

Positive Education Planning

Supporting children with a disability
in Victorian government primary schools

3rd Edition 2015



Association for
Children with a
Disability



Association for
Children with a
Disability

ACD is the leading advocacy and information service for children with any type of a disability and their families living in Victoria.

We provide pre-service training and professional development on family centred practice and raise awareness of disability from a family perspective.

Our contribution to improvements in policy and service system delivery is driven by our deep understanding of what children and families need to have a good life.

It's what we are passionate about because we know from personal experience how disability changes lives. Raising a child with a disability brings rewards and achievements and but also many challenges.

Language interpreters

If you need a language interpreter to access our service, call the Translating and Interpreting Service on 13 14 50. Tell the operator your preferred language and that you want to speak to the Association for Children with a Disability on 03 9818 2000. This is a free service.

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Acknowledgements

Positive Education Planning: Supporting children with a disability in Victorian government primary schools

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1st edition printed 2009

2nd edition printed 2012

3rd edition printed 2015

This booklet is available free of charge to families in Victoria thanks to the financial assistance provided by:

Victorian Government Department of Education and Training (DET)

The Besen Family Foundation

Special thanks to the families and staff at Bayside Special Developmental School whose photos appear in this booklet.

ISBN – 978-0-9804065-4-2

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Your feedback

We welcome your feedback on this booklet and any other aspect of our service. Send to:
Association for Children with a Disability, Suite 2, 98 Morang Road Hawthorn VIC 3122
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Every child can participate, learn and achieve. Families expect that their child will receive the best quality education and school experience their chosen school can offer.

ACD is active in promoting effective parent-school partnerships and positive education outcomes for children with a disability. The best outcomes are achieved when parents and schools work together.

Introduction

This booklet is about positive education planning for children with a disability attending Victorian government primary schools.

Going to school is an exciting time for children and families. Your child will be one in a class of students who are all different, and who may all have varying academic, physical, intellectual, social and cultural needs.

Supporting students with a disability at school involves detailed planning by the Student Support Group, a quality Personalised learning and support plan and appropriate supports.

In this booklet we refer to the programs and guidelines used by the Department of Education and Training (DET) for students with disabilities in government schools. This includes the Student Support Group Guidelines (SSG) and the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD). These are available online or you can ask the school for a copy. A list of resources and other useful information is included on page 30.

While the information in this booklet focuses on education planning for children with a disability in Victorian government primary schools, the planning principles will be similar for other school settings.

Developing a positive partnership with your child's school is the foundation of a successful school experience for your child and family. The best outcomes are possible when parents and schools work together.



Developing a positive partnership with your child's school is the foundation of a successful school experience for your child and family.

With good communication and skills in advocating for your child, you will be able to address any issues as they arise. A list of advocacy organisations is included on page 28.

For more information about positive education planning for children with a disability contact the Association for Children with a Disability (ACD) on **03 9818 2000** or **1800 654 013 (rural callers)** or by email **mail@acd.org.au**

A successful school experience

Parent story

I chose the school primarily because I was impressed with their attitude towards children with a disability.

My favourite quote from the principal is, "We have 400 children with special needs. Every child is special!"

So what has helped my boys have a successful experience?

First, I think it was an inherent belief by the school that all children deserved an education that suited their individual needs. This belief was matched by a commitment to work hard to achieve that.

Second, it was the school's willingness to work together with parents. There was respect for what I knew as a parent and consideration of my suggestions about possible improvements to the educational programs. This was also extended to specialists I invited to consult with teachers.

Third, there was good communication. Both aides and teachers communicated regularly. Little issues were dealt with in the early stages before they escalated.

There was also a willingness to try new things and to make changes. The school listened to my suggestions and they were prepared to learn new skills and 'give it a go'.



Student Support Group meetings have usually been well run and useful. I had input into setting the agenda and deciding which of my son's specialists would attend each meeting.

I have made a point of taking time to give positive feedback to teachers and aides. One of the reasons we have a good relationship is because they know I appreciate their efforts. I guess it works both ways.

I can't say that it has all been smooth sailing. There have been some difficult times but overall I have been very happy with what has been put in place for my two boys.

From speaking to other parents, I know that my positive experience at the school is considered to be the exception rather than the rule, and I feel very lucky to have such a committed group of individuals supporting my sons.

Parent

Parents and schools: Developing positive partnerships

To achieve the best possible school experience for your child, it is important to develop and maintain a positive partnership with the school.

As a parent, you know your child better than anyone else. By sharing information and knowledge about your child with the school, you can become a partner in your child's education. Your belief that your child will learn and progress at school can also inspire others to have the same confidence.

Being part of the school community

Parents are valued members of the school community. Spend some time getting to know the teachers, principal, parents and other children at the school, and become familiar with the school grounds and routines.

Communication

Good communication between school and home is essential for developing and maintaining a positive partnership with your child's school. Communication can be both formal and informal.

Formal communication will take place through regular Student Support Group meetings, parent-teacher interviews, school newsletters and assemblies.

Informal communication can include quick chats with the teacher, using email or a communication book. A communication book travels between home and school in your child's bag and can work well as long as both you and the teacher check it regularly.



By sharing information and knowledge about your child with the school, you can become a partner in your child's education.

Schools can use the communication book to tell parents about events such as sports days or excursions, learning themes for the term or a positive note about something your child has achieved.

Parents can use the communication book to tell schools about things that are happening at home that may impact on your child's day at school. For example, a late night family celebration or house renovations.

Talk to the teacher about what type of communication suits you both. Schools can provide access to language interpreters if needed. Developing a positive partnership with the school is the same as for any other relationship. It requires mutual respect, listening skills, empathy and communication.

Positive education planning

Planning for your child's year at school should begin as early as possible. By allowing plenty of time to gather information and explore all the options, you can be confident in making informed decisions about your child's educational program.

Keep in mind that planning is an ongoing process and that there may be changes as the year progresses. An important part of the planning process is the initial development and regular monitoring and review of your child's personalised learning and support plan.

Positive education planning involves:

- developing a positive partnership with the school
- establishing a Student Support Group
- shared understanding your child as a learner
- developing a personalised learning and support plan and setting goals (includes reasonable adjustments)
- identifying and implementing supports
- measuring your child's progress
- adjusting the plan as needed

Positive education planning

Parent-school partnership

Develop a positive partnership with the school that is based on good communication and sharing information.



Student Support Group



Understanding your child as a learner



Developing a personalised learning and support plan



Supports for students with a disability



Measuring your child's progress



Adjust the plan as needed

The Student Support Group

The Student Support Group is a group of people who come together to form a co-operative partnership to support students with additional learning needs.

A Student Support Group is available to any student with additional learning needs. This is independent of funding from the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD). Members of the Student Support Group can include:

- parent/s
- class teacher
- principal or nominee
- a parent advocate (if required)
- the student (where appropriate)
- consultants as agreed by the group may also be invited

All members of the Student Support Group should have particular areas of expertise. As a parent and member of the Student Support Group, you will have valuable knowledge to contribute about your child.

Other members of the group will each have their own perspective and expertise and may offer different ideas about how to plan for your child's school experience. Listen to all ideas with an open mind.

