

# Education for students with disability

Helping your child through changes in their education

An Easy Read guide



## How to use this guide



This guide was written by:

- people with disability
- families and carers.

Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA) helped them write this guide.



When you see the word 'we', it means the people who wrote this guide.



They wrote this guide for the Australian Government Department of Education.



We wrote this guide in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

**Bold**  
Not bold

We have written some words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of important words we use in this guide on page 5.

There is a list of other words on page 53.



This Easy Read guide is a summary of another document.

This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other document on our website.

[www.dese.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005/students](http://www.dese.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005/students)



You can ask for help to read this guide.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.



We wrote this guide to support you.

We hope you find this guide helpful.



This guide has information for children of different ages.

You don't have to read the sections about children that are a different age to your child.

## What's in this guide?

Words we use in this guide	5
Who is this guide for?	10
What is this guide about?	11
What are your rights?	14
Getting your rights	18
What are the important transitions?	28
Starting Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)	28
Leaving ECEC and starting primary school	31
New changes for each school year	38
Leaving primary school and starting high school	41
Finishing early high school years and starting late high school years	47
Finishing high school and going on to other learning	51
Word list	53

## Words we use in this guide



We have some words we always use when we talk about the Disability Standards for Education (DSE).

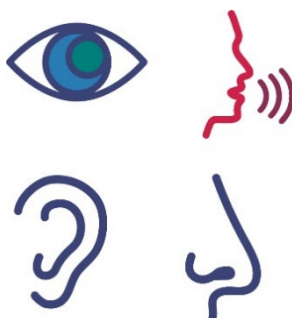
Knowing what these words mean can help you understand how the DSE work.



### Disability

A disability can affect your:

- brain
- body
- senses.



You use your senses to understand the world around you.



When you have a disability, part of your body doesn't work:

- very well
- how it should.



A disability can affect:

- what you can do
- how much you can do on your own.

A disability can affect how you:



- communicate



- learn



- do things.

## Education

When you get an education, teachers support you to learn:



- new skills
- knowledge.





## Education provider

An education provider is somewhere you go to learn.

This could be a:



- pre-school or kindergarten



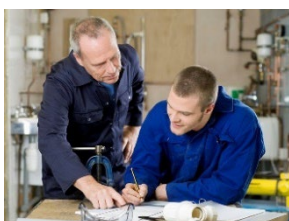
- primary school



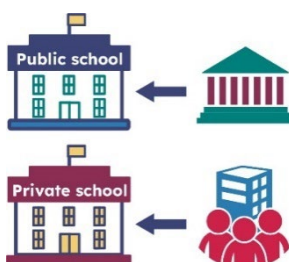
- high school



- university



- training organisation, such as TAFE.



An education provider might be public – it's run by the government.

Or it could be private – another organisation owns and runs it.



## Rights

Your rights are rules for how you can expect other people to treat you.

This includes education providers.

## Standards

Standards are what we use to measure how well something is done.

We look at:

- what is done
- what the standard is.



Standards help us make sure things work well.



Education providers must:

- reach the standard
- try to do better than the standard.





## Students

Students are people who learn with an education provider.

This includes when they learn:



- in a classroom



- at home



- at work.



Students can be people:

- with disability
- without disability.

## Who is this guide for?

This guide is for anyone who:



- has a child with disability



- uses an education provider.

It doesn't matter:



- how old your child is



- what stage of their life your child is at.

## What is this guide about?



A **transition** is when you change from one thing to another.



This guide is about how to manage important transitions in your child's education.



Transitions can be:

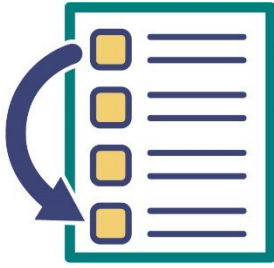
- big
- small.



We talk about all the important transitions in your child's education on page 28.



Transitions happen every year.



Transitions can change the order you are used to doing things in.

Transitions can also lead to new:



- places and spaces



- people



- activities



- ways of doing things.

## The Disability Standards for Education (DSE)



The DSE are standards for the education of students with disability.



You can use the DSE to help your child with transitions.

The DSE talk about 2 important things:



- the rights of students with disability



- what education providers must do.



You can use the DSE to help your child transition from one thing to the next.

