

My name is _____, and I work as a Youth Worker in the _____, I have a Dip in Human Resource Management and am about to commence my Masters in Social Work. I used to work supporting people with a disability gain work or educational opportunities then took a position at _____ Retirement trust where I placed trainees into aged care roles as part of a recruitment strategy during covid giving 130 people jobs. I now work with young girls aged 10-17, supporting young women dealing with various challenges that impact their mental health and school attendance. I also have two sons on the NDIS for Autism and mental health issues due to escaping domestic violence 14 years ago. Their anxiety and Autism Level 1 diagnosis **sometimes** make it difficult for them to leave the house and engage with support workers, leading to accumulated NDIS funds and the constant threat of losing support if not spent.

After about six months, they begin to engage, and the funds are well-utilized to support them in the community. As a youth worker, I see the significant disengagement and anxiety around school attendance. A recent 'Today Tonight' article highlighted a young person in Australia unable to attend school due to Autism, a situation becoming increasingly common. Parents face legal trouble for their children's non-attendance, creating a nightmare scenario for those trying to balance jobs or studies. The recent 'Non Schoolers' on the 4 corners program also highlights the issue.

I propose that NDIS funds be used for educational placements in schools equipped for children with Autism and other medical issues. This support could extend to university, encouraging higher education. Education is a lasting gift. Schools should adopt various learning models, including Gonski, Montessori, Waldorf Steiner, and traditional Australian methods, to provide an inclusive education in smaller class settings.

NDIS funds should be allocated directly to these placements, frozen until used, and then redirected as needed. This would alleviate parents' anxiety about losing support due to their children's mental health struggles. Additionally, these schools should have mental health professionals, social workers, and psychologists, all funded by NDIS plans. These schools should provide devices including basic mobile phones with parents signing disclosure that they will not purchase another device so that online bullying and social media is blocked to lessen the effect that social media has on these vulnerable cohorts.

Thank you for taking the time to read my submission

After I finish my Masters in Social Work I would like to work in educational reform

Thank you