Good communication between all members of the Student Support Group will contribute to a shared understanding of your child's abilities and needs.



Good communication between all members of the Student Support Group will contribute to a shared understanding of your child's abilities and needs.

Student Support Group Guidelines

Information about the aims and responsibilities of the group are detailed in the Student Support Group Guidelines published by the Department of Education and Training (DET).



Student Support Group Guidelines

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/Pages/handbook.aspx

Responsibilities of the Student Support Group

It is the responsibility of the Student Support Group to:

- identify the student's needs
- determine any adjustments to the curriculum, learning environment
- develop an personalised learning and support plan
- discuss the plan with teachers and provide support to implement the plan
- provide advice to the principal about the additional education needs of the student and the resources required to meet these needs
- review and evaluate the student's program on a regular basis, once per term, and at other times as needed

Personalised learning and support plan

One of the first tasks of the Student Support Group is to develop a personalised learning and support plan for your child.

Once the plan is developed, the group should meet regularly to make sure there is a co-ordinated approach to your child's program. There may also be times when the group meets more often. For example, if there are changes in your child's condition or situation.

The Student Support Group will meet to monitor your child's progress against the personalised learning and support plan, make changes as needed, and to plan ahead. Student Support Group meetings are also an opportunity to acknowledge and celebrate your child's progress.

Positive feedback to the Student Support Group lets them know what things are working well and contributes to the group's understanding of your child as a learner.

Schools have a responsibility to support students to behave appropriately.

Your child's health and well-being

The focus of the Student Support Group is not limited to the academic needs of the student. Social, emotional, safety, access, behavioural, medical or personal care needs can be addressed through care plans that support the personalised learning and support plan.

Examples of health care plans include asthma, anaphylaxis or epilepsy care plans. These are often developed in consultation with a doctor or therapist and must be done with written permission from parents. Referrals to Student Support Services Officers, such as speech therapists and psychologists, also require written permission from parents.

Planning by the Student Support Group provides an opportunity to identify staff skills and training requirements, responsibility for tasks, storage of medication and care supplies, a private area for personal care and anything else required to meet your child's needs. Keep the school up to date with any changes to medication and care plans and make sure you complete any necessary forms.

Student behaviour

Schools have a responsibility to support students to behave appropriately. Detailed planning by the Student Support Group can identify specific goals and strategies to assist students who have difficulty understanding instructions or managing classroom routines.

For example, some students may respond well to social stories or visual reminders about 'what comes next'. The Student Support Group might develop a behaviour support plan so that everyone is consistent in their approach.

Student Support Group meetings

Before the meeting

Being well prepared for Student Support Group meetings means that you can go in feeling confident and self-assured. Everyone participating in the Student Support Group can contribute to the agenda for the meeting. Usually the parent will contact the convenor of the meeting, such as the principal or nominee, with specific items they want to discuss.

If you need support at a Student Support Group meeting, organise an advocate or friend to go with you. Discuss what is on the agenda and what outcomes you are seeking. Let the Student Support Group know before the meeting if you are bringing an advocate or support person with you.

There will be regular items on the agenda such as reviewing the personalised learning and support plan. Planning for events such as school camp should be identified early in the year so there is time to plan for specific tasks. Additional planning may be needed for events such as surgery that may require changes to your child's support needs. Identifying these early will ensure that the Student Support Group can support your child effectively.



Student Support Group Guidelines

Section 4.5 Parent/Guardian/Carer(s)' Advocate

At the meeting

In addition to the teacher, there should be a designated chairperson (usually the principal or nominee) who ensures that accurate minutes of the meeting are taken. The meeting should follow the agenda that has been given to all members of the group. If you have other issues that you want to discuss, you can add these to the agenda at the start of the meeting.

There may be times when you are willing to accept a compromise, but if you feel strongly about something don't be afraid to speak up. Give your reasons and if possible offer some solutions. Remember that as a parent, you have valuable knowledge about your child to contribute to the group.

After the meeting

By the end of the meeting there should be a written summary or plan of agreed actions. This should include the issue, action, person responsible and when the action is to be completed. You can ask that the agreed actions be read back to the group at the end of the meeting. Relevant actions should be incorporated into the personalised learning and support plan.

All members of the group should receive a copy of the minutes from the meeting. It is the responsibility of the Student Support Group to make recommendations to the principal, and it is the principal's decision whether to accept the recommendations. If you disagree with the principal's decision you can raise your concern with the school (see page 23). See also example of Student Support Group Meeting Record at www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/oohcsupp.aspx

Sample Action Plan

Issue	Action	Person responsible	When
Difficulty with communication skills	Referral for speech therapy	Principal	26 February
Classroom accessibility for the following year	Consultation with occupational therapist	Classroom teacher	15 August

Tips for preparing for Student Support Group meetings

- Read the minutes from the previous meeting and make a note of actions that have been done and those that require follow up.
- Review your child's Individual Learning Plan and how it is progressing. Look back through the communication book to refresh your memory.
- Think about all aspects of school life for your child and identify any issues that you want to discuss, for example, safety, equipment, therapy, academic, social or personal care needs.
- Think about the term ahead and identify any special events that require planning, for example, school camp or swimming lessons.
- Make a note of anything that has changed at home that the school might need to know about.
- Prioritise the issues you want to discuss in case there isn't enough time to raise them all.
- Think about what outcomes you want from the discussion.
- Ask that your discussion items be put on the agenda and circulated to all members of the group.
- If you are taking an advocate or support person with you, give them advance notice of the meeting.
- Celebrate achievements and acknowledge what is working well.

Keeping the minutes from previous Student Support Group meetings and copies of personalised learning and support plans can be useful during times of transition, such as moving schools or preparing for the following school year.

Follow up

While you may informally hear from the teacher about how the agreed actions are progressing, the next Student Support Group meeting is when you will formally review progress. It is also an opportunity to discuss why some decisions haven't progressed and how to move these forward.

The Student Support Group should continue to meet regularly, for example, once per term, to review and adjust the personalised learning and support plan. A plan is only as good as the actions that follow. Don't be afraid to ask why something isn't happening.

Keeping records

It's a good idea to keep an ongoing record of what is happening at school. Good record keeping is sometimes a skill we take for granted. If you can, sort and store relevant information during your child's school years so you will have an instant history to refer back to.

Keeping the minutes from previous Student Support Group meetings and copies of personalised learning and support plans can be useful during times of transition, such as moving schools or preparing for the following school year.

Having all of this information together can also make it easier to clarify things in the event of a misunderstanding or miscommunication.

Understanding your child as a learner

Many people think of school as the beginning of their child's education but your child has been learning since they were born.

Your child has been learning from their play and kindergarten experiences, from family members and from you their whole life. They will continue to learn from family and their lived experiences, and they will also have an opportunity to learn other things at school.

All children can learn and teachers recognise that children learn differently. The development of a personalised learning and support plan allows for changes to the curriculum so that a child can successfully participate in all class activities and progress at their own pace. The first step to achieving this is to understand your child as a learner.

Focus on your child's strengths

By identifying your child's strengths, learning preferences and interests you can make the most of opportunities for your child to be an active participant in all aspects of school life. Develop and encourage this strength-based approach which expands on what your child can already do and focuses on progress. This can also help you maintain a positive outlook on your child's education.

