

NSW CENTRE FOR EFFECTIVE READING

SERVICE GUIDELINES

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Background

Australian children living in rural and remote areas, including those in Aboriginal communities, are at a higher risk of experiencing difficulties in literacy than their counterparts who live in metropolitan areas and large rural centres.

Isolation and inaccessibility of services can compound factors already known to impact literacy learning – the quality and nature of teaching, school attendance, engagement in learning and on-task behaviour, socioeconomic factors, language or processing problems and difficulties in working memory, amongst others.

Through stories of the ‘journey’ to get help for their children, parents describe the impacts of isolation in graphic terms. The Ministerial Council on Education, Employment, Training and Youth Affairs found that the further a student lives away from a large centre, the more likely he or she is to experience literacy difficulties. Further, the problem usually grows worse – the gap widens – as the student gets older.

Understandings of how and why these students encounter difficulties learning to read continue to evolve.

For most students, evidence-based teaching delivered accurately, systematically and explicitly will be sufficient to turn the tide. Some students will still need targeted support, and a few will experience the most severe and non-responsive reading difficulties, requiring intensive assessment and intervention.

The importance of providing support to students when their reading difficulty is first identified is widely acknowledged. Beyond the immediate impact of not being able to read lies a range of possible outcomes leading to long term academic failure, disengagement, restricted life opportunities and poverty.

Significant research and practice evidence shows many students who struggle to gain new knowledge will often have difficulty maintaining and using that learning in new settings over time.

Developing professional learning courses and programs to equip all participants in the process of supporting students with complex reading difficulties is essential.



The Department of Education along with the Catholic Education Commission of NSW and the Association of Independent Schools NSW play key roles in improving educational outcomes for students. Primary school students experiencing difficulties with learning to read are in the first instance supported by the school. Teachers have access to a range of programs and strategies to support students with reading difficulties.

In addition, teachers in government and non-government schools can access specialist staff that can assist them identify specific programs and strategies to further support students experiencing difficulty with reading.

NSW Health plays an important role in assisting children and families to achieve health and wellbeing. The NSW Health system collaborates with general practitioners, local government, government and non-government organisations, health professionals and families to create the best opportunities for improving children's health.

NSW Centre for Effective Reading

The NSW Centre for Effective Reading is a joint NSW Department of Education and NSW Health initiative.

Through this joint education and health facility the NSW Centre for Effective Reading strengthens services to students with complex reading difficulties in rural and remote New South Wales.

The Centre provides direct assessment and intervention services for students in rural and remote primary schools who are experiencing complex reading difficulties, professional learning and resources for teachers and other key participants, and undertakes research and development in the area of complex reading difficulties.

The services provided through the Centre complement and build on reading programs currently used in primary schools across the state. The direct services provided through the Centre are not substitutes for programs delivered in schools. Instead, these services provide additional support for those students who are not making expected gains on programs delivered in schools.

Visit the [NSW Centre for Effective Reading](#) website for more information.

Assessment services

Multi-disciplinary teams undertake assessments in four hubs located at Dubbo, Wagga Wagga, Manly and Westmead. These teams comprise specialists, including an educational psychologist, a speech pathologist and a special education teacher.

The team at Westmead also includes a neuropsychologist and a paediatrician. The additional staff provide further valuable specialist input to assessments for students who have health related matters in addition to their reading difficulty.

The specialist staff delivers direct assessment services to identify a student's strengths and areas of need. They tailor the assessment for each student. Team members determine assessment tools based on previous assessment reports and information provided by the school and parents.

Intervention services

Using information gained from assessment the Centre staff develop a plan for reading intervention in collaboration with the parents/carers and home school. The student's home school implements the plan for reading intervention under the guidance of the specialist staff from the Centre.

The interventions are selected from research and evidence based programs and strategies that have been proven to be successful for students with complex reading difficulties. These interventions vary in type and intensity according to the individual needs of the student.

An up to four week intensive educational clinic is available to those who require it. For students who access the clinic their plan for reading intervention will include, in addition to their reading program, a focus on the emotional needs of the student and the use of technology to support curriculum access. For students in Year 6 the clinic also has a focus on planning for the student's transition to high school.

A parent of the student is invited to attend an intensive educational clinic for up to five days. This provides an opportunity for the parent to learn about the child's reading difficulty and to observe the programs and strategies that have been developed to meet the student's reading needs. For students accessing this part of the service, technology will play a strong role in supporting and sustaining their long term reading development.

Monitoring and review

Specialist staff from the Centre support the implementation and monitoring of the plan for reading intervention for 12 months. Centre staff use systematic monitoring to ensure prompt action to support students not making expected gains.

Additional support offered through the Centre for students who are not making expected gains will depend on the student's needs and their response to the intervention.

Additional support may include:

- making changes to the plan for reading intervention
- accessing an assessment/further assessment and new plan for reading intervention
- attendance at an up to four week intensive educational clinic with a follow-up school based intervention plan.

Towards the end of the 12 months reading intervention the school, parents or carers and Centre staff review the student's progress. The home school is responsible for further ongoing monitoring of the student's reading development.

