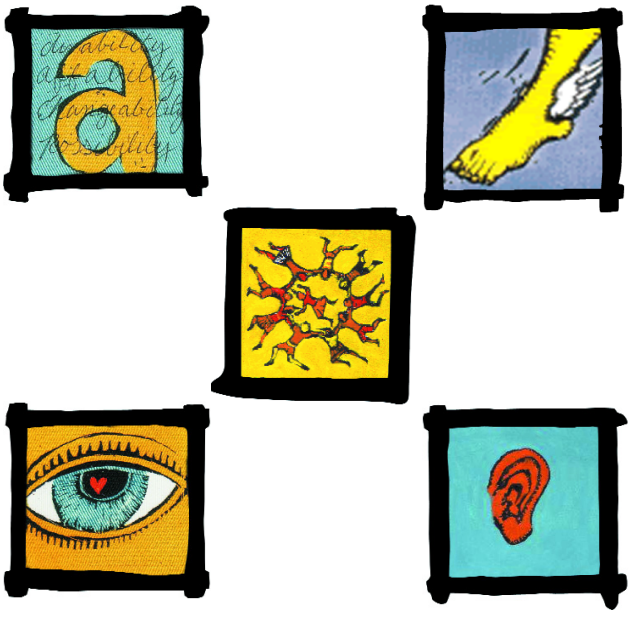
DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

Five-step Process



Government of South Australia
Department of Education and Children's Services

DISABILITY & STATEWIDE PROGRAMS
www.decs.sa.gov.au/svpst

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OVERVIEW

The Department of Education and Children's Services (DECS) has a range of provisions and programs to support the additional needs of students with disabilities and learning difficulties. The Disability Support Program is one such program. It provides support for students with disabilities in year level classes and sits within the context of the DECS Students with Disabilities Policy (DECS 2006).

The Students with Disabilities Policy provides a broad framework for teaching and learning practices and the provision of services and support to ensure that all students with disabilities can enjoy the benefits of education in a supportive environment that values diversity, inclusion, participation and achievement.

The policy is aligned to the Commonwealth Disability Discrimination Act 1992 and Disability Standards for Education (Australian Government 2005). DECS has a commitment to ensuring that students with disabilities gain the necessary knowledge, skills and attributes to achieve to their highest level of learning and participate successfully in our society. The policy is based on the following five key areas from the Disability Standards for Education:

- Enrolment
- Participation
- Curriculum development, accreditation and delivery
- Student support services
- Elimination of harassment and victimisation.

THE DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

The DECS Disability Support Program (DSP) assists students in year level classes who have been verified as having one or more of the following disabilities:

- Autistic Disorder/Asperger's Disorder
- global developmental delay (up to 7 years)
- intellectual disability
- physical disability
- sensory disability (hearing)
- sensory disability (vision)
- speech and/or language disability.

The DSP has a five-step process to access additional support and resourcing for students with disabilities**.** Each step involves gathering information that can be used in planning to meet the education and care needs of the student.

