



Off to School

A guide for parents of children with developmental delay or disability in Western Australia



ADVOCACY



KNOWLEDGE



COMMUNITY

DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITY *wa*



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with developmental delay or disability
in Western Australia

2023

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Introduction

Starting school is an exciting and important step for you and your child.

This booklet has been produced to help families look at the education options available for children with developmental delay or disability. It will help guide you through the maze of organisations and services, as well as introduce you to people who can help your family and your child.

Good planning takes time! It's best to begin at least 12 months before your child enters kindergarten. Not only do you need time to think about your choices, but schools need time to put resources and staff in place, so your child will have the support they need.

Every family has different needs and goals for their children. In Western Australia (WA) a range of schooling options are available, and in order to choose what will suit your family best, you will need to understand what each education sector/system offers.

Kindergarten programs are available to children who have turned/will turn four by June 30 in any given year. While attendance at kindergarten is not compulsory in WA, most children attend because it helps give them the best start to school. Government schools are required to accept all kindergarten applications for children who reside in the local intake area. If the local school is full, a place in a school as close as possible to the child's home is guaranteed. Typically, Kindergarten programs run for 15 hours a week. Some schools have full days and half days each week, while others have only half days or only full days. Talk with your school to find out how the kindergarten program is set up.

Pre-primary is compulsory for all Western Australian children who have turned/will turn five by June 30 in any given year. All children are guaranteed a place in their local government school for the pre-primary year. Children are enrolled in that school until Year 6 and do not have to re-enrol unless moving to another school. Pre-primary programs run for five full days.

Information about kindergarten and pre-primary is available on the Department of Education website:

<https://www.education.wa.edu.au/enrolling-in-school>

What do You Want for Your Child?

Choosing a school can be one of the most significant decisions you make for your child in their early years. There are several questions you should ask yourself when considering what you want for your child. You know your child and the needs of your family. There may be a number of schools you feel suit your child's needs, or you may have already found what you want. Either way, this booklet can help you prepare for your child's school enrolment.

If the choice of schooling is not obvious and there are a few options that could cater for your child's needs, consider making a list of the advantages and disadvantages of each.

The following points may help you gather useful information.

- Do you want all of your children to attend the same school?
- Where is the school and how far is it from home?
- Is transport available, such as a dedicated bus service?
- Do you want your child to attend the same school for primary and high school?
- What educational outcomes do you want for your child?
- How important are social outcomes?
- How important are academic outcomes?
- What specialist programming is available?
- Do you want government, non-government or home schooling?
- How important to you is the school's attitude towards difference and disability?
- How important to you is an inclusive educational setting?
- How does the school work with external supports (eg. therapists, visiting teachers/consultants)?
- If your child has complex medical needs, how will the school organise to have the resources and staff to support them?
- Does the school offer before and or after school care and/or vacation care?

The Raising Children Network website also has some useful information to consider when choosing primary schools for children with disability. Read more here:

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/disability/school-play-work/school/choosing-primary-schools-disability>

Remember, the choice you make now relates to your current situation. It does not need to be a commitment for all of your child's school years. Your family's situation may change in later years and you may decide to choose a different option.

What Choices Do You Have?

In Western Australia, there are three different choices of education.

- **Government Schools** – also known as public schools, including Independent Public Schools (IPS) and the School of Isolated and Distance Education (SIDE). Under some circumstances SIDE may offer support for students who are unable to attend a regular school due to severe medical/chronic health problems, severe mental health issues and other special cases. All public schools are funded by the government and are part of the Department of Education.
- **Non-Government Schools** – also known as private schools. These include the Catholic Education system (CEWA) and other denominational and non-denominational schools. The collective body for supporting and representing private schools is known as AISWA (Association for Independent Schools in Western Australia)
- **Home Education** – is an option that must be approved by the Education Department of Western Australia and be supported by a home education moderator. There are various organizations that offer support to families wanting to home-school their children.

Local Government Schools

All children with developmental disability or delay are entitled to attend their local kindergarten or pre-primary, and indeed their local primary and high school beyond those first years of school.

The Department of Education provides a range of educational programs and placement options, from kindergarten to Year 12, to support students with disability to access and participate in education on the same basis as students without disability. The 2020 Review of the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (the Standards) is available on the Department of Education website: <https://www.dese.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005>

The location of all government schools' addresses and phone numbers is available on the WA Department of Education website:

<http://www.det.wa.edu.au/schoolsonline/home.do>

If needed, the physical school environment can be modified so your child can access facilities and maximise their physical, social and academic participation at school.

School staff will also assist with creating an individual education plan for your child. NDIS therapy support needs to be negotiated with your child's school.

