



**Better Start for Children  
with Disability initiative  
Registration and Information Pack**

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ph 1800 242 636 | [www.betterstart.net.au](http://www.betterstart.net.au)

# ABOUT BETTER START



In 2010, the Australian Government announced new funding to improve access to early intervention services for eligible children with disability to better prepare them for the transition to school.

Better Start is funded by the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs. The initiative provides eligible children with access to:

- A Registration and Information Service to register eligible children and to provide families with information about Better Start and other appropriate services and support.
- Up to \$12,000 (maximum \$6,000 in any one financial year) to pay for early intervention services delivered by members of the Better Start Early Intervention Service Provider Panel.
- An additional one off support payment for families living in outer-regional and remote areas to assist with the costs of accessing services.
- The Better Start Early Intervention Service Provider Panel that families will access for early intervention services utilising the Better Start funding.
- Access to new Medicare items.
- Website accessible information for parents, carers and professionals including evidence-based information and online resources about child disability, together with information about other relevant sources of advice and assistance.

## About Carers Australia

Carers Australia is the national peak body representing the diversity of carers in Australia. We work in partnership with the state and territory Carers Associations with the ultimate aim of improving the lives of carers.

## Carers Australia's Role

Carers Australia is funded by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA) to deliver the Better Start Registration and Information Service to eligible children and their families.

The Registration and Information Service is delivered by qualified staff in each of the state and territory Carers Associations.

## About the Registration and Information Service

The Registration and Information Service assists families by providing information about Better Start, registering eligible children and informing families about services and other forms of assistance they may be entitled to. More information about registration can be found within this booklet and at: [www.betterstart.net.au](http://www.betterstart.net.au)

# ELIGIBILITY FOR BETTER START

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To be eligible to register for the Better Start early intervention funding a child must be registered before the age of 6yrs old, be an Australian resident, and have a confirmed diagnosis of one of the following disabilities:

## Hearing impairment

Hearing loss at 40 decibels or greater in the better ear, based on a 4 frequency pure tone average. Children with permanent conductive hearing loss and auditory neuropathy will also be eligible

## Vision impairment

Vision of less than or equal to 6/18 or equivalent field loss, in the better eye with correction

## Deafblindness

A confirmed diagnosis made by a specialist multi-disciplinary team, including audiological and ophthalmological evaluation

## Down syndrome

A confirmed diagnosis of Down syndrome, including Mosaic Down syndrome

## Fragile X syndrome

A confirmed diagnosis of Fragile X syndrome with full mutation

## Cerebral palsy

A confirmed diagnosis of cerebral palsy

The thresholds that apply to these disabilities have been determined by FaHCSIA in conjunction with advice provided by an Expert Reference Group.

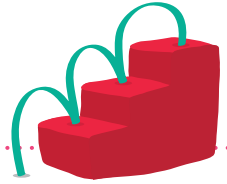
For more information please go to [fahcsia.gov.au/betterstart](https://fahcsia.gov.au/betterstart) or call the Better Start Registration and Information Service on 1800 242 636.

## Outer Regional and Remote Payment

Families who live in outer regional or remote areas are entitled to receive a one off payment of \$2,000 per eligible child in addition to the early intervention funding. You will be informed of your eligibility for the outer regional and remote payment by your Advisor at the time of registration.

This one off payment is intended to assist families living in regional and remote areas with the costs of accessing services. If you are eligible for this payment, your Registration and Information Service Advisor will require your bank account details to facilitate this payment through Carers Australia.

# PATH THROUGH BETTER START



## STEP 1 Initial Contact

Contact the Registration and Information Service on 1800 242 636 to arrange an appointment. At the time of your appointment you will need to have available:

- a completed Application Form,
- your child's Centrelink generated Customer Reference Number (CRN),
- proof of your child's age (eg. the child's birth certificate, passport or cited proof of birth from Centrelink),
- written confirmation of your child's diagnosis provided on letterhead and signed by the diagnosing practitioner. For sight and hearing impairments, a moderate (or greater) impairment must be identified in the document,
- proof of residential status (where applicable); and
- proof of residential address which could be a recent utilities bill, rates notice or similar.

