

Speaking up for your child with disability

Getting your child what they need from their primary school

An Easy Read workbook



How to use this workbook



This workbook was written by:

- people with disability
- families and carers.

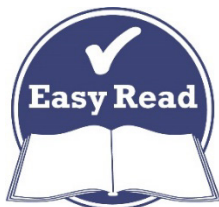
Children and Young People with Disability Australia (CYDA) helped them write this workbook.



When you see the word 'we', it means the people who wrote this guide.



They wrote this guide for the Australian Government Department of Education.



We wrote this workbook in an easy to read way.

We use pictures to explain some ideas.

Bold
Not bold

We have written some words in **bold**.

This means the letters are thicker and darker.



We explain what these words mean.

There is a list of important words we use in this workbook on page 5.

There is a list of other words on page 52.



This Easy Read workbook is a summary of another workbook.

This means it only includes the most important ideas.



You can find the other document on our website.

www.dese.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005/students



You can ask for help to read this workbook.

A friend, family member or support person may be able to help you.



We wrote this workbook to support you.

We hope you find this workbook helpful.

What's in this workbook?

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Words we use in this workbook



We have some words we always use when we talk about the Disability Standards for Education (DSE).

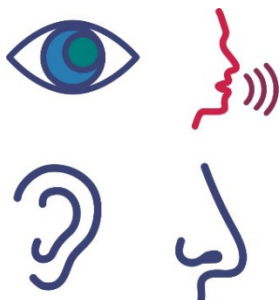
Knowing what these words mean can help you understand how the DSE work.



Disability

A disability can affect your:

- brain
- body
- **senses.**



You use your senses to understand the world around you.



When you have a disability, part of your body doesn't work:

- very well
- how it should.



A disability can affect:

- what you can do
- how much you can do on your own.

A disability can affect how you:



- communicate



- learn



- do things.

Education

When you get an education, teachers support you to learn:



- new skills
- knowledge.



Education provider

An education provider is somewhere you go to learn.

This could be a:



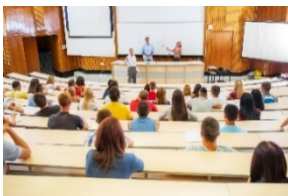
- pre-school or kindergarten



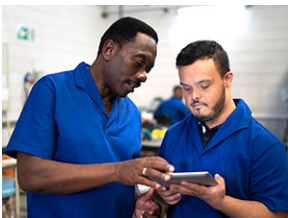
- primary school



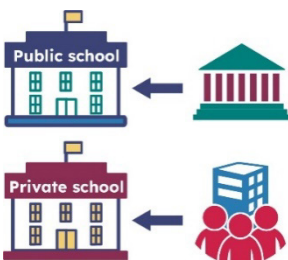
- high school



- university



- training organisation, such as TAFE.



An education provider might be public – it's run by the government.

Or it could be private – another organisation owns and runs it.



Reasonable adjustment

When something changes so your child can join in, we call it an adjustment.



Adjustments can include:

- someone to support your child
- doing things in new ways
- changing things.



When something is reasonable, it is:

- fair
- sensible.

Reasonable adjustments are things your education provider must:



- do
- change.

In this workbook, we call them accommodations.



Rights

Your rights are rules for how you can expect other people to treat you.

This includes education providers.

Standards

Standards are what we use to measure how well something is done.

We look at:

- what is done
- what the standard is.



Standards help us make sure things work well.



Education providers must:

- reach the standard
- try to do better than the standard.



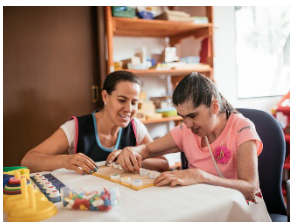
Students

Students are people who learn with an education provider.

This includes when they learn:



- in a classroom



- at home



- at work.



Students can be people:

- with disability
- without disability.

What is this workbook about?



In this workbook we talk about how to get accommodations for children with disability who go to primary school.



We want your child with disability to get accommodations they need.

This workbook can help you:



- think



- plan.



You can take this workbook to meetings at your child's school.

Using this workbook



This workbook:

- is quite long
- has lots of activities for you to do.

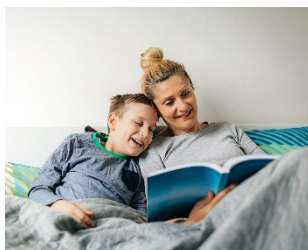


It helps if you read the whole workbook before you do any of the activities.



