



ASPIRE Pre-School Application Form Guidance Notes

You are advised to read the guidance notes provided, which will assist in the completion of the online application form. This application process is for the preschool sector in both Northern Ireland and Ireland.

Completed preschool applications should be submitted online here:

<https://eu.research.net/r/ASPIREAPP>

Please note: Primary/Secondary school applications are being managed by the Education Authority and Léargas.

Versions

V2. 07/11/2024 – amended eligibility criteria for ROI settings

V3. 19/11/2024 – Amended the eligible children per setting.



PEACEPLUS
Northern Ireland - Ireland

Co-funded by the



European Union



UK Government

This project is supported by PEACEPLUS, a programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

The following guidance notes provide information on the **ASPIRE** project (**Part 1**) and the completion of the application form (**Part 2**).

PART 1 – ABOUT THE PROJECT

What is the ASPIRE Project?

ASPIRE is a 4-year Peace Plus funded project (2024 – Dec 2028) that aims to:

- **Improve Educational Outcomes**
- **Promote good relations**

The ASPIRE Project is a shared education initiative, funded through PEACEPLUS.

Shared Education is the provision of direct, sustained, curriculum-based contact between pupils and teachers from all backgrounds through collaboration between schools/settings from different sectors. The aims are to promote good relations, enhance children's skills, change attitudes and contribute to a more cohesive society.

This multi-year, cross border partnership is led by Northern Ireland Education Authority alongside Early Years, the National Childhood Network, Léargas and Fermanagh Trust. The overall objective of the project will be to increase the number of children, educators and leaders engaged in sustained partnerships with those from different backgrounds.

Applications are now open to PSEP funded pre-schools, nursery schools and units in NI and ECCE funded preschools in the ROI border counties. Applicants from Northern Ireland are invited to form cross-community partnerships and applicants from ROI border counties are invited to form partnerships to undertake Shared Education activities aimed at improving community cohesion, inclusion, diversity and educational outcomes for young children.

Who is eligible to apply?

- Statutory pre-school nurseries and nursery units in NI
- Voluntary and Private pre-school settings within PSEP in NI
- Community and Private pre-school settings funded through ECCE in the Southern Border Counties (SBCs). *The Southern Border Counties are Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Louth.*
- Early Start Settings in ROI
- Settings **are eligible** who previously participated in *Sharing from the Start*, the previous PEACE IV funded initiative.

Applications are particularly welcome from settings which:

- i. have high proportions of children experiencing **social disadvantage***
- ii. have higher percentages of **newcomer children***
- iii. Are partnering with their nearest eligible partner setting.
- iv. are **cross-border** (i.e. at least one partner is in NI and another partner is in the SBCs).

In the event of being oversubscribed we will maintain a waiting list.

(*see Part 2 of these guidance notes for definitions)

What do we have to do?

Participation in **ASPIRE** involves the following:

1. Form a partnership:

- Applicants from NI are invited to form cross-community partnerships (partnering with a setting with children of a predominantly different religion).
- In the ROI, where this is not possible, applicants are encouraged to partner with settings with children from a diverse range of ethnic or socio-economic backgrounds.

2. Apply:

One application per partnership should be completed and submitted by:

Wednesday the 20th of November at 5pm

3. If Successful:

- You will be supported to plan and deliver 30hours of **joint curricular shared education sessions** for children (e.g. 10 x 3-hour sessions per school year).
- The joint sessions should **contribute to the two project aims** (a) improve educational outcomes; and (b) building good relations.

How will we benefit from participating in the project?

In addition to enhancing educational outcomes for children and building good relations, **ASPIRE** provides additional benefits. There will be a robust package of support available, both financial and non-financial, for each participating pre-school within each partnership. The programme will begin to be rolled out in January 2025.

There is a unit cost to the value of **€150 (EUROS) provided** per eligible child* who completes 30 hrs Shared Education in Year 1 (this is for the completion of the shared education sessions per child per school year). This financial support is in place to assist your partnership working.

Please note the following:

- Costs must contribute directly to the joint curricular sessions (e.g. transport, specialist tutors, hiring facilities, basic resources).
- Capital purchases above £199 (€229) are not eligible.
- Unit cost will be calculated based on the total number of children engaged in shared education activities in the application.
- Individual settings are capped at a maximum of 80 children in year 1.

Once an application is approved, the ASPIRE team will work with partnerships to develop a workplan and finalise the budget for activity. Key enabling technology can be provided to ensure effective participation. Needs will be assessed once applications have been processed.

