

# Talking Matters

[www.talkingmatters.com.au](http://www.talkingmatters.com.au) Ph: 8255 7137  
*Helping your child to reach their potential*



## Claiming Medicare rebates for children diagnosed with an Autism Spectrum Disorder

*Children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, including Autism, Asperger's Syndrome, Rhett's Syndrome and Childhood Disintegrated Disorder may be eligible to claim Medicare rebates for some therapy sessions with speech pathologists, occupational therapist and psychologists.*

Rebates are available for children under the age of 13 years. Each child is entitled to 20 sessions in total, across all therapy areas. The total of 20 sessions is for the life of the child (not per year). Medicare rebates and private health fund rebates cannot both be claimed for the same session. Families should investigate which option is most beneficial.

To be eligible to claim the sessions from Medicare:

1. Your child must be under the management of a paediatrician or child psychiatrist. If your child is not currently seeing a paediatrician or child psychiatrist, you will need to ask your GP to make a referral.
2. The paediatrician or psychiatrist must agree that your child has Autism Spectrum Disorder. If your diagnosis was carried out by another professional take copies of your diagnostic reports to your appointment.
3. If your paediatrician or psychiatrist agrees, they can prepare a care plan that includes speech pathology, occupational therapy or psychology services. They will then lodge a claim with Medicare that includes the appropriate item number, so Medicare knows that your child has Autism Spectrum Disorder and is eligible for the therapy rebates.
4. The paediatrician should prepare a treatment plan for your child, which includes the appropriate therapy services. They can allocate up to 10 therapy sessions, per profession, at one time. There is no particular form that needs to be completed. The paediatrician can simply indicate the need for services in a letter to the appropriate service.
5. Following the 10 therapy sessions, your therapist can provide a written report to your paediatrician, who will consider whether to order a further series of sessions up to a total of 20, across all therapy areas.
6. You cannot claim your rebates for sessions until the paediatrician has sent his claim to Medicare with the appropriate item number. If you wish to check to see whether your child is eligible, and the item number has been lodged, you can call Medicare on 132011.
7. In order to claim for speech pathology services, your speech pathologist must be registered with Medicare and be a practising member of Speech Pathology Australia as well as have experience in the area of working with children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. All speech pathologists at Talking Matters meet these criteria.



Parents can gain more information about this by contacting the Helping Children with Autism enquiry line on 1800 289 177, <http://www.health.gov.au/autism>, or by contacting Autism SA on 1300 288 476.