

# Applying for EEF funding

## Guidance notes to support you in completing the initial application form for our Spring 2025 funding round

**Round open:** Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January 2025

**Closing date:** Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March 2025 at 11am

**Research priority area: Early Years (with a focus on programmes that prioritise self-regulation and executive function or programmes that support these as part of broader developmental goals)**

The EEF's grant-funding rounds test the impact of high-potential programmes and approaches aiming to raise the attainment of 2–19-year-olds from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Funding rounds focus on projects within selected themes. This ensures that we are funding projects that can answer the most important questions as suggested by the existing evidence base and school or setting priorities, while also giving precedence to the areas that are likely to be most beneficial for socio-economically disadvantaged children. This guidance document is for organisations considering applying for the **Early Years theme** (with a focus on programmes that prioritise self-regulation and executive function or programmes that support these as part of broader developmental goals) of the EEF's Spring 2025 funding round.

The first few years of a child's life are hugely important to their future. How they spend this critical period shapes their outcomes – both in the shorter term and later in life – laying the foundations for their academic achievement, which in turn, have a significant influence on their life chances. Giving every child access to great learning and development opportunities in the early years is also crucial to combatting education inequality: gaps in development between children from disadvantaged homes and their more affluent peers require early identification and intervention.

Key for development in the early years and the foundation for future learning and attainment are self-regulation and executive function.<sup>1,2</sup> **Self-regulation** refers to skills and abilities that help children to monitor their emotions, thoughts, and behaviour, while **executive function** refers to skills and abilities that help children to resist impulses, direct their attention and hold information in mind.

The objective of this funding round is to support and evaluate existing programmes in the early years that focus on improving self-regulation or executive function in children or support these as part of broader developmental goals. This is the first time the EEF has opened for applications with a focus on self-regulation and executive function in the early years.

<sup>1</sup> Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2011). [Building the Brain's "Air Traffic Control" System: How Early Experiences Shape the Development of Executive Function: Working Paper No. 11.](#)

<sup>2</sup> The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) (2023). [The Early Years Evidence Store: Self-Regulation and Executive Function.](#)

## Early Years priority areas and sub-themes

For each of the priority areas, we want to investigate whether, and if so to what extent, these approaches support children's development, future learning, and attainment, especially for children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

The primary focus of this funding round is self-regulation and executive function. However, applications for programmes that do not have a direct focus on the priority areas are still encouraged if they contain components of the priority areas. This may include programmes that have a primary focus on Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED), early language, early maths, physical development, and mental health and wellbeing. For example, a PSED programme with a focus on improving children's interactions with others may include activities where children are supported to monitor their own emotions, which would fit under this theme.

We are interested in programmes that support 2–5-year-old children. This includes professional development programmes provided to educators working in: maintained nurseries; Private, Voluntary and Independent settings (PVI); primary school Reception phases; and childminders.

A range of examples are included in the table below to give an indication of what applications with a direct and indirect focus on priority areas could look like.

**Applications may cover multiple priority areas and sub-themes but must address at least one.** These sub-themes have been identified following a review of the existing evidence and practice in settings, stakeholder engagement and a review of the existing programmes the EEF has funded within this theme area. Please indicate which of these your application is addressing, referring to the number and letter from the tables below.

**Priority Area One: Creating and navigating challenge*****Creating developmentally appropriate challenges for children to develop and practise their skills in different contexts***

*Sub-theme 1a.* Developing educators' skills to design appropriate challenges for children and/or adjust them appropriately (scaffolding)

*Sub-theme 1b.* Developing educators' skills to support children 'in the moment' as they navigate through challenges and tasks (including during play). This includes approaches to support educators to monitor and observe children before supporting them, as well as approaches to support persistence and adaptability.

*Sub-theme 1c.* A programme of activities involving complex movements and adapting to changing task demands.

*Sub-theme 1d.* A programme of activities to support children to better problem solve, overcome challenges, or improve memory.

Examples of programmes that could fall under this priority area include:

- A set of activities that encourage children to copy and extend actions, making a story physically active.
- Professional development for educators to support children through challenges including the use of hints/prompts and scaffolding.
- Professional development for educators to run fun, short, play-based activities designed to support children's early thinking and numeracy skills through gradually increasing executive function demands.

**Priority Area Two: Teaching self-monitoring and self-awareness*****Helping children to develop an awareness of their own thoughts and emotions, including how their feelings can influence their actions and vice versa***

*Sub-theme 2a.* Activities/professional development designed to support children to label, understand, and manage emotions.

Examples of programmes that could fall under this priority area include:

- A professional development programme that fosters teachers' and early years educators' warm and responsive relationships with children through self-regulation and co-regulation of both children and adults.
- A professional development programme that uses key approaches each week to support PSED including social communication, self-regulation (including awareness of children's own thoughts and emotions) and independence skills.

**Priority Area Three: Creating a community of collaborative learners*****Facilitating collaborative groups of learners where adults and children cooperate and work towards shared goals***

*Sub-theme 3a.* Activities (including play activities) that allow for cooperation between adults and children to work towards goals.

*Sub-theme 3b.* Professional development to help educators to plan for and create collaborative learning/play, including involving children's voices in planning activities.

*Sub-theme 3c.* Professional development that supports educators to create and facilitate (scaffolded) collaborative learning experiences for children. This can include approaches to support child-led play.

*Sub-theme 3d.* Professional development to help educators engage in sustained shared thinking or 'in the moment' support of this approach, such as through open-ended questions.

Examples of programmes that could fall under this priority area include:

- Professional development that supports educators to use strategies to promote high-quality, as well as multi-turn conversations with all children.
- Professional development designed to provide educators with practical strategies to enhance children's communication and language skills through specialised ways of interacting and communicating with children during normal daily routines.

#### **Priority Area Four: Promoting talk about learning**

***Encouraging talk that enables children to plan, monitor, and reflect on their thinking and learning, including how they plan to approach or adapt an activity and evaluating this afterwards***

*Sub-theme 4a.* Activities/professional development to support children to talk about what they are going to do (planning), how things could end up (predicting) or what they are doing in the moment (monitoring).

*Sub-theme 4b.* Developing educators' skills to think aloud to children to share thought processes or to draw attention to/affirm interest in relevant characteristics of problems or thinking.

*Sub-theme 4c.* Developing educators' skills to encourage children to share thoughts and ideas (including dialogic talk or sustained shared thinking).

*Sub-theme 4d.* Story-related activities that seek to support children's planning and self-reflection.

*Sub-theme 4e.* Activities/professional development to support feedback on children's self-regulation and approaches to tasks. This includes approaches to discussing children's mistakes and how they can be used to support future learning.

Examples of programmes that could fall under this priority area include:

- Professional development for educators to support all children in listening, speaking and understanding. This includes understanding how and why questions, and using talk to organise, sequence and clarify thinking. This approach can also be considered a communication and language programme and is based around group conversation and shared sustained thinking.
- Professional development for educators to support pre-verbal child to plan/think about their learning/activities.

#### **Priority Area Five: Co-regulation**

***Educators working alongside children to co-regulate and co-solve problems. Adults helping children to shift their attention and inhibit their initial impulses, in favour of alternative emotional and behavioural responses.***

*Sub-theme 5a.* Activities/professional development to support educators to engage in co-regulation approaches. This includes supporting children's expression of emotions and emotional/behavioural difficulties, as well as waiting for children to attempt to use strategies.

*Sub-theme 5b.* Developing educators' skills to respond to incidents or difficulties, such as through consistent responses or identifying learning opportunities when co-regulating.

*Sub-theme 5c.* Activities/professional development to use talk and gesture to shift/co-manage children's attention or emotions in order to help them inhibit their initial impulses.

*Sub-theme 5d.* Activities/professional development to help guide children through problems, including calming activities.