**Funded PSEP children in NI and funded ECCE children*

PART 2 – THE APPLICATION PROCESS

Completing the Application | Each partnership should complete **ONE** online application form.

SECTION 1 – PARTNER DETAILS

Partner Details

Applicants should provide the name of Partner 1 and complete all the following information reflective of their setting. A partnership can contain a maximum of 4 partners.

- Pre-school name.
- Applicants from Northern Ireland should provide their DENI reference number.
- Applicants from ROI/Southern Border Counties should provide their DCYA reference number.
- Contact name: a person available during office hours and is aware of the project and other partner details.
- The address provided should be the address of where your pre-school is located and where all correspondence will be directed to.
- Telephone Number: this needs to be contactable during office hours, please include mobile number if preferred.
- Email address: this should be accessible by the named contact identified above.

Partners should select what type of funded pre-school setting they identify as:

- Statutory Nursery NI
- Nursery Unit NI
- Voluntary/Private NI
- Community/Private (ROI)
- Early Start (ROI)

Community Background

- Applicants from NI are invited to form cross-community partnerships (partnering with a setting with children of a predominantly different religion). Each partner should identify the community background of the funded children in each partner setting.
- In the ROI/SBCs, where this may not be possible, applicants are asked to state the total number of funded children in their settings. Participation is also encouraged by people from other communities, including minority ethnic communities, those of different racial backgrounds and new communities.

- There should be an intention to secure 60:40 cross community participation in a partnership (or 80:20 in the SBCs).

Previous Involvement in Shared Education

- Partners should identify if they have been previously involved in shared education. If yes, partners should provide further detail on the name of your partner/s during this period of shared education, state the number of times you met with the partner/s, describe how regular the shared curricular sessions took place and the overall duration of the project.

SECTION 2 Eligibility Criteria

If more applications meet the Eligibility Criteria than there are places on the Project, they will be ranked using the following Criteria.

1. Social disadvantage

All partners should identify the number and percentage of socially disadvantaged funded children in each of their settings.

- In NI, this is the % of funded children whose parents are in receipt of Income Support, or Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, when applying for admission to the setting. (Reference document: DENI SRPRE17)
- In SBCs, this is number of children in receipt of support (Equal Start, Early Start, Preschool within a Family Resource Centre CCSP)

2. Newcomer children (Foreign National or EAL)

- For settings in NI, you need to identify the number and percentage of funded Newcomer children who will be participating in the programme.
- For settings in ROI, you need to identify the number and percentage of Foreign National or EAL/International Protection children participating in the programme.

Definition of newcomer children:

This is children who have enrolled in a school but do not have the satisfactory language skills to participate fully in the school curriculum, and the wider environment, and do not have a language in common with the teacher, whether that is English or Irish. This has previously been referred to as English as an Additional Language (EAL). It does not refer to indigenous pupils who choose to attend an Irish medium school. That circumstance is dealt with under the Irish Medium policy in NI. (Reference Document: DENI SRPRE/17)

3. Partnering with nearest eligible setting

Applicants should state the distance (in miles) between their partner settings. Where there are more than 2 settings the distance between the two furthest partners is required.

Partners should identify if they are engaging in this project with their nearest eligible setting. Where this is not the case, an explanation should be provided detailing why the nearest eligible settings have not been chosen.

4. Cross-border partnerships

Cross border partnerships are encouraged as part of the scheme.

SECTION 3 PROJECT DETAILS

Project Summary

Partners are required to summarise (in less than 500 words) what activities are planned as part of their project.

This should also include information about how this project will improve inclusion and community relations. This section also demonstrates how the project intends to improve educational outcomes.

Any Other Comments

Please share any further comments you feel may support your application. If possible, can you provide details of closure days your setting/partnership has planned over the incoming year. Please also add any relevant context about the participants. For example, more families may now choose not to identify as part of a particular community, in this instance please list any alternative methods used to demonstrate the community background in the setting, e.g. data linked to nationality, identity, locality of home.

Declaration by All Partners

Ensure that all partners are content with the detail of the application and tick that all partners named confirm that the information supplied within this application is accurate. The application must also be agreed by the Leader/Principal/Owner of each setting.

A waiting list may be created in the event of higher-than-expected demand.

Submit the application and the ASPIRE team will provide a notification of outcome for your application in December 2024

Contact

For further information please contact:

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