Education Support Centres

If your child has developmental disability or delay, they may be eligible to attend an education support centre. Education Support Centres are located on local primary and high school grounds and provide educational programs for children with higher support needs. Being located on the same site may provide students with more opportunities for interaction and participation with their mainstream school peers, however it varies from school to school and should be discussed with the Principal. School staff will also assist with creating an individual education plan for your child.

Education Support Schools

These are separate primary and secondary schools which provide educational programs for children who require intensive support. They have on-site access to nursing and often have specialist facilities including therapy rooms, swimming pools and 'access all' playgrounds. NDIS therapy support needs to be negotiated with your child's school. Most Education Support Schools offer pre-primary places and some offer kindergarten places. School staff will also assist with creating an individual education plan for your child.

You can do an advanced search for Education Support Centres and Schools on the WA Department of Education website:

<https://www.det.wa.edu.au/schoolsonline/home.do>

“My son, Joel, was three years old when he contracted a viral infection which left him with multiple disabilities. My husband and I spent many hours talking and thinking about what the future held for Joel. Education was a major concern. I felt Joel needed a lot of individual attention. Speech and physiotherapy were very important to us. We chose an education support school, as I was confident this school would give Joel the best start in life.”

Lisa

Education support and early intervention programs for children with Autism

Autistic students who do not have an intellectual disability may be eligible to enroll in specialised learning programs (SLPs) within 9 mainstream primary schools. As well as these programs having small class sizes, children have many opportunities to interact with mainstream students as part of their education. School staff will also assist with creating an individual education plan for your child. Enrolment depends on where you live. There are also early intensive intervention programs for Kindergarten/Pre-primary children with autism at specific mainstream schools in the metropolitan area. More information can be found at: <https://www.oneclassroom.wa.edu.au/ssend/autism-specialist-learning-programs>

SPECIALIST SUPPORTS IN GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS

All Government schools can access local and specialist support from the Department's Statewide Support Services - Schools of Special Educational Needs (SSEN). This service provides support to teachers/schools to support children with disability and learning disabilities to be inclusive and deliver specialised programs to students. You can ask your Principal to seek advice and support from this service to assist your child's teacher. There are specialist support services for

- Disability,
- Medical & Mental Health,
- Sensory (vision & hearing),
- Behaviour & Engagement,

In addition, Government schools can access support from the

- Statewide School Psychology Service
- Statewide Speech and Language Service

More information can be found at:

<https://www.education.wa.edu.au/children-with-special-educational-needs>

Deaf Education

Parents are provided with the option of either spoken and/or signed communication, at all stages of their child's education. The Department of Education provides a statewide specialist service for children who are deaf or have a hearing loss through the Department's Statewide Support Service, School of Special Educational Needs: Sensory: Deaf Education. Visiting teachers provide assistance to students in mainstream Government, and non-Government schools, and in Education Support facilities.

Parents have a choice of educational settings for their children, ranging from an inclusive placement in a mainstream school, through to metropolitan specialist schools located in inclusive settings: the Mosman Park School for Deaf Children, and the Shenton College Deaf Education Centre.

Telethon Speech & Hearing also partners with a number of non-Government schools to provide comprehensive in-school support programs that offer extra support to hearing-impaired students in mainstream classes. More information can be found here: <https://www.tsh.org.au/our-school/outpost/>



“At my daughter’s diagnosis of profound deafness, one of my first thoughts was of schooling. At first we thought that the only option would be a special school. As time went on we discovered many options which only made the decision more difficult. We decided we wanted her to integrate into a regular school. I investigated our local primary school, which I had thought was too big with approximately 900 children. To my surprise the Principal and staff were only too keen to accommodate my daughter. The school was very welcoming and I decided this is where I wanted her to go to school.”

Kylie

Vision Education

The Department of Education provides a statewide specialist service for children with vision impairment across WA. Assistance is delivered in government and non-government schools. A specialist visiting teacher is able to offer support based on individual student educational needs from Kindergarten through to Year 12/13. This can include providing support to teachers, including direct teaching and consultation, providing resources (including braille texts), and collaborating with parents and therapy teams.

Language Development Centres

Children who have a Developmental Language Disorder as their primary diagnosis may be eligible to enrol in one of 5 Language Development Centres (LDCs) across the Perth metropolitan region. LDCs provide intensive language, academic and socio-emotional support for students in Kindergarten through to Y3. Referral to a Language Development Centre requires assessment and referral from a speech pathologist, as well as an age-appropriate psychological assessment, adaptive behaviour assessment and a completed parent/ teacher questionnaire. Referrals need to be completed prior to September the year before the student starts kindergarten. A small number of places may be available for pre-primary or year one entry. Following attendance at a LDC, students are transitioned back to their enrolled school amongst their mainstream peers. There is no local intake area for LDCs but eligible students will usually be placed at the campus nearest to their home address.