*Sub-theme 5e.* Professional development to support adults in modelling appropriate strategies and reactions to challenges.

*Sub-theme 5f.* Professional development to help educators be aware of and support their own state as part of engaging in co-regulation activities.

Examples of programmes that could fall under this priority area include:

- Professional development that supports educator awareness of how children's states affect them and how they support children, before engaging in co-regulation activities.

Professional development for educators to support children to move from co-regulation to self-regulation.

### Priority Area Six: Other broader approaches

*Sub-theme 6a.* Self-regulation or executive function curricula or programmes that have a planned and sustained set of activities and instruction feasible to implement in settings.

*Sub-theme 6b.* Professional development for educators to better support the development of self-regulation and executive function, including training and mentoring. It also includes training to create a calm, consistent learning environment to support self-regulation and executive function.

*Sub-theme 6c.* Other activities or professional development for educators to support self-regulation or executive function during play.

*Sub-theme 6d.* Programmes that connect self-regulation and executive function to later learning (such as early maths), supporting school readiness. These programmes should still have self-regulation and executive function as key components of their programme.

Examples of programmes that could fall under this priority area include:

- A mentoring programme to support early years leads create a calm, consistent learning environment.
- A set of activities with an executive function component which seek to improve early mathematical development of children.

## Which funding stream should I apply for?

This funding round is open to developers of programmes that seek to improve early years outcomes with a focus on self-regulation and executive function and that align with one or more of our priority areas and sub-themes identified above.

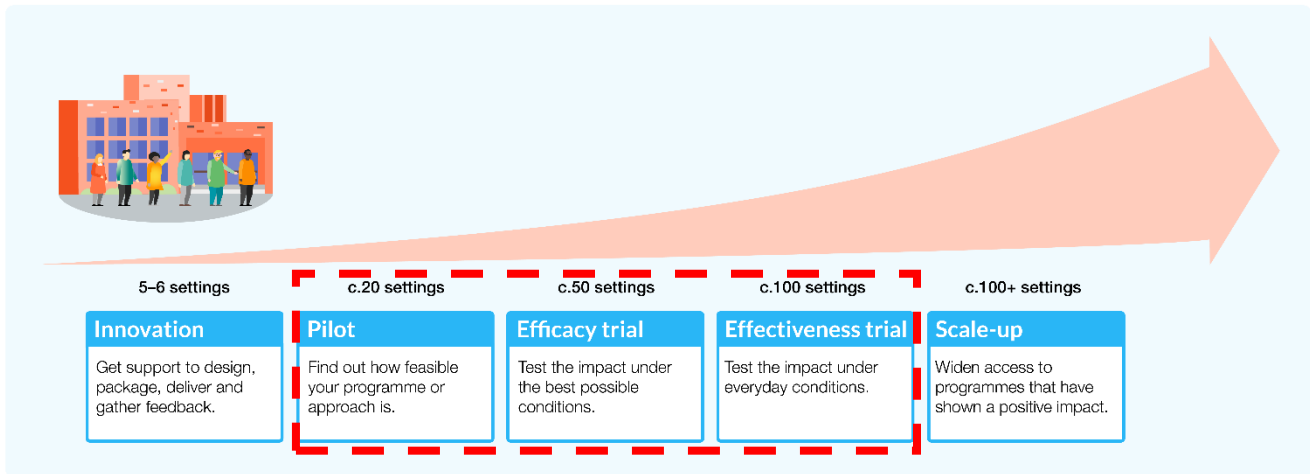
For this Early Years funding round, there are two funding streams for the different ways we will evaluate programmes. You should decide which funding stream your programme best fits into. This is based on how developed your programme is, what the prior level of evidence for the programme is, and at what scale the programme is currently being delivered.

The two streams have separate application forms, and are defined as:

- **Pilot:** Pilot includes independent evaluations of programmes that are fully developed and ready to be tested for feasibility in a small number of settings.
- **Efficacy and effectiveness trials:** Efficacy includes independent evaluations of programmes that are ready to be trialled (subjected to an impact evaluation) under best possible conditions. Effectiveness is the stage after an efficacy trial and includes programmes that are already well evidenced and scaled, and ready to be trialled at a larger scale under everyday conditions.

The below diagram shows the different project stages we fund, referred to as our '[evidence pipeline](#)'. The three types of projects funded in this round are outlined.

## What types of projects and evaluations do we fund?



### Pilot projects

Applications selected for a pilot project will require minimal development work. The programme, or most elements of the programme, will have been delivered in around 11–20 settings, and will have some supporting research data indicating that the programme has promise. This could include findings from qualitative data, such as case studies, or quantitative attainment data, usually without a comparison group. Successful applicants will be paired with an independent evaluator who will design the pilot evaluation. The aim of the pilot evaluation will be to test the programme's feasibility of implementation, initial evidence of promise, and to consider if the programme is ready to be trialled at efficacy level.

Prior to the evaluator appointment, shortlisted applicants will be asked to attend a developmental theory of change workshop. If the programme looks like a good fit for a pilot evaluation, they will proceed to final sign-off from our Grants Committee. At this stage, successful developers will be expected to refine their budget, working with the EEF to accommodate the needs of the programme evaluation. The EEF funding will typically cover a portion of the costs to deliver the programme to a defined number of schools that are part of the evaluation, and separately, the costs associated with the evaluation of the programme. More information on what costs EEF covers can be found in our [FAQs](#).

In limited circumstances, we may offer some pre-pilot developmental support to programmes that we think show promise in an area of high priority for EEF but are not quite ready for independent pilot evaluation. For example, a programme that has been delivered internationally with promise but needs support with translation to the English context before evaluation, or a programme that is being adapted for a type of setting or age group of pupils in which it hasn't been implemented before. In such circumstances we may offer an EEF-supported pre-pilot phase, where we provide you with some guidance on programme design and development, and the opportunity to deliver the programme to a small number of settings and collect feedback, before we commission an independent evaluator. A fixed grant of up to £22,000 would be available to contribute towards the costs of engaging in this development process, delivering the programme to settings, and collecting formative feedback. The expectation would be that a pilot evaluation would directly follow if the programme still shows promise at this stage.

