Child Development Service

The metropolitan Child Development Service provides free assessment, early intervention and treatment services to eligible children with developmental delay or difficulty that impact on function, participation and/or parent-child relationship.

Eligibility

All clients must meet all of the following eligibility criteria:

- be under the age of 16 years
- have an eligible Medicare card/number*
- live at an address in the Greater Perth Region.

*clients with yellow Medicare cards are ineligible.

Making a referral

- A referral can be made by parents, legal guardians or professionals.
- It is best if you use the Metropolitan Child Development Service Referral Form.
- Referrers must document parent/legal guardian consent for the referral, and provide information that will allow us to identify the child, determine eligibility and to make contact with the parent/legal guardian in relation to the referral.
- Provide detailed information about the developmental history and concerns on the referral form, and attach any other relevant reports and information. Incomplete or overly brief referrals may result in unnecessary delays in accessing services.
- Describe the parents’ main concern in the referral, and how it impacts on the child and family in their everyday life. This will help us identity the most appropriate clinician to make first contact with each family.
- Consider if it is right time to make a referral. Life can be busy, and we understand that parents have many competing demands. We will contact parents soon after a referral is received, so it is important that parents are ready to work with us to support their child’s development.
- Let us know if there is anything that may impact on a family’s ability to respond to appointment letters, or to attend appointments. This will help us to follow up with families who may need extra contact or support to access our service.

To access the Metropolitan Child Development Service Referral Form, or for more information visit or search Child Development Service – WA Health or call 1300 551 827.

To refer children living in regional areas to a child development service visit or search WA Country Health Service – Child Development.
What parents can expect when their child is referred to us

Knowing what to expect helps parents to feel ready to work with us to support their child’s development. This information will help referrers to describe our service to parents when discussing a referral.

When a child is referred to us, parents/carers will be invited to book a service planning appointment. This appointment usually takes place within eight weeks of the referral. During this appointment we discuss parents’ concerns, goals and priorities, and together we develop an agreed service plan. A copy of the Service Plan is also sent to the referee.

Depending on the child’s needs, the plan may include a range of service options, such as:

- activity ideas and resources for home, school or day-care
- parent workshops
- individual or group therapy appointments
- information on community programs
- referral to another service.

The plan will be based on:

- working with the family on goals that are most important to them and their child
- increasing the family’s skills and confidence to support their child’s development in everyday environments, like at home and school
- allowing time between appointments to practice and master new skills
- supporting families to access other relevant services and community resources.

Our team of clinicians include Speech Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Social Workers, Clinical Psychologists, Paediatricians, Therapy Assistants, Audiologists and Nurses. Children may see more than one clinician depending on their needs.

Where else can parents get help and information?

Referrers are encouraged to talk to parents about the wide range of community, public and private services that are available to support children and families. Here are some suggestions:

- **Crisis Care 9223 1111** for urgent counselling or help
- **Ngala Parenting Line 9368 9368** | [ngala.com.au](http://ngala.com.au) | offers parenting support for families with babies and children 0 to 18 years
- **Playgroup WA 1800 171 882** | [playgroupwa.com.au](http://playgroupwa.com.au) | to find a local playgroup
- **Raising Children Network** | [raisingchildren.net.au](http://raisingchildren.net.au) | for child development and parenting information
- **Child Health Nurses** | [healthywa.wa.gov.au/childhealth](http://healthywa.wa.gov.au/childhealth) | free services to help families raise happy, healthy children

This document can be made available in alternative formats on request for a person with a disability.