

Available support

There are a wide range of support options available to your child in NSW public schools.

Your local public school is the first point of contact and your voice is important. You can discuss your wishes for your child's education with your local school principal, as well as your child's specific needs and the different support options that are available. This should happen before enrolling.

Support for your child in mainstream classes

Your local public school is well-prepared to support students with disability and additional learning and support needs, and staff are ready to answer your questions.

Most students with disability are supported directly in their local school in mainstream classes. This is done through personalised learning and support and adjustments.

Your child's teachers will talk to you about your child's strengths, interests and needs. They can make changes to the way they teach in the classroom to help support your child's learning.

All schools are given resources to be able to access a specialist learning and support teacher and funding that the school can use flexibility to support their students.

Most NSW public schools have a learning and support team to work with you and your child, your child's teachers and other professionals.

If your child has complex health care needs, you can work with the school to set up a formalised health care plan.

Personalised learning and support

Personalised learning and support refers to the adjustments teachers and other school staff make to support your child's learning in class.

These adjustments can be changes to teaching and learning programs, lessons, assessments or the school environment. These adjustments allow all students to access and participate in education on the same basis.

To create a personalised learning and support plan for your child, teachers, support staff and other professionals will work together with you to assess your child's education needs.

The plan is reviewed regularly and can be changed if your child's needs change.

Requesting physical changes to your child's school

Your child's school may be able to make changes to the physical environment to meet your child's needs at any time during their schooling.

If possible, talk to your local public school before your child starts school about making sure the physical environment is accessible.

If you believe the school may need to make changes to the building such as the bathrooms or ramps before your child arrives, you should contact the school two years before your child would be starting.

Additional support

If your child needs additional support or specialist support provisions, your school will talk to you about the options for your child. They might suggest applying for Integration Funding Support (IFS) or a placement for your child in a support class in a mainstream school or a school for specific purposes (SSP).

Some targeted and specialist programs or support services will require students to have a confirmed disability which meets the department's disability criteria.

Integration Funding Support (IFS)

If your child meets the department's disability criteria, extra support may be provided in mainstream classrooms through Integration Funding Support .

The funding could be used to provide extra teaching staff or school learning support officers (SLSOs, also known as teacher's aides), or it could mean your child's classroom teacher is given more time for professional learning and to plan for your child.

SLSOs work under the direction and supervision of your child's classroom teacher. They provide assistance to the teacher for students with disability and additional learning and support needs at school.

IFS is only considered if the learning and support team decides that the school needs additional resources to provide adjustments for your child, or the most appropriate resource is extra teacher time and/or extra SLSO time. You will be part of this discussion.

Itinerant support teachers

Itinerant support teachers hearing and vision work with students who have a confirmed sensory disability prior to school and in NSW public schools. They may visit your child at specific times throughout the week, and may work in partnership with your child's class teacher.

Support teachers transition help teachers and high school students in mainstream schools and SSPs – as well as their parents and carers – with the process of moving from high school to adult life.

Support classes

For children with moderate to high needs, places in support classes in mainstream schools and SSPs are determined by a panel who assess the needs of all children in the area. You cannot enrol your child directly into these classes, but your local school can lodge an access request to apply for a placement for your child.

Starting your child in a particular school setting does not mean they need to stay there. You can review your child's placement every year, or as needed.

You can also decline a place if it's not what you want for your child.

Other forms of support

Your child may also:

- Use assistive technology
- Require specialised equipment that is not assistive technology, e.g. standing desks, hoists, etc.
- Be supported by NDIS service providers in their class if this is approved by the school's principal and your child needs this assistance to help them learn
- May be offered or apply for disability provisions for exams.

