



Specialised Learning Programs for Students with ASD: Frequently asked questions for educators

Q. What is the Specialised Learning Program for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)?

A. Specialised Learning Programs (SLP) for students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) support the individual needs of students with ASD from Kindergarten to Year 12. The programs target students who do not have an intellectual disability with a focus on year level or near year level academic engagement and achievement, organisational skills, social cognition development, positive peer relationships and emotional self-regulation.

Q. How many students should be enrolled?

A. Within the Primary program 22 – 25 students can enroll. Secondary programs that enroll 15-18 students will attract sufficient funding to be able to offer a flexible and responsive program. When fully subscribed, funding will support employment of a Level Three Program Coordinator; three teachers; six to eight education assistants; and transition support. The school needs to have a vacancy within mainstream to be able to enroll a student in the SLP.

Q. What is funded?

A. Each school that hosts a program enters into an agreement with the Department and receives a Targeted Initiative. The SLP are funded through a combination of the targeted Initiative, Individual Disability Allocation (level two) and per student amounts allocated through the Student Centred Funding model.

Q. What are the eligibility criteria?

A. Students eligible to apply to enrol in the specialised learning program for students will have:

- eligibility for enrolment in Western Australian public schools in Kindergarten to Year 12;
- a multi-disciplinary diagnosis of ASD without accompanying intellectual impairment;
- the ability to work at or near year level academic standard. This will include students on ATAR/WACE/VET pathways;
- difficulties with social, emotional and/or behavioural issues and challenges directly related and attributable to the impact of ASD;
- independent self-management of personal care requirements;
- transport to be facilitated by families (bus services are not provided to the program)

Q. Can a student who is deemed eligible be accepted mid-year?

A. Yes. Enrolment in the SLP may occur throughout the year as vacancies arise.

Q. When does a student exit from the SLP?

A. Students may exit the SLP at any time if a parent chooses to remove them. A student is deemed ready to exit the program when they are integrating successfully in mainstream for a sustained period of time. The Program Coordinator will discuss this with the parents and a thorough transition process will be developed. The parents may choose for the student to remain at the school, or return to their local public school.

Q. How much time do students spend in the homeroom?

A. The amount of time each student spends within the homeroom will vary according to age and individual need. Support is provided to address the learning needs that stem directly from their ASD such as communication, self-regulation, peer interaction and organisational skills. Within the homeroom, explicit teaching is utilised with the aim of ensuring that students maintain academic output, ensuring a smooth transition back into mainstream when the student is ready.

Q. Do students enrolled in the primary school SLP automatically have a place in the local secondary SLP?

A. The Minister has publicly stated that the SLP will offer a seamless placement option for students with autism from K-12. Whilst placement in secondary SLP will require an enrolment process to occur, it is expected that “feeder” primary and secondary schools will communicate regarding Year5/6 cohorts and will develop appropriate transition processes.