There is a Language Development Centre in each metropolitan district and a Language Development School in the Peel district. You can do an advanced search for LDCs on the WA Department of Education website:

<https://www.det.wa.edu.au/schoolsonline/home.do>

Regional Education Services

The Department of Education provides a statewide specialist visiting teacher service for children with disabilities. Contact your local Education Regional Office (ERO) <https://www.education.wa.edu.au/contact>

You are also encouraged to visit your local school to discuss your child's needs with the school Principal.

Regional Offices	Telephone (08)	Email
GOLDFIELDS	9093 5600	Goldfields.ERO@education.wa.edu.au
KIMBERLEY	9192 0800	Kimberley.ero@education.wa.edu.au
MIDWEST	9956 1600	Midwest.ERO@education.wa.edu.au
NORTH METRO	9285 3600	NorthMetropolitanERO.PublicInbox@education.wa.edu.au
PILBARA	9185 0111	Pilbara.ero@education.wa.edu.au
SOUTH METRO	9336 9563	SouthMetro.ERO@education.wa.edu.au
SOUTH-WEST	9791 0300	Southwest.ERO@education.wa.edu.au
WHEATBELT	9622 0200	Wheatbelt.ERO@education.wa.edu.au

Non Government Schools

Catholic Education Western Australia

Catholic Education Western Australia (CEWA) supports the inclusion of students with disability in all Catholic schools. School enrolment procedures are non-discriminatory, and Catholic Education WA aims to fully support the Disability Standards in all of their schools. The majority of children within the Catholic system attend their local parish school. Parents should contact the Principal of their local parish school of choice to discuss their child's enrolment. Early enrolment is encouraged as places can be limited.

Education Support Centres have been established in designated primary and secondary Catholic schools for students with disability whose educational needs require the provision of additional support and resources. This includes special education teacher/s and additional teacher assistants, as well as specialised resources and facilities. The centres offer educational service provision for children whose disability might limit their ability to gain access to the regular curriculum without specialist support. Depending on individual needs and abilities, some students will receive the major part of their academic program in the Education Support Centre while others will spend the majority of their time in regular classes with varying levels of support.

The Students with Disability (SWD) Team support students in schools to access funding and resources for students. They help the school community meet the spiritual, educational, social and physical needs of the child. The SWD Team and the Catholic Education Psychology Team are available to assist and support schools to provide for students with disability.

If you need to find out more about any of the above information, contact Students Services, Catholic Education Office of Western Australia, on (08) 9380 1800

Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia (AISWA)

AISWA is an association of schools in which each school operates independently and has its own enrolment policy. Parents wanting to enrol their child in an Independent school must approach the individual school for enrolment details and information on specific programs relating to the needs of their child. The decision for enrolment is made by the Principal. Enrolment may need to be done many years in advance. Full information is requested on enrolment applications to enable the school to inform parents what the school can offer regarding specialist programs and support, and not to determine enrolment. Schools must consider the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA) and the Disability Standards for Education 2005 (DSE) when considering applications for enrolment and throughout the time a student is enrolled in the school.

AISWA has four Inclusive Education Consultants, who provide information on supplementary funding, program support and assistance to all non-Catholic independent schools, at the school's invitation. To search for a school with facilities for students with disabilities, go to <https://www.ais.wa.edu.au/search-for-a-school-list-view>



Home Education

Parents have the right to educate their child at home. This means they accept the responsibility of educating their child during their compulsory years of schooling. A child must be enrolled in full time school when they turn 5 years and 6 months.

Under the Education Act 1999, if you wish to educate your child yourself, you must lodge an application with the Department of Education through the local Education Regional Office. The Act requires that parents apply to be registered within fourteen days of a child's non-attendance at school. The Act also requires parents who are registered as a home educators, to have an initial assessment visit within 12 weeks of commencing home education, then one assessment visit in each twelve-month period. Parents are able to individually tailor the learning experiences and educational program to meet the Australian curriculum and cover all the core subject areas.

Your Education Regional Office will provide information and put you in contact with the person who will visit within three months of registration to assess the program.

