

*family*

A D V O C A C Y

**Submission to the Department of Social Services for  
Australia's Disability Strategy 2021-2031: Consultation to  
inform the Strategy Guides**

**“Children that learn together, learn to live together”**

*Jody Carr, Former Minister for Education, New Brunswick, Canada,  
speaking at  
Family Advocacy's National Symposium on Inclusive Education 2017*

Cecile Sullivan Elder  
Executive Officer, Family Advocacy  
[cecile@family-advocacy.com](mailto:cecile@family-advocacy.com)

Leanne Varga  
Systemic Advocate  
[leanne@family-advocacy.com](mailto:leanne@family-advocacy.com)

Family Advocacy  
(02) 9869 0866  
Suite 704, 88-90 George Street,  
Hornsby, NSW 2077, Australia

**November 2022**

**Acknowledgement:**

Family Advocacy would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the lands on which this report has been written, reviewed and produced, whose cultures and customs have nurtured and continue to nurture this land since the Dreamtime. We pay our respects to their Elders past, present and future. This is, was and always will be Aboriginal land.

## Table of contents

Introduction .....	3
Q10. Good examples of when the Guiding Principles have been used .....	4
• Case studies and resources .....	4
• Inclusion and education .....	4
• Inclusion and employment .....	5
• Inclusion and housing .....	9
• Inclusion and community.....	9
• Helpful resources applying the Guiding Principles to Inclusive Education .....	10
Q9. Is there anything missing from the Guiding Principles that should be included in the Guide? .....	18
• Inclusion and the role of family advocacy to heighten expectations and support their family member into typical and ordinary settings .....	18
• Inclusion and the Media .....	18

## Introduction

Family Advocacy is a Federal and State government funded disability advocacy organisation that works across New South Wales (NSW) to advance and protect the rights and interests of people with developmental disability<sup>1</sup> (hereinafter “disability”). It was founded by families 30 years ago who had a strong Vision of an inclusive life for their family member with a disability, that can be enjoyed by experiencing the same opportunities and living conditions as the majority of Australians. This means being included in education, employment, and community with the right to live safely, with dignity, and free from violence, abuse, neglect or exploitation.

In order for the Vision of an inclusive life to become a reality, the advocacy undertaken by a family can be one of the greatest influences of inclusion and safeguards in their family member’s lives. As such, Family Advocacy supports families in their advocacy development to advocate with and on behalf of people with disability from a wide range of backgrounds: socioeconomic, First Nations, culturally and linguistically diverse, and people from metropolitan, rural and remote areas. We also provide statewide advocacy advice and advocacy information to individuals and systemic advocacy.

Over recent years, our work included specific funding around the Royal Commission into Violence, Abuse, Neglect and Exploitation of People with Disability (hereinafter, the Disability Royal Commission). As such, our policy and advocacy work entails constantly questioning the quality and effectiveness of legislation, policy and practice in the disability sector.

One of our initiatives, Resourcing Inclusive Communities, provides information, resources, mentoring and training to enable people with disability to live as active and valued members of the community.

As Question 10 asks, we have witnessed many “good examples of when the Guiding Principles have been used” in real life over the last 30 years. We will share some resources, case studies and films in this submission which we submit are relevant for all of the Guiding Principles. We recommend the DSS use these resources in the Guide to the Guiding Principles.

---

<sup>1</sup> Developmental disability is a disability that occurs in the developmental period of a person’s life (in the period from conception to adulthood) and includes but is not limited to: autism, intellectual disability, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, and any combination of physical, intellectual or sensory disability.

## Q10. Good examples of when the Guiding Principles have been used

### Case studies and resources

Below are examples of some of the community booklets and videos Family Advocacy has produced to promote inclusion:

#### ***Family Advocacy / Resourcing Inclusive Communities booklets promoting inclusion***

- [All students learning together](#)
- [Developing Community Connections](#)
- [Life Long learners](#)
- [Harness the possibilities](#)
- [Conversations for Collaboration](#)
- [Access Symposium](#) - which is a holding site for a grounding of information in education about [what is inclusion](#), [why include](#), [how to include](#), [changing mindsets](#), [teacher impact](#), [Australian examples](#).
- [Mac's story – Australian Government's Inclusive Education Exemplar of Practice](#)

#### ***Films promoting inclusion***

For ease of reference, we have listed which stage of life each film relates to - education, employment housing, community participation - a brief explanation about the film and some quotes from people featured in the films so you can get an idea of the variety of voices included such as parent, teacher, principal, student, friend, and support worker.