## What are your rights?



Your rights are human rights.

This means you always have the same rights as other people.



You have the right to:

- join in
- be included.



It is ok to speak up for your rights.



You have the right to enjoy all the good things in life.



Students with disability have the right to be treated on the **same basis** as other students.



Being treated on the same basis means students with disability get:



- treated as equal to other students



- choices about taking part, just like other students



- chances, just like other students.

When you **enrol**, you:



- tell an education provider you want to become a student



- give the education provider information about you.



Students with disability have the right to enrol:

- at a new education provider
- in a course or learning program.



Students with disability have the right to take part in any:

- course
- learning program.



The course or learning program must be **accessible**.



When something is accessible to students with disability, they can:

- get to it
- take part in it.



This might be a:

- place
- activity
- object or piece of equipment.



Students with disability have the right to get support they need so they can learn.



We have laws that protect your rights.

## Getting your rights

### Things to think about and questions to ask

#### Meeting with your education provider



Meet with your education provider.



Find out what support they will give you.

Find out:



- who the best people to contact are



- who you should ask for information



- what information they need from you.



Find out how often you will meet with:

- your child's teacher
- other support staff.

## Questions



Here are some questions you can ask your education provider.



How much experience do you have with students with disability?



What challenges have you faced before?

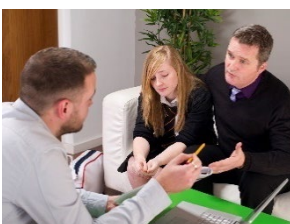
How did you handle those challenges?



How will I take part in making decisions about:

- my child's education?
- what support they need?

Will my child get the same supports this year that they had last year?



Will my child get:

- all of those supports?
- only some of those supports?

Or will my child get different supports?

## How your education provider will support your child



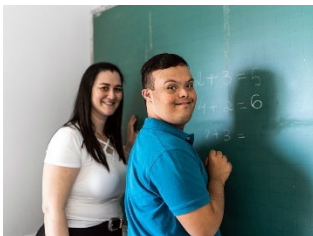
Find out how your education provider will make decisions about how to support your child.

You and your child should be included when they make decisions.



Find out if information from past years will be shared with:

- your child's new teachers
- other support staff.



Find out how your education provider supports students who learn differently.



Find out what special supports are available for your child.





Find out how your education provider supports students who need to use **assistive technology**.



Assistive technology can:

- make it easier to do things
- keep you safe.



Assistive technology might be:

- an aid or piece of equipment
- a system to use.



Find out what your education provider will do when you are worried about something.



Find out what support your education provider will give your child when they must see health care workers for regular treatments they need.

## Questions



Here are some questions you can ask your education provider.



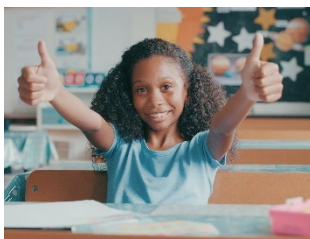
How can we work together to decide what my child needs?



How will you include my child?



How will you support my child?



How will you make sure my child gets what they need?



Have you worked with other children who need the same types of support as my child?

Will you use the same supports?

What other supports will you use?

## Keeping your child safe



Find out what your education provider does about **bullying**.



Bullying is when someone says or does something to make you feel bad over and over again.



Find out if you should talk about your child's disability with their:

- teacher
- classmates.



Find out what you should do if:

- you have a problem
- something goes wrong.

## Questions



Here are some questions you can ask your education provider.



How do you deal with bullying?



How do you teach students about:

- building good relationships?
- connecting with each other?



How do you teach students about **diversity**?



Diversity is what makes people different from each other.

People can:

- come from different places
- speak different languages
- have different abilities
- live their lives in different ways.



How do you teach students about **inclusion**?



Inclusion is when all students can:

- go to school
- take part
- feel like they belong
- get the support they need to learn.



How strict are your rules?

What will you do if my child can't follow the rules as well as other students?



## Speaking up about your rights



If you can, find out how good your education provider is compared to other education providers.



You might talk to the parents or carers of other students.



Find out how well your education provider will get to know your child and not just their disability.



Find out what to do if an education provider won't let your child enrol.



If they don't let your child enrol because of their disability, they are breaking the law.



Find out how your education provider handles other services your child needs while they are at school.