See the Department of Education website for information and resources on home schooling: <https://www.education.wa.edu.au/home-schooling>

There are a number of on-line support groups for parents who choose to educate their children at home. These include:

Home Education WA a community-based and volunteer-run organisation that supports home based learning. There is a fee to become a member, which gives educators access to social events, discounts to seminars, workshops and subscriptions to learning websites, as well as providing social support and connection to a wider community of home based learners. <https://hewa.wa.edu.au/>

Home Education Association: a national not-for-profit association supporting Australian homeschooling families, offering help and resources, including books to support lesson development. Visit their website to find out more <https://www.healedu.au/wa>

The Educating Parent: A website that merges 'Homeschool Australia' and 'Unschool Australia'. It offers information, articles, registration guides, and resources to help parents find ways to meet their family's educational needs. Visit their website to find out more: Visit <https://homeschoolaustralia.com/>

“Home schooling has proved to be the most successful option for our son who has mild Autism. We feel that being at home with parents, siblings and friends is the best place to teach social skills, such as kindness, helpfulness, sharing and friendly competitiveness. His success in reading and comprehension has been an added bonus.”

Caroline

Making a Decision

You now have a general idea about what options are available and you have thought carefully about what you want for your child, it is time to make a decision and you may find the following list of “things to do” helpful.

- Identify which schools your child can attend and select which schools you would like your child to attend.
- Make appointments with Principals of the selected schools to discuss your child’s needs.
- Discuss the various schooling options with people who work with or know your child.
- Talk to friends and parents of children attending schools on your list.
- Contact the Department of Education visiting teacher service at School of Special Educational Needs (SSEN). Your child may have already been referred by the school or your child’s therapy agency, with your prior permission.
- Find out if an assessment by the school psychologist is needed to determine your child’s school placement or to support a funding application.
- For Catholic schools, ask to speak to the specialist consultants at the Students with Disability team, the Learning Support Coordinator or school psychologist working in your school district.
- Take a walk around selected schools to determine the accessibility of the facilities. Some schools may offer “Open Days” or school tours.
- Ask the Principal to describe programs offered and establish what special equipment is available.
- Find out what support can be made available for your child
- Gather written information from each school you visit, for example, policy documents, procedures for enrolment.
- Try to assess the atmosphere/ attitudes/ tone of schools you visit. Consider the values and beliefs about difference and diversity promoted by the school.
- Attend parent information evenings run by agencies.
- If you feel the local school is not the best for your child, investigate the option of another nearby school. To cross Education District boundaries, you will need to work closely with your local Education Regional Office.
- And finally and most importantly, think about how comfortable and welcome you, your child and family felt after visiting the school.

You've Made a Decision

Time to Enrol Your Child

You may apply to enrol your child in more than one school. Begin by contacting your chosen school to discuss their enrolment procedure. If possible, make an appointment with the school Principal and discuss your wish to enrol your child at the school. Depending on the school, you may be invited for an interview with the Principal, Deputy, Head of Junior School or the Learning Support Coordinator to discuss your child's needs and the programs that the school can offer.

“Give yourself plenty of time to explore schools, both local and other surrounding schools. Visit the school, look at other children, make an appointment to see the Principal and ask to meet the teacher(s) likely to be involved with your child.”

Kate



Some points you may like to discuss with the school are listed below. You can find them in a checklist at the back rear of this booklet, to use as a guide when talking to the Principal of the school of your choice.

- How will camps, school excursions and swimming lessons be available for your child?
- What are the procedures for the administration of medication?
- How will the curriculum be modified?
- Will a documented plan be written for your child? Who will be involved? How much say will you have? How often will they be reviewed?
- Are there any safety issues which need addressing? For example:
 - » can the school provide adequate supervision for your child at all times
 - » is your child able to negotiate all physical aspects of the school eg. playgrounds
 - » are the school grounds fully fenced and secure
 - » is access to a busy road a problem?
- What transport assistance is available? Can you find information about transportation eg. timetables, supervision and modifications to the bus to meet safety requirements?
- Do the staff have an understanding of your child's particular needs? Will staff be able to attend in-service education or professional development opportunities? How is the Principal able to support staff?
- What information can you provide for the Principal and school staff to help your child's inclusion in school programs? Are there others (who are involved with your child) who may be able to help?
- Are any structural changes to the school or specialised equipment required to accommodate your child's access to classrooms, toilets, library, canteen, assembly area, sports/playgrounds, and drinking fountains? (Good planning is important here as applications for funding, building modifications and purchase of specialised equipment take time).
- If your child has therapists involved, is it possible for them to see your child in the school environment for observe your child in the school environment? Will the classroom teacher and other relevant staff collaborate with your child's therapist and work on shared goals?
- The availability of the most recent information from your child's speech pathologist, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, psychologist, and/or a paediatrician may be beneficial.

A meeting to plan your child's transition, involving school staff and others who know your child, will assist your child's introduction to the school. Discuss this option with the Principal.



