# Better Start for Children with Disability (Better Start) initiative

## Information for service providers

Since 1 July 2011, children who are aged under 6 years and have been diagnosed with cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, Fragile X syndrome and moderate or greater hearing or vision impairments, including deafblindness, have been able to register for access to early intervention funding of up to $12,000 (up to a maximum of $6,000 per financial year) under the Better Start for Children with Disability (Better Start) initiative.

From 1 January 2013, Better Start has been expanded to include children who are aged under six years and have been diagnosed with Prader Willi, Williams, Angelman, Kabuki, Smith-Magenis, CHARGE, Cornelia de Lange or Cri du Chat syndromes or microcephaly. Children in this group who are under six (or turn six) on 1 January 2013 are eligible to register for Better Start.

The funding can be used to pay for services such as speech pathology, audiology, occupational therapy, physiotherapy, optometry, psychology, orthoptics and services of teachers of the deaf. Families have until their child turns seven to use 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 Better Start, a panel of early intervention service providers has been established. Parents and carers of eligible children are 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 are expected to demonstrate experience in working with children with at least one of the listed disabilities.

The application process for membership of the Panel is on-going.

Information about the application process, including relevant guidelines and application form is available at www.fahcsia.gov.au/betterstart

## More information

For more information about Better Start, please visit www.fahcsia.gov.au/betterstart

Enquiries can also be directed to the Better Start Helpline on
**1800 778 581** or emailed to Better.Start@fahcsia.gov.au