

# Psychology in the Department for Education Support Services

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June 21<sup>st</sup> 2019



# Acknowledgement of Country



# Outline

- Overview of Support Services
- What is a Psychologist?
- Working Memory
- Psychology in the Department for Education
- Time for discussion and questions

# Student Support Services

Work within the Department for Education to support preschools and schools where there are children and young people who have particular educational support needs.

These needs include:

- developmental delay/disability
- learning difficulties
- behavioural issues (social/emotional)
- health or wellbeing issues
- disengagement/non-attendance issues
- communication difficulties

## **Vision**

To build a stronger future for our children by making South Australia's education and child development system world class.

## **Purpose**

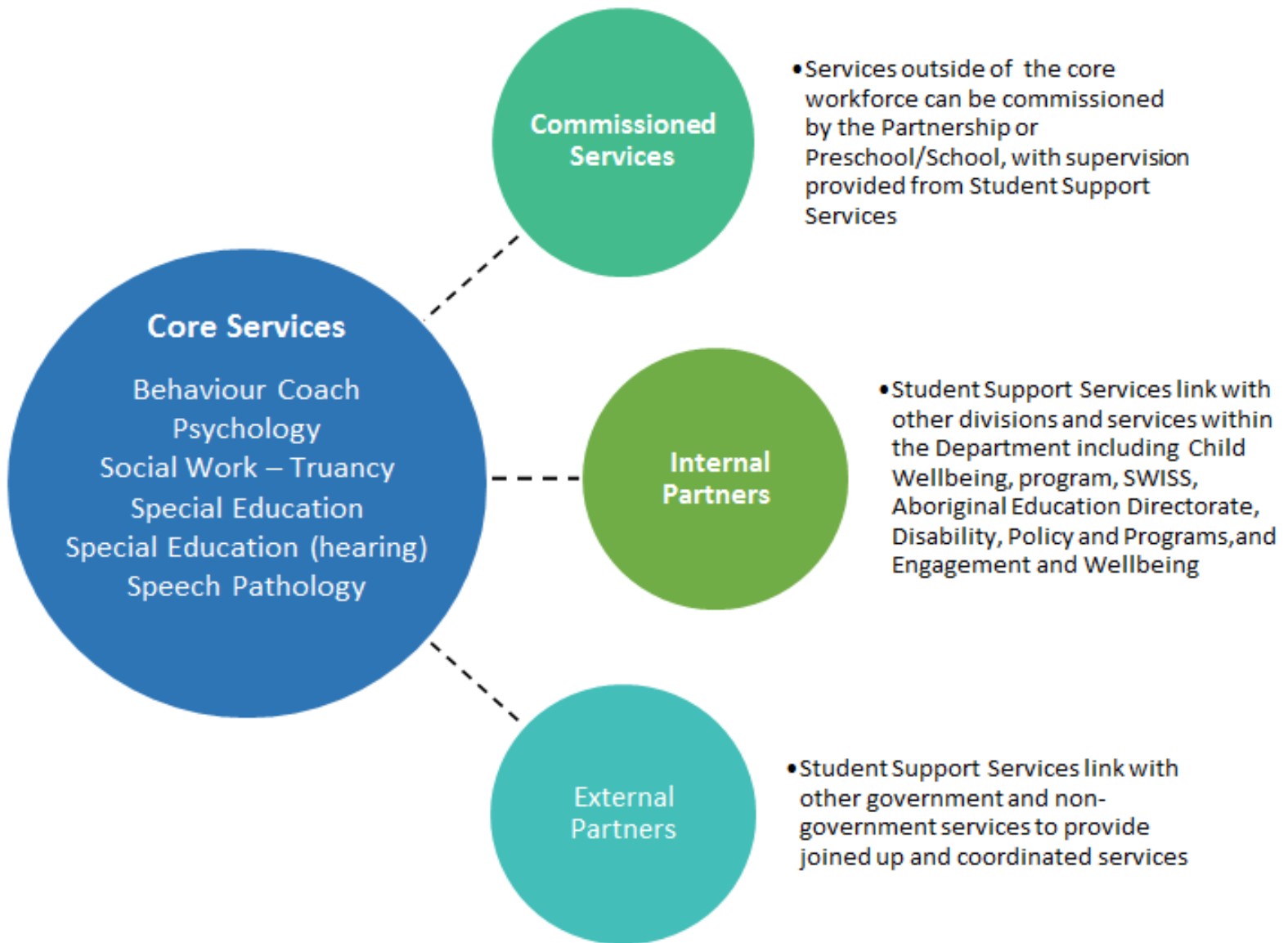
To provide high quality evidence informed support to leaders, educators and preschools and schools to identify and support children with additional needs in order to maximise their inclusion and educational achievement.

