

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT CENTRES



Language Development Centres (LDCs) are independent public schools for children who have speech and language difficulties. Eligible students attend LDCs during their early years of schooling and receive a specialised language program aimed at developing their communication and literacy skills.

There are five LDCs located in the metropolitan areas of Western Australia. Most LDCs are located on a site of a mainstream school. The North East Metropolitan Language Development Centre (NEMLDC) caters for children attending school in Kindergarten, Pre Primary, Year 1 and Year 2. The school has sites located at the West Morley Primary school in Dianella and the North Balga Primary School in Balga. Class sizes within the NEMLDC (12 -15 students) are smaller than those typical of mainstream schools.

Eligible students can access a maximum placement of three years; however each child's placement is reviewed annually to evaluate their suitability to continue enrolment. Upon exit, students transition to a mainstream school with support from the LDC.

Parents and carers play an important role in a child's learning and development at the NEMLDC. They regularly participate in a variety of learning opportunities designed to enhance their ability to support oral language learning and literacy development at home. Strong partnerships between home and school result in the most effective placements.

NEMLDC ORAL LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

The aim of the learning programs delivered at the NEMLDC is to develop the oral language skills of students so they become effective communicators and successfully develop literacy skills. Lessons that are explicit, challenging and achievable for all students are delivered daily.



Students attending the NEMLDC participate in all areas typically taught within a mainstream curriculum, such as English, Science and Mathematics; however, there is an increased emphasis on oral comprehension, semantic organisation and vocabulary, story telling skills, grammar, sound awareness, and social skills. These areas are the foundation of literacy.

NEMLDC STAFF

The NEMLDC employs a variety of professionals, including administration staff, teachers, education assistants, speech pathologists and a school psychologist. Unique to the NEMLDC is the highly collaborative way that the Centre's speech pathologists work with teachers to develop and deliver high quality language learning programs and maximise the achievement of students.

Students are taught by specialist teachers who are recognised and respected for the quality of their practice and expertise in the classroom. Their thorough knowledge of language development and its links to literacy outcomes enables them to understand how children can be best supported to learn language concepts, content and skills. By working directly with small groups of children, the Centre's education assistants provide valuable opportunities to support both small group and individual learning needs.

The NEMLDC regularly supervises both speech pathology and education students on practicum placements.

REFERRAL CRITERIA

The following criteria need to be considered when making a referral:

- 1) The child must have a significant primary language disability in one or more language areas.
- 2) The child needs to demonstrate evidence of non-verbal learning potential within the average or above average range as measured by standardised cognitive assessment.
- 3) The child needs to demonstrate sound adaptive behaviour skills, substantiated by observed descriptive evidence of the child's behaviour in the current educational placement/home

Children with learning or developmental difficulties in areas other than language may be best supported through other services. Children who are learning English as a second language may be eligible for entry if impairment in their primary (home) language is present.

REFERRAL PROCESS

Applicants can apply for entry into Kindergarten, Pre Primary or Year 1. The number of places available varies from each year, although most vacancies are for children entering Kindergarten and Pre Primary. Annually the NEMLDC offers an Open Morning, an opportunity for families to view the Centre and ask questions about placement. Please be aware that the closing dates for applications are usually towards the end of September. As the referral package is quite comprehensive, it is important that the process begins well before this time.



Before deciding to proceed with referral, interested families should speak with a speech pathologist, who will investigate the severity and nature of a child's language impairment and their ability to meet the language related LDC entry criterion.

Publicly funded speech pathology services are available through the Child Development Service (Department of Health). As waiting times for appointments may apply, it is important that children are referred to this service well before they start school. Parents may alternatively choose to access private services; in which case a health fund rebate may apply.

