

## GETTING READY TO LEARN (GRtL)

# Application Pack - Guidance

### Getting Ready to Learn

There is a wealth of evidence about the benefits of increased parental involvement in early learning, which is found to have a greater impact on children's wellbeing and achievement than any other factor, such as family income, parental education or school environment. The home learning environment is a term used to describe activities (e.g. reading with children, painting and drawing) that parents undertake with their children, which have a positive effect on their development (Field, 2010).

The Department of Education in conjunction with the Education Authority seeks to support pre-school education settings with DE-funded places to:

- encourage and develop parental involvement in children's early learning to ensure maximum parental contribution at a crucial time in children's early brain development;
- support parents<sup>1</sup> to improve their young children's home learning environment

Funding is available to support the establishment of support programmes in pre-school education settings that once embedded, can be sustained with little or no cost.

**We would strongly encourage all settings to apply.**

<sup>1</sup> Where reference is made to 'parent' in terms of Getting Ready to Learn, this includes the child's primary caregiver

# Application Pack

## Background

Getting Ready to Learn (GRtL) was developed as part of the Early Intervention Transformation Programme (EITP) which aimed to improve outcomes for children and young people across Northern Ireland through embedding early intervention. Workstream 1 of EITP aimed to equip, support and empower parents to provide their children with the best start in life. GRtL is one of a suite of 3 'Getting Ready..' programmes in Workstream 1:

<b>Getting Ready for Baby</b>	Focused on transforming maternal care, both hospital and community based, from the initial GP appointment to delivery.
<b>Getting Ready for Toddler</b>	Focused on embedding early intervention in core health visiting, with a focus on improving the social and emotional development of children attending pre-school.
<b>Getting Ready to Learn</b>	Focused on improving outcomes for children in pre-school by engaging and empowering parents to help them create and sustain positive home learning environments.

To date, the Getting Ready to Learn programme has delivered very positive outcomes in terms of transformed practice, better home learning environments and improved learning outcomes for children. In recognition of the success of the programme, the Department of Education and the Education Authority are committed to continuing GRtL, to further embed the positive parental engagement to date and to encourage more settings to participate.

The Public Health Authority, PHA, is the lead for **Getting Ready for Baby** and **Getting Toddler (including the 3+Review)**. Both these components are also being continued and the 3+ Review is expected to be delivered in most pre-schools by 2021.

# Application Pack

## What is Getting Ready to Learn (GRtL)?

Getting Ready to Learn (GRtL) seeks to support pre-school education settings with DE-funded places to encourage and develop parental involvement in children's early learning to ensure maximum parental contribution at a crucial time in children's early brain development.

The programme has been based on research and evidence of best practice in parental engagement. Account has also been taken of the results of an online survey with health and education practitioners and workshops with parents. All of the findings concluded that parents would benefit from knowing more about:

- ☑ how children develop, including attachment and brain development;
- ☑ the importance of parent-child relationships for the child's development and behaviour;
- ☑ the importance of childhood education and learning; and
- ☑ the importance of healthy lifestyles and diet.

The majority of pre-school settings already have programmes in place to support both induction and transition. Getting Ready to Learn focusses on raising parent's awareness of how they can support children's learning at home through-out the pre-school year. A key focus is on sharing practice across the Early Years Sector, so that practitioners can learn from, and support each other, in establishing effective programmes of support for parents.

Settings are invited to participate by developing a programme of support for parents around four key themes:

- Education Works in Pre-school
- Happy Healthy Kids
- Ages & Stages, 3-4
- Big Bedtime Read

# Application Pack

Settings may be:

- introducing new practice
- developing existing practice to increase parental awareness of how to support children more effectively in the home

**In all cases, the focus is on transforming ‘how things are done’; making a real difference to the lives of young children.**

Settings will be required to set out what they propose to do and how they propose to do it. It should be clear from the application how the proposals will transform practice e.g. enhancing staff capacity, engaging parents more effectively etc. It should also be evident how the programme will be embedded and sustained in future years.

## Who can apply?

All settings delivering the CCEA’s Curricular Guidance for Pre-School Education <sup>2</sup> in the 2019/20 academic year to target-age (3-4) children, namely:

- ☑ Nursery schools
- ☑ Nursery units within primary schools
- ☑ Private or voluntary settings with DE-funded pre-school places (PSEP)
- ☑ Primary schools may also apply if they are delivering the CCEA Curricular Guidance for Pre-School Education to pre-school children in a reception class
- ☑ Special schools

*2 - [Curriculum Guidance for Pre-School Education](#)*

## Is there information on / guidance for each theme?

Guidance and resources will be made available by the EA to provide support for staff in preparing for and facilitating the sessions ([www.gettingreadytorearn.co.uk](http://www.gettingreadytorearn.co.uk)). Cluster groups will also be facilitated as the programme progresses to provide opportunities for training and dissemination of effective practice

# Application Pack

---

## What funding is available for GRtL and what does it include?

Some funding is available to enable settings to establish practice, for example, purchasing resources for home-lending packs, guidance material and to cover essential session costs. The funding is specifically aimed at enabling settings to engage with parents: therefore funding will **not be available to purchase generic pre-school equipment, or IT hardware/ software.**

There is an indicative maximum amount of funding available and the level of funding for each approved application will be determined by factors such as the total number of applications, the number of themes covered, the number of children per class, and value for money.

