

Early Years Pupil Premium Champions – Application Guidance

Please note you must be located in one of these five local authority areas to apply:

- Brent
- Central Bedfordshire
- East Sussex
- Redcar and Cleveland
- Wolverhampton

The deadline for applications is Thursday 16 July at 23:59.

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Section 1: What is an Early Years Pupil Premium Champion?

We know there is variability in how effectively settings claim and use the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP). We are looking for individuals with experience in the early years sector to work within local authority areas to help change this.

Champions will lead local efforts to promote the effective use of EYPP funding, acting as advocates who support settings to strengthen provision for children from lower-income families.

The EYPP Champion role supports the two-year ‘test and learn’ policy reform (2026-28) funded by the Department for Education (DfE). The initiative will be delivered in 20 local authority areas, providing an enhanced EYPP alongside changes to claims and payments processes.

The aim is to improve how funding is accessed and used to support children from lower-income families. The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) will recruit and train local EYPP Champions in five participating local authorities.

We are looking to appoint EYPP Champions who currently work in or are closely associated with early years settings, including those working in local authorities, nursery chains and Multi-Academy Trusts. We expect to establish a grant arrangement with each Champion’s existing employer to enable their time and support.

What will Early Years Pupil Premium Champions do?

Supported by the EEF, EYPP Champions will help to strengthen local system capability for the effective use of EYPP funding through targeted and practical support to settings.

Their work will focus on four key areas:

1. Local engagement and relationship building

Champions will build trusted relationships with early years settings (including Private, Voluntary, and Independent [PVI] nurseries, school-based provision and childminders), raising awareness of evidence-informed approaches to spending the EYPP. They will act as local advocates for the EEF’s EYPP tools and guidance, and broker collaboration between settings, local authorities, Stronger Practice Hubs and Research Schools. Where applicable, two Champions will work together to coordinate their activity across an area.

2. Communication and mobilisation

Champions will deliver local communications and events to promote the EYPP, adapting and sharing EEF resources, newsletters, blogs and case studies to provide consistent messaging with local relevance. They will also contribute to new exemplification materials such as written vignettes or short videos showcasing effective EYPP use.

3. Support for settings

Champions will provide hands-on, tailored support to help settings diagnose needs, plan spending, and implement evidence-informed strategies, programmes and interventions. They will encourage setting leaders to monitor and reflect on the impact of their EYPP spending choices. They may also deliver local professional development sessions using the ***EEF Guide to the Early Years Pupil Premium*** and facilitate small learning groups or communities of practice where settings share learning and exemplify effective approaches. In addition, Champions will work with settings to explore pooling EYPP funding to maximise spend (e.g., on high-quality professional development programmes that all staff can access).

4. Learning, monitoring and feedback

Champions will take part in induction, training and ongoing support led by the EEF. They will monitor their own progress, share examples of effective practice and participate in evaluation activities such as interviews.

Time commitment and grants information

The engagement will run from January 2027 to July 2028, with an expected commitment of around nine days per month (approximately 0.4 Full-Time Equivalent).

There will also be an induction period during Autumn 2026, comprising three full days.

Each host organisation will receive a £44,500 grant to enable release time for the Champion and to support them to carry out their responsibilities effectively. Payment will be distributed across agreed milestones over five terms.

The engagement will involve travel across the region, including occasional visits to the EEF office in London.

Section 2: Why should I apply to be an Early Years Pupil Premium Champion?

Becoming an EYPP Champion offers a unique chance to influence the use of EYPP funding locally and to help shape the future direction of policy. You will receive a structured induction and ongoing guidance from EEF colleagues, including support on evidence-informed practice and practical approaches to improving provision for children from lower-income families.

You will gain further hands-on experience in system leadership, working directly with settings to strengthen planning, implementation and evaluation of EYPP spending. You will also have opportunities to contribute to local exemplification and case studies, feeding into national learning and helping shape future guidance.

Finally, you will join a network of fellow EYPP Champions, sharing learning, challenges and solutions with peers across the country.

