

Guidelines for Collaboration in the Private Sector

- WA standards for ASD assessment require multidisciplinary collaboration. In the private sector, communication between team members is important to ensure a clear, cohesive experience for WA families.
- In most cases, the paediatrician or psychiatrist is the first “port of call” for families undergoing the process. If the paediatrician/psychiatrist concludes that a comprehensive team assessment for ASD is required, it is important to inform families about the choice to proceed in the public sector or private sector. Should the family elect to proceed privately, referral is made to the psychologist and speech pathologist. This referral process will enable Medicare rebate for four assessment appointments associated with multidisciplinary autism assessment.
- In some cases, the family may have made initial contact with the psychologist/speech pathologist. It is the responsibility of all assessment team members to advise families that a collaborative, multidisciplinary process is required and facilitate the referral pathways and if applicable, inform families regarding Medicare rebates.
- It is recommended that the psychologist and speech pathologist discuss the division or collaborative rating of the DSM-V criteria prior to proceeding with their respective components of the assessment. This prevents double-rating any of the criteria, as this can make it more difficult to confirm a diagnostic conclusion and is confusing for families. In some collaborations, the criteria may be divided up and in other cases, clinicians may decide to work together on each criterion. The end result should produce ONE agreed-upon set of ratings for criteria and severity level ratings.
- Information needs to be sourced across setting. If information needs to be obtained from other sources (eg. school or childcare staff, OT etc), the psychologist and speech pathologist should discuss in advance who will take responsibility for this. There should also be agreement on how to divide aspects of overall history-taking.
- Once the components of the assessment are completed, information should be exchanged between assessors to enable a joint conclusion. Prior to this collaborative exchange, individual assessors should refrain from providing clients and families with a firm diagnostic conclusion.
- Assessors should agree upon who will take responsibility for a feedback session either in person or remotely to discuss the conclusion with the family and coordinate subsequent referrals and paperwork.
- Medical follow up with paediatrician/psychiatrist post completion of multidisciplinary assessment is recommended and, for children under 13 years of age, is **required** to activate Helping Children with Autism funding.
- All assessors should forward reports to each other once completed.