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2023 Enhanced Program Support Funding Guidelines

**Early Years and Child Care Services
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Table of Contents

1.0 INTRODUCTION	1
2.0 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA	2
3.0 FUNDING APPROACH.....	3
4.0 KEY TIMELINES.....	5
5.0 REPORTING AND RECONCILIATION REQUIREMENTS.....	6
6.0 ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES	8
7.0 CONTACT INFORMATION.....	10
APPENDIX 1: Enhanced Program Support Position Responsibilities and Recommended Requirements.....	11
APPENDIX 2: Process to access EPS Funding	12
APPENDIX 3: An Example of How to Report Key Performance Indicators.....	13

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Guideline gives information on the rules of how Enhanced Program Support (EPS) funding can be used by licensed centre-based child care programs to support children 0–12 years of age. Providers must review this guideline with the Early Years and Child Care Services (EYCCS) Stabilization Funding Agreement.

Licensed Centre-Based Child Care Programs for Children 0–12 years of age include:

- Infant, Toddler, and/or Preschool Programs for children 0-4 years of age; and/or
- Licensed Before and After School Programs and/or Licensed Summer Programs for children 4-12 years of age (i.e., school-aged children).

Overview

The Region of Peel (“the Region”) offers special needs resourcing (SNR) support to licensed centre-based child care programs delivering child care services to families and children in Peel between 0 to 12 years old. This Guideline will help providers learn more about EPS funding.

Children with special needs are defined under the *Child Care and Early Years Act* (CCEYA), as a child whose cognitive, physical, social, emotional, or communicative needs, or whose needs relating to overall development, are of such a nature that the child needs added supports.

The Peel Inclusion Resource Services (PIRS) is built on the foundation of access, inclusion, participation and belonging. PIRS delivers three layers of support within licensed centre-based child care programs:

- **Universal Support** which supports and enhances inclusive practices for all children (i.e., universal tools, child care provider awareness, general consultation, etc.).
- **Child Specific Support** which involves resource consultation and supports children with special needs.
- **Intensive Support** which gives funding to licensed centre-based child care programs to get added support so that all children are included in child care.

EPS funding allows providers to hire new program support staff and/or extend the hours of existing staff. Program support staff will:

- Work together with the program team to help all children to fully participate in child care
- Not be included in the minimum *Child Care and Early Years Act* ratio requirements

See [Appendix 1](#) for Program Support staff position responsibilities and suggested requirements.

Outcomes

The outcomes of EPS funding include:

- Families can access and keep child care placements
- Programs are enhanced with extra staff resources
- All children are supported
- Children feel an increased sense of belonging and enjoy positive social relationships (see [How Does Learning Happen?](#))

GovGrants

The Region uses GovGrants for reporting and service system management. Providers will use GovGrants to:

- Agree to the Stabilization Enhanced Program Support Funding Agreement
- Apply for EPS Top-Up funding, if eligible and as needed
- Complete and send all key performance indicators and financial reports
- Communicate directly with regional staff

GovGrants uses [electronic signatures](#) that follow electronic signature regulations and industry standards called DocVerify. Authorized GovGrants users must use DocVerify to digitally sign contracts created in the system. GovGrants resources are available on our [external website](#) to help providers use the system.

2.0 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

To receive EPS funding, providers must:

1. Be a 0-12 licensed centre-based child care program in the Region with a signed Early Years and Child Care Services Fee Subsidy and Funding Agreement.
2. Meet the Region's [Authentic Participation](#) requirements:
 - a. Inclusion of children in receipt of fee subsidy;
 - b. Continuous quality enhancement; and
 - c. Inclusion of children with special needs by participating in Peel Inclusion Resource Services (PIRS).
3. Have business management practices which align with the Region's priorities identified in the [Early Years and Child Care Service System Plan 2019-2024](#).
4. Follow the Early Years and Child Care requirements described in the Early Years and Child Care Service Provider Handbook, including no active holds on funding.
5. Ensure staff complete the virtual training called 'Together we are One –The Role of Educators and Program Support Staff Working Together' available through [Child Development Resource Connection Peel \(CDRCP\)](#). See [Section 6.0\(A\)](#) for further information.

Please note: Providers who sign their Early Years and Child Care Services Fee Subsidy and Funding Agreement in 2023 may qualify for EPS funding. In-year EPS eligibility will be considered on a case-by-case basis and based on available funding.

