26 June 2019

Minister for the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), Stuart Robert, today announced a plan to resolve delays and backlogs for children with disability in accessing Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) supports through the NDIS.

Early intervention aims to reduce the impact of a child's impairment on their functional capacity by providing support at the earliest possible stage. The approach builds on the strengths and capacity of the family and promotes increased inclusion and participation in a child's everyday environments.

The six-month plan will be implemented by the National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA). The key initiatives include:

- Working with ECEI Partners to secure additional resources to ensure children receive early childhood supports in a timelier manner.
- For those children who have been found eligible for the NDIS, but who are likely to experience a wait time of greater than 50 days between an access decision and getting a plan, the NDIA will provide a standardised interim plan for six months. These interim plans will be replaced by a full NDIS plan no later than six months after being issued.
    - For new participants who are not categorised as complex and who are not transferring from an existing Commonwealth, state or territory disability program—they will be given a standardised interim plan for $10,000.
    - For those who are transferring from an existing Commonwealth, state or territory disability program their interim NDIS plan and funding package will reflect their existing support levels. If, however, that amount is lower than $10,000— they will also receive the $10,000 standardised interim plan for up to six months.
- For participants with complex support needs, they will immediately be streamed to an NDIA Early Childhood specialist to develop their plan and appropriate funding package.

The NDIA will also provide additional support to ECEI Partners in areas experiencing delays by redirecting available NDIA ECEI planners to assist with planning activities.

Minister Robert said the NDIS promotes family decision-making and ensures the values and needs of the whole family are considered to support the child's development.

'The NDIS has the potential to be a game-changer for families and children with significant and permanent disability or developmental delay to meet their goals and engage in the community,' Minister Robert said.

'I know this is already the case for many children in Australia. But I also know that unnecessarily complex processes have the potential to discourage families who are already doing so much for their children.

‘As the Minister for the NDIS, I have been working with the NDIA to identify what more can be done to reduce the backlogs that are currently being experienced by families in some locations.’

As at 31 March 2019, there were around 280,000 participants supported by the NDIS, more than 85,000 of whom have never had any state or federal disability supports. There were more than 11,500 children aged 0-6, receiving supports through the ECEI approach.

Find out more in our frequently asked questions (16KB) or read the Minister's media release (external).

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