### Inclusion and Education

[Inclusive High School Education - Al's story](#) - (15.51 minutes) This film is about Al Graham and his inclusive education journey through the lens of his last week at Turramurra High School in NSW. Thank you to the Graham family and Turramurra High School.

**Al's school mate** - "The opportunity it's given me and others has been really significant to our lives and had a really huge impact on us".

**Al's teacher** - "All those soft skills go out into the workforce and out into the community, and that's where you start to get the inclusiveness that you want in our communities, and the acceptance, the promotion of diversity".

[Inclusive High School Education - Jacob's story](#) (18.59 minutes) School is one stage in life where we learn to become an adult, form our viewpoints, determine our social peer groups and be an individual.

Families often express how valuable it is to hear from other families about their experiences, what are others doing out there in the real world?

We decided to make this film in order to provide families with this experience of one student's journey through primary to high school and showcase how Jacob's school is adjusting and providing for him to have the same opportunities and school life as every student in the regular class.

**Annette (Jacob's mum)**, "...something that we really would encourage that people think about their child's life holistically, as a whole going beyond school because school is only just one part of their whole life but it certainly sets them up for having a good life after they leave school".

[Inclusive Primary Education - Joscelyn's Journey](#) - (23.45 minutes) This film is about Joscelyn's inclusive education at primary school from Kindergarten to Year 6.

**Lee Oliver (Principal)** - "We really are a reflection of society and that's what schools are. So if we can provide for Joscelyn or any child, the ability and skills and knowledge to go out on to high school or the wider community, Joscelyn will make a significant contribution to Lake Albert Public School, to high school and the workforce down the track. So it's been a team effort and a positive one."

[School Work experience - Rhiannon's work experience](#) (6.26 minutes), a story about Rhiannon's successful work experience at her local Bakery. Rhiannon's mother, Di, thought carefully about the tasks her daughter would be performing and prepared the employer and Rhiannon as much as possible prior to the work experience actually happening. Rhiannon was prepared for success as her mother collaborated with the employer and the employer was receptive to her input. We strongly recommend this video be adopted as an exemplar of good practice towards providing a system that supports genuine work experience for young people with a disability whilst they are at school, and also changing community attitudes, upskilling the capacity of parents, and lifting employer engagement.

## Inclusion and employment

[Josh's story](#)<sup>2</sup> (6 minutes) illustrates that employment can be the norm following an inclusive education rather than a Day Service and/or ADE. Josh now runs his own mail delivery business and is a valued and respected member of his community. We know of other examples of micro businesses such as a coffee cart business, a paper shredding business, a greeting card business where the artwork of the person with disability is used to decorate the cards, a biscuit making where the biscuits are sold in the local café's and markets.

---

<sup>2</sup> Family Advocacy, *Josh's Story*, YouTube, 24 November 2019. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OTdRgyh1dV0>>

[Let's Get to Work – The Admin Assistant](#) (5.44 minutes), which was launched during [Imagine More's](#) Let's Get to Work virtual conference on June 11, 2020. When he was in Year 11, Jack's family and his Circle of Support used their connections to find work for Jack at the University of Canberra (UC). Work experience at UC led to paid employment for 8 hours a week at the University of Canberra through a school-based apprenticeship. As a young adult now, the job as an admin assistant was carved by a champion in the workplace that also happens to be on Jack's Circle of Support. The job is customised to Jack's interests and strengths.

[Let's Get to Work – The Research Technician](#) (4.13 minutes) which was launched during [Imagine More's](#) Let's Get to Work virtual conference on June 11, 2020. With the support of Gus's family networks, they discovered a job opportunity at the CSIRO. CSIRO used an innovative interview process that was not dependent on verbal responses, rather Gus was taken straight into the lab where he demonstrated he was the right person for the job. Gus had a strong champion within the workplace and many supportive co-workers. CSIRO didn't have everything worked out before they decided to employ a person with disability, but they acknowledge the right support was imperative. It has been extremely successful.