3.0 FUNDING APPROACH

Notional Allocation

All providers with a purchase of service agreement will receive an annual notional allocation based on a formula which considers factors, such as the:

- Provider's operational capacity
- Percentage of children with special needs who may need EPS. **Not all children who have special needs or receive PIRS support need EPS.**
- The number of instructional days and hours; and
- Programs being delivered (i.e., Programs for children 0-4 years of age and/or Before and After School Programs and/or Licensed Summer Programs for children 4-12 years of age).

The minimum allocation amount a provider will receive is \$7,500, which will allow programs to get approximately 20 hours of support per week for 17 weeks at the wage rate of \$21.64/hour including benefits.

Note: Providers who run a Licensed Summer Program for school aged children will receive a minimum of \$1,000 for this period.

Providers will be notified of their annual allocation through a Funding Announcement in GovGrants. To accept the notional allocation, providers will receive a DocVerify email with the link to sign their EPS Funding Agreement. The Region encourages providers to accept their notional allocation by signing the EPS Funding Agreement when they receive this notification. The funding can be used at any point in 2023 to meet program needs.

Providers who do not sign their EPS Funding Agreement by the deadline outlined in Section 4.0 will not qualify for EPS funding for 2023.

Providers whose annual allocation is less than \$12,000 will receive a one-time payment. Providers whose allocation is greater than \$12,000 will receive monthly payments.

Top-Up Funding

Notional allocation funding will meet most program needs for EPS. However, there may be exceptional circumstances where there are complex needs in a classroom that need longer periods of support. Providers may apply for Top-Up funding for programs with complex needs. Providers must discuss the complex needs with the PIRS Resource Consultant (RC). The PIRS RC must validate the EPS Top-Up funding request.

To qualify for Top-Up funding, providers must:

- Have complex needs in the classroom(s) that cannot be supported by their notional allocation funding alone

- Work together with the PIRS RC to support the needs in the program, including carrying out strategies recommended by the RC (i.e., Individualized Program Plan, child-specific brief consultation, general classroom consultation)
- Have ongoing conversations with the PIRS RC about the needs in the program and specifically about the complex needs driving the Top-Up funding request
- Have no existing corrective actions related to Authentic Participation

Note: Providers can only apply for Top-Up funding once per calendar year. Multi-site agencies or single sites with the same owner(s) can only **apply for Top-Up funding once per calendar year** to use across all sites. Once the Region approves the Top-Up funding request, providers may use EPS funding to manage needs in one or more classrooms.

The maximum amount of Top-Up funding a provider can receive in a calendar year is \$25,000 in addition to their annual notional allocation.

Top-up funding is prorated every quarter and paid to providers in a lump sum or monthly payments. The table below shows the pro-rated amounts of Top-Up funding available depending on when the Region receives the funding request. The deadline for receiving Top-Up funding requests is October 31, 2023.

Distribution of Top-Up Funding	
Top-Up Funding Request Received	Top-Up Funding Available
January – March 2023	\$25,000
April – June 2023	\$18,750
July – September 2023	\$12,500
October 2023	\$6,250

Top-Up Funding Request

To apply for Top-Up funding, providers must:

- Complete the *EPS Top-Up Request Form* available on the [Region of Peel website](#).
- Upload the completed form into GovGrants under the “Attachment” tab
- Send an email to PIRS using the “Collab” tab in GovGrants to let the Region know that a Top Up funding request form was uploaded.

Top-Up funding requests that are not received through GovGrants will not be processed.

Before applying for Top-Up funding, providers must discuss the program’s complex needs, the goal of EPS support, and strategies that the team of educators will carry out with their PIRS RC.

Providers must receive validation of the complex need from the PIRS RC before applying for Top-Up funding.

Providers who run only a Before and After School Program for children 4-12 years of age must have completed at least one Child-Specific Brief Consultation or one General Classroom Consultation with a Resource Consultant (RC) within 3 months of applying for Top-Up funding.

If the EPS Top-Up request form is incomplete and/or the Region needs more information, the Region will email the provider to outline the sections that need to be completed or clarified. Incomplete forms will not be processed. Providers must make the needed changes, upload the updated Top-Up funding request form, and email PIRS using the “Collab” tab in GovGrants to say that the updated Top-Up Request Form has been uploaded.

The Region will confirm validation with the PIRS RC before approving an EPS Top-Up funding request. The Region will reply to the provider’s application within 15 business days of receiving the email notification that Top-Up funding is requested. The amount of Top-Up funding a provider qualifies for is based on the date that the completed EPS Top-Up Request Form is received in GovGrants.

