

TO THE HONOURABLE THE SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF  
THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

This petition of certain concerned citizens of Australia

draws to the attention of the House:

The Better Start for Children with Disability (Better Start) Initiative urgently requires reform. The Better Start policy excludes thousands of Australian children with developmental disabilities in need of early intervention services. These children have comparable early intervention needs and similar developmental disabilities as those with eligible conditions, and many are able to prove the beneficial impact of such treatment.

The inequalities of Better Start must be removed to allow all Australian children with developmental disabilities access to the support they need in the critical early years of development.

Your petitioners request that the House take all necessary steps to:

Act urgently and effectively to amend the Better Start for Children with Disability policy so that:

- there is no longer inequality of access to effective treatment and early intervention for Australian children with developmental disabilities;
- the current eligibility criteria is revised and replaced with a needs-based model whereby eligibility is determined by the functional aspects of the child's disability, the level of impairment and how the impairment affects the child.