

family

A D V O C A C Y

HOW TO LOBBY YOUR MP

WHAT YOU NEED TO HELP TAKE ACTION



**SAME
CLASSROOM
SAME
OPPORTUNITY**

family

A D V O C A C Y

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If you are a family member or advocate of a person with disability, you understand the struggles of students in NSW regarding inclusive education. It's time to make our voices heard and demand that politicians commit to providing inclusive education for students, no matter their circumstances. We need to ensure that every child has the opportunity to learn and grow, to secure a better future.

We need to let your local MP know, we demand change.

This guide will provide you with the necessary steps to make sure your message is heard and to advocate for the support our families and friends deserve. Let's work together to create a more inclusive and equitable society for all.

The more people who contact their local MPs, the more likely we will win election commitments on:

- an Inclusive Education Roadmap with a long term vision that will strengthen the system's capability including supporting teachers so students with disability can access and participate on the same basis as other students
- investment in a Work Transition Pilot Project to improve the transition of young people with disability from education to employment

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LOBBY YOUR MP

Almost one in five people in NSW have a disability.

Our political parties have an opportunity – and a responsibility – to make disability inclusion in NSW a genuine priority.

MEETING WITH YOUR LOCAL MP

01

Organise a meeting

Send an email to request a meeting. If you don't hear back within 10 days, send a friendly reminder or give them a call. Be politely persistent.

If you're not having much luck getting a meeting, you can try to meet them at a community event, where you can politely ask them to make our election commitments.

02

Prepare for your meeting

Research your politician. Find out how they've previously voted on these issues and what their interests are, so you can connect with them on a personal level.



Family Advocacy's Same Classroom, Same Opportunity - Securing Better Futures through an Inclusive Education campaign aims to ensure ALL students in NSW, no matter their circumstance, are welcomed and supported in the general classroom of their local school, all day, everyday.



MEETING WITH YOUR LOCAL MP

03

During the meeting

Remember to always be respectful, clear and concise. Introduce yourself and share your family's story. If you have other parties present, make sure there is a clear understanding of their role.

Most importantly, State your ask:

I support the #SameClassroomSameOpportunity Campaign, and we are asking the major parties to make election commitments on:

- an Inclusive Education Roadmap with a long term vision that will strengthen the system's capability including supporting teachers so students with disability can access and participate on the same basis as other students
- investment in a Work Transition Pilot Project to improve the transition of young people with disability from education to employment

If they refuse, thank them for listening and assure them that these are voting issues for constituents like you and your family. You can also ask them if they can connect you with other community groups, so that you can share these issues with them.

04

After the meeting

Send a follow up email to the politician and hold them accountable on anything they agreed to. Please email an update to communications@family-advocacy.com



05 TEMPLATES

HOW TO SAY IT

Making a call

Calling a politician is a quick and easy way to let them know what matters to you. You can find their number on their website. Most times, you won't speak with the actual politician but rather one of their staff. Either way, what you are saying will be noted.

Here is an example:

Hello, my name's [name] and I live in [electorate].

I am a parent, or family member of a person with disability. Right now, students with disability in NSW struggle with inclusive education. Students deserve better.

*(Share how these issues have affected you or the person with disability you care for.)
[Share their/your lived experience].*

I would like you and your party to commit to an Inclusive Education Roadmap with a long term vision that will strengthen the system's capability including supporting teachers so students with disability can access and participate on the same basis as other students. I would also like you to invest in a Work Transition Pilot Project to improve the transition of young people with disability from education to employment.

*A commitment to these issues will guarantee my vote in the next election.
Thank you for your time.*



HELP US BUILD A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Taking action on disability inclusion isn't just the right thing to do, it's a basic and fundamental obligation under international and Australian law.

05 TEMPLATES

HOW TO SAY IT

Writing/sending an email

Clearly state the issue and your ask in the first paragraph. Once you have made your stance clear, add in your story and explain why these matters are important to you.

Here's an example:

As a constituent in your electorate, I ask you to support Family Advocacy's Same Classroom, Same Opportunity - Securing Better Futures through an Inclusive Education campaign which aims to ensure ALL students in NSW, no matter their circumstance, are welcomed and supported in the general classroom of their local school, all day, everyday.