## STEP 2 Appointment

Your appointment may be face-to-face or over the phone, depending on where you live. The Registration and Information Service will confirm eligibility and register your child to access early intervention funding. You will be provided with information about Better Start and the services provided by the *Better Start Early Intervention Service Provider Panel*. Your Advisor can also provide information and advice on other services available in your state or territory.

## STEP 3 Letter of Introduction

Once your child's eligibility has been confirmed you will be provided with a *Letter of Introduction*. You are required to show this Letter to each service provider when you attend your first appointment. It confirms your eligibility for Early Intervention funding and allows the provider to access your child's information on the FaHCSIA Online Funding Management System (FOFMS) and submit claims for payment.

Please retain this letter – copies should not be made by the service provider without your permission.

## STEP 4 Accessing Services

- Before you start using your Better Start funding, it may be useful to make an appointment to see your child's medical practitioner for the development of a treatment and management plan. There are a number of new Medicare items available to support this initiative (please see Medicare Information sheet about the items available for your child).
- When accessing a *Better Start Early Intervention Service Provider* you should advise them that your child is registered to receive Better Start early intervention funding.
- You can view the online list of Better Start Early Intervention Service Providers by visiting: [www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/disability/progserv/people/betterstart/providers/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.fahcsia.gov.au/sa/disability/progserv/people/betterstart/providers/Pages/default.aspx)

If you do not have access to the internet your Registration and Information Service Advisor can provide you with a hardcopy list

### STEP 5 Entitlements and Payment

Your child is able to access up to \$12,000 of early intervention funding until he or she turns 7 (all children must be registered prior to their 6<sup>th</sup> birthday to access funding).

- Of this funding, no more than \$6,000 can be spent in any one financial year.
- The funding will be available until your child turns 7, or when you have reached the \$12,000 limit, whichever happens first.
- Early intervention funding is **not paid directly to you**. You will not need to claim reimbursement for services provided to your child. Rather, each *Better Start Early Intervention Service Provider* will require you to sign a *Consent to Claim Payment Form* for services. Signing this form authorises the provider to claim payment from FaHCSIA for the services provided to your child.

### STEP 6 Purchasing Resources

- Up to \$4,200 (35%) of your child's funding can be used to purchase resources or equipment that supports the ongoing delivery of early intervention therapies. Of this amount up to \$2,100 can be used in any one financial year.

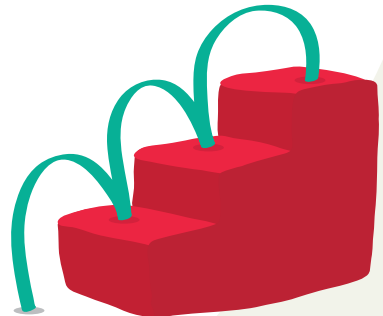
- Once a resource or equipment need has been identified and agreed between you and your *Better Start Early Intervention Service Provider*, the item can be purchased by the provider (or by you) and reimbursement claimed from FaHCSIA out of the child's Better Start funding.

### STEP 7 Keeping track of your funding allocation

- Once your child starts using Better Start services, you will be sent a monthly *Family Activity Statement* from FaHCSIA to assist you in tracking your use of the funding.
- A resource is also provided with your *Letter of Introduction* to assist you to keep record of your Better Start spending and the services accessed.

### STEP 8 Questions?

If you have any questions about the registration process, please do not hesitate to contact your local Registration and Information Service Advisor on **1800 242 636**.



# OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

## Interpreter Service

An interpreter service can be arranged if required. Carers Associations have access to interpreters who cover more than 170 languages and dialects, including Auslan. If you require interpreting services please contact your Registration and Information Service Advisor who can book an interpreter on your behalf.

## Contact your local Carers Association

If you would like to find out more please contact the Carers Association in your state or territory on **1800 242 636**, or go to **betterstart.net.au**

## Carer Support

Carers Australia is the national peak body representing carers in Australia. The state and territory Carers Association network provides information, advice and support for carers across Australia.