If the Region does not approve the Top-Up funding request and the provider would like to discuss the Region’s decision, the provider can email the Region at PIRS@peelregion.ca.

[Appendix 2](#) outlines the key steps in the process for accessing EPS funding.

4.0 KEY TIMELINES

Date	Action
November 23 - 25, 2022	EPS Announcement is published with the allocation amount in GovGrants, and providers receive a DocVerify email with link to sign the Funding Agreement
December 9, 2022	Deadline for providers to sign the Funding Agreement for payments to begin in January 2022 Note: Providers who do not sign the Funding Agreement by this deadline will not be able to access funding for 2023
January 2023	Providers begin to receive allocation payments
January – October 31, 2023	Providers may apply for Top-Up funding (must be validated by their RC before uploading in GovGrants)

5.0 REPORTING AND RECONCILIATION REQUIREMENTS

Reporting Requirements

1. Providers must complete reports on key performance indicators and use of funding as explained in the table below. The reports must be completed in GovGrants. The Region will follow the [Deadlines Compliance Policy](#) with providers who do not meet reporting deadlines.

Note: Providers who have not used their EPS funding during the reporting period must complete and send their reports and must include a comment in the performance narrative section of their GovGrants submissions.

EPS Funding	
Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Measure
Number of kindergarten children with special needs served (cumulative)	Total number of kindergarten aged children (44 months to less than 72 months) with special needs in the classrooms that were supported by Program Support staff. Each child is counted only once in a calendar year. *Applicable for Before and After School Programs and/or Licensed Summer Programs only.
Number of school aged children with special needs served (cumulative)	Total number of school aged children (72 months up to and including 144 months) with special needs in the classrooms that were supported by Program Support staff. Each child is counted only once in a calendar year. *Applicable for Before and After School Programs and/or Licensed Summer Programs only.
Average monthly number of kindergarten children with special needs served (cumulative)	Actual number of kindergarten aged children (44 months to less than 72 months) with special needs in the classroom that were served each month, added together, and divided by the total number of months. Each child is counted only once every month. *Applicable for Before and After School Programs and/or Licensed Summer Programs only.
Average monthly number of school aged children with special needs served (cumulative)	Actual number of school aged children (72 months up to and including 144 months) with special needs in the classroom that were served each month, added together, and divided by the total number of months. Each child is counted

	only once every month. *Applicable for Before and After School Programs and/or Licensed Summer Programs only.
Number of family-initiated placement terminations (cumulative)	Number of placements terminated where termination was initiated by the family due to the program being unable to support the needs of the child(ren) after the Continued Placement Process was followed.
Number of provider-initiated placement terminations (cumulative)	Number of placements terminated where termination was initiated by the provider due to the program being unable to support the needs of the child(ren) after the Continued Placement Process was followed.
Number of placements not supported (cumulative)	Number of placements unable to be supported due to complex needs (i.e., families turned away) after the New Placement Process was followed.
Number of hours of program support provided (cumulative)	Total number of hours of program support through EPS. Note: Total number of hours reported must show the hours of program support using EPS funding only. Hours of program support exceeding the EPS funding amount (i.e., funded by other sources) should not be included.
Number of classrooms supported (cumulative)	Total number of infant, toddler, and pre-school (birth to less than 44 months) classrooms supported by Program Support staff. Each classroom is counted only once in a calendar year.
	Total number of kindergarten and school-aged (44 months up to and including 144 months) classrooms supported by Program Support Staff. Each classroom is counted only once in a calendar year.

* Children with special needs, as defined under the Ontario Regulation 138/15 of the CCEYA, include children whose cognitive, physical, social, emotional, or communicative needs, or whose needs relating to overall development, are of such a nature that additional supports are required for the child.

See [Appendix 3](#) for an example on how to report key performance indicators.

- Providers must reconcile actual expenditures to approved funding in their reconciliation reports in GovGrants. **Providers can only use EPS funding for Salaries, Wages and Benefits.**

Note: There are other budget categories in GovGrants that don't apply to EPS funding. Please ignore these categories.

3. If your agency's reconciliation reporting results in underspending the Region will recover unused funds. The Region will send you an email with more instructions if a recovery is owing.
4. Providers must report information asked for by the Region.

Reporting Timelines

The table below shows the mandatory reports, reporting periods, due dates, and method of submission by providers.

