



Enrolment Policy

DOCUMENT VERSION

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About Giant Steps Australia Early Years Program and School Program

History

Giant Steps Sydney (now Giant Steps Australia) was established in July 1995 at the old Gladesville Hospital site. A group of dedicated parents founded the school to bring world best practices in the education and support of children with autism to Australia. The school began with a program that was developed in Montreal Canada and an intake of 12 students.

Over the past 29 years, Giant Steps Australia (Giant Steps) has become a leading educational centre for children with autism and their families. The school takes a holistic approach to supporting children and their families, while fostering a culture of care and professional excellence in the wider community.

Special Features of the Giant Steps Program

- A transdisciplinary approach where speech, occupational and music therapists collaborate with teachers and educators to develop individual programs, specific to each child's needs and abilities, within the Australian curriculum framework.
- A class grouping structure whereby students engage in whole class, small group, paired, whole school and individual learning programs, as appropriate.
- Highly trained and committed staff.
- Programs and therapies soundly based on current research.
- Setting of individual goals and close monitoring of a child's progress.
- Program adjustments are made based on each child's needs.
- Parent consultation and guidance for supporting students within the home environment.
- Home visits and support for transitioning to new educational settings when required.

Funding

Giant Steps is an independent school and receives both State and Commonwealth funding. Giant Steps is also a registered charity and donations are tax-deductible.

We do not charge fees, and all parents are actively involved in supporting the school.

Additional Services

Giant Steps Autism Services offers a range of outreach services, including speech, music and occupational therapies. The school also provides educational support, parent training and professional development for providers and professionals in the wider community through *The Autism Training Hub*.

During school holidays, a vacation care program is available for our students. Additionally, families have access to an on-site Mental Health Clinic with a visiting psychiatrist and paediatrician.

Fees apply for service provisions such as outreach services.

Vision Statement

“Giant Steps Australia will continue to be recognised as a centre of excellence for the creation, implementation, and dissemination of innovative and effective programs and services for individuals with autism and their families.”

Mission Statement

“Giant Steps Australia seeks to develop intensive therapeutic and educational programs to ensure that each individual has the opportunity to reach their full potential. Giant Steps Australia also seeks to provide support to families, improve understanding of autism in the wider community and to develop best practice amongst carers and professionals”.

Core Values

- Maintain a culture of best practice service to individuals with autism
- Remain open to the acceptance of new ideas and approaches, seeking continuous improvement in all that we do
- Recognise the skills of our staff, encouraging commitment and dedication from a team of quality people
- Strengthen professional relationships within and outside Giant Steps Sydney
- Adopt collaborative approaches to challenges
- Promote constructive reciprocal involvement within the community
- Pursue growth opportunities consistent with our core undertakings whilst maintaining prudent financial and risk management
- Celebrate our achievements
- Committed to the health, welfare and safety of each and every student. Giant Steps has zero tolerance of child abuse.

Giant Steps Australia Enrolment Policy

Eligibility Requirements

Our school is funded in part by the NSW Department of Education as well as the Federal Department of Education, both of which have specific criteria for placement in a special school.

To be eligible for enrolment, students must have a primary diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder, supported by a current report from a specialist medical practitioner or registered psychologist with appropriate clinical experience. The report and documented evidence must include:

- A completed Application Form with supporting documentation, submitted by parents or legal guardians.
- The nature of the student's disorder.
- Documented evidence of a developmental disability affecting verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction, significantly impacting the child's learning.
- Functional assessment consistent with the student's disorder.

Students must also be eligible to receive Federal and State government funding.

Admissions

A vacancy may arise when:

- A student moves to the next program due to age.
- A student leaves Giant Steps.
- Additional places become available due to the availability of additional resources.

Offer of Placement

When a vacancy arises, the following factors are considered:

- Where the vacancy exists within the class structure.
- The student's age.
- Parental commitment and involvement.

Selection Criteria:

- Compatibility with the intake group in terms of developmental age, social, and behavioural factors.
- Demonstrated parental commitment to supporting their child's education, socialisation, communication, and overall well-being.
- Ongoing commitment to school's ethos, including participation in fundraising and committee work.

Acceptance of Placement

- Offers are subject to a meeting with the parents/guardians and an opportunity for the school to observe the child at the school.
- Acceptance must be agreed upon by all appropriate parents/guardians unless waived by the school.

- Upon acceptance, all signatories are jointly and severally liable for the obligations in the enrolment terms and conditions.

Conditions of Entry

Parent Commitment

Parents are required to meet with a member of the fundraising team before admission to understand the expectations regarding participation and commitment.

Parent Contributions

Giant Steps is a registered charity, and government funding does not cover all operational costs. The remaining funds are raised through donations and fundraising events. All parents are expected to contribute to the significant fundraising efforts required to ensure the school's continued successful operation.

Medical Treatment

If a student requires urgent medical treatment and the school cannot contact the parents/guardians despite reasonable efforts, you authorise the school to approve the necessary treatment. You indemnify the school, its staff, and agents for all costs and expenses associated with such treatment.

Change of Details

Parents are responsible for notifying the school of any changes to their contact information.

Student Absences

Parents must notify the school of any absences and provide a written note explaining the reason for each absence.

Exclusion from Giant Steps Australia

1. If the Principal, or their delegate, determines that a student's behaviour poses a substantial risk to other students or staff, the student may be excluded permanently or temporarily at the Principal's absolute discretion.
2. If the Giant Steps Australia Board or the Principal determines that the relationship of trust and cooperation between a parent and the school has broken down to the extent that it adversely affects the partnership, the Board or Principal may require the parent to withdraw their child from the school.

Withdrawal from Giant Steps Australia

A term's notice is required if a student's enrolment is to be withdrawn.

Progression to Next Program

Students in the Early Years, Primary, or Secondary programs must apply if they wish to progress to the next program. Offers are subject to the placement criteria.