



# Education for children with disabilities in South Africa

## What needs to change



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## Who are we?

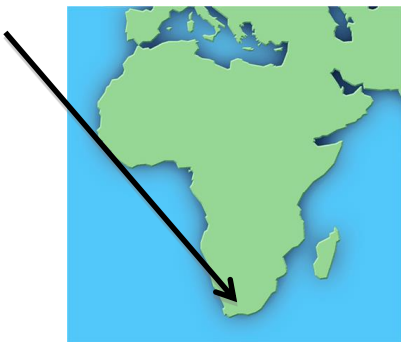
We are called Human Rights Watch.



We work to make sure everyone in the world is treated fairly and gets their rights.

## What is this report about?

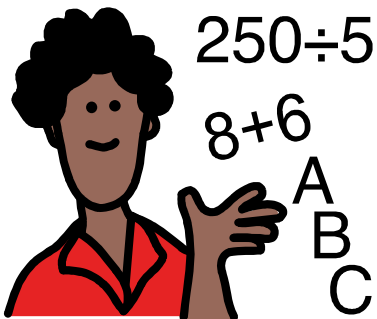
This report is about education for children with disabilities in South Africa.



Every child has the right to go to school.

This means:

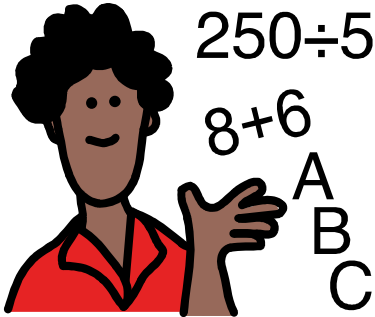
- primary school (which should not cost anything)
- secondary school
- university or training in new skills after that



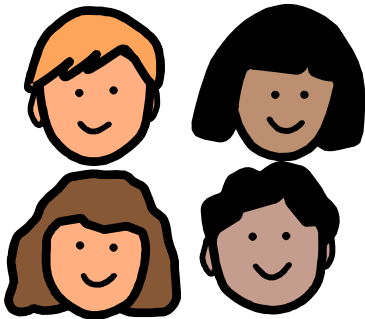


Children with disabilities have the same rights as other children.

They should be treated fairly.

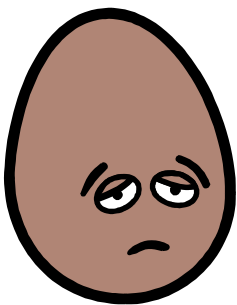


They should be able to get a good education in the same schools as other children.



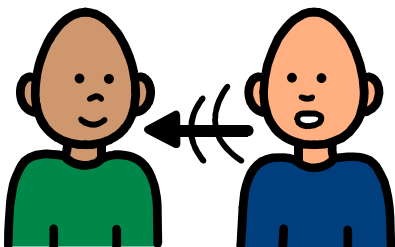
This means it should be easy for children with disabilities to go to these schools.

South Africa agreed to do this.

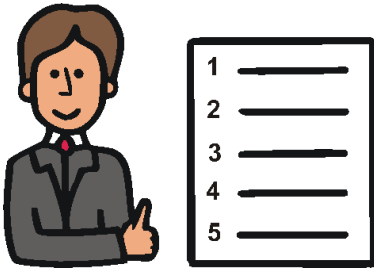


We looked at what is happening with education in South Africa.

We found many problems for people with disabilities.



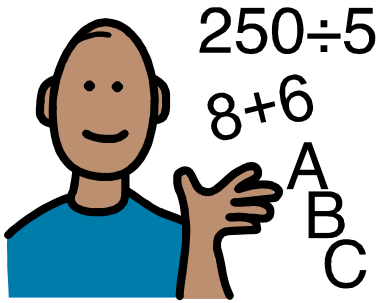
This report tells you more.



