

Navigating Literacy Challenges

**A step-by-step
guide for parents**



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As both an Inclusive Educator and the founder of Collective Order, I have met countless parents who have observed their children struggling with the growing literacy demands at school – I am one of them. Many feel uncertain about where to begin seeking help, and sorting through the overwhelming amount of information online can be both time-consuming and exhausting. Additionally, misconceptions about needing referrals or multiple appointments to access certain services often delays or discourages parents from pursuing support sooner.

Based on my experience, here is the advice I share with parents to allow them to take the next steps with confidence:

SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

Start by engaging in conversations with your child's educator. They will be able to provide valuable insights into your child's strengths and areas for development. They closely monitor their progress using their experience and expertise.

Find out who is in charge of Inclusion or Learning Support and involve them in the conversation. They will bring specialised knowledge of learning difficulties, can recommend targeted intervention strategies and understand how to plan and implement personalised support.

ENT

Seek a referral for an Ear Nose and Throat doctor (ENT) if hearing concerns related to ear health or adenoids, tonsils and so forth have been identified during testing with an Audiologist.

SPEECH PATHOLOGIST

If your child has been cleared of hearing, ear health and eye issues and you are still concerned, it might be time to engage a Speech Pathologist. Through targeted screenings based on your concerns, educator observations and the results of your child's hearing and vision tests; a Speech Pathologist can provide early Identification of Speech and Language issues that affect literacy development.

**** No referral required ****

EXPERT TIPS – If your child is school aged you could ask the Inclusion or Learning Support team if there are any screening assessments they can complete at school prior to seeing a Speech Therapist.

You may be able to access a Speech Therapist through Community Health Centres or the Department For Education.

If ongoing Speech Therapy sessions are required, you may be able to apply for a Chronic Disease Management Plan through your child's GP. This will provide a subsidy on 5 sessions.

COMPREHENSIVE TESTING

If the pre-assessment identifies Dyslexia and/or Dysgraphia, or was inconclusive, it might be time to seek a Psycho-Educational Assessment. This is performed by a psychologist and will provide information regarding your child's intellectual abilities and academic achievement. This process can be used to identify specific learning difficulties including Dyslexia, Dysgraphia and Dyscalculia.

EXPERT TIP – Waitlists can vary considerably. It is worthwhile calling several clinics to check waiting times and placing your child's name down first before seeking your referral.

**** GP referral required ****

HEARING ASSESSMENT

Before heading to a Speech Therapist or ENT if you have concerns about your child's literacy, it is important to rule out any possible hearing and ear health issues. Speech Therapists and ENT's will also ask you to have your child's hearing tested before engaging with their services. Therefore, it is a great one to tick off the list early on.

EXPERT TIP – Select a Paediatric Audiologist over a general Audiologist. Paediatric Audiologists are skilled professionals who focus on the identification of hearing and ear issues in children and can conduct full diagnostic hearing and processing checks in an age appropriate and fun way.

**** No referral required ****

EYE CHECK

Next you could proceed to a vision check. Research suggests 80% of classroom learning is acquired through the visual system and vision difficulties can impact behaviour, learning and development.

EXPERT TIP – Select an Optometrist that specialises in the early years or a Behavioural Optometrist for a vision assessment.

This may be claimed under Private Health if available to you.

****No referral required ****

PRE-ASSESSMENT

If concerns still persist in the areas of reading and writing it might be time to seek further assessments.

EXPERT TIP – The Australian Dyslexia Association offers a pre assessment service which in their words is, 'A sensible procedure in identifying Dyslexia and or Dysgraphia.' At \$185 this process avoids upfront full testing, which can be upwards of \$1600.

FIND OUT MORE INFORMATION
[@dyslexiaassociation.org.au](https://dyslexiaassociation.org.au)

SPELD SA Inc also offers literacy assessments.

REMEMBER

Trust your instincts. The earlier the intervention, the greater success and confidence your child will have moving through school.