

## HOW TO ACCESS BETTER START

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To access Better Start, children with an eligible diagnosis must meet all registration criteria and be registered before they turn 6 years old. Families will have until the child turns 7 to access funding.

### Assessment & Registration

To be registered with Better Start your child's eligibility needs to be assessed and confirmed by the Registration and Information Service (RIS).

This assessment can be face-to-face, via telephone, internet, email or a video link. At this assessment the child's parent or carer will need to provide documents to the Registration and Information Adviser who will talk you through the process.

Your eligibility assessment will be assessed and if confirmed, your child will be registered for Better Start as soon as possible.

### Referral

Once approved, you will receive a letter of confirmation of your child's registration with Better Start. Your RIS Advisor can assist by providing you with information about early intervention services for your child.

To contact and register for Better Start call the Carers Association on 1800 242 636.

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



#### CARERS ACT

Ph (02) 6296 9900  
[carers@carersact.org.au](mailto:carers@carersact.org.au)  
[www.carersact.org.au](http://www.carersact.org.au)

#### CARERS NSW

Ph (02) 9280 4744  
[betterstart@carersnsw.org.au](mailto:betterstart@carersnsw.org.au)  
[www.carersnsw.org.au](http://www.carersnsw.org.au)

#### CARERS NT

Ph (08) 8944 4888  
[carersnt@carersnt.asn.au](mailto:carersnt@carersnt.asn.au)  
[www.carersnt.asn.au](http://www.carersnt.asn.au)

#### CARERS QLD

Ph (07) 3900 8100  
[betterstart@carersqld.asn.au](mailto:betterstart@carersqld.asn.au)  
[www.carersqld.asn.au](http://www.carersqld.asn.au)

#### CARERS SA

Ph (08) 8291 5600  
[info@carers-sa.asn.au](mailto:info@carers-sa.asn.au)  
[www.carers-sa.asn.au](http://www.carers-sa.asn.au)

#### CARERS TAS

Ph (03) 6231 5507  
[betterstart@carerstas.org](mailto:betterstart@carerstas.org)  
[www.carerstas.org](http://www.carerstas.org)

#### CARERS VIC

Ph 03 9396 9500  
[betterstart@carersvictoria.org.au](mailto:betterstart@carersvictoria.org.au)  
[www.carersvictoria.org.au](http://www.carersvictoria.org.au)

#### CARERS WA

Ph 08 9228 7400  
[betterstart@carerswa.asn.au](mailto:betterstart@carerswa.asn.au)  
[www.carerswa.asn.au](http://www.carerswa.asn.au)

### National Disability Insurance Scheme

Better Start will transition to the NDIS and gradually close. Children with disability can already access early intervention services in the NDIS trial sites. The NDIS website has more details about where the NDIS is currently operating.

[www.ndis.gov.au](http://www.ndis.gov.au)



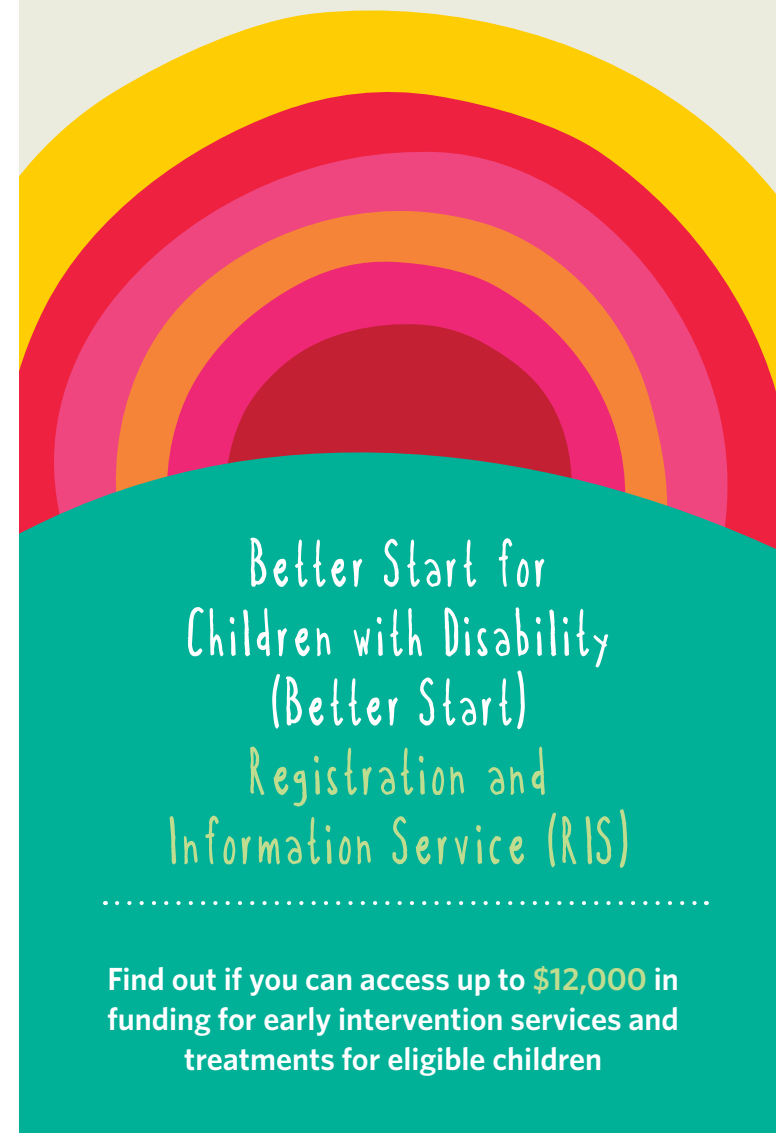
Australian Government  
Department of Social Services