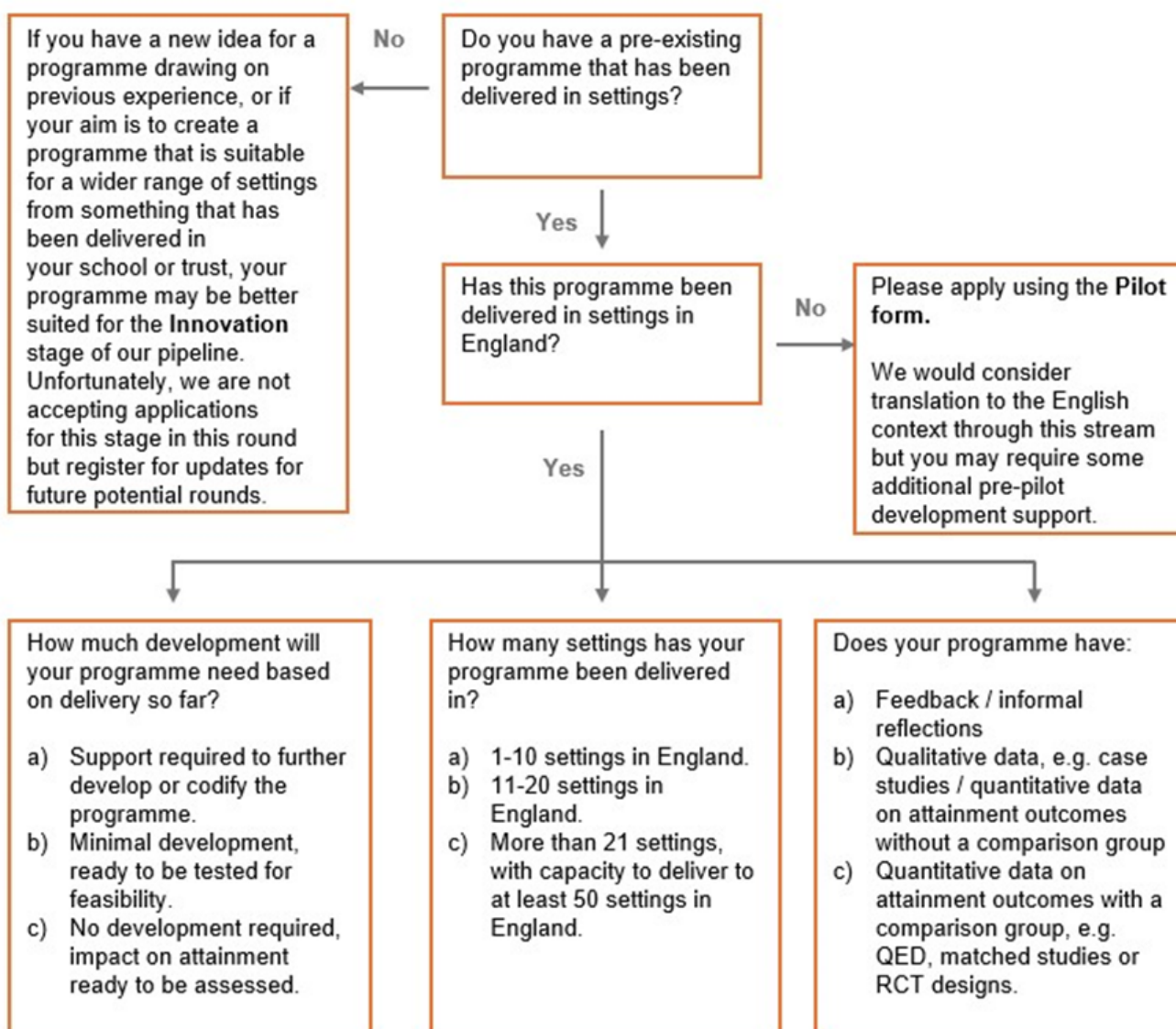
### Trials

Applications selected for trial at efficacy or effectiveness level will have strong prior evidence of promise for raising the development, future learning, or attainment of children. This will be positive evidence, often quantitative, from prior evaluations of the programme or very similar approaches. The programmes will be well defined and developed, have been shown to be feasible and attractive to settings, and have been delivered previously in a large number of settings.

The aim of a trial is to rigorously assess the impact of the programme on children’s learning outcomes using a randomised controlled trial (RCT) approach, where the children taking part in the programme are compared to their peers who continue to receive usual practice in their setting. In all EEF evaluations, we also fund an implementation and process evaluation, which helps explain why an intervention has (or has not) been successful, what factors have contributed to this result, and what lessons we can learn about educational practice and research. The evaluation will be designed and conducted by an independent evaluation team, but our grantees share responsibility for ensuring that the evaluation is as robust as possible.

Prior to the evaluator appointment, shortlisted applicants will be asked to attend a developmental theory of change workshop. If the programme looks like a good fit for a trial evaluation, they will proceed to final sign-off from our Grants Committee. At this stage, successful developers will be expected to refine their budget, working with the EEF to accommodate the needs of the programme evaluation. The EEF funding will typically cover a portion of the costs to deliver the programme to a defined number of settings that are part of the evaluation, and separately, the costs associated with the evaluation of the programme. More information on what costs EEF covers can be found in our [FAQs](#).

The decision tree below provides guidance on which of the funding streams you should apply to:



If you've answered **mostly As**, use the Pilot Application Form – it might be that your programme still requires some additional pre-pilot development support, however, we will assess this as part of scoring your application.

If you've answered **mostly Bs**, use the Pilot Application Form – it might be that your programme is suitable for a pilot.

If you've answered **mostly Cs**, use the Efficacy and Effectiveness Application Form.

## What makes a successful proposal?

### Successful proposals will be:

- **Well defined, with a clear explanation of what the programme is and how it will be implemented.**
  - Can you be clear about what will happen at every stage of your programme? Have you thought through what support schools/settings will need to implement it effectively?
  - As the intention is to fund programmes that have an increased impact compared to what schools/settings are already doing, your programme should be a sufficient change from usual practice.
  
- **Clear with regards to how they will support children and young people from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds.**
  - The EEF is dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement. There should be a clear rationale as to why your programme is likely to particularly benefit children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Your project description should clearly outline the programme itself, the research evidence it is rooted in, and how change happens through your programme to ultimately have an impact on these children's attainment outcomes.
  - Ideally, for pilots and efficacy/effectiveness applications, you will have specific evidence of how your programme has positively impacted children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, and evidence of running your programme in schools/settings serving higher-than-average proportions of such children and young people.
  - If the proposal is successful, we will expect grantees to prioritise recruitment of schools/settings with higher-than-average levels of socio-economically disadvantaged children and young people to the trial (this may be less important if your programme is targeted and targets these children specifically). Applicants need to consider and justify how their programme will be implemented and delivered with this in mind.
  - **Please note:**
    - Applicants do **not** need to have identified specific settings or areas to work in – this would be agreed in discussion with the EEF and an independent evaluator if your application is successful.
    - Applicants do **not** need to work exclusively with children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds – but there should be a clear rationale for how the programme will support the EEF's mission to close the attainment gap.
  
- **Informed and supported by evidence of impact on learning outcomes.**
  - We are primarily interested in academic attainment, such as improvements in SATs, GCSE English scores or writing skills. In the early years, we are interested in impact on broader development as well as future learning outcomes.
  - We are seeking programmes with a clear description of the mechanisms that lead from the proposed activities to the positive impact on children's learning outcomes. This is commonly referred to as a theory of change. This should be supported by evidence from rigorous research from wider literature, and/or previous evaluation of the specific approach. In addition, we expect applicants to build on previous literature reviews and any evaluations of similar interventions to describe how their programmes will mitigate any delivery barriers previously identified.
  - We *strongly* encourage all applicants to consult reviews of the wider evidence base in preparing their applications and reference the wider evidence in the application with clear links back to their programme.

- **Practical, cost-effective, and scalable.**
  - Our aim is to identify programmes that, if shown to be successful, could be taken on by educational settings across England. Therefore, we are only interested in developing and testing initiatives that are practical and cost-effective to deliver.
  - A programme that relies on the ability of one particular trainer or developer is not scalable. Scalable programmes can be delivered by other teachers and other organisations. We will assess your programme’s scalability as part of your application, with higher expectations for scalability for programmes at more advanced stages of the [evidence pipeline](#).
- **Willing and able to be independently evaluated.**
  - For pilots, efficacy trials and effectiveness trials, we expect you to be willing to work with an independent evaluator, who will design and conduct the evaluation of your programme. This includes a willingness to adapt your delivery plan and budget to accommodate the evaluation. For example, this could include recruiting a larger number of schools/settings or delaying the implementation of the programme until baseline assessments are collected.
  - **Please note:**
    - Applicants do **not** need to include an evaluation design in the programme plan or budget.
    - Applicants do **not** need to contact evaluation teams independently. The EEF will appoint an independent evaluator from our panel of evaluators, and work with successful applicants to design an appropriate evaluation plan.