Report	Reporting Period	Due Date	How to Send Report
Key performance indicators	January - June	July 15 th	Send through GovGrants
	July – December	January 15 th	
Financial Reporting	January – June	July 15 th	
	July – December	January 15 th	

6.0 ACCOUNTABILITY MEASURES

To monitor the performance and impact of EPS funding and to make sure that funds are used appropriately as outlined in this Guideline, the [PIRS Memorandum of Understanding \(MOU\)](#) and your program's approved Inclusion Policy, the following accountability measures will be carried out:

A. Training requirements

All staff (supervisors, educators, and program support staff) working in a classroom where program support will be added must complete the *Together We Are One* training by March 31, 2023. The Region may ask you to verify staff have taken the training.

The Region strongly encourages all staff (supervisors, educators, and program support staff) in programs accepting EPS funding to complete this training. Staff must review the training when updates to the content are made, as directed by the Region. Any new staff hired must view the webinar as part of their orientation. This webinar can be accessed at [CDRCP](#).

B. General Inclusive Practices Requirements

Providers must deliver inclusive programs as per the PIRS Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) and their approved Inclusion Policy. Inclusive practices are evident when:

- All families have access to a child care program
- Days and hours of care are not limited, and providers are committed to supporting placements
- Ongoing environmental assessment and adjustments are made to meet the needs of all children in the program
- Providers and program staff (educators and program support staff) are authentically participating in PIRS and allowing RCs full access to the program
- Program staff (educators and program support staff) work together to support all children in the program
- If a child has complex needs that require individual support:
 - All educators and program support staff share responsibilities
 - Include other children in activities when possible (i.e., mealtime, cloakroom, activities)

C. Requirements for use of EPS Funding

EPS offers short-term support in licensed centre-based child care programs when needs are present. Not all children with special needs or classrooms within a program will need EPS support. When a program accepts EPS funds, the following activities related to the use of Program Support Staff will happen:

- Child care program staff (educators and program support staff), supervisors and providers will have ongoing communication to discuss needs within classrooms to support the inclusion and participation of all children in the program.
- The program staff (educators and program support staff) will set goal(s) and strategies for the use of EPS staff. Goals do not need to be sent to the Region.
- Strategies shared by PIRS RC related to the use of EPS will be carried out.
- EPS hours will be adjusted in response to changing program dynamics and as goals are achieved, including a plan to fade out support.
- EPS is a support for the entire classroom - **not** as a 1:1 staff for an individual child. Individual support for children is a shared responsibility for all program staff (educators and program support staff) and cannot be assigned to one staff.
- Providers work with their PIRS RC to find areas where professional development is needed and look for opportunities that will support their educators' knowledge and development related to the program needs, goals, and inclusive practices.

If a program's complex needs change (i.e., earlier validated complex needs no longer exist), providers must adjust the use of EPS staffing.

Failure to use EPS as outlined in this Guideline may lead to enhanced oversight, recovery of existing funding and may impact future funding.

D. Enhanced oversight and accountability

As part of enhanced oversight and accountability for the use of EPS funding, the Region may conduct site visits and/or need providers to present documents. The documents asked for must support gross expenditures for hiring added staff or extending hours of existing staff (i.e., staff schedules, attendance records, payroll, T4s) and other information to confirm that funding was used for the approved purpose. Other audit requirements may be carried out on a case-by-case basis.

Providers must use EPS funding for its intended purpose and must complete and send information on time. The Region will use the [Deadlines Compliance Policy](#) for providers who miss reporting deadlines, do not follow the EPS funding guideline, and/or misuse EPS funding.

Note: Funding may not be used to offset budgeted costs.

As part of both the provincial and the regional funding verification processes, providers must keep all original documentation for at least seven years. Through the Region's audit selection process, providers may be contacted to complete a review of the Enhanced Program Support funding.

7.0 CONTACT INFORMATION

If you need more information or have questions about EPS funding, please email PIRS@peelregion.ca.

