



# SELDC

# South East Language Development Centre

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## SOUTH EAST LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT CENTRE INFORMATION

### *Answers to common questions for Parents and Referring Professionals*

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

##### What are Language Development Centres (LDCs)?

- LDCs are Department of Education schools that cater for children with an identified language disorder. The LDCs provide specialised language intervention on an intensive basis. The program is for an identified population of children with average intelligence whose academic and social performance is limited by seriously delayed / disordered language development.
- Within the Perth metropolitan area there are five LDCs that each have a specific catchment area, and together cover the whole metropolitan area. At present there are no LDCs located outside the metropolitan area.
- The LDCs are all located on the site of a mainstream school. This enables the children to receive a specialised program in a regular school environment.
- South East Language Development Centre (SELDC) is one school with three campuses to allow children to attend a campus close to their home.
- Our **Cloverdale Campus** (including the Administration) is situated on the same site as Belmay Primary School and currently has ten classes. Children from these metropolitan suburbs attend the Cloverdale Campus:

Ascot	Gooseberry Hill	Queens Park
Beckenham	High Wycombe	Redcliffe
Belmont	Kalamunda	Rivervale
Bentley	Karawara	Salter Point
Burswood	Kensington	South Perth
Cannington	Kenwick	St James
Carlisle	Kewdale	Victoria Park
Carmel	Lathlain	Walliston
Cloverdale	Lesmurdie	Waterford
Como	Maida Vale	Wattle Grove
East Cannington	Manning	Welshpool
East Victoria Park	Pickering Brook	Wilson
Forrestfield	Piesse Brook	

- Our **Maddington Campus** is located at East Maddington Primary School and currently has seven classes. Children from these metropolitan suburbs attend the Maddington campus:

Gosnells	Maddington	Southern River
Harrisdale	Martin	Thornlie
Huntingdale	Orange Grove	

- Our **Armadale Campus** is located at Kingsley Primary School and currently has four classes. Children from these metropolitan suburbs attend the Armadale campus:

Armadale	Champion Lakes	Oakford
Bedforddale	Forrestdale	Piara Waters
Brookdale	Haynes	Seville Grove
Byford	Hilbert	Roleystone
Camillo	Kelmscott	Westfield
Cardup	Mount Nasura	Wungong through to Serpentine

### What types of children attend a Language Development Centre (LDC)?

- LDCs cater for a population of children who have significant language disorders but who have intelligence within the normal range and have sound adaptive behaviour skills.
- There are some other groups of children who have language difficulties for whom the LDC may not be the most appropriate placement. For some children their difficulties in learning are not confined to the area of language but fall across many areas. For other children their difficulty is in acquiring English as a Second Language. For children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds differential diagnosis is often very difficult, and may involve collaboration between a number of professionals (e.g. Speech Pathologists, Psychologists, ESL Specialist Staff) provided by the Department of Education WA.
- Children who do not meet the LDC criteria will not be offered a place. Although a LDC may not be the most appropriate placement for these children, the Department of Education WA has a range of services and placements that may better meet these children's needs. These options are best explored through discussion with the child's local school Principal.

### Can I visit the LDC before referral?

- At South East LDC we will run an Information Session in Term 2 at the school's main campus in Cloverdale. This provides an opportunity to see where the school is and what it looks like, how the classes are set up and to ask questions. It is important to note that attendance at the information session has no bearing on a child's chances at placement – all children are considered equally, regardless of whether parents/caregivers have attended the information session. It is just a chance to help parents/caregivers in their decision making and thinking about LDC referral.
- Appointments can be arranged through the school administration if parents/caregivers or professionals would like to view one of our satellite campuses.

### How much does it cost?

- The LDC is a government funded education facility and as such school fees are set by the Department of Education and are voluntary. At South East LDC the school fees are \$60 for the whole year. Excursions and incursions require additional payment throughout the school year. Fees set for these events are very reasonable, and none of these events are compulsory.

### Can a child attend part time?

- Generally the answer to this is no. In order for a child to gain maximum benefit from the placement they need to attend the full program.
  - Kindergarten students attend 15 hours over a fortnight timetable 2 days one week and 3 days the next
  - All other students attend five full days a week

### If my child does not get in to the LDC are there any other options for support?

- The Department of Education is committed to providing the best learning environment for every child and thus a range of interventions and services are available in mainstream schools for children who have learning difficulties.

- Each Language Development Centre has an Outreach service which provides training and consultative support to staff and teachers working with students who have identified speech and language difficulties in mainstream schools. The Outreach service consists of a team of Support Officers for Speech and Language. Services include consultation, professional development, network group support and resource links dependent upon student need. Requests for services must come via the school administration.