## How to apply

- To submit an application, please complete the relevant online form:
  - [Pilot Application Form](#)
  - [Efficacy and Effectiveness Application Form](#)
- Guidance on each of the questions can be found below.
- You might also find it useful to have a look at our [Funding FAQs](#). Moreover, for examples of the types of programmes we fund, please check the [projects](#) we have funded in the past. We aim to fund a mix of different types of programmes, so if your idea is very similar to something we have already supported, do contact us before applying, and/or ensure you address this clearly in your application.
- Please consider attending the Early Years Applicant Webinar we are hosting on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> February 3-4pm, to support prospective teams in applying for funding. You can sign up [here](#).
- **The deadline for initial applications is 11am, Friday 14<sup>th</sup> March.**
- Shortlisted programmes will be supported to submit their proposal to the EEF Grants Committee in July 2025.
- After an independent evaluation team is appointed, applicants will work with the EEF and the evaluation team to design the accompanying evaluation and finalise the programme plan.
- The updated proposal and budget will be presented to our Grants Committee in January 2026.

## Timeline for pilot projects and efficacy/effectiveness trials

Activity	Date
Funding round opens	Wednesday 29 <sup>th</sup> January 2025
Early Years Applicant Webinar	3pm, Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup> February 2025
Deadline for initial applications	<b>11am</b> , Friday 14 <sup>th</sup> March 2025
Design evaluation, finalise programme, theory of change workshop, interview and budget ( <i>working with EEF and independent evaluator</i> )	March 2025–December 2025
Final EEF Grants Committee decision	January 2026
Estimated time for recruitment of schools/settings to take part in the programme – project dependent (this is usually the grantees’ responsibility)	February–July 2026
Programme starts in schools/settings – project dependent	September 2026

Note that if your programme is offered pre-pilot development support, this will happen as a pre-stage before the evaluation is designed, and the evaluation timeline will run approximately one year later to allow for the development work to take place.

## Pilot application form guidance notes

To submit an application, please complete the online [Pilot Application Form](#).

Wherever the guidance refers to ‘schools/settings’, this can be read as referring to a range of settings, including early years settings and colleges. Where the guidance refers to ‘teachers’, this can be read as referring to a range of practitioners, such as teachers, early years educators, and teaching assistants. Where the guidance refers to ‘parents’, this can be read as including other carers. Where the guidance refers to pupils, this can be read as including young children, pupils, and young adults engaged in post-16 education.

Applications can be saved on the system while drafting. You may find it easier to draft first in another program, like Microsoft Word, paying attention to the word count for each question. If copying into the form, please format using the form’s tools.

The following notes explain each question from the initial application form. Each section relates to a section on the form. If you have any questions, please contact the EEF at [applications@eefoundation.org.uk](mailto:applications@eefoundation.org.uk).

### Eligibility screening

#### **1.1 Where will your proposed programme take place?**

Please note that the EEF can only fund programmes that will work for the benefit of children and settings in England.

#### **1.2 Is your application from a legally constituted organisation?**

We accept applications from legally constituted organisations, and not from individuals. The organisation does not have to be based in England, although if you are not based in England, we would expect you to demonstrate reasonable partnerships and knowledge to support you to work with English schools/settings.

### **1.3 Would this grant be used to pay for any costs already incurred?**

Our grant funding is restricted to cover activities supporting your proposed programme and cannot be used to cover costs that have already been incurred. For pilot projects, the grant typically starts after the programme has been given final approval by the EEF Grants Committee (any travel expenses incurred before this can be expensed).

### **1.4 What types of costs or activities would the grant be used for?**

We are not a source of funding for ongoing delivery of existing commitments. If successful, you will be required to work with new settings that you have not previously worked with. For pilot projects, if successful, you would collaborate with an independent evaluation team who will work with you to design a robust evaluation of your programme, and funding would support the direct costs of delivering the programme for the evaluation. Funding is not available to cover: property or capital items; pupil fees, scholarships or bursaries; loan or debt repayment. We do not fund university overheads as these can be reclaimed. Website development and seminar attendance are also out of scope, except for where they are part of a wider proposal with the broad aim stated above.

### **1.5 Please confirm that your application is for one of the key research agenda themes.**

Please select Early Years (with a focus on self-regulation and executive function).

## **About your organisation**

### **2.1 Organisation name**

### **2.2 Organisation type**

Please select from:

- Early Years Setting
- Primary school
- Secondary school
- Special school
- Further education college
- Sixth Form College
- Sixth form attached to a School
- Independent training provider
- University
- Local education authority
- Charity
- For profit company
- Multi-academy trust / Teaching School Alliance
- Community Enterprise Company / Social Enterprise
- Other (please state)

### **2.3 Number of employees**

### **2.4 Briefly outline your experience of working with pupils from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds (max 100 words)**

Please include here an indication of the demographic of pupils your organisation works with – this could include, for example, indicating the percentage of pupils who are eligible for free school meals or the Early Years Pupil Premium.

### **2.5 Applicant title**

### **2.6 Applicant first name**

### **2.7 Applicant last name**

### **2.8 Applicant contact email**

## 2.9 Applicant contact phone

## 2.10 Applicant job title

## 2.11 Please give the name and a brief description of any partner organisations that will contribute to this programme.

Please indicate what role the partner organisation(s) will play in the proposed programme.

## Programme questions

### 3.1 Please tick the main priority area the proposed programme is related to – further information on each priority area is included in the guidance notes:

Please choose from:

1. Creating and navigating challenge
2. Teaching self-monitoring and self-awareness
3. Creating a community of collaborative learners
4. Promoting talk about learning
5. Co-regulation
6. Other broader approaches

### 3.2 Which sub-theme(s) does your programme fit within (see application guidance)?

- 1a. Developing educators' skills to design appropriate challenges for children and/or adjust them appropriately (scaffolding)
- 1b. Developing educators' skills to support children 'in the moment' as they navigate through challenges and tasks (including during play).
- 1c. A programme of activities involving complex movements and adapting to changing task demands.
- 1d. A programme of activities to support children to better problem solve, overcome challenges, or improve memory.
  
- 2a. Activities/professional development designed to support children to label, understand, and manage emotions.
  
- 3a. Activities (including play activities) that allow for cooperation between adults and children to work towards goals.
- 3b. Professional development to help educators to plan for and create collaborative learning/play, including involving children's voices in planning activities.
- 3c. Professional development that supports educators to create and facilitate (scaffolded) collaborative learning experiences for children.
- 3d. Professional development to help educators engage in sustained shared thinking or 'in the moment' support of this approach, such as through open ended questions.
  
- 4a. Activities/professional development to support children to talk about what they are going to do (planning), how things could end up (predicting) or what they are doing in the moment (monitoring).
- 4b. Developing educators' skills to think aloud to children to share thought processes or to draw attention to/affirm interest in relevant characteristics of problems or thinking.
- 4c. Developing educators' skills to encourage children to share thoughts and ideas (including dialogic talk or sustained shared thinking).
- 4d. Story-related activities that seek to support children's planning and self-reflection.
- 4e. Activities/professional development that supports feedback on children's self-regulation and approaches to tasks.
  
- 5a. Activities/professional development to support educators to engage in co-regulation approaches.
- 5b. Developing educators' skills to respond to incidents or difficulties, such as through consistent responses or identifying learning opportunities when co-regulating.
- 5c. Activities/professional development to use talk and gesture to shift/co-manage children's attention or emotions in order to help them inhibit their initial impulses,

- 5d. Activities/professional development to help guide children through problems, including calming activities.
- 5e. Professional development to support adults in modelling appropriate strategies and reactions to challenges.
- 5f. Professional development to help educators be aware of and support their own state as part of engaging in co-regulation activities
  
- 6a. Self-regulation or executive function curricula or programmes that have a planned and sustained set of activities and instruction feasible to implement in settings.
- 6b. Professional development for educators to better support the development of self-regulation and executive function, including training and mentoring.
- 6c. Other activities or professional development for educators to support self-regulation or executive function during play.
- 6d. Programmes that connect self-regulation and executive function to later learning (such as early maths), supporting school readiness.