[Let's Get to Work – Zellner Services](#) (6.10 minutes) which was launched during [Imagine More's](#) Let's Get to Work virtual conference on June 11, 2020. With the dedicated support of Cameron's family and his Circle of Support they used the Discovery Process to assist in identifying all of Cameron's interests and skills that could be explored for a business idea. The Discovery Process included Cameron himself, his family, friends and circle of support and the goal was to determine which of Cameron's interests would most likely lead to employment options.



To begin, you can see from the slide above that information was reviewed going back to 2016, to determine which work path was going to best suite Cameron. The blue arrows on the left side of the page are Cameron's interests, which included rowing, dogs, chopping & food, cooking and photography. Red arrows indicated work roles explored, yellow are unpaid valued roles explored and green arrows have led to paid employment.

Many of the opportunities they explored came through Cameron's Circle of Support connections.

One of the interests, was computers which followed his Dad's interests in computers. Good example of how you can consider showing the young person different tasks where they shadow and learn from you. From computers, Cameron started to enjoy scanning images and from there, with the support of his family he has created his own micro business called Zellner services, that specialises in scanning, shredding and data entry.

[Let's Get to Work – Pa's Produce](#) (5.53 minutes), was launched during [Imagine More's](#) Let's Get To Work virtual conference on June 11, 2020. In this video, you'll meet Annie and her family. Together they've created a small enterprise called Pa's Produce. A seasonal business, they roast and sell chestnuts from Annie's grandparents' farm. The family demonstrates how important it was to value Annie's strengths and interests. You'll see the power of planning and of taking the first steps, even when it all seems overwhelming. You'll also see the importance of putting the right supports in place. For Annie, this has been a combination of freely-given support from extended family and the paid support of a well-chosen mentor.

### **An Australian employment success story of a DES using Customised Employment model**

We have a successful example of customised employment in Australia. We strongly urge DSS to read the transcript from a presentation made by Peter Symonds, General Manager for Operations at 'Possability' in Tasmania called [Customised Employment](#). Instead of competing for advertised jobs in the open labour market, customised employment strategies are used to support people to create opportunities in businesses and organisations that suit their unique skill set and support needs.

*Measuring how successful an employer program is relatively easy. It's based on how many people get jobs, how long they keep them, what they are paid and do the hours of work match what the person is seeking."*

- Peter Symonds, General manager for Operations at *Possability*, Tasmania

The statistics presented by Mr Symonds speak for themselves:

### **What are the outcomes?**

#### ***Tasmanian Customised Employment experience Jan 2014 – Dec 2015***

*75% gained employment and of this group 91% of these people remained in employment after 26 weeks*

#### ***Disability Employment Service (DES) comparison***

*24.6% gained employment and of this group 29% remained in employment after 26 weeks*

## **Inclusion and Housing**

[Independent living - Jac's Place](#) - (9.46 minutes) Jacob Hughes has made the move to live independently. This film is about his life, the plan to give him the opportunity to have his own place and the team of people who worked together to make it happen.

**Jac's support worker** - "Since Jac has moved in to his own place, it had had a really good impact on Jac's independence and Jacob not being a 26-year-old guy who lives with his mum but now being an independent young man who lives in his own place.

**Melanie (Circle of Support member)** - "Jacob has really taken to living on his own and being in charge per se, because you can see he is up for a social gathering that he has initiated with support and he is doing a lot more on the weekends and you can see how engaged he looks on his face. I feel like it's made a difference to the people around him because we know it's what Jacob wants".

## **Inclusion and Community**

[Community Participation/ Self-managed supports - Rachel's story](#) - (7.57 minutes) Rachael is discovering her passions and challenging herself with a close team of assistants. Rachael uses a power chair but it hasn't stopped her from exploring her strength as a pole dancer.

**Sarah (support staff)** – "When I first started with her, she was a lot more quiet and not as capable and confident in everything. So these last two years, she's blossomed heaps. She's out there more. She's cooking in the kitchen. She's pegging out her washing. She's out doing archery and swimming and horse riding and pole-dancing, and it's amazing how well she's developed and grown. And happy to do what she's doing, not just forced to do something because it's that day."



**Luci (support staff)** - “She just continues to surprise us every day with the leaps and bounds that she makes. Self-management means that Rachael has a happy individual life doing things that she’s choosing to do.”

