Problems with Education for Children with Disabilities in Kyrgyzstan

Insisting on Inclusion. Institutionalization and Barriers to Education for Children with Disabilities in Kyrgyzstan
About us

We are called Human Rights Watch.

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

About this report

This report is about education for children with disabilities in a country called Kyrgyzstan.

Kyrgyzstan is in Central Asia.

Many children with disabilities in Kyrgyzstan do not get a good education.

And they are often treated badly and unfairly.
We looked at what is happening to children with disabilities in Kyrgyzstan.

We went to visit special schools and other places where children with disabilities live.

We spoke to many people, such as:
- Children with disabilities
- Their parents
- Staff at the places where children with disabilities live
- People who know a lot about children with disabilities

This report tells you what we found out.
What is happening to children with disabilities in Kyrgyzstan?

1. Problems going to school

Children with disabilities often have a meeting before they start going to school.

The meeting is with education or medical people.

They decide what type of school children with disabilities should go to.

People at the meeting may say that children with disabilities should not go to school with children without disabilities.

They should go to special schools or other places for children with disabilities instead.

Or they should learn at home.

Some parents are told that their child cannot learn at all. This is wrong.
Parents don’t have to do what the people at the meeting say.

But parents may feel they have no choice.

For example:

- Parents may not know about their children’s rights and other choices

- Schools in the community may say no to children with disabilities

- Schools in the community are often hard for children with disabilities to enter and move around in

- Schools in the community may not give children with disabilities the right support to learn and join in

- There may be no support for children with disabilities near where they live

For example, support to communicate
2. Problems learning at home

Some children with disabilities have to learn at home.

Teachers may come to see them every week.

But they may only come for a few hours a week. That is not enough.

3. Problems in special schools or other places for children with disabilities

Some children with disabilities have to go to special schools or other places for children with disabilities.

They often have to live there.

This means they may have to live far away from their families.
Many children with disabilities who live in special schools or other places for children with disabilities do not get a good education.

Many special schools or other places where children with disabilities live do not have enough staff.

This means children with disabilities may be left alone without the support they need.

Children with disabilities in these places may be kept apart from other children.

They may be split into different groups. Like a group for children who cannot walk.

They may not be able to see or play with children from other groups.
Forcing children with disabilities to take medicine or go to hospital

Staff may force children with disabilities to take medicine if they are upset or behave in a way that staff do not like.

Or staff may send children to hospitals for people with mental health conditions.

Staff may do this to control the way children with disabilities behave or to punish them.

Staff may not tell children with disabilities or their parents what the medicine is for or ask them first.

This is wrong. No one should be forced to take medicine.
Children with disabilities may be unsafe

Children with disabilities may not know how to speak up if something bad happens to them.

For example, if staff hurt them or treat them badly.

Some children are not allowed to speak to their parents without staff being there.

4. Making choices for people with disabilities

People often stop children with disabilities from making their own choices when they become an adult.

For example, choices about where to live and medical care.
Many children with disabilities are moved to places for adults with disabilities when they are 18.

Staff or family members are often allowed to make choices for them.

All these problems can make children with disabilities very sad.

And a bad education can stop them from getting a job and doing well when they are older.

What the government in Kyrgyzstan is doing

There is an important document about the rights of people with disabilities in the world.

For example, the right of people with disabilities to live in the community.
The government in Kyrgyzstan has promised to do what this document says.

There is also a law in Kyrgyzstan that says all children should get an education.

The government started to close some places where children with disabilities live.

But too many children with disabilities still live in special schools or other places for children with disabilities away from their families.
What we want to happen next

These things are for the government in Kyrgyzstan to work on straight away.

The government should:

• Make sure all children with disabilities get a good education in the same classrooms as children without disabilities
  
  They should get extra support to learn and join in if they need it

• Make sure no one stops children with disabilities from getting this education

• Make sure no one says that children with disabilities cannot learn
The government should also:

- Make sure children with disabilities get the right support near where they live

They should not have to live at special schools or other places

- Make a plan for moving children with disabilities out of special schools and other places for children with disabilities

This is so they can live in the community

- Say when this plan will happen

- Make sure children with disabilities have a say in the plan

- Make sure people do not make children with disabilities take medicine or go to hospital to control the way they behave
The government should also:

- Make sure children with disabilities in special schools and other places for children with disabilities are safe and treated fairly

- Make it safe for children with disabilities to speak up if someone treats them badly

- Make sure people with disabilities can make their own choices when they are 18

- Give children with disabilities and their families the information they need.

For example, information about their rights. And how decisions about education are made.