### 3.3 How does your programme link to the priority area and sub-theme(s)? (max. 150 words)

If it links to any further priority areas and sub-themes, please mention it here.

### 3.4 Programme title (max. 15 words)

Please give your programme a title. Simple, descriptive titles (e.g. “Peer-tutoring in the North-East” or “Mentoring programme for Year 7s”) are welcome. If you are applying with a named programme, please include the name in the title.

### 3.5 Please describe the experience and expertise of the proposed team (max. 100 words)

The programme team is central to ensuring EEF funds are well spent and that the programme has the maximum impact. We would like to know about them and their track record in this area. (e.g. recruiting schools/settings to programmes, managing complex programmes, development of professional development, working with partners, working with disadvantaged pupils as well as expertise in the area your programme covers).

Please provide a comprehensive list of members of the team that will deliver this programme. Describe what their responsibilities will be. Describe their track record in this area.

### 3.6 Which Key Stage/s are you targeting?

Please select Early Years

### 3.7 Is your programme targeting: whole setting / whole class / large part of a setting (e.g. a department or Key Stage)/ targeted group of pupils?

Please give an indication of whether the programme is aimed: **whole setting change** (e.g. training all educators in a setting); **whole class** (e.g. training practitioners to improve their classroom practice); **large part of a setting** (e.g. support targeting a specific subject department or Key Stage); or a **targeted group of pupils** (e.g. additional small group support for struggling pupils).

### 3.8 Who will deliver the programme? Please select who will be directly responsible for improving outcomes for pupils. For example, if a practitioner receives coaching to improve their practice, please select “practitioner”, not “external trainer”.

Please select from:

- Please select from: Subject Leaders/ Setting leaders/ Teachers or educators/ Teaching Assistant/ External trainers/ Other
- If ‘Other’ please let us know who?

### **3.9 Please provide a brief, two-sentence summary of your programme (max. 50 words)**

In your summary, aim to concisely capture the most important activities in your programme, highlighting its purpose, target audience, and the key outcome it seeks to affect. Focus on what makes your programme unique or impactful. Ensure that the sentence is clear and easy to understand by someone unfamiliar with your work.

### **3.10 Please describe your programme, including the specific activities that settings, practitioners, and pupils will be expected to do, and the support and/or training that you will provide to ensure effective implementation (max. 400 words)**

Please ensure that within your answer to this and other questions, you have answered the following:

- **Who will benefit** from the programme (the ultimate recipients e.g. all pupils or targeted groups?)
- **What?** What materials (e.g. structured activities for educators) and practices (e.g. teaching pedagogies) will be introduced/alterd in order to try to improve outcomes?
- **Who will deliver** the materials and practices? Will it be teachers from within the regular education setting or external experts? How often will they use the approach (e.g. weekly sessions)?
- **How is the training delivered** (if educator training is involved)? What does this involve? How long will training last and when will it be scheduled? Who will deliver the training? What will the content of the training be? Please be as specific as possible about the professional development strategies you will use.
- **How long does the delivery of the programme last?** We are looking for programmes where pupils, having undertaken the programme, demonstrate a measurable improvement in attainment (e.g. in a national test), so the length/intensity of the approach should reflect this.
- **What is involved in supporting schools/settings to implement the programme successfully?** We are interested in understanding what support schools/settings are given to effectively implement the programme, and why the support is designed like this. How will you identify schools/settings that are not implementing it correctly? What additional support will they be given?

Write your description in clear, straightforward language, avoiding jargon or technical terms. If you need to use specific terms, provide brief explanations so that someone unfamiliar with your field can easily understand. Use short sentences and bullet points where appropriate to make your description more readable.

If you have any pre-existing materials that describe your programme to an external audience (for example, a marketing slide deck), you can upload it with your application.

### **3.11 Do you need to make any further adaptations to your programme before it is evaluated? (max. 100 words)**

Generally, at pilot stage we would expect minimal adaptations to the programme to be required (applicants should be applying with fully developed programmes). However, in limited circumstances, we may offer some pre-pilot developmental support to programmes. Example circumstances could include if a programme has been delivered internationally with promise but needs support with translation to the English context before evaluation, or is being adapted for a new type of setting or age group of pupils.

Please describe here if any modifications need to be made to your programme before evaluation. Please indicate if you would like to be considered for pre-pilot development support from the EEF to make these modifications to your programme.

### **3.12 Please describe how your programme aligns with the EEF's mission to break the link between family income and educational achievement (max. 200 words)**

The EEF is dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement. When assessing how your application fits the EEF's portfolio, a key consideration will be alignment with our mission.

You can assume that we have some understanding of the broad issues facing socio-economically disadvantaged pupils. Here, we are interested in how your specific programme aligns with EEF's mission. Details specific to your programme – e.g. specific language deficits or gender sub-groups – should be briefly explained.

In particular, please outline why the programme is expected to have a greater impact on the learning outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. Please indicate what evidence supports your claims.

**3.13 Please describe how your proposed programme contributes to the evidence base, and/or will address sector interests (max. 200 words)**

Please describe how your proposed programme could contribute to the existing evidence base, as well as how the programme addresses sector interests such as those of schools/settings or policy makers. If the proposal is similar to anything that the EEF has funded in the past, please highlight this and expand on what this research will add to the evidence base.

**3.14 Please outline any training and implementation commitments for teachers and/or settings taking part in your programme (max. 100 words)**

You should consider both the initial and ongoing training commitments, and also any ongoing additional work the programme adds to teacher or wider school/setting commitments, for example additional administrative tasks that may be caused by taking part in this programme. This may be an estimated or proposed outline, and could include for example, the number of hours participants are expected to self-study, or between-training activities undertaken by participants to fulfil programme demands.

**3.15 Please include an indicative budget for a pilot with 20 settings, broken down into the direct cost per setting and central costs for managing the project.**

All applicants will be required to submit an indicative budget for a pilot of 20 settings. Once the scoring process has been completed, projects selected for the pilot route will hone their budget with the EEF team.

**3.16 Please describe how your proposed programme is likely to be different from 'business as usual' in settings (max. 100 words)**

Please detail here precisely how the approach differs from typical practice, and how you know.

**3.17 Please outline how many settings the programme has been delivered in, to date, and how many of those were in England (max. 100 words)**

We are interested in how developed the programme is and what its reach has been prior to EEF involvement.

How many English settings have participated so far? If your programme has been delivered in settings outside of England, please specify to how many, and in which countries.

Did previous settings deliver the same version that is now being proposed? How many settings have received the version of the programme that is being submitted as part of this application for funding?

For how long has the programme been available to schools/settings? How has the number of settings receiving the programme changed over time?

What is the profile of schools/settings that have taken part so far? We are particularly interested in programmes that have already been running in schools/settings serving higher-than-average proportions of socio-economically disadvantaged pupils.

**3.18 How many settings has the programme been delivered to in the last year?**

**3.19 Please describe any feedback you've collected from settings and teachers that have participated in the programme, including information about how achievable implementation has been (max. 100 words)**

Briefly describe the methods you used to gather feedback, such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, or informal discussions. You might refer to quantitative data (e.g. survey results) or qualitative insights (e.g. comments from interviews) that you collected. Good responses to this collection will summarise broad trends and insights, rather than relying on individual quotations.

Highlight any specific comments about the ease or challenges of implementing the programme. This could include feedback on how achievable the implementation was in terms of time, resources, and integration with existing school/setting practices.

