

As a mother of a 6.5 year old child who is struggling with literacy at school, I have found accessing services, support, resources, and assessment for my child incredibly difficult. My child has been accessing the Primary Health speech services in the Central Wheatbelt since he was aged 2.5 years old. During that time there has been periods of 6 months or more where he was unable to access the service due to a lack of therapists. I have been told that he may lose access to the service as his speech issues are not as severe as others and there is a high demand. There is a lack of private services that we can access due to our location. There is a private service that travels from Perth once a fortnight. This is still 72 kms from where we live and one 45-minute session costs over \$200 due to the service's travel charges.

My son's school has raised with me the possibility of my child having a specific learning disorder. To have my son assessed means I will have to travel to Perth, a 2 day stay, costs of the assessment \$1500, and a 13-month waitlist before he is assessed. There is no way to have him assessed in the government system, so we need to do this privately.

I am highly concerned by this, as being a teacher myself, I am aware of the effect early intervention has for children like my son. I feel he is being let down and placed at a disadvantage due to the lack of services afforded to him.