After speaking with a speech pathologist and deciding to pursue a referral the following process is recommended:

1. PSYCHOMETRIC OR DEVELOPMENTAL ASSESSMENT

It is essential that applications into Pre Primary and Year 1 are supported by a psychometric assessment. The purpose of this assessment is to provide evidence of non-verbal learning potential within the average range (criterion 2). The psychologist working within the child's school will use a suitable non-verbal psychometric assessment (e.g. LEITER-2) and complete a behaviour checklist. A parent may prefer to contact their child's school directly to discuss the assessment or they may ask the speech pathologist to make contact on their behalf.

For Kindergarten applications, a developmental assessment (e.g. Griffiths), conducted by a paediatrician or medical officer, is strongly recommended. Children may be eligible for this assessment through the Department of Health Child Development Service, however waiting times apply. Alternatively a GP can provide a referral to a private paediatrician.

2. SPEECH PATHOLOGY REFERRAL ASSESSMENTS AND REPORTS

After confirming the applicant demonstrates nonverbal learning potential in the average range, a speech pathologist will then perform the required language assessments and complete the referral forms. Up to three appointments may be needed to complete the assessments and fill in the referral forms. Speech pathologists can download the referral forms from the “Enrolments and Referrals” section of the NEMLDC website.

3. TEACHER OR PARENT QUESTIONNAIRE

If the applicant is already attending school, a teacher will be asked by the school psychologist to fill out a questionnaire. If the child is not attending school, a parent or carer will be asked to complete a form in consultation with the referring speech pathologist.

4. SUBMIT FORMS AND DOCUMENTS TO THE NEMLDC

All referral forms and supporting documentation (i.e. checklists, assessment reports) are then submitted to the NEMLDC, either by email or post. Late or incomplete referrals will not be accepted. All applications received will receive a receipt acknowledging submission.

SUBMIT COMPLETED APPLICATIONS TO:

NorthEastMetro ldc.referrals@education.wa.edu.au

OR

The Referral Officer
NEMLDC
18 View Street
Dianella
WA 6059

REFERRAL OUTCOMES & PLACEMENT OFFERS

A placement committee, consisting of the school principal, a deputy principal/s, speech pathologists and school psychologist will carefully consider all the information provided. Each application is evaluated and discussed individually. The decision to accept or decline the referral depends upon the applicant meeting entry criteria, priority ranking, and the number of places available.

Successful applicants are notified in writing in term four and a pre-placement information session is held shortly after. Parents are expected to attend. Students commence placement in term one of the following year. Initial placement offers are for 12 months only.

If a referral is unsuccessful, feedback can be provided upon request. Parents are encouraged to speak to their child’s speech pathologist about future management and educational placement options.

The NEMLDC Outreach Service provides support in the area of speech and language for mainstream schools. This Service aims to expand the knowledge and leadership skills of staff within schools through professional learning sessions, assistance with whole school planning and consultation with relevant staff.

CHARGES & CONTRIBUTIONS

The NEMLDC requests school charges and voluntary contributions to cover the costs of educational resources and the specialised learning programs delivered.

School contributions and charges at the NEMLDC are similar to those requested by a mainstream public school and are payable in term 1.



TRANSPORT ASSISTANCE

The School Bus Services branch of the Public Transport Authority (PTA) determines what form of transport assistance is provided to eligible parents who have children attending LDCs. This may be a publically funded bus service or conveyance allowance; an amount per kilometre paid to help meet the cost of transporting eligible students to and from school in a private vehicle. Parents can apply online for transport assistance by visiting the School Bus Service's website at www.schoolbuses.wa.gov.au.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For further information please contact us or visit our website.

North East Metropolitan Language Development Centre & Outreach Service

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Perth, WA 6059
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E: northeastmetro ldc@education.wa.edu.au
www.northeastldc.wa.edu



It is important to remember that children with SLI are usually as able as other children their age, except for the difficulty they have with talking.

USEFUL LINKS

Child Development Service

www.pmh.health.wa.gov.au/services/child_development_service

Private Speech Pathologists Association

www.pspawa.com.au

Speech Pathology Australia

www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au

"IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD AND A WHOLE SCHOOL TO OPTIMISE LANGUAGE GROWTH"