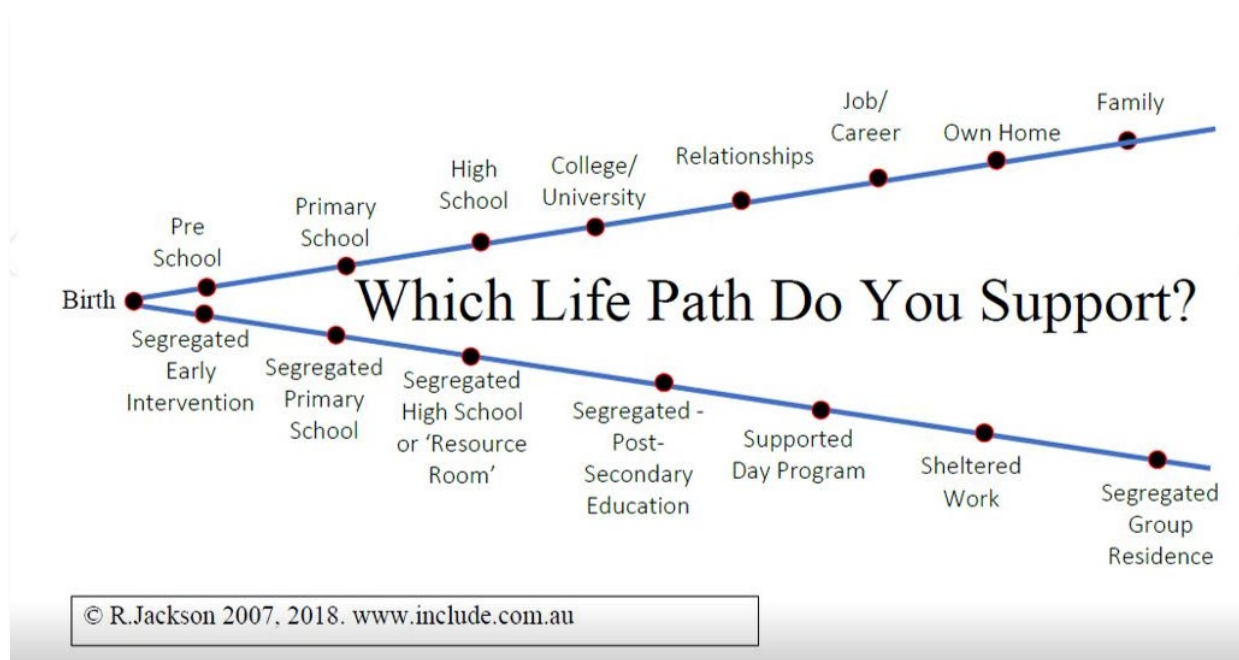
**Jo (mum)** - “From a very early age, I realised that Rachael was going to have different needs to her peers. But I still wanted her to have the same outcomes as her peers and have a life of her own, so I was very strategic in setting goals, working with things that she was interested in... I’m watching my daughter thrive, doing what she wants to do.”

We strongly recommend the DSS visit our [Resourcing Inclusive Communities](#) website to see more videos, stories, and resources that support people with disability to lead an inclusive life as valued members of the community.