Experiencing Difficulties?

What happens if the Principal does not believe their school will be able to provide for your child's individual needs? If this is the situation, and you feel this school is the best option for your child, seek further advice and help from the various support services offered by each of the school systems. The procedures are listed below.

Government Schools

Contact the Coordinator Regional Operations (CRO) at your Education Regional Office for assistance in resolving the issue. This will involve an independent review of the situation and may include mediation. Contact details for your region are on page 10.

Catholic Schools

Contact the Disability Support Consultant for your area to personally discuss your difficulties on 6380 5316.

Independent Schools

Parent enquiries should be directed to the school that you wish your child to attend. The school may then, depending upon the circumstances, contact the AISWA Inclusive Education Consultant for information and/or support.

“During your initial visit with the Principal ask him/her what the school may offer your child. Give the Principal your child's background information and discuss your child's strengths as well as any learning difficulties. Some Principals may be more knowledgeable than others regarding children with special needs. Offer any assistance to the Principal and state your child's needs positively. I always present myself as an integral part of the school team as well as Alex's parent. Discuss plans for your child's transition and participation. State clearly your child's learning methods and ask if the teachers and aide may use your preferred techniques, such as, direct instruction with reinforcement.”

Kate

The Equal Opportunity Act states that it is unlawful for an educational authority to discriminate against a person on the ground of the person's impairment –

- By refusing or failing to accept the person/s application for admission as a student; or
- In the terms and conditions on which it is prepared to admit the person as a student.
- By denying the student access or limiting the student's access to any benefit provided by the educational authority.
- By expelling the student; or
- By subjecting the student to any other detriment.

The Equal Opportunity Commission's enquiry line (08) 9216 3900 can provide you with information regarding you or your child's rights in relation to any potential discrimination, and the complaint process free of charge. The Commission will also provide legal support for any complaint that is referred by the Commissioner to the State Administrative Tribunal.

The objectives of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 are:

- a.** to eliminate, as far as possible, discrimination against persons on the ground of disability in the areas of:
 - work, accommodation, education, access to premises, clubs and sport;
 - the provision of goods, facilities, services and land;
 - existing laws; and
 - the administration of Commonwealth laws and programs;
- b.** to ensure, as far as practicable, that persons with disabilities have the same rights to equality before the law as the rest of the community; and
- c.** to promote recognition and acceptance within the community of the principle that persons with disabilities have the same fundamental rights as the rest of the community.

“We decided that we wanted our daughter to integrate into a regular school. We approached the local catholic school. We were not accepted into this school which I took personally, only to find a friend’s hearing son was also not accepted, so places it seems really were full.”

Kylie

Other Support Services

- Disability organisations relevant to your child’s needs (see Useful Contacts).
- Developmental Disability WA
- Kalparrin connects families raising children with disability and/or additional needs, and provides advice, guidance and support to families.
- The Disability Discrimination Unit at Sussex Street Community Law Service Inc. provides legal advice and representation to people with disabilities who believe they have been discriminated against because of their disability.
- Equal Opportunity Commission in Perth, WA provides information about Impairment Discrimination under the Equal Opportunity Act (1984).

**Remember – think ahead, but don’t cross bridges before you come to them.
Anticipation is often worse than reality!**



Support Services

Prior to School Entry

You may have already contacted/are involved with a number of organisations that provide support for children with disability and their families. These may include support services or health professionals. If you have not yet made contact with any support services and you believe your child needs some assistance, discuss your concerns with your local Doctor, Community Health Nurse, local Child Development Centre, or Wanslea (the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) partner in WA that delivers Early Childhood Early Intervention support for children aged under seven).

In addition, the 'Enhanced Transition to Schools Project' supports setting up community based playgroups on or near a school site to help families become familiar with the school environment and build relationships with staff. This provides benefits for both families and the school.

Find playgroups here: <https://playgroupwa.com.au/>

Support is provided at Education Department supported "Child and Parent Centres". 22 Centres around WA provide a range of easily accessible programs and services for children and families, including early learning programs, maternal and child health services, and child support activities. Families can visit the child health nurse at the centre and there may be speech pathologists, physiotherapists and other health professionals there for them to see. Find more information here: <https://www.education.wa.edu.au/child-and-parent-centres>

'KindiLink', is a play-and-learn initiative for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children who are not old enough to enrol in school. KindiLink operates in 38 public schools around WA. Find more information and a list of KindiLink schools here: <https://www.education.wa.edu.au/kindilink>

Transition Planning

Transition planning is best if it includes you and staff from educational and disability services. You and others who are working with your child are encouraged to meet with staff that will be part of your child's life at school. A transition plan can include the following:

- your child's abilities, interests, and current goals
- your child's likes, dislikes and anxieties
- strategies proven to be successful with your child
- parent's aspirations for their child
- preparation for school attendance

A transition plan can be a valuable tool in assisting program development and supporting school staff.

