**About the NEMLDC Language grids:**

The NEMLDC Language grids are used to set goals and track progress across various domains of oral language from Kindergarten (or LDC entry) through to Year 1/2. Teachers regularly plot students’ progress onto their grids which get sent home at the end of each semester with each student’s report. Currently grids are used to track students’ progress in relation to:

- Semantics
- Oral narrative
- Phonological Awareness
- Oral comprehension

**How do I interpret the grids?**

Your child’s teacher has indicated the level of skill that your child has achieved (or is developing) by entering a date into the relevant box on the grid. Your child’s most recent level of achievement will be indicated on the grid, and in some cases your child’s skill level from earlier in the year will also be indicated.

If you would like further information about any of the grids, please refer to the relevant sections below. In addition you are welcome to contact your child’s teacher or one of the LDC speech pathologists.
**Semantics Grid**

**What is semantics?**
Semantics relates to our use of words to convey meaning (vocabulary) and our understanding of how these words/concepts relate to each other. We can gain a picture of a person’s semantic knowledge through a range of skills that tap into their knowledge of words and how they relate to each other. These include:

- **Vocabulary and Word Retrieval**—how efficiently and effectively words of varying familiarity are used (tier 1 = very common words, → tier 3 words = highly specific, uncommon words).

- **Classification & Categorisation** – the ability to put items into groups based on a variety of criteria and provide a reason for the grouping (e.g. an apple, banana and tomato go together because they are all types of healthy food).

- **Multiple Exemplars** - the ability to rapidly provide many examples from a given category (e.g. lots of types of clothes include shoes, socks, shirt, pants, skirt etc.)

- **Description & Definition** – the ability to talk about what an item looks like and what is known about it (including its category, where it is found, colour, shape, size etc.)

- **Comparison** – the ability to talk about what is the same and what is different about items based on various traits (e.g. category, where it is found, what it looks like)

- **Word Relationships** – the ability to:
  - identify and explain associations between words (e.g. ‘bread and butter go together because we eat them together’)
  - understand and use words of multiple and opposite meanings
    - Synonyms = words with similar meaning e.g. ‘tiny’ & ‘small’
    - Antonyms = words of opposite meanings e.g. ‘hot’ & ‘cold’

**Why is semantics important?**
The core of being able to communicate with others is having words that we understand and being able to use them appropriately. This is what semantics is about. For every word that a person knows, there is a ‘file’ of information that surrounds that word – what the word means, what we associate with it, things that go with the word etc. The denser and more organised this ‘file’ of information is, the easier it is to find and use the word in conversation, and the more effectively we are able to communicate ourselves.

**How do I read the semantics grid?**
The semantics grid has been separated into the various semantics skills. Each skill has been further divided into rows and your child’s progress has been dated in most of the rows. This gives an idea of overall, how rich and well developed is your child’s semantic knowledge is. With the exception of ‘features included in...’, skills can be read as easier → harder from left to right.
**Phonological Awareness Grid**

**What is Phonological Awareness?**
Phonological Awareness (PA) is an oral skill (i.e. there is no writing or letters involved). It is the ability to hear and manipulate sound segments of speech. This awareness takes place at several ‘levels’ including being aware of:

- the words in sentences e.g. ‘I am running’ = 3 words
- the syllables in words e.g. ‘jumper’ = 2 syllables ‘jum/per’
- rhyming words e.g. ‘cat’ & ‘hat’ rhyme
- individual sounds in words e.g. ‘fish’ = ‘/f/ /i/ /sh/’; the vowel sound is /i/ which is a short sound

**Why is PA important?**
PA is an essential skill required for reading and writing success. In particular, children need to have a good awareness of all the sounds in words, including the vowels to be able to read, write and spell.

**How do I read the PA grid?**
Generally skills towards the right and bottom of each page of the grid are later developing than skills on the left and top.

The PA grid has been broken up into the 4 ‘levels’ of PA.

- Page 1 of the PA grids looks at your child’s awareness of words, syllables and rhyme.
- Page 2 of the PA grid looks at your child’s awareness of the individual sounds in words - identifying the initial (first) sound, final (last) sound and all the sounds in the word.
- Page 3 of the PA grid continues to look at your child’s awareness of the sounds in words, with particular focus on the vowel sounds.

**Tasks**
Down the side of each page various PA tasks have been noted. These include:

- **Blending** – pushing separated parts of words together to identify the word e.g. blending syllables: /le/ + /mon/ = ‘lemon’; blending sounds: /c+a+t/ = ‘cat’

- **Segmenting** – separating the parts of a word. This could include isolating one particular part of the word e.g. segmenting syllables: the syllables in ‘fishing’ are /fi/ & /shing/; segmenting sounds: the sounds in ‘man’ are /m/-/a/-/n/. The first sound in ‘man’ is /m/ (isolating the first sound).

