

## Education (General Provisions) and Other Legislation Amendment Bill 2024

**Submission No:** 1653  
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**Submitter Comments:**

I make this submission in relation to the plans to change homeschooling legislation and require families to follow the Australian curriculum.

My oldest daughter is 6.

When she was born, home education was never something I considered. I personally attended 12 years of schooling, followed by 2 university degrees. I've received many awards for my high grades. I loved learning, and it made me feel good to do well. My daughter appeared very clever from a young age too, so if anything, I was excited for her to go to school and see her mind exploding with new knowledge.

However, over time we realised she was likely Autistic, with a PDA profile, and had ADHD, anxiety and a sensory processing disorder.

Every day tasks are extremely challenging.

99% of the time we stay in our home because she isn't able to complete tasks such as getting dressed, brushing her hair, toileting, eating etc in a manner that society deems normal. Most of the time if we do leave the house, it's because we have skipped all of those tasks to reduce demands, which means my daughter is usually just wearing a pair of underwear because she 'can't' wear clothes (I can't imagine trying to tell her/enforce that she needed to wear a school uniform everyday!). Even in this instance, we are always late because it takes her hours to feel mentally ready to leave the house (once we tried to attend her favourite playgroup from 9-12pm; at 2pm, she finally told me she was ready to go). If she were enrolled in Prep last year, we would have had 0% attendance. There was absolutely no day where we woke up and completed tasks in a way that would have allowed us to be at school on time.

The Australian Curriculum says that she should be starting to read and write, that she should be able to recognise numbers and sequences, and start to count with money. My daughter used to love having books read to her. We've probably read thousands. We haven't read a book in months, as these cause her distress now. I thought she would be reading by now, or at least know the alphabet. She knows how to write "PAPA" and writes this all over the house, but resists learning any other letters. Our extended family generously buys her age appropriate workbooks like they'd have in school, with colouring and basic number and letter writing; she instantly goes into a rage and throws these or tries to destroy them. We have to hide them in cupboards. She loves drawing pictures, but it has to be entirely on her own schedule, otherwise it feels like a demand and causes anxiety. She can go months without drawing, but then will draw 100 pictures in a week. We absolutely have no say about what she draws. She loves painting, but due to her sensory seeking nature, she prefers to paint with her hands/body on walls and floors, and not a brush on paper. How are we meant to apply the Australian Curriculum to our daughter? She wouldn't survive school, so why should we be forced to do school at home?

With a child led approach though, my daughter is blossoming. Anyone who meets her is awestruck with how clever she is and how much she knows. She is so creative and artistic, and creates things I could never even imagine. Her current hyperfocus is beading: she spends hours every day doing this and loves showing off and explaining her designs to

people. She sorts through all the colours and sizes and makes incredible patterns. She's learnt about different types of string, elastic etc and decided on her favourite materials. She makes pretend shops and invents her own currency. She also loves gardening. She's in the process of creating her own fairy garden and is maintaining about 15 different flowering plants at the moment, in addition to helping me care for our vegetable garden and fruit trees.

We don't homeschool because we want to control our daughter or limit the information she receives from school. We do it to survive. Following the Australian Curriculum isn't an option for us. My daughter is gaining extensive knowledge and experience from everyday life by following her interests. When she is capable of learning something, she does. If you try to direct her to something she's not interested in, it is met with resistance and sometimes it takes days or weeks for her to calm down. I don't need that additional pressure in my life. I didn't ask to have a child with mental health issues or nervous system disabilities, but this is my reality. Please don't ask me to align our life with the Australian Curriculum, as I still can't get my daughter to wear shoes.