CREBNE 14815-0516



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



Better Start for  
Children with Disability  
(Better Start)  
Registration and  
Information Service (RIS)

Find out if you can access up to \$12,000 in  
funding for early intervention services and  
treatments for eligible children

## WHAT IS BETTER START?

Better Start is an Australian Government initiative funded by the Department of Social Services (DSS).

The Registration and Information Service (RIS) assists parents and carers by informing them about Better Start Registration and early intervention service options.

The RIS is delivered by qualified staff in Carers Associations states and territories.

Evidence shows that targeted early intervention for children with eligible disabilities better prepares them for the transition to school.

Children who are registered with Better Start can access up to \$12,000 in funding (up to a maximum of \$6,000 per financial year) to pay for early intervention services delivered by Registered Service Providers.

Families living in outer regional or remote areas may be eligible for an additional one-off support payment of \$2,000. This payment will assist with additional expenses such as travel and home visits associated with accessing services.

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

### About the funding.

The funding can be used to pay for early intervention services provided by a range of early intervention professionals who are members of the Better Start Early Intervention Service Provider Panel.



The professionals on the panel include but are not limited to:

- speech pathologists
- audiologists
- occupational therapists
- physiotherapists
- psychologists
- orthoptists
- teachers of the deaf
- optometrists

## WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

A child must be under the age of six years and have been diagnosed with one of the following disabilities and meet the required thresholds, to be eligible for Better Start funding.

**Eligibility thresholds apply.** These thresholds have been determined by DSS in consultation with an Expert Reference Group and are endorsed by the Parliamentary Secretary for Disability and Carers.

All children with a confirmed diagnosis of the disabilities listed below are eligible for Better Start.

Angelman syndrome  
Cerebral palsy  
CHARGE syndrome  
Cornelia de Lange syndrome  
Cri du Chat syndrome  
Down syndrome, including those with mosaic  
Down syndrome  
Fragile X syndrome  
Fragile X syndrome with full mutation, includes mosaicism.  
Kabuki syndrome  
Prader-Willi syndrome  
Rett's disorder  
Smith-Magenis syndrome  
Williams syndrome.

## THRESHOLDS APPLY TO THE BELOW DISABILITIES:

### Hearing impairment

Children will be eligible if they have a hearing loss in both ears that meets either of the following two criteria:

- A permanent conductive or sensorineural hearing loss that has a four frequency average hearing loss\* of 40dBHL or greater in the better-hearing ear.
- Auditory Neuropathy Spectrum Disorder diagnosed in both ears

\* The four frequency average hearing loss represents the average of hearing thresholds at 500 Hz, 1000 Hz, 2000 Hz and 4000 Hz.

### Microcephaly

A diagnosis of microcephaly based on a head circumference less than the third percentile and a functional level at or below 2 standard deviations below the mean for age on the Griffiths Mental Development Scales or the Bayley Scales of Infant Development.

### Vision impairment

The vision impairment threshold for Better Start eligibility is less than or equal to 6/18 or equivalent field loss, in the better eye with correction.

Conditions do apply with very young children and with children with some other conditions which affect their ability to cooperate during the testing, so it may be difficult to establish an exact level of impairment. Speak to your local RIS Advisor.

### Deafblindness

All children with a diagnosis of deafblindness made by a specialist multidisciplinary team which includes an ophthalmological and audiological evaluation (therefore application of a threshold is not necessary) will be eligible.