



United Counties of Leeds and Grenville

Special Needs Resource Service Guidelines 2023

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ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF CMSM (SERVICE SYSTEM MANAGER)

As Service System Manager, the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville (Leeds Grenville) is responsible for the planning, funding, oversight and accountability of the delivery of Special Needs Resource services within Leeds and Grenville. As such, Leeds Grenville has created this document to establish the guidelines for the delivery of this service as well as to ensure transparency and accountability of the use of public funds.

Special Needs Resource (SNR) funding is provided to the CMSM, by the Government of Ontario, Ministry of Education (MOE) on an annual basis, for the following eligible expenses:

- To hire or acquire the services of resource teachers/consultants and/or supplemental staff where necessary (including salary and benefits) to support the inclusion of children with special needs in licensed child care program sites;
- To provide professional development opportunities to support all staff in licensed child care settings working with children with special needs and their parents/families to support inclusion; and
- To purchase or lease specialized/adaptive equipment and supplies to support children with special needs in licensed child care program sites.

The Service System Manager may choose to deliver SNR services directly or enter into a contract with a third-party agency to deliver SNR services on its behalf.

Vision

Leeds Grenville envisions the highest quality licensed child care system that provides inclusive and responsive child care programs and that views all children as competent and capable.

"All children and families have access to a range of high-quality, inclusive and affordable early years and child care programs and services that are child- and family-centred and contribute to children's learning, development and well-being."

Government of Ontario, Ministry of Education

SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCE SERVICE

Definitions

Child with Special Needs is defined as a child 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 (*Child Care and Early Years Act, 2014*).

Child Care Service Agency (the Operator) is defined as the business organization responsible for the delivery of licensed child care services as licensed by the Ministry of Education, Ontario.

Child Care Program is defined as the specific program, age grouping and/or geographic site where a child care agency delivers licensed child care services (e.g. infant program, toddler program). Includes both centre-based and home-based locations.

Enhanced Support Funding is the funding provided by Leeds Grenville to support the inclusion of children with special needs in licensed child care settings by providing temporary additional staff support in the child care program.

Inclusion is defined as when a child is welcomed, respected, supported and inspired to succeed with the highest regard.

Special Needs Resource Service Provider means the agency that is delivering SNR services as designated by Leeds Grenville.

Serious Incident means an incident involving the SNR Service Provider staff that requires notification to the Ministry of Education, police, Public Health, medical and/or Family and Children's Services.

Service Intent

As directed by the Government of Ontario, Ministry of Education, *Ontario Child Care and EarlyON C.F.C. Management and Funding Guideline*, the intent of SNR services is two-fold:

- To support the inclusion of all children in licensed child care programs; and
- To increase the capacity of licensed child care program staff to be confident and capable of providing an inclusive quality program for all children.

Access

All licensed Operators, with program sites located in Leeds and Grenville, are permitted to access and receive SNR services funded by the Government of Ontario.

Requests for SNR service can only be made by an Operator. Requests/referrals for SNR service will not be accepted from a parent/guardian or other service provider.

Special Needs Resource Services Available

The following outlines the SNR services that are required to be available to Operators from the Special Needs Resource Service Provider:

- Program Consultation
- Training/Workshops
- Specialized/Adaptive Equipment Provision
- Enhanced Support Consultation/Support
- Individualized Support Plan Development Consultation
- Transition to School Consultation

For specific details about these services, please refer to page 8, [SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCE SERVICE PROVIDER GUIDELINES - SERVICE PROVIDER](#).

Quality Assurance

SNR services must be operated in accordance with all federal, provincial and municipal legislation and regulations, as well as Ministry policies and guidelines, and the Leeds Grenville Service Agreement. To ensure the utmost quality and accountability of public funds, Leeds Grenville will conduct random audits, evaluations, and/or reviews of the SNR service to evaluate the effectiveness and quality of the service, as well as alignment of the service to the service guidelines.

CHILD CARE AGENCY GUIDELINES

All Operators are expected to ensure the provision of an inclusive child care program for all children.

Where child care staff lacks the capacity, training and/or skills to offer an inclusive child care program for children, the Operator will request the services and supports offered through the SNR service provider. The Operator should only request additional supports if the capacity of their staff is not sufficient to support the inclusion of a child with special needs in the licensed child care program. Not all Operators may need SNR services to ensure inclusion of children with special needs, in its child care program(s).