Parents as teachers

Teachers and consultants bring particular expertise to the Student Support Group however parents have a unique contribution to make to a shared understanding of your child. There are many things that only you, as a parent, know about your child.



Parents teach many things to their children and you can share important information with the school about how your child learns.

Part of your role as a parent is that of teacher. Parents teach many things to their children and you can share important information with the school about how your child learns.

Information about your child's likes and dislikes and about their personality can help others to understand your child as a learner. Teachers can also use your child's interests to capture your child's attention and motivate them to learn.

The Student Support Group can use this information to develop goals that expand on your child's strengths, skills and abilities. A holistic approach will ensure that your child's academic, social and emotional needs can be identified and planned for.

Independence

Developing independence is a strong focus at school. Your child's needs will continually change as they develop and gain new skills.

Discuss with the school what support your child will need, whether it is a visual schedule or assistance with personal care. A therapist may be able to assist with this. Continuing previously established routines, such as toileting, at school is also important.

Children with a disability may need assistance with certain tasks but it is important that they are active participants in their learning. Adults assisting children with physical and intellectual disabilities need to understand the importance of providing assistance without creating dependence. Sharing your insight about how your child progresses with these tasks can help others to develop this understanding.

Tips for identifying your child's learning preferences

- Does your child enjoy listening to stories or prefer looking at a book?
- Does your child prefer to watch you do something first and then copy?
- Does your child enjoy drawing and colouring?
- Does your child respond well to humour?
- Does your child prefer small groups or enjoy the hustle and bustle of a large group?
- Does your child have sensory issues?
- Does your child get distracted easily in a noisy environment?

Children with a disability may need assistance with certain tasks but it is important that they are active participants in their learning. Adults assisting children with physical and intellectual disabilities need to understand the importance of providing assistance without creating dependence.

Using your support networks

Although you are the person who knows your child best, there will be other people who know your child well and who can contribute to developing an understanding of your child as a learner. This may include extended family, close friends or carers. Each person will be able to give a different perspective on your child.

Your child's kindergarten teacher and health care practitioners, such as speech therapists, may also know your child well and be able to contribute to this information. This may be in addition to preparing a professional report for the school. These people are often invited to Student Support Group meetings to contribute to the personalised learning and support plan. Talk to the school about who you want to attend.

Your role as a parent

Continuing your role as a partner in your child's learning by reading at bed time or asking them about their school day reinforces what they learn at school. Many things that you do together as a family, from playing 'eye spy' in the car to helping around the house, will continue to shape your child's knowledge and learning.

Personalised learning and support plans

A personalised learning and support plan is a working document for the planning, provision and evaluation of your child's education.

In Victorian government schools, all students receiving support through the Program for Students with Disabilities should have a personalised learning and support plan.

However, any student who has additional needs may benefit from having a personalised learning and support plan, regardless of their eligibility for the Program for Students with Disabilities.

Everyone involved with your child at school should support your child's personalised learning and support plan. This includes all of your child's teachers across all subject areas, special needs aides and co-ordinators, the principal, and Student Support Services Officers such as speech therapists.

The personalised learning and support plan is developed by the Student Support Group and written by your child's school. The plan is a working document that evolves as goals are achieved or modified. The plan should be referred to regularly and adjusted as needed.

Parent contribution to the personalised learning and support plan

As a member of the Student Support Group, you have an important role in the development of your child's personalised learning and support plan.

You know your child better than anyone else and will be able to assist other members of the Student Support Group to understand your child's strengths and needs.



As a member of the Student Support Group, you have an important role in the development of your child's personalised learning and support plan.

Linking to the curriculum

The main purpose of a personalised learning and support plan is to link your child's specific learning needs to the curriculum. This may be for part of the curriculum or for the whole curriculum. Teachers are responsible for planning and implementing the curriculum for all students.

Planning should be done in a way that allows all students to participate in classroom activities. This can involve contributions from other school staff such as the librarian, art teacher, music teacher, and sports teacher. Teaching and learning strategies may need to be adapted for this to happen. The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) is responsible for the curriculum and assessment programs in Victorian government schools.

Abilities Based Learning and Educational Support (ABLES)

To assist with the development of personalised learning and support plans, teachers now have access to a new suite of tools to better support your child's education. ABLES will allow teachers to better support students by encouraging them to implement the Learning and Teaching Cycle. This requires teachers to:

1. Assess
2. Gather data
3. Plan appropriate learning goals and
4. Teach using appropriate selected strategies

ABLES supports the teacher to base their assessment of your child's needs by focusing on their abilities. ABLES also includes an online assessment tool that can generate three reports:

- **Learning Readiness Report**
that summarises your child's skills and abilities and their learning pathway
- **Student Profile Report**
that maps your child's learning and progress
- **Class Report**
that provides reflection on groups of students' progress at similar levels of learning.

By reviewing these reports, the teacher can better develop a curriculum that is appropriate to your child's learning.

ABLES and its links to Towards Level 1 of the VELS better enables teachers to design appropriate, specific and measurable goals within personalised learning and support plans.

For more information about ABLES visit www.education.vic.gov.au and search for 'ABLES - Abilities Based Learning and Education Support'.

For more information about curriculum provision and students with disabilities visit ausvels.vcaa.vic.edu.au and search for 'AusVELS Students with Disabilities Guidelines'.

Designing the plan

There is no one-size-fits-all template for designing the perfect personalised learning and support plan. The plan will depend on your child's needs and must be flexible enough to allow for changes.

If your child can participate in certain parts of the curriculum without additional support, then the plan need not cover those curriculum areas. A plan only needs to be developed for those areas of the curriculum where your child will receive additional support. This may only be for certain parts of the curriculum or it may be for the whole curriculum.

The Department of Education and Training (DET) has sample student reports on their website, including 'Report cards using a personalised learning and support plan'. This style of report is in line with those provided to all Victorian students in government schools, twice a year. These sample reports can be adapted into personalised learning and support plans. Schools may also have their own format they like to use.

Updating the plan

Your child's plan should be updated by the Student Support Group as needed and following any assessments or reviews.

Sharing information

It is the school's responsibility to make sure that information about your child is communicated to the right people. The Student Support Group meeting provides an opportunity to decide how this will happen and to seek written permission to share information or make referrals. It's a good idea to document who, when and for what purpose you give this permission.

There may be some aspects of your child's care that only need to be communicated to those people directly involved. Your family and child's right to privacy must be respected at all times. Good planning will identify who needs to know what and how this can be communicated. Working as a team, the Student Support Group should be able to design and write a plan that meets the individual needs of your child.

Setting goals

Success and achievement promote ongoing learning, self-esteem, resilience and emotional health.

All children deserve opportunities to experience success and achievement.

Identifying entry level skills

The first step in developing a personalised learning and support plan is to have an understanding of your child's strengths and to identify their 'entry level' skills. These are what your child can do now. An accurate outline of your child's current level of ability is essential for developing achievable goals and measuring progress. Your child's progress during the year will determine their entry skill level the following year.

