

How Do Schools Make Decisions About Supporting Students with Disability?

AIM



The purpose of the study was to gain a better understanding of the adjustments provided for students with disability in mainstream classrooms, the decision-making processes and the factors school staff consider when selecting supports and adjustments.

WHAT PEOPLE TOLD US

1. DECISION MAKING

- Across the schools there was a wide range of decision-making processes, often a combination of formal and informal processes.
- In some schools the process was not clear or agreed.
- Families were generally involved in the decision-making process to the extent they wished.
- Participants within schools generally agreed that decision making was a joint process.
- Schools tended to consider only a limited range of possible options .
- Participants were not always in agreement on the values that guided their decisions.

2. ADJUSTMENTS AND MONITORING

- Within the schools there was good consensus across participants on what adjustments were put in place.
- Some schools focused primarily on issues related to management and care of students and pedagogical and curriculum adjustments were limited.
- School Learning Support Officers were used extensively one-to-one with the student and often without plans to fade their support.
- Student goals were often non-specific and adjustments were often only monitored informally.

WHO TOOK PART?



107 people
took part in interviews
(educators, parents & students)



Across **22** schools

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



The research partners in this study sincerely thank the participants who took part for their time and willingness to share their opinions.

WHO WERE THE RESEARCH TEAMS INVOLVED?



MACQUARIE
University
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NSW
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POINTS FOR CONSIDERATION



Do we have a clear, shared set of values that underpin our decision-making?

Do we have clear, specific, explicit and measurable goals for each student?

Can we balance management/care focused adjustments with a broader educational focus?

Have we considered a wide range of possible options for adjustments?

What options could we consider beside School Learning and Support Officers?

- Peer support?
- Support from a specialist teacher?
- Professional learning?
- Curriculum adjustments?
- Changes to classroom pedagogy and management strategies?

If we decide on an SLSO ...

- What adjustments will the SLSO help implement?

- What strategies will the SLSO teach the student?

- How can we increase student independence by reducing SLSO support over time?

- How will we decide if use of an SLSO is effective?

- Can the SLSO be used flexibly to provide teacher support, rather than working 1:1 with a student?

How will we formally monitor the effectiveness of the adjustments we have put in place?

FIND OUT MORE

You can access a full report of this study via the SERAP Research Repository at:

app.education.nsw.gov.au/serap/ResearchRecord/Summary?id=114

You can contact the researchers via the study's Project Leader:

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