How will your host organisation benefit from this opportunity?

Hosting an EYPP Champion is an opportunity to contribute to improving outcomes for children from lower-income families across your local early years system through the effective use of EYPP funding. We are looking for host organisations that see this as part of their mission and are committed to supporting their Champions to work across the local area.

EYPP Champions will receive a structured induction and training programme, ongoing community of practice sessions, and individual support from the EEF. The Champion's increased knowledge, skills and networks will enhance your organisation's capacity and expertise around the EYPP.

Your organisation will also gain insight into how settings across your local area are using the EYPP, what barriers they face and what is working well.

Section 3: Eligibility and selection criteria

To apply for this opportunity, you should be able to demonstrate:

- Experience in the early years sector in England (e.g., as an EY lead, nursery manager, SPH practitioner, LA adviser).
- Excellent communication, facilitation and relationship-building skills.
- Strong connections within the early years sector and experience of building and maintaining effective partnerships or networks, particularly within your local authority area.
- Experience developing and/or delivering professional development and supporting staff across a setting or organisation.
- Ability to work independently and manage multiple relationships.
- Ability to effectively translate evidence into practical advice.
- A good understanding and knowledge of:
 - The impact of socio-economic disadvantage on child development in the early years.
 - Evidence-informed early years practice and pedagogy.
 - EEF's Guide to the Early Years Pupil Premium and relevant resources.
 - Quality improvement and professional development in the early years.

In addition, your organisation must be happy to support your capacity to fulfil this role. This includes having a credible plan for covering your existing responsibilities.

We are looking to engage approximately eight to ten EYPP Champions, across five local authorities. Where two Champions are selected to cover one local authority area, we will balance location, existing networks, background (including setting type) and other characteristics to inform the final decision.

Our expectation is that Champions will be based within a local host organisation, such as a local authority, school, nursery (including PVI and/or chains) or Multi-Academy Trust.

We will establish a grant agreement with that organisation to support the Champion's time and capacity. (See Section One.)

How will applications be assessed?

All applications will be assessed using the following criteria:

1. *Local engagement and relationship-building*
 - a. Evidence of establishing and maintaining trusted relationships across early years settings (PVI, school-based and childminders), local authorities or other stakeholders.
 - b. Ability to engage partners and foster collaboration toward a shared outcome.

2. *Supporting settings to change practice*
 - a. Experience helping settings plan, implement or review strategies, programmes or spending choices.
 - b. Demonstrated impact of support on decision-making, practice or outcomes for children from lower-income families.
 - c. Ability to provide practical, tailored guidance and contribute to professional development within settings or networks.
3. *Communication and mobilisation*
 - a. Experience creating and communicating guidance, tools or resources to an early years audience.
 - b. Ability to make evidence accessible and engaging.
 - c. Ability to tailor materials and messages for different settings and local contexts to support engagement and understanding.
4. *Letter of support*
 - a. Clear commitment from the setting leader or senior leadership team to enable the EYPP Champion's participation and success in their role.
 - b. Sufficient capacity at the setting/organisation to facilitate release time for the EYPP Champion as expected.

Section 4: How to apply

Preparing to apply

After familiarising yourself with the description, responsibilities and characteristics of an EYPP Champion, speak with your employer to determine whether this opportunity is a good fit for you both.

Coordinate your approach to the application process to ensure that both your skills and experience, as well as your host organisation's commitment and capacity to support you, are clear.

You may also want to spend some time reviewing the EEF's **Early Years Hub**, particularly the **EEF Guide to the Early Years Pupil Premium**, for further context.

Application stages

The application process consists of three main stages.

Stage 1: Online application form

The online application window will be open from 18 June to 16 July. To apply, please complete an application form via the **online portal**. More details on the application questions can be found below.

Stage 2: Video task

Applicants longlisted from Stage 1 will be invited to submit a 3-5 minute video to prepare in advance. Information on this task will be sent separately to successful applicants.

