



STANDING COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY INCLUSION
MICHAEL PETERSSON MLA (CHAIR), JOHNATHAN DAVIS MLA (DEPUTY CHAIR), PETER CAIN MLA

Inquiry into referred 2019–20 Annual and Financial Reports and Budget Estimates 2020-21
ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked by Elizabeth Kikkert MLA:

In relation to: Occupational Therapy Drop-In Clinics

1. Ms Plater stated in hearings that, following a successful pilot of an occupational therapy drop-in clinic at the Child Development Service in Holder, this program will be expanded to the three Child and Family Centres. When will this expansion occur at each, and what will be the cost of doing so?
 - a. Is this program an assessment only, followed by a referral to a specialist, or does it provide any therapy directly?
 - b. In hearings, Ms Plater stated that this service had improved access by decreasing the wait from six months to a matter of weeks. Can the minister please provide the full context/explanation for this comment?

Yvette Berry MLA: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

- 1) In late 2019, and into early 2020, Child Development Service (CDS) trialed the introduction of CDS Occupational Therapy drop-in clinics as bookable appointments at the Holder site. These clinics allowed families to access a timely consultation with an Occupational Therapist, and there was strong uptake from the community.

Following the success of this trial, the decision was made to expand Occupational Therapy drop-in clinics in 2021 to run weekly across the three Child and Family Centres, in line with other CDS drop-in clinics to improve accessibility for families. These commenced in February 2021.

The service is being provided within the existing operational budget.

- a) CDS drop-in clinics provide an opportunity for parents of young children in the ACT to discuss concerns about their child's development with a qualified allied health professional. Drop-in clinics provide a screening and information service. If a child or family attending a drop-in clinic is identified to require further assessment or supports, the family will be referred into CDS or linked with other services who are better placed to meet each family's specific needs.



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
FOR THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

QON No. 6

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- b) Prior to 2019, the CDS offered Speech Pathology and Physiotherapy drop-in clinics, but not Occupational Therapy drop-in clinics. Prior to this introduction of Occupational Therapy drop-in clinics across the ACT, families were required to have a referral through the CDS Intake service, and if found eligible, were placed on the CDS Occupational Therapy waiting list for assessment. Wait times for an appointment with an Occupational Therapist were typically three to six months.

Implementing a weekly CDS Occupational Therapy drop-in clinic means that families can now meet directly with an Occupational Therapist to discuss concerns about their child's development within one week in their local region.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Community Inclusion

Signature:

Date:

01/04/21

By the Minister for Early Childhood Development, Yvette Berry MLA