

Submission
No 124

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

Name: Mrs Katrina and Mr Adam Ginsburg

Date received: 17/02/2010

Our daughter Kayla started kindergarten this year - she has Down Syndrome and was diagnosed with a mild intellectual disability. We felt we had very few options as IM classes don't start until 3rd class; mainstream teachers are not properly trained and are time constrained so are hesitant to have kids with additional needs in their class; and there was not enough proposed funding to meet her needs and ensure she was given optimal learning in the the NSW mainstream education system.

After much frustration, stress, additional testing and deliberation - due to behaviour and medical issues, the local area counselor suggested Kayla to go into the local IO class where she is now very happy. Our preference is to eventually see Kayla in the mainstream education system, which would appear sending her to a small independent school would be more likely as we had great feedback, and the support was so poor in the mainstream system for our child with a mild intellectual disability.

The level and adequacy of current special education places within the NSW education system needs to be improved. Our suggestions are:

1. Take into account functioning capacity rather than disability in setting up more specialised classes plus IM classes from kindergarten;
2. More specialised in-house counselor support for parents, teachers and children alike;
3. Suitable curriculum provisions and training for teachers who have a child with a disability in the school and / or class.

These would seem to be a vital part of the solution to nurture children such as Kayla's needs as this learning time is so important and the pressure on teachers to provide this additional care and teach to the whole class is rarely possible.