## **Values**

- Child Centred
  - Work in Partnership with Families
- Work in Partnership with Preschools and Schools

We work together with the school staff and parents and carers to address your child's needs within the educational setting

The aim is for the preschool or school to gain the expertise and capacity to support the learning needs of all children, including yours.



# Psychology



# What does a Psychologist do?

The work psychologists do is incredibly varied and the list is endless.

In fact, wherever there are people, a psychologist can usually bring their expertise so that outcomes are improved.

Broadly speaking, most psychologists provide assessment and therapy to clients, help facilitate organisational or social change, conduct psychological research, or administer psychological tests to individuals or groups.

# Within the Department for Education:

Psychologists provide specialist support in the areas of learning, behaviour and wellbeing. They apply their psychological expertise to support preschools, schools and families to meet the needs of children and young people with additional needs to achieve academic success, psychological health, and social and emotional wellbeing (The Australian Psychological Society LTD, 2009).

# What is working memory?

- Working memory involves both the storage and manipulation of information over short periods of time. It is the ability to hold in mind and mentally manipulate information - it is a kind of mental workspace that is used for many aspects of everyday life.
- Unless the information is actively processed by working memory or rehearsed, it will be forgotten.

# Working Memory Examples

The simultaneous task of holding and maintaining information in mind is an extremely effortful cognitive task.

Examples of tasks:

- Mental arithmetic (358 x 456)
- Adding up the cost of your grocery list as you go
- Remembering directions (e.g. go up the main road, turn left at servo, then continue 100m and turn right just before the intersection, then it's another 2km before turning onto Rubrik St on the right).

# Why is WM important?

Working memory is used for:

- Controlling attention
- Resisting distraction
- Complex thinking
- Organisation
- Problem solving
- Remembering tasks

It is critically important for learning new information and novel concepts.

# Differences in capacity across the lifespan:

Age	Number of Instructions
5-6	2-3
7-9	3-4
10-12	4
13-15	5
16 and over	6

Source: Wechsler, D. (2016). Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children – Fifth Edition: Australian and New Zealand (WISC-VA&N) Administration and Scoring Manual. Sydney, NSW: Pearson, Inc.



# Correlates with Working Memory Difficulties:

- Working memory difficulties are often associated with:
- poor phonological awareness
- learning disorders and learning difficulties
- attentional issues
- anxiety, worry and trauma

# Working Memory and Learning

- Research shows that around 10-15% of children in any school have working memory (WM) deficits that slow the rate of academic progress (Fried et al, 2016).
- Poor working memory capacity is characteristic of many kinds of learning difficulties. These include:
  - Language impairments
  - Reading difficulties (including dyslexia)
  - Difficulties in mathematics
  - ADHD
  - Developmental coordination disorder/dyspraxia
- However, poor WM can also be a stand alone problem.



# Cognitive Processes associated with academic skills

Psychological Processes Significantly Related With Types of Academic Learning

Basic Reading Skills	Reading Fluency	Reading Comprehension	Mathematics Calculation	Mathematics Problem Solving	Written Language	Oral Expression	Listening Comprehension
		Auditory processing	Attention		Auditory processing		Auditory processing
		Executive functions		Executive functions	Executive functions	Executive functions	Executive functions
		Fluid reasoning	Fluid reasoning	Fluid reasoning	Fine motor Fluid reasoning		
Long-term recall	Long-term recall	Long-term recall	Long-term recall	Long-term recall	Long-term recall	Long-term recall	Long-term recall
Oral language		Oral language		Oral Language	Oral language	Oral language	Oral language
Phonological processing	Phonological processing				Phonological processing	Phonological processing	Phonological processing
Processing speed	Processing speed		Processing speed	Processing speed	Processing speed	Processing speed	Processing speed
			Visual-spatial processing				
Working memory		Working memory	Working memory	Working memory	Working memory	Working memory	Working memory

Note: Reprinted with permission from Dehn (2012a), *Children's Psychological Processes Scale, Professional Manual*.