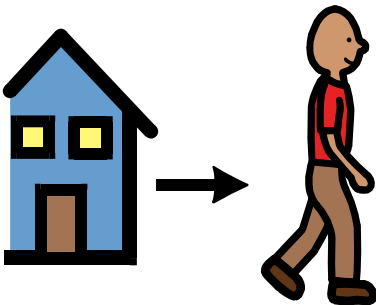
## What the government in South Africa says

In 2001 the government said they will try to make sure children with disabilities can:

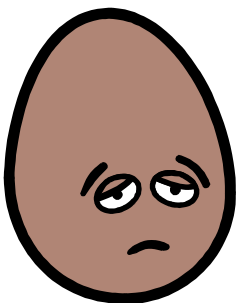
- go to school and get a good education
- go to the same schools as children without a disability



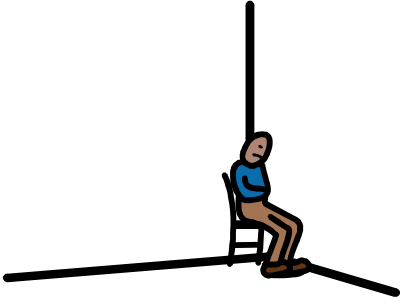
They said that some children who need a lot of support may need to go to special schools for children with disabilities.



But things in South Africa are not happening like they should.



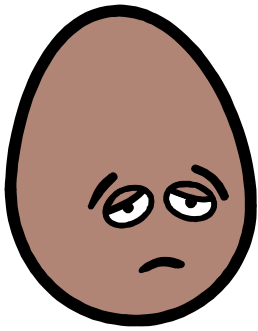
For example, too many children with disabilities are still in special schools.



This means children with disabilities do not get the chance to be with other children and learn the same things together.

But going to school with other children is good for many children with disabilities.

## What we found out



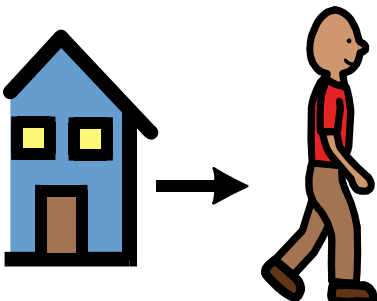
We found many problems for children with disabilities in South Africa when they go to school.

### 1. Money

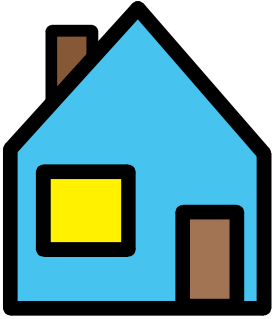


It often costs children with disabilities more to go to school.

For example, many children with disabilities at special schools have to pay money. Children at other schools do not.

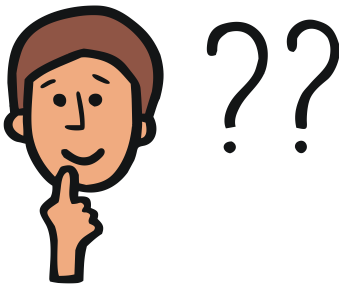


It can cost parents a lot of money to send children with disabilities to special schools.



For example, the school may be far away from home so they have to pay for transport or for their children to stay there.

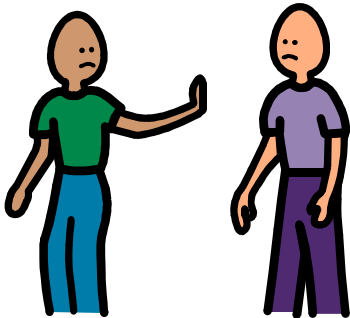
In regular schools, many children have to pay for their own support in the classroom.



## 2. Schools say no

Most schools decide who can go there.

This means they can say no to children with disabilities.



This means many children with disabilities have to go to special schools instead.



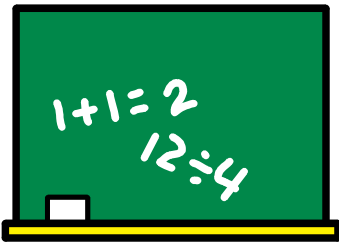
## 3. Poor education

Many children with disabilities do not get a good education.



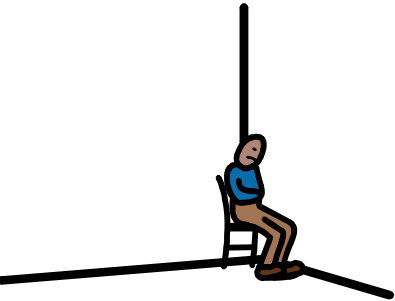
They can have big problems like:

- school buildings that are hard to get into
- teachers who do not have the right training or skills to support them



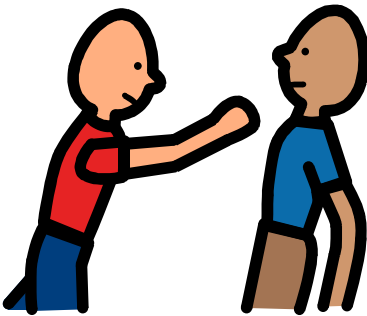
Many children in special schools do not learn the same things as other school children.