Stage 3: Online Interviews

Applicants shortlisted from Stage 2 will be invited to a 45-minute online interview.

For applicants selected from Stage 3, we expect to have a short conversation with a senior leader at your setting or organisation as part of the due diligence process. These conversations will be held in late September. This will help us ensure the appropriate level of commitment and capacity is available from leadership.

We expect to confirm who is successful by 2 October.

Application timeline

| Key dates | Key activities |
|-----------|-------------------|
| 18 June | Applications open |

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|--------------------------|--|
| 2 July | Informational webinar |
| 23:59 on 16 July | Applications close |
| 24 July | Longlisted applicants notified and video task assigned |
| 14 August | Video task submission deadline |
| 4 September | Shortlisted applicants notified |
| 14 & 15 September | Interviews |
| 21 September – 1 October | Due diligence conversations |
| 2 October | Successful applicants notified |

Application form questions

You can find the application form questions below. Please note that this is for reference only. Applications must be submitted via the online portal. **Click here to access the Application Form.**

Contact Information

1. Contact name
2. Contact email (please make sure you have access to this email over the summer)
3. Contact phone number
4. Name of host organisation (i.e., who the grant agreement will be with – this could be your setting, organisation, or other employer)
5. Type of host organisation
 - a. School-based setting
 - b. PVI setting
 - c. Local authority
 - d. Multi-Academy Trust
 - e. Another organisation (specify)
6. Postcode of host organisation
7. Address of host organisation
8. Local authority of the host organisation

Application Questions

1. Please describe a situation where you successfully built trusted relationships with early years settings, local authorities, or other stakeholders. How did you engage partners and build collaboration, and what was the outcome? (*max 300 words*)

2. Please give an example of how you have supported a setting or group of settings to plan or implement evidence-informed practice, particularly to improve outcomes for socio-economically disadvantaged children. What approaches did you use, and what was the impact? (*max 300 words*)
3. Tell us about a time when you created or adapted guidance, tools, or resources to make evidence accessible and engaging for an early years audience. How did you tailor your approach for different settings or contexts, and what did engagement look like? (*max 300 words*)

Letter of Support

You will be asked to attach a one-page letter of support from a senior leader confirming your host organisation's commitment to enable your role as an EYPP Champion. Who this letter is from may depend on your employment circumstances. For example:

- School-based settings: a letter of support from the head teacher or senior leader within your trust.
- Private, voluntary and independent settings: a letter of support from the setting manager or senior leader within the chain.
- Local authority-based: a letter of support from the departmental lead.
- Multi-Academy Trust: a letter of support from the senior leader within your trust.
- Early years training provider or other sector organisation: a letter of support from the senior leader within your organisation.

To demonstrate that your host organisation can effectively support your engagement with the EEF as an EYPP Champion, please detail the following in the letter of support:

- Commitment to the EEF's work in the early years.
- Understanding of the responsibilities of an EYPP Champion.
- Ability to secure sufficient release time for the EYPP Champion to successfully fulfil their responsibilities.

Declaration and Submission

You will be asked to confirm that the details of your application are correct.

Please note that once you click the submission button on the online form, you will be shown a summary of your full application.

We strongly recommend that, at this stage, you save a copy of your application for your own records.

Section 5: About the Education Endowment Foundation

Who are the EEF?

We are an independent charity dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement. We do this by supporting schools, early years settings and colleges to improve teaching and learning through better use of evidence.

What is EEF's role in the early years?

The EEF aim to improve outcomes for children from lower-income families. Intervening in the early years is crucial to ensuring every child gets a fair start. Supporting the early years sector to use evidence helps improve practice and ultimately children's outcomes.

Section 6: More Questions?

If you have any further questions not answered in this document, we are running a webinar on Thursday 2 July from 4:00-5:00pm.

You can register using this link: **Early Years Pupil Premium Champion - Information Webinar Registration - Zoom**

You can also send questions to us by email at <mailto:eyppchampions@eefoundation.org.uk>.