



Australian Government
Department of Social Services

MC15-015074

Mr Bob Buckley
cnvnr@a4.org.au

Dear Mr Buckley

Thank you for your email of 5 November 2015 to the Minister for Social Services, the Hon Christian Porter MP, regarding Autism and the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS). The Minister has asked me to reply to you on his behalf.

I acknowledge the challenges faced by parents of children and teenagers with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). I would like to assure you that the Australian Government is working to improve services for children and adolescents with ASD.

Under the Australian Government's Helping Children with Autism (HCWA) programme, early intervention funding is available to families for therapies to help address issues such as communication, socialisation and challenging behaviours. Research shows that providing support during the earliest years of childhood is linked with improved outcomes for children with disability. The early childhood years lay the foundation for all future development. Early intervention can achieve significant improvement in life outcomes for the child and family, and improve the child's ability to make the transition into a mainstream education setting.

The Raising Children Network website is funded, as a component of HCWA, to provide ASD-specific information, online resources and interactive functions to support parents, carers and professionals. The website informs families and carers about services available for their children. It also provides information that helps families and carers to cope with pressures they face in raising their children and helps to maximise the day-to-day functioning of the family.

The NDIS provides funding for long-term, individualised care and support that is reasonable and necessary to meet the needs of people with permanent disability, where a person's disability significantly affects their communication, mobility, self-care or self-management.

The scheme takes a lifelong approach to providing care and support. This means that an individual's plan looks not only at their immediate needs but also across the course of their life. Taking a lifelong approach also means that the scheme focuses on early intervention where there is good evidence that intervening early will substantially improve functioning or delay or lessen a decline in functioning.

The National Disability Insurance Agency (NDIA) is working closely with state and territory governments, service providers, the public and people with disability, their families and their carers in trial sites to make sure they are well supported during the development of the scheme.

Thank you again for writing.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'James Kemp'.

James Kemp
A/g Branch Manager
Disability and employment Sector Reform

16 December 2015