

Senate Employment, Workplace Relations and Education
References Committee
Inquiry into the Education of Students with Disabilities

My submission is focused on the area of deafness, I'm a parent of two deaf children and this will reflect my concerns

(i) The level of funding attributed to a child, the criteria for obtaining this level of funding in many cases is inadequate. If a child has multiple disabilities they are forced to choose funding for one area of the disability eg: if a child has mild autism, a mild hearing loss, and learning difficulties, they can only claim for one area. When in fact each area needs recourse

When a child has multiple disabilities they should be funded for each disability

(iii) I understand that it would be impossible to establish appropriate facilities for each disability in their areas. remembering the importance for these children to interact with people of the same background, culture, disability etc.

Accommodation services are an important part of this, and could be provided in two ways

Provide a one off payment to the family to relocate nearer the service available

Provide ongoing accommodation support in the local area of the service available

(iv) Early intervention is the area of greatest need, for this is the time most crucial to a child's development, in the deafness field this is most concerning. There are currently three services available, funded from different areas.

Only one offers a truly comprehensive service the others are concerned with only one philosophy.

The importance of one comprehensive service, is the degree of intervention or method can be changed easily. The mix can be adjusted to suit each case. This is nearly impossible over two agencies.

Amalgamate all three early intervention services and fund it accordingly

Upon diagnosis the client be referred to this agency

(v) Remove the funding to private schools altogether

(vii) It is apparent in most regions that there is a lack of teachers, let alone teachers that are suitably qualified. There is a real difficulty in recruiting any teachers to the country regions. This could be overcome by

- **Increase the number of places in university**
- **Allow regular teachers to externally study and qualify for specialist education while on the job**
- **Start an indemnity program, where a student teacher completes the last two years of training on the job**

(b) The most alarming thing is the lack of consistency within the states in regard to education in government schools, I'm not sure whether this is the interpretation of policy by regional department heads or the lack of policy altogether.

Some consistency needs to be achieved !

Create a new position "Victorian Deaf Education Co-ordinator"

Could be directed by DEET policy in consultation with the principles of education facilities and consumers.

Author

Greg Frost
RMB 1450
Nagambie 3608 Vic

Email grekarfro@bigpond.com.au