The Operator is expected to:

- Ensure equitable access to child care programs for all families including those with a child with special needs
- Partner with parents/guardians, SNR service staff and any other regulated health professional or community partner to support the inclusion of a child with special needs in their child care program.
- Modify program environment and incorporate the goals of the individualized support plan into the program to support the inclusion of a child with special needs.
- Participate in goal setting, implementation and maintenance of a child's individualized support plan.

Where an Operator has been approved for Enhanced Support Funding, the Operator will work with the SNR Service Provider to identify in writing, a detailed plan for the use of Enhanced Support Funding including how the additional staffing support will allow the regular licensed child care staff to build their capacity to support the inclusion of children with special needs in their program.

Operators in receipt of Enhanced Support Funding, must ensure that staff, when in this role, are paid minimum wage plus \$2.00/hour, as this position is not eligible for Wage Enhancement Funding. Additionally, Operators must ensure that when a staff is working in the role of Enhanced Support, that the staff is not included as part of operating ratios of the program.

SPECIAL NEEDS RESOURCE SERVICE PROVIDER GUIDELINES

Accountability

It is significantly important for public transparency and accountability, that SNR services delivered using Ministry of Education funds, are being well managed and are in alignment with the Service Agreement with Leeds Grenville and these Guidelines.

Ineligible Use of Funds

SNR service funds are not permitted to be used to deliver the following, as these are considered out of scope for the mandate and funding of SNR services, as contracted by Leeds Grenville:

- To provide services in any location other than a licensed child care program site located in Leeds and Grenville;
- Case management or case coordination services for parents/family or a child;
- To attend community and/or medical appointments with a parent/family;
- To train members of the general public, parents/family members and/or other service providers;
- To provide services, training and/or therapy on behalf of another municipally, provincially or federally funded service provider. (e.g. Preschool Speech and Language, Infant Child Development Program, etc.);

- To provide services, training, program, etc. that are already funded by another municipal, provincial, federal ministry/agency within the agency.
- Expenses as outlined in [APPENDIX B – INADMISSIBLE EXPENDITURES](#)
- Any other service or function, service and/or training that is not identified in these SNR Service Guidelines and/or the Service Agreement.

Administration

The SNR Service Provider is permitted to use up to five percent (5%) of its annual SNR funding allocation towards the Administrative expenses associated with the delivery of the Special Needs Resource Service. For a list of eligible Administrative expenses as well as ineligible expenses, please see [APPENDIX A – MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES](#).

Staffing

The positions/title of the staff that will deliver SNR services in licensed child care programs will be called Inclusion Consultant.

The SNR Service Provider is responsible to hire and train an adequate number of Inclusion Consultants to provide quality SNR services to licensed child care agency staff as outlined in the annual Service Agreement as well as this document.

All recommendations, training, services, etc. made by the SNR Service Provider staff to an Operator staff must align with *How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Years*.

Staff Qualifications

Staff hired in the position of Inclusion Consultant to deliver SNR services must hold the following qualifications:

- A diploma in Early Childhood Education (recommended) or at minimum, a post-secondary diploma/degree with a focus on early childhood development.
- Additional courses focusing on inclusion in early childhood in child care settings.

- A current standard first aid including infant/child CPR (level C) certificate, as per the *CCEYA, 2014*.
- Additional courses in adult education/adult learning principals are strongly recommended.
- At minimum, one (1) member of the Inclusion Consultant team must be able to provide services (verbal and written) in French so that staff working in francophone child care centres can receive SNR service supports, training, etc. in their own language.

Should the SNR Service Provider be unable to hire Inclusion Consultants with the required qualifications/credentials, the SNR Service Provider will ensure that staff are supported and trained to meet all of the above noted qualifications. In addition to the required qualifications, the Service Provider must ensure that all Inclusion Consultants meet the following:

- A Criminal Reference Check, including Vulnerable Sector Search as per the *CCEYA, 2014*.
- Up-to-date immunizations, as per the *CCEYA, 2014*.

Continuous Professional Development

Inclusion Consultants are expected to engage in continuous professional learning opportunities to stay informed of the latest research on topics related to special needs, adult education, capacity building approaches, child development, play and inquiry-based pedagogy, and other relevant topics.

Required Services

Leeds Grenville views all staff working in the licensed child care program/service agencies as competent and capable. The services provided by the SNR Service Provider will align with this vision and serve to build upon the existing capacity of these child care staff in a positive and supportive manner.

