

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

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Home-Schooling

Minister for Education

Firstly, I would like to say I am in favour of a more formal approach to Home Schooling and would like to add some suggestions also.

I have been Home-Schooling my daughter since 2022. I chose to Home-School because my older daughter who is now 29 did distance education as a child and was the youngest of 4 children I had in school at the time.

I found for her that the school environment was not suitable although the other three children all attended mainstream.

I chose Home Schooling for [REDACTED] who is now 7 years old for many reasons but I had always planned on Home-Schooling her and started when she was three.

In being a part of one Home-schooling Facebook group I have found some disturbing facts about those who have chosen to Home-School and have in the past had discussions with Chris Whiting MP surrounding my observations.

I was heavily involved with my older children's school, being a teacher aid, support a reader, organized and ran the year 1 CAPON motor skills program and was involved in P&C for many years in primary and high school and was delegate for QCPCA so am an informed parent.

I worked with Mal Brough, was liaison for my children's school when the federal government introduced the Civic and Citizenship program to schools and also was heavily involved with Hon Dean Wells when he was Education Minister with many initiatives and schooling issues.

I started [REDACTED] Home-Schooling with full intention to follow a curriculum similar to mainstream as I could always have some sort of gauge of where she should be and I have used Naplan books that are always available, most retailers stock them and I have also used Excel which has testing on grade specific subjects and also ABC Reading Eggs keeps track of progress.

Curriculum to me is a ridiculous argument this community are putting forward as I have never found an issue. I always assumed to follow the basic curriculum requirements as a guideline, be that in a flexible way, not as structured as in school but being at home there is no need to squeeze learning into a time limited schedule. I actually have never read the actual curriculum guidelines until this has arisen as I have just educated as per age specific requirement and have found we have achieved as per curriculum requirements.

I am definitely in favour of the flexibility of Home-Schooling as my daughter and myself have had DV issues and my daughter has suffered extreme trauma surrounding this which is my first point.

I have never chosen to have my child diagnosed with any form of label simply to get an extra payment. I am getting sick to death of so called caring parents seeking instruction to start Home-Schooling then asking how to get onto Centrelink so they don't have to work and have exemption from seeking employment and once registered their first questions, how do I get an extra payment, how do I get some form signed off. If they can't get it signed with a psychologist how can they get around that and find a GP to sign off so they get more money. Next its how do I get a tutor for my child, well the reason you got your registration is because you signed off to be your child's educator.

Now there are people who are wanting to get together with a group to hire a teacher for their children and the comments are just don't let anyone know.

Everyone seems to be saying the influx of Home-Schooled kids is due to Covid and the experience of having them home, no, it was the experience of finding out you can get on Centrelink and get extra money without having to go anywhere. No school drop off/pick up, no looking for work until your child is old enough which leads me to my next point.

There is a disturbing amount of parents posting they are stressed or suffer from a mental health condition, they have no idea what they are doing or are supposed to do or their child simply refuses to do any schoolwork. I find it particularly disturbing the amount of parents who are saying they have a child 10 years old who can't read, one was 14. That's not on and the only response being that it's ok, kids learn at their own rate and many going on to admit their children are at a significant age and can't read either. Mind you the literacy skills of many of these parents are shocking also.

A parent who is unable to offer some form of teaching experience is not a productive educator.

The amount of parents using their own health issues as an excuse to need help and want advice because it's affecting their children. Comments like 'I am stressed out and it's affecting my anxiety' or whatever other condition they have. It's not I am non sympathetic to mental health but this should not affect your child or their education and if it is its time for full assessment of the child's environment.

I had open heart surgery last year, appointments at doctors, hospitals, with tests, scans, dentists, GPs and Specialists and all that never stopped me continuing with education, I also have PTSD from a violent attack 2 years ago which I witnessed and had her father incarcerated and while I reported on this in my yearly review I never used it as any form of excuse. It was a disruption, but workable so I do believe I am qualified to speak on this issue.

If significant disruption stops your child learning then other alternatives need to be sought like returning a child to school.

Advice given by this community is that you can teach whatever you want if you undertake what they call unschooling which I did try when we had significant issues and sending to school was not an option for safety reasons. This type of activity based suggestion I found to be very unproductive in a sense that the 'activity' suggested would be a usual undertaking of a family and the fact they say they are teaching life-skills is not educating as per schooling it's basic parenting.

Currently many activities are being disguised as formal educational learning, they are really everyday things done in the course of an after-school activity.

Schooling is done by an educator and is called formal education. 'Freedom to pursue interests' which is a major claim of unschooling is an extra curricula activity basis undertaken by a parent once again for this to work you need a competent parent which leads to my next point.

While I understand writing your first plan and then your first report is daunting it shows that you understand what you have taught your child and offers your guarantee that you are offering your child the quality of education expected.

This community offers for I think the last comment I saw was \$70 a list of people to write your plan and or report for you.

I have made suggestion of there being some form of assessment, maybe face to face interview either at home or via phone to see the caregiver who intends to educate and the child/children before giving approval and to view the learning environment. This would benefit if it could be done by a child expert.

Plans and reporting needs to be more involved rather than a simple generic template to catch out the cheats.

While I have not done a teaching degree I have had plenty of practical experience with teaching along with a Diploma in Counselling, Associate degree in Social Science and currently studying my Bachelor of Psychological Science and have completed subjects in Child Development so I feel confident I am qualified to comment which brings me to yet another point

The Facebook page to which I refer is also offering up templates and submissions and asking for as many people as possible to copy but not exactly and submit. I honestly don't believe most people who are contributing know exactly what this is all about. I do believe that certain individuals associated with the page are scare mongering and to me the only people who would be against these proposals are those who are doing as less as possible to educate their children.

There is no doubt Home-schooling is a great way to educate and is the best option for many children but the parents using it purely for monetary gain or different agendas other than educating their children need weeding out.

Kind Regards

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