



# Helping Children with Autism Initiative

## Information Sheet No 2

11<sup>th</sup> July 2008

### Increased access to Early Intervention Services

The following initiative is provided by the Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

While all care has been taken by Autism Victoria to provide accurate and up to date information, this is a new initiative from the government and some areas are still being fine tuned. Please go to the address below for further information on the governments' initiative.

[http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/disabilities/services-help\\_child\\_autism.htm](http://www.facsia.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/disabilities/services-help_child_autism.htm)

### **\$12,000 early intervention support for children 0 - 6years**

Children diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, who are aged between 0 and 6 will be eligible to receive \$6,000 per year for 2 years before they go to primary school. This money is to help those families who are on waiting lists for early intervention services, as well as families who are already accessing early intervention. Parents may choose therapies from psychology, speech or occupational therapy, as well as treatments such as ABA (Applied Behaviour Analysis) and Sensory Integration.

The government wants families to be confident in the services that they choose for their child. To ensure this, only services and organisations that follow best practice guidelines will be authorised to provide services. (You can find these guidelines on the department of health and ageing website.)

For a provider to be on the approved provider panel they need to show that they are autism aware, that therapies they use are specifically tailored to the needs of children with Autism, and that they are providing value for money. The services that can demonstrate this will be called The Autism Spectrum Disorder Early Intervention Panel.

To help families choose which service from the panel is best for their children, there will be 40 new Autism Advisors across Australia. Advisors will be appointed shortly.

At the time of writing this article, the Autism Spectrum Disorder Early Intervention Panel, and the Autism Advisors have not yet been finalised, and families can not yet access this money. Autism Victoria will keep you updated when it does become available via the Autism Victoria Website. [www.autismvictoria.org.au](http://www.autismvictoria.org.au)

In the meantime you can access the 20 services from the New Medicare items for the diagnosis and early intervention treatment for children with autism or any other pervasive developmental disorder. (See information sheet 1 for further information on this.)

Points to Remember:

- Children must be aged between 0 – 6.
- Children must be diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- Children already in Early Intervention can access this payment.
- Children who attend school can not access this funding.
- \$12,000 will be split over 2 years - \$6,000 each year.
- To be eligible to access this funding, services must follow evidence-based best practice guidelines.
- Services must be provided by a multidisciplinary team or a consortium of providers that collectively work in a multidisciplinary model.

**If you have any other questions about Helping Children with Autism, you can call the Helping Children with Autism Enquiry Line: 1800 289 177**

**If you need further help, you can contact the Autism Victoria Infoline: 1300 308 699 or if you live outside Victoria call 03) 9885 0533 or email [info@autismvictoria.org.au](mailto:info@autismvictoria.org.au)**