The SNR Service Provider is required to provide the following services, upon request by an Operator:

- Program Consultation.
- Training, Workshops, Seminars, etc.
- Specialized/Adaptive Equipment Provision.
- Enhanced Support Funding.
- Individualized Support Plan (ISP) Consultation.
- Transition to School Consultation.

Program Consultation

Upon request and/or approval of the Operator, the Inclusion Consultants will provide information, resources, strategies, mentorship and/or coaching to child care program/service agency staff based on-site observations, in the child care program setting.

Inclusion Consultants are expected to take an active participatory role in the program to demonstrate inclusion strategies or provide coaching. The frequency and duration of the consultation service will be dependent on the needs of the Operator staff/program, as identified by the Operator and in consultation with the Inclusion Consultant.

The Operator, in consultation with the Inclusion Consultant, will take the lead in identifying when their staff have the necessary capacity to support inclusion in the program and when the program consultation service is no longer required.

Training/Workshops/Seminars

Upon request of and/or in consultation with the Operator, Inclusion Consultants will develop and provide responsive training/workshops/seminars for child care program/Operator staff to support the highest quality inclusive child care program. Training, workshop, seminars, etc. content/topics should directly relate to supporting inclusion of children with special needs currently attending the child care program and/or best practices in the field of inclusion/special needs.

Training, workshops, seminars, etc. will be delivered via a variety of formats including but not limited to:

- One-on-one with Operator staff or child care team, to build the skills needed to support inclusion in a licensed child care program.
- Facilitated topic discussions about inclusion in a licensed child care setting, during a, Operator staff meeting/information session (e.g. Lunch and Learn).
- Workshops, training and/or webinar events designed for a specific set of child care staff/licensed child care program needs or for the broader child care system. These workshops/trainings can be delivered directly by Inclusion Consultants or by a community partner/other expert and that has been arranged by the SNR Service Provider.

Inclusion Consultants may occasionally, provide training/workshops to parents/families of a child with special needs that are attending licensed child care programs; however, the Operator staff must be present during the training/workshop. Such a training/workshop offering serves a dual purpose in both supporting the inclusion of the child in the child care program as well as building the capacity of the child care program/Operator staff.

Specialized and Adaptive Equipment Provision

If deemed necessary to support the inclusion of a child with special needs in a licensed child care program, the Special Needs Resource Service Provider will loan specialized and/or adaptive equipment to the Operator.

All equipment purchased by the SNR Service Provider with provincial funds as provided by Leeds Grenville remains the property of the Province and must be returned to Leeds Grenville, should the contract be terminated with the SNR Service Provider.

In the event that an Operator closes, all specialized and adaptive equipment must be returned to the SNR Service Provider.

The SNR Service Provider:

- Will ensure that a full electronic list of all Specialized and Adaptive Equipment is made available upon request to Operators and/or Leeds Grenville.
- Must regularly inspect and ensure all equipment that it maintains/loans out to the programs is in good repair and safe to be used in the program.
- Must have appropriate and adequate storage for equipment and resources currently not in use.
- Shall ensure that there are policies and procedures with respect to sanitary practices for the equipment that it maintains/loans out to the programs.

Enhanced Support Funding (ESF)

As the Service System Manager, Leeds Grenville determines the annual amount available for Enhanced Support Funding as well as the eligibility criteria and application process. For more information about the Enhance Support Funding process, please see [APPENDIX C – ENHANCED SUPPORT FUNDING](#).

Only Operators that have a child(ren) with special needs as per the Child Care and Early Years (CCEY) definition and who have a Service Agreement with Leeds Grenville are eligible to apply for Enhanced Support Funds.

The intent of Enhanced Support Funding is to support Operators to hire additional non-ratio child care program staff for a period of time, as an extra 'set of hands' in a program, to ensure an inclusive experience for children with special needs.

Example: Time for permanent staff to develop enhanced programming, to support engagement in play-based activities, to undertake observations and documentation of child(ren) with special needs as well as organize, arrange and maintain all required equipment.

Applications for Enhanced Support Funding are the responsibility of the Operator. Approval or denial of Enhanced Support Funding applications is the responsibility of Leeds Grenville. Payment of Enhanced Support Funding to Operators will be done directly by Leeds Grenville.

Where an Operator has been approved for Enhanced Support Funding, the Operator will work with the SNR Service Provider to identify in writing a detailed plan for the use of enhanced support including how the additional enhanced support staff will support the inclusion of children with special needs in the program.

