

POST SCHOOL OPTIONS – ADULTS WITH HIGH SUPPORT NEEDS

1. BACKGROUND

When parents have a child with a severe intellectual disability their lives are changed dramatically. During the 13+ years that the child is able to attend school the parents are able to take solace in the fact that their child's needs will be taken care of, the child will be happy and safe, the child will be involved in developmental activities and their child will be able to attend school 5 days per week for approximately 40+ weeks of the year. There is security for the parents and families of a child with high support needs in the schooling system. As the young person with high support needs reaches school leaving age this security is broken. The parents now have to find a post-school options service provider that will be able to meet the needs of their child with a level of funding decided by a government agency assessment that may be insufficient to allow their child to attend 5 days per week and will require at least one of the parents, if both parents are still living together to give up some if not all of their employment.

2. WHAT ARE THE CURRENT CONTEXTUAL ISSUES RELATED TO THE POLICY/POSITION PAPER AREA?

- 2.1. Lack of consistency of program provision across the states/territories.
- 2.2. Lack of consistency of quality and quality assurance mechanisms of programs within and across states and territories.
- 2.3. Poor communication structures to disseminate information about post-school options to families.

3. WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW?

States/territories are working under different models and time frames.

4. WHAT POSITIVE ACTIONS/OUTCOMES ARE OCCURRING?

- 4.1. Increasing diversity in programs to cater for differences and meet individual needs.
- 4.2. Level of funding increasing to allow increased access to programs.

5. WHAT ARE THE CONCERNS?

- 5.1. Inconsistency across states/territories causes stress to families and reduces lifestyle options eg. Capacity to work, relocation.

- 5.2. Not all placements are full time, full day placement.
- 5.3. Clarity of pathways ie what happens after transition? Retirement programs?
- 5.4. Accountability processes for service providers and /or clients.
- 5.5. Lack of rural and indigenous services.
- 5.6. Lack of dissemination of information for families.
- 5.7. Concept of lifelong learning does not apply across all services.

6. ASEPA POSITION/POLICY

6.1. What is ASEPA'S preferred position or policy?

- National plan
- Transparent processes
- Brokerage/index funding model. (FFYA- Vic model?)
- Strong accountability.
- Philosophy of lifelong learning

6.2. What further research does ASEPA need to do in this area?

- Deeper research into each states systems and their effectiveness.
- Impact of parents having to leave work to become carers for their children with high support needs who are of post-compulsory school age.

7. ACTIONS FOR ASEPA

7.1. What actions do we need to undertake?

Influence federal government to provide a supplementary pension to top up state/territory allowance that will allow access to developmental and community access programs up to five days per week.

7.2. Who do we need to influence?

Families, service providers, DHS and local, state and federal governments

7.3. How do we take this agenda forward?

Contact stakeholder organisations eg. ACSSO, carers associations, advocacy groups

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8. REFERENCES RELATED TO POLICY/POSITION

- Research Papers
- Organisations/Contact Details
- Web Sites
- Individual Contacts
- New Directions for Community Participation – NSW Department of Ageing, Disability and Home Care
- Post School Services – Adult Lifestyle Support Program – Queensland Government.
- Community Involvement Program – Tasmanian Department of Health and Human Services.

9. MEMBERS OF ASEPA WORKING PARTY

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