- **Deletion**: Taking away a part of the word e.g. deleting the last sound in ‘hat’ = /ha/

- **Manipulating**: Changing part of the word for something else e.g. manipulating the first sound in ‘kid’ to a /h/ = ‘hid’
Word Types

PA can be demonstrated through the above tasks in words of differing complexity. Generally words with 2 syllables are easier to process than words with more than 2 syllables. In addition, words with a few sounds are easier to process than words with many sounds. The complexities of words develop from easiest to hardest as follows:

- CV/VC – words with 1 consonant and 1 vowel sound e.g. ‘moo’ (CV) & ‘up’ (VC)
- CVC words - words with 3 sounds e.g. ‘mat’, ‘shop’ and ‘home’
- CVCC and CCVC words – words with two consonants next to each other e.g. ‘sleep’ (CCVC) and ‘hand’ (CVCC)
- CCCVC words – words with 3 consonants next to each other e.g. ‘scrap’

Summary

Within each ‘level’ (word, syllable, rhyme or sounds) you child’s PA ability has been dated at the relevant task and word type. Generally skills towards the right and bottom of each page of the grid are later developing than skills on the left and top. Ultimately children need to master phoneme level (sound awareness).
Comprehension

What is comprehension?

Comprehension is a broad term that relates to our understanding of language. This can be broken down into our understanding of:

- Word meanings (part of semantics)
- Varied grammar (part of syntax)
- Stories (part of narrative)
- Body language (part of social skills)
- Instructions, concepts and questions

Why is comprehension important and what has my child been evaluated on?

Comprehension enables us to make sense of our world and what others are trying to communicate to us. It is vital for successful everyday interactions as well as for long term learning and academic success. Your child has been evaluated on their comprehension in a variety of settings throughout the semester.

How do I read the Comprehension grid?

Because large parts of comprehension form a part of other language areas, the Comprehension Grid only comments on selected aspects of comprehension represented by columns. These include:

- **Listening and Attention** – the ability to listen and attend to a speaker
- **Comprehension Monitoring** – the ability to identify when one does not understand and why this might be the case (e.g. the speaker is mumbling or speaking too fast)
- **Problem Solving** – the ability to identify a problem, suggest a possible solution and predict possible outcomes
- **Instructions** – the ability to follow instructions of increasing length and complexity
- **Questions** – the ability to understand questions of increasing difficulty
- **Non Verbal** – the ability to interpret body language, gestures and facial expressions
- **Concepts** – the ability to understand common concepts (e.g. before, after, under, over etc.)

The Comprehension Grid shows earlier developing skills at the bottom of the grid and later developing skills towards the top of the grid. Your child’s skill level has been represented by dates in each of the columns. Skills described in boxes above your child’s current skill level are goals which your child will continue to work towards in their time at the NEMLDC.
**Oral Narrative**

What is Oral Narrative?

Oral narrative relates to the ability to understand, retell and generate sequences of events, either real or make believe. At the early primary level this can include procedures (e.g. how to make a cup of tea), personal recounts (e.g. what happened on the class excursion) and story retell and generation (e.g. retelling the story of Goldilocks and the Three Bears, or making up a story about a girl and some animals).

Why is Oral Narrative important and what has my child been evaluated on?

Oral narrative is a vital part of everyday conversation (e.g. talking about what you did on the weekend, talking about what happened in a movie) and forms a foundation for children’s later reading and writing success. Retelling and generating a story is the most difficult of these narrative skills. As such your child’s oral narrative ability has been evaluated based on story retells or generations throughout the semester.

How do I read the Oral Narrative grid?