But you don't need to:

- read the whole workbook all at once
- do all the activities at once.

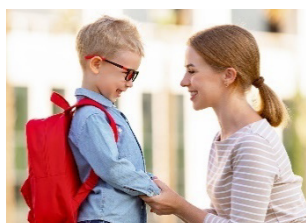


You can include your child when you:

- think
- plan
- do the activities.



Give your child a chance to make choices about their life at school.



If you can, do this while they are young.

This can help them take charge of their own life when they're older.

What are the Disability Standards for Education (DSE)?



The DSE are standards for the education of students with disability.

The DSE talk about 2 important things:



- the rights of students with disability



- what education providers must do.

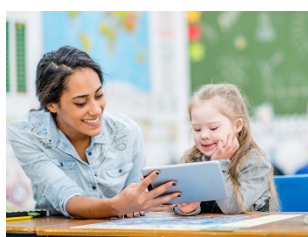
We need the DSE to:



- make sure students with disability get an equal chance to learn



- protect the rights of students with disability.



The DSE help education providers understand how to support students with disability.

Getting accommodations your child needs



Accommodations let your child take part in education.



Your child has the right to get the accommodations they need.



Schools must make accommodations that help their students join in.



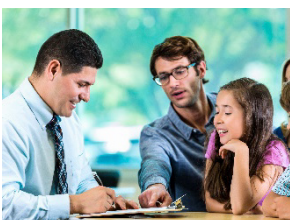
But first, they must talk to:

- you
- your child.

Your child's school should talk to you:



- about how your child's disability affects them taking part



- before they decide what to do.

Your child's school should also talk to you about what accommodations:



- they could make
- are reasonable.



You should talk to your child's school when they **enrol**.



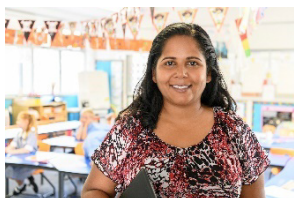
When you enrol, you:

- tell an education provider you want to become a student
- give the education provider information about you.

You should talk to your child's school again:



- at the start of each school year



- if your child gets a new teacher



- whenever there is a problem.

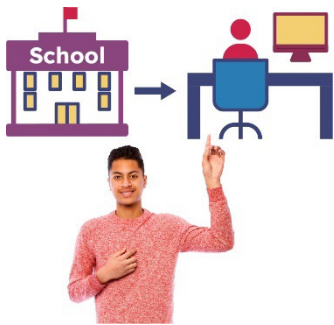


As your child goes through school, they might need different accommodations.



Or the accommodations might:

- not work
- need to change.



What they need when they start primary school won't be the same as when they leave.



You might not know what accommodations the school should make.

That's ok.

It's not your job to have all the answers.



The school will have ideas about things that have worked well for other students.



You might ask someone who:

- already works with your child
- knows your child well.



They might have ideas about what would work well for your child.

Setting a goal

1. Ask yourself



Think about what you want your child to get from going to school.

Ask yourself:



Why do I want accommodations for my child?



What do I hope will happen?



What is my child good at?

What does my child like doing?

My goals are:



A large, empty rectangular box with a dark blue border, intended for writing goals.

2. Ask your child



Ask your child what they want.

Think about:



- your child's age



- how they communicate.

You want to know what:



- it's like for them to take part in school



- doing well means for them.



Questions you might ask



What does it look like when you take part at school?



What does it feel like when you take part at school?



What makes a day at school a good day?



What do you want for the future?

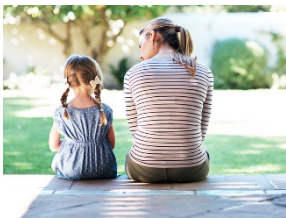


What are you good at?



What do you like doing?

3. Support your child to answer



Talk to your child.



Show your child words or pictures to help them communicate.

You might help your child:



- draw a picture



- write a story.



You know your child best.

You might come up with another way.

Write or draw in this box:



A large, empty rectangular box with a dark blue border, intended for writing or drawing. The box is positioned below the text 'Write or draw in this box:' and is connected to the notepad icon by a thin blue line.

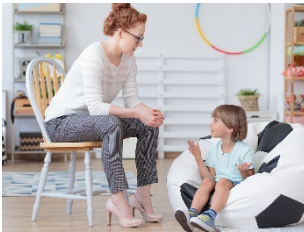
4. Talk about which goals are right for your child



Put your ideas and your child's ideas together.