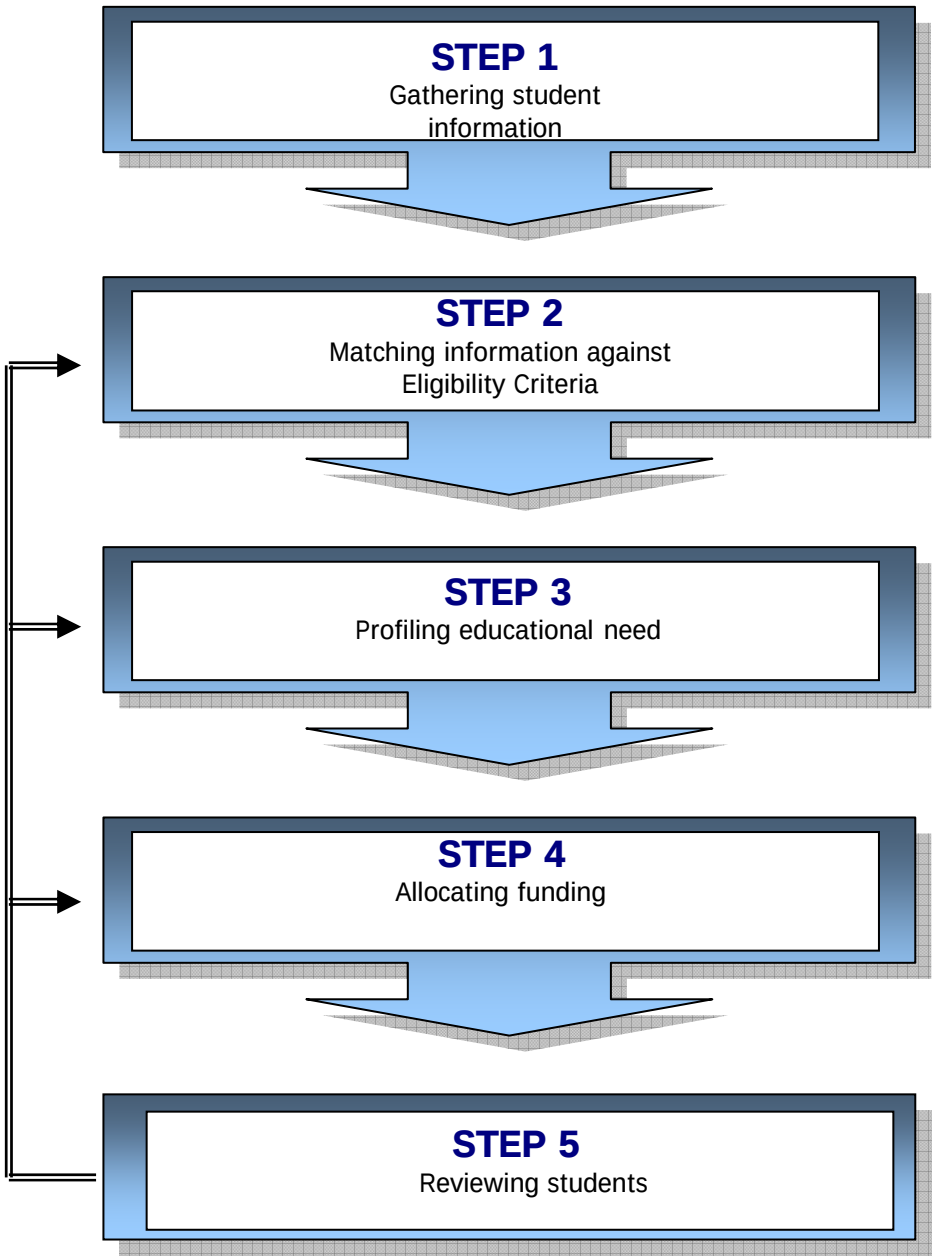
Students who are eligible for support from the DSP will have their educational needs profiled as part of the five-step process using curriculum and access profiles. Access to the DSP occurs through referral to state or district support services.

Students with disabilities, verified as eligible for the DSP, are required to have a Negotiated Education Plan (NEP). The NEP is available from the Special Education Resource Unit (SERU) website at <http://web.seru.sa.edu.au >.

FIVE - STEP PROCESS FOR THE DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

To access the support offered by the Disability Support Program, the needs of a student with disabilities have to be assessed using a five-step process. The process involves gathering information that can be used in planning to meet the education, care and access needs of the student.

Diagram 1: Five-step process for accessing the Disability Support Program



STEP 1:
GATHERING STUDENT INFORMATION

In the first step, a student support group considers relevant information from the preschool, school, student and parent or caregiver. The purpose of the student support group is to assist in planning and gathering information about the student that may be used to inform teaching and learning and to assess eligibility for the DECS Disability Support Program.

The nature and amount of information gathered by the student support group will reflect the needs of the student and should include the range of measures that the school has already undertaken to meet the student's educational and/or care needs, including any relevant assessments, reports and early childhood information.

Parents and caregivers are valued members of their child's support group. They are able to provide information about their concerns and observations of their child and they must be included in all decision-making processes.

STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP

Membership of the student support group is based on the student's support needs and should include some or all of the following key personnel:

- principal or nominee
- parent/caregiver/student
- class teacher
- site-based staff where relevant (eg special education teacher or coordinator)
- district support services staff
- DECS state support services (eg South Australian School for Vision Impaired (SASVI), Kilparrin Teaching and Assessment School and Services, Regency Park School, SERU specialist teams)
- other agency providers/consultants involved as requested.

Students have a right to be involved in decision-making processes that influence their future. Therefore, schools must ensure that appropriate procedures are established to enable participation of students in making decisions that affect their schooling.

Members of the student support group may use a range of processes, formal meetings and informal discussions to gather and act on information (see Diagram 2). Membership will vary according to the type of information being sought.

INFORMATION GATHERED

It is expected that the student support group will gather documentation and information about the student's learning needs, education achievements, health and wellbeing, including:

- early childhood history, the nature of preschool support provided, disability-specific information and any health and personal care requirements
- parent or caregiver concerns and additional reports (eg medical and school reports)
- Individual Learning Plans
- information from the student, including his/her views, aspirations, etc
- preschool/school assessment information; this may include the student's academic attainment, functional behaviour and recent annotated samples of the student's work
- current student achievement data (eg literacy and numeracy test results, literacy/numeracy benchmarks, achievement against the SACSA Outcomes)
- documented observations from the classroom teacher and/or other professionals

- reports and recommendations from:
  - DECS support services (eg psychologist (early childhood), guidance officer and/or speech pathologist)
  - statewide services (eg SASVI, Kilparrin, Communication and Language Disorder Support Service, Early Intervention Services—Hearing Impaired)
  - other agencies or medical or allied health professionals (eg Novita, Disability SA .).

The documentation gathered assists the student support group to:

- identify the student's aspirations, strengths and challenges
- review current learning and teaching strategies
- use information from relevant state, district and/or agency services
- consider the most appropriate programs, adjustments, curriculum accommodations and additional resources
- determine whether to proceed with a referral to support services.

MAKING A REFERRAL TO DISTRICT SUPPORT SERVICES

Schools should use their established pre-referral processes or student review teams to consider a student's educational needs before deciding on a referral to district support services.

A student referral is initiated by the school principal, with the consent of the parent or caregiver, using the Support Services Referral (SSR) process.

A referral to guidance or speech pathology services is necessary to assess a student's educational needs and eligibility for the Disability Support Program.

Consultations and/or referrals to other services may be necessary to support verification, to review a level of support or to discuss additional support requirements. In these situations, schools should refer to:

- the disability coordinator
- the coordinator for hearing impairment for students with a sensory disability (hearing)
- the support service teacher from the South Australian School for Vision Impaired (SASVI) for students with a sensory disability (vision)

Support Services Referral (SSR) information is available on the Statewide Verification and Professional Support Team's website at <http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/svpst> or by contacting the local district office.

More information about the roles of the student support group and the Support Services Referral process is provided in supporting documents (see Bibliography).

The role of the STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP in the

DISABILITY SUPPORT PROGRAM

THE PRINCIPAL OR NOMINEE MANAGES THE PROCESS FOR DSP

- Advises the parent/caregiver about the Disability Support Program.
- Provides information about in-school support, the referral process, support services and schooling options.
- Assists the parent/caregiver in the referral and information gathering process.
- Arranges to meet or to consult with appropriate participants of the student support group to complete the five-step process for the Disability Support Program and, if the student is eligible, begins the student's Negotiated Education Plan (NEP).

CONSULTANTS TO THE STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP

To inform decision-making and recommendations, participants in the student support group can obtain information and advice from people who have expertise in specialist areas, including:

- medical practitioners / specialists (eg Child Development Unit, CAMHS, Child & Youth Health)
- educators
- relevant allied professionals (i.e. psychologists, speech pathologists, counsellors, social workers, physiotherapists, occupational therapists)
- DECS state support services
- other agencies (i.e. Autism SA, Down Syndrome Society, Novita, Disability SA, Child & Youth Health, Families SA , advocacy groups).

PARENTS/CAREGIVERS PROVIDE INFORMATION

- Assist in obtaining and providing documentation.
- Provide information about their child.
- Participate in NEP process.

STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP MANAGES PROCESS

- Gathers supporting information, including previous history, reports, health and well being information, current student achievement data and documentation about the student from all sources.
- Manages the referral process to support services.
- Manages the NEP process if student is eligible for DSP.
- Manages review processes, including NEP review.

THE STUDENT

- Participates in *step one* information gathering stage and provides information about his/her aspirations, strengths, personal support needs and well being issues.
- Participates in NEP

SITE BASED STAFF PROVIDES ADVICE AND SUPPORT

(eg teachers, special education/special needs teacher/coordinator, student review team)

- Provides knowledge and assessments of the student's educational needs.
- Provides student specific documentation.
- Liaises with appropriate departmental personnel and other consultants/stakeholders as required.
- Refers for assessment to support services through Student Referral Process.
- Establishes and maintains a system of record keeping (including Individual Learning Plans and /or Negotiated Education Plans)

DECS SUPPORT SERVICES DISTRICT NOMINEE(S) PROVIDES GUIDANCE AND ADVICE

- Guides school through five-step process for the Disability Support Program
- Provides advice to the principal regarding supportive documentation required to establish verification and eligibility for the DSP
- Supports staff to determine/gather relevant information/assessments
- Undertakes assessments/observations of the student to complete student profile for allocation of curriculum level of support
- For students with additional access needs, gathers information for allocation of District Disability Supplementary funding.

STEP 2:
MATCHING INFORMATION AGAINST ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

In the second step, the school's student support group together with a DECS guidance officer and/or speech pathologist consider all information including relevant assessments and documentation. This information is matched against the DECS Disability Support Program 2007 Eligibility Criteria.

To be verified as eligible for the Disability Support Program, the student must have evidence indicating that the student meets both the impairment criteria *and* the disability criteria.

THE ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The DSP Eligibility Criteria categories are the following.

DSP Eligibility Criteria	***EDSAS Code***
Autistic Disorder and Asperger's Disorder	**A** (AU & AS)
Global developmental delay (children under 7 years old)	**G**
Intellectual disability	**I**
Physical disability	**P**
Sensory disability (hearing)	**H**
Sensory disability (vision)	**V**
Speech and/or language disability	**S** (SS & SL)

VERIFICATION PROCESS

DECS guidance officers and/or DECS speech pathologists:

1. Verify the student's eligibility for the Disability Support Program and document it using the Verification form (ED040). (See dual verification information in DSP Eligibility Criteria book).
2. Seek consent and signatures from the parent or caregiver and endorsement from the school principal for the student to be placed on the DSP.
3. Ensure the school completes the ED040 Verification form, including all signatures.

The completed ED040 form is kept by the school in the student file and a copy sent to the Manager, Support and Disability (MS&D) in the district office for recording relevant data. This information (electronic or hard copy) is then forwarded by the district office to:

Data Manager: Statewide Students with Disabilities Database
Statewide Verification and Professional Support (SVPS)
6th Floor, Education Centre
31 Flinders Street, ADELAIDE SA 5000
Courier: R11/46
Fax: (08) 8226 5690

The student's details are entered onto the Students with Disabilities Database. The student is recorded on the database as having a *Consultancy* level of support (see *Levels of Support RCADI* guidelines brochure).

The student support group is responsible for the continuation of the NEP process, including gathering curriculum documentation to profile the student's educational needs (step 3).

Note: It is recommended that, whenever possible, the district office sends both the ED040 Verification and ED040A Level of Support forms to SVPS central database at the same time.

STEP 3:
PROFILING EDUCATIONAL NEED

In the third step, the disability coordinator works with the student support group to profile the student's educational need and to discuss additional support requirements for funding purposes. Educational need includes both the student's curriculum needs and support to access the curriculum. The funding provides the school with additional resources to support the student's inclusion, participation and achievement in the mandated curriculum frameworks.

PROFILING CURRICULUM NEED

The Levels of Support RCADI guidelines are used by the disability coordinator to profile a student's curriculum needs for allocating a level of support. These guidelines describe the nature of support required for the student's education, care and access. The evidence gathered for the student's profile is documented on the Teaching Support Plan.

