

Speaking up for your young child with disability

An Easy Read guide



How to use this guide



A group of people worked together to write this guide.

The group included:



- people with disability



- their families and carers



- Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA).



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



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



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 we use on page **29**.



This Easy Read guide is a summary of another guide.

This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other guide on our website.

www.education.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005/information-resources-students-disability-and-their-caregivers



You can ask for help to read this guide.

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

What's in this guide?

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Words we use in this guide



We have some words we always use in this guide.

Knowing what these words mean can help you understand this guide better.

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.



Educational institution

An educational institution is somewhere you go to learn.

This could be a:



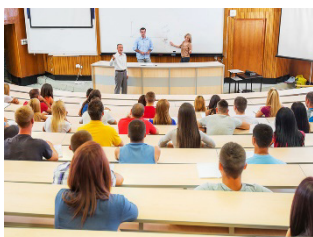
- pre-school or kindergarten



- primary school



- high school



- university



- training organisation, such as TAFE.



An educational institution might be public – this means it's run by the government.



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



Reasonable adjustment

When something changes so you can join in, we call it an adjustment.

This is sometimes called an accommodation.



Adjustments can include:

- someone to support you
- doing things in new ways
- changing things.



When something is reasonable, it is:

- fair
- sensible.



Reasonable adjustments are things your educational institution must:

- do
- change.



Rights

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

This includes educational institutions.

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.



Educational institutions must:

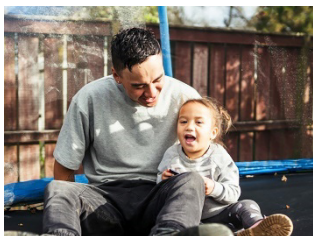
- reach the standard
- try to do better than the standard.

Who this guide is for



This guide is for anyone who has a young child with disability.

This includes if you are the young child's:



- parent



- carer.

What this guide is about



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



- pre-school



- kindergarten.

ECEC centres include:



- long day care



- family day care.

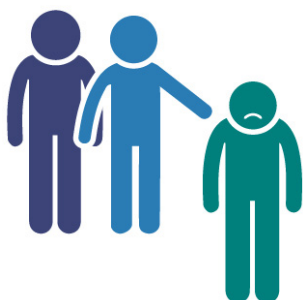


This guide is about how to speak up for your young child when they go to ECEC.

Laws that protect your young child



There are 2 laws that protect your young child when they go to ECEC.



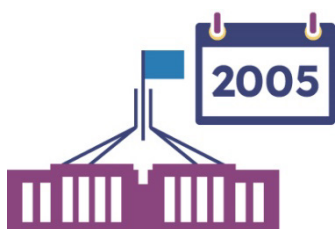
Discrimination is when someone is treated unfairly because of something about them they can't change.



In Australia, we have a law called the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA)*.



The DDA says it is against the law to treat people with disability unfairly.



In 2005, the Australian Government published the Disability Standards for Education (DSE).



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

The DSE talk about 2 important things:



- the rights of children with disability



- what educational institutions must do.



The DSE and the DDA work together.

The DSE protects your young child when they go to:



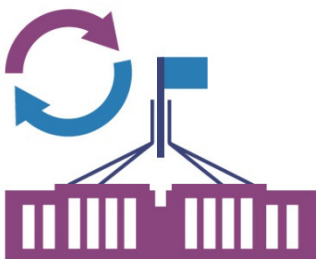
- pre-school



- kindergarten.



But at the moment, the DSE doesn't cover your young child if they go to ECEC centres.



The Australian Government are working on ways to change this.

Your young child's rights



In Australia, your young child has rights when they go to ECEC.



Your young child has the right to get the same services as children without a disability.

Your young child also has the same right as children without a disability to:



- take part



- learn



- be treated fairly.



But your young child might need a reasonable adjustment to make sure they:

- get the same services
- can take part.



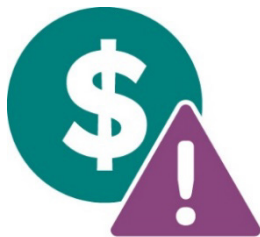
An ECEC service must make the change if it is reasonable.



But they don't have to make a change if it creates an **unjustifiable hardship** for them.



An unjustifiable hardship is a change that is too much for an ECEC service to make for your young child.



For example, a change you want them to make might cost too much money.



An ECEC service must show that they can't make the change.

How the laws that protect your young child work in ECEC



There are some important questions you might have about ECEC.



We explain how the laws that protect your young child work in ECEC on the following pages.

