



Big support boost for kids with disability

FAMILIES caring for disabled children have won access to up to \$30,000 a year in the May Budget to help with early intervention and support.

The \$130 million boost to early intervention will include new support for autism and deliver on an election pledge to offer a \$6000-a-year Better Start for Disability payment from July.

News Limited can reveal that 9000 extra families will now be able to secure up to \$30,000 a year in assistance.

The Better Start for Children with a Disability Payment will help eligible children with cerebral palsy, Down syndrome, hearing and vision loss, deafness and blindness.

The total support will now include up to \$19,290 a year in carer payments, \$2900 in carer allowance, \$1200 in carer supplement and \$1000 carer disability assistance payments plus the new Better Start for Children with a Disability payment of up to \$12,000, capped at \$6000 a year.

Programs for autism

will be expanded after more children registered for the Helping Children with Autism package offered by previous budgets.

The scheme which was first launched in 2008 provides eligible children with up to \$12,000 to secure early intervention including speech pathology, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and psychology services.

While 9000 children were expected to benefit, more than 12,000 families have now secured support with the Government

boosting funding by \$30 million for this program to help meet the cost.

But an angry backlash from mothers over Budget plans to means-test the childcare rebate has prompted the Government to dump the proposal.

News Limited revealed last week that options on the table were a means test on income between \$150,000 to \$200,000 or a work test to limit stay-at-home mums claiming the 50 per cent rebate.