### Helpful resources applying the Guiding Principles to Inclusive Education

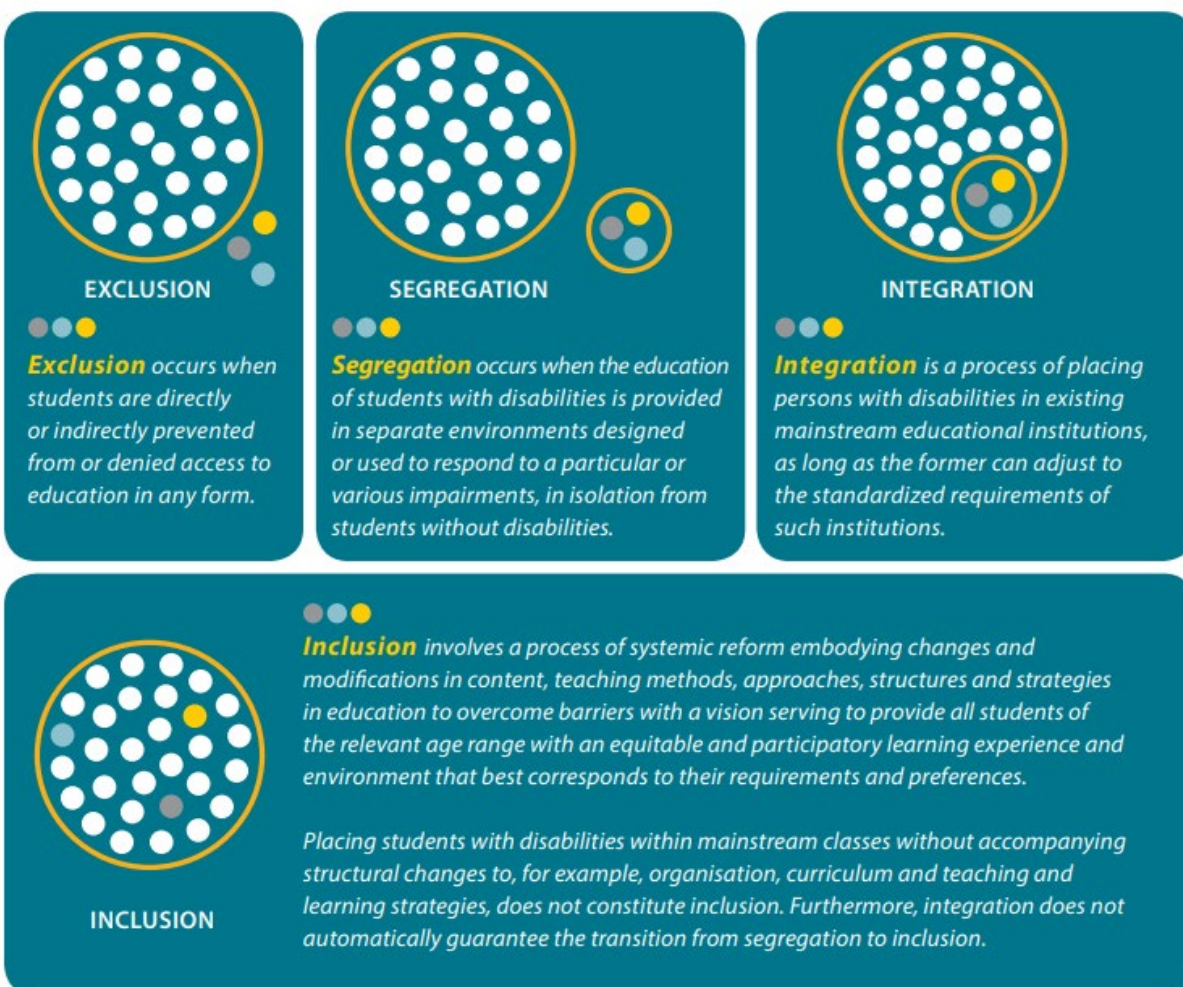
#### The Inclusive v Segregated Life Path

The diagram below shows the natural pathways of childhood and the impact of an ordinary inclusive pathway versus a segregated pathway. Every step taken down the segregated pathway has a distinct “othering” effect, where people with disability end up living their lives parallel to the rest of society rather than being in and part of community. One family member noted, “the further you travel down the segregated path, the harder it is to come back to being included in community and the good things of life”.



## Clarity around the definition of inclusion in education is critical

The definition of inclusion is clearly defined in [General Comment No. 4 \(GC4\) under Article 24 \(Right to an Inclusive Education\) of the UNCRPD](#) and depicted by the diagram overleaf.



Source: United Nations Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities General Comment No. 4 (<http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/CRPD/GC/RighttoEducation/CRPD-C-GC-4.doc>)

## Case Study - The journey from Special education to Inclusive education

We urge the DSS to read these three articles about parent choice, and watch the two films produced by Family Advocacy below about their child's journey from a special to regular class:

- Glennys Mann, [From here to there and back again: the story of a mother, her son, disability, and school choice](#)
- Glennys Mann, [An investigation of parents' decisions to transfer children from regular to special schools](#)

- Catherine McDonald, “Choice does not equal informed choice around inclusive education” (see Appendix 1)
- [Yolande’s story: A child’s journey from support unit to regular classroom](#) (5.27 minutes)
- [One of the boys](#), Luke's parents talk about their decision to move Luke from a special school to the regular class (5.02 minutes);

## 12 Principles of Inclusion

These principles apply to all education settings from primary, secondary to tertiary levels.

