

Education and Service Providers

Parent initiated service provider for students with disability

This fact sheet provides information for parents to consider when seeking external services to be provided for their child.

1. Working Together

Schools, families and service providers, such as therapy services, are committed to supporting students with disability to reach their potential, enjoy meaningful relationships and participate in their communities. This includes a shared interest in achieving positive educational outcomes for students with disability.

Schools, parents and providers understand the best outcomes are achieved when they work together. This may include sharing information about the student and what activities might work best to support them. In some cases, where it is suitable, this may mean working directly with the provider in the classroom, sharing skills, expertise and strategies to support student learning

2. Education

Schools understand that every student has their own aspirations, learning needs, strengths and interests. Schools are committed to maximising participation and access to learning experiences by providing students with an education that best meets their individual needs. This is achieved by making reasonable adjustments to suit each student's education needs to support them to achieve their full potential.

3. External Services

Service providers, such as therapy services, contribute to the lives of students with disability by supporting them to reach their potential, enjoy meaningful relationships and participate in their communities. The benefits of services can include:

- promoting individual and family health and wellbeing;
- supporting the development of skills and independence in areas such as communication, mobility, daily living and behaviour;
- developing or enhancing meaningful relationships; and
- encouraging community inclusion and participation.

4. Making decisions

The benefits of ensuring the delivery of externally provided services in the school need to be balanced against the need to ensure that the school continues to be managed and administered for the benefit of all students.

Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis considering the individual circumstances of the student and the wider needs of the school. These decisions take into account the educational needs and priorities of the student and ensure that the school still operates to the benefit of all students and without disrupting learning.

The principal will manage any services that come into the school in a way that supports children to continue to take part in classes and school activities. This allows the school to focus on teaching your child and all other students, and ensures your child does not miss out on important learning time.

Schools, families and service providers are committed to supporting students to reach their potential.

5. Service Delivery

Schools can typically develop programs to develop a range of areas including academic skills, fine motor skills, social skills, play skills, and skills in activities of daily living (e.g. toilet training, hygiene and eating). A value added service uses specific skill sets and programs that schools do not have the capacity to provide.

It may be more appropriate for therapy services to occur outside of school hours, for instance in circumstances where therapy includes increasing the capacity of parents and family members to assist their child, it should be undertaken at home. Some students, particularly older students, may prefer to access therapy services after school hours for privacy reasons and to not impact on instructional hours at school.

Undertaking therapy outside of school can also offer families the chance to focus on achieving therapeutic goals, where schools may not have the instructional time available to address such goals. Furthermore, it may provide time for therapeutic goals to be addressed in addition to those being met at the school.

6. Considerations

Parents and students should look for service providers that are right for them. It can help to:

- Have a good understanding of what supports you require. This will allow you to see whether they offer the right services to meet your child's specific needs to help them reach their goals.
- Find out if the service provider can deliver the services at a time and place that suits you and be able to accommodate changes in your schedule.
- Ensure the people who will be providing services for your child are suitably qualified and maintain professional registrations.

Additional information and advice can be sought from advocates and advocacy groups or family and friends. Some schools will be able to provide information on providers or link you to an advocacy service. National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) Planners and Local Area Coordinators can also provide advice on selecting the right service provider.