**3.20 Please describe any potential barriers to successful delivery, including how they have been, or could be, mitigated (max. 100 words)**

**3.21 If the proposed programme were to be funded by the EEF, and positive results were found, would your organisation be able to develop the capacity to deliver the programme for an EEF-funded impact evaluation, likely in around 50 settings? This would likely be a randomised controlled trial (max. 50 words)**

We are interested in how your programme might be scaled up so that it could be delivered in larger numbers of schools and settings in England and subjected to a robust impact evaluation. Recent EEF efficacy trials have typically been delivered in 50 settings or more, sometimes substantially more. For example, does the lead organisation have the capacity and skills to grow the model? Or would it need to be partnered with a larger organisation/network?

**3.22 If the answer to the question above is no, would you be willing to work with EEF to develop routes to scale? E.g. through finding a partner organisation to support delivery at scale (max. 50 words)**

**3.23 Please briefly outline any potential barriers you anticipate in scaling the programme to other settings (max. 50 words)**

For example, this could include barriers that relate to the programme design and/or challenges with organisational capacity.

**3.24 Please provide an explanation of the research evidence that supports the theory that your programme will work. You may provide references. Please also include information from any previous evaluations (max. 200 words)**

You may also describe here evidence from evaluations of very similar approaches. This evidence could be drawn from international studies. If quoting wider literature, please make clear reference to the characteristics your programme shares with the programmes referenced. More information about what the EEF considers to be good evidence can be found on the evaluation section of our website.

Good applications will reference high quality evidence. This might include systematic reviews and meta-analyses that collate multiple previously published research studies. Applications might also refer to experiments (e.g. randomised controlled trials) that compare the impact of one teaching approach or programme with one approach, or no intervention at all.

Good applications will reference reliable studies. Indicators of reliability in a study include independence (the researcher is unbiased) and a large enough sample size to generalise its conclusions to the wider population.

EEF's resource, [Using research evidence](#), gives an overview of different types of education evidence, what they can be used for, and what their limitations might be.

**3.25 Please outline how you think the implementation of your programme leads to behaviour change in staff/setting/parents/pupils as appropriate. If you have a theory of change or logic model, please feel free to upload it, but we don't expect you to write one for the application (max. 300 words)**

Here we want to understand *how* and *why* the programme works to support the development and/or future learning, or raise the attainment and skills, of children. What is the theory that links the programmes' activities and its intended outcomes? What are the key mechanisms that trigger the desired change? (for example, a parental engagement programme that aims to improve the development and/or learning outcomes of children could do so by increasing children's attendance). What changes are you expecting to see in the short term and how are these likely to influence behaviour change in the long term?

When answering this question make sure you think about and clearly outline:

- What are the key activities of your programme?
- How are the different activities intended to change the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours of either children or practitioners in the short or medium term?
- How are these changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes and/or behaviours expected to affect the final desired outcomes, including learning outcomes for children from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds? As an example: if your programme involves training practitioners in an approach, how do you expect the activities you do with practitioners to translate to a change in practitioner behaviour? And how will a change in practitioner behaviour translate to a change in children's outcomes?

**4.1 Additional documentation upload (optional):**

If you already have a theory of change for your programme, please do include this as an additional document.

To submit an application, please complete the online [Efficacy and Effectiveness Application Form](#).

Wherever the guidance refers to 'schools/settings', this can be read as referring to a range of settings, including early years settings and colleges. Where the guidance refers to 'teachers', this can be read as referring to a range of practitioners, such as teachers, early years educators, and teaching assistants. Where the guidance refers to 'parents', this can be read as including other carers. Where the guidance refers to pupils, this can be read as including young children, pupils, and young adults engaged in post-16 education.

Applications can be saved on the system while drafting. You may find it easier to draft first in another program, like Microsoft Word, paying attention to the word count for each question. If copying into the form, please format using the form's tools.

The following notes explain each question from the initial application form. Each section relates to a section on the form. If you have any questions, please contact the EEF at [applications@eefoundation.org.uk](mailto:applications@eefoundation.org.uk).

### **Eligibility Screening**

#### **1.1 Where will your proposed programme take place?**

Please note that the EEF can only fund programmes that will work for the benefit of pupils and settings in England.

#### **1.2 Is your application from a legally constituted organisation?**

We accept applications from legally constituted organisations, and not from individuals. The organisation does not have to be based in England, although if you are not based in England, we would expect you to demonstrate reasonable partnerships and knowledge to support you to work with English schools/settings.

#### **1.3 Would this grant be used to pay for costs that have already been incurred?**

Our grant funding is restricted to cover activities supporting your proposed programme and cannot be used to cover costs that have already been incurred. The grant typically starts after the programme has been given final approval by the EEF Grants Committee (any travel expenses incurred before this can be expensed).

#### **1.4 What types of costs or activities would the grant be used for?**

We are not a source of funding for ongoing delivery of existing programmes. If successful, you will be required to work with new settings that you have not previously worked with, and to collaborate with an independent evaluation team who will work with you to design a robust evaluation. Funding should support the direct costs of delivering the programme for the evaluation. Applicants should apply with a programme that has already been developed, we are not able to fund significant development work of a programme.

We cover:

- Programme delivery
- Staff costs
- Resources to deliver the programme
- Travel and venue hire
- Administration and printing costs

We don't cover:

- Property or capital items
- Pupil fees
- Scholarships or bursaries
- Loan or debt repayment
- University overheads (as these can be reclaimed)

In some cases, we would cover the following, but this is not guaranteed and would be determined with shortlisted applicants during the funding process:

- Programme development work
- Website development
- Producing publications
- Seminar attendance

**1.5 Please confirm that your application is for one of the following key research agenda themes:**

Please select Early Years (with a focus on self-regulation and executive function).

**About your organisation**

**2.1 Name of organisation**

**2.2 Organisation type**

Please select from:

- Early Years Setting
- Primary school
- Secondary school
- Special school
- Further education college
- Sixth form college
- Sixth form attached to a school
- Independent training provider
- University
- Local education authority
- Charity
- For profit company
- Multi-academy trust / Teaching School Alliance
- Community Enterprise Company / Social Enterprise
- Other (please state)

**2.3 Number of employees**

**2.4 Applicant title**

**2.5 Applicant first name**

**2.6 Applicant last name**

**2.7 Applicant contact email**

**2.8 Applicant contact phone**

**2.9 Applicant job title**

**2.10 Please describe briefly the experience and expertise of the proposed delivery team (*max. 100 words*)**

The programme team is central to ensuring EEF funds are well spent and that the programme has the maximum impact. We would like to know about them and their track record in this area (e.g. recruiting schools/settings to programmes, managing complex programmes, development of professional development, working with partners, working with disadvantaged pupils, as well as expertise in the area your programme covers).

Please provide a comprehensive list of members of the team that will deliver this programme. Describe what their responsibilities will be. Describe their track record in this area.

**2.11 Please give the name and a brief description of any partner organisations that will contribute to this programme (max. 100 words)**

Please indicate what role the partner organisation(s) will play in the proposed programme.

**2.12 Briefly outline your experience of working with pupils from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds (max. 100 words)**

Please include here an indication of the demographic of pupils your organisation works with – this could include, for example, indicating the percentage of children who are eligible for the Early Years Pupil Premium.

**Programme questions**

**3.1 Please tick the main priority area the proposed programme is related to – further information on each priority area is included in the guidance notes:**

Please choose from:

1. Creating and navigating challenge
2. Teaching self-monitoring and self-awareness
3. Creating a community of collaborative learners
4. Promoting talk about learning
5. Co-regulation
6. Other broader approaches

**3.2 Which sub-theme(s) does your programme fit within (see application guidance)?**

- 1a. Developing educators' skills to design appropriate challenges for children and/or adjust them appropriately (scaffolding)
- 1b. Developing educators' skills to support children 'in the moment' as they navigate through challenges and tasks (including during play).
- 1c. A programme of activities involving complex movements and adapting to changing task demands.
- 1d. A programme of activities to support children to better problem solve, overcome challenges, or improve memory.
  
