

## **Government funding initiatives:**

### **FahCSIA AutismEarly Intervention Initiative**

#### **Who is eligible?**

Children aged 0-7 years who have been diagnosed with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (including Pervasive Developmental Delay). To be eligible for the early intervention funding package a child must have been seen by an Autism Advisor and deemed eligible to access the program *before their sixth birthday*.

#### **What do you receive?**

- The \$12,000 in funding under the early intervention component can be used until the child's seventh birthday to a maximum of \$6,000 per financial year.
- Up to 35 per cent of a child's early intervention funding may be used to purchase resources, to a maximum of \$2,100 per financial year, or \$4,200 in total
- Resources must be discussed in full with the therapist and the family as being integral to the child's therapy program.
- Funding can be used for assessment, individual therapy, groups, resources and meetings.

#### **How do I access this funding?**

- You must receive a diagnosis of Autistic Spectrum Disorder by your child's paediatrician
- Contact Autism Queensland to make an appointment with an Autism Advisor on 1800 428 847 or (07) 3273 0000. At this appointment the child's needs are discussed, appropriate service providers identified, and the child is registered for the early intervention initiative.
- Please bring your "Letter of Introduction" to your child's appointment to commence using the funding.

- You have the choice as to what services you use the funding for, and whether or not you would like to pay for some services privately if funding runs out

## **FahCSIA Better Start funding Better Start for Children with Disabilities**

This program will be similar to the Helping Children with Autism plan, however children with Cerebral Palsy, Down Syndrome, Fragile X, Hearing impairment or Visual impairment will be eligible. Children may access services from allied health professionals including psychologists, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, audiologists, optometrists and orthoptists.

### **Eligibility criteria:**

- Hearing impairment: children will be eligible if they have a hearing loss of 40 decibels or greater in the better ear, across 4 frequencies (including children with permanent conductive hearing loss and auditory neuropathy)
- Sight impairment: children will be eligible if they have vision of less than or equal to 6/18 or equivalent field loss, in the better eye with correction.
- Deafblindness: diagnosis by a specialist multidisciplinary team which includes an ophthalmological and audiological evaluation (therefore application of a threshold is not necessary).
- Down syndrome: all children with a confirmed diagnosis of Down syndrome, including those with mosaic Down syndrome.
- Fragile X syndrome: all children with a confirmed diagnosis of Fragile X syndrome with full mutation.
- Cerebral palsy: all children with a confirmed diagnosis of cerebral palsy.

## **Carer Payment and Allowance**

Parents and carers of children with a disability may be eligible for Australian Government financial assistance through Carer Payment and Carer Allowance.

You may be eligible for Carer Payment (caring for a child under 16 years) if you provide constant care (greater than 14 hours of additional care beyond that of a typically developing child) for:

- A single child under 16 years of age with a severe disability or a severe medical condition
- 2-4 children under 16 years of age with a disability or medical condition whose combined care needs are significant
- 1-2 children and an adult who each have a disability or medical condition
- Short term or episodic basis care for 3-6 months for short term significant care

Additional eligibility criteria exist (such as income and asset testing), however single parents may receive \$670.90 per fortnight, and couples may receive \$505.70 each per fortnight.

Carer Allowance (caring for a child under 16 years) is a supplementary payment that may be available if you are a parent or carer who provides additional care and attention on a daily basis for a child aged under 16 years with a physical, intellectual or psychiatric disability or medical condition. You may receive either:

- a fortnightly payment of \$110 plus a Health Care Card for the child, or
- a Health Care Card for the child. (*which of these you receive depends on the level of functional disability of the child*)
- If you are receiving a Carer Allowance (caring for a child under 16 years) payment on 1 July each year, you are also paid an annual:
- Child Disability Assistance payment of up to \$1,000 to help you with the costs of caring for a child with a disability, and
- Carer Supplement of up to \$600 for each child in your care who qualifies you for Carer Allowance

Call Centrelink on 13 27 17 or visit their website for further information. (*I recommend all parents/carers apply for this rebate at the outset of treatment. Once you have acquired the form from Centerlink, your therapist can assist you in filling it out and signing off for it*).

## **Other support services**

**Carers Australia** 1800 242 636

[www.carersaustralia.com.au](http://www.carersaustralia.com.au)

**Disability and Community Care Services (Department of Communities, Qld Government)**

1800 177 120

<http://www.communities.qld.gov.au/disability>