Come up with some goals for your child to reach.



For example:

Joshua loves making up stories.

Joshua's goal



Find more ways for Joshua to:

- write stories
- share stories.

Our shared goals are:



5. Write down your goals

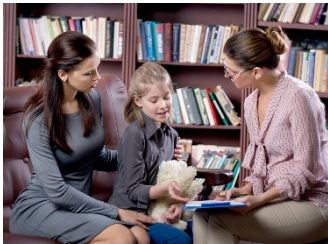


You might have more than one goal you want your child to reach.



Set as many goals for your child as you want.

Write them down.



You might share these goals with your child's school.

My child's goals are:



A large, empty rectangular box with a dark blue border, intended for writing down the child's goals.

Talking to your child's school

Under the DSE, schools must do 3 things:



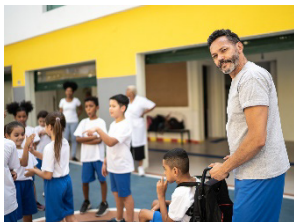
- meet with you and your child



- make accommodations



- make sure your child is treated well.

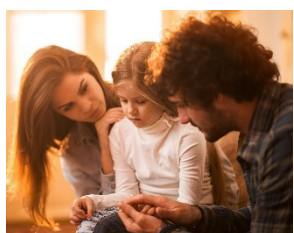


Let your child join you when you meet with the school.

Support them if they want to take part.



If you include them while they're young, they can take part more when they're older.

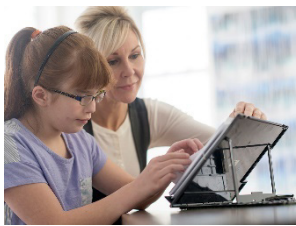


Your child can tell you what makes it hard for them to take part at school.

Your child can give you ideas about:



- what to talk about in meetings



- accommodations the school could make.

Talking to your child



You will talk to your child a lot while they are in primary school.



Sometimes you might plan:

- when you talk to your child
- what you will talk about.



Other times it will just happen.

Every child:



- is different



- will have their own way they like to communicate.



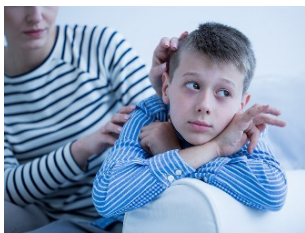
Your child might change how they communicate as they get older.



Here are some ideas about how to talk to your child.



Choose the right time to talk to your child.



Does your child want to talk?

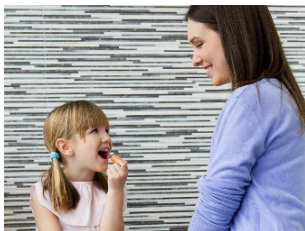
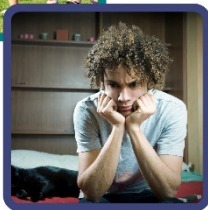
If they don't want to talk, do you know why?



Is your child in the right mood?

Are they:

- busy?
- stressed?



Do you both have enough energy?



Use words your child:

- **knows**
- **understands.**



Communicate with your child in a way you know works well.



If your child hasn't started school yet, use words and ideas they already know.



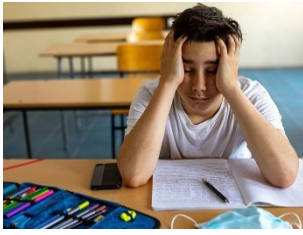
Watch how your child behaves.

Look out for what:

- **works well**
- **doesn't work well.**



How your child behaves can help you understand how they feel.



It might take your child time to get used to something new.



The things you change might not work.



You can:

- try something else
- change things back.



Support your child to speak up about what they need.



Support them to:

- use words they know
- say what they need.

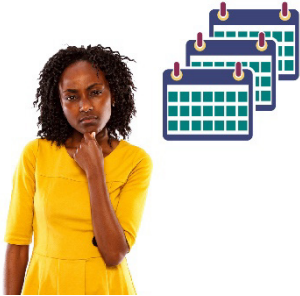


Listen when they talk about:

- their ideas
- what they think
- what they need.



Let your child take charge of their own life more as they get older.



This might take a long time.

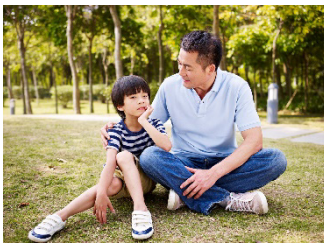


Think about what is right for your child.



