

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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My Son started his education journey in mainstream government (state) education, starting with kindy at 3 and prep enrolment at age 4. He was reported by both government facilities as being delayed, inattentive due to ADHD, and having a significant speech impediment. He did not have any behavioral issues at school. Both facilities advised that they did not have the required resources to provide any additional support as ADHD is not considered enough to qualify for additional school funding and they did not have the staff or resources to provide the support he would need. We were left with no option but to enrol him in state distance education, which required him to retain attention online for a 6 hour a day virtual class. Being only 7 years old and diagnosed inattentive he was unable to adhere to the schedule expected and by year 3 he was still unable to recognise letters and sounds. He was being left behind by a system that had no support or time for a child with learning difficulties. There is only 1 special needs school in our area that requires private school fees and has a long waitlist. They had no room to accommodate our Son (at capacity) At that point I had exhausted all avenues but to homeschool. Over the last few years I have been able to teach my Son to read, write and do maths myself. I am a university educated parent with an excellent homeschool report record and have achieved more in the last few years with my Son than what state education could have provided. They don't have the time, and would have left him behind (and many teachers agree this is the biggest flaw with the state education system). We do not follow curriculum and instead stick to the basic essentials due to his inattentive condition. Being forced to implement curriculum in Science, language, PE and art would detract from being able to focus the time that he can be attentive to his literacy and numeracy learning. If the government wants to improve the education of special needs children implementing more legislation and paperwork/rules will detract from parents time to teach, and will impair the department of Home education by increasing their workloads and reporting requirements. The government needs to start taking some responsibility. Instead of adding additional pressures and legislations to vulnerable members of the community (like families who have children with special needs), start taking action to foster equity and inclusion in our society. Provide state schools with better funding and resources so that children with learning can attend state schools, provide more support in the development and funding of more special needs schools, provide educational and financial support to families who need to access special schools and support. Increase Medicare assistance and criteria so children can access regular, inexpensive or free speech therapies because the health plans don't subsidise enough sessions per year to make and ground, and stop bulking down GPs with so much required paperwork, which is affecting people's ability to access cheap health care for other conditions, it takes weeks to get an appointment with a GP and some have even resorted to charging \$150-\$200 cash with no rebate if you need any paperwork done (most paperwork does not have a Medicare item code). If you want more children attending schools, start closing gaps so that they can attend. Our paediatrician advised there was no point trying to apply for NDIS to access assistance like speech therapy because the government system doesn't acknowledge ADHD as a grounds to access any help. Take some action, take some responsibility and fix your support systems, and stop taking punitive approaches to try and get the public to do what you want because (from the ground), government support systems are ineffective for so many people who need them.