

Supplementary
Submission
No 52a

**INQUIRY INTO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH
DISABILITY IN NEW SOUTH WALES EDUCATIONAL
SETTINGS**

Name: Mrs Ciara and Mr Tim McKillop

Date Received: 29 February 2024

Dear NSW public school

I'm sorry if I seem cynical

I'm sorry if I seem rude, or disappointed or like nothing is good enough.

I'm sorry if I seem like I'm placing an impossible task on you.

I'm sorry if it seems like I challenge everything and believe nothing.

I don't know you and you don't really know me. I'm sure you're a fantastic teacher, I'm sure you're a teacher in this unit because you care greatly about the outcomes for these children. I'm sure your heart is in the right place.

The thing is.

Last year was not ideal, it wasn't the start to our child's education journey like I had hoped.

I went in wanting open and construction, solution based communication.

I was told teachers are scared of parents.

I went in being open, honest and vulnerable.

I was told teachers are burnt out.

I went in with professional advice and researched evidence.

I was told it would be read and implemented.

But I received no evidence of this.

I went in explaining our stance on neuroaffirming language and the importance of psychological safety.

I was told your child is safe, teachers love them just as much as you do.

I was so optimistic, I was so hopeful, I was so utterly naive.

His report reflected little to no effort

if you can not recognise the effort he makes and the ways it looks different to neurotypical children, you don't know or understand my child.

His report reflect no values

if you don't see his strong sense of social justice and need for clarity around expectations, he attempts to stick up for his peers, you are missing his beauty and potential. It looks different to his peers.

His report reflect a version of a child that only exists when viewing said child through a lense that's deficient based, with little positive regard.

It reflects a poor understanding of what an autistic child struggles with and how compassion and trauma informed practice far outweighs any positive behaviour plan.

It reflects continuous comparison to neurotypical children and setting expectations he will never be able to meet.

I know you are doing your job, you are not the boss, you don't make the rules. Your hands are tied.

Backed by an education department that write policy setting expectations my child will not meet in the same way his neurotypical peers meet them, written in a way they will never be held accountable for his 'failings'

I won't ever be sorry for my child though.

Don't mistake this for not apologising for aggressive or violent behaviour. I will always be sorry if someone gets hurts...

but I will also be sorry to my child that they felt the only option was violence or aggression, that the supports put in place were not enough or incorrectly implemented.

I'll be a strong advocate to know what happened and what the triggers were. I won't accept 'there weren't any signs or warning' because there always is.

And gosh I'll hold the school accountable to those policies in times of suspension.... I will want to know what supports will be put in place to ensure my child feels safe and regulated at school, so it doesn't happen again

I want to support the teacher so the teacher has the capacity to successfully support and teach my child.

We seem to want the same thing...for my child to be a successful learner.

All I've ever wanted was to work together, collaboratively and honestly. Like a team my child can trust and rely on, in an environment he can feel psychologically safe.

Maybe my expectations are too high, maybe I need to adjust them. I don't know. All I know is I'll keep advocating, I'll keep questioning, I'll keep communicating and I'll keep trying, after all it's only week 1.

Kind regards

One Exhausted Parent