Most schools carry out academic assessments each year to measure performance levels in academic areas such as reading and numeracy. For students with a modified program, other assessments or evaluation may be used. The Student Support Group can identify your child's entry skills from the information you provide about your child together with reports from professionals and their own assessments.

Setting realistic goals

Goals are specific statements about the skill or behaviour for particular curriculum areas that the Student Support Group would like your child to achieve within a set period of time.

Goals should be based on the progress that your child can reasonably expect to achieve rather than a comparison with other students of the same age. Set goals that are realistic and achievable but challenging.



Goals should be based on the progress that your child can reasonably expect to achieve rather than a comparison with other students of the same age.

Goals should be flexible enough to be adapted as needed. For example, goals that are too easy can be made more challenging and goals that are too difficult can be modified or reconsidered.

Long-term goals may not be clear when your child is in Prep but broad statements, such as being as independent as possible or completing secondary school, can provide a starting point for thinking about the journey to achieving these goals.

There is no need to set separate goals when a student with a disability can learn from the standard curriculum without additional support, as they will participate and be assessed the same as other students.

In Victorian government schools the curriculum is developed from AusVELS. This is the Victorian form of the new Australian Curriculum. For more information about AusVELS visit ausvels.vcaa.vic.edu.au

The goals in a personalised learning and support plan should link to the curriculum and lead to the student's inclusion in all school activities. Using the progression points in the VELs can assist with goal setting and measurement, even if your child may not be at the same level as other children in the class.

Strategies should outline what will be done to achieve the goals, by whom and when, as well as what resources are required and how they will be used. Larger goals can be broken down into smaller steps.



Student Support Group Guidelines

Section 6: The Individual Learning Plan

The goals in a personalised learning and support plan should link to the curriculum and lead to the student's inclusion in all school activities. Using the progression points in the VELs can assist with goal setting and measurement, even if your child may not be at the same level as other children in the class.

Strategies should outline what will be done to achieve the goals, by whom and when, as well as what resources are required and how they will be used.

Linking goals to the curriculum

The Australian Curriculum in Victoria (AusVELS) has 11 levels which roughly correspond to school years Prep (Foundation) to Level 10. Each Level is further broken down so that expected achievements or 'progression points' for each level are described, for example:

Mathematics - Foundation (Prep)

At Progression Point 0.5, the work of a student progressing towards the standard at Foundation Level in Mathematics in the area of Number and Algebra may be able to:

- connect number names and numerals with sets of up to 10 objects
- match individual objects with counting sequences up to and back from 10
- order the first, second and third elements of a set

For more information about Mathematics Progression Points visit www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Documents/auscurric/progressionpoints/AusVELS-MathematicsProgressionPoints.pdf

Towards Level 1 of the VELS

Your child may not be yet be ready to work towards goals specified at the Foundation (Prep) level of the AusVELS curriculum. If this is the case your child's teacher should be encouraged to look at the curriculum that was specially designed for Victorian students who are at a pre Foundation level.

Below is an example of goals and strategies for the area of English, Reading and Writing developed from the Towards Level 1 of the VELS.

Goals must be measurable in order to monitor your child's progress. Goals that are linked to the curriculum are more easily measured, even if your child is at a different part of the curriculum than their peers.

Personalised learning and support plan - Examples of goals and strategies for English

Goals	Entry Skills	Outcome Target
<p>English, Reading and Writing, <i>Towards Level 1 of the VELS: Stage C</i></p> <p>Focus: Learning to match or identify letters and numbers, to recognise very familiar words by sight, and to link these to basic needs and wants.</p> <p>Example Strategies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Engage Michaela in daily individual and small-group shared reading sessionsProvide opportunities for Michaela to draw and trace over letters, numbers, shapes, words, and patternsUse ICT resources to engage her interest, including talking books, ipads, laptops and interactive whiteboards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Michaela can identify most letters and numbersShe shows interest in books by role-playing reading behaviour with support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Michaela will match pictures to letters and simple words in her language experience book and other similar reading materialsShe will independently open a book to the front page and turn the pages one at a time.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development. (2011). *Abilities based learning and Education Support: An introductory guide for Victorian Government Schools*. Source: www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/ablesintroguide.pdf

Measuring progress

Goals must be measurable in order to monitor your child's progress. Goals that are linked to the curriculum are more easily measured, even if your child is at a different part of the curriculum than their peers.

Your child's progress can be measured by assessing how often (quantity) and how well (quality) they are performing the skills or behaviours that were identified as goals. Comparing their performance against their entry skills will also give an idea of how far your child has progressed. While some progress might be made in small steps, all of your child's successes and achievements are worthy of praise and celebration.

Strategies to support learning

Schools have an obligation to make 'reasonable adjustments' so that a student with a disability can participate in the same education and training as other students.

A reasonable adjustment takes into account the student's learning needs while balancing the interests of the student, school, staff and other students. Reasonable adjustments can include decisions made by the school, adapting the environment, teaching strategies and modifying the curriculum and classroom tasks. For more information also see Disability Education Standards 2005 on page 25.

Decisions made by the school

All decisions made by the school should take into account the needs of students, teachers and the community. This can include decisions about building works, new programs, professional development for staff or the venue for the school camp. An inclusive approach by the school council should take into consideration issues of access to both facilities and the curriculum.

Adapting the environment

Modifications and equipment requirements should be arranged as soon as possible so that they are available when the student starts school. These may include:

- rearranging the classroom
- building modifications, such as ramps or accessible toilets
- a private area for personal care
- the use of aids or equipment
- a quiet area

Teaching strategies

Teachers should choose different teaching strategies to suit their students. These may include individual learning, group learning, peer and cross-age tutoring, and matching intensive teaching with the times of day when students learn best.

Teachers can choose different resources to suit different learning preferences. For example, resources for learning maths may include counting blocks, activity sheets, a computer program or the student's favourite toys.

Modifying the curriculum and classroom tasks

Any teacher involved with your child should be able to modify tasks so that all children in the class can participate. This can be done by modifying the quantity or complexity of the task, or by allowing a student to complete the task in a different way from the rest of the class.

Any teacher involved with your child should be able to modify tasks so that all children in the class can participate. This can be done by modifying the quantity or complexity of the task, or by allowing a student to complete the task in a different way from the rest of the class.

For example, a literacy task might be to write three sentences about the weekend's activities. A student with a disability might be expected to write one sentence with an illustration. They could do this using a communication device, by dictating and then copying a sentence or by using a computer. There can be many different ways to complete a task.

Tasks and materials should be age appropriate. For example, a 10-year-old boy may be more likely to engage with reading material about football or space than with a story about teddy bears that was selected because it is at his reading level.

Therapists and consultants

Therapists and consultants, such as speech pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, and psychologists, can make an important contribution to your child's education. They can work directly with the child, teacher, special needs aide and school to give advice on modifications to the environment and curriculum. They may also be able to assist with support plans for personal care, behaviour support or safety.

Decisions about choosing a therapist or consultant will be based on your child's needs and co-ordinated by the Student Support Group.

Supports for students with a disability

There are resources and programs to support students with a disability at school.

Once the Student Support Group has a good understanding of your child's strengths and needs through the development of the personalised learning and support plan, you can then look at additional resources to support the plan.