APPENDIX 1: Enhanced Program Support Position Responsibilities and Recommended Requirements

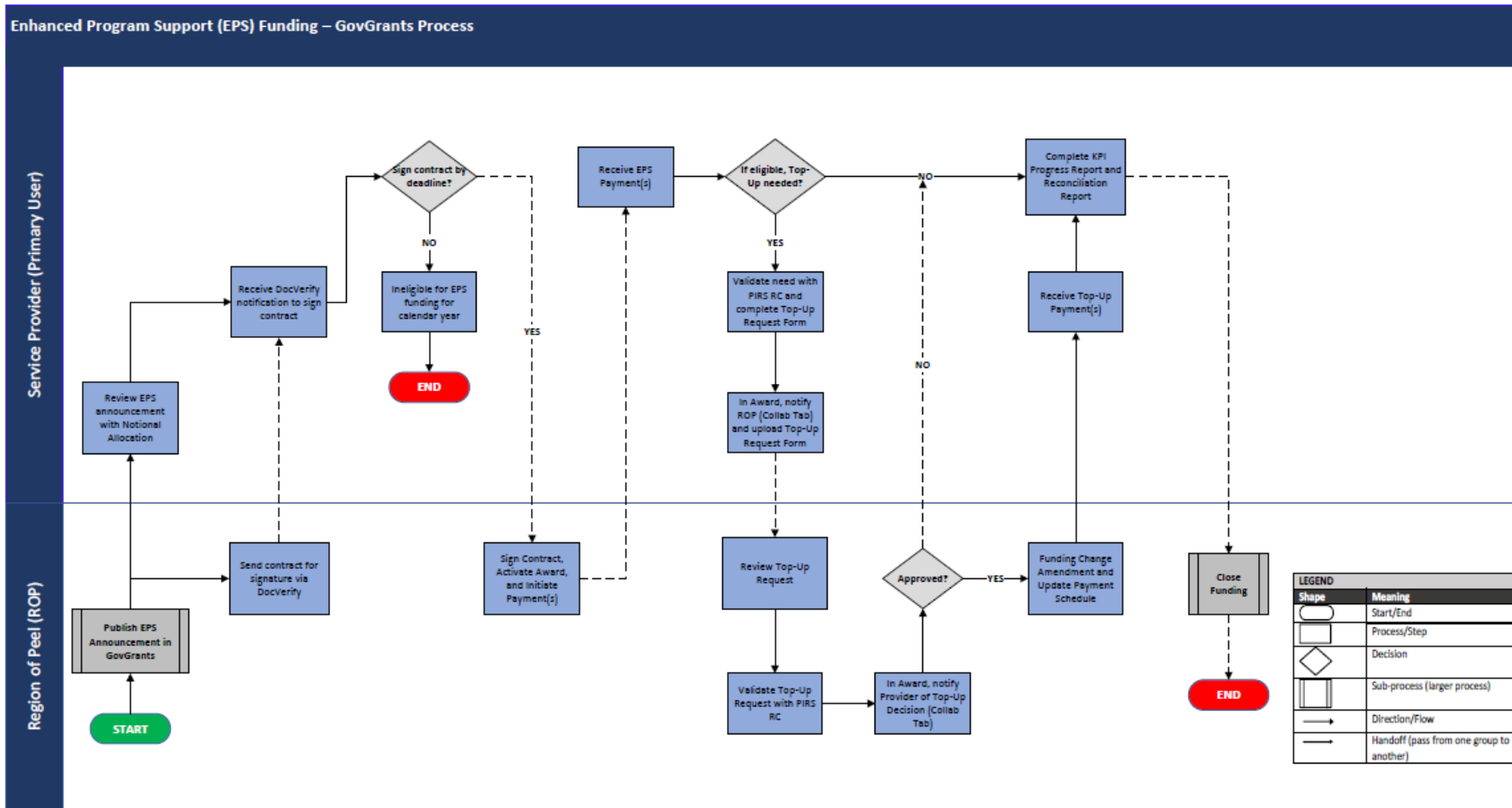
Program support staff must work with the program team to support all children in Licensed Centre-Based Child Care Programs for Children 0–12 Years of Age. The following responsibilities highlight the key aspects of the role related to inclusion:

1. Support the principles of inclusion during all daily routines, activities and in all locations.
2. Take part as a team member and support strategies related to daily routines including:
 - Small and large group activities
 - Transitions
 - Toileting and hand washing routines
 - Dressing routines
 - Snack routines
 - Documentation of child’s progress and goals
 - Providing added support on field trips
3. Carry out program activities and child specific strategies (individually and in groups) collaboratively with program staff
4. Be flexible, responsive, and supportive to offer support in a crisis/problematic situation
5. Take part in ongoing professional learning and development

EDUCATION AND QUALIFICATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

- Previous experience working or volunteering with children with differing abilities or diagnosis; and/or
- Previous experience working or volunteering with individuals or children with special needs; and/or
- Diploma in Early Childhood Education, Child and Youth, Developmental Support, Educational Assistant or Recreation and Leisure
- A current police record check, including vulnerable sector screening as outlined in section 59 of Ontario Regulation 137/15 made under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014
- Standard First Aid including infant/child CPR certificate as outlined in section 55 of Ontario Regulation 137/15 made under the Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014

