



Enrolment

DOCUMENT

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ENROLMENT

About Giant Steps Australia Early Years Program and School Program

History

Giant Steps Sydney (now Giant Steps Australia) was established at the old Gladesville Hospital site, about seven kilometres from the Sydney city centre, in July 1995 by a group of dedicated parents who wanted to bring world's best practice 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.

Some 27 years later, Giant Steps Australia has evolved into a leading educational centre for children with autism and their families. Giant Steps has a multifaceted approach to the provision of services to children with autism and their families, whilst spreading a culture of caring and professional excellence through the broader community.

What are the Special Features of the Giant Steps Program?

- A transdisciplinary approach where speech, occupational and music therapists work with special education staff in a collaborative team developing 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, where appropriate, individual teaching and learning programs
- Highly trained and committed staff
- Individualised and small group instruction by specialist teachers and educators
- Programs and therapies soundly based on current research
- Setting of individual goals and close monitoring of a child's progress
- Program adjustment based on each child's need
- Parent consultation and guidance in supporting students within the home environment
- Home visits and transitional support to student's next educational setting when required

How is Giant Steps Australia Funded?

As an independent school Giant Steps Australia receives both State and Commonwealth funding. Giant Steps Australia is also a registered charity and all parents are actively involved in supporting the school.

Donations to Giant Steps Australia are tax deductible.

Giant Steps Australia does not charge fees.

What Other Services does Giant Steps Australia Offer?

Giant Steps Australia also offers a range of outreach services (Speech, Music and Occupational Therapies) as well as educational support, parent training and training amongst professionals and providers in the wider community, through the Autism Training Hub.

A vacation care program runs during the school holidays for the children of Giant Steps.

There are fees for service provisions such as outreach services.

Giant Steps Australia's 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."

Giant Steps Australia's 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".

Giant Steps Australia's 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 of Giant Steps Australia.
- 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.

Giant Steps Australia Enrolment Process

Eligibility Process

Our school is funded in part by the NSW Department of Education as well as the Federal Department of Education which have specific criteria for placement in a special school. A completed Application Form, with supporting documentation, must be lodged by parents or legal guardians.

To be eligible for enrollment students must have a current report from a specialist medical practitioner or registered psychologist with appropriate clinical experience. The report must detail the nature of the student's disorder. Documented evidence must indicate a developmental disability affecting verbal and non-verbal communication and social interaction, that significantly affects the child's ability to learn. There must be information of a functional assessment consistent with the student's disorder.

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

Admissions

A vacancy may arise when:

- a student moves from one program to the next program because of their age
- a student leaves Giant Steps
- a student graduates (is integrating independently at his or her local school)
- additional places become available due to the availability of additional resources

Offer of Placement

When a vacancy arises the following will be considered:

- where the class vacancy exists
- age of student
- parent commitment and involvement

Offer of a place is subject to an interview of parents/guardians and child. The Admissions Committee will meet to determine offer of enrolment. Students are selected for intake based on the following criteria:

- The assessment process will account for compatibility in relation to the intake group and will consider characteristics related to the developmental age as well as social and behavioural repertoire.
- Parent support and commitment in the program, both school-based and home-based. That is, parents demonstrate past and present commitment to their child's overall developmental needs including education, socialisation, and communication, behavioural/emotional and general well-being.
- Parents must demonstrate an ongoing commitment to the ethos of the school. This involves active participation in fundraising activities and parent committee work and to support the program in other ways.
- An offer of enrolment must be accepted by both Parent/carer(s) where appropriate unless the School agrees to waive this requirement. Upon acceptance all signatories to the terms and conditions will be jointly and severally liable in respect of the obligations contained in these terms and conditions.

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Conditions of Entry

Parent Commitment

Parents are required to have an interview with a member of the fundraising team prior to admission to gain an understanding of Giant Steps' expectations regarding the participation and commitment required by parents.

Parent Contributions

Giant Steps Australia is a registered charity and all donations are tax deductible. Government funding does not fully meet the costs of running the school. The remaining funds are raised through donations and fundraising events. All parents are expected to contribute towards the substantial fundraising effort required to secure the successful on-going operation of the school.

Medical Treatment

If a student needs urgent hospital or medical treatment of any nature and the school is unable to contact the parent or guardian after making reasonable efforts, you authorize the school to give authority for such treatment. You indemnify the school, its employees and agents in respect of all costs and expenses arising directly or indirectly out of such treatment.

Change of Details

It is the responsibility of the parents to advise the school of any change of address and contact numbers.

Student Absences

The school needs to be contacted if your child is going to be absent from school for any reason. Parents must send in a Sickness/Absenteeism note each time the child is absent, or partially absent, from school.

Exclusion from Giant Steps Australia

1. If the Principal, or any person deputing for the Principal, considers that a student's behaviour is of such a serious nature that there is substantial risk to other students or staff, the Principal may exclude the student permanently or temporarily at their absolute discretion.
2. If the Giant Steps Australia Board or the Principal believes that a mutually beneficial relationship of trust and cooperation between a parent and school has broken down to the extent that it adversely impacts on that relationship, then the Giant Steps Australia Board or the Principal may require the parent to withdraw the child from the school.

Withdrawal from Giant Steps Australia

The school requires one term's notice if a student's enrolment is to be withdrawn.

Enrolment in next program

Students are offered a place in the Early Years, K-6, or Secondary programs. Current students need to apply in writing to the principal if they would like to move to the next program. See criteria for offer of placement.