

Dear Sir

Please find my thoughts on this

The criteria used to define and differentiate levels of disability hampers and discriminated against higher functioning students. My daughters 14 and 18 are ASD and High functioning. Their school has no STLD or LD support or Integration funding.

The nature of ASD makes their handicaps hard to assess even on IQ/Standardised testing. Early intervention was not available to them in primary school or junior high. ASD(Aspergers was not on the DSM1V until 1992.)

Their Selective high school, local comprehensive high school and local state run primary school refused to and was not familiar with the Integration process. We had no access to any social skills training, peer support, teacher time, aid time unless we paid for it privately from the Autism Association at \$125 per hour. The legal ramifications are that these students are denied a full and free education and are discriminated against in educational and work opportunities. My now 18 yr old worked for a large fast food chain for 2.2 years and only served a dozen times in that time and did not get the training that other 15,16,17 yr olds got. This chain does support other disabled people eg people with Downes Syndrome. Children with hard core learning disabilities (2-5% of the pop) are fighting for places in IR reading classes, OL language classes. Also other students (10-20%) who are 12-30mths behind languish waiting for (untrained) STLD part time help.

If these kids are in mainstream adequate training and funding must be given to support them reach their fullest potential.

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