12 Principles of Inclusion	
<b>Leadership</b>	Children with disability flourish when leadership in the early learning environment ensures children with a disability are valued and disability is viewed as adding diversity to the class.
<b>Natural Proportions</b>	Children with disability should be spread out in natural proportions rather than being grouped together by the category of their disability.
<b>Supports</b>	Support needs to come direct from the teacher rather than aides (school learning support). We need to move away from 1:1 support.
<b>Time for Planning</b>	teachers should have sufficient co-planning time to ensure children with disability have adequate and appropriate support and reasonable adjustments made.
<b>Mobile services</b>	rather than taking a child out of the regular classroom, services should be delivered in the context of the regular classroom. Learning skills in a natural environment is more effective than practicing a new skill in an isolated setting once or twice a week.
<b>Specialist Teachers</b>	should be supporting the teacher in the regular classroom
<b>High expectations</b>	assume every child can learn without requiring evidence of their capacity. Inclusive education needs no prerequisite skills.
<b>Collaboration</b>	develop partnerships based on mutual commitment, trust and respect between the early learning centre and the student and their family/ guardian.
<b>Peer Learning</b>	To foster friendships and avoid micro exclusion in classrooms, instigate peer learning opportunities.
<b>Changed mindsets</b>	are required for inclusive education where traditional views of education are transformed.
<b>Continuous reflection</b>	required on practices, policy, values and beliefs and how they impact the inclusion of children with disability.
<b>Student and parent voice</b>	acknowledge the lived experience of the child with a disability and their parent, their experiences, their needs and their solutions.

## The importance of having a Vision for inclusion

We share some quotes from a recent survey asking our families what inclusion meant to them:

People with a disability being wholeheartedly included in all aspects of society - socially, in education, in work, in family life.

Where a person with a disability can join and participate like any other person with minimal focus on their disability and a full acceptance of them as a person that feels wanted and safe in that particular group.

Inclusion to me is everyone having the same opportunities and sense of belonging as their peers.

Ability to access any services like everyone in the planet. Valuing someone for their individual strengths and not measuring them against a 'norm'.

Where everyone is included and not separated on the basis of their disability or their differences.

Inclusion is to be embedded within the community in a meaningful way. This should be based on the person's passions and interests among peers, friends and family of their choice.

Inclusion does not have an othering rule- good for some but not others.

Belonging, having the same choices and opportunities as people without a disability, to participate in what life has to offer eg school, recreation, employment, along with everyone else, not in a segregated setting.

Inclusion is being accepted to be myself and accepting others for who they are.

Inclusion is about equity and access, planning and building systems and processes so that people with disability are not disadvantaged. Inclusion is the way we think, openly and genuinely about our desire to make life accessible

I just wanted him to have the same opportunity as the kids his age. I wanted him to be able to mix with family, be happy, go to school, have a job etc. He can't learn to do things unless he has the opportunity to do it. Having a vision is having a clear path, a journey, you're on a journey...to the good things of life.

## Parent voice - How has inclusive education helped my child?

Below are the comments provided from parents from a recent survey sharing their views on how inclusive education has benefited their child, the difference an inclusive attitude and environment makes in learning and the elements that led to successful transitions.

### The positive benefits (short and long term) when the child is included in the regular class

Our daughter was in a mainstream school and was able to travel to an agricultural field day with her class and that led to her career.

Friendships, and positives for how things can be inclusive. Being able to participate in a swim carnival regular race using a canoe when your disability has prevented you from being able to swim or walk.

My child has felt like he's one of the kids. Adults (teachers) including him has helped develop compassion and empathy in some of his classmates who've been more patient and understanding of my son than would have otherwise.

My child, J, went on many inclusive excursions. Ironically, the deputy principal of his primary school was not helpful but J had many natural friendships and the staff that attended were very aware of our family's definition of inclusion. It was very successful. Many successful excursions occurred eg. theme parks, camps, snow skiing, adventure parks flying on flying foxes, parliament house, universities; all were overnight excursions. He also attended short term excursions to the beach, rainforests, lookouts and nature reserves. He always travelled with his peers, sitting with his peers, laughing with his peers and getting in to trouble with his peers. He had a support worker close by but not in his face. I ensured the support worker was on the 'same page' as us.