The Student Support Group will make recommendations about supports and the principal will make the final decision. Supports can include Student Support Services Officers, the Program for Students with Disabilities, Language Support Program and the Schoolcare Program.

Student Support Services Officers

Student Support Services Officers (SSSOs) are a group of professionals employed by the Department of Education and Training (DET) to provide support to students and schools.

SSSOs aim to enhance a school's ability to improve student outcomes and provide continuity of care to all students, and assist in the development of personalised learning and support plans and appropriate supports. Student Support Services Officers can include:

- guidance officers or psychologists
- social workers
- visiting teachers (for students with visual, hearing or physical impairments)
- speech pathologists
- curriculum consultants



The Student Support Group will make recommendations about the supports required to implement your child's personalised learning and support plan and the principal will make the final decision.

Students Support Services Officers provide services to students at a number of schools and their services are often in high demand.

Referrals to Student Support Services Officers can, and should, be made as soon as your child's needs are identified.

In government primary schools, your child may be referred by the principal. Some government specialist schools have their own therapists on staff.

Program for Students with Disabilities

The Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) is available to schools to support the education of eligible students who have a moderate to severe disability.

Principals can help identify eligible students and the Student Support Group works together to make the application. The eligibility criteria and application process are detailed in the Program for Students with Disabilities Guidelines, which is available from the school or the DET website (see page 30).

If your application is successful decisions can then be made about resources to support the personalised learning and support plan. Support can include specialist staff, professional development, education support staff, specialised equipment and building modifications.

The level of funding allocated to the school to support your child through the Program for Students with Disabilities is not restricted to education support staff hours. This is just one of the supports available.

The Student Support Group should carefully consider the best way the school can meet all of your child's needs and specifically when education support staff would most benefit your child, and for what activities.

Specialist staff

Specialist staff can be a staff member at the school, a Student Support Services Officer, Special Needs Co-ordinator or someone employed using funds from the Program for Students with Disabilities.

If your child needs professional support that is not offered by the Student Support Services Officers (such as occupational therapy) or if there is limited availability, you can discuss with the Student Support Group the possibility of purchasing that professional support as part of the Program for Students with Disabilities and providing this recommendation to the principal.

If a number of children at the school need occupational therapy, it may be possible for an occupational therapist to see all the children on the same day and to negotiate a reduced fee, or two or three children could be seen together in a group session if they have similar needs.

Professional development

The Program for Students with Disabilities allocation can be used to fund targeted professional development for teachers and other school staff. For example, it could be used to educate staff about alternative communication methods or training about care procedures. You can also play a role in educating school staff using the skills you have acquired from caring for your child every day.

Education support staff

(sometimes called special needs aides)

Education support staff are people employed by the school to facilitate or support a student with additional needs. Education support staff must work under the direction of the teacher and may perform a variety of duties including:

- support with class work, including reading, writing, maths, art and sport
- assistance with personal care
- supervision if there are safety concerns
- attending therapy sessions with your child so that therapy can be applied in the classroom if appropriate, for example to learn how to use aids or equipment, or to support speech therapy goals
- preparation of teaching materials such as social stories



Program for Students with Disabilities Guidelines

Section 5.3 Resources provided to the school

The Student Support Group should carefully consider the best way the school can meet all of your child's needs and specifically when education support staff would most benefit your child, and for what activities.

Education support staff can work with a student individually or in a small group where the children have similar skills. Increasing independence is a goal for all children at school. As your child progresses, they may be more able to do some work on their own or with minimal supervision.

Specialist equipment

If your child needs specialist equipment, this should be discussed with the Student Support Group who will then make recommendations to the principal. If the principal agrees with the recommendations made by the Student Support Group, the equipment may be purchased using Program for Students with Disabilities funding.

Grants are available to assist schools with the purchase of major items of essential specialised equipment for students with a mild visual impairment who are not eligible for the Program for Students with Disabilities but for whom specialised items of equipment are essential for them to access the curriculum. For more information contact the DET office in your region (see page 32).

Building modifications

If building modifications are required, the school can apply to the Regional Facilities Branch of DET for funding modifications such as ramps and toilet facilities. These should commence as soon as possible as they may take some time.

Language Support Program

The Language Support Program is a framework for teaching oral language to students requiring additional support. Professional development is provided to teachers to develop skills to support students in the classroom. This includes an understanding of the components and development of oral language, a screening procedure to identify students with a language disorder and teaching strategies to address the difficulties identified.

These strategies are implemented in the classroom and teachers are also given a detailed list of resources. Students who are considered to have a 'severe language disorder' may be referred to a speech pathologist.

Schoolcare Program

The Schoolcare Program is a service provided by DET and RCH@home that enables students with ongoing complex medical needs to have their health care requirements met safely at school. The program provides specialist training to staff who deliver medical care to students.

Two levels of support are offered, depending on the level of medical intervention or support required. Examples of referrals to the Schoolcare Program might include students who need tracheostomy care, tube feeding or students who are incontinent.

If you think your child might benefit from this program, speak to the principal and they can make a referral. Supports should only be considered after the Student Support Group is satisfied that all of your child's needs have been identified, a personalised learning and support plan has been developed, and there has been detailed planning to establish the most appropriate level and type of support to ensure your child has the best school experience possible.

For more information visit the DET website www.education.vic.gov.au and search for 'supplementary programs' or visit www.rch.org.au/hacc/.

Measuring your child's progress

School reports, comments from the teacher and the work your child brings home are all ways to measure your child's progress at school.

The monitoring, review and reporting of your child's progress is essential for your child to have a positive learning experience at school. These processes also assist with the ongoing development of your child's personalised learning and support plan.

It is important to focus on the progress your child makes throughout the school year and to celebrate their successes, both big and small. You might observe progress through improved behaviours, things your child talks about at home or from information communicated by the school.

There is a fine balance between having high expectations and achievable goals. Focus on the progress your child has made in their own learning and development rather than comparing their achievements to those of other students.

If there are areas where progress has stalled or is slower than expected, discuss these with the Student Support Group.

Student Support Group Guidelines

Section 6.5 Monitoring and Evaluation



Focus on the progress your child has made in their own learning and development rather than comparing their achievements to those of other students.

School reports

Schools inform parents of student progress with twice-yearly school reports and mid-year parent-teacher interviews. All government schools (with the exception of some specialist schools) use the A to E rating scale, where a 'C' rating means that a student is at the standard expected at the time of reporting.

The A to E ratings have the same meaning at all schools and are used to report student progress against the same statewide standards. Standard school reports also include individualised comments from the teacher that can provide additional information about your child's progress.

For more information about student reports see www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/support/Pages/studentreports.aspx and www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/support/Pages/reportcards.aspx#6

Examples of measuring goals for English

Learning area	Entry skills	Goals	Achievement
English - reading	Sam is familiar with books at home and is read to regularly.	By the end of Term 2: To understand the directional sequence of text. To recognise some letters of the alphabet. To develop awareness of the relationship between sounds and letters.	5
English - speaking and listening	Sam speaks in two or three word utterances, supported by pointing and gesturing. He is difficult to understand for the new listener but this gets easier as you get to know him.	By the end of Term 2: To be able to express greetings clearly, such as 'Hello Tom', 'Good morning Mrs Jones'. To speak in longer sentences using verbs to express needs, such as 'I want a drink, please' instead of just saying 'drink'.	4

Individualised reports

Individualised reports can be developed for students who have a modified curriculum that does not fit within the standardised A to E reporting framework. As individualised reports rely more on the teacher's assessment of your child's progress, it is important to develop goals that can be measured in a meaningful way.