- 2a. Activities/professional development designed to support children to label, understand, and manage emotions.
  
- 3a. Activities (including play activities) that allow for cooperation between adults and children to work towards goals.
- 3b. Professional development to help educators to plan for and create collaborative learning/play, including involving children's voices in planning activities.
- 3c. Professional development that supports educators to create and facilitate (scaffolded) collaborative learning experiences for children.
- 3d. Professional development to help educators engage in sustained shared thinking or 'in the moment' support of this approach, such as through open-ended questions.
  
- 4a. Activities/professional development to support children to talk about what they are going to do (planning), how things could end up (predicting) or what they are doing in the moment (monitoring).
- 4b. Developing educators' skills to think aloud to children to share thought processes or to draw attention to/affirm interest in relevant characteristics of problems or thinking.
- 4c. Developing educators' skills to encourage children to share thoughts and ideas (including dialogic talk or sustained shared thinking).
- 4d. Story-related activities that seek to support children's planning and self-reflection.
- 4e. Activities/professional development that supports feedback on children's self-regulation and approaches to tasks.

- 5a. Activities/professional development to support educators to engage in co-regulation approaches.
  - 5b. Developing educators' skills to respond to incidents or difficulties, such as through consistent responses or identifying learning opportunities when co-regulating.
  - 5c. Activities/professional development to use talk and gesture to shift/co-manage children's attention or emotions in order to help them inhibit their initial impulses,
  - 5d. Activities/professional development to help guide children through problems, including calming activities.
  - 5e. Professional development to support adults in modelling appropriate strategies and reactions to challenges.
  - 5f. Professional development to help educators be aware of and support their own state as part of engaging in co-regulation activities
- 
- 6a. Self-regulation or executive function curricula or programmes that have a planned and sustained set of activities and instruction feasible to implement in settings.
  - 6b. Professional development for educators to better support the development of self-regulation and executive function, including training and mentoring.
  - 6c. Other activities or professional development for educators to support self-regulation or executive function during play.
  - 6d. Programmes that connect self-regulation and executive function to later learning (such as early maths), supporting school readiness.

**3.3 How does your programme link to the priority area and sub-theme(s)? If it links to further priority areas and sub-themes, please mention it here. (max. 150 words)**

**3.4 Programme title (max. 15 words)**

Please give your programme a title. Simple, descriptive titles (e.g. "Peer-tutoring in the North-East" or "Mentoring programme for Year 7s") are welcome. If you are applying with a named programme, please include the name in the title.

**3.5 Which Key Stage/s are you targeting?**

Please select the Key Stage/s of focus for your programme: Early Years, KS1, KS2, KS3, KS4, Post-16

**3.6 Is your programme targeting: whole setting / whole class / large part of a setting (e.g. a department or Key Stage)/ targeted group of pupils?**

Please give an indication of whether the programme is aimed at **whole setting change** (e.g. training all educators in a setting); **whole class** (e.g. training practitioners to improve their classroom practice); **large part of a setting** (e.g. support targeting a specific subject department or Key Stage); a **targeted group of pupils** (e.g. additional small group support for struggling pupils).

**3.7 Who will deliver the programme? Please select who will be directly responsible for improving outcomes for pupils. For example, if a practitioner receives coaching to improve their practice, please select "practitioner", not "external trainer".**

Please select from:

- Subject Leaders/ Setting leaders/ Teachers or educators/ Teaching Assistant/ External trainers/ Other
- If 'Other' please let us know who?

**3.8 Please provide a brief, two-sentence summary of your programme (max. 50 words)**

In your summary, aim to concisely capture the most important activities in your programme, highlighting its purpose, target audience, and the key outcome it seeks to affect. Focus on what makes your programme unique or impactful. Ensure that the sentence is clear and easy to understand by someone unfamiliar with your work.

**3.9 Please describe your programme, including the specific activities that settings, leaders, educators, and pupils will be expected to do, and the support and/or training that you will provide to ensure effective implementation (max. 600 words)**

Begin with a two-sentence, clear-language description of the programme. Please give a clear, simple description of what your programme will do. What would it look like from the point of view of a participating setting?

Please ensure that within your answer to this and other questions, you have answered the following:

- **Who will benefit** from the programme (the ultimate recipients e.g. all children or targeted groups?)
- **What?** What materials (e.g. structured activities for educators) and practices (e.g. teaching pedagogies) will be introduced/alterd in order to try to improve outcomes?
- **Who will deliver** the materials and practices? Will it be teachers from within the regular education setting or external experts? How often will they use the approach (e.g. weekly sessions)?
- **How is the training delivered** (if educator training is involved)? What does this involve? How long will training last and when will it be scheduled? Who will deliver the training? What will the content of the training be? Please be as specific as possible about the professional development strategies you will use.
- **How long does the delivery of the programme last?** We are looking for programmes where children, having undertaken the programme, demonstrate a measurable improvement in attainment (e.g. in a national test), so the length/intensity of the approach should reflect this.
- **What is involved in supporting teachers and settings to implement the programme successfully?** We are interested in understanding what support teachers and settings are given to effectively implement the programme, and why the support is designed like this. How will you identify teachers and settings that are not implementing it correctly? What additional support will they be given? Please consult the EEF's [Guide to Implementation](#) and [Guide to Effective Professional Development](#) for guidance on these topics.

Write your description in clear, straightforward language, avoiding jargon or technical terms. If you need to use specific terms, provide brief explanations so that someone unfamiliar with your field can easily understand. Use short sentences and bullet points where appropriate to make your description more readable.

If you have any pre-existing materials that describe your programme to an external audience (for example, a marketing slide deck), you can upload it with your application.

**3.10 Please describe how your proposed programme is likely to be different from 'business as usual' in settings (max. 100 words)**

As in most trials the programme will be compared to 'business as usual' (BAU), we would expect the approach to be a sufficient deviation from BAU for the proposed approach to have an impact. Please detail here precisely how the approach differs from typical practice, and how you know.

**3.11 Please describe how the planned programme activities will lead to the intended outcomes and ultimate impact, and what evidence supports these assumptions? If you have a theory of change, please describe it here (max. 500 words)**

Here we want to understand *how* and *why* the programme works to raise the development, future learning, attainment and skills of children. What is the theory that links the programmes' activities and its intended outcomes? What are the key causal mechanisms that trigger the desired change? (For example, a mentoring programme that aims to increase learner attainment could do so by increasing learner attendance). What changes are you expecting to see in the short term and how are these likely to influence changes in the long term?

When answering this question make sure you think about and clearly outline:

- What are the key activities of your programme?
- How are the different activities intended to change the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours of either children or practitioners in the short or medium term?
- How are these changes in knowledge, skills, attitudes and/or behaviours expected to affect the final desired outcomes, including learning and/or developmental outcomes for children from socio-economically deprived backgrounds? As an example: if your programme involves training practitioners in an approach, how do you

expect the activities you do with practitioners to translate to a change in practitioner behaviour? And how will a change in practitioner behaviour translate to a change in children's outcomes?

Please draw on the wider research evidence to support the programme's theory of change. Are the approaches backed up by robust educational theory and research? You can provide links/references to any research cited here in question 3.16. You may wish to include a surname and year in this answer, for example (Harris, 2013).

**3.12 Has the proposed programme been previously evaluated? Please describe the strongest evidence for your programme's impact (this can be on attainment, children's learning and/or development depending on the funding round the application is for) (max. 200 words).**

Describe here the evidence for your programme's impact on children's development, learning, future learning or attainment. Ideally, you would have specific evidence for your particular programme's impact from a previous evaluation. Please describe this evidence here, in particular the evidence and findings that you have mentioned in your answer to the previous question.