## Questions



Here are some questions you can ask your education provider.

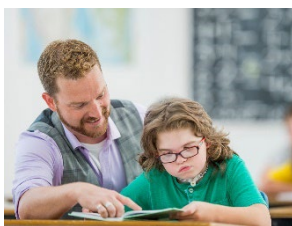


How do you feel about other people who support my child meeting with my child's teachers?



Will my child go to school every day?

Will they start on the first day with the other students?



How will you support my child?



How do you support students to speak up about what they need?

## What are the important transitions?



There are some important transitions in your child's education.

We talk about each of these transitions in detail on the following pages.

## Starting Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC)



Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) is for children from birth to the start of primary school.



Children go to ECEC for:

- care
- teaching and learning.





ECEC takes place in:

- ECEC centres
- preschools
- kindergartens.



Lots of things change when a child starts ECEC.

They will have a lot of new experiences.



The order your child is used to doing things will change.



Your child will be:

- in a new place
- away from home for longer than they are used to.



Your child will meet new adults, such as:

- teachers
- educators.



Your child will meet other children.



Your child will need to share:

- spaces
- toys and other equipment.



Your child will have more structure – their activities and play will be planned.



Your child might need support to:

- join in
- take part
- do things you usually support them to do.

## Leaving ECEC and starting primary school



Primary school can be very different from:

- life at home
- ECEC.



Lots of things will change.

There is a lot to get ready for.



Your child will spend more time away from home.

The order your child is used to doing things in will change.



Your child will meet new adults, such as:

- teachers
- school leaders
- support staff.



Your child might have:

- more than one teacher
- different teachers on different days
- different teachers at different times.



Your child will meet other children.



Your child will visit:

- places in the school they haven't been to before
- different parts of the school at different times.



Your child will do tasks and learning activities they haven't done before.





Your child's school will have rules your child needs to:

- learn
- follow.



Your child will wear new clothes.

They might have to wear a uniform at school.



Your child will:

- learn in new ways
- have more structure – each day will be planned for them.



Your child might need support to:

- start school
- take part
- get used to doing things in new ways.



Your ECEC centre might help you and your child get ready to start school.

## Lee's story

5



Lee is 5 years old.

He will start primary school soon.



Lee and his mum just moved to a new area.



Lee's kindergarten sent his new school some information about Lee.



It says that Lee likes sharing stories.



It also says how Lee doesn't like:

- sitting
- using pens or pencils.





It talks about some times when Lee didn't behave very well.



Lee's mum thinks the information doesn't tell Lee's new school what he:

- is good at
- needs.



Lee's mum thinks he might have **autism**.

Autism affects how you:

- think
- feel
- communicate
- connect and deal with others.



But when she filled in forms for Lee's new school, she left the part about disability blank.



The school contacted Lee's mum.

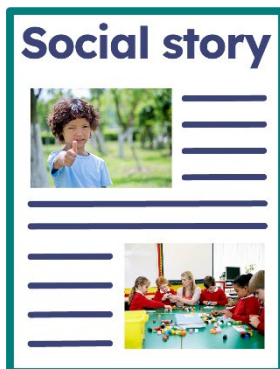
They wanted to find out if they might get money from the government to support Lee at school.



Lee's mum didn't think the school knew enough about Lee – they had not even met him yet!



She wants the school to support Lee to do well in the classroom.



The school sent Lee a **social story**.

A social story uses words and pictures to show you how something works.

It has words that are easy to understand.

It might use photos of real people and places.

Or it might use drawings instead.



Lee's social story had photos of:

- his classroom
- the playground
- other parts of the school.



Lee and his mum:

- walked around his new school
- talked about things Lee was worried about.



Lee and his mum both got excited about Lee starting school.

## New changes for each school year



There will be lots of big changes for your child when they are at school.

Each year, your child will have new:



- classrooms and play areas



- teachers and school friends



- subjects to learn and activities to do



- ways to learn



- events and programs to take part in.





Some year levels have different changes to get used to.



They might use different:

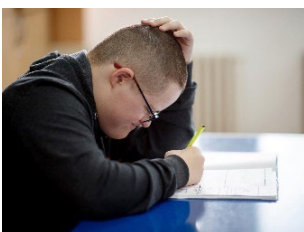
- buildings
- classrooms.



