

## **Can my child's appointments take place at school?**

Out Loud attempts to provide the best and most flexible service tailored to meet the needs of your child and family.

Under NDIS best-practice recommendations, we like to engage with children in a variety of their natural environments (home, school/daycare, playgrounds etc.), as this helps us to observe and make recommendations at the point of need. We also like to see children at our purpose-built clinic in Bunbury, particularly when teaching new strategies, as this is a space where the environment can be controlled to optimise the learning of new skills.

We may offer to see your child at school or daycare if their goals are specific to that environment, or there are extenuating circumstances that make it difficult for you to bring your child into the clinic or have a therapist in your home.

When appointments are frequent, school-based therapy can be helpful to minimise the impact of appointments on your child's class time and can be useful to support other adults who work with your child.

When considering whether therapy sessions at school are appropriate, therapists and families come to a prior agreement about:

- The home practice activities that will be required to ensure that progress is extended beyond the school-based session
- The supports available to your child through home or school to practice the skills associated with their goals
- What would be considered a successful outcome and how we will evaluate if therapy at school is being effective
- When we will review the school-based program and make a decision about future therapy.

## **Are school visits more expensive than clinic sessions?**

We charge the same hourly rate for all appointments regardless of the location however for appointments outside of our clinic, a travel fee will apply. You can find more information about this in the Travel FAQ's.

## **What type of goals are best suited to being addressed at school?**

School and daycare visits can be a successful tool to support a range of therapy goals when the student's parent/caregiver commits to a plan to extend support across other environments.

The best goals to focus on in a school setting are:

- fine motor skills, working towards writing
- independence in a classroom (this is school dependent, as some schools will not allow therapists to work within a classroom)
- using a communication device in a classroom setting
- supporting access to activities in the school environment

- gross motor skills, including accessing playground equipment safely and effectively
- improving engagement in the classroom related to sensory regulation and processing
- improving engagement in the classroom related to behaviour management supports
- supporting Education Assistants (when available) to provide direct support to achieve goals
- coaching and supporting the adults working with your child as to how to work towards goals and facilitate success in the classroom environment.

### **How long will Out Loud see my child at school?**

Generally, the time frame for school-based services is set at one term, with the effectiveness of therapy and progress towards goals reassessed at the next program review.

Your program review (where you meet directly with your therapy team, usually during a school holiday break) is an essential component to any service where you are not present for sessions. These meetings provide the opportunity to discuss progress and challenges and create a therapy plan going forward. If you do not attend a program review, supports will be paused until you can meet with your therapy team to discuss outcomes from the previous term's school-based service and plan for the coming term.

While seeing students at school or daycare can provide a great therapy environment, these sessions can sometimes result in slower progress and success than we would expect if the support was provided in a different location, with family members present, who can work also on the goals at other times. If a change of environment would be better for your child's therapy, we will discuss options with you.

### **When are school visits unsuitable?**

School visits may not be suitable when:

- A child is reluctant to transition away from their peers or class activities
- The goal is directly linked to a different environment
- A child's behaviour is a barrier to a successful session
- The goal has been worked on for a significant period with minimal progress or change
- The goal is linked to strategies that require a high level of understanding from carers or require practice with peers (including strategies addressing behaviour and anxiety)
- A suitable space is not available for therapists to work in
- School policy does not allow therapists to attend the school site.

### **How else can Out Loud work with my school?**

Out Loud works with schools in many ways to ensure a child's goals are supported by all adults in their life.

We can work with schools by:

- Providing school programs that can be implemented by Education Assistants
- Providing training to schools on strategies specific to your child
- Attending meetings to discuss your child's progress and supports.

## **What are my options if school visits aren't suitable for my child?**

Out Loud can offer support through a range of services including:

- Assessment
- Home and school programs (written by therapists, implemented by family and school staff)
- Group sessions
- Clinic appointments
- Home visits
- Coaching
- Telehealth.

Your therapists will work with you to consider your options and identify the best way to support the goals you have identified for your child.

## **What is involved in booking school sessions?**

Establishing school services typically requires a significant amount of time liaising with a school to:

- justify why services are suited to being provided at school
- submit a mandatory application to be on school site, in accordance with Department of Education rules
- identify a suitable timeslot which will not impact your child's timetable too much
- identify a location for therapy to occur
- provide information about our therapists and business to the school (e.g., providing copies of therapists' Working with Children Check cards, proof of COVID-19 vaccination, business insurance etc.)
- attend induction or other school-specific training.

To compensate for this time, Out Loud will bill a maximum of one hour of service.

If school-based services are negotiated to extend beyond one term, this establishment fee will not be billed again, however if your child changes school or we need to coordinate a different therapy time after sessions have already been established, an additional fee may apply. Out Loud reserves the right to extend billing in the circumstance that a school requests additional applications or reports that are not generally required or provided.