



Including everyone from the start – our view on inclusive education

The Disability Royal Commission is talking about schools in a public hearing from 6-10 June, 2022.

They will be talking about the experiences of young people with disability in different types of schools.

Inclusion Australia thinks that what happens to students with an intellectual disability at school needs to change. Many students with an intellectual disability don't go to a mainstream school. Instead, they are told they have to go to a segregated school. This is sometimes called a 'special' or 'specialist' school.

When students with an intellectual disability go to a segregated school, they don't come back to a regular school. They don't get the same education as students without disability. They are also much more likely to end up living in a group home and working in a sheltered workshop.

Some of the big decisions about segregated education happen at particular times in young people's lives. This includes when starting primary or secondary school, or near the end of secondary school (Year 10 and 12). There can be a lot of pressure on families to move from regular to segregated school at these times.

Inclusion Australia thinks this is very unfair and we want it to change.

Often, regular schools tell students with an intellectual disability and their families that they don't belong and that they have to go to a different school. This isn't ok. We want regular schools to include everyone, with no exceptions.

We want there to be a plan to make all regular schools include students with an intellectual disability.

By 2024, we want all segregated schools to stop letting students with an intellectual disability into Prep and Grade 1, so they have to go to regular school.

We want more resources to go to regular schools about how students with an intellectual disability learn, how to support them properly, and how to include them in all parts of school life.

Inclusion Australia thinks that the NDIS and education systems need to work better together, and stop arguing about who is responsible for what.

We also think there needs to be an independent education advocacy service for students with an intellectual disability and their families.

School is a difficult time for many young people and some students will always need some extra help. There may be risk of exclusion for some students. At these times we want very specific help and support for students with an intellectual disability, their families and schools to make sure students can stay in regular school.

Young people with an intellectual disability deserve the best start in life. They have a right to be supported to be part of the Australian community from an early age. We all have a role to support young people, their families, schools and teachers and governments to create a more inclusive future for all Australians.