



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

Dear Parent/Carer,

Important information about your child's Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) and Better Start for Children with Disability (Better Start) funding.

We hope you and your child are well during the Coronavirus pandemic.

In response to the situation, the Australian Government has extended the HCWA and Better Start programs. This extension aims to ensure that families continue to receive support through the challenges that the pandemic has presented.

What this means for you:

Some of the information previously sent to you about your child's HCWA or Better Start funding has changed.

The most important change is that HCWA and Better Start programs will no longer be ceasing on 30 June 2020.

Instead, your child's HCWA or Better Start eligibility will now end when whichever of the following happens first:

- 31 March 2021; OR
- your child turns seven; OR
- all funding has been spent; OR
- your child has an approved National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) plan in place.

It is really important that families seek access to the NDIS as quickly as possible in order to continue to access funded supports.

The process of accessing the NDIS can take time. If you have not already done so, test your child's eligibility now so your child does not miss out on funded services.

You can start the process of testing your child's eligibility for the NDIS, by contacting the Early Childhood Partner in your area. A list of Early Childhood Partners is available on the NDIS website at www.ndis.gov.au/ecej. You can also contact the NDIS National Call Centre on 1800 800 110 for advice.

Also, please visit the [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) information and support section](#) of the NDIS website for the latest information on the response to coronavirus.

GPO Box 9820 Canberra ACT 2601

Email • Facsimile • Telephone 1300 653 227

National Relay Service: TTY: 133 677, Speak and listen: 1300 555 727, Internet relay: www.relayservice.com.au

www.dss.gov.au

What if my child is not eligible for the NDIS?

If your child does not meet the access requirements for the NDIS, you will continue to receive HCWA or Better Start supports until whichever of the following happens first:

- your child has turned seven; OR
- all funding has been spent; OR
- 31 March 2021.

From 1 April 2021, if your child is not eligible for the NDIS, they may be eligible for the Australian Government Continuity of Support arrangement (CoS). This is intended to support clients of existing Commonwealth programs to receive similar funded services and supports to those under HCWA or Better Start. Until then, your child will be supported through HCWA or Better Start, as long as they remain eligible.

Please be aware that the information on the Department of Social Service's website will be updated in the coming days.

If you have any questions, contact the Department of Social Services' Early Intervention Helpdesk on 1800 778 581 or email early.intervention@dss.gov.au.

Yours sincerely



Sarah Hawke
Acting Branch Manager
Participant Outcomes Branch
10 June 2020