At School

When your child begins school, it is essential you have a good relationship with your child's school, including your child's teacher(s), Principal and support staff. By fostering positive relationships, communication and teamwork, you can help your child receive the best possible support.

Once children start school, there are three main areas of additional support services available:

- education support
- therapy support
- family and individual supports

EDUCATION SUPPORT

Education services, whether government or non-government, offer a variety of supports for children with disability. These services may directly support you and your child, or indirectly support your child by assisting the teacher and school. Access to specific services can vary depending on what sector/system your child attends. It is at the discretion of the school how additional funding is allocated and may look different at different schools, for different students.

Sometimes, students with disability may be supported by an education assistant/teacher assistant. They may be employed by the school to assist the teacher to provide the educational program. They are supervised by the class teacher and duties may include:

- directly assisting the student with personal and educational needs to allow their participation in the education program;
- supporting the class and school community to include the individual needs of your child; and
- working with your child's peers to allow the class teacher time to oversee the individual needs of the student with a disability.

For children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, visiting teachers from the Education Department's EAL/D (English as an Additional Language/Dialect) team may be able to provide assistance through the provision of advice, information and curriculum support. Interpreter services are available for families and children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Resource levels may vary between Government and Non-government sectors, and school to school. The way in which your child's school distributes funding is at the discretion of the school.

THERAPY SUPPORT

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

Most therapy support for children with developmental delay or disability is funded through the NDIS. This is an individualised approach to providing support to people with disability across Australia. The NDIS is a flexible and personal approach to ensuring that individuals, their families and their carers have access to the support they need to pursue their goals and participate in everyday life. Most therapy providers will collaborate with schools if families would like them to. Examples of collaboration may include:

- Building the capacity of teachers and education assistants to implement support strategies within the school routine
- Providing strategies, resources and tips to help children access the curriculum
- Working with teachers to identify if any equipment (assistive technology) is needed
- Attending and providing input into Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings
- Working with specialist teachers where required
- Providing specific therapy sessions at schools (eg. Speech therapy or occupational therapy)

Child Development Services (CDS)

The Metropolitan Child Development Service is part of WA Health's Child and Adolescent Health Service (CAHS). It provides a range of assessment, early intervention and treatment services to children with developmental delay or difficulty that impact on function, participation and/or parent-child relationship. Families referred to the service are invited to attend a service planning appointment within eight weeks of referral. During this appointment parents discuss their concerns for their child, goals and priorities, and an agreed service plan is developed. Each CDS is staffed by a team of paediatricians and allied health professionals.

Private Therapy services

Some families are interested in exploring private therapy services for their child. Private therapy services are provided on a fee for service basis by allied health clinicians working in private practice. Children are still eligible for CDS or NDIS services even if their parents decide to access private services. Your private health insurance may cover a portion of the fee for allied health supports.

Chronic Disease Management Plan (CDMP):

For children with a recognised chronic medical condition, Medicare provides rebates for speech pathology, occupational therapy and/or physiotherapy services. Eligible children can claim a maximum of five sessions per calendar year under the program. Parents will have to pay the gap between the Medicare rebate and what the therapy provider charges.

FAMILY AND INDIVIDUAL SUPPORTS

The hospital, Child Development Service or service provider supporting your child may also be able to offer audiology, orthoptics, podiatry, psychology, dietetics and social work/family systems therapist assistance. This may include:

- Giving you strategies, resources and tips
- Providing equipment, if required
- Help to access community services
- Group therapy programs

Family support groups (eg. Down Syndrome Association, Autism Association, ADHDWA, Kalparrin), are also available to give advice or support.



Equipment Provision

If your child requires specialised equipment that will be used at home and at school, for example a wheelchair and insert, standing frame, walker, hand splints or communication aids, you should continue to seek funding and supply (including maintenance) of these items through your disability funding (eg. NDIS plan). Your child's therapist/s can assist with selecting and acquiring this equipment. It is expected that these items will be used both at home and in school. If transporting of equipment between home and school is an issue, please discuss this with your child's teacher and therapist.

At school your child may need additional specialised equipment to access the curriculum or physical modifications to access the school environment. Under the Disability Discrimination Act (1992) schools are required to make "reasonable adjustments" so that a student with a disability has the same access as other students. Funding and supply of equipment can follow different procedures. It is best to discuss your needs with the school. Your child's occupational therapist, physiotherapist or speech pathologist may be consulted prior to modification of the environment or purchase of specialised equipment.

