



Summary of the 2020 Review of the *Disability Standards for Education 2005*

In 2020 the Australian Government reviewed the *Disability Standards for Education 2005* (the Standards). The Standards help to make sure students with disability can access and participate in education and training on the same basis as students without disability. This includes preschool, school, vocational education and training, and higher education. The Standards explain the responsibilities education providers have under the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992*.

During the 2020 Review of the Standards we heard from students with disability, as well as their parents and carers and disability advocacy groups. We also heard from educators and education providers. The Review had a focus on the experiences of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and their families.

We heard that some parts of the Standards need to be changed and that more people need to know about and understand the Standards. We also heard that we need to make sure the Standards are followed. Four areas where changes will be made are described below.

Empowering and supporting students with disability and their families

Students with disability and their parents and carers told us that there is a power imbalance between them and education providers. They felt it was up to them to understand the laws and education system so they can advocate for reasonable adjustments.

What will change	How we will do it
Information for students with disability and their families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with people with disability to develop information products on the Standards that explain the rights of students with disability. • Make sure that this information is provided to students and their families at relevant points in a student’s life.
Clearer rules on consulting with students with disability and their families and handling issues and complaints	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change the Standards to explain how education providers should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ consult with students with disability and their families about the supports and adjustments they need ○ handle issues and complaints relating to students with disability.
Sharing information when students change schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at how to transfer relevant information about a student’s needs when they move from school to school or move into training or higher education.

Strengthening the knowledge and capability of educators and providers

People told us that many educators are unaware of their responsibilities under the Standards or do not have the information they need to implement them. Students with disability had better experiences when their educators and education providers had a good understanding of the Standards and knew how to follow the Standards.

What will change	How we will do it
Information for education providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop information products on the Standards that explain the responsibilities of education providers. • Provide examples of good practice in supporting students with disability.
Training on the Standards for school teachers and leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask state and territory governments to make sure that all school teachers and leaders receive appropriate training on the Standards and supporting students with disability, including before they start their jobs.
Including the Standards in higher education policies and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make sure the Standards are included in the policies and practices of higher education providers.

More accountability for the Standards throughout education

People said accountability for making sure the Standards are followed needs to be improved. They wanted more information about how education providers follow the Standards.

What will change	How we will do it
Making sure education policies match the Standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with state and territory governments to make sure that rules and policies that apply to education providers align with the Standards.
Improving vocational education and training for students with disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with state and territory governments to strengthen the delivery of vocational education and training for students with disability, as part of other changes being made to vocational education and training.
More public information on how schools support students with disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> School education authorities will be required to put information on their websites explaining the services and supports their schools provide for students with disability.
Data and reporting about school students with disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with state and territory governments to develop national principles and practices on collecting and reporting data on how students with disability take part in school education.
Checking how well the Standards are followed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask state and territory governments to conduct an audit to check how well the Standards are followed.

Building awareness and capability in the Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) sector

The Standards do not currently apply to child care providers, but these providers must follow the *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (DDA). There is strong support for making sure ECEC educators and providers better understand their responsibilities under the DDA. We also heard that parents and carers need better information on the DDA.

What will change	How we will do it
Information for parents and carers about their children's rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop products for parents and carers about the rights of children with disability in ECEC.
Information for ECEC providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with state and territory governments to develop resources for ECEC providers and make sure ECEC providers know about and understand the DDA.
Making sure ECEC policies match the DDA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with state and territory governments to make sure that all rules and policies that apply to ECEC providers align with the DDA.
Change the Standards to include ECEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Change the Standards to include ECEC and consult the ECEC sector about the changes.

Making the changes

Some of the changes listed here are things the Australian Government can do on its own, but many changes will need state and territory governments to agree to make the changes and to work together with the Australian Government on them. Some changes will require state and territory governments and the education authorities who run schools to make changes or do something new.

Changes will be made with help and advice from people with disability. This will include working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities.

We will keep the community up to date about progress on these changes.

For more information, go to www.dese.gov.au/disability-standards-education-2005/2020-review-disability-standards-education-2005.