

Better Start for Children with Disability

The *Better Start for Children with Disability* initiative provides early intervention funding to parents and carers of children with a disability.

From **1 July 2011**, parents and carers of children up to the age of six years who have been diagnosed with either Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, Fragile X syndrome, deaf-blindness or eligible hearing or vision impairments will be able to register to access funding of up to \$12,000 to pay for early intervention services, up to a maximum of \$6,000 per financial year.

Services include:

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

New Medicare items will also be available for the development of a treatment and management plan for eligible children under 13 years of age.

A dedicated Registration and Information Service will be established to register eligible children, and provide information about entitlement to therapies, supports and services in the local area.

To register a child for early intervention funding, parents or carers must provide:

- proof of the child's age, preferably their birth certificate or passport
- written confirmation of diagnosis - for sight and hearing impairments, confirmation of a moderate (or greater) impairment is required
- proof of residential status (where applicable)
- proof of residential address (where applicable, to ensure outer regional and remote access payment - this could be a recent bill or similar) and
- the child's Centrelink-generated Customer Reference Number (CRN).

Families will be able to contact their local Carers Association to register their child for the initiative from **1 July 2011** via freecall **1800 242 636**.

Further information on the program will be available at www.carersaustralia.com.au.