

To the Select Committee into Child Development Services,

I am a Mother of 2 children who were born in Western Australia. They are currently 10 and 13. It became evident when I couldn't get my 18 months check up with my youngest as they didn't have enough nurses to provide appointments, that there were issues with the system. When my daughter was in Year 3 (she was 8) when we started looking for assistance, she has Auditory Processing Disorder (there is not enough Audiologists who know how to diagnose APD), she is gifted, which means there are no supports for her giftedness in schools at all and with COVID all the development services shut down, it took 2 and a ½ years to get an appointment with a PEAD, which means she has now been diagnosed this July with ADHD. How much easier it would have been for her and her schooling with early intervention. Only getting diagnosed at 8 with APD has left her 2 years behind in her spelling ability.

I am also a Primary School Teacher, who works for a Language Development School. This shortage of Child Development Services impacts our students greatly. We are an early intervention program (K-3), and students cannot apply to our school without having a speech pathologist and a school psychologist report. Our school is important to build these children's skills as they are usually 2 -3 years behind their same age peers. It is hard when school psychologists work 1 day a week, some are 2 -3 days a week in each school. The public system Child Development Services has wait lists from 18 months to 24 months depending on what specialist you are waiting for, private peads are full and not taking new clients, and there are not enough speech and OT therapists in the private sector either.

This is all detrimental to early intervention. I would be happy to extend on any of these points if needed.

Kind regards,