Goals that have clear links to the curriculum can be more easily measured. Clearly established entry level skills can become the baseline from which to measure progress.

In some areas of work, your child's progress can be demonstrated by the inclusion of samples or portfolios with their report.

Individualised reports also include detailed comments from the teacher that are in the same format for all students in government primary schools. These comments provide more specific information about progress and what the school and parents can do to support future learning.

Achievement Ratings

- 1 No progress
- 2 Little progress
- 3 Satisfactory progress
- 4 Good progress
- 5 Very good progress
- 6 Excellent progress

Additional comments

What Sam has achieved ...

Areas for improvement or future learning ...

The school will do the following to support Sam in his learning ...

What you can do at home to help Sam's progress ...

Preparation and communication

Parent story

I have always found preparing for Student Support Group meetings to be really beneficial.

I take the time before each meeting to think through any questions I have, issues I want to discuss or information to pass onto staff. This can include upcoming school events that may need to be discussed or planned for. I also prepare words and/or examples to use that clearly describe what I want to say.

I prioritise the issues I have in case there is not enough time to raise them all, and I make sure I discuss the most important ones first. I check through the minutes from the previous meeting to familiarise myself with what was discussed and any information I need to update staff. I also note any issues that were to be followed up.

Each year I establish preferred methods of communication with the class teacher, something that works for me and the teacher. This has included a communication book, a quick conversation before or after school, an occasional written note or my favourite: email. This way I feel confident that I can quickly touch base with the teacher as needed in a way that works for them.

At the beginning of each year I prepare a single page summary of each of my children with additional needs. It contains all sorts of information including their diagnosis and how it affects them.



I explain whether they are aware and accepting of their diagnosis, if any of the other parents or children are aware of the diagnosis, and I outline their strengths and weaknesses.

I also include strategies that have worked well in the past, suggestions about how to deal with issues as they arise, and a list of supports they have accessed in the past.

I have found these to be really helpful in allowing the new class teacher to get to know my child well, before they start. This way, the transition from one teacher to another is smoother and the kids have a better start to the year.

It has also helped specialist teachers get to know my children and have simple strategies to assist them. It also helps if the information can be given to any casual relief teachers too, as it gives them a brief summary of my child.

Parent

Raising a concern

If you have a concern about something at the school, it is best to address the issue as soon as possible.

A good parent-school partnership will allow you to feel comfortable with addressing issues as they arise.

Sometimes people avoid raising issues that they think might cause conflict but this can lead to increased anxiety. Don't always expect conflict. Others may agree with you. Creative solutions can often be found when everyone works together and contributes their knowledge and insight. This works best when there is good communication and a positive attitude from everyone involved.

Your concerns should be addressed in a way that respects your child and family's privacy and confidentiality.

Get all the facts

The first step is to get all the facts. Writing these down can help clarify what the issue is. Once you have all the facts, you can then identify whether your concern is about a particular issue or incident, an aspect of your child's program, staff or personnel, or a combination of these.

Speak to the school first

Schools value concerns being raised early so that they have an opportunity to address the issue and stop it from getting worse. Think about what you will say and how you will say it. Focus on the outcome you want for your child.



Schools value concerns being raised early so that they have an opportunity to address the issue and stop it from getting worse.

- Concerns about an issue or incident at school are best addressed by speaking to the teacher in the first instance.
- Concerns about your child's program are best addressed by the Student Support Group.
- Concerns about staff or personnel should be directed to the principal.

You may need to use one or all of these approaches. The principal and Student Support Group should be informed of all serious or ongoing issues. Keep in mind that it can take time to organise a Student Support Group meeting. It can be useful to keep your own record of all discussions and to ask the Student Support Group to note any decisions in the minutes.

Moving towards positive change

When discussing your concern with the teacher, try to be realistic about what, when and how changes can be made. Agree on a timeframe to trial the changes and then review what worked well and what could be improved.

Organise an appropriate time and place for the discussion. For example, ask the teacher at the start of the day if they are available to meet later in the day. Try to avoid having the discussion in places such as busy corridors. If a teacher or principal insists on continuing a discussion in the corridor, ask to move the discussion to a more private place.

If the situation continues, request a Student Support Group meeting to look at other ways to resolve the issue.

Put your concerns in writing

It's always a good idea to put serious concerns in writing to the principal. It's important to be clear about what you know about the situation without jumping to conclusions or making accusations.

Let the principal know that you would like to work through the issue together and ask for a response within a reasonable timeframe. Your letter also becomes part of your record keeping, which may be important if the matter is complex and takes some time to sort out.

Policies and guidelines

Once your concern has been raised, a process for dealing with it should be put in place. Find out if there are any policies or guidelines for addressing your concern. Ask the school for a copy of their complaints policy.

Information for parents about how to raise a concern or make a complaint is available on the Department of Education and Training (DET) website www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complainschool.aspx

Find out if there are any policies or guidelines for addressing your concern.

Taking the matter further

If you are not satisfied with an outcome you can approach the Community Liaison Officer at the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Regional Office. If the matter remains unresolved, you can address your complaint in writing to the Deputy Secretary, Regional Services Group, c/o Manager, School Operations and Governance Unit, Regional Monitoring and Support Division, GPO Box 4367, Melbourne VIC 3001.

You can also send an email to: community.stakeholders@edumail.vic.gov.au

You may also be able to submit your complaint for consideration by an independent agency such as the Victorian Ombudsman or the Victorian Human Rights Commission.

Suspensions and expulsions

Schools have an obligation to students and staff to provide a safe environment. Expected standards of behaviour are outlined in Student Engagement Policy Guidelines. The guidelines exist to ensure that everyone in the school community is treated with dignity and respect.

Serious breaches of the guidelines may result in disciplinary actions. Processes for suspensions and expulsions outlined in the guidelines include consulting with parents and supporting students to resolve the issue. Schools have an obligation to reflect on, and plan for, your child's return to school.

Information about the Student Engagement Policy Guidelines is available on the Department of Education and Training (DET) website www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/participation/Pages/engagepol.aspx

Disability Standards for Education

Under Section 32 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992, education providers must comply with the Disability Standards for Education. To comply, an education provider must make 'reasonable adjustments' to accommodate a student with a disability.

An adjustment is a measure or action taken to assist a student with a disability to participate in education and training on the same basis as other students. An adjustment is reasonable if it does this while taking into account the student's learning needs and balancing the interests of all parties affected, including those of the student with the disability, the education provider, staff and other students.

The Disability Standards for Education 2005 set benchmarks for education and training providers with which all Victorian government schools must comply. These include the right to comparable access, services and facilities, and the right to participate in education and training unimpeded by discrimination, including on the basis of stereotyped beliefs about the abilities and choices of students with disabilities.