The Intensive (I), High Sustained (H) and Very High Sustained (V) levels of support require a state application process. The H and V levels of support are not included in the guidelines brochure and are available on the SVPST website. For these levels of support, the relevant district, statewide service or agency with specialist expertise will be involved in profiling the student's support needs and in future planning.

District and state level of support processes may involve observations of the student and a series of discussions with the teacher and relevant personnel from the student support group, taking into account:

- advice and recommendations from the guidance officer and/or speech pathologist
- supporting information from the relevant services, agencies or other professionals
- type of support required by the student to achieve learning outcomes
- the school context and site adjustments necessary to support the learner
- the level of support (RCADIHV) that best meets the student's strengths and needs to enable his/her participation
- specialised program supports provided by service or agency partners.

These discussions are underpinned by the Disability Standards for Education (Australian Government 2005) and are part of the Negotiated Education Planning (NEP) process. Consultation with the parent or caregiver, relevant support service and agency personnel is required as part of this process.

Funding to the school from the Disability Support Program is allocated through the school's Resource Entitlement Statement (RES), with adjustments occurring each term.

PROFILING ACCESS NEED

A small number of students who have low incidence disabilities and high support needs require a specialist access program developed with a DECS service or a non-government agency that has the expertise and authority to assist schools in putting in place programs for their clients.

The Access Profile Guidelines are used by the disability coordinator with relevant district/state or agency partners to profile the student's specific access needs and to document (SSOH2 form) the support program and agreed arrangements between the school and the service or agency partner. These programs are monitored and reviewed each term through the Manager, Support and Disability at the district office.

For further details about the District Disability Supplementary Funding (DDSF) processes and the access profiles, see the DDSF section in step 4.

STEP 4:
ALLOCATING FUNDING

In the fourth step, the disability coordinator or the relevant specialist service provides the required evidence for the student's level of support recommendation. The appropriate process for funding is discussed with the Manager, Support and Disability at the district office.

There are two separate funding programs: Curriculum Support (RCADIHV) and District Disability Supplementary Funding (DDSF).

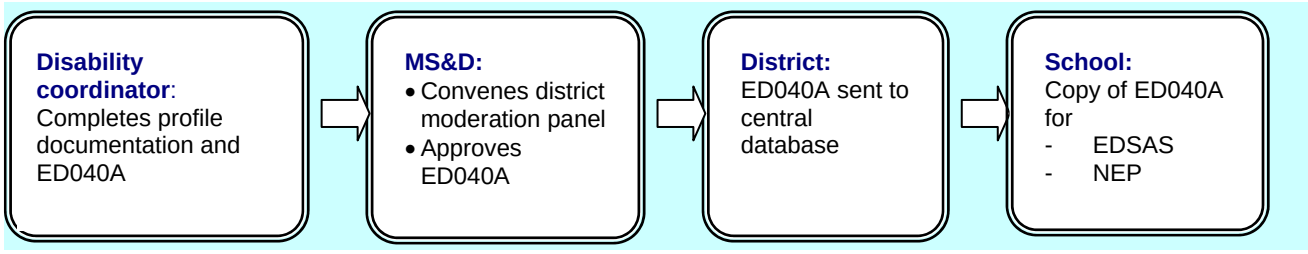
CURRICULUM SUPPORT

There are two processes for the allocation of a level of support:

- a district allocation process for Review (R), Consultancy (C), Additional (A), and Direct (D) levels of support
- a state panel process for Intensive (I), High Sustained (H), and Very High Sustained (V) levels of support.

District allocation process (RCAD)

The disability coordinator documents evidence about the student's profile on the Teaching Support Plan. Districts convene a panel each term to moderate the evidence provided and approve the level of support. Moderation is part of statewide quality assurance processes. Nominated students are selected for the district moderation process.



