



Better Start

supporting families of kids with Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, Fragile X syndrome, eligible hearing and vision impairments including deaf/blindness

What is the Better Start program?

The Better Start program is an Australian government initiative that supports families and their children who have a diagnosis of Down syndrome, Fragile X syndrome, cerebral palsy, moderate or greater vision or hearing impairments, including deaf/blindness.

Children who are eligible for the program can access funding of up to \$12,000 (to a maximum of \$6,000 per financial year) for a range of early intervention services, including:

- Speech therapy
- Occupational therapy
- Psychology
- Audiology
- Physiotherapy
- Orthoptics
- Equipment that is essential to the child's therapy when ordered by an approved provider (up to 35%)

Therapists must be chosen from the Government approved authorised provider panel.

Children **must** be under six years old to be registered, and families will have until the child's seventh birthday to use the early intervention funding.

From 1 July 2011, Carers Victoria will deliver the registration and information service for families wanting to access the Better Start program.

Can I register for the \$12,000 Better Start funding?

1. Is your child under 6 years of age?
2. Does your child have a definitive diagnosis of one of the following?
 - Down syndrome
 - Cerebral palsy
 - Fragile X
 - Moderate or greater vision or hearing impairments
 - Deaf/blindness
3. Are you an Australian citizen or permanent resident?

If you answered YES to all of these questions you are encouraged to register for early intervention funding through the Better Start program.

How do I register?

Contact the Carer Advisory Service on 1800 242 636 or email betterstart@carersvictoria.org.au and ask about the Better Start program.