Operators are responsible for hiring their own enhanced support staff. It is recommended that enhanced support staff hold an Early Childhood Education Diploma and have RECE designation. Should the Operator be unable to hire an RECE in this capacity, they should endeavor to hire staff with related education and/or experience such as, but not limited to, a Child and Youth Worker and/or someone who has previous experience working in child care or early years programs.

As enhanced support staff is not eligible for the Provincial Wage Enhancement Grant and the minimum hourly rate paid to these staff must be minimum wage plus \$2.00/hour.

Individual Support Plan Consultation

Under s. 52 of O. Reg. 137/15, Operators are required to have an up-to-date individualized support plan in place for each child with special needs.

At the request of the Operator and with parent/family consent, SNR Inclusion Consultants will work with child care program staff to develop, support and maintain Individual Support Plans for children with special needs registered in the child care program.

Transition to School Consultation

At the request of the Operator and with parent/family consent, the SNR Inclusion Consultant may participate in transition to school case conferences along with the child care program/Operator staff to support the successful transition of the child to the school setting.

POLICIES/PROCEDURES

As Service System Manager, Leeds Grenville must ensure that the appropriate policies and procedures are in place for the delivery of SNR services. Failure to have and follow policies and procedures creates a significant risk to children and staff in licensed child care programs, the SNR Resource staff and organization as well as Leeds Grenville.

The SNR Service Provider is required to have the following policies and/or procedures in place and available for review:

- Serious Incident
- Duty to Report
- Conflict of Interest
- Complaints and Resolutions Policy/Process
- Cleaning/Disinfecting of Equipment and Other Loaned Resources
- Any other Policies/Procedures as required by Leeds Grenville

Serious Incident

All serious incidents, involving a SNR Service Provider staff member must be reported by the SNR Service Provider to Leeds Grenville, Children's Service Manager by calling 613-342-3840, extension 2461.

Duty to Report

Everyone, including members of the public and professionals who work closely with children, are required by law to report suspected cases of child abuse or neglect. SNR Provider staff, with reasonable grounds to suspect that a child is or may be in need of protection, must report these concerns to Family and Children's Services of Lanark, Leeds and Grenville. The SNR Service Provider will have a policy in place that identifies the process and staff responsibilities for report a suspected case of abuse or neglect of a child in licensed child care program in Leeds and Grenville.

Conflict of Interest

Situations whereby a real or perceived conflict of interest exist may damage public confidence in the SNR Service.

A conflict of interest may occur under the following circumstances:

- A direct or indirect personal gain or benefit is given or received by a party, or a family member of a party, or
- A direct or indirect advantage or privilege is given to or received by a party, or a family member of a party.

The SNR Service Provider must closely monitor their relationships, arrangements, contracts and agreements and not engage in any actions/behaviour that may result in a conflict of interest. Should a conflict of interest arise, the SNR Service Provider must immediately advise Leeds Grenville, Children's Service Manager.

Complaints and Complaint Resolution

The SNR Service Provider will ensure that all concerns and/or complaints regarding its services are addressed in a timely and transparent manner. Every issue and concern will be treated confidentially, and every effort will be made to protect the privacy of children, staff, students, volunteers and parents/guardians, except when information must be disclosed for legal reasons (e.g. to the Ministry of Education, College of Early Childhood Educators, law enforcement authorities and/or a Children's Aid Society). The SNR Service Provider will document and maintain a file of the concerns, complaints, etc. in detail, including the resolution or outcome to the complaint. This information must also be provided to the County on a quarterly basis.

Should there be a complaint regarding safety or service standards, the SNR Service Provider Manager/Supervisor will take the lead on following-up with the Operator. If an Operator feels that the complaint or concern has not been adequately resolved, the Operator should then direct the concern to the Children's Services Manager at Leeds Grenville.

If a complaint is received by Leeds Grenville from an Operator without the SNR Service Provider being aware, Leeds Grenville will take the lead on following up on the complaint with the Operator and/or the SNR Service Provider.

Cleaning/Disinfecting of Equipment and Other Loaned Resources

The SNR Service Provider shall ensure that there are policies and procedures with respect to sanitary practices for the adaptive/specialized equipment and other loaned resources that it maintains for use by Operators. A copy of these policies/procedures shall be made available to Leeds Grenville, upon request.

Other Policies

Leeds Grenville may at times introduce additional policy and/or procedure requirements for the SNR Service Provider in order to align with changes in Federal, Provincial or local direction and/or service/funding guidelines.