Process

1. Documentation is completed about the student (using the Teaching Support Plan), and the recorded level of support on the ED040A is signed by the disability coordinator.
2. The Manager, Support and Disability convenes a district moderation panel each term to discuss nominated student profiles and approve the recommended levels of support.
3. The ED040A is signed by the Manager, Support and Disability once it is approved. All supporting documentation is kept in the district file and a copy of the ED040A is sent to the school.
4. The ED040A information (electronic or hard copy) is forwarded to the Data Manager: Statewide Students with Disabilities Database in the Education Centre.
5. The district disability coordinator has responsibility to inform the school principal of the approved level of support and provide a copy of the ED040A. The school places this copy in the student's NEP file and enters the information on EDSAS.
6. School funding process:
   - The level of support information must be entered onto the school's EDSAS.
   - The school's EDSAS return is validated against the SWD database.
   - Funding is transferred to the school through the Resource Entitlement Statement (RES) at the commencement of each school term.

Note: It is recommended that, whenever possible, the district office sends both the ED040 Verification and ED040A Level of Support forms to SVPS central database at the same time.

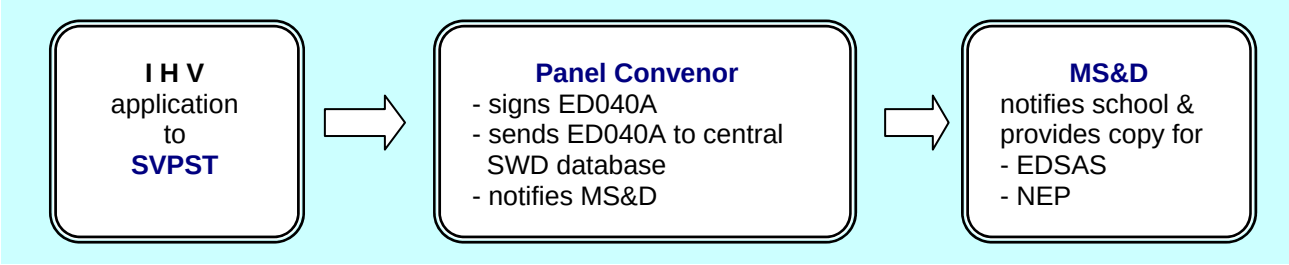
State panel process

The process for I, H and V levels of support funding is managed centrally through the Statewide Verification and Professional Support Team.

The student support group initiates the level of support review processes with the relevant support service provider. An application for funding approval is submitted to the Manager, Support and Disability for endorsement and for forwarding to the appropriate SVPS team panel convenor.

A panel is convened to determine whether the student meets the following levels of support requirements:

- Intensive (I)
  - Disability coordinator application to SVPS Disability Services Officer
- High Sustained (H)
  - Coordinator, Hearing Impairment application to SVPS Guidance Officer (Hearing)
  - SASVI/Kilparrin Support Service Teacher application to SVPS Guidance Officer (Vision)
  - Combined application for Dual Sensory: Hearing and Vision
- Very High Sustained (V)
  - District guidance officer application to SVPS Guidance Officer.



Process

1. The panel convenor:
   - completes and signs the ED040A when the level of support process is approved
   - notifies Manager, Support and Disability and provides the original ED040A for the district file
   - forwards the ED040A information (electronic or hard copy) to the Data Manager: Statewide Students with Disabilities Database in the Education Centre.

2. The Manager, Support and Disability informs the school principal of the approved level of support and provides a copy of the ED040A and documentation. The school places these copies in the student's NEP file and enters the information on EDSAS.

3. School funding process:
   - The level of support information must be entered onto the school's EDSAS.
   - The school's EDSAS return is validated against the Students with Disabilities database.
   - Funding is transferred to the school through the Resource Entitlement Statement (RES) at the commencement of each school term.

See the support services secure log-in general section of the SVPST website at <http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/svpst> for I, H and V application processes, guidelines, the moderation process and all proformas.

DISTRICT DISABILITY SUPPLEMENTARY FUNDING

In each district, the Manager, Support and Disability is responsible for the District Disability Supplementary Funding (DDSF) process. This additional funding is primarily for students who require a specialised access program jointly developed with a DECS support service or non-government agency partner. The student's program requires regular monitoring and review by the student support group.