Settings will need to detail the costs required to implement their programmes and proposed costs should be realistic and based on the specific needs of their setting. Settings will also be required to detail any other funding source they currently have to avoid the risk of duplicate funding.

**Proposals must adhere to the principles of value for money, namely to enhance the economy, efficiency and effectiveness of activities, and demonstrate how the initiative will be sustained.**

# Application Pack

## Can the setting use the funding to pay for external facilitators?

Funding **must not be used to pay for external facilitators**. The aim of Getting Ready to Learn is to build the capacity of staff within pre-school settings to engage effectively with parents, Therefore Early Years practitioners are required to deliver the workshops / sessions in their setting based on their own expertise and delivery of the NI Curricular Guidance for Pre-School Education .

Settings may wish to arrange visits to local libraries throughout the year, or invite people to read stories to children or talk about their professions. However, such sessions should be in addition to Getting Ready to Learn workshops and no costs should be incurred through this funding stream.

## How will applications be assessed?

All applications for funding will be assessed by an application panel.

This is a universal programme and application panels will take into consideration the following when assessing overall funding requirements:

- the proposed approach to delivering the programme, e.g. how many themes will be covered and the number of sessions planned
- the number of target-age children enrolled in the setting
- inspection findings – in terms of the setting’s capacity to deliver high quality activities for parents, or the capacity to introduce new and varied activities with support;
- value for money;
- local evidence of specific or additional need for parenting support (i.e. reasons for chosen theme(s) to deliver);
- sustainability of the proposed approach i.e. how does the setting propose to deliver similar services in future years ; and
- the total number and value of applications received.

# Application Pack

---

Where appropriate, applicants may be asked to provide further information, either written or verbal, to support their application.

Applicants will then be informed of the funding decision and the funding will be allocated by the EA.

## When will settings receive the funding?

The EA will notify settings of the amount of funding they will receive. Funding will be allocated to settings in September. All Getting Ready to Learn funding must be used by the end of the financial year i.e. 31 March 2020. Therefore resources should be **purchased in Term 1. Any anticipated underspend may be recalled in Term 2 for allocation elsewhere.**

## How will GRtL be monitored and evaluated?

Using the Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) framework. OBA is a framework used to monitor progress and success. It is a proven approach to planning services and assessing their performance that focuses on the outcomes that the services are intended to achieve. It focuses on 3 questions:

- How much did we do?
- How well did we do it? and
- Is anyone better off?

The EA will provide settings with a standard reporting template for completion. This information will then be used by the EA to monitor GRtL and evaluate the impact it is having.

Settings will be required to complete the template within stipulated timescales and will:

- gather performance information e.g. via pre and post programme questionnaires;
- share qualitative data, for example, photographs and comments from parents, children and staff
- send completed data collection tools/questionnaires to EA for quality assurance, analysis; and reporting

The EA will:

- ✔ monitor the implementation of the programmes to ensure they are delivered to a high standard;
- ✔ support and monitor data collection and outcomes and ensure effective governance and accountability systems are in place;
- ✔ collate outcome data at a local and regional level;
- ✔ audit / verify expenditure, settings should note that the GRtL funding will be subject to audit and settings must retain records of expenditure e.g. invoices;
- ✔ evaluate the programme at the end of each year; and
- ✔ disseminate high level learning from good practice.

The ETI, during their normal inspection activity, will evaluate the quality of parental engagement and if a GRtL programme is operating.

# Application Pack

---

## What is the role of the Education Authority (EA)?

The EA will provide leadership, strategic direction and operational support to preschool settings taking part in the GRtL programme. The EA will ensure consistency and quality of service, so that pre-school children and their families benefit from the additional funding provided.

The EA will administer the programme and manage the application process. The EA will work with settings in receipt of this funding to facilitate local quality assurance requirements.

The EA will provide the standard reporting templates for settings to complete and the EA will monitor and evaluate the outcomes.

## Where can I access the application form?

Application forms are available to download from:

[www.gettingreadytolearn.co.uk](http://www.gettingreadytolearn.co.uk)

# Application Pack

## What is the deadline for applications?

Application forms must be received by 5pm on **Friday 14 June 2019**.

Please email your form to: [grtl@eani.org.uk](mailto:grtl@eani.org.uk)

If internet access is not available please post to:  
Hilary McEvoy, Education Authority, 40 Academy Street, Belfast, BT1 2NQ.

Settings should retain a copy of their application form for their own records.

## Can I contact anyone if I have any questions?

Please contact the Getting Ready to Learn Team by email at [GRtL@eani.org.uk](mailto:GRtL@eani.org.uk),  
or:

Hilary McEvoy (Programme Manager EA)	028 9056 4047
Lorna McCausland (Programme Administrator)	028 9056 4155
Judith Campbell (Research and Development Officer)	028 9056 4069

Improving the Home Learning Environment

# Application Pack

---

**GETTING READY TO LEARN (GRtL)**

Improving the Home Learning Environment

# Application Pack