# Develop the students' strategies

- Visualisation /mental imagery - attaching a visual in the mind's eye
- Making meaningful connections - build new information onto existing or logical knowledge
- Mnemonics/acronyms - make up a song or an acronym to help remember
- Chunking – grouping info into smaller units (usually 2-3 items e.g. turn 0411692143 into 0411-692-143)
- Teaching them how to remember (e.g. Memory Mates)

Think about it. **People remember...**



**20%**

20% of what they hear



**30%**

30% of what they see



**70%**

An amazing 70% of  
what they see & hear!

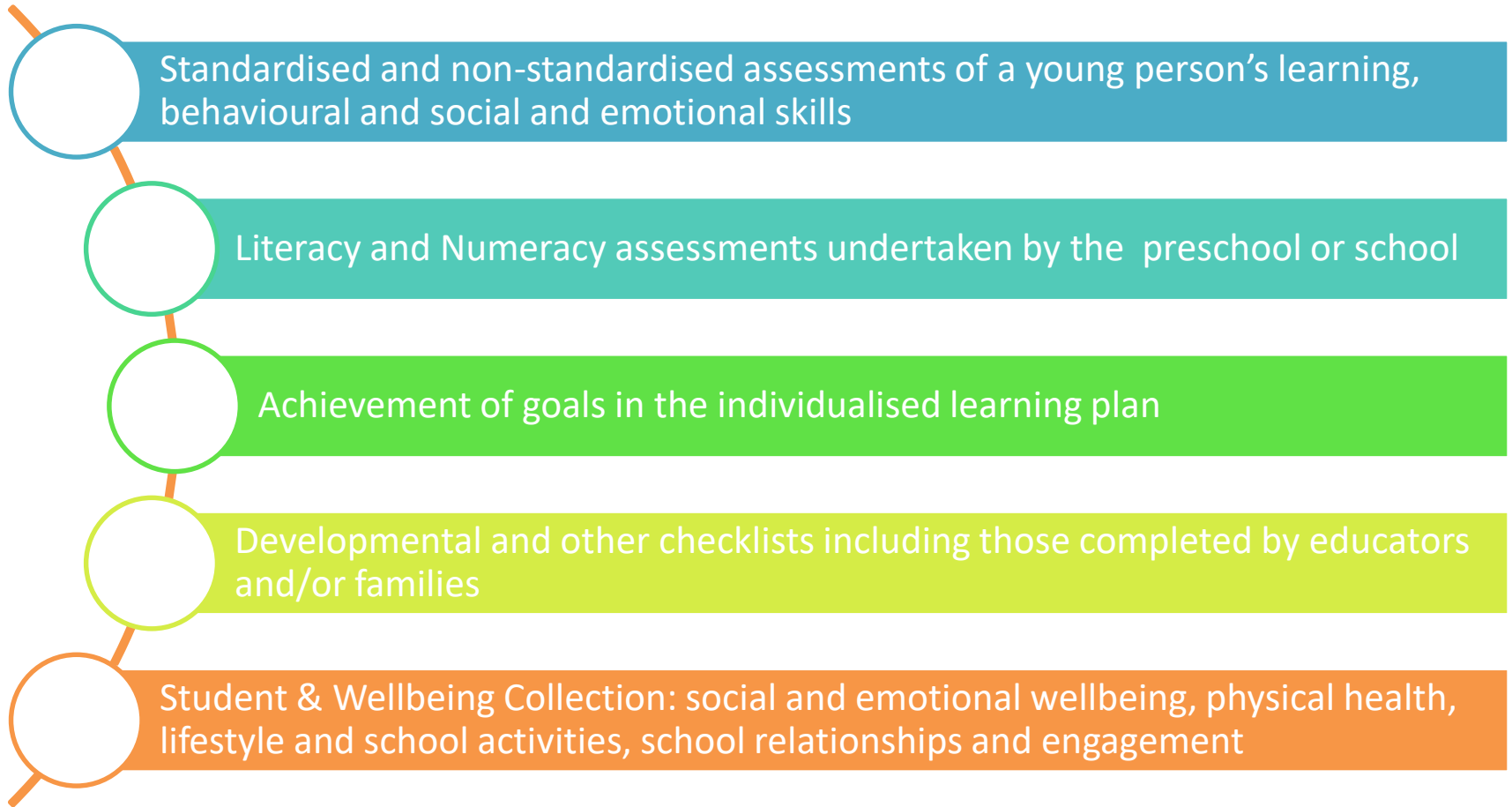
# Aim of our service

Improve outcomes for children and young people with additional needs

# Outcomes of our service

- Support preschools and schools to ensure children and young people reach their educational potential
- Improvement in the child or young person's, social, emotional, behavioural and or physical development. This can include those with exceptional needs (including giftedness).
- Improve preschools' and schools' capabilities in effectively planning for and supporting children in an inclusive educational setting.
- Improve preschools' and schools' capabilities in addressing the social, emotional and learning needs of all children and young people.

# Data Collection



# Eligibility

Psychology services are accessible to:

- Individual and groups of children and young people.
- Those who have ongoing issues after preschool and school based interventions have been implemented.
- When the response to school intervention has been minimal.
- This includes children and young people who are affected by barriers to achieving their potential due to learning, behavioural, or social and emotional issues.

# Eligibility

- Any Department preschool or school is eligible for a proactive service where a need is identified for capacity building related to supporting the learning, behaviour or social and emotional wellbeing of children and young people.
- There are a range of services that fall outside the scope of psychology services. These include Autism Spectrum Disorder assessments and therapeutic interventions.
- Consideration is also given to the requirement for a Department psychology service when a psychology service is already provided through another service or agency, for example National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) or private providers.



# Service Provision

- We may provide:
  - an assessment and/or diagnosis for individuals referred to the service
  - Case formulation, recommendations for intervention
  - feedback to the child/young person, family and school staff including the provision of a written report where appropriate.
  - training and development for parents and preschool/school based staff

# Service Provision

Where appropriate we may also be involved in:

- Participating in a multi-disciplinary case management approach to improve learning and wellbeing.
- Coordination and liaison with other external services and agencies to facilitate an integrated approach.

