

## Learning Difficulties: Information for Parents

### Are you concerned your child has gaps in their learning?

Learning difficulties can present themselves in a number of ways and can manifest in reading, writing, spelling and maths. You may have noticed your child 'falling behind', struggling with their schoolwork or just not progressing at the same rate as other children of a similar age. Although sometimes there can be fluctuations over the course of a child's development, they can be signs of learning delays and these initial observations are very useful in helping professionals determine what the problem is, and importantly, how to address it.



### Key signs & behaviours to look for

- Lower than expected grades on reports
- Weak memory skills- cannot retain information, even after short periods of time
- Works slowly and is quickly fatigued
- Becomes emotional/ frustrated when doing homework
- Has issues copying from the board and may miss information visually and have issues with self-monitoring their work
- When reading, has difficulties tracking words and reads words in the incorrect order
- Has problems when reading, drawing inferences and making predictions
- When writing, struggles to express their thoughts clearly
- Has poor spelling, struggles to write on the line and space out work appropriately
- In mathematics, has problems performing computations mentally and needs visual cues
- Is 7+ years and is still reversing letters when reading or writing

### What can I do to help?

- **Assessment-** IQ testing (the standard in Australia being the WISC-IV) and academic achievement testing (the standard usually being the WIAT-II) will be able to diagnose whether your child is achieving to their potential. Assessment will diagnose the presence of any specific learning disabilities (dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia). If issues are identified, it will then be helpful to do a more comprehensive assessment to determine why these learning issues have occurred and to identify the core blocks to learning. Testing of memory, attention, visual processing, auditory processing, executive functioning, motor skills, language skills and even potentially psychological factors may be required to help guide appropriate treatment.
- **Treatment** – Tutoring may allow your child to relearn material that was missed in the classroom, however, ultimately the aim of treatment will be to address the core blocks to learning so your child is able to learn effectively in a classroom environment. Treatment may need to be aimed at several areas in order to have your child maximise their potential. It is important to ensure that the person conducting the assessment is able to identify holistically, these blocks to learning, otherwise even if benefits are noted academically, learning may still be an unpleasant experience for your child.