



Australian Council of State School Organisations Limited

ACSSO Submission on the Review of Disability Standards for Education 2025

Introduction

The Australian Council of State School Organisations (ACSSO) welcomes the opportunity to respond to the consultation on the Disability Standards for Education 2025. As a representative of public school parent communities, ACSSO is committed to advocating for inclusive, accessible, and equitable education for all students, regardless of disability. We believe that every child should have the opportunity to participate fully in their educational journey.

Support for Expanding the Standards to Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) Services

ACSSO strongly supports the proposed extension of the Disability Standards for Education to include Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) services. This extension aligns with our view that inclusion should begin from the earliest years of education, establishing a foundation of equity and support that continues throughout a child's educational journey.

We commend the recognition of the diverse range of ECEC services and support the inclusion of all providers who deliver educational programs based on an approved learning framework. This inclusive approach ensures consistency in the application of the Standards and supports children and families who access different types of ECEC settings.

Importance of Consistency Across Educational Settings

One of ACSSO's key concerns has been the inconsistency in how inclusion is addressed across educational settings. By incorporating ECEC services into the Standards, the proposed amendments address a long-standing gap, ensuring that children in preschool and other early education contexts receive the same protections and adjustments as students in primary and secondary schools.

We particularly support the principle that children enrolled in, or applying to enrol in, ECEC services should have the same rights as those in school settings. This alignment helps to build a more consistent, inclusive educational experience from early childhood through to school completion.

Recommendations

The national voice for families, carers, and communities in government education

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1. **Clear and Practical Guidance:** We recommend that the revised Standards are accompanied by comprehensive, practical guidance to assist ECEC providers in meeting their obligations, including case studies and best practice examples.
2. **Professional Development:** It is essential to ensure that ECEC educators and administrators receive targeted professional development on implementing inclusive practices and making reasonable adjustments.
3. **Ongoing Consultation and Review:** ACSSO encourages ongoing engagement with families, educators, and disability advocates to evaluate the practical impact of the changes and make improvements as needed.
4. **Support for Families:** Resources to support parents and carers in understanding their rights and advocating for their children are essential to the successful implementation of these changes.

Feedback on Definitions and Service Inclusions

ACSSO supports the draft definitions of 'educational early childhood service' and 'educational early childhood service provider' as outlined in the Amendment Standards. We believe these definitions are appropriately inclusive while clearly delineating the types of services that must comply.

We also support the inclusion of services approved under both national and state or territory frameworks, ensuring that no child is excluded from the protections offered by the Standards due to the regulatory structure of their chosen service.

Conclusion

In closing, ACSSO commends the Department of Education and the Attorney-General's Department for their commitment to strengthening the Disability Standards for Education. We believe that these amendments will make a significant difference in promoting inclusive practices across educational settings and look forward to continued collaboration to support their effective implementation.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback. For further discussion, please contact us at 0418470604

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