PRESCHOOL SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PROGRAM
INFORMATION FOR FAMILIES
2012

WHAT IS A SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PROGRAM?

Speech and Language Programs provide a high level of specialised support for children with severe specific speech and/or language impairments. Their primary area of need is communication, while learning and development in other areas is similar to that of other children their age. The program aims to strengthen children’s communication by improving their talking and listening skills, ability to learn and interact with others. There are 8 Speech and Language Programs in selected preschools across the metropolitan area.

IS MY CHILD ELIGIBLE TO ATTEND A SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PROGRAM?

Children can be referred to a Speech and Language Program if they have a severe specific speech and/or language impairment diagnosed by a speech pathologist, and:
- Are making slow progress with regular speech pathology support
- Will generally be 4 years - 4 years 6 months of age when they begin the program unless they are Aboriginal or under the Guardianship of the Minister and they then can be considered individually for earlier intake to the Program.
- Have non-verbal intelligence within the average range or above
- Have hearing within normal limits (as shown by a hearing test, carried out within the last 12 months).

Speech and Language Programs may not meet the needs of children who have:
- Learning needs that relate to delayed development generally
- A significant syndrome or disability, such as autism or Down Syndrome
- Needs that may be best met by other support programs, such as the Preschool Support Program

These children may be referred to other preschool support programs and Regional Support Services in collaboration with your Preschool Director and/or Disability Coordinator.

HOW DOES A SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PROGRAM WORK?

The Speech and Language Programs provide specialised teaching that supports children’s participation and learning at preschool. Your child’s program will include:
- Individual and small group activities to teach talking and listening skills
- Direct teaching through play
- Follow up to support their use of new skills across all areas of learning
REFERRAL TO SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

A speech pathologist, including a private provider, can refer your child to a Speech and Language Program if appropriate, and they will gather relevant information about your child.

The following information is required along with referral forms for the program:
- A speech pathology report - describing your child’s talking and listening skills
- A psychological report - describing your child’s intellectual ability
- A report on your child’s hearing
- Any other relevant professional reports (e.g., paediatric, occupational therapy etc.)
- Other information may be sought as required.

1. If your child is not attending a DECD preschool, the Manager Regional Support Services in the region of your 1st preference program will contact you to facilitate the completion of additional paperwork required as part of the referral process.

2. If you are unable to arrange an intellectual assessment by a psychologist through a community health centre, public hospital, or private psychologist, DECD Support Services will assist you in this process.

3. An Intake Panel will discuss your child’s needs and if your child meets the criteria and there is a vacancy in a program, you will be offered a placement.

* Please note - There are only 8 Programs across the metropolitan area with 7 places in each Program. A limited number of spaces are available each term and there are generally a high number of applicants with children prioritised according to level of need. If you would like more information:
  - Speak with your DECD, community or private speech pathologist
  - Contact the Manager Regional Support Services at your local Regional Office.

WHAT SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE IF MY CHILD DOES NOT GET INTO THE SPEECH AND LANGUAGE PROGRAM?

The Speech and Language Program is not designed to meet the needs of all children. There are other options available that may be more beneficial for your child. These may include:
- **The Preschool Support Program** – additional staff are provided to your local preschool in order to support the teaching and learning of children with additional needs.
- **The Disability Coordinator** – will provide support and advice to both families and preschool staff in order to best meet your child’s individual needs.
- **DECD speech pathology and/or psychology services** – assessment and intervention available to children attending preschool.
- **Other service providers outside of DECD** – speech pathology, psychology, occupational therapy etc.
FAMILIES ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING

The majority of children's talking and listening occurs at home with family and friends. Everyday activities can help children improve their talking and listening skills. Children learn best when families and preschool staff work together to achieve the same goals.

Families are expected to support their child's learning by:
- Ensuring regular attendance
- Sharing information about your child with staff working with your child
- Talking about what you want your child to learn
- Being involved in preschool activities
- Working on learning goals at home
- Attendance at meetings as required

Preschool staff will plan with you to keep you informed about your child's progress and talk about how you can continue your child's program at home. Parents are welcome to bring a family member or friend to support them in talking about these issues.

Speech and language programs are located at the following preschools and in the following regions. Additional information about programs can be obtained from the Manager Regional Support Services located in the regional offices as listed below.

**Northern Adelaide Regional Office:** Ph: 8256 8111
Salisbury Lutheran Kindergarten
Valley View Kindergarten
John Hartley Preschool

**Eastern Adelaide Regional Office:** Ph: 8366 8800
Bertram Hawker Kindergarten

**Southern Adelaide Regional Office, Noarlunga:** Ph: 8207 3762
Brentwood Drive Kindergarten
Flagstaff Oval Kindergarten

**Southern Adelaide Regional Office, Flinders Park:** Ph: 8416 7333
Glandore Kindergarten
West Lakes Kindergarten