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# Playgroup Funding Handbook

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The Playgroup Funding Handbook provides information about how playgroup funding is calculated and the conditions which need to be met to receive playgroup funding in accordance with section 548 of the Education and Training Act 2020.

# Introduction

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## **Introduction**

This handbook sets out the conditions for funding payments to playgroups.

Information about eligibility, the conditions that govern the funding and applying for these funding types can be found in this Handbook.

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## **Who is the Handbook for?**

The Playgroup Funding Handbook applies to all playgroups funded by the Ministry of Education. In particular, it is intended for the management committees of these playgroups.

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## **Funding Types**

There are two types of funding for playgroups.

- Playgroup Operational Funding, a general grant available to all eligible playgroups to assist with ongoing operational costs.
  - Playgroup Special Grant, a discretionary grant available to assist playgroups to meet large costs that cannot be met from other funding.
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## **For Further Information**

Contact an Education Advisor at your regional Ministry of Education office.

Regional office contact details and financial guidance material are available on [www.education.govt.nz](http://www.education.govt.nz).

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# Playgroup Operational Funding

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**Introduction** Playgroup Operational Funding is intended to assist playgroups to meet their ongoing operational costs.

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**Eligibility** To be eligible to receive Playgroup Operational Funding a playgroup must:

- be certificated (that is hold a valid interim or full certificate) and
- meet the conditions for payment of funding set out in this Handbook.

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**Funding Rate** The funding rate for all playgroups is \$1.83 per hour per child. Playgroup Operational Funding is GST inclusive.

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**Funding Dates** Playgroup Operational Funding is paid twice per year.

The funding periods are from 1 January to 30 June and from 1 July to 31 December.

A payment advice notice will be emailed to all playgroups that receive funding confirming the amount they will be paid.

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**Updating Contact Details** It is important the Ministry of Education has the most up-to-date contact details for each playgroup. If your playgroup's funding contact person, email address, postal address or bank account details have changed please notify your Education Advisor as soon as possible. Incorrect playgroup details may result in delayed funding.

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# Playgroup Operational Funding Conditions

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<b>Objectives</b>	<p>Funding is provided to support playgroups to meet the following objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. to enable a community-initiated response to increase participation in early childhood education</li><li>2. to support playgroups to provide quality educational programmes consistent with any curriculum prescribed by the Minister of Education, and</li><li>3. to assist playgroups to be sustainable over time.</li></ol>
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<b>Report on met Objectives</b>	<p>Playgroups are required to provide the Ministry of Education with a report on how the funding received has been used to meet these objectives. See the Playgroup Funding Report page in this handbook for further details of this requirement.</p>
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<b>Guidelines for Expenditure</b>	<p>Playgroups must ensure that the use of their playgroup operational funding is allocated appropriately to meet the three objectives.</p>
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<b>Example 1: Inappropriate Spending</b>	<p>It would not be appropriate for a playgroup to spend their entire allocation on paying for a playgroup coordinator if there were inappropriate or inadequate curriculum resources.</p>
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<b>Example 2: Inappropriate Spending</b>	<p>It would not be appropriate to use the majority of funding for overheads and transport costs if there was insufficient equipment for children.</p>
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<b>Expenditure Justification</b>	<p>Playgroups need to carefully consider the rationale and justification for any expenditure. This information can be used to complete the Playgroup Funding Report (PG5).</p>
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## Playgroup Operational Funding Conditions, continued

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### **Objective 1: Increase ECE Participation**

Objective 1 spending is for premises and facilities or ensuring children's health and safety.

The following examples support this objective:

- to assist with the playgroup's operating costs, such as rent and electricity
  - to support children's health and safety by installing products like safety matting and sunshades, and
  - to make or contribute to repairs or additions to the building used by the playgroup as appropriate.
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### **Objective 2: Quality Educational Programmes**

Objective 2 spending is for learning opportunities and experiences that support the prescribed curriculum framework (see Education (Playgroups) Regulations 2008).

The following examples support this objective:

- to purchase curriculum resources and a range of children's equipment
  - to purchase language and culturally-specific resources
  - to improve learning spaces used by the playgroup, and
  - to support training programmes relevant to the playgroup.
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### **Objective 3: Sustainable Playgroups**

Objective 3 spending is for the playgroup's management and administration costs.

The following examples support this objective:

- to purchase resources for the sound financial and administrative management of the playgroup
  - to recruit and maintain membership to ensure the ongoing success of the playgroup
  - to pay wages or fees to a playgroup coordinator, and
  - to promote the availability of the service within the community.
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## Playgroup Operational Funding Conditions, continued

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- Administrative Requirements** To receive funding playgroups are required to:
- maintain a separate bank account either in the name of the playgroup or the affiliated organisation
  - have two signatories to sign off all expenditure
  - maintain accurate and verified records of income and expenditure and make these available to the Ministry of Education on request
  - complete the Playgroup Funding Report (PG5) to account for the expenditure of government funding, and
  - maintain enrolment and attendance records and make these available to the Ministry of Education on request.
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- Conditions on Closure** Funding is provided to playgroups on the condition that, upon closure:
- all remaining funds received from the Ministry of Education are returned to the Ministry of Education, and
  - all equipment purchased with Ministry of Education funding may be reclaimed by the Ministry.
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- Restrictions on Funding** Funding must not be claimed for:
- children enrolled in a licensed home-based service who attend the playgroup with their home-based educator, or
  - children over the age of six or who are enrolled in school.
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## Claiming Playgroup Funding

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### **Maximum to be Claimed**

There are no restrictions on the number of days or hours a certificated playgroup can operate during a week. However, no child may attend for more than four hours per day, and no playgroup may claim funding for more than four hours per day for any child attending.

