



Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2022-2023

ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Asked by: Mrs Elizabeth Kikkert

Reference: Hearing on 13 November 2023, Annual Report of Community Services Directorate

In relation to: Early Childhood Development and CDS Referrals from CFC Worker at Gordon Primary

The Annual Report mentions that a Child and Family Centre (CFC) worker who was embedded at Gordon Primary School had referred children with possible developmental delays or vulnerability to the Child Development Service (CSD) (p.79).

- (1) During the reporting year, how many children at Gordon Primary were referred to CDS by the CFC worker?
- (2) How many of these referrals were to speech pathologists, how many were to occupational therapists, how many were to physiotherapists, and how many were for autism assessments?
- (3) How many referrals to occupational therapists, physiotherapists, and speech therapists were for children age 6 and under, and how many were for children age 7-8?
- (4) Has this exercise provided any clarity regarding why certain developmental delays are not being identified until children are at school?
- (5) Besides embedding CFC workers in primary schools, what has been discussed to increase early detection of developmental delay and/or autism spectrum disorder?

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

1. Less than 10 children were referred to the Child Development Service during the 10 weeks that a Child and Family Worker from the Tuggeranong Child and Family Centre was at Gordon Primary School during term 2, 2023.
2. The referrals were for Speech Pathology and Occupational Therapy. There were no Physiotherapy referrals. Child and Family Workers cannot directly refer for Autism Assessments as referrals for Autism Assessments are required from a paediatrician. Notwithstanding this, Child and Family

Workers encourage families to go to their GPs and seek a referral to a paediatrician if they feel this would be beneficial.

3. All the referrals made to the Child Development Service were for children under 7 years.
4. Embedding workers in schools is focused on addressing individual needs of a very small number of students at those schools. There is not enough data available to identify any specific trends.
5. Child and Family Workers are highly trained professionals who are trained to observe developmental delays and concerns. There is ongoing work occurring between Education and CSD to ensure that Child and Family Centres can support families and provide this support in ways that is easiest for them to access.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

Signature:

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a horizontal stroke, positioned over the signature line.

Date: 28/11/23

By the Minister for Early Childhood Development, Yvette Berry MLA