This can cause problems later on. For example, it can be harder for them to get a job or be part of their communities.

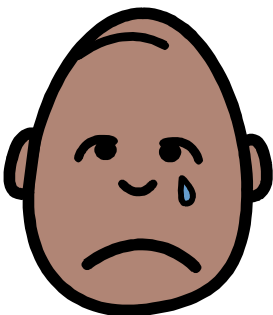


#### 4. Violence and being treated badly

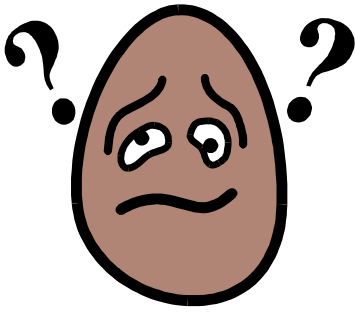
Many children in South Africa are treated badly at school.



For example, people may hurt them or be violent to them.



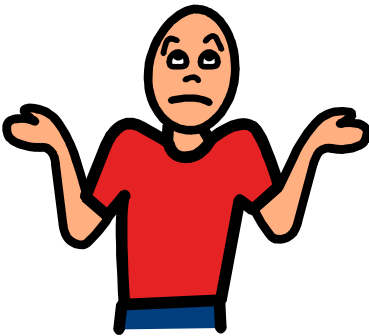
This can be worse for children with disabilities.



## 5. Life after school

School does not help many children with disability get ready for the future.

Many children with disabilities do not have good skills when they leave school.



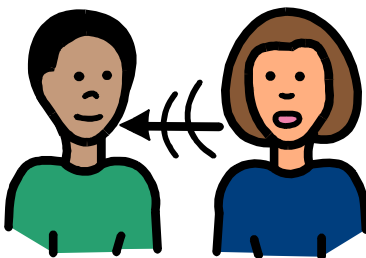
There are also other problems.

For example:



- the government does not pay enough money to make sure all children can study together in the same schools

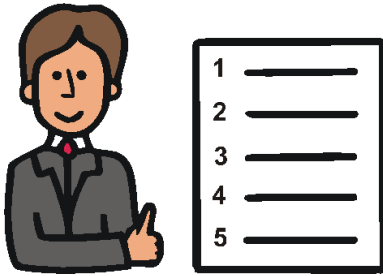
- many children with disabilities and their families do not get the right information and support



- staff tell parents that their child should go to a special school

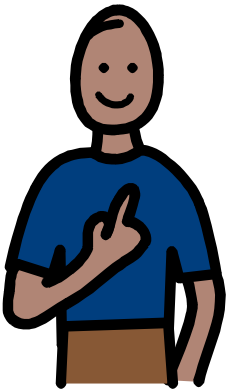
Many parents think they have to do what these people say.





## What needs to happen?

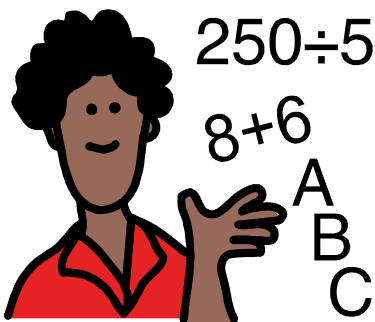
The government in South Africa needs to do what they promised.



Some children with disabilities may want or need to go to special schools.

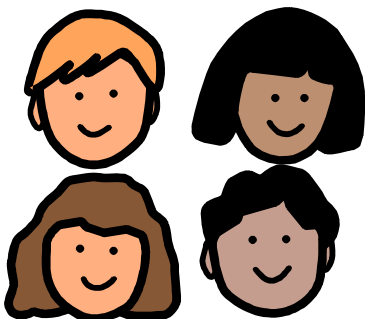
But they should have choices.

They should be able to go to the same schools as other children if they want.