## HOW DOES A CHILD GET INTO AN LDC?

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### How is a child referred to an LDC?

- Parents/Caregivers, Speech Pathologists, Psychologists or Teachers can refer children for an LDC assessment. A Health Department checklist is available to teachers to more clearly identify children currently in Kindergarten or Pre-primary who may be appropriate for referral to the LDC. These referrals can be made to private speech pathologists or to local clinics, such as community health centres or child development centres. Referrals made through the Department of Health may be subject to waiting times so early referral is recommended.
- For referral for Pre-Primary to Year 1 places**, the referral will require a:
  - Speech Pathology Assessment
  - Psychology Assessment (i.e. Non-verbal IQ test and Behaviour Checklist)
  - Teacher Questionnaire

The collection of this information can take quite some time, detailed reports are required and therefore the process may involve several appointments. This part of the referral is completed by the:

- referring Speech Pathologist (either at the child's local Government Speech Pathology Clinic or Private Speech Pathology Services)
- the referring Psychologist (which may be a School Psychologist, a Government Clinical Psychologist or a Private Clinical Psychologist)
- the child's local classroom Teacher (if currently attending school)

Assessments are to be submitted to Language Development Centres no later than **Friday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2023**.

**Kindergarten referrals** require a Speech Pathology Assessment and a completed Parent Questionnaire for placement at an LDC. A cognitive assessment completed by a medical officer or paediatrician is also highly recommended. Assessments for Kindergarten referrals are to be submitted to Language Development Centres no later than **Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023**.

- Standardised referral packages that contain all necessary forms and information are sent to referring professionals by the local LDC each year. Following the initial assessment a decision is made as to whether the child is appropriate for referral to the LDC. If it is deemed appropriate the referral information is sent through to the LDC.
- Appropriate referrals are prioritised by the Placement Committee at the LDC. At South East LDC the Placement Committee consists of the LDC Principal, Deputies, Speech Pathologists and the School Psychologist. The Placement Committee usually meets in early Term 4 of each year. All information discussed at the Placement Committee meeting is confidential.
- Parents/Caregivers and referring Professionals are notified of the Placement Committee's decision mid Term 4.

### When are the closing dates for referral to the LDC?

The closing dates for 2023 (placement in Year 2024) are as follows:

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| - Kindergarten (Four Year Olds) | <b>Wednesday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2023</b><br>(Term 3, Week 10) |
| - Pre-Primary & Year 1          | <b>Friday 8<sup>th</sup> September 2023</b><br>(Term 3, Week 8)      |

### **How many places are available at the LDC?**

- There is no way of providing an exact answer to this question - as each year the number of available places and the number of children referred vary. The mix of children and classes at each LDC changes from year to year - it is dependent on the numbers of children that exit each year and this information is not usually available until mid Term 4. The LDCs are usually in the position of having more appropriate children referred than we have places to offer.

### **When do children enter the LDC?**

- Most children start at the LDC at the beginning of the following school year after referral.

## **WHAT HAPPENS AT THE LDC?**

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### **Is an LDC like a mainstream school?**

- Whilst the LDC has many similarities to a mainstream school the overall focus tends to be somewhat more specific. However, as the aim of the program is to exit children back into their mainstream school the curriculum must be similar enough to allow this transition to occur. The classroom curriculum is an adapted mainstream curriculum with a major emphasis on oral language and literacy development. Specific oral language sessions are held during the week to promote particular language areas (e.g. narrative, phonological awareness, semantics, social skills, and syntax).
- A wide range of teaching techniques and resources are used. These include individual and small group work, and specific language activities. Children are encouraged to learn through 'hands on experiences' and outings as well as very explicit teaching of language skills.

### **How big are the classes at the LDC?**

- The class sizes at South East LDC are small - only 10 or 12 children per Kindergarten class and usually 12 - 14 children per Pre-Primary and Primary class. This allows for significantly more adult - child interaction and teaching time. Often additional adults are present in the classroom for a particular lesson (e.g. Support Teachers, Teacher Assistants, Speech Pathologist), which increases this ratio.

### **Are the Teachers at the LDC specially trained?**

- Although there is no special qualification for Teachers at LDCs, Teachers receive an intensive professional development program at the LDC ensuring they have current knowledge and skills in the areas of language development and language disorders. Teaching positions within the LDCs are highly sought after and thus the selection procedure is highly competitive. This ensures a high calibre of teaching staff at the LDC.

