



Down Syndrome NSW

18 May 2010

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GPSC's

Rhia Victorino
Senior Council Officer
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

Dear Rhia

I would like to thank the Committee for inviting Down Syndrome NSW to appear before it, and thank you for all the assistance you provided in facilitating this.

Jill and I have read over the transcript and we have no major corrections. On a minor issue of terminology, the wording used for 'Down syndrome' in the transcript is inconsistent. In some places, it is referred to as '*Down's syndrome*' and in others as '*Down Syndrome*'.

Although either could be viewed as correct 'Down syndrome' is the term commonly used in Australia and by all the Australian Down syndrome Associations. I have corrected the transcript to reflect this.

I would also like to briefly expand upon the issue of assessment, and the issue of 'over assessment' of children with Down syndrome and other disabilities. One contributing factor to this 'over assessment' which we did not discuss at the hearing is the lack of portability of funding support a child receives. If the parents wish or need to move their child to a different school, the child will commonly be required to be assessed anew. We would recommend that all funding support be attached to the child not the school, and be fully portable from school to school.

Regarding the issue of ongoing assessment, any ongoing assessment done should focus specifically on the support needs of the child in the classroom (and playground etc) setting, accessing the curriculum and participating in school life, *not* an ongoing assessment of the broad capabilities of the child such as level of intellectual capacity. A child with Down syndrome will *always* have Down syndrome, will *always* have some level of intellectual disability which will not change greatly from year to year. Therefore, more global tools such as IQ tests which do not specifically assess the classroom support needs of a child should be used very sparingly. It should also be noted that there can be a significant 'practice effect' with some assessment tools ie the more you are tested, the better you get at performing that particular test.

We have included some further information and research summaries on classroom assessment and learning support needs of children with Down syndrome:

Patron: Craig Wing

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*Learners with Down syndrome: A Handbook for teaching professionals, Down Syndrome Victoria. p.10-11 has the developmental profile associated with Down syndrome. It could be used to develop appropriate assessments.

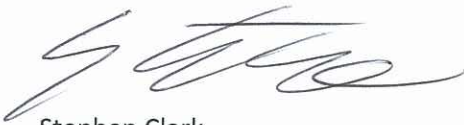
*Excerpt from **Accessing the Curriculum: Strategies for differentiation for pupils with Down syndrome**, Down Syndrome Education International, 2000.
Types of accommodations needed

*Memory issues research: Memory development for individuals with Down syndrome: an Overview
Explains some of the issues with one of the features of Down syndrome—short term auditory memory.

There is more research available at www.down-syndrome.org. This is just a sample of what has been developed using the research.

If you have any other questions please contact us at 9841 4444.

Yours sincerely,



Stephen Clark
Chief Executive Officer
Down Syndrome NSW