Government Schools (Public Schools)

Most education support schools and centres provide equipment for students with physical disabilities. However, where the school environment needs to be modified, application for funding is made by the school's Principal to the Department of Education. Any required specialised equipment is funded and provided through the School of Special Educational Needs (SSEND).

Catholic schools

Modification to school facilities and specialised equipment can be funded either through the school or by application from the school to Catholic Education Western Australia.

Independent schools (Non-Catholic)

Individual schools have their own policies in regard to funding specific modifications to school facilities and the purchase of specialist equipment. Schools are able to apply for funding for equipment through the AISWA Australian Government Targeted Programs, however funds are limited.

Please note that provision of equipment and modifications to school buildings takes time and can be expensive. It is important that funding applications are made well in advance of your child commencing school.

Preparing your child for school

The change from a small group to a larger school community can be overwhelming for all children but the impact may be greater for a child with disability. There are a number of things you, and people currently working with your child, can do to help prepare your child for starting school. Preparation will help your child make a successful transition to school.

“Once your child has begun school, be proactive!! I have a close working relationship with Alex’s assistant and teachers. This way I can support them and prevent small problems from becoming major disasters. I try and support Alex’s teachers and assistant in all ways possible. Because they are doing a good job I like to remember to tell them so occasionally!”

Kate

Suggestions for your child include:

- familiarisation with the school environment; visit the school a few times and talk to your child about what is happening at the time of your visit.
- changing your daily routine to simulate a typical day at school
- meeting the teacher
- promoting independence in self- care and toileting
- practising turn taking, being quiet while others are speaking and waiting
- learning to organise books and equipment
- knowing what to do when work is completed
- learning self-advocacy skills - knowing how and when to seek help from a peer or teacher
- practising opening lunch containers and food wrappers
- ask the school Principal and classroom teacher if you can take photographs of the environment so that you can prepare a social story for your child about starting school.

What is an Individual Education Plan (IEP)?

An Individual Education Plan or Documented Plan is a way of establishing educational goals and recognising a students’ highly individual needs. Requirements vary in different settings. An IEP identifies the student’s academic, physical, social and emotional needs and outlines a continuing plan to meet the student’s needs, strategies and specifies the resources required.

An IEP may include:

- an assessment of the student's present level of educational achievement
- statement of priorities
- specific educational objectives
- names of those responsible for the respective parts of the program
- monitoring of the student's progress

Your involvement in the creating of an IEP is valued. You should be asked to attend a teacher/parent interview or complete a questionnaire about your child's strengths, level of functioning in key areas, particular disability and level of independence. The teacher, the school Principal, psychologist, visiting teacher or therapists, may also be involved, to help formulate appropriate goals. Consider what you would like your child to achieve during the year and your aspirations for their future. Information about how your child best learns new skills is helpful. If you do not feel comfortable being part of the planning process, discuss your concerns with your child's teacher and endeavour to make alternative arrangements eg. you may choose to have someone accompany you or you might put your thoughts in writing.



A Checklist for Parents:

Things to consider when enrolling your child

- ✓ Are there any structural/ physical changes needed to the school so my child can access all of the school's areas and the curriculum eg. classrooms, toilets, playgrounds, library, canteen, drinking fountains?
- ✓ Is there any specialised equipment required to accommodate my child's access to school eg. mobility aids, communication supports/devices, specialised seating?
- ✓ What transport assistance is available? Where can information be obtained about transportation, for example, timetables, supervision and modifications to the bus to meet safety requirements?
- ✓ Are all safety precautions appropriate and in place for my child eg. supervision during recess, negotiation of physical environment, fencing and security of school grounds?
- ✓ What are the procedures for the administration of medication?
- ✓ How will camps, school excursions and swimming lessons be modified for my child?
- ✓ How will the school curriculum be modified?
- ✓ Will an Individual Education Plan (IEP) be written for my child? Who will be involved? How much say will I have? How often will they be reviewed?
- ✓ Will staff be able to attend in-service education relevant to my child's access to the curriculum?
- ✓ Do I have available the most recent reports/information from my child's Early Childhood Intervention Service team and/or paediatrician readily available to provide to the school to assist them in preparing a funding application?



