

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 661
Submitted by: Divina Taschke
Publication:
Attachments: No attachment
Submitter Comments:

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Education, Employment, Training and Skills Committee](#)
Subject: Ensuring Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities: A Call for Action
Date: Friday, 15 March 2024 10:26:56 PM

Divina Taschke
[REDACTED]

Dear Committee Members:

My name is Divina Taschke. I moved to this beautiful country almost 13 years ago, seeking a brighter future, specifically better education prospects for my then primary school aged son. A son who was flourishing back home so who I thought would excel even higher with the presumed better education here. I was so wrong. My son was let down so badly by this system, made to feel less than, who was crying to be seen and understood and who sadly enough was not even allowed to graduate after struggling through the hell that was school. I will live with this destruction for the rest of my life as I try to help him to pick up the pieces and navigate through his future. Do you know what he said to me one day, after the pandemic? That he wishes he could always have studied like that. Unknowingly, he was asking to study either by Distance Education or Homeschooling. At that time, both of these options were nowhere on my horizon so I did what all law abiding parents do, and forced my son to complete school. He will spend the rest of his life recovering from the trauma from that hellish experience. My brilliant, intelligent child was broken by the current education system because that curriculum is not a one size fits all.

Three years on after going through that experience with child 1, and being more knowledgeable and aware of red flags, trends, patterns etc, I noticed the same thing happening with child 2. I was not going to let that system destroy another child of mine and did something I never thought I'd do, decided to homeschool him. This decision was not made lightly. I wanted my son to learn with his peers. To be part of his local community. Have a network of friends. As immigrants, we need this more than most. Learning from my older son's experience, I worked hard to create an inclusive environment for him with the opportunity to a good quality, inclusive education. The amount of work I put in to give him this opportunity has been tiring, frustrating and exhausting and all for nought. He was never safe. Emotionally and mentally. The curriculum was way out his reach and although significantly modified, he too saw himself as a failure.

When we chose to homeschool him, we were excited that he finally had the opportunity to learn at his pace, to his interests and in a safer environment. This has gone swimmingly. I have not seen my son this happy in almost a year. We get so much learning in because I move at his pace, to his strengths.

As a homeschooling parent of a child with several disabilities, I am deeply disappointed by the proposed changes to homeschooling legislation. For many children with disabilities and neurodivergences, homeschooling is not just a choice but a necessity—an opportunity to create an environment where they can thrive at their own pace and in their own unique way.

It is disheartening to see a focus on making homeschooling more rigid rather than addressing the systemic barriers that prevent many children with disabilities from accessing quality education in mainstream schools. Instead of imposing restrictive measures on homeschooling families, the committee's efforts would be better directed

towards making mainstream schools more accessible and inclusive for all students, regardless of their abilities or differences.

Children with disabilities often face significant challenges in traditional school settings, where rigid structures and standardized approaches may not accommodate their diverse needs. Homeschooling provides a lifeline for these children, offering the flexibility and personalized support they require to learn and grow in a safe and nurturing environment.

Rather than limiting the options available to families, we should be working to ensure that all children have access to a range of educational opportunities that meet their individual needs and preferences. This includes advocating for greater resources and support for inclusive education practices within mainstream schools, as well as providing alternative options like homeschooling for those who require a more tailored approach.

In conclusion, I urge the committee to reconsider its approach to homeschooling legislation and to prioritize the needs of children with disabilities and neurodivergences.

Thank you for considering my perspective.

Sincerely,

Divina Taschke

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Homeschooling Parent of a Child with Disabilities