



## North East Metropolitan LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

### Developing language. Building futures.

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, along with the WA curriculum.

There are five LDCs located in the metropolitan area of Western Australia. 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 West Morley Primary School in Dianella and North Balga Primary School in Balga. Class sizes within the NEMLDC (12 – 15 students) are smaller than those typical of mainstream schools.

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.



### Oral language programs

The NEMLDC provides intensive, evidence-based oral language intervention for students in their early years of schooling. Explicit lessons in oral comprehension, semantic organisation and vocabulary, story-telling skills, grammar, early literacy skills, and social skills are delivered at each student's level. Student progress is closely monitored, and additional support is provided through an

intervention program. The WA Curriculum, including subjects like Maths and Science, is also delivered with an explicit oral language focus.

### Staff

The NEMLDC employs a range of professionals, including administration staff, teachers, education assistants, speech pathologists, an occupational therapist and a school psychologist. Unique to the NEMLDC is the collaborative way in which speech pathologists work with teachers to develop and deliver high quality language programs.



## Referral criteria

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

- 1) The child must have a **significant primary language disorder** in one or more language areas.
- 2) The child needs to demonstrate evidence of **learning potential within the average or above average**.
- 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 they also have difficulty in their primary (home) language.

## Referral process

Applications are accepted for Kindergarten, Pre-primary and Year 1. The number of places available varies each year, although most vacancies are for children entering Kindergarten and Pre-primary. There is an annual intake period, with closing dates for applications towards the end of September each year. As the referral package is quite comprehensive, it is important that the application process begins well before this time.

Before deciding to proceed with a 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 criteria.

Publically 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 as early as possible. Alternatively, parents may choose to access private services. A private health fund rebate may apply.

There are three main components of the referral. Referring agents can download the referral forms from the "Referral and Enrolment" page of the NEMLDC website.

## Speech pathology assessment

A speech pathologist will administer standardised language assessments and complete the referral forms. Up to three appointments may be needed to complete the assessments and fill in the referral forms. An additional questionnaire will be completed if the child has been exposed to any additional languages.



### Psychometric or Developmental Assessment

For Pre-primary and Year 1 referrals a current cognitive assessment completed by a school or private psychologist is essential. The use of a nonverbally administered cognitive assessment (with contemporary normative data) is preferential. These tests provide a fair assessment of cognitive ability for students who have speech and language disorders.

For Kindergarten referrals, a developmental assessment (e.g. Griffiths Development Scales) is strongly recommended. Children may be eligible for this assessment through the Child Development Service, however waiting times apply. Alternatively, a GP can provide a referral to a private paediatrician. If an ASQ (Ages and Stages Questionnaire) has been completed, please include this with the score sheet.

### 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, and a behaviour checklist. If the child is not attending school, a parent or carer will be asked to complete a questionnaire, in consultation with the referring speech pathologist. This questionnaire can also be completed by day-care staff.

### Referral submission

Referring agents (i.e. speech pathologist, psychologist) are responsible for submitting all referral forms and supporting documentation by email or post. Late or incomplete referrals will not be accepted. All applications will be acknowledged with a receipt.

### Electronic submission

[NorthEastMetro ldc.referrals@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:NorthEastMetro ldc.referrals@education.wa.edu.au)

### Hard copy submission

The Referral Officer  
NEMLDC  
18 View Street  
Dianella WA 6059

### Referral outcomes & placement offers

A placement committee, consisting of the school principal, speech pathologists and school psychologist carefully consider all the information provided. Each application is evaluated and discussed individually. Placement is offered based on the applicant meeting eligibility criteria and the number of places available within the school.

Applicants are notified in writing in Term 4 of the outcome of the application and successful applicants must accept the placement within the given timeframe. A parent information session is held shortly after, and new parents are expected to attend. Students commence placement in Term 1 of the following year.

Eligible students can access a maximum placement of three years, however placement is reviewed annually to evaluate suitability of ongoing enrolment. Upon exit, students transition to a mainstream school with support from the NEMLDC.



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 on enrolment.

### Immunisations

Department Policy states that all students enrolling into a Kindergarten program must provide evidence of full immunisation using the Australian Immunisation Record (AIR) online version. Parents of students enrolling into the compulsory years of schooling, (PP-12) are also asked to provide this evidence.

### Transport assistance

The School Bus Services branch of the Public Transport Authority determines what form of transport assistance is provided to 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](http://www.schoolbuses.wa.gov.au).

### Useful links

#### Child Development Service

[www.caahs.health.wa.gov.au/Our-services/Community-Health/Child-Development-Service](http://www.caahs.health.wa.gov.au/Our-services/Community-Health/Child-Development-Service)

#### Speech Pathology Australia

[www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au](http://www.speechpathologyaustralia.org.au)

#### Private Speech Pathologists Association

[www.pspawa.com.au](http://www.pspawa.com.au)

#### Raising Awareness of Developmental Language Disorder

[www.radld.org](http://www.radld.org)

### Contact information

For additional information please contact us:

☎ 9218 1600

✉ [northeastmetro ldc@education.wa.edu.au](mailto:northeastmetro ldc@education.wa.edu.au)

🌐 [www.northeastldc.wa.edu.au](http://www.northeastldc.wa.edu.au)