



Australian Government

Department of Families,
Housing, Community Services
and Indigenous Affairs

Better Start for Children with Disability (Better Start) initiative

Information for parents and carers

On 28 July 2010, the Australian Government announced new funding to provide services and support to children up to 15 years of age with a disability that affects their development.

Under the Better Start for Children with Disability (Better Start) initiative

- cerebral palsy
- Down syndrome
- Fragile X syndrome
- moderate or greater vision or hearing impairments, including deafblindness

are the identified disabilities.

Support for families with young children

From 1 July 2011, children who are aged under six years and have been diagnosed with one of the listed disabilities can be registered to access early intervention funding of up to \$12,000 (up to a maximum of \$6,000 per financial year).

The funding can be used to access early intervention services such as speech pathology, audiology, occupational therapy, orthoptics, physiotherapy and psychology. Families will have until the child's seventh birthday to access the early intervention funding.

This targeted early intervention during the pre-school years aims to complement existing Commonwealth and State and Territory services and to assist these children to have the best possible preparation for the transition to school.

Support for families with older children

A Medicare item for the development of a treatment and management plan will be available for children up to the age of 13.

Medicare items will also be available for up to four allied health diagnostic services and for a total of 20 relevant allied health services per eligible child. The new items will be available for children up to the age of 15 provided the treatment and management plan is in place before 13 years of age.

Improving the lives of Australians

Support for families living in outer regional and remote areas

Families living in outer regional or remote areas may be eligible for a \$2,000 one-off support payment. This payment recognises the difficulties that families living in remote and outer regional areas face in accessing services and will assist with expenses such as travel and home visits.

Registering for the Better Start initiative

Registration for the early intervention funding will be available from 1 July 2011.

The Better Start Registration and Information Service will be operated by Carers Australia. To register your child for the Better Start initiative, call Carers Australia on **1800 242 636**.

In order to register for the Better Start initiative families will need to provide:

- the child's Centrelink Customer Reference Number (CRN);
- proof of the child's age and residential address; and
- a written conclusive diagnosis.

Further information

For further information about the Better Start initiative, please visit the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) website at

www.fahcsia.gov.au/betterstart

Enquiries can also be directed to the Better Start Helpline on **1800 989 530** or emailed to Better.Start@fahcsia.gov.au