute (directly or indirectly) to their reserves. **For-profit** providers may not use their EPS funding allocation to contribute (directly or indirectly) to their surplus/profit/retained earnings, etc.

Note: Funding may not be used to offset budgeted costs.

As part of both the Provincial and the Regional funding verification processes, providers are required to keep all original documentation for a minimum of seven years. Through the Region of Peel's audit selection process, Providers may be contacted to complete a review of the Enhanced Program Support funding.

7.0 CONTACT INFORMATION

If you require additional information or have questions about EPS funding, please direct your inquiry to PIRS@peelregion.ca.

APPENDIX 1: Enhanced Program Support Position Responsibilities and Recommended Requirements

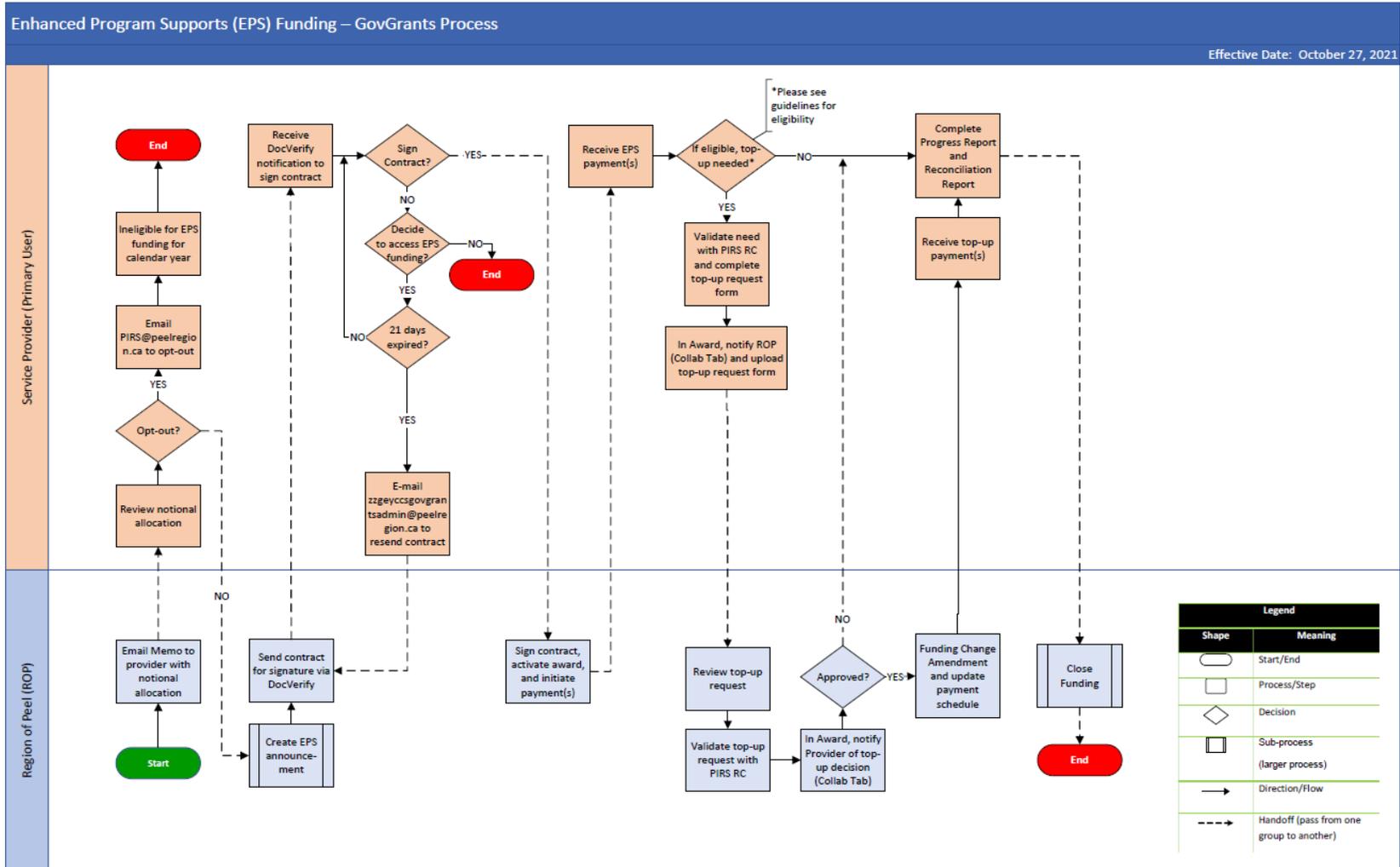
Enhanced Program Support staff are required to work in partnership with the program team to support all children in 0-4 licensed child care centres. The following responsibilities highlight the key aspects of the role related to inclusion:

1. Support the principles of inclusion during all daily routines, activities and in all locations.
2. Participate as a team member and support strategies related to daily routines including:
 - Small and large group activities
 - Transitions
 - Toileting and hand washing routines
 - Dressing routines
 - Snack routines
 - Documentation of child's progress and goals
 - Providing additional support on field trips
3. Implement program activities and child specific strategies (individually and in groups) collaboratively with program staff
4. Be flexible, responsive and supportive in order to provide support in a crisis/problematic situation
5. Participate in ongoing professional learning and development

EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

- Previous experience working or volunteering with children with differing abilities or diagnosis; and/or
- Previous experience working or volunteering with individuals or children with special needs; and/or
- Diploma in Early Childhood Education, Child and Youth, Developmental Support, Educational Assistant or Recreation and Leisure
- A current Vulnerable Sector Check
- Standard First Aid including infant/child CPR certificate as outlined in section 55 of Ontario Regulation 137/15 made under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014

APPENDIX 2: Process to access EPS Funding



APPENDIX 3: An Example of How to Report Key Performance Indicators

EPS Funding			
Key Performance Indicators	Measure	Jan – June	July – Dec
		Due: July 31	Due: Jan 30
Number of hours of EPS (cumulative)	Total number of hours of Enhanced Program Support	50	70
Number of EPS hours staffed by new staff (cumulative)	*Number of hours of Enhanced Program Support delivered by a newly hired EPS staff	30	90
Number of EPS hours staffed by existing staff (cumulative)	*Number of hours of Enhanced Program Support delivered by existing program staff	40	80
Number of classrooms supported (cumulative)	Each classroom supported by Enhanced Program Support staff is counted only once in a calendar year	2	3
Number of children served (cumulative)	Total number of children in the classrooms that were supported by Enhanced Program Support staff. Each child is counted only once in a calendar year	10	15
Number of family-initiated placement terminations (cumulative)	Number of placements terminated where termination was initiated by the family	0	2
Number of provider-initiated placement terminations (cumulative)	Number of placements terminated where termination was initiated by the provider	1	2
Number of placements not supported (cumulative)	Number of placements unable to be supported due to complex needs (i.e., families turned away)	1	3

For all KPIs, include the totals in the report due on January 30. For example, as outlined in the table above, if your centre reported 10 children served from January-June on the July 30 report, and 5 new children joined the centre between July-December, the January 30 report would include a total of 15 children served.