Please include information about the sample size, pupil characteristics (including level of disadvantage), outcome measures and key findings of any evaluations completed. You can provide links/references to any evaluation reports cited here in question 3.16. Wherever possible, please show evidence that pupils who participate in the proposed programme improve relative to a comparison group of similar pupils who do not participate. You may also have evidence for mediators/causal mechanisms here.

You may also describe here evidence from evaluations of very similar approaches. This evidence could be drawn from international studies. If quoting wider literature, please make clear reference to the characteristics your programme shares with the programmes referenced. More information about what the EEF considers to be good evidence can be found on our [website](#).

**3.13 Please outline any other research which provides evidence that the proposed programme is likely to have an impact on attainment, learning and development, or on teacher outcomes or an outcomes closely linked to these. This could include evidence from evaluations of similar approaches, pilots of the programme, or evidence of progress on outcomes for the programme, but with no comparison group (max. 400 words)**

**3.14 Please describe how your proposed idea contributes to the evidence base, and/or will address sector interests (max. 200 words)**

Please describe how your proposed programme could contribute to the existing evidence base, as well as how the programme addresses sector interests such as settings or policy makers. If the proposal is similar to anything that the EEF has funded in the past, please highlight this and expand on what this research will add to the evidence base.

**3.15 Please describe how your programme aligns with the EEF's mission to break the link between family income and educational achievement (max. 200 words)**

The EEF is dedicated to breaking the link between family income and educational achievement. When assessing how your application fits the EEF's portfolio, a key consideration will be alignment with our mission.

You can assume that we have some understanding of the broad issues facing socio-economically disadvantaged children. Here, we are interested in how your specific programme aligns with EEF's mission. Details specific to your programme – e.g. specific language deficits or gender sub-groups – should be briefly explained.

In particular, please outline why the programme is expected to have a greater impact on the learning outcomes of socio-economically disadvantaged children. Please indicate what evidence supports your claims.

**3.16 References to quoted research (max. 500 words)**

Please provide either full references or URLs to key reports quoted in the previous answers here. You may wish to use a numbering system for references in answers to other questions, and use the numbers to organise your references here. For example: 1) Harris, Alma, 'Distributed Leadership: Friend or Foe?', *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, vol. 41, issue 5, 2013, p.545 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143213497635>.

Please do not add references that have not been included in your answers. If you have referenced research that is unpublished or you envisage it will be difficult for the EEF team to find with university online library access, please upload here if possible.

**3.17 If the programme has been implemented previously in England, please describe its reach so far, the context of settings engaged, and whether settings contributed financially (max. 200 words)**

We are interested in how developed the programme is and what its reach has been prior to EEF involvement.

How many English settings have participated so far? If your programme has been delivered in schools or settings outside of England, please specify to how many, and in which countries.

Did previous settings deliver the same version that is now being proposed? How many settings have received the version of the programme that is being submitted as part of this application for funding?

For how long has the programme been available to settings?

What is the profile of settings that have taken part so far? We are particularly interested in programmes that have already been running in settings serving higher-than-average proportions of socio-economically disadvantaged children.

We are mostly interested in programmes that have been delivered to some extent already and therefore do not require extensive development before they can be tested in large numbers of settings. We require organisations to have the capacity to be able to deliver an EEF trial, which typically delivers to a large number of settings (50+).

**3.18 How many settings has the programme been delivered to in the last year?**

**3.19 If the proposed programme were to be funded by the EEF and a positive impact were found, what do you think are possible ways that the proposed programme could be taken to scale? (max. 100 words)**

We are interested in how your programme might be scaled up so that it could be delivered in large numbers of schools/settings in England. For example, does the lead organisation have the capacity and skills to grow the model? Or would it need to partner with a larger organisation/network?

**Finances**

**4.1 What is the cost (per setting and per pupil) of your programme? (max. 50 words)**

- If you already provide the programme to settings and children, please indicate how much it costs per setting and per child.
- If you don't currently offer the programme to settings and children, please estimate how much you think it would cost per setting and per child if you were to offer it at scale.
- Please note that we expect programme costs to be as manageable for settings as possible and wish to prioritise programmes that could be funded in large part from settings' Early Years Pupil Premium or Pupil Premium (Early Years Pupil Premium is increasing to up to £570 per eligible child; Pupil Premium is currently £1,455 per eligible primary-aged pupil).

**4.2 Approximately how many settings would you be able to work with for an EEF trial? (max. 50 words)**

We are interested in the maximum number of settings you could deliver your programme in for an EEF trial. Please note that we ask that applicants are willing to be flexible on the exact scale and delivery model in order to ensure that a robust evaluation can be undertaken. We work with successful applicants and an external evaluator to jointly design a programme and evaluation plan. However, it is useful to have an indication of the numbers of institutions that you are comfortable working with.

Please consider the following timescale and your related capacity when providing your answer: we anticipate approving grants in January 2026, which for a typical project would allow the spring and summer terms to recruit settings ahead of delivery in September 2026.

### **4.3 What is your total budget? (max. 150 words)**

The EEF funding can cover the costs needed to deliver your proposed programme and manage the programme. However, we would usually expect contributions from other organisations: e.g. you and/or your delivery partners and/or other funders.

Please estimate how much funding is required to deliver the programme in total. This should be based on the maximum number of settings you could deliver to (as stated in 4.2). Please note that the grantee is usually expected to recruit the settings to the programme. How many settings are to be recruited depends on the programme design, but often twice the number of settings are recruited than delivered to, as half are allocated to a control group and carry on with 'business as usual'.

The EEF funding starts from when the grant agreement is signed, which is after the evaluation approach has been agreed and the programme has been signed off by the EEF Grants Committee. From sign-off, a typical EEF programme will have a short preparation period before recruitment (typically 2–3 months), a recruitment period (typically 5–8 months), and a delivery period (the length of time that you deliver the programme in settings). Please see the timeline given earlier in this guidance for rough timings for this funding round.

If possible, please break the budget down into 5 broad cost categories:

- Programme development (if required)
- School or setting recruitment
- Programme delivery (e.g. training, resources)
- Programme management and admin
- Other (please specify)

A more detailed budget is not required at this stage; programme budgets often change substantially once we begin working with successful applicants. For example, we may wish to change the number of settings involved in the programme in order to get a more robust estimate of its impact. We will ask for a more detailed budget breakdown if your application progresses to later stages of the process. At this stage of the process, we are only looking for an approximate cost of the programme.

- You do not need to include costs of running the evaluation – the EEF will commission an external team who will be responsible for designing and delivering the evaluation, in partnership with you.
- We typically expect settings participating in trials to contribute to the costs of the programme where appropriate (for example, by paying a subsidised fee for the programme), so you may want to suggest an amount for settings to contribute as part of your budget.
- For a description of what EEF funding covers you should consult our Funding FAQs on our website, which can be found [here](#).

### **4.4 What funding are you intending to secure from other sources? (max. 100 words)**

- To enable us to continue funding innovative, evidence-based ideas, we normally expect all applicants to apply with a contribution within the range of 5% to 50% of the overall programme costs, or to be able to commit to fundraising for such a contribution. Please include in your application your plan for ensuring this contribution. If there are particular reasons why you think you will be unable to do this, please let us know.
- For-profit applicants are expected to substantially subsidise the programme cost.
- School or local authority applicants do not need to secure funding from other sources.
- If you have approached, or are considering approaching, any other organisations to seek funding for this programme, please outline these organisations and the amounts sought here.

### **5.1 Additional documentation upload (optional)**

If you already have a theory of change for your programme, please do include this as an additional document. If you have unpublished research demonstrating the impact of your programme that you are able to share, please include this as an additional document.