The standards cover enrolment, participation, curriculum development, student support services, and the elimination of harassment and victimisation.

More information about the standards is available from the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations website <https://education.gov.au/disability-standards-education>

Legal advice

For information and advice about issues of discrimination, contact an organisation that specialises in providing legal advice on disability issues (see page 28).

Tips for raising a concern

- Get all the facts.
- Be clear about the outcome you are seeking.
- Concerns about an issue or incident at school are best addressed by speaking to the teacher in the first instance.
- Concerns about your child's program are best addressed by the Student Support Group.
- Concerns about staff or personnel should be directed to the principal.
- Find out if there are any policies or guidelines for addressing your concern.
- Ask the school for a copy of their complaints policy.
- Organise an appropriate time and place for any discussion.
- Put serious concerns in writing to the principal.
- Focus on moving towards positive change.
- Make sure any changes are reviewed and adjusted if needed.
- If the situation continues, request a Student Support Group meeting to look at other ways to resolve the issue.
- If there is no positive change, contact (DET) and/or an independent agency.
- Information for parents about how to raise a concern is available on the DET website www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complainschool.aspx

Advocating for your child

It is common for parents to act as advocates for their child in many situations, even though you might not recognise it as advocacy.

An advocate is someone who can support, assist or represent another person to achieve a positive outcome in a difficult situation or meeting.

Being a parent advocate

As a parent, you have the most experience and personal knowledge about your child. If you have a strong instinct about what could improve your child's situation, be firm and persistent. Remember that you are your child's best advocate and you do not have to apologise for standing up for your child.

How to advocate for your child

Be clear about what would be an acceptable outcome. Others will find it easier to respond if they understand your perspective and what you are trying to achieve.

Think about what you want to say and how you will say it. Write down the points you want to cover and keep a record of any meetings.

Avoid being pressured into agreeing to something if you feel uncertain. It's okay to say that you need time to think things through before you respond.

Agree on an appropriate time and place for any discussion. You need to be in an environment where everyone at the meeting has time and space to actively listen without interruption. You may need to make an appointment for this to happen.



If you have a strong instinct about what could improve your child's situation, be firm and persistent. Remember that you are your child's best advocate and you do not have to apologise for standing up for your child.

Remember to keep some notes about any discussion. This will make it easier to follow up on agreed actions. If these are not happening, or the situation changes, you can raise the issue again.

Emotions

It is common to feel strong emotions when advocating for your child. Emotions can overwhelm you when you least want them to. Even if you are not in a situation of conflict, you may find it difficult to contribute to the conversation.

Whatever emotion you experience, you can ask for a few moments to gather your thoughts. If you have someone supporting you in a meeting, talk to them beforehand about how you would like to proceed if you become emotional. Think about what your own coping strategies are and go with what feels right for you.

Be reassured that as a parent advocate you are doing what you believe is best for your child.

Support and advocacy for parents

Sometimes communication issues can arise and you may want to ask a friend or advocate for support. An advocate can be a friend, family member, or a formal advocate.

You can take an advocate with you to any meeting but to comply with Student Support Guidelines the advocate must not be in receipt of a fee. You can also seek information and advice from an advocacy organisation (see page 28).

Think about what you want to say and how you will say it. Write down the points you want to cover and keep a record of any meetings.

Avoid being pressured into agreeing to something if you feel uncertain. It's okay to say that you need time to think things through before you respond.

Tips for advocating for your child

- Be clear about what you want to achieve and what is an acceptable outcome.
- Find out who is responsible for the outcome you seek.
- Don't always expect conflict, as others may agree with you.
- Be firm and persistent.
- Think about what you want to say and how you will say it.
- Write down the points you want to cover.
- Think about points that others may raise and how you might respond.
- Agree on an appropriate time and place for any discussion.
- Stay focused on getting the best outcome for your child.
- Be open to other solutions that may be just as effective.
- Negotiate and be open to compromise.
- Keep some notes about what was discussed.
- Follow up on agreed actions.
- If emotions overwhelm you, ask for a few minutes to gather your thoughts.
- Try to stay calm.
- If you need support, ask a friend or advocate to help you.
- Seek further information and advice from an advocacy organisation if you need to.

Advocacy organisations

Disability advocacy organisations work to ensure that the rights of people with a disability are respected and realised.

Some organisations provide individual advocacy while others give general information and advice.

Statewide services

ADEC (Action on Disability within Ethnic Communities)
Phone **9480 1666** or **1800 626 078**
www.adec.org.au

AED Legal Centre
Phone **9639 4333**
www.aed.org.au

Association for Children with a Disability (ACD)
Phone **9818 2000** or **1800 654 013 (rural callers)**
Email **acdsupport@acd.org.au**
www.acd.org.au

Blind Citizens Australia
Phone **9654 1400** or **1800 033 660**
www.bca.org.au

Brain Injury Matters
Phone **9639 7222**
www.braininjurymatters.org

Communication Rights Australia
Phone **9555 8552**
www.caus.com.au

Disability Justice Advocacy
Phone **1800 808 126**
www.justadvocacy.com

Leadership Plus
Phone **9489 2999**
or **1300 727 017 (rural callers)**
www.leadershipplus.com

Parents Victoria
Phone **9380 2158**
or **1800 032 023 (rural callers)**
www.parentsvictoria.asn.au

Star Victoria
Phone **9650 2730**
www.starvictoria.org.au

Victorian Aboriginal Education Association Inc (VAEAI) Schools Unit
Phone **9481 0800**
www.vaeai.org.au

VALID Inc. (Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with an Intellectual Disability)
Phone **9416 4003**
www.valid.org.au

Victorian Equal Opportunity and Human Rights Commission
Phone 1300 891 848
TTY 1300 289 621
www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au

Youth Disability Advocacy Service (YDAS)
Phone **9267 3755** or **9267 3733**
or **1300 727 176 (rural callers)**
www.ydas.org.au

Regional services

Eastern Metropolitan Region

Melbourne East Disability Advocacy

Phone **9808 8633**

www.meda.org.au

Regional Information and Advisory Council (RIAC)

Phone **5822 1944** or **1800 221 944**

www.riac.org.au

North Eastern Victoria Region

Citizen Advocacy Sunbury and Districts

Phone **9744 7378**

http://casunbury.net

Disability Advocacy and Information Service (DAIS)

02 6056 2420 or **1300 886 388**

www.dais.org.au

North East Citizen Advocacy

Phone **8407 3684**

www.citizenadvocacy.com.au

South Eastern Victoria Region

Gippsland Disability Advocacy Inc.

Phone **5133 9440**

**www.daru.org.au/organisation/
gippsland-disability-advocacy-inc**

www.gdai.org.au

Southern Disability Advocacy Inc.

Phone **9533 5977**

www.southernda.org.au

Westernport Speaking Out

Phone **9770 1710**

South Western Victoria

Assert 4 All

Phone **52218011**

www.bdrc.org.au

Colac Otway Region Advocacy Service (CORAS)

Phone **5232 1009**

Grampians Disability Advocacy Association

Phone **5352 2722**

Southwest Advocacy Association Inc.