APPENDIX 2: Process to access EPS Funding



APPENDIX 3: An Example of How to Report Key Performance Indicators

EPS Funding

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Measure	Jan-June Due: July 15	July-Dec Due: Jan 15
Number of kindergarten children with special needs served (cumulative)	Total number of kindergarten aged children (44 months to less than 72 months) with special needs in the classrooms that were supported by Program Support staff. Each child is counted only once in a calendar year *Applicable for Before and After School Programs and/or Licensed Summer Programs only.	2	5
Number of school aged children with special needs served (cumulative)	Total number of school aged children (72 months up to and including 144 months) with special needs in the classrooms that were supported by Program Support staff. Each child is counted only once in a calendar year. *Applicable for Before and After School Programs and/or Licensed Summer Programs only.	5	7
Average monthly number of kindergarten children with special needs served (cumulative)	Actual number of kindergarten aged children (44 months to less than 72 months) with special needs in the classroom that were served each month, added together, and divided by the total number of months. Each child is counted only once every month. *Applicable for Before and After School Programs and/or Licensed Summer Programs only.	2	3

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Measure	Jan-June Due: July 15	July-Dec Due: Jan 15
Average monthly number of school aged children with special needs served (cumulative)	Actual number of school aged children (72 months up to and including 144 months) with special needs in the classroom that were served each month, added together, and divided by the total number of months. Each child is counted only once every month. *Applicable for Before and After School Programs and/or Licensed Summer Programs only.	4.5	5.5
Number of family-initiated placement terminations (cumulative)	Number of placements terminated where termination was initiated by the family due to the program being unable to support the needs of the child(ren) after the Continued Placement Process was followed.	0	2
Number of provider-initiated placement terminations (cumulative)	Number of placements terminated where termination was initiated by the provider due to the program being unable to support the needs of the child(ren) after the Continued Placement Process was followed.	1	2
Number of placements not supported (cumulative)	Number of placements unable to be supported due to complex needs (i.e., families turned away) after the New Placement Process was followed.	1	2
Number of hours of program support provided (cumulative)	Total number of hours of program support through EPS Note: Total number of hours reported must show the hours of program support using EPS funding only. Hours of program support exceeding the EPS funding amount (i.e., funded by other sources)	150	300

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Measure	Jan-June Due: July 15	July-Dec Due: Jan 15
	should not be included.		
Number of classrooms supported (cumulative)	Total number of infant, toddler, and pre-school (birth to less than 44 months) classrooms supported by Program Support staff is counted only once in a calendar year.	2	5
	Total number of kindergarten and school-aged (44 months up to and including 144 months) classrooms supported by Program Support Staff is counted only once in a calendar year.	4	6

Providers who deliver Licensed Centre-Based Programs for Children 0-4 Years of Age **only** (i.e., infant, toddler and/or preschool programs) should report '0' for the following KPIs as these are applicable for Before and After School Programs and/or Licensed Summer Programs:

- Number of kindergarten children with special needs served (cumulative)
- Number of school aged children with special needs served (cumulative)
- Number of kindergarten children with special needs served each month
- Number of school aged children with special needs served each month

The totals for all KPIs must be included in the report due on January 15. For example, as outlined in the table above, if your program reported 2 kindergarten children with special needs served from January-June on the July 15 report, and 3 new children joined the centre between July-December, the January 15 report would include a total of 5 children served.

If a child is of kindergarten age upon entry of the program and transitions to school-age at some point in the year, only report the child under the kindergarten KPIs. In the following year, the child would be reported under the school age KPIs.

NOTE: Providers who did not use their EPS funding during the reporting period must include a comment in the **Performance Narrative** section of their report to outline why funding was not used. Providers should report '0' for all the KPIs, except for the following:

- Number of family-initiated placement terminations (cumulative)
- Number of provider-initiated placement terminations (cumulative)
- Number of placements not supported (cumulative)

Resources

For GovGrants support, please refer to the following links:

- [Progress and Reconciliation Reporting for Service Providers](#) guide
- [Progress Report Process for Service Providers](#) video
- [Reconciliation Report Process for Service Providers](#) video

For any other questions about EPS funding, please email PIRS@peelregion.ca.