

Your Literally Ausome Guide to Accessing Financial Assistance

Medicare Australia

Your General Practitioner can provide your child with:

- Helping Children with Autism Increased Access To Diagnosis plan which provides your child with four appointments for private diagnosis referred by a Paediatrician or Psychiatrist to a Psychologist or Speech Therapist¹ to assist you in covering the fees for assessments.

Note: This plan only provides you with four appointments. You may have to use your CDM or MHCP (see below) as part of your assessments so you are able to claim via Medicare.

- The Chronic Disease Management Plan (CDM) - Previously called Enhanced Primary Care plan (EPC). This provides your child with five sessions per calendar year with an Allied Health Professional².
- The Better Access to Mental Health Plan - also known as the Also known as Mental Health Care Plan (MHCP). This plan provides your child with ten sessions of individual therapy per calendar year with a Psychologist, OT or social worker. Your referral will initially be for six sessions and an additional four sessions following a review with your GP.
- The Better Access to Mental Health Plan Group, also known as the Mental Health Group Care Plan, provides you with ten Group Sessions per calendar year of therapy with a Psychologist, Occupational Therapist or social worker.

Note: This plan is also available for anybody (people on the spectrum, parents, siblings, carers etc.) who feel that their overall wellbeing and mental health is at risk.

Your Paediatrician can provide your child with:

- Helping Children With Autism Treatment Plan (also known as an item 135) and can only be provided following your child's Autism diagnosis. This provides your child with 20 sessions with any Allied Health Professional for treatment and support. This plan can only be used once in the child's lifetime and they must be provided by their 13th birthday and used by their 15th birthday.

For more information on any of the above plans or to learn about plans for children over the age of 13, contact Medicare on 13 20 11 or visit www.medicareaustralia.gov.au.

¹ You can also access this plan to see Occupational Therapist, Audiologist, Optometrist, Orthopedist and/or Physiotherapists, however these health professionals are not required for the assessment or diagnosis for Autism Spectrum Disorder.

² Allied Health Professionals: Aboriginal Health Workers, Audiologists, Chiropractors, Diabetes Educators, Dieticians, Exercise Physiologists, Mental Health Nurses, Occupational Therapists, Osteopaths, Physiotherapists, Podiatrists, Occupational Therapists, Psychologists and Speech Pathologists.

National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS)

- If your child has received an Autism diagnosis prior to their seventh birthday, they are eligible to be provided access to The Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI). If your child is older than seven, they are still eligible for NDIS, they will not be placed in the Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) category. Call 1800 800 110 to register your child.
- Forms will be mailed to you to complete and return in 28 days. The letter you receive with these access forms will ask you to complete it all and return it in 28 days OR provide supporting evidence of your child's diagnosis via email. I recommend emailing the National Access Team directly and attaching ALL reports for their consideration.
- Your request for access will be processed. You will be notified if you're required to provide any additional documentation for consideration. Approval can take as little as a few weeks to months.
- Once approved, a representative from your local NDIS office will contact you to make a planning meeting with a Local Area Consultant (LAC).
- Once your appointment with your LAC is made, prepare for this meeting by considering the support services your child will require (i.e. Psychology for emotional regulation, social skills groups etc) and assign goals (short and medium-term) for each therapy. Your LAC will assist you with this at your planning meeting.
- Your LAC will contact you to advise when your plan has been approved by the NDIA and will advise you of the funds allocated across categories. Your plan is approved at this point unless you request to have it reviewed.

For further information on the NDIS, visit <https://www.ndis.gov.au>

You can find a comprehensive guide on the Literally Ausome website, at:

<http://www.literallyausome.com/accessing-the-ndis-for-your-autistic-dependents/>

Centrelink - Financial Assistance for Families

Once your child receives an Autism diagnosis, you can apply for Carers Allowance and/or Carers Payment (fortnightly payments for carers). A Health Care Card is also provided which provides the cardholder (i.e. your child) with reduced rates at your General Practitioners, Paediatrician and Pharmacy.

- Your Paediatrician or Psychologist is required to fill this in. Print out the appropriate form/s (links below) and take this to your Paediatrician's appointment or ask your Psychologist if they are able to assist you with this.

For more information on these payments including eligibility criteria and forms to download to be completed, visit:

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/carer-allowance>

<https://www.humanservices.gov.au/individuals/services/centrelink/carer-payment>