



Updated April 2012

## Helping Children with Autism

### What is it?

The Australian Government has committed to funding to address the need for services for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), their families and carers.

All initiatives of the Helping Children With Autism (HCWA) strategy include support for parents, families, carers, children from Indigenous backgrounds and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds and those living in rural and remote areas.

The package includes:

- Autism Advisors
- Funding for an Early Intervention Service
- PlayConnect Playgroups\*
- Early Days family workshops\*
- An ASD website

\* Access to PlayConnect Playgroups and Early Days workshops is also available to children with ASD like symptoms

### Who is eligible?

To be eligible for the Early Intervention Service children must satisfy each of the eligibility criteria including:

1. Age
  - Eligible children are those aged 0-6 years who have been diagnosed in Australia with an ASD.
  - A child must have been seen by an Autism Advisor and deemed eligible to access the service before their sixth birthday.
  - Funding of up to \$12,000 (maximum of \$6,000 per financial year) can be accessed until the child's seventh birthday.
2. Diagnosis

The Autism Advisor must sight a written conclusive diagnosis made by or through any one of the following:

- the new Medicare items through the HCWA strategy,
- a State/Territory Government or equivalent multidisciplinary assessment service,
- a private multidisciplinary team,
- a Paediatrician, or
- a Psychiatrist.

A multidisciplinary assessment team must consist of a psychologist and speech therapist but may also include an occupational therapist. An acceptable diagnosis is one of the following as listed in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Health Disorders (DSM) IV under Pervasive Developmental Disorders:

- Autistic Disorder,
- Asperger's Disorder/Syndrome,
- Rett's Disorder,
- Childhood Disintegrative Disorder, or
- Pervasive Developmental Disorder – Not Otherwise Specified (PDD-NOS)

### 3. Residential eligibility

Residential eligibility for access to funding is the same as that for Carer Allowance (Child). That is, both the carer and the child being cared for must be:

- Australian residents - living in Australia on a permanent basis and either:
  - Australian citizens, or
  - holders of permanent resident visas, or
  - holders of Special Category Visas.

### How do I apply?

Following diagnosis, you can contact an Autism Advisor who will assist you in applying. In the ACT, the Autism Advisor service is [Autism Aspersers ACT Inc](#) who can be contacted on (02) 6176 0515.

### Who runs it?

The Australian Government Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs (FaHCSIA).

### Contact

For more information about the HCWA package:

- Call the ASD Support Helpdesk on 1800 778 581 or
- email [ASD.Support@fahcsia.gov.au](mailto:ASD.Support@fahcsia.gov.au)

To access a 1800 FaHCSIA number:

- TTY users - phone 1800 555 677 then ask for the 1800 toll-free number you wish to contact
- Speak and Listen (speech-to-speech relay) users - phone 1800 555 727 then ask for the 1800 toll-free number you wish to contact
- Internet relay users - visit the [National Relay Service website](#) and ask for the 1800 toll-free number you wish to contact.

Autism Aspersers ACT Inc.

Ph: (02) 6176 0515

Web: [Autism Aspersers ACT Inc.](#)