They might have more homework.



They might have a special event, like school camp.



Each year will be more difficult than the last.



Your child's needs will change too.



The changes your child goes through in Year 2 will be very different to Year 6.

And this will be very different to Year 8.



When your child goes through these new changes, they will need different support.



These changes can also happen if your child moves to a new school.

## Leaving primary school and starting high school



Leaving primary school and starting high school is a very big change.

There is a lot to get ready for.

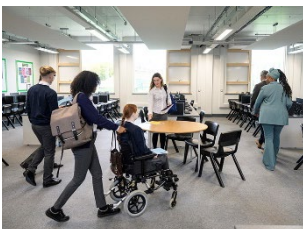


Your child will go to a new school.



There will be new:

- buildings
- classrooms
- playgrounds.



Your child will visit different parts of the school at different times.

They will move around a lot.



Your child will meet new adults, such as:

- teachers
- school leaders
- support staff.



Your child will have:

- more than one teacher
- different teachers for different subjects.



Your child will meet lots of other children.



Your child will have more:

- schoolwork
- homework.



The work will be harder.

They will have to do more of the work on their own.

Your child will:



- do more activities



- need more materials and equipment.



The support your child needs might change too.

## Charlie's story



Charlie is 11 years old.

He lives in a small town.



Charlie has **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**.

ADHD affects how you:

- sit still
- pay attention
- control what you do.



Charlie also has **dyslexia**.

Dyslexia is a learning disability.

Dyslexia affects how you:

- read
- learn how letters and sounds go together.



Charlie has just finished primary school.

He liked playing sport on the oval at his primary school.





Charlie is about to start high school.



Charlie's parents met with people from the high school.

They talked about what primary school was like for Charlie.

Charlie's dad was worried about reports from Charlie's primary school.

He didn't think they showed how well Charlie could:

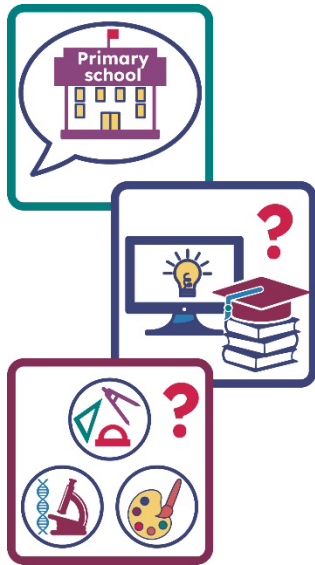


- read
- write
- work with numbers.

Charlie went to a special day at his high school where he could:



- look around the school
- meet his teachers and other students.



Some of the people who work at the high school talked to Charlie about:

- primary school
- how he likes to learn
- what he likes to learn about.

Charlie likes his new teacher because she:

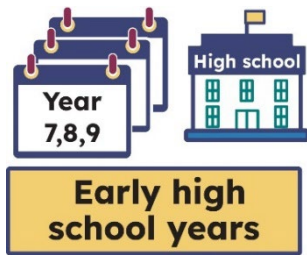


- understands reading and writing can be hard for Charlie



- uses different ways to test Charlie's learning.

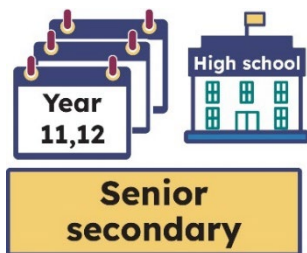
## Finishing early high school years and starting late high school years



Years 7, 8 and 9 are the early high school years.



Years 10, 11 and 12 are the late high school years.



Some schools call Years 11 and 12 'senior secondary' years.

Even if they stay in the same school, things can change a lot when students:



- finish early high school
- start late high school.



They might use different:

- buildings
- classrooms.

They might have different:



- subjects

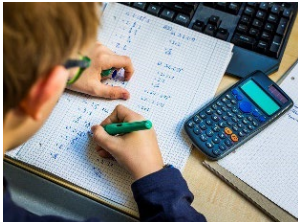


- teachers.



In late high school years, students have more:

- schoolwork
- homework.



The work will be harder.

They will have to do more of the work on their own.



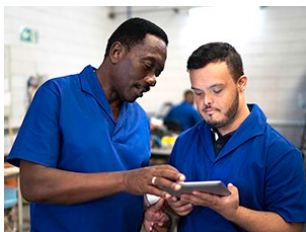
The support a student needs might change too.