For more information or to contact your state or territory Carers Association, please contact the Carer Advisory Service on the phone number below.

Phone **1800 242 636**

Web **carersaustralia.com.au**

## Early Intervention Service Provider Panel

Better Start funding can be used to pay for services provided by members of the Panel, including services provided by:

- Audiologists
- Occupational therapists
- Orthoptists
- Physiotherapists
- Psychologists
- Speech Pathologists
- Other early intervention specialists

To view a comprehensive list of service providers, and the services they offer, please go to **fahcsia.gov.au/betterstart**

### Medicare Items

For children with one of the eligible diagnoses, new Medicare items are also available for the development of a treatment and management plan; 4 allied health diagnostic services to assist in the preparation of the treatment plan, and up to 20 allied health treatment services per eligible child (in total).

You do not need to register for access to the new items. For further information about the Medicare items contact your child's GP or specialist doctor.

A fact sheet for parents and further information is available at: **[health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/children-disabilites-factsheetforparents](https://health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/Content/children-disabilites-factsheetforparents)**

### Raising Children Network

An A-Z Disability Reference is available on the Raising Children website. This resource provides an overview of disability terms and professionals you may encounter.

Go to: **[raisingchildren.net.au/disabilities](https://raisingchildren.net.au/disabilities)** and follow the link through to the Disability Reference

### Other assistance

State and Territory governments are the main providers of specialist disability services in Australia.

There are also many disability specific organisations in Australia that offer support and advice to families affected by disability.

For a list of State or Territory disability services, and disability specific organisations, visit the Better Start website at: **[betterstart.net.au/links-and-resources](https://betterstart.net.au/links-and-resources)**



# STEPS FOR REGISTRATION

## BETTER START FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY INITIATIVE



### Instructions for Returning Application Form

Once you have read through the information contained in this booklet and completed the Application Form it should be returned to your Registration and Information Service Advisor as soon as possible. If you have any questions contact your local Carers Association on **1800 242 636**.

Forms can be submitted by:



FAX

OR



POST

OR



EMAIL

Application forms can also be downloaded at [www.betterstart.net.au](http://www.betterstart.net.au)



# APPLICATION FORM BETTER START FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY REGISTRATION

## Child Details

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_ Centrelink Customer Reference Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender:  Male  Female Country of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

## Does the child have an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander background?

No  Yes - Aboriginal  Yes - Torres Strait Islander  Yes - Both

## Parent/Carer Details

### Parent/Carer 1

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Suburb/town: \_\_\_\_\_

State & Post Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Other phone: \_\_\_\_\_

### Parent/Carer 2

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to child: \_\_\_\_\_ Mobile: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Suburb/town: \_\_\_\_\_

State & Post Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Other phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## Child has been diagnosed with (please select where appropriate)

Hearing impairment  Down syndrome

Vision impairment  Deafblindness

Fragile X syndrome (full mutation)  Cerebral palsy

## Residency Status

Australian citizen  Permanent resident

Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

## Do you speak English as your preferred language at home?

No  Yes



# APPLICATION FORM BETTER START FOR CHILDREN WITH DISABILITY REGISTRATION

**Do you require interpreter or translation services?**

No  Yes, which language do you speak? \_\_\_\_\_

**Is the child from a culturally and linguistically diverse background?**

No  Yes, what is the child's background? \_\_\_\_\_

**Does the child speak any language/s other than English in their home?**

No  Yes, which language/s? \_\_\_\_\_

**Where did you hear about the Better Start program?**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Carers Association       | <input type="checkbox"/> Medical Practitioner (GP, paediatrician etc.) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local Government service | <input type="checkbox"/> Allied health professional                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> FaHCSIA                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Friend/relative/other parent                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disability organisation  | <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare/preschool                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____              |  |

**Do you have regular access to the internet?**

No  Yes

**Privacy Information**

I have read the Privacy Statement and understand that my information will be recorded in FaHCSIA's Online Financial Management system. I also understand that the Carers Association that registers my child for the Better Start program will enter my details into their own database as a caring family.

