

Education for Children with Autism

When a politician uses their position to make an ill-informed statement about a vulnerable minority group there are individuals and families that might be seriously affected. A politician's desire for free publicity at the cost of informed and sensitive debate has to be challenged by everyone who shares humanity and integrity as core values.

Over 50% of children with an autism diagnosis are currently enrolled in mainstream schooling. This is 100% the right placement for those children because it is the parents' choice and the child's right. Of the children with a diagnosis enrolled in special education schools, it is again absolutely the right placement at this time for those children and their families. In a perfect world, all children should be educated in their local school with the right expertise and resources to support the appropriate education.

To all of those families with a child in a mainstream school, today, there is another challenge to be faced. All families of an exceptional child with additional needs or a disability have the right to make an informed decision on what is the most suitable education setting available for their child. Politicians have no place in this most difficult and complex decision.

Mainstream school communities, particularly government schools, value diversity in their community so that all children can learn the real meaning and challenges of being inclusive society. Today, we would encourage those schools to ensure all children are made to feel especially welcomed and valued, and to reinforce that discrimination against any already disadvantaged group is not acceptable. Each child, each situation, is seen as individuals with rights that our education system has a responsibility to fully support, nurture and educate in accordance with parent choice.

If you know of a family of a child with autism or any other exceptionality who is currently enrolled in mainstream schooling, I would encourage you to make contact to offer support and encouragement at this challenging time.



Jeff Innes

Principal

22 June 2017