

Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

Submission No: 1492
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Dear Committee Members,

Regarding: Proposed amendments to Queensland Education Legislation
specifically concerning Home Education

I am writing to express my concern about the proposed changes to the Queensland Education legislation for home education.

When my (now) 6-year-old daughter, C, was diagnosed with Williams Syndrome at 4 months old, a genetic consultant told my husband and I, “You will become the experts in your daughter’s diagnosis. It will be up to you to educate the doctors and therapists you see in the future.”

Such is the case with rare genetic disorders; it is up to the parents to learn the nuances and specifics of their child’s unique attributes to aid their development.

I have found this to be true with C’s therapy, having tried many allied health professionals both at home and in-clinic over the years, but ultimately seeing greater engagement and faster results when I applied myself to learning (through online courses and research) how to help C hit her motor skills, speech and cognitive goals at home.

I see her education in the same light as therapy: there are situations and circumstances for families where having a third party (or parties) involved in their child’s development is beneficial for reasons of time, money and/or knowledge, and other cases, such as ours, where the parents choose to take a higher level of personal responsibility for those outcomes and make the necessary personal sacrifices to achieve them.

I have a dual degree from the University of Queensland (Bsc/BJ) and have over 10 years’ experience in the workforce, in corporate senior managerial positions. I am now a full-time mother and carer for my two daughters (6 & 4yo).

Homeschooling kids is not an easy path – on top of the educational demands of planning, preparing, teaching and record-keeping, there are additional domestic requirements for cooking and cleaning when the kids are in the home most of the day. Add to that, any specialist appointments or behavioural issues that come with homeschooling special needs kids and it’s a very busy job.

Preparing a homeschool yearly plan in the current policy is quite overwhelming (especially for a first-timer), so I employed the help of one of the more experienced members of our community. I also spend a significant amount of time reading curriculum (I have purchased a few and use elements of each), sourcing educational apps and games, researching educational strategies. I am now slowly pulling together

my notes and examples for the first annual report, not due for another two months, but such is my limited spare time that I have already begun.

In summary, the proposed changes to the Education legislation in Queensland would:

1. Limit the ability for home educating parents to adapt their approach to suit their children's abilities and needs (especially when it comes to children with disabilities)
2. Place unnecessary demands on time-poor HE parents who are usually juggling/sacrificing work with the full-time responsibility of caring for their children
3. Create more administration for home educating parents and the HEU department when the current process is adequate for all involved

Home education is a selfless pursuit for parents who are dedicated to ensuring the highest quality education for their children in a supportive environment. I strongly oppose the proposed changes to the legislation and I hope you will support the homeschool community and take this feedback into account.

Yours sincerely,

Laura Meritan