

Better Start for Children with Disability Funding

The Better Start for Children with Disability provides funding for early intervention services.

Who is Eligible?

Children under six years are eligible if diagnosed with one of the following disabilities:

- A moderate or greater vision of hearing impairment, including deafblindness
- Down Syndrome
- Cerebral palsy
- Fragile X syndrome

What does the Funding include?

- Up to \$12,000 in funding for early intervention services and treatments for eligible children. 35% of this funding can be used for resources (such as technology and Auslan classes) to support the early intervention outcomes for the child;
- Additional assistance for eligible children who live in outer-regional, rural or remote locations to help with the costs of accessing services;
- A Medicare item for the development of a treatment and management plan for eligible children up to the age of 13;
- Medicare items for up to four allied health diagnostic services, the results of which contribute to the development of the treatment and management plan; and
- Medicare items for up to 20 relevant allied health services in total for each eligible child up to the age of 15 provided the treatment and management plan is in place before the age of 13.

Better Start Funding for Resources

Up to 35% of a child's early intervention funding can be used for the purchase of resources. This means that up to \$4100 in total of the \$1200 can be used for resources, up to a total of \$2,100 in any one financial year. Parents can use this resource funding for items such as an iPad or Auslan classes.

Resources that are purchased with Better Start funds, must:

- be recommended by the child's service provider;
- be directly linked with the EI services being delivered; and/or
- provide support for the delivery of interventions at home;
- if deemed suitable the child's provider, parents may use some of their child's resources funding to pay for accredited Auslan courses. Certificate II and III level courses are in scope under Betterstart.
- Please note: this funding cannot be used to pay for items or interventions such as swimming lessons.
- Items or services that are provided through other schemes, such as hearing aid devices.



New Medicare Items for Families with Older Children under Better Start

Did you know that in addition to the early intervention funding under Better Start, children with the listed disabilities (including those who are over the age of six) may be eligible for new Medicare items for:

- the development of a treatment and management plan for a child under 13 years of age by a specialist, consultant physician or general practitioner
- up to four diagnostic, treatment and management services delivered by psychologists, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, audiologists, physiotherapists and orthoptists to assist the referring practitioner in the assessment, diagnosis and development of a treatment and management plan for a child under 13 years of age.
- up to a total of 20 early intervention treatment services per child, consistent with the treatment and management plan, delivered by psychologists, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, optometrists, audiologists, physiotherapists and orthoptists.

The new treatment items are available for children up to the age of 15 provided the treatment and management plan is in place before 13 years of age.

Parents and carers of eligible children are not required to complete a formal application to access the Medicare component of the initiative, but need to be referred by their general practitioner or a physician.

The Medicare component of the Better Start initiative is administered by the Department of Health and Ageing.

Further information about the Medicare component of Better Start is available at

http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/children_disability