A sophisticated narrative includes complete overall story structure (macrostructure e.g. including a setting, initiating event/problem etc.) as well as the use of varied and correct grammar and vocabulary (microstructure). The Narrative Grid provides a breakdown of the essential story structure, grammar and literary elements that a sophisticated story would include down the side of each page. Within each element going across the page (from earlier to later developing) a description of a child’s skill at increasing developmental levels has been given. Your child’s development has been dated along these continuums to reflect their ability to retell and generate a story at various points in time. A detailed description of each ‘element’ and examples can be found on the next page.
<table>
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<th>MACROSTRUCTURE ELEMENT</th>
<th>Description of Element</th>
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</table>
| **CHARACTER**           | Who                    | ▪ The man / the boy / the alien  
                          ▪ Peter  
                          ▪ Maisy  
                          ▪ Hush and Grandma Poss |
| **SETTING**             | The setting is at the beginning of the story and contains the place (where), and the time (when) that story takes place.  
                          **When**  
                          ▪ The time or day that the story happens.  
                          ▪ This concept can include a wide range, including years, special occasions (celebrations), seasons, months of the year, days of the week, daytime or night time, last week/tomorrow, yesterday/today and times of the day.  
                          **Where**  
                          ▪ The place that the story begins.  
                          ▪ Once upon a time, in a land far far away...  
                          ▪ Once upon a time, but not very long ago, deep in the Australian bush... |
| MIDDLE                  |                        |          |
| **INITIATING EVENT**    | Problem                | ▪ Suddenly, there was a problem  
                          ▪ He woke up and he was hungry  
                          ▪ But Grandma Poss could not find the spell to make Hush visible again |
| **INTERNAL RESPONSE**   | Emotions               | ▪ He was sad / mad / angry  
                          ▪ Hush said “Don’t worry Grandma, I don’t mind”. But in her heart of hearts she did.  
                          ▪ He decided...  
                          ▪ All night Grandma Poss thought and thought...We’ll just have to try and find it.” |
| **PLAN**                | The plan refers to what the character is going to do to achieve his goal, in response to the initiating event and their emotional response to this event.  
                          ▪ Goldilocks sat on the bears’ chairs, Goldilocks ate the Bears’ porridge, the Bears came in and found their chairs had been used; the Bears found that their porridge had been eaten. |
| **ACTION/ATTEMPTS**     | Events                 | ▪ Hush closed her eyes and nibbled the lamington. “It worked! It worked!” she cried.  
                          ▪ From that time onwards, Hush was visible. |
<p>| ENDING                  | <strong>RESOLUTION</strong>         |          |
|                         | Final Event            | ▪ From that time onwards, Hush was visible. |
|                         | <strong>CONSEQUENCE</strong>        |          |
|                         | Conclusion             | ▪ From that time onwards, Hush was visible. |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Microstructure Feature</strong></th>
<th><strong>Description &amp; Definition</strong></th>
<th><strong>Examples</strong></th>
</tr>
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</table>
| CONNECTORS / CONJUNCTIONS | ▪ Words that join two sentences / clauses together in a sentence  
▪ **Temporal connectors**: connecting words that join clauses in time order  
▪ **Causal connectors**: connecting words that connect clauses in a causal relationship | Temporal Connectors:  
Next, Then, and then, first, second, third..., finally, meanwhile, eventually, after, before, and, also, as well as, moreover, too  
Causal Connectors:  
because, so, therefore, thus, consequently |
| MENTAL VERBS | ▪ **Mental**: verbs about thinking  
▪ **Linguistic**: verbs about communicating | Mental verbs:  
E.g. thought (think) / felt (feel) / decided / wanted (want) / remembered / realised / agreed / know (knew) / loved (love) / hated (hate) / liked (like) / disliked / wished (wish) / considered / desired / believed  
Linguistic verbs: E.g. said / yelled (yell) / shouted (shout) / exclaimed / whispered / |
| REFERENCING / PRONOUNS | ▪ Character names  
▪ Nouns & pronouns | Character Names: E.g. Grandpa, The Wombat, Hush  
Nouns: E.g. the man / the cat / the mum / policeman  
Pronouns: E.g. he / she / they / his / hers |
| ADVERBIALS | ▪ **Adverbials of Place**: a description of where a verb takes place  
▪ **Adverbials of Time**: a description of when a verb takes place  
▪ **Adverbials of Manner**: a description of how a verb takes place | Adverbials of Place: E.g. “at the shop”; “in the bowl”  
Adverbials of Time: E.g. “after school”; “on Monday”; “the next day”  
Adverbials of Manner: E.g. “quickly”; “fast”, “slowly”, “softly” |
| ELABORATED NOUN PHRASE | A noun phrase that is elaborated (expanded) by adding an article, determiner or an adjectives | Article: E.g. “A boy”; “The man”; “An apple”  
Determiner: E.g. “Some” bananas”; “All the children”; “Those men”  
Adjective: E.g. “The **big** ball”; “The **angry** bear”; “An **orange** ball” |
| TENSE | Verbs - present, past & future tense verb markers | Past Tense: Regular: -ed e.g. The boy walked; Irregular past tense: e.g. The boy ran  
Present Tense: Regular: -ing e.g. running  
Future Tense: Will XX e.g. I will draw |
| GRAMMATICALITY | ▪ How many grammatical errors the child made | Sentence level grammar errors: Incorrect word order: E.g. “I goed went to the shops yesterday;  
Missing words: E.g. “He went up tree”  
Word level errors: E.g. “I goed to the shops” |
| Literate Features | **Description & Definition** | **Examples** |
| Listener Orientation | ▪ As characters and settings change within the story the listener is explicitly told and reoriented | “Once upon a time there was a girl who lived in the forest…. later on **at the beach** the girl…” |
| Direct Speech | ▪ The characters’ speak is directly quoted | “Mum said ‘You should come home quickly’. Then Sally said ‘But I want to stay out and play’” |