Phone **5561 4584**

www.southwestadvocacy.org.au

For more on Victorian based disability
advocacy organisations contact:

Disability Advocacy Resource Unit (DARU)

Phone **9639 5807**

www.daru.org.au

Legal and Human Rights

Disability Discrimination Legal Service

Phone **9564 8644** or **1300 872 882 (rural callers)**

TTY **9654 6817**

www.communitylaw.org.au

Victorian Human Rights and Equal

Opportunity Commission

Phone **1300 292 153** or **9032 3583**

TTY **1300 289 621**

Interpreters **1300 152 494**

www.humanrightscommission.vic.gov.au

Villamanta Disability Rights Legal Service

Phone **1800 014 111**

www.villamanta.org.au

Other useful information

DET Resources

Abilities Based Learning and Education Support (ABLES)

Abilities Based Learning and Education Support (ABLES) enhances the resources available to school leaders and teachers to support the teaching and learning of students with disabilities and additional needs.

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/Pages/ables.aspx

Autism Resources

Topic areas include:

- Characteristics of autism
- Behaviours
- Strategies and interventions
- Working with families

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/Pages/autism.aspx

Behaviour Support Plans

www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/teachplans.aspx

Bully Stoppers

Resource for students, parents, teachers and principals.

www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/default.aspx

Complex Medical Needs: School Policy and Advisory Guide

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/health/pages/complexneeds.aspx

Disability Standards: Resources

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/Pages/legislation.aspx

Handbook and Guidelines

- Program for Students with Disabilities
- Student Support Group Guidelines
- Language Support Program
- Enhanced Transition from Kindergarten to School

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/teachingresources/diversity/Pages/handbook.aspx

Medical and Accessibility Support

- School Care Program
- Medical Intervention and Support
- Special Provision for VCE Exams
- Equipment Grants for Students with Vision Impairments
- Accessible Buildings Program

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/health/pages/programsapp.aspx

Parent complaints — Government Schools

Information for parents about how to raise a concern or make a complaint.

www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/complainschool.aspx

SchoolMate App

Essential information for parents of school-aged children, produced by DET. Search the DET website or download from the Apple App Store or Google play.

School Policy and Advisory Guide

Information, regulations, and policies for the management and operation of government school in Victoria.

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/Pages/spag.aspx

Transition to School

www.education.vic.gov.au/childhood/parents/transition/Pages/default.aspx

Support for Children with Special Needs

- Assessment Service
- Enhanced Transition from Kindergarten to School
- Autism
- Home Based Programs
- Student Support Groups
- Career and Pathway Planning

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/needs/Pages/default.aspx

Towards Level 1 of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards

Provides a framework for developing effective learning programs and assessing students with disabilities and additional learning needs in Victorian schools who are working towards Level 1 Victorian Education Learning Standards (now AusVELS).

www.eduweb.vic.gov.au/edulibrary/public/teachlearn/student/ABLES_TL1VELS.pdf

Other resources

Amaze Fact Sheets

Available on a range of topics, including education.

www.amaze.org.au/discover/about-autism-spectrum-disorder/resources/

Australian Curriculum in Victoria (AusVELS)

Replaces Victorian Essential Learning Standards – (VELS)

ausvels.vcaa.vic.edu.au

For information about application of AusVELS for students with disabilities, search using the term 'diversity' or 'diversity of learners' e.g.

www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/foundation10/curriculum/diversityoflearners.aspx

Disability Standards for Education:

A practical guide for individuals, families and communities

resource.dse.theeducationinstitute.edu.au

Disability Standards for Education 2005

www.ddaedustandards.info

education.gov.au/disability-standards-education

Occupational therapy and physiotherapy service delivery in school

ww2.rch.org.au/emplibrary/edinst/School_guide.pdf

Raising Children Network

Information and resources on raising children, including sections on autism and disability.

raisingchildren.net.au

Department of Education & Training (DET)

Department of Education & Training (DET) Information and Referral Service

Phone **1800 809 834** (freecall)

Email edline@edumailvic.gov.au

www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/default.aspx

North Eastern Victoria Region

Email nevr@edumail.vic.gov.au

Regional Offices

Benalla

Phone **5761 2100**

Fax 5762 5039

Glen Waverley

Phone **9265 2400**

Fax 9265 2444

North Western Victoria Region

Email nwvr@edumail.vic.gov.au

Regional Offices

Bendigo

Phone **5440 3111**

Fax 5442 5321

Coburg

Phone **9488 9488**

Fax 9488 9400

South Eastern Victoria Region

Email sevr@edumail.vic.gov.au

Regional Offices

Dandenong

Phone **8765 5600**

Fax 8765 5666

Moe

Phone **5127 0400**

Fax 5126 1933

South Western Victoria Region

Email swvr@edumail.vic.gov.au

Regional Offices

Ballarat

Phone **5337 8444**

Fax 333 2135

West Footscray

Phone **9291 6500**

Fax 9291 6565

Geelong

Phone **5225 1000**

Fax 5225 1099

Notes

A large rectangular area with a light blue dashed line border, containing 20 horizontal dashed lines for writing notes.

Notes

A large rectangular area with rounded corners, containing 25 horizontal dashed lines for writing notes.

Parent feedback

Your feedback will help us provide information that is relevant and of interest to families of children with a disability. After completing the survey please tear off this page and post to **Association for Children with a Disability, Reply Paid 84584, Hawthorn VIC 3122**. You can also email feedback to **mail@acd.org.au** or fax it to **03 9818 2300**.

Did the **Positive Education Planning** booklet provide you with the information you were looking for? **Yes** **No**

What other information would you like to see included?

Was the information easy to find? **Yes** **No**

Could the layout or design be improved to make it easier to read? **Yes** **No**

If yes, how?

Is the size of this booklet right for this type of information? **Yes** **No**

Does the booklet have the right balance of pictures and text? **Yes** **No**

How did you receive this booklet?

Do you use the internet to find information? **Yes** **No**



Association for
Children with a
Disability

ACD Membership

Becoming a member of ACD helps create a better life for children with a disability and their families.

ACD members include parents, siblings, family members of children with a disability, young people with a disability, professionals who work with families, students and supporters.

We encourage you to join ACD and other disability-specific groups. Our combined aim is to work together on issues extending across all disabilities.

ACD membership benefits:

- **4 editions per year of ACD's member magazine NoticeBoard**
- **Free information resources for families**
- **Discounts on ACD workshops and events**

ACD membership is:

- **FREE for families for the first 12 months, then \$16.50 (GST Inc) per year.**
- **\$16.50 (GST Inc) per year for students and interested persons.**
- **\$55 (GST Inc) per year for community organisations and professionals.**

We have over 2,000 members and welcome new members and supporters.

In addition to membership, we also welcome donations.

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

For more information contact the ACD office on 03 9818 2000 or 1800 654 013 (rural callers), by email mail@acd.org.au or visit acd.org.au



Association for
Children with a
Disability

Suite 2, 98 Morang Road, Hawthorn VIC 3122

T 03 9818 2000 or 1800 654 013 (rural callers)

F 03 9818 2300 E mail@acd.org.au

W acd.org.au

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