

EIS and RTLB Service Pathways from January 2027

Information for Schools and Kura

SEPTEMBER 2026



From Term 1 2027, the Ministry of Education's Early Intervention Service (EIS) will become the primary learning support pathway for eligible learners from birth to the end of Year 1.

From Year 2 onwards, learners requiring ongoing support may access Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) and other Ministry-delivered or school-based learning support pathways, depending on their individual needs, eligibility and circumstances.

Background

As part of Budget 2025 investment in strengthening learning support, the Ministry expanded Early Intervention Services to the end of Year 1, from the start of 2026.

During 2026, RTLB have played an important role in supporting some Year 0 and Year 1 learners while the Ministry expanded EIS workforce capacity and capability.

Learners already receiving RTLB support through these transitional arrangements will continue to receive support until that support is no longer required.

What this means for Schools and Kura

From Term 1 2027:

- › EIS becomes the primary pathway for eligible learners from birth to the end of Year 1.
- › From Year 2 onwards, learners requiring ongoing support may access RTLB and other learning support pathways.
- › New requests for support for eligible Year 0 and Year 1 learners will be managed through EIS.
- › Existing specialist support pathways remain unchanged.

Term 4 referrals (from 2026 onwards)

- › Year 0/1 learners requiring support should be referred to EIS.
- › If a need is identified in Term 4 of Year 1 and the child will be in Year 2 the following year, they should not be referred to EIS in Term 4. Consider other pathways available, e.g. RTLB, Ministry communication or behaviour services or school-based support.
- › Where ongoing support is likely to be required beyond Year 1, planning should begin during Term 4.

Planning support beyond Year 1

Where ongoing support is likely to be required beyond Year 1, planning should begin in Term 4. EIS will work alongside whānau, schools, kura, RTLB and other relevant services to identify the most appropriate support pathway and support a coordinated transition into Year 2.

Depending on the learner's needs, this may include:

- › School-based supports, including Learning Support Coordinators (LSCs) and SENCOs
- › RTLB
- › Ministry Behaviour or Communication Services
- › Other specialist services, where appropriate.

Understanding Year-Level Placement

EIS eligibility is based on a learner's school year-level placement.

Schools and kura determine a learner's current year-level placement based on their educational programme, learning needs and school context.

From Term 1 2027, support should be provided as follows:

SCENARIO	WHAT HAPPENS?
New learner requiring support, in Early Learning, Year 0 and Year 1	EIS is the primary pathway for eligible learners from birth to the end of Year 1. EIS provides support for learning, behaviour and communication needs through specialist services, collaborative planning with schools and whānau, capability building around the learner and learning environment, and Teacher Aide support where eligibility criteria are met. Submit a Request for Support through the existing process.
A learner reaches Year 2	Year 2 learners are not eligible for EIS. Where ongoing support is required beyond Year 1, EIS will work with whānau, schools, kura and relevant services to plan for ongoing support and identify the most appropriate pathway. This may include RTLB, Ministry Behaviour or Communication Services, school-based supports or other specialist services, depending on the learner's needs and eligibility. Where RTLB is identified as the most appropriate pathway, the school will need to complete a new RTLB Request for Support.
A learner remains in Year 1	EIS is intended to support eligible learners through to the end of Year 1. Where a learner remains in Year 1 and ongoing support is required, schools, kura, whānau and relevant services should work together to identify the most appropriate support pathway based on the learner's needs, eligibility and circumstances. Decisions regarding year-level placement should be based on the learner's educational needs and circumstances and should not be made for the purpose of accessing a particular learning support service.
A learner was receiving RTLB support in 2026 and continues to need support in 2027	RTLB will continue supporting these learners until support is no longer required. There is no change to existing support arrangements and transfer to EIS is not required.
A learner receives ORS or other specialist services	Existing specialist supports and pathways remain unchanged. Learners will continue receiving support through their current specialist services.

Questions and support

For questions and guidance about eligibility, learning support pathways or accessing support, please contact your local Ministry of Education Learning Support team.

More information:

[Learning support in the early years - Ministry of Education](#)

[Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour - Ministry of Education](#)