

**INQUIRY INTO THE PROVISION OF EDUCATION TO  
STUDENTS WITH A DISABILITY OR SPECIAL NEEDS**

**Name:** Name Suppressed

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Partially Confidential

I'd like to put forward some comments on this new inquiry.

I have a seven year old boy with down syndrome who attends a mainstream school. Prior to him attending school I attended a conference about mainstream schooling to arm myself with information to help me manage his support at school. At this conference there were representative from the Department of Education who informed me of some information that we could presume would occur in a mainstream school. When it came to being at school it appears that there seem to be varying interpretations of what an IEP is, for instance. This sort of interpretation can have vast effects on the face to face education that your child receives.

It also amazes me that if you were to put your car in for a services you'd expect a mechanic to work on it. If you were attending uni to study medicine, you'd expect suitably qualified lecturers to teach you about anatomy. I can send my child with special needs to school and he could be taught by a teacher who has had NO special needs training, and not only that, the aid who is employed to work directly with him, can also be totally untrained. What does that say for the value of our kids with special needs? It says to me, "that will do".

For the last 2 years I've had to trust that my child is getting the best he will get to a certain degree. I've been lucky to have had one of the best and most imaginative teachers there is and she has managed remarkably well, considering she had NO special needs training. But not all teachers are like her. And now that he has moved to a different teacher, I'm finding that out. Our school is only a small one (150 kids) and so the range of teachers is limited. Would you like your child's heart operated on by a brain surgeon? There needs to more suitably qualified teachers or adequate support staff who can then allow teachers to improve their level of training and skill.