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2010-11 Budget funds Autism Coordinator to assist families

The 2010–11 ACT Budget will provide further support to families who have a child with autism or suspected autism, as well as assistance to enable families to make the most of existing services.

Minister for Children and Young People, Joy Burch, announced today the ACT Government will provide \$425,000 over four years to employ a community-based family support coordinator.

The coordinator will work closely with families as they come to terms with the diagnosis, navigate the service system and plan for the future during a time when families need significant levels of support and information.

Ms Burch said children with autism may be accessing a number of different services and it was important to ensure services were coordinated and working toward a common goal.

“The coordinator will work with families and service providers to develop an integrated plan,” Ms Burch said.

“At transition stages in a person’s life, such as starting school, leaving school or leaving home, new plans and supports will need to be developed.”

Ms Burch said the coordinator would also be able to link families together so that they were able to support each other and share information and ideas.

“Families can find the range of services confusing and need information to help them decide what is best for their situation. At the time of diagnosis families can become anxious to ensure that their child is receiving the best support possible,” Ms Burch said.

The ACT Government already provides a range of services for people with autism including diagnostic services, therapy intervention, respite services, and autism-specific education and development support.

There are also services funded through the Commonwealth Government’s ‘Helping Children with Autism’ package and in the private sector.

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