

Media Release



30 June 2011

Carers Australia is the recognised national voice of Australian carers. Our members are the carers associations in each state and territory. We have no political affiliation. We work with all parties to achieve better outcomes for all carers.

Better Start for children with disability registration service begins!

From 1 July Carers Australia begins its Registration and Information service for the *Better Start for Children with Disability* initiative funded by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services, and Indigenous Affairs. Through the state and territory Carer Associations this service will be delivered at 23 sites across Australia, reaching urban, regional and remote families. Qualified advisors will assist families to access early intervention services for their child. To find out more go to www.betterstart.net.au, or call 1800 242 636 to speak to a registration and information advisor.

Carers Australia President, Tim Moore welcomes the opportunity to deliver such an important national service for children with a disability which will assist in their better transition to school.

Carers Australia has successfully managed the National Carer Counselling Program and Carer Advisory Service for over a decade. This success is due to the strong collaboration between Carers Australia and the state and territory Carer Associations.

Tim Moore says, 'Carers Australia and its network of state and territory carer associations have a proven capacity to deliver services to caring families nationally, and are committed to ensuring the same level of quality to families eligible to access Better Start funding.'

The Better Start Registration and Information Service has been developed by Carers Australia and will assist parents and carers by informing them about the Better Start initiative, registration and early intervention services. Parents and carers of children with a disability will be able to speak with a qualified advisor about the initiative and its services.

Tim Moore said, 'that as part of delivering a better practice registration and information service we have developed strong relationships with the national peak bodies representing the eligible disabilities. Carers Australia will continue to work closely with these groups to ensure that families receive the best possible advice for their child.'

The Better Start for Children with Disability initiative provides funding for early intervention services. To access Better Start children with an eligible diagnosis must be registered before they turn six years old.

Children are eligible for Better Start if diagnosed with one of the following disabilities:

- Cerebral Palsy
- Deafblindness
- Down Syndrome, including mosaic Down syndrome
- Fragile x Syndrome with full mutation
- Hearing impairment

- Vision Impairment

Thresholds apply to these disabilities which have been determined by the Department of Families, Housing, Community Services and Indigenous Affairs.

Tim Moore said, 'Carers Australia recognises that families with children with other conditions not covered by the program often face similar challenges and will continue to work with families, the Department and government to consider ways that they too might be assisted.'

Media Inquiries contact Jane Brownbill on (02) 6122 9906 or 0429 940 444