Help your child believe in:

- themselves
- what they can do on their own.



Support your child to speak up about what they need.



Support your child to be who they really are.



How does your child:

- see themselves?
- talk about themselves?



Talk about your child the way they:

- like
- choose.



Think about who they are as a person, not just about their disability.



Think about:

- **when to include other people**
- **how to include other people.**



Everyone deserves a chance to feel:

- included
- like they belong.



Are there things you should talk to other people about?



Are there things you should keep private?

Talking about accommodations



You can talk to your child about the accommodations they might need at school.

Help them understand:



- their right to take part and do well at school



- their teacher is there to help them

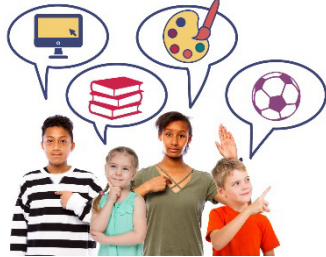


- getting the support they need is a good thing.

Remind them:



- having accommodations is a good thing



- everyone learns and plays differently



- their accommodation might help other students



- other students will have accommodations too.

Talk to them in a way you know works well.

You could say:



“I want you to have fun and learn at school.

This will help make school better for you.

This will help you join in with your friends.”



You might use pictures.

Show them what might change.



You might use stories.

Make up a story about:

- your child's experiences
- the accommodations they need
- how things change.



Ask your child questions about the story.

Make sure they understand.

You might use a **social story**.



A social story uses words and pictures to show you how something works.

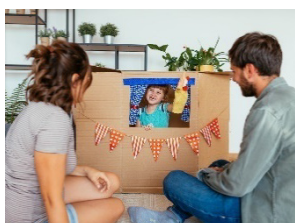
It has words that are easy to understand.

It might use photos of real people and places.

Or it might use drawings instead.

You might:

- use role play
- act out what might happen.

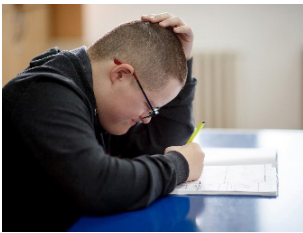


What stops your child taking part?

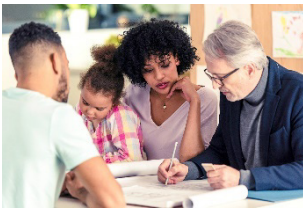


A **barrier** is something that makes it harder for your child to:

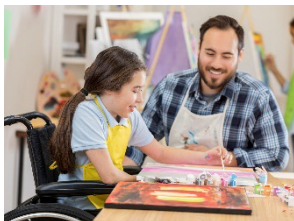
- join in
- take part.



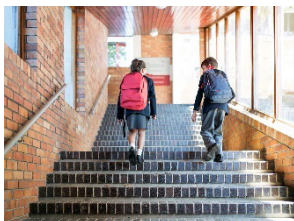
It's important to first work out what barriers your child faces.



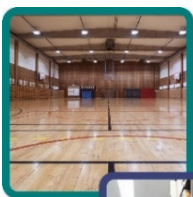
Then you and the school can work out how to take these barriers away.



Your child has the right to take part in every area of school life.



Think about what barriers they might face in all the different areas.



Are there barriers that stop your child:

- going to different places in the school?
- using different spaces?



Is it easy for your child to get to, or use:

- other classrooms?
- the playground?
- the toilets?



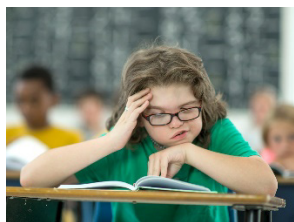
Can your child:

- make friends?
- work in groups with other children?



Can your child learn in a classroom when it's:

- busy?
- active?
- noisy?



What learning challenges does your child face?

What stops your child from learning?



What skills does your child:

- have now?
- still need to learn?





What communication challenges does your child face?

What stops your child from communicating?

Can your child take part in school events?

This might include:



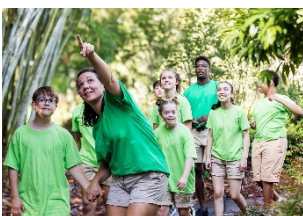
- assemblies



- swimming and other sports activities



- excursions – trips away from school to support what the students are learning about



- camps.



Remember, your child is an expert in their own life.

They can help you understand the barriers they face at school.

