



Australian Government

Department of Families,
Housing, Community Services
and Indigenous Affairs

Better Start for Children with Disability (Better Start) initiative

Information for service providers

On 28 July 2010, the Australian Government announced new funding to provide early intervention services to children with a disability that affects their development.

Cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, Fragile X syndrome, and moderate or greater vision or hearing impairments, including deafblindness, are the disabilities identified under the Better Start initiative.

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 in 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.

Applying for the Better Start Early Intervention Service Provider Panel

As part of the Better Start initiative, a panel of early intervention service providers will be established. Parents and carers of eligible children will be able to seek early intervention services from service providers on the Better Start Early Intervention Service Provider Panel (the Panel).

Providers will need to be suitably qualified and would be expected to be able to demonstrate experience in working with children with at least one of the listed disabilities.

Applications for membership of the Panel are now being accepted. The application pack is available at www.fahcsia.gov.au/betterstart

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

Improving the lives of Australians