

Inclusive Early Years Fund Readiness Checklist

A practical tool to help early years settings plan IEYF-aligned inclusive practice.



The Inclusive Early Years Fund (IEYF) gives early years providers an opportunity to strengthen inclusive practice, early intervention and emotionally supportive environments for young children with SEND and emerging needs.

Use this checklist to reflect on your current provision, identify gaps and consider where Thrive could support your inclusive practice and early years strategy.

Settings should ensure any funding decisions are linked to identified needs, whole-setting inclusive practice, early intervention and local authority guidance.

Understanding need

1 Do you understand the needs and barriers in your setting?

- ☐ We understand the main barriers affecting children's participation, communication and emotional wellbeing.
- ☐ Staff can recognise emerging social, emotional and developmental needs.
- ☐ We have processes for identifying needs early.
- ☐ We can identify patterns across groups of children or areas of provision.
- ☐ We use observation and evidence to inform planning and support.

Where Thrive can help:

Thrive supports practitioners to understand children's social and emotional development through a developmental and relational lens, helping settings identify needs earlier and plan appropriate support.

Whole-setting inclusivity

2 Is inclusive practice embedded across the whole setting?

- ☐ Inclusion is part of everyday practice, not separate provision.
- ☐ Staff share a consistent relational approach.
- ☐ Emotional wellbeing is considered across routines, transitions and play.
- ☐ Adults respond consistently to distress and dysregulation.
- ☐ Children experience predictable and emotionally safe environments.

Where Thrive can help:

Thrive helps settings develop a whole-setting approach built around relational practice, emotional safety and consistent adult responses.

Confidence supporting SEND

3 Are staff confident in supporting children with SEND and emerging needs?

- ☐ Staff understand how emotional development affects behaviour and learning.
- ☐ Practitioners feel confident supporting emotional regulation.
- ☐ Staff understand behaviour as communication.
- ☐ Workforce development is ongoing, not limited to one-off training.
- ☐ Staff have opportunities to reflect on practice and build shared understanding.

Where Thrive can help:

Thrive training supports workforce confidence by helping practitioners understand social and emotional development, relational practice and emotionally supportive approaches.

Emotional support

4 Are your environments emotionally supportive and inclusive?

- ☐ Children experience emotionally available and responsive adults.
- ☐ Routines and transitions support predictability and security.
- ☐ The environment reduces barriers to participation.
- ☐ Sensory and emotional needs are considered within the setting.
- ☐ Children feel safe, connected and able to explore and engage.

Where Thrive can help:

Thrive helps settings create emotionally safe environments that support regulation, belonging and participation.

Families and wider support

5 Are families included as partners in support?

- ☐ Families are involved in conversations about children's needs and strengths.
- ☐ Staff feel confident discussing emotional wellbeing and development with parents and carers.
- ☐ Transition planning includes emotional and relational needs.
- ☐ Home-setting communication is consistent and supportive.
- ☐ Wider professionals are included where appropriate.

Where Thrive can help:

Thrive provides a shared developmental framework that strengthens communication and understanding between practitioners, families and wider services.

Intervention and support

6 Can you provide early intervention and targeted support?

- ☐ Children can access support before difficulties escalate.
- ☐ We use graduated responses to emerging need.
- ☐ Targeted support is planned and reviewed.
- ☐ Emotional wellbeing and regulation are part of support planning.
- ☐ We can evidence the impact of support and interventions.

Where Thrive can help:

Thrive supports early intervention through developmentally informed support, targeted relational approaches and ongoing review of progress.

7 Are you able to evidence your inclusive practice and impact?

- ☐ We can explain how funding supports inclusive practice.
- ☐ Staff development and provision decisions are linked to identified needs.
- ☐ We monitor children's participation, wellbeing and engagement.
- ☐ We can evidence improvements in inclusion and support.
- ☐ We have a clear plan for developing inclusive practice over time.

Where Thrive can help:

Thrive helps settings connect staff development, early identification, targeted support and progress monitoring as part of a sustainable whole-setting approach to inclusion.



Ready to **strengthen inclusive practice** in your setting?

Thrive can help early years settings strengthen staff confidence, identify social and emotional needs earlier, build relational consistency and create emotionally supportive environments where more children feel safe, connected and able to thrive.

Early years providers may be able to use IEYF funding for Thrive-related activity where it supports identified needs and forms part of a wider whole-setting inclusion approach.

Book a 30-minute IEYF planning conversation with Thrive



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