# What a parent could expect

## Referral

- An initial conversation with your preschool or school to gain your consent for referral to occur.
- A **question/reason for referral** will be raised to provide direction and clarity of what the input from the Psychologist will be
- There is a waiting list for services to occur within psychology and a state-wide priority system

*After providing your consent, you may withdraw it at any time. We encourage you to talk with your child's school or preschool about what support for your child will mean for your family.*

# What a parent could expect

## Active Service

- You will be contacted before any work is started to discuss how we will work with your child and their centre/school to answer the referral question.
- Information will then be collected regarding the child's areas of need (this may include assessment, observation or interviews)
- The Psychologist may then meet with class teacher or delegate, SSO, parent, carer to discuss the outcome of the assessment and next steps
- The school and parents can re-engage services any time in the future as needed.

# Gathering Information

- Formal Assessments (e.g. cognitive assessment)
- Informal Assessments (e.g. classroom observations)
- Meeting with teachers to gather learning data and reviewing work samples
- Reviewing external reports and information

If you have any questions about our involvement or the process of providing support to your child, please first speak with your school or preschool.

# Support for schools & centres

- Support educators by providing advice about relevant teaching and learning strategies to support inclusion
- Assist preschools and schools to identify and implement evidence based interventions to support learning and engagement
- Development and delivery of wellbeing intervention programs to whole of preschool, school and/or Partnership
- Support educators by providing professional development in areas such as:
  - Wellbeing education and prevention programs focusing on resilience, social skills, self-care, study skills, trauma informed practice and behaviour management
  - Psycho-education on a range of education topics (e.g learning disorders and cognitive processes)
- Assist preschool and schools to identify areas of need for program development and intervention through the analysis of learner data and trends.

# Specialist Programs

- The special class, disability unit or special school placement process is used to determine enrolments in special options.
- Placement in a special option will be dependent on available vacancies and student priority and offers will be made before the start of the following school year.
- Student Support Services and schools will work with the families of children and young people who are not placed with a special option to ensure they are supported with appropriate curriculum and resourcing within a mainstream setting.
- Eligibility for these programs are based on a stringent process with specific criteria to determine appropriate candidates





# Questions



Thankyou

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