

14 January 2020

Dear Doctor,

**Re: STAR4Kids Program Update**

The STAR4Kids program provides free psychological therapies to children aged 3-12 years with, or at risk of, mild to moderate mental illness.

Since program commencement in July 2017, **1866** children across South Western Sydney have been supported through the program.

In January 2019, the funding allocation for the program was doubled.

Clients Referred	Session Hours Delivered
1866	10,369

As part of a regular review of the program, eligibility has been refined to children who experience barriers to accessing the [Better Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and General Practitioners through the MBS \(Better Access\) initiative](#) through Medicare.

**STAR4Kids Eligibility criteria:** Children aged 3-12 years with, or at risk of, developing mild to moderate mental illness, including depressive, anxiety or stress disorders, with barriers to accessing Better Access (Medicare).

**STAR4Kids Exclusion criteria:**

- Children that do not experience barriers to accessing Better Access (Medicare).
- Children with a diagnosed behavioral or neurodevelopmental disorder, including Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), unless the main presenting concern is the child's mental health problem.

*Barriers to accessing Better Access may include:*

- Financial barriers:
  - Unable to engage bulk billing/Medicare registered mental health professional; Or
  - Unable to afford gap payment.
- 10 sessions provided under Better Access per calendar year is not expected to meet child's mental health needs.

When referring children for psychological therapies, please first consider the Better Access Initiative. If the family experiences barriers to accessing Better Access and the child has, or is at risk of, mild to moderate mental illness, please then consider the STAR4Kids program.

For children experiencing more severe mental illness or that are high risk, please refer to South Western Sydney Local Health Districts, Infant Child Adolescent Mental Health Service (ICAMHS), contact the Mental Health Access Line on **1800 011 511**.

For more information about the STAR4Kids program and other SWSPHN commissioned mental health services, or to access referral forms, visit: <https://www.swsphn.com.au/mentalhealth>

We thank you for your support.

Kind Regards,  
South Western Sydney PHN Mental Health Team  
Phone: 1300 797 746