



## **Students with Disability Assessment Service**

### **Assessments Australia Service Update**

#### **October 2022**

This newsletter provides important updates regarding referrals to support Disability Inclusion, and administration of standardised assessments through our service. If you have further questions, after reading below, please feel free to contact us on (03) 9678 5100 or via email to [psd-as@assessments.com](mailto:psd-as@assessments.com).

Schools are reminded to submit any outstanding referrals for year 6/7 and short term reviews for students with funding end dates of Term 4 2022 as soon as possible.

#### **Professional behaviour and respect**

Assessments Australia staff are committed to interacting with you, students and their families in a respectful and professional way, in a manner that is consistent with the Victorian Public Sector Code of Conduct.

Assessments Australia is an independent assessment service and, while we follow the Department's operational and professional guidelines, our team ensures that each assessment reflects a student's individual needs and that the assessment is carried out impartially. Assessments Australia does not set the criteria for funding support or school placement. We conduct approximately 6000 assessments each year, and take pride in our history of doing this independently, impartially and to an extremely high standard.

All assessment tools used are approved, valid and normed for use in a one-on-one quiet setting, and administration according to standardised guidelines, which include the amount and degree of prompting and examples that can be provided. More information about this can be found further down in this newsletter.

Our assessors are all professionals who have had extensive training across both their bachelor and master's degrees, as well as in their career. While they will always consider information provided to them before and on the day of assessment, they are the only ones who are qualified to determine the most appropriate assessment tool and the interpretation of the assessment outcome. They have professional, ethical and legal responsibilities to ensure assessments are fair and valid, and that all factors are considered in determining an outcome. Sometimes the outcome may not be what was expected by you or the student's family, but please be assured the results provided are accurate and valid. Assessment reports are peer-reviewed by our senior clinical team to ensure our expectations and professional standards have been maintained. Our assessments are conducted in keeping with guidelines provided by the Department of Education and Training.

It is understood that the referral and assessment process can be an uncertain time, and a time of high emotion for families and others involved with the student. Questions are encouraged but we

ask that these are raised in a way that respects both your and our professional and ethical standards.

If you have concerns please contact our program manager, Cathy Pateras, on 9678 5100.

### **Assessments to support Disability Inclusion Profiles**

As communicated previously, Assessments Australia can conduct assessments to support Disability Inclusion Profiles where there is evidence that the student is likely to have an intellectual disability or severe language disorder with high functional needs.

Schools are encouraged to make referrals to us well before a planned profile meeting. Review assessments for students who are currently funded can take place before the student transitions to a new setting, such as a secondary school, even if the profile completion will happen in the new setting. Having updated information about a student's learning and/or language strengths and challenges as well as recommendations to support the student can help in transition planning.

### **Adjustments to standard administration of assessments**

All standardised cognitive and language assessments that Assessments Australia use are developed and reviewed by their publisher, using large samples of children of differing ages from different backgrounds. During test development or updates, certain conditions are followed exactly, including how instructions are delivered and how many times they can be repeated, prompts that can be used by the assessor, and the environment in which testing occurs. The large samples of responses are then used to determine what the average performance is for each age range of the test, and where an individual's scores fall when compared to these norms.

The aim of all our assessors is to replicate these administration guidelines exactly, and this is what occurs in nearly all assessments. Sometimes, based on the student's needs, an assessor may decide that they need to make a change from standard administration. Some examples of this may include using an interpreter, enlarging material so that a student with a visual impairment can see it clearly, or having another person in the room if the student is very anxious or has significant challenging behaviours. This is a decision that needs to be made by the assessor after considering all the information you have provided about the student. Assessors will explain any variation to standard administration guidelines and determine if the scores are still valid. They will explain this to you and the family after the assessment, and also in their report/s.

### **School Dashboard**

All schools have access to their own personalised PSD-AS Dashboard, and are encouraged to use this to check on the current status and progress of referrals that have been made to the PSD-AS.

School users can access this information online at any time by clicking the button below.

[Log in to School Dashboard](#)

**Want some more information about Intellectual Disability and Severe Language Disorders?**

**Have a question about our service?**

**After some more tips and strategies for working with students with additional needs?**

Visit our [website](#) for a list of Frequently Asked Questions and information about intellectual disability and severe language disorder. We can also email you a resource, usually provided as part of our regional briefing sessions, around the likely presentation of students with an Intellectual Disability in the school setting - just let us know if you'd like a copy.

Monash University in conjunction with the Victorian Department of Education also have a great website with information about a wide range of disabilities, and evidence based strategies for schools and families. The All Play Learn website can be accessed [here](#).

## Key Dates

**4th October 2022** - Term 4 begins

**1st November 2022** - Melbourne Cup Day public holiday

**20th December 2022** - Term 4 ends

**27th January 2023** - Term 1 2023 starts

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W: [Program for students with disabilities in Victoria | MAX \(maxsolutions.com.au\)](#)

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