Useful Contacts

AGENCY	ADDRESS	PHONE (08)	WEBSITE
ADHDWA	The Niche QEII Health Campus 11 Aberdare Road NEDLANDS hello@adhdwa.org	6457 7544	www.adhdwa.org.au
Agosci Inc: Australia's AAC and Diverse Communicator Community	PO Box 211 The Gap QLD 4061	0414 369 535	https://www.agosci.org.au/
Association of Independent Schools of WA (AISWA)	3/41 Walters Drive OSBORNE PARK reception@ais.wa.edu.au	9441 1600	www.ais.wa.edu.au
Catholic Education Western Australia	50 Ruislip Street LEEDERVILLE 6007 reception@cewa.edu.au	93801800	https://www.cewa.edu.au/
Child Australia	Suite 4, 183 Great Eastern Highway, BELMONT 6104 support@childaustralia.org.au	9260 6666 or 1300 661 164	www.childaustralia.org.au
Child Development Service	Level 9, 2 Mill Street PERTH 6000 childdevelopmentsservice@health.wa.gov.au	6372 4500 or 1300 551 827	https://cahs.health.wa.gov.au/Our-services/Community-Health/Child-Development-Service
Cystic Fibrosis Western Australia	11 Aberdare Road NEDLANDS info@cfwa.org.au	6224 4100	https://www.cysticfibrosis.org.au/wa/
Department of Education	151 Royal Street EAST PERTH 6004	9264 4111	www.education.wa.edu.au
Developmental Disability WA (DDWA)	2 Delhi Street WEST PERTH 6005 ddwa@ddwa.org.au	9420 7203	https://www.ddwa.org.au/

AGENCY	ADDRESS	PHONE (08)	WEBSITE
Disability Discrimination Unit - Sussex St Community Law Service	29 Sussex St, EAST VICTORIA PARK 6101 Legal@sscls.asn.au	1300 648 655 6253 9500	http://www.sscls.asn.au
Down Syndrome Australia	Suite 3, 2 Canning Highway, SOUTH PERTH info@downsyndrome.org.au	1300 881 935	www.downsyndrome.org.au
Equal Opportunity Commission-WA	Albert Facey House, 469 Wellington St. PERTH 6000	92163900	https://www.wa.gov.au/organisation/equal-opportunity-commission
Home Education WA	coordinator@hbln.org.au or admin@hbln.org.au	NA	https://hewa.wa.edu.au
Home Education Association Inc.	support@hea.edu.au	1300 72 99 91	https://www.hea.edu.au
Kalparrin	Perth Children's Hospital 15 Hospital Avenue NEDLANDS. 6009 kalparrinwa@health.wa.gov.au	6456 0035	www.kalparrin.org.au
Meerilinga Children and Community Foundation	22 Southport Street West LEEDERVILLE WA 6007	9489 4022	www.meerilinga.org.au
NDIS National Disability Insurance Scheme	78/80 Railway Pde, MIDLAND 6056	1800800110	https://www.ndis.gov.au/understanding/ndis-each-state/western-australia
School of Special Educational Needs	Statewide Specialist Services 33 Giles Avenue, PADBURY SSEND.Enquiries@education.wa.edu.au	9402 6409	https://www.education.wa.edu.au/children-with-special-educational-needs
Wanslea ECA (NDIA partner that delivers Early Childhood Approach support for children under 7).	ndis@wanslea.org.au	1300 969 645	https://www.wanslea.org.au/programs/early-childhood-approach-eca

Acronyms

AISWA	Association of Independent Schools of Western Australia
ADD	Attention Deficit Disorder
ADHD	Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
CEWA	Catholic Education Western Australia
CP	Cerebral Palsy
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
DoE	Department of Education Western Australia
DoH	Department of Health Western Australia
EA	Education Assistant
ECA	Early Childhood Approach
EI	Early Intervention
ESC	Education Support Centre
ESS	Education Support School
HI	Hearing Impaired
IEP	Individual Education Plan
ID	Intellectual Disability
LDC	Language Development Centre
NDIS	National Disability Insurance Scheme
NGO	Non-government Organisation
OT	Occupational Therapy/Occupational Therapist
PT	Physiotherapy/Physiotherapist
Psych	Psychologist
SP	Speech Pathology/Speech Pathologist
CDC	Child Development Centre
SSEN	School of Special Education Needs
SSEND	School of Special Educational Needs – Disability
SSEN-BE	School of Special Educational Needs – Behaviour and Engagement
SSEN-MMH	School of Special Educational Needs – Medical and Mental Health
SSENS	School of Special Educational Needs – Sensory
VI	Vision Impairment
VT	Visiting Teacher



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2 Delhi Street, West Perth, WA 6005

Phone: 08 9420 7203
Email: ddwa@ddwa.org.au
Web: www.ddwa.org.au
ABN: 61 89 503 484



Developmental Disability WA



Developmental Disability WA



[Instagram.com/ddwa](https://www.instagram.com/ddwa)

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