Playgroups can be funded for a maximum average of 25 children between birth and six years of age for each playgroup session (when averaged over the ten week period).

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### **Calculating Playgroup Funding**

Playgroup operational funding is calculated using the formula below:

The funding rate x the average number of children attending x the hours per week the group operates x weeks of operation over the six month period.

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### **Example**

Happy Days Playgroup has an average of eight children and operates 20 hours per week. The playgroup expects to operate for 19 weeks over this six month period.

They could claim:  $\$1.83 \times 8 \times 20 \times 19 = \$5,563.20$

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### **Statutory Holidays**

Playgroup operational funding can only be claimed for statutory holidays if the playgroup was operating on that day and children attended.

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### **Notional Roll**

Where a playgroup has an average number of children attending that is greater than zero but less than five, this will be rounded up to five.

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## PG3 Playgroup Funding Form

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**Introduction** To claim Playgroup Operational Funding, playgroups should register for access to the Education Resourcing System (ERS). ERS is a funding system for early learning services and schools that allows funding applications to be submitted online. It allows users to track the status of current funding applications and review their funding history requests.

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**Access to ERS** You will need to have an Education Sector Logon (ESL) to access ERS.

To obtain an ESL logon to access ERS complete sections 1 and 2 of the [ESL 61 Form - ECE user request for Playgroups](#). Send the completed form and proof of identity to your regional Education Advisor who will send you an invitation to create an account.

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**Applying for Funding** For guidance on how to request funding using ERS, see the training material and user guides available on the [ERS website](#)

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**Timelines** Your Education Advisor will let you know when funding requests are due. The cut-off dates for submission in ERS are:

- 30 June each year for the period 1 January to 30 June of the calendar year.
- 31 December each year for the period 1 July to 31 December of the calendar year.

Requests cannot be submitted after the cut-off dates. Any request submitted after the cut-off dates will be processed as a request for the next funding round.

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**Paper Funding Forms** We encourage all Playgroups to use ERS to submit their requests for funding. However if you need to submit a paper form a [PG3 Playgroup funding claim form](#) can be downloaded from our website and should be returned to your regional Ministry of Education office.

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# Playgroup Special Grant

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**Introduction** The Playgroup Special Grant is a discretionary grant to assist a playgroup to cover large costs that cannot be met from other funding. The Special Grant may contribute to or meet the full costs of what is applied for.

There are two grant rounds per year.

As this is a discretionary grant, the applicants are not guaranteed to receive monies applied for.

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**Eligibility** Playgroups eligible for playgroup operational funding are also eligible to apply for the special grant.

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**Special Grant Uses** Playgroup Special Grant funding is available for:

- set up costs for new playgroups
- addressing health and safety issues
- increasing participation in quality ECE in priority communities, and
- addressing extraordinary circumstances (like damage to equipment by an extreme weather event).

If funds permit we will also consider applications for resources or activities that will directly benefit children at the playgroup and cannot be funded from operational funding.

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**Special Grant Conditions** Playgroup Special Grant is available on the conditions that:

- the grant is used only for the purpose identified in the application
  - the playgroup informs the Ministry of Education as soon as possible in the event of any changes that affect the immediate use of special grant money
  - any special grant funds unspent after one year are returned to the Ministry of Education
  - the use of special grant funding is reported in the playgroup's annual Playgroup Funding Report for the year it was granted, and
  - equipment purchased with Ministry of Education funding may be reclaimed by the Ministry when the playgroup ceases to operate.
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## Applying for the Playgroup Special Grant

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<b>Receiving the Form</b>	The Playgroup Special Grant Application Form (PG4) and a supporting Factsheet can be obtained from your Regional Education Advisor or from the <a href="#">playgroup funding handbook</a> section of our website.
<b>Returning the Form</b>	The completed Playgroup Special Grant application form PG4 should be returned to your Regional Ministry of Education office.
<b>Grant Amount</b>	The playgroup special grant can be claimed for up to a maximum of \$5000. The maximum granted to a playgroup in a 12 month period cannot exceed \$5000.
<b>Timeline</b>	<p>Applications for the special grant are due back to your regional office by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 30 April each year for the for the January-June grant round, and</li><li>• 30 October each year for the July-December grant round.</li></ul> <p>Playgroups will receive confirmation from their regional Education Advisor about whether or not their application has been successful. Payment will be made following a successful application and a payment advice notice will be emailed to you from the Education Resourcing System (ERS).</p>
<b>Assistance</b>	Your Education Advisor is available to offer advice and support about applying for a special grant.

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# Playgroup Funding Report

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**Introduction** Every year playgroups are required to complete and return a Playgroup Funding Report (PG5) to the Ministry of Education. This report needs to show the funds the playgroup has received from the Ministry of Education and how this money has been spent.

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**Process** Playgroup Funding Report forms are sent to all playgroups that received Ministry of Education funding the previous financial year. It is important that the Playgroup Funding Report is completed and returned to your regional Ministry of Education office for checking and recording.

Note: for the purposes of playgroup funding, the Ministry's financial year runs from 1 July to 30 June in the following year.

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**Timeline** Playgroup Funding Reports for the previous financial year are due at your regional Ministry of Education office by 20 July each year.

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**Further Funding** An annual Playgroup Funding Report is required before a playgroup can receive further funding in the next financial year.

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**Assistance** An Education Advisor can help your playgroup to complete the annual Playgroup Funding Report. The advisor will check that the funding has been used to meet the objectives of Playgroup Funding and the playgroup has met all the Ministry of Education funding rules.

Contact an education advisor at your [Regional Ministry of Education Office](#).

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