Access Profile Guidelines

The Access Profile Guidelines include five access domains:

- physical environment
- health and personal care
- communication
- social competencies
- maximise safety.

An additional two curriculum support descriptors are included for funding consideration:

- enabling participation
- significantly modified.

The Access Profile Guidelines are used by the disability coordinator with relevant school staff and DECS support service or non-government agency partner to:

- develop program goals or outcomes
- plan the additional support requirements
- document support arrangements (using SSOH2 form).

Partnership arrangements with a service or non-government agency are part of the NEP review process, and those arrangements are documented on the DDSF Additional School Services Officer Hours SSOH2 form.

The disability coordinator applies to the district Manager, Support and Disability for DDSF funding. All allocation decisions are based on student need and availability of district resources at the time of request. Each district has a set budget amount for each semester.

The district keeps a copy of the SSOH2 form and a copy is forwarded to the school.

School funding

The following process occurs for DDSF to schools:

1. The Manager, Support and Disability completes the DDSF monthly spreadsheet.
2. The spreadsheet is forwarded to the Education Centre for funding to schools.
3. Funding is transferred directly into the SA Schools Investment Fund (SASIF) account each term.

STEP 5:
REVIEWING STUDENTS

STUDENT SUPPORT GROUP REVIEW PROCESSES

In the fifth step, the student support group:

- continues to monitor and review the student's progress through the Negotiated Education Planning (NEP) process
- seeks a review of the student's level of support when there has been a change in circumstances, need or when new information is available (see steps 3 and 4)
- participates in regular review processes for students with I, H and V levels of support and for students accessing District Disability Supplementary Funding (DDSF)
- seeks a review of student's eligibility for the DSP when new information is available (see step 2):
  - if the student's disability category changes, the guidance officer and/or speech pathologist will need to confer and complete a new ED040 Verification form
  - if the student no longer meets the Eligibility Criteria for the DSP after a review process, the relevant support services staff, school and parent or caregiver need to complete the ED040B form for change of Eligibility Status.

Further information about the Disability Support Program can be found on the SVPST website at <http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/svpst>.

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WEBSITES

All websites accessed on 30 June 2007.

Communication and Language Disorder Support Service
<http://web.seru.sa.edu.au/CLDSS.htm>

DECS provisions slide
<http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/svpst/files/links/other_programs_pp.pps>

Disability SA
<http://www.familiesandcommunities.sa.gov.au/Default.aspx?tabid=926>

Disability Support Program
<http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/svpst/pages/info/dsp>

Early Intervention Services—Hearing Impaired
<http://web.seru.sa.edu.au/EISHI.htm>

Kilparrin Teaching and Assessment School and Services
<http://www.kilparrin.sa.edu.au/>

Novita Children's Services
<http://www.novita.org.au/Default.aspx?p=1>

South Australian School for Vision Impaired (SASVI)
<http://www.sasvi.sa.edu.au/>

Special Education Resource Unit (SERU)
<http://web.seru.sa.edu.au>

Statewide Verification and Professional Support Team (SVPST)
<http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/svpst>

- 2007 Eligibility Criteria
- ED040 Verification form
- ED040A Level of Support form
- ED040B Change of Eligibility Status form
- Level of Support RCADI guidelines
- The Access Profile Guidelines
- SSOH2 form
- Moderation process booklet
- Intensive (I) level of support application form
- High Sustained (H) (Hearing) application
- High Sustained (H) (Vision) application
- Very High Sustained (V) application

Support Services Referral (SSR) process documentation and information
<http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/svpst/pages/info/referral/>

Special Education Resource Unit

Welcome to SERU

Government of South Australia
Department of Education and Children's Services

SERU provides a range of learning and teaching materials and specialised services which support children and students with disabilities and learning difficulties.

SERU is a South Australian *Department of Education and Children's Services* (DECS) support centre.

Links:

SERU brochure - (pdf file)

NEP - Direct Link

Resource Centre - Direct Login

SERU Databases - Login List

Database Help File (pdf file)

The Premier's Reading Challenge
Students with Disabilities and Reading Difficulties - Assistive Technology Solutions (pdf file)

Special Education Expo Website