### **Do the LDC children integrate with mainstream children?**

- At the South East LDC the LDC children integrate with the mainstream school children during playtime and lunchtime, at some sporting events (e.g. swimming, athletics), assemblies and any special joint functions.

### **How will my child's progress be reviewed at the LDC?**

At South East LDC each child's progress is monitored closely through a number of means.

These include:

- Oral Language Testing (Term 1) - each child receives individual oral language testing by the Speech Pathologist and Teachers. This information is used to set individual (and group) goals for the children.
- Progress Reviews (mid Term 1) - this consists of a meeting between the child's Teacher and Speech Pathologist. Oral language and speech profiles are discussed and goals set for each child. An ongoing progress summary of all testing and comments about language areas is filled in and kept in the child's file. This information then forms the basis of an Individual Language Plan (ILP) for each child. The ILP is discussed with the parents.

- School Reports or Portfolios (end of Terms 2 & 4) - these provide a means of informing parents of their child's progress within oral language and other curriculum areas.
- Any input from the Speech Pathologist is recorded. The Speech Pathologist is always available and willing to make a time to meet with parents to discuss any concerns/issues.
- Case Conferences (when requested/required) - this consists of a meeting between the child's Parent, Teacher, Speech Pathologist, LDC Principal and/or Deputy. This meeting provides a verbal summary of the child's progress over the year and also a chance to discuss future placement (i.e. whether the child will stay at the LDC next year or exit to another school).
- Exit testing (Terms 3 & 4) - if it is felt that the child may be ready to leave the LDC then a battery of standardised oral language tests are completed to determine the child's current language skills. This is compared to their past language performance and their current literacy skills. Decisions are made between the Speech Pathologist, the Classroom Teacher and the Principal regarding the child's readiness to exit. This information is discussed with parents/caregivers at a Case Conference.

### **How long will my child stay at the LDC?**

- At South East LDC children generally stay at the Centre anywhere between 1 to 5 years.
- The amount of time a child stays is highly variable between individual children and depends on a number of factors - such as the severity of the language / literacy problem, the age of entry into the LDC, and the child's progress whilst at the LDC.

### **Can I be involved in the LDC Program?**

- The staff at South East LDC believe that children cannot achieve their potential without the support and involvement of parents, thus parental involvement is actively encouraged. Classroom Teachers all encourage parent help in the classroom and there is an active School Board and P&C in which parents can become involved. The school encourages parents to make contact with each other in order to provide support and friendship to each other.
- The Centre runs a number of Parent Workshops over the year. In general, the more information that parents are able to gain about their child and their language/literacy difficulties, the better equipped they will be to act as advocates for their child in outside settings. This will also better enable parents to aid in the eventual transition from LDC to local school. It is expected that parents will attend at least two workshops per year, as well as assisting their child in completing set homework activities and any extra speech/language work. This will vary from child to child. Parents are actively encouraged to access information from other sources as well.

### **Do I have to transport my child to the LDC?**

- Language Development Centres are gazetted Special Schools and thus the Public Transport Authority provides bus transportation or conveyance allowance to children attending the school. The children are picked up from home in the morning and dropped off at home in the afternoon. The children are supervised on the bus journey by a Bus Aide.
- Whilst every attempt is made to place children on buses, this cannot always be guaranteed. The best way to get a child on a bus is for parents to apply as soon as they accept a place at the LDC. An application for bus transport must be made online through [www.schoolbuses.wa.gov.au](http://www.schoolbuses.wa.gov.au). The LDC School Officer or Manager Corporate Services can assist parents with this application.
- Parents who choose to transport their child to school themselves may be paid a conveyance allowance to help offset the costs. Time spent travelling on the bus is variable for each child and depends on a number of factors such as distance from the centre, the number of children on that bus run. Transportation is generally not provided for students attending Kindergarten as it is felt that they are too young to travel safely on the bus, but applications for Kindergarten children may be successful.

### **Do they wear a uniform at the LDC?**

- All LDCs are located on the site of a mainstream primary school. The students of this school have a uniform and the LDC children are encouraged to also wear the uniform.

## **LDC SPEECH PATHOLOGY SERVICES**

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### **Who provides the Therapy at the LDC?**

- Speech Pathology services at the South East LDC are provided by the Department of Education WA. Children at the LDC who require individual therapy for articulation are provided with articulation programs. These articulation programs are written and monitored by the LDC Speech Pathologists, but implemented by Education Assistants. Children requiring additional support for speech sound disorders, fluency or voice difficulties are encouraged to access outside Speech Pathology services.

