

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES 2009-10**

Outcome/Agency 2

DEEWR Question No. **EW711_10**

Senator Fielding asked on 22 October 2009, EEWHR Hansard page 42

Question

Free assessments for learning difficulties

Senator FIELDING—..... Has the department done any work on looking at what it would cost the government to offer every child at a young age a free assessment at one of these assessment centres?

Ms Paul—No, I do not believe we have done that work.

Senator FIELDING—Is there a chance of that being looked at all, just as a general—

Ms Paul—We could take it on notice to see if we can find anything out. Why don't we take it on notice and see what there is to say?

Answer

The Department has not done any work on the cost of providing every child a free learning assessment at a private or government assessment centre.

The Department has sourced the following input from the Department of Health and Ageing (DoHA). Should any further details be required, they should be sought directly from DoHA.

Medicare provides rebates to patients for clinically relevant services rendered by an appropriate health practitioner. Medicare does not provide a rebate for the assessment of a child's learning disability. However, the following health assessments are available for Medicare eligible people with an intellectual disability; for four year old children; and for children who may have a pervasive development disorder.

- The Medicare Benefits Schedule (MBS) health assessment (item 718) for people with an intellectual disability provides a structured clinical framework for medical practitioners to comprehensively assess the physical, psychological and social function of patients with an intellectual disability and to identify any medical intervention and preventive health care required. Medicare support for this assessment is available annually.
- The MBS Healthy Kids Check (items 709 and 711) is to ensure every four year old child in Australia has a basic health check to see if they are healthy, fit and ready to learn when they start school. The Healthy Kids Check promotes early detection of lifestyle risk factors, delayed development and illness, and provides the opportunity to introduce guidance for healthy lifestyles and early intervention strategies. The Healthy Kids Check may be delivered in conjunction with the four year old immunisation. Medicare support for this Check is available only once.