

FACT SHEET FOR DISCUSSION WITH FAMILIES

DISABILITY EDUCATION PROGRAMS

THE CHANGE

From 2023, all ACT Public Schools will offer a small group program known as a “Disability Education Program”. Previous small group program names (Learning Support Unit; Learning Support Unit Autism; Learning Support Centre; and Disability Program) will no longer be used.

THE REASON FOR THE CHANGE

This change will ensure consistency across the ACT public education system and promote inclusion by ensuring all children can attend their priority enrolment school with their siblings and neighbours and enrol on the same basis as their peers.

This change is occurring in the context of broader inclusion reforms, with the ACT Government currently developing a longer-term Inclusive Education Strategy and implementation plan to strengthen inclusive practice in schools.

WHAT THIS MEANS

- ACT Public Schools are committed to meeting the needs of students with disability and make reasonable adjustments to support students to access and participate in the school curriculum, programs and activities on the same basis as their peers.
- All students in the ACT are guaranteed a place at their local school. The Education Directorate works closely with schools to provide appropriate supports and adjustments.
- Students who meet the ACT Student Disability Criteria for Intellectual Disability or Autism Spectrum Disorder are eligible to access Disability Education Programs (previously known as Learning Support Units/Learning Support Units Autism/Learning Support Centres/Disability Programs and/or small group programs) for families who choose this option. From 2023, Disability Education Programs will be offered at all ACT Public Schools. These programs are run flexibly to meet the needs of students and usually offer a lower staff to student ratio along with time with same-aged peers and time in small group settings.
- All schools will continue to offer the Inclusion Support Program, which provides additional support to schools to facilitate reasonable adjustments. All students who are eligible for Disability Education Programs are also eligible for the Inclusion Support Program.
- This change supports inclusion by ensuring all children can attend their local school with their siblings and neighbours. However, families may continue to choose to apply for enrolment at an out of area school and their application will be assessed against [specific criteria](#).
- Work is under way to amend the [online enrolment form](#) so families can include relevant information about their child’s eligibility for the Inclusion Support Program or a Disability Education Program when they are enrolling their children for 2023. Families will subsequently need to provide evidence to schools to confirm their eligibility to access disability programs.
- Your local school will work with you and your child to identify what supports are needed to help your child thrive at school. Families can discuss the options for their child with the school’s principal, executive teacher, Disability Education Contact Officer (DECO) or school psychologist.