

SCHOOLS — PSYCHOLOGIST SERVICES

2385. Hon Martin Aldridge to the Minister for Education and Training:

I refer to psychologist services in public schools, and I ask:

- (a) what are the current number of FTE psychologists employed by the Department of Education;
- (b) what are the current number of FTE psychologists in regional Western Australia;
- (c) what early intervention services does the Department of Education provide for children with speech and language issues;
- (d) what early intervention programs is the Department of Education promoting in the early identification and remediation of speech and language difficulties with young children;
- (e) what is the current waitlist for children to obtain a formal assessment by either a paediatrician, psychologist or speech therapist for autism spectrum disorders by region;
- (f) are there any early intervention centres for children with identifiable disabilities within Western Australia; and
- (g) if yes to (g), can the Minister please provide a breakdown by metropolitan and by region?

Hon Sue Ellery replied:

Answer

- (a) As at 22 August 2019, 353.58 FTE.
- (b) As at 22 August 2019, 103.15 FTE.
- (c) Language Development Centres are Department of Education schools that cater specifically for children in the early years whose primary diagnosis is an identified language disorder. The Department also provides a state-wide Speech and Language Outreach Service to support teachers of students who experience speech and language difficulties.
- (d) The Department of Education does not promote any external programs. Students may be referred to the Department of Health.
- (e) The Department of Education is unable to comment as it does not undertake assessments. This question should be referred to the Minister for Health.
- (f)–(g) Yes. There are five Early Intensive Intervention Programs in Western Australia that provide early intensive intervention to Kindergarten and Pre-primary students with Autism Spectrum Disorder or Global Developmental Delay. There are also eight primary (Kindergarten to Year 6) Specialised Learning Programs for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder that have an intensive intervention component in the early years.

Early Intensive Intervention Programs are located as follows:

North Metropolitan Education Region

Creaney Education Support Centre, Kingsley

Mount Hawthorn Education Support Centre

South Metropolitan Education Region

Canning Vale Education Support Centre

Meadow Springs Education Support Centre

Southwest Education Region

Spencer Park Education Support Centre, Albany

Specialised Learning Programs are located as follows:

North Metropolitan Education Region

Alkimos Primary School

Heathridge Primary School

Marangaroo Primary School

South Metropolitan Education Region

Cooloongup Primary School

Gosnells Primary School

North Mandurah Primary School

Samson Primary School

Southwest Education Region

Cooinda Primary School, East Bunbury

The School of Special Educational Needs: Disability provides support to all Western Australian public schools for students with disability, including Specific Learning Disorders, on a request for assistance basis.

School psychologists play a key role in supporting students, parents, teachers and school administrators and deliver services to all schools in Western Australia.

Child and Parent Centres provide services for local families with young children. There are 21 Child and Parent Centres in high-needs communities across Western Australia; 10 in metropolitan Perth and 11 in regional towns.

KindiLink at 38 public schools (10 metropolitan and 28 regional) provides supported playgroup sessions for Aboriginal children below the age of school entry, who attend with a parent–caregiver. The sessions have an oral language focus and provide scope to identify children for whom formal speech diagnosis may be warranted.

There are Engagement Centres in every education region. Engagement Centres coordinate the Kindergarten to Year 12 provision of the following three services:

- professional learning to improve student engagement and behaviour;

- consultative support for schools needing additional assistance with planning for students with complex needs; and

- intensive support for individual students exhibiting challenging and complex needs.

Intensive support for individual students can occur at the student’s school or at an Engagement Centre. Each Engagement Centre has a school psychologist to assist with student assessment, case formulation and intervention planning.