A diagnosis about your young child's disability



A **diagnosis** is when a doctor:

- checks your health
- says what health condition they think you have.



Your young child does not need a disability diagnosis to be protected by the law.

These laws include the DSE and the DDA.



An ECEC service might need to make reasonable adjustments to support your young child.



They might not need proof of a disability diagnosis to make the change.



But you can choose to give an ECEC service a letter from your young child's doctor.

This letter might help an ECEC service understand how to support your young child.

What ECEC services can't do



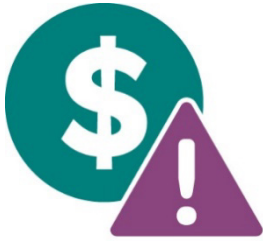
Children with disability have the same rights to take part in ECEC as children without a disability.



This means an ECEC service can't stop your young child from going because of their disability.



For example, an ECEC service can't say they will only accept a certain number of children with disability.



They also can't stop your young child from going because they don't have enough **funding**.



Funding is money that an ECEC service receives to pay for supports and services.



An ECEC service must make changes to support your young child.



Unless it creates an unjustifiable hardship for them.

Reasonable adjustments



You can ask an ECEC service to make reasonable adjustments for your young child.



An ECEC service must support your young child to take part.

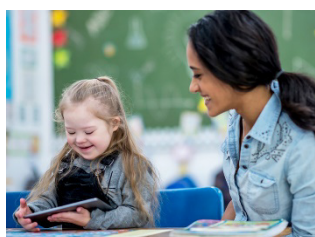


You can work with an ECEC service to find out what changes will support your young child the most.



For example, your young child might communicate using a device that contains:

- words
- symbols.



A reasonable adjustment is for an ECEC worker to learn how to support your young child to use this device.

This helps your young child to communicate what they need and want.

Support for your young child's self-care tasks

Self-care is when you do things to look after yourself.



This includes your:

- mind
- body.

You can ask an ECEC service to support your young child's self-care tasks.



For example, your young child might need support to go to the toilet.

This is a type of reasonable adjustment.

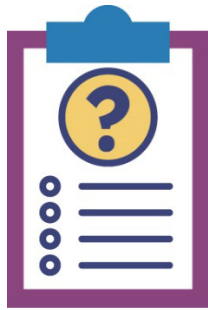


If an ECEC service can't support your young child's self-care tasks, they must explain why.

Questions to help you choose an ECEC service



It can be hard to work out which ECEC your young child should go to.



One way to help you is to make a list of questions to ask each ECEC service.



We have included some examples of questions below that might help you.

Question 1



What is your **attitude** towards people with disability?

Attitudes are what you:

- think
- feel
- believe.

Question 2



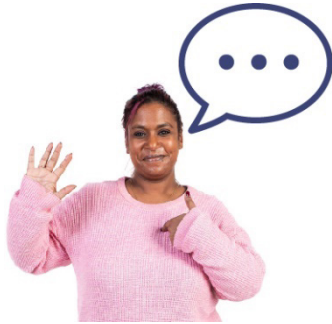
How will you support my young child?

Question 3



How will you support my family?

Question 4



What are your:

- values?
- beliefs?



How do your staff members follow your:

- values?
- beliefs?

Question 5



How will you work with me to:

- learn about my young child?



- support my young child?

Question 6



How will you organise reasonable adjustments if my young child needs them?

How to find out the answers to your questions



To find out the answers to your questions, you can ask to meet with the staff members from an ECEC service.

You can look online, including:



- social media pages



- the ECEC website.

Or you can ask other:



- parents



- carers.



It might also help if you think about what answer you would like to hear.

This will help you work out what type of ECEC you want your young child to go to.

Word list

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

Attitudes



Attitudes are what you:

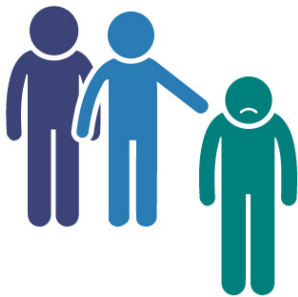
- think
- feel
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Diagnosis



A diagnosis is when a doctor:

- checks your health
- says what health condition they think you have.



Discrimination

Discrimination is when someone is treated unfairly because of something about them they can't change.



Funding

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Self-care



Self-care is when you do things to look after yourself.

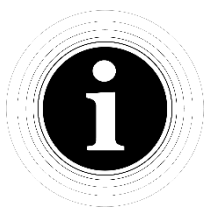
This includes your:

- mind
- body.



Unjustifiable hardship

An unjustifiable hardship is a change that is too much for an ECEC service to make for your young child.



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