

## Child Development Unit

# Frequently Asked Questions

Making the decision to refer to, and navigating your way through the Child Development Unit (CDU) process can be confusing. We've provided a few answers to our most common questions and enquiries below.

### **How do I know the Women's and Children's Hospital (WCH) CDU is the right place to refer my Child?**

The WCH Child Development Unit (CDU) is a developmental assessment service for children with complex developmental concerns in three or more areas. The recognised catchment area for the WCH CDU is central Adelaide (South of Grand Junction Rd and north of Cross Rd.). To ensure we get the correct information regarding your child's concerns, all referrals need to be submitted on our WCH CDU Referral Form (available online at <http://www.wch.sa.gov.au/>, search services and look for Child Development Unit). The CDU referral form also contains information on our referral criteria (and exclusions) as well as other information if you are considering seeking a referral for your child.

### **Why can't I choose which CDU my child goes to?**

To enable easy access to public services throughout the state and ensure services are not overrun, your referral will be directed to your nearest CDU based on geographical location. The WCH CDU provides coverage for central Adelaide (and children over 8 years in northern Adelaide), while the Flinders Medical Centre Children's Assessment Team services southern Adelaide, and the Gordon McKay CDU provides services for children up to 8 years old in northern Adelaide.

### **Why does the CDU need so many forms and questionnaires?**

In order to provide a tailored service for your child, a large information gathering process is needed. While they might look similar, each questionnaire is different and when put together by our Unit Coordinators, they provide a comprehensive overview of your child's developmental history and possible future needs. While we may still accept similar questionnaires from other units, parents/carers/educators are still required to complete our own CDU questionnaires as they are regularly reviewed, updated and reflect current best practice standards. The more accurate, relevant and up to date information we have regarding your child's concerns the more efficient and accurate the assessment will be.

### **Why do I need a medical/GP referral?**

Allied Health Professionals and Educators can initiate the referral of a child to our service. However, a Medicare compliant GP referral is required prior to appointments with a CDU paediatrician. This referral enables Medicare (MBS) billing to occur and provides eligibility for MBS funded post therapy services after CDU assessment. Without this referral, your child may not be able to access Medicare funded (or subsidised) services.

### **My child was referred six months ago and I never heard anything back, what happens next?**

Once a valid WCH CDU referral is received, the referral will be triaged (prioritised) and both referrer and nominated parent/caregiver will be notified of the outcome. If you have not received any written confirmation from the CDU within 6-8 weeks from the date of referral, please contact us on (08) 8161 7287.

### **Why does it take so long for an assessment?**

Referrals to the CDU initiates the information gathering phase of our process. Referrals are not 'accepted' until all requested information has been received, at which time, if the referral is accepted, appointment(s) will be allocated. There is no mandatory 'wait time'. Appointments and/or assessments are allocated based on a triage (prioritisation) category and the next available appointment and/or assessment session within that category. Due to significant demand for services, this is where a 'wait' may be experienced. You (and your child's) time spent within the CDU process can be minimised by ensuring submission of a valid referral, prompt return of requested information, keeping your personal details up to date with the CDU and willingness to be contacted at short notice (often on the day) should someone else's scheduled assessment be cancelled.

## Women's and Children's Hospital

### **My child is waiting for assessment but their behaviour/concerns are getting worse, can you prioritise my child?**

The CDU is not an acute (emergency) service. If your child's behaviour means they are a risk to themselves or to others, please present to your nearest hospital emergency department and/or seek advice from your GP. A referral to CDU does not preclude you from seeking other medical or therapy help for your child while waiting for assessment. A GP or Paediatrician may consider a Mental Health Care Plan that enables your child to access a number of subsidised sessions with a psychologist. Your local Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) may also be able to assist with behavioural difficulties. Demand for CDU services is high and all children engaged with our service meet the same referral criteria.

### **What can I do for my child while waiting for an assessment?**

While you are waiting for your assessment, you may wish to seek other medical or therapy support for your child. A GP or Paediatrician may consider a Mental Health Care Plan or Chronic Disease Management Plan that enables your child to access a number of subsidised sessions with a psychologist. If your child's concerns are regarding learning and communications skills, your Child's school may also refer your child to a school Speech Pathologist/Psychologist or suggest these professionals are accessed within the local community.

### **Are there other options for assessment?**

There are many options available to access private assessments for your child. Private assessments are usually conducted at cost to the patient (costs should be discussed with individual providers). The CDU does not provide private assessments. For Autism assessments, please see our 'Assessment Options for ASD in SA' pamphlet or visit the Autism SA website at <http://www.autismsa.org.au> for further information.

### **What should I bring to the assessment?**

As the assessment can typically take 3-4 hours, please ensure you and your child arrive on time. Your child should continue to take any medication they would normally take. Copies of any reports not already provided to CDU are also welcome.

### **The CDU assessed my child. Why can't I use CDU for ongoing care?**

The Child Development Unit is established as an **assessment service** for children with complex developmental concerns in three or more areas. Although we don't provide post diagnostic therapy and ongoing follow up, we do provide comprehensive post diagnosis referrals, recommendations for future therapy and can assist with some government funded initiatives as part of our diagnostic report.

### **Who do you distribute information to?**

With your consent, the CDU will collect information from a range of organisations (such as schools, preschools and other medical professionals). The final report may also be distributed between 5-8 weeks post-assessment to a range of nominated professionals, however this will be discussed with you during the assessment process.

Parent/caregiver consent is a mandatory requirement and is requested at the beginning of the CDU process. One parent's consent is sufficient to proceed. You may withdraw consent, or change who you provide us consent to release information to, at any time throughout the process. Please note that if you choose not to update your consent, a copy of the CDU diagnostic assessment report may be automatically distributed based on your initial submitted consent form.

The CDU must comply with all court orders and/or interventions that may restrict distribution of information. Where the child's biological parents have separated and no court-ordered custody arrangements exist, both parents may have an equal right to their child's CDU information. Where there is conflict between parents/caregivers over distribution of information, the CDU may choose to provide information to the parents only, who may then distribute information to other parties of their own choosing.

### **The National Disability Insurance Service (NDIS) states my child needs a reassessment, what do I do?**

In many cases, NDIS may want to gather updated information regarding your Child's diagnosis and functional capacity (the ability to perform tasks in a variety of circumstances). The CDU is only able to offer Functional Capacity Assessments to patients previously assessed and diagnosed through the CDU. This assessment will only be allocated following provision of a new medical referral and receipt of updated questionnaire(s). If your child was not diagnosed through the CDU we are unable to provide this service and suggest contacting your child's original diagnostician/assessment team or therapists currently offering therapy with your child.

#### **For More Information**

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