Being part of the whole year excursion - having mainstream peers greet her with familiarity and genuineness. Long term - confidence and an increased sense of belonging. Perhaps for the mainstream peers a greater acceptance.

Incredible and numerous benefits, which I believe will be lifelong! He was happy, had fun, experienced friendship, learned so much by being part of a regular class, had to live up to high standards of appearance, punctuality etc (all good skills for future employment), got to play handball at lunchtimes with the other kids (who adapted the rules to include him, without any adult/teacher intervention), was a part of important school rituals such as formals, graduation dinner, athletics and swimming carnivals, school concerts and camps along with his peers. The long- term benefit of being a student at the local primary school has been instrumental in him becoming a valued volunteer at the school for more than 7 years which continues to be a wonderful way to become known in the community. At high school he was able to experience a variety of sports including being introduced to spin cycle classes and a mainstream gym, which led to attendance at our local gym where he is well known, and is a regular in the spin cycle classes with the assistance of a personal trainer, another great way to be part of the community, not to mention the health benefits and increased physical ability. There have been immeasurable benefits, both short and long term, some of which we did not foresee at the time.

J has never been in a segregated class. At 3 years old he began his education at an inclusive preschool. However, he has experienced many segregated experiences. School cricket, soccer, athletic carnival were all initially off the school's agenda as he 'wasn't' physically able to contribute. He, his friends, his sisters, us and staff that 'got it' and recognised the segregation were quick to provide solutions. J didn't need to kick the soccer ball he could catch and throw it. His mates took it in turns to push him around the cross-country course. As a result of this default expectation of true inclusion, J is now 21 years old, lives 300km away from the family home, with 2 flat mates in a house that is being modified. He drives his own modified vehicle independently, attends university, takes himself off to gym twice a week with a trained gym support worker and he goes to parties/pubs where sometimes accessibility is poor but he weighs up the risks and his friends do the muscle work.

For me inclusion is about Hannah fully participating – not doing something else. Last term the school musical took place. This followed 3 terms of rehearsals and preparation. The kids involved would stay back every Monday until 7 and order pizza. It was wonderful for Hannah to have the opportunity to be part of that – to meet kids from other grades with the same interest and to share in the experience. There was a real bond between the kids by the time the musical took place. Kids still stop and talk to Hannah.

She did not have a stand out part but she was part of it. There was no expectation that the family would stay. She was just allowed to be part of the group. It was inclusion at its best - a real opportunity to be part of the gang. Other parents also saw her there as just one of the kids. Often, parents are the ones you need to win over as parents' attitudes rub off on kids.

## An inclusive attitude or environment made a difference to the child's learning

Being included in camps led to her feeling included and this created a great learning environment as she was able to use drawings and pictures to do her presentations visually.

She had many outside interests like ballet, sunbeams church swimming. She was just one of the group. She commuted with her sisters and then on her own to school. She enjoyed supported holidays on her own meeting new people, what joy. It all gave her a sense of independence, for me it was so important for her future.

Reading the same novel as the rest of the class when the expectations and workload were adapted for each individual. More than anything this taught me that teaching differentiated teaching can be a remarkably positive approach. In first grade her teacher placed the kids desks about one metre apart so my daughter could move between them. She took her first independent steps in this class and the whole class cheered for her.

J, his 2 sisters and his growing network of friends always assumed inclusion. They all knew what it looked like and how to achieve it. He didn't miss out on anything. He was included in all activities and it was his sisters and friends that came up with solutions of how he could contribute. Therefore, his learning in general was so much more productive as he had a huge network of natural relationships. This attitude flowed on to his sister's friends and community as they witnessed and learned by example of what inclusion looks like. J was included in school carnivals and swam with his peers, he was just a lot slower. The entire school community was astounded at his ability and so, so supportive. This in turn gave him confidence to tackle anything.

Year 4 teacher - casual, very young and inexperienced - but willing to TRY different strategies and chat with me to try to work out how she could help. She devised a plan for teaching money skills which worked fantastically well. At the end of the year she told me how nervous she'd been, and said that if her first idea didn't work, she'd try something else. What a great attitude. Proves that you don't need an "expert", just someone willing to try, and try again. Surely a great attribute for any teacher. It was the teacher's willingness to make adjustments that resulted in great learning outcomes. With the assistance of a great teacher's aide who "got" inclusion, the whole class benefited. No fancy or expensive resources required, just a positive attitude.