Write or draw in this box:

A large, empty rectangular box with a dark blue border, intended for writing or drawing. In the top right corner of the box, there is a small icon of a notepad with a pencil resting on it.



You can write down what you find out about the barriers your child faces in the table below.

Area of school life	Barrier	Notes
Places and spaces at the school		
Making friends and working with other children		
Learning		
Communicating		
School events		

Coming up with ideas



You can use this part of the workbook to come up with ideas for accommodations the school could make for your child.

Think about the:



- goals you set



- barriers your child faces.



You can find good ideas in lots of different places.

You might ask:



- the school



- someone who already works with your child



- other parents of children with disability.



You can find good ideas:

- online
- from social media.



But make sure you can trust the information you find.



Focus on what your child needs.



You might need to support your child's teacher to make an accommodation work.



You might need to change an accommodation if it doesn't work.



Give your child a chance to make choices about their life at school.



You can support your child to speak up for themselves about what they need as they get older.



You can write your ideas in the table below.

Barrier	Ideas for accommodations



Remember, your child is an expert in their own life.
They can help you come up with ideas for accommodations too.

Write or draw in this box:

A large, empty rectangular box with a dark blue border, intended for writing or drawing. In the top right corner of the box, there is a small icon of a notepad with a pencil, indicating that users can write or draw in this area.

Putting it all together



Fill out the table below.



In the 'Use' column, you can tick the box for:

- Yes
- No.



You can take this table to meetings at your child's school.

Area of school life	Accommodations	Use	Notes
Places and spaces at the school		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Making friends and working with other children		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Learning		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Communicating		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
School events		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	

Next steps

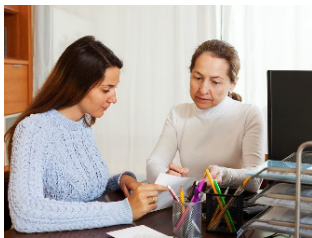
When you have filled out this workbook, you should:



- have something you can use



- be ready to meet with your child's school.



You can take this workbook to meetings at your child's school.



The next step is to set up the meeting.

Use the table below to plan for that meeting.

What do I need to think about?	Notes
Who will be in the meeting?	
What is the meeting about?	
What do I want to get from this meeting?	
What do I need to take to this meeting?	
What documents about my child's disability do I need to take?	
How can I include my child in the meeting?	



Your child's school might have already worked with:

- your child
- other children who need the same things.

They might:



- already have their own ideas



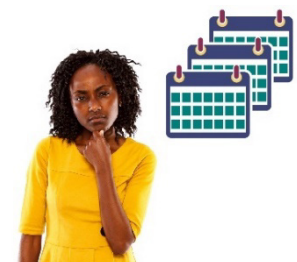
- need more information



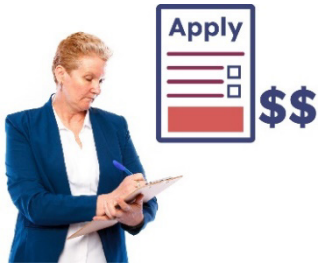
- try to work out a different accommodation for your child.



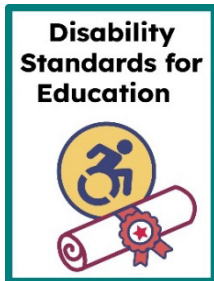
Your child's school might be able to make some accommodations straight away.



But other accommodations might take a while.



The school might have to apply for money to help pay for the accommodations.



Schools need to make accommodations for your child.

It says this in the DSE.



Sometimes schools can't make the accommodations you:

- want
- ask for.



But the school must have very good reasons.

Your education provider doesn't have to make adjustments that are:



- not reasonable
- too hard for them to make.



But they must prove why an adjustment is too hard for them to make.

Word list

This list explains what the **bold** words in this document mean.

Barrier



A barrier is something that makes it harder for your child to:

- join in
- take part.

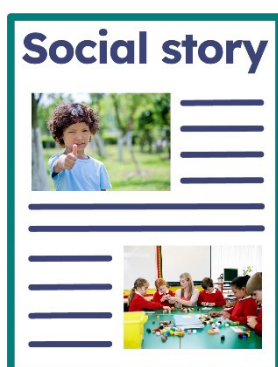
Enrol



When you enrol, you:

- tell an education provider you want to become a student
- give the education provider information about you.

Social story



A social story uses words and pictures to show you how something works.

It has words that are easy to understand.

It might use photos of real people and places.

Or it might use drawings instead.



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