### **What type of Speech Pathology services are provided at the LDC?**

- Each LDC has the services of Speech Pathologists, who are responsible for assessing the children's language, setting language objectives for the children's programs, in-servicing LDC Teachers, running Parent Workshops, and providing class based intervention in collaboration with Teachers.
- Children are usually not withdrawn for individual 'therapy' at the Centre - they receive ongoing group language work in their classrooms through the Teachers. Children with individual needs may work with a Teacher or Education Assistant carrying out a program set and supervised by the Speech Pathologist.
- At South East LDC Speech Pathologists work on a collaborative model. A significant amount of their time is spent in-servicing teachers and being involved in joint planning to ensure that the children's language needs are met in the classroom program. Therapists also spend time in classrooms working alongside the teacher focussing on specific language goals.

### **Will my child receive other therapy at the LDC (e.g. Occupational Therapy / Physiotherapy)?**

- No. Children who require other therapy services (e.g. Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy) will need to access these services through Private or Local Community Therapists. This should be negotiated directly by the Parent (e.g. with current service providers).

### **Will my child still have to attend outside therapy whilst attending the LDC?**

- Children who are in the Kindergarten and Pre-Primary programs receive 'language' intervention from the LDC but continue to attend their local Speech Pathologist (e.g. at their local Government Speech Pathology Clinic or Private Speech Pathology Service) if they require work on their 'speech' skills (i.e. if they are having trouble pronouncing speech sounds – e.g. Childhood Apraxia of Speech / phonology / articulation problems).
- Children in the Junior Primary level program often become ineligible for outside Government Speech Pathology services (except to access therapy for fluency). Most children attending the LDC may not need to access outside Speech Pathology; however supplementary Private Speech Pathology is encouraged. Parents are welcome to discuss this with the LDC Speech Pathologist so that it can be coordinated appropriately.
- Children who require Occupational Therapy or Physiotherapy will need to access these services outside of the LDC Program. With all outside therapy appointments we ask that parents attempt to book children in at times that are outside of LDC hours (e.g. after school or on the weekend). This ensures that children do not miss out on crucial programs and lessons at the LDC.

## WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MY CHILD LEAVES THE LDC?

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### How will I know when my child is ready to leave?

- There are a number of factors that determine when an individual child is ready to leave the LDC but they have the option to remain until the end of Year 3. Some children make pleasing progress and thus it may be decided that they will be able to learn in a mainstream classroom environment at an earlier age. For other children there may come a time when their language difficulty may no longer be the primary difficulty and thus an alternative placement may be sought.

### Will my child be 'cured' of their language difficulties?

- Research suggests that language disorders are present throughout life, but that the way they present varies. Therefore children with language disorders will not be 'cured' of their language difficulties. Rather, the aim of the LDC placement is to teach the child strategies to enable them to better deal with the language difficulties they experience. LDC placement also provides the child with a supportive early educational experience, with direct support for literacy development and social skills, plus the appropriate speech and language intervention. Therefore the impact of the child's language difficulties can be minimised.

### What will happen to my child after they leave the LDC - where will they go?

- At the time a decision to exit the child is made, the placement committee will make recommendations about the most appropriate placement for the child. This varies, however the most common recommendation is for the child to attend their local mainstream school with support negotiated for the child if necessary.

### Will my child get support when they leave?

At South East LDC there is a supported exit process involving –

- A visit prior to exit when the child attends their new school for one day then comes back to the LDC so that any immediate problems and worries the child has can be ironed out. More visits may occur if a child requires a more gradual exit from the Centre
- Opportunity for the child's new mainstream teacher to attend a Transition Workshop hosted by South East Language Development Centre and Outreach Service.
- A speech and language transition report is written by the LDC Speech Pathologist, this is then discussed with the new teacher at a Transition Workshop
- Any strategies that have been found to be helpful for that particular child will be discussed with the new teacher
- After children leave the LDC, their mainstream school will be offered support from the Language Development Centre's Outreach service. The nature and amount of support varies according to the needs of the mainstream school, and therefore is individually negotiated. Most children do not need ongoing Speech Therapy after leaving the LDC, however they may be referred back to their local Government Speech Pathology Clinic or Private Speech Pathology Service for review appointments to monitor their progress. If ongoing therapy is required this will be discussed with the parent/s at the final case conference.

If you require further information regarding the referral process, please contact South East Language Development Centre. [SouthEast.LDC.Referrals@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:SouthEast.LDC.Referrals@education.wa.edu.au)

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