

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 for a block of therapy 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. Out Loud does not offer ongoing school services, and operates in blocks of treatment and review to ensure progress is made in a school environment.

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 practise 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.

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. Out Loud is unable to provide school based services when there is no additional support from the home and/or school environment to ensure that the progress made in 1:1 sessions is transferred to everyday activities.

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. The travel fee is a combination of the time taken by your therapist to travel to and from the location where supports are provided and the distance travelled, measured in kilometres. Where Out Loud is able to schedule multiple appointments in a similar area, the travel fee will be shared between clients, as per NDIS guidelines. 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. 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.

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 ten sessions (at a weekly or fortnightly interval), with the effectiveness of therapy and progress towards goals reassessed at the next program review. Cancellations or non-attendance of sessions within your block are counted in the ten sessions and cannot be added to the block's end however if a cancellation is initiated by Out Loud (e.g., your therapist is away) the session can be rescheduled to another date.

Your program review (where you meet directly with your therapy team) 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. A program review is essential in planning the next 'therapy' steps for your child's program. If you do not attend a program review, your therapy team will be unable to identify what model of therapy is required for your child. Therapy supports will not be offered in any environment until a program review is completed.

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
- An adult eg parent or EA is not available to attend the sessions
- There is no capacity within the school or home environment to complete practice outside of sessions and implement strategies
- School policy does not allow therapists to attend the school site.

How can Out Loud work with my child's school to support their progress?

Out Loud works with schools in many ways to ensure a child's goals are supported by all adults in their life. In addition to blocks of therapy support we can work together with schools through:

- 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:

- Skills based assessments
- Home and school programs (written by therapists, implemented by family and school staff)
- Group sessions
- Clinic appointments

- Home visits
- Parent coaching to support families in identifying strategies and activities to support goals in a home environment
- 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?

Out Loud has limited flexibility in the times and days it can schedule school based sessions. When scheduling sessions, our team is required to allocate travel time to and between schools, work between allocated break times (i.e., lunch and recess times) and work with a school's schedule to ensure an appropriate space is available for sessions. Our team members visit areas on set days (to reduce the cost of travel to families) and we are unable to adjust the days or times we offer blocks in. If a time proposed to a school is not appropriate for the school's timetable, our team will note preferred school time frames and attempt to offer an appropriate time when a block next becomes available.

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 time slot 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, business insurance etc.)
- attend induction or other school-specific training.

To allow for the time to establish a block of school sessions, Out Loud will bill the time required to complete a school's application process up to a maximum of one hour of service.

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.

What does a school session look like?

When our team provides services outside of our clinic we are required to complete additional tasks that become part of the allocated session duration. Our sessions in a school or daycare environment include:

- Completing a schools sign/check in process
- Collecting a child from their classroom and transitioning them to the allocated space for their therapy session
- Completing the session
- Return child to class
- Sign out of school grounds
- Documenting the outcomes of the session on a triplicate note that are provided to school and home, with an additional copy retained on Out Loud's files.

What happens if my child refuses to go with their therapist?

Our therapists make every effort possible to ensure your child enjoys therapy sessions and will work to motivate your child to participate in the session but on the occasion that this does not eventuate, you will be informed of any challenges in school based sessions.

If your child's motivation and behaviour becomes a barrier to successful school sessions, your child's therapist will schedule an appointment with you to discuss school sessions and identify any strategies that

may assist in your child participating in school based sessions. It may be that the school sessions are discontinued, and an alternative program is negotiated.

What happens if my child is meant to be in a special activity?

Therapy times are carefully negotiated with the school and every attempt is made to accommodate around the student's regular classroom activities. If there is a special event (ANZAC Day ceremony, Book Week Parade, swimming lessons etc) that you would like to your child to attend in preference to their therapy session, it is your responsibility to inform your child's therapist giving as much notice as possible.

What happens if my child is sick during the session?

Out Loud reserves the right to cease sessions where clients are showing symptoms of sickness. The therapist will return your child to the classroom and discuss with the teacher.

What happens if the EA or teacher wants to talk to my child's therapist as they are leaving the session?

General feedback is often able to be given briefly after sessions, but greater detail discussions require more time for therapists to engage in, thus are not able to occur without notice. Extra time taken to discuss your child (beyond a brief feedback) with the teacher, may be billed. It is important that you communicate with your child's teacher and request a case conference to ensure clear communication between therapists and EA/teachers.

Where will therapy take place?

Schools allocate the spaces they have available for therapy sessions during the initial request for school services email from Out Loud's School Services Coordinator. Generally, ongoing or regular therapy sessions do not take place in your child's classroom as it is too distracting for other students, and likely not related to what they are doing in the classroom at the time. For a successful session, our team requires a quiet space with an appropriate sized desk and minimal disruptions. School sessions will not be able to take place if an appropriate environment is not available.