Your child might do something different in the late high school years.



They might try a training organisation such as TAFE.



When you study VET or TAFE, you learn knowledge and skills to help you do a certain job.

## Jamie's story



Jamie is 16 years old.

They live in a small town.



Jamie has a **physical disability**

A physical disability affects how you:

- move
- use your body.



Jamie also has a **psychosocial disability**.

A psychosocial disability affects your mental health.

It can affect the way you:

- think
- feel
- deal with other people.



The school has made sure Jamie can get mental health support.

Jamie's teachers:

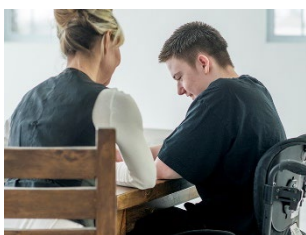


- let Jamie have more time to finish their schoolwork when they need it



- plan how to support Jamie during exams.

Jamie might need more support when schoolwork and exams:



- get harder
- take more time.



Jamie learned to speak up about what they need.



## Finishing high school and going on to other learning



Your child might want to keep learning after they finish high school.



Your child might try a training organisation such as TAFE.



Your child might go to university.



A lot will change when your child:

- finishes high school
- goes on to other learning.



Your child might not be an adult yet.

But they will spend a lot more time with other adults.



Your child's relationship with their teachers will change.



Your child's teacher won't contact you to talk about your child's learning.

They will contact your child.



You will need to support your child at this time.



You can talk to your child about:

- how their learning is going
- what support they need.

## Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.

### **Accessible**



When something is accessible to students with disability, they can:

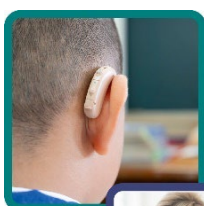
- get to it
- take part in it.



### **Assistive technology**

Assistive technology can:

- make it easier to do things
- keep you safe.



Assistive technology might be:

- an aid or piece of equipment
- a system to use.



### **Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)**

ADHD affects how you:

- sit still
- pay attention
- control what you do.



## Autism

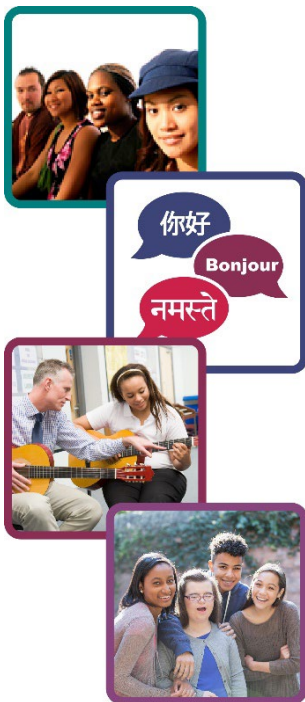
Autism affects how you:

- think
- feel
- communicate
- connect and deal with others.



## Bullying

Bullying is when someone says or does something to make you feel bad over and over again.



## Diversity

Diversity is what makes people different from each other.

People can:

- come from different places
- speak different languages
- have different abilities
- live their lives in different ways.



## Dyslexia

Dyslexia is a learning disability.

Dyslexia affects how you:

- read
- learn how letters and sounds go together.



## Enrol

When you enrol, you:

- tell an education provider you want to become a student
- give the education provider information about you.



## Inclusion

Inclusion is when all students can:

- go to school
- take part
- feel like they belong
- get the support they need to learn.



## Physical disability

A physical disability affects how you:

- move
- use your body.



## Psychosocial disability.

A psychosocial disability affects your mental health.

It can affect the way you:

- think
- feel
- deal with other people.





## Same basis

Being treated on the same basis means students with disability get:

- treated as equal to other students
- choices about taking part, just like other students
- chances, just like other students.



## Social story

A social story is a book a book someone makes to show you how something works.

It has:

- words that are easy to understand
- photos or real people and places.



## Transition

A transition is when you change from one thing to another.



The Information Access Group created this Easy Read document using stock photography and custom images. The images may not be reused without permission. For any enquiries about the images, please visit [www.informationaccessgroup.com](http://www.informationaccessgroup.com). Quote job number 4378-B.