*(Please sign below to indicate that you consent to your information being collected by FaHCSIA and the Carers Association)*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_

If you are unable to attend a face to face appointment with a Registration and Information Service Advisor please ensure that you attach copies of the required documents to your completed Application Form. If you are attending a face to face appointment please ensure that you bring copies of these documents. **Applications cannot be processed without all supporting documentation.**

Application Checklist					
Have you completed:	Yes	No	Have you provided copies of:	Yes	No
Application form?			Proof of child's age?		
Client Consent form? (FaHCSIA Consent form sent with this pack)			Proof of address?		
			Child's Diagnosis?		
Child's CRN?			Proof of residency? (where applicable)		

# PRIVACY STATEMENT

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## Parent/Guardian Consent Information

To provide access for your child to the early intervention funding we are required to collect personal information about you and your child and share these details with the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).

## What information is shared?

All the information on this application form is shared with FaHCSIA. This includes your child's name, date of birth, address, gender, Centrelink Reference Number, diagnosis and parent/guardian contact details.

## Protection of information

The Better Start program is obliged to observe the Information Privacy Principles contained in the Commonwealth Privacy Act 1988. The information that is forwarded to FaHCSIA is stored in a secure manner and only a limited number of FaHCSIA staff have access to your personal information.

From time to time FaHCSIA may provide information about individuals who are accessing Australian Government funded services to other government departments and researchers. If this happens limited and de identified information is made available.

The Federal Privacy Commissioner can investigate complaints of improper collection, use and disclosure of personal information by federal government agencies and the Carers Associations.



To contact and register  
for Better Start call the  
Carers Association  
in your state or territory  
on **1800 242 636**.

For more information  
go to [www.betterstart.net.au](http://www.betterstart.net.au)

## Contacts for State and Territory Carers Associations

### CARERS ACT

80 Beaurepaire Crescent  
Holt ACT 2615  
Ph (02) 6296 9900  
[betterstart@carersact.org.au](mailto:betterstart@carersact.org.au)  
[www.carersact.org.au](http://www.carersact.org.au)

### CARERS NT

59 Bayview Boulevard  
Bayview NT 0800  
Ph (08) 8944 4888  
[carersnt@carersnt.asn.au](mailto:carersnt@carersnt.asn.au)  
[nt.carersaustralia.com.au](http://nt.carersaustralia.com.au)

### CARERS SA

58 King William Road  
Goodwood SA 5034  
Ph (08) 8291 5600  
[betterstart@carers-sa.asn.au](mailto:betterstart@carers-sa.asn.au)  
[www.carers-sa.asn.au](http://www.carers-sa.asn.au)

### CARERS VICTORIA

Level 1, 37 Albert Street  
Footscray VIC 3011  
Ph (03) 9396 9500  
[betterstart@carersvictoria.org.au](mailto:betterstart@carersvictoria.org.au)  
[www.carersvictoria.org.au](http://www.carersvictoria.org.au)

### CARERS NSW

Roden Cutler House  
Level 18, 24 Campbell Street  
Sydney NSW 2000  
Ph (02) 9280 4744  
[betterstart@carersnsw.asn.au](mailto:betterstart@carersnsw.asn.au)  
[www.carersnsw.asn.au](http://www.carersnsw.asn.au)

### CARERS QUEENSLAND

15 Abbott Street  
Camp Hill QLD 4152  
Ph (07) 3900 8100  
[betterstart@carersqld.com.au](mailto:betterstart@carersqld.com.au)  
[qld.carersaustralia.com.au](http://qld.carersaustralia.com.au)

### CARERS TASMANIA

64 Burnett Street  
North Hobart TAS 7000  
Ph (03) 6231 5507  
[betterstart@carerstas.org](mailto:betterstart@carerstas.org)  
[www.carerstas.org](http://www.carerstas.org)

### CARERS WA

182 Lord Street  
Perth WA 6000  
Ph 1800 242 623  
[betterstart@carerswa.asn.au](mailto:betterstart@carerswa.asn.au)  
[wa.carersaustralia.com.au](http://wa.carersaustralia.com.au)