## Transition – Elements for success

Not re-inventing the wheel each year, sharing good examples of testing ideas, file with helpful information and good opportunities for partnerships with school and easy communication channels

Understanding of his disabilities. Regular communication.

Creating a connection to her community and utilising her interests instead of placing her where they think people with a disability should work. Having flexibility

Not pulling out of the class and help other students understand everyone is included and need help.

Lots of parent teacher communication to build up trust and respect Visits to new class/ school beforehand. Set up of physical environment and equipment so it is ready. Staff training. Social stories and visuals.

Respect or her rights - listened to family goals and values - considered whole child - no issues with funding

Getting away from a school that has a support unit on site - there is a strong community perception that if you have a disability then you belong in the support unit. Local school - great seeing familiar faces at other places in the local community eg. shops, pool. Attitude of staff, families, students Teacher's aide who "got" inclusion. Strong support from family, and involvement with school, support for fundraising, working bees, canteen etc.

The attitude of teachers and principal was an important factor for successful transition.

The most important element was for us to be prepared and sure/educated in what we wanted his experience to look like. In our instance this was to approach the school 2 years before enrolment. We found many barriers put up by the executive staff of his primary school as to why it wouldn't work. This was due to lack of understanding, education and experience. It was a huge benefit to have started this early. Our family were sure to have a positive approach. Year 6 to high school was less emotionally draining but more challenging in regards to structure of the school. However, the executive staff were much more willing to listen to our family, welcomed the challenge and our suggestions of how this would work. They were open-minded and educated themselves within the dept as well as taking advice from our family. It was a 3-story school of 900 students and built on a hill. However, this was where his 2 sisters went and the majority of his friends were going and, most importantly, where he wanted to go. It happened and was extremely successful.



## Q9. Is there anything missing that should be included in the Guide?

### Inclusion and the role of family advocacy to heighten expectations and support their family member into typical and ordinary settings

As a general rule, the parent or family member has a natural authority for the person with disability in their life as they are the constant in people's lives, the setter of expectations, and the repository of knowledge. They tend to care more, have greater responsibility over their family member's wellbeing, they know them the most fully and for the longest period of time, have a stake in outcomes, and are granted a degree of independence which call into question the credibility of other parties.

In addition, families are often best positioned to see the big picture, how everything in its entirety, adds up to a person's life and for this reason, they can often see the incongruences of different interventions in early childhood, in education and employment. Utilising this relationship and familiarity with the person enables all options to be explored that are sustainable in the long term. In this regard, we refer to "[The Natural Authority of Families](#)" by Michael Kendrick.

When we hear of the successful inclusion stories already shared throughout this submission, the key element was the parent having a clear [Vision](#) for their child, thinking ordinary and typical, being included in mainstream society, high expectations in the long term, and good collaboration. With this in mind, it is vital that the DSS includes in its Guide to the Guiding principles the practical stories we have shared that support the capacity building of the family to have the skills, knowledge and confidence in order that they can support an inclusive life for, with or on behalf of the person with a disability in their life.

### Inclusion and the Media

Another powerful resource assisting to change community attitudes and apply the Guiding Principles is Starting with Julius' media toolkit, [Disability Royal Commission – Our Guide for Media Reporting](#) as well as the resources from the [Attitude Foundation](#), who ensure increased and authentic representation and inclusion of people with disabilities across all forms of media. Through media, they want to "improve Australia's understanding of disability, including by striving to challenge the common misconceptions regarding:

1. the portrayal of people with disabilities as objects of inspiration, pity, burden, menace or tragedy;
2. the belief that an individual's diagnosis or impairment is the main barrier to their participation in society. Instead, we promote a "social model"<sup>3</sup> perspective of disability, which recognises that everyone is different, and that society needs to be organised in a way that ensures that all people can participate on an equal basis; and
3. that all impairments have obvious physical characteristics, when in fact many impairments are invisible, for example, psychosocial or mental health conditions, intellectual or sensory impairments, and hearing and vision impairments."