

# Expansion of Early Intervention Services (EIS)

## Information for Schools and Educators



The Early Intervention Service (EIS) is a learning support service for children with additional developmental, communication or behavioural needs.

From Term 1 2026, EIS is expanding to support children from birth through to the end of Year 1 of school. Currently, EIS ends when a child starts school.

### **Working with children and their families**

Early intervention teams work with families, early learning services, schools and kura who ask for support when they are concerned about a child's learning and development.

The expansion of this service through to the end of Year 1 of school means that children and whānau will be supported from early learning settings to school, with the right supports in place to make the best start.

### **What this means for schools**

All tamariki develop at their own pace, but at times you may still have concerns about a child's learning.

Schools are now able to make referrals to Early Intervention Services for learners in Years 0 to 1.

A referral to EIS can be made once parental consent has been provided.

The school's Learning Support Coordinator (LSC) or Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO) may also play a central role in facilitating connections between specialists, kaiako and whānau.

### **Referrals to EIS can be made:**

- › By early learning services
- › By schools, via the teacher, the school's learning support coordinator (LSC) or Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO)
- › By parents, via Ministry regional teams
- › By healthcare providers, such as General Practitioners, Paediatricians, Plunket or Well Child Tamariki Ora.

### **Talk to our learning support team**

You can also contact our learning support team directly for more advice and support.

- › [Regional offices](#)

Our learning support team members can help clarify whether the child may need extra support, and what options are available.

### **More information**

- › [Learning Support in the Early Years](#) includes an EIS Factsheet for Schools and Educators
- › [Learning support when your child moves to school - Ministry of Education](#) includes EIS Factsheet for Parents and EIS Service Journey Infographic – 2026 and Beyond
- › [Budget 2025 investment for Learning Support](#)

# Questions and Answers

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## **Who is eligible for Early Intervention Service?**

EIS support is available for learners from birth through to the end of Year 1, from 2026. Children do not need a diagnosis to access learning support.

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## **Who provides consent for EIS support?**

Parents give their consent for EIS support and can withdraw consent at any time. Signed informed consent is required from parents.

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## **Can a new entrant be referred to EIS?**

Yes, children with newly identified needs in Year 0 or 1 can be referred to EIS, from 2026.

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## **What happens to learners transitioning to school in 2026?**

When learners are already receiving support from EIS, and are transitioning to school in 2026, they will be supported by EIS through to the end of Year 1.

Learners arriving at school in 2026, who are not known to EIS previously but are showing early signs of need can be referred to EIS.

If, in 2026 a new referral is received when a child's needs are unable to be met by EIS, some service flexibility is required to make sure learners and teachers get the support they need, when they need it. Conversations involving RTLB Cluster Managers and Service Managers will be required to agree the best approach to meet the child's needs. This will be reviewed at the end of Term 2, 2026.

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## **What if a child requires learning support beyond Year 1?**

From 2026, EIS support is available for learners through to the end of Year 1 at school.

If a child requires learning support beyond Year 1, they may be supported by the Resource Teacher Learning and Behaviour (RTLB), or Behaviour and Communications Services, or within school supports such as SENCO or LSC.

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## **What about children who already receive support from RTLB?**

If a learner in Year 0 to 1 is already receiving support from RTLB, they will continue to receive the service from RTLB.

This is a temporary arrangement for 2026 only to ensure continuity of support for learners with additional needs and seeks to avoid unnecessary transitions for learners between services.

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### **How will LSCs, EIS and RTLB work together to support within school transitions?**

Due to the expansion of EIS for learners in Years 0 to 1, the RTLB service will begin working with learners and their families during the transition period from Year 1 to 2. LSCs will work with EIS and RTLBs to support within school transitions for learners.

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### **Will teachers be spending more of their teaching time interacting with specialists?**

This initiative will support classroom teachers to be able to focus on their core work - teaching all learners in their class. Learners with additional needs will be included in the whole class learning and will have dedicated EIS support to enable this. Classroom teachers will have a role collaborating with EIS on planning pathways that align with a learner's identified strengths and learning needs.

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### **Will Early Intervention Teachers (EITs) need curriculum knowledge for primary school settings?**

Yes. EITs will require a working understanding of the NZ Curriculum and Te Marautanga o Aotearoa.

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### **Will training be provided for staff in the Early Intervention Service who haven't worked in primary schools before e.g. on the New Zealand Curriculum?**

Yes, professional learning and development (PLD) opportunities will be provided to all staff, existing and new, to support a nationally consistency EIS that works to identify the needs of learners earlier and provide timely, efficient and effective support. Early Intervention Teachers who have already completed their training will be provided PLD opportunities to build skills and capabilities to work with learners in Year 1 and make the transition from Te Whāriki, New Zealand's early learning curriculum to New Zealand Curriculum (NZC).

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### **Will Behaviour and Communication Services be available in Year 1?**

Specialist support for communication and behaviour needs are delivered as part of EIS support during Year 0 to 1 and shift to RTLB and/or Ministry Behaviour and Communication services from Year 2.

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### **Will there be funding for teacher aide hours to support learners with additional needs?**

In addition to EIS being expanded through to the end of Year 1 of school, Budget 2025 also invested in strengthening EIS, so that alongside additional learning support specialist staff to work with learners, educators and whānau in the school environment, there are 900,000 additional teacher aide hours (by 2029) dedicated to supporting learners in the crucial early years. You can contact us directly for more advice and support - [Regional offices](#)

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### What services are involved in the transition to school process?

Structured transition to school planning involves collaboration between EIS teams and school staff, including LSCs, along with whānau and families. When other agencies are involved, they should also be part of the transition planning, so a child's strengths and needs are identified, understood and planned for.

*“Budget 2025 is the largest investment in learning support in a generation. It focuses on early intervention, expands services, and improves access to specialists, to ensure learners get the support they need.”*