The government should make sure all children with disabilities can:

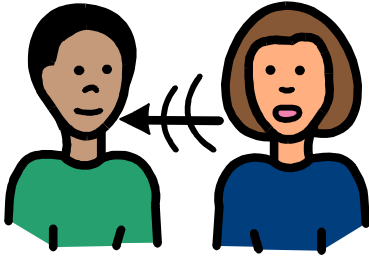
- go to school and get a good education



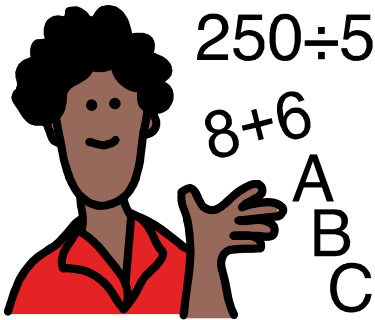
- mix with other children and learn the same things together

This means children with disabilities who need a lot of support as well.

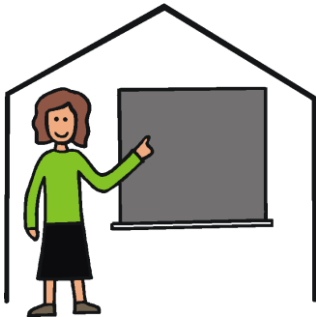
The government should make sure all children with disabilities can:



- get the support they need to do well and learn the right things at school



- have teachers and staff with the right skills and training to support them

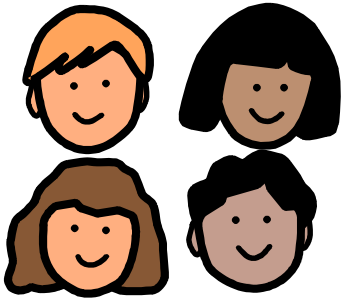


- be safe at school

- get more education or training after they leave school



- get support and information to choose the best education for them



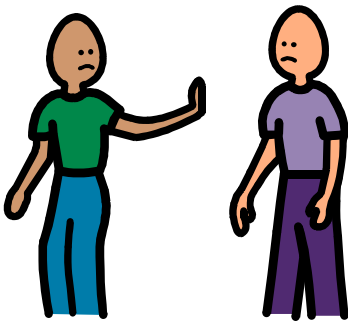
The government should look at how to make this happen.

This means thinking now about how to make sure:

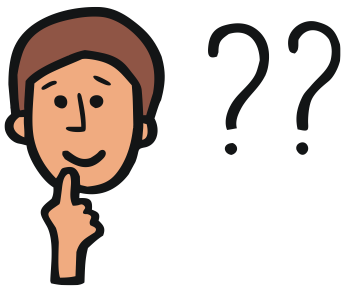


- schools are easy for children with disabilities to go to

- staff have the right training and support



- schools can get in trouble if they say no to children with disabilities



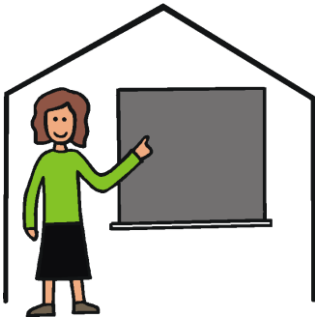
### **Other things the government should do**

The government should look again at what they promised.

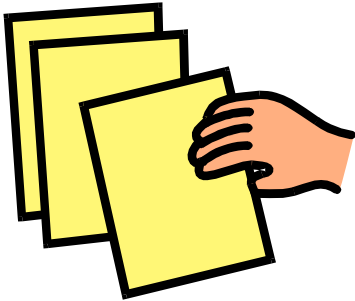


They should make a good law and more rules about education for people with disabilities.

The government should also make sure:

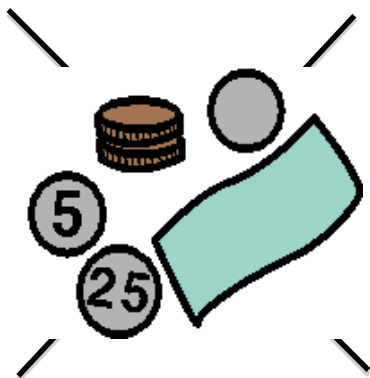


- adults with disabilities can get a basic education



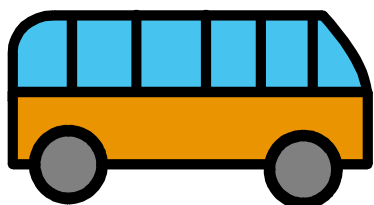
- there is good information about children with disabilities and schools

Such as information to show how many children with disabilities should be in school.



- special schools do not ask for money
- regular schools do not ask children with disabilities for money for things that other children do not pay for

The government should also make sure:



- transport is cheaper for children with disabilities



- there is enough money to make education for children with disabilities better