

Support for families with young children

Children who are aged under six years and have been diagnosed with one of the specified disabilities will benefit from early intervention funding of up to \$12,000 (up to a maximum of \$6,000 per financial year).

The financial assistance can be used to pay for services and therapies such as:

- ▶ speech pathology
- ▶ audiology
- ▶ occupational therapy
- ▶ orthoptics
- ▶ physiotherapy
- ▶ psychology.

Families will have until the child's seventh birthday to access the financial assistance.

This targeted early intervention during the child's pre-school years will complement existing Commonwealth and State and Territory services and help children have the best possible preparation for school.



Australian Government

Department of Families, Housing,
Community Services and Indigenous Affairs



Further information

For further information about the Better Start initiative, please call the Carers Australia Registration and Information Service on **1800 242 636** or visit **www.fahcsia.gov.au/betterstart**

FaHCSIA11568.1107

Better Start for Children with Disability initiative

Information for parents and carers

Improving the lives of Australians

Better Start for Children with Disability is a new initiative of the Australian Government to help make vital early intervention services and therapies more affordable and accessible.

Funding for services and therapies is available for children with:

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

The Government is providing \$147 million over four years to help families access early intervention therapies and services.



Support for families with older children

Under the Better Start initiative a range of new Medicare rebates are now available for eligible children. This means that more kinds of treatment and support for children with disability are subsidised through Medicare.

Eligible children can access both the early intervention funding and the Medicare rebates.

Parents should talk to their child's doctor to find out more about the rebates.

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.

Eligibility for this payment is assessed when you register for Better Start.

Registering for the Better Start initiative

Better Start is available from 1 July 2011. To access the early intervention financial assistance, parents and carers of eligible children will need to register their child for Better Start before they turn six.

The Better Start Registration and Information Service is operated by Carers Australia.

To register your child for the Better Start initiative, call Carers Australia on **1800 242 636** to arrange an appointment.

In order to register for the Better Start initiative families will need to contact Carers Australia and provide:

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