Whilst some progress has been made, too often, there are stories like Tim's, who has a disability, and is led away from his friends to a separate classroom every day and not included in school camp or school photos – a constant reminder of the ways he's different when really he wants the SAME good things of life just like everyone - to belong, to contribute, to be included.

The Disability Royal Commission has heard that many children and young people with a disability are being excluded, segregated, unfairly suspended, forced to attend part-time, or subjected to a heightened risk of abuse, neglect and low expectations. Sadly, this sets up children and young people with disability for a life pathway without employment and social isolation from the general community.

Children and young people with disability in NSW deserve better!

I feel strongly about this issue. As my representative in the NSW Parliament, I call on you and your party to endorse our call upon the NSW Government to:

1. Commit to an Inclusive Education Roadmap with a long term vision that will strengthen the system's capability including supporting teachers so students with disability can access and participate on the same basis as other students. Read more here: <https://acie.org.au/acie-roadmap/>

2. Invest in a Work Transition Pilot Project to improve the transition of young people with disability from education to employment. Read more at: <https://bit.ly/work-pilot>



Securing Better Futures through an Inclusive Education

Family Advocacy 2023 Election Campaign

BRIEFING PAPER

OUR VISION

Family Advocacy's Same Classroom, Same Opportunity - Securing Better Futures through an Inclusive Education campaign aims to ensure ALL students in NSW, no matter their circumstance, are welcomed and supported in the general classroom of their local school, all day, everyday.

CURRENT SITUATION

The Disability Royal Commission has heard that many children and young people with a disability are being excluded, segregated, unfairly suspended, forced to attend part-time, or subjected to a heightened risk of abuse, neglect and low expectations.

Sadly, children and young people with disability are set up on a life pathway with poor employment outcomes and social isolation from the general community. This is in conflict with the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disability and Australia's Disability Strategy 2021 to 2031*.

Children and young people with disability in NSW deserve better!

THE SOLUTION

The starting point to secure better futures for the one-in-five students learning with disability in NSW is through an inclusive education. We call upon the next NSW government to:

- Commit to an Inclusive Education Roadmap with a long term vision that will strengthen the system's capability including supporting teachers so students with disability can access and participate on the same basis as other students.
- Invest in a Work Transition Pilot Project to improve the transition of young people with disability from education to employment.

www.family-advocacy.com
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Securing Better Futures through an Inclusive Education

Family Advocacy 2023 Election Campaign

WHY IS INCLUSIVE EDUCATION SO IMPORTANT?

Inclusive education is important for our school because it sees every child thrive in our community. There is an overwhelming amount of evidence-based research that supports disabled students learning alongside their peers in general education settings. Some of these benefits include:

Benefits for students who experience disability:

- greater academic and vocational outcomes
- greater social interaction, resulting in more opportunities to establish and maintain social connections
- increased development of speech.

Benefits for all students:

- elevated self-esteem
- improved behavioural development, with less 'disorderly' behaviour
- empathy and understanding
- opportunities to engage with friendships with a better understanding of how to include people of all abilities
- equitable education and care.

Children who engage in school alongside people with disabilities have also been found to benefit academically, with equal or improved outcomes than their peers in non-inclusive settings.

Benefits for teachers and educators:

- professional growth
- increased personal satisfaction
- confidence in delivering the curriculum.

Benefits for families and the community:

- greater psychological and economic wellbeing for parents
- parents may feel more supported and confident to return to work
- greater community engagement



DISABILITY INCLUSION FRONT AND CENTRE

We believe in Inclusive Education for ALL students in NSW, no matter their circumstances.

01

A commitment to the 10 year road map to progressively realise inclusive education in NSW.

02

Practical measures like increasing the number of teachers with disability in the education system.

03

Ensuring every student has access to the support, services and products they need to learn and achieve.

04

Investment in a work transition pilot, so students have a clear & viable pathway from education to employment.



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ADVOCACY

LET'S GET SERIOUS ABOUT POLICY CHANGE

WE PLEDGE OUR SUPPORT

With 1.4 million people in NSW living
with disability, we need to put disability
inclusion front and centre



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A D V O C A C Y

Our asks and important links:

- Send a letter to your MP <https://bit.ly/3CJgkyy>
- Sign our petition <https://bit.ly/3QZ7B12>
- Upload your photo to our SCSO wall logo <https://bit.ly/SCSOwall>

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