APPENDIX A – MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES

Leeds Grenville allows for a portion of the annual funding allocated for SNR services to be used by the SNR Service Provider for eligible management and administrative expenses. A maximum of five percent (5%) of the total SNR service funding received, may be used towards management and/or administration costs of the SNR service.

Management and administrative expenses are defined as the costs associated with staff that do not directly delivery SNR services to clients. This includes, but is not limited to, the following roles/positions in the SNR Service Provider organization: Executive Director, Director, Manager, Supervisor, Administrative Assistant, legal, IT, Human Resources, Payroll, Finance, etc.

The Management and Administrative funding threshold applies to the following expense categories:

Wages

Payment of gross salaries and wages, vacation pay, sick pay, compassionate pay, over-time and statutory holiday pay.

Benefits

Employer contributions for pension, employment insurance, workers' compensation, employee benefit plans, and other legal requirements of the employer.

Purchased Professional Services

Services that are not client related, including costs incurred in purchasing professional services for which the agency itself does not employ staff (e.g. fees for administrative or corporate legal work, audit or bookkeeping fees).

Accommodation

Expenses including office space lease/rental, utilities, etc. These expenses should reflect fair market value for accommodation. In the case of owned buildings, the eligible annual cost will be based on fair market value of tent or imputed rent.

Travel

Reimbursement of staff costs for travel (mileage).

Education and Staff Training

Staff development and educational opportunities.

Technology

Expenditures for IT systems, such as, computer hardware, software, network access charges, operating costs, system enhancements, software updates, computer supplies and maintenance.

General Office Expenses

All costs associated with the following items:

- Telephone, cell phone, computer, internet and fax (may include rentals, regular charges, long distance, etc.)
- Postage and courier.
- Office supplies (may include stationery, forms, maps, books, periodicals).
- Printing (may include production, translation, printing and other costs).
- Photocopier rental and services.
- Insurance payments (fidelity, fire, public liability, theft, other), including bonding and liability insurance for staff.
- Office equipment and maintenance.
- Building maintenance (may include janitorial, cleaning, minor repairs).
- Bank transaction charges.
- Collection and bad debt costs (may include court fees, credit bureau etc.)
- Advertising and marketing (job postings, newsletters).
- Research, consultation and professional services.
- Moving and relocation.
- Security.
- Records Management.
- Minor miscellaneous expenses.

Management and administration expenses must represent actual expenses incurred and may not be expressed solely in terms of a percentage of program expenditures. Expenditures exceeding the annual maximum threshold will be the responsibility of the contracted agency and will not be funded by Leeds Grenville.

APPENDIX B – INADMISSIBLE EXPENDITURES

The following are considered inadmissible expenses for the use of SNR service funds:

- The provision of services and/or programs considered out of scope for the SNR Program Service Schedule. Out of scope is defined as any/all service, activity or program not identified as a function of the SNR Service Provider in the SNR Service Guidelines.
- Professional organization fees paid on behalf of staff for membership in professional organizations. (e.g. CECE, AECEO, ECRTNO, etc.)
- Interest expenses incurred on capital or operating loans.
- Property tax expenses.
- Fundraising expenses.
- Capital loans.
- Mortgage financing.
- Staff bonuses, gifts and/or honoraria.
- Student grants, scholarships and/or honoraria, donations to charitable institutions or organizations.
- Reserve Funds.

APPENDIX C – ENHANCED SUPPORT FUNDING

Leeds Grenville is responsible for determining the eligibility criteria, application process, funding allocation and oversight of Enhanced Support Funding (ESF). Leeds Grenville will determine, on an annual basis, the total budget for Enhance Support Funds and will communicate this information to the SNR Service Provider and Operators.

Where an Operator has been approved for Enhanced Support Funding, the Operator will work with the SNR Service Provider to identify, in writing, a detailed plan for the use of this funding to support the inclusion of children with special needs in the program.

The SNR Service Provider and Child Care Operators are required to follow all policies and/or processes developed and/or identified by Leeds Grenville for the eligibility, application, provision and use of Enhanced Support Funding.

-  **1** Child Care Operator completes ESF Application.
-  **2** SNR Service Provider provides comment on the ESF Application.
-  **3** Child Care Operator submits ESF Application to Leeds Grenville.
-  **4** Leeds Grenville reviews ESF Application and approves/denies the application.
-  **5** Leeds Grenville advises the Operator of ESF Application decision and allocates funds as appropriate.