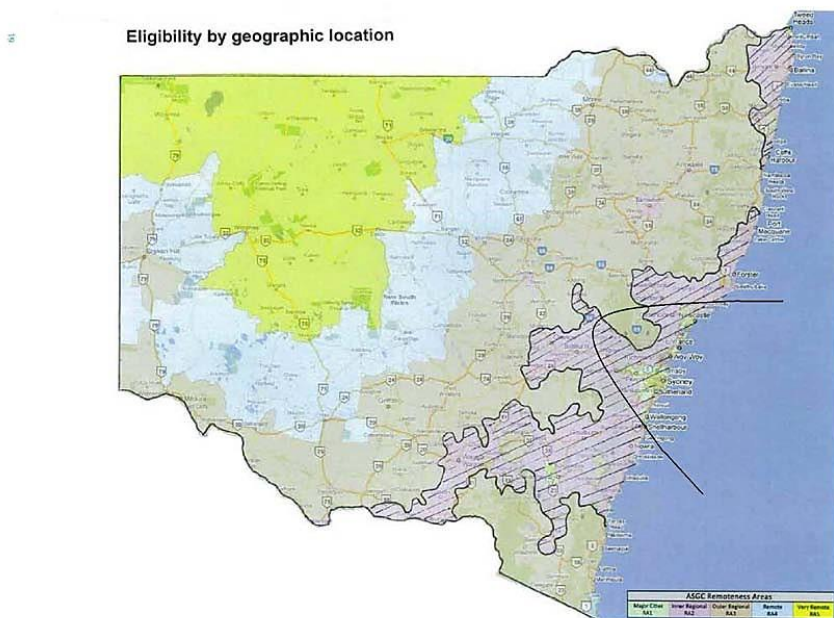
Referral to the NSW Centre for Effective Reading

Following discussions with parents, principals from eligible government and non-government schools can refer a student with complex reading difficulties to the Centre for a direct school-based assessment and intervention service. Sector placement panels manage referrals and decisions about allocation of the Centre's services.

Eligibility

Students eligible to access the assessment and intervention services through the Centre:

- have not responded to reading intervention provided at the student’s home school
- live and attend a school over 100km from the Sydney metropolitan basin.



Referral process

Eligible schools complete an online referral form to refer students to the NSW Centre for Effective Reading. The Department of Education provides all eligible schools with information about the referral process which occurs in Term 2 and Term 4.

When making a referral schools document previous interventions used to remediate a student’s reading difficulty and provide data about previous interventions and the student’s response.

The school principal also acknowledges that the:

- student's parents or carers are supportive of the referral
- school will participate in meetings with Centre staff to develop a plan for reading intervention
- school will implement the plan for reading intervention
- school will participate in training and professional learning activities to support the implementation of the plan for reading intervention.

Referrals from government and non-government schools are forwarded to Disability, Learning and Support, NSW Department of Education.

A state placement panel with representation from senior officers from the NSW Department of Education, the Catholic Education Commission of NSW, the Association of Independent Schools of NSW and NSW Health considers referrals to the Centre.

Referrals made to the Centre are prioritised according to:

- student's age and level of reading difficulty
- student's history of previous interventions
- school proximity to other services.

Aboriginal students experiencing difficulties with reading are further prioritised for the service.

Referral decisions

Students referred to the Centre receive either an assessment and school-based intervention service through the Centre, or continue on a program delivered in their home school with assistance and support provided through the relevant education sector's support services.

Schools will be notified of placement panel decisions by email within four weeks of the closing date for referrals.

If the panel determines that the student's school and its sector can do more to support the referred student, the relevant education sector works with the school to develop an

appropriate personalised reading intervention for the student. These students are monitored by the relevant school and its sector.

If it is demonstrated that the student is not making expected gains, the student can be re-referred to the Centre. The school will need to complete a new referral.

Professional learning for teachers and other key participants

The NSW Centre for Effective Reading provides a website with learning opportunities, suggested professional readings and resources to develop knowledge and skills of those involved in supporting students with reading difficulties.

Research and development

The NSW Centre for Effective Reading has established relationships with tertiary institutions to ensure that the services provided through the Centre are based on well-established research evidence.

These partners assist the Centre to conduct its own research.

Steering Committee

A Steering Committee oversees the strategic direction of the Centre and guides the Centre's progress and development.

The primary functions of the NSW Centre for Effective Reading Steering Committee are to contribute to:

- developing the strategic focus for the Centre's management plan
- supporting the implementation of the Centre's management plan
- reporting of the Centre's accomplishments and operation.

The NSW Centre for Effective Reading Steering Committee has representatives from:

- Isolated Children's Parents' Association of NSW
- NSW Aboriginal Education Consultative Group Inc.



- Royal Far West
- NSW Centre for Effective Reading
- Catholic Education Commission NSW
- Association of Independent Schools of NSW
- NSW Teachers Federation
- Macquarie Centre for Cognitive Science
- Sydney Children’s Hospital Network.

Contact details

Further information about the services provided through the NSW Centre for Effective Reading can be obtained through the following locations:

- Westmead hub, located at Palm Avenue School – 9687 0377
- Dubbo hub, located at Buninyong Public School – 6885 4375
- Manly hub, located at Royal Far West School – 9977 2452
- Wagga Wagga hub, located at Tolland Public School – 6931 1042