



Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children

Disability Living Allowance is a tax free benefit payable to people aged from birth up to 65 who need help looking after themselves and/or find it difficult to walk or get around because of an illness or disability. Claims for a child under 16 are only paid when the child's disability means they have substantial needs above those of an average child of the same age.

Important points for children's claims

- There are many different illnesses, conditions or disabilities that mean a child can qualify, if you aren't sure then seek advice.
- It is not affected by the family's income or savings
- It does not reduce other social security benefits. In fact getting DLA may entitle a family to extra Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance or Tax Credits, Housing and Council Tax Benefit or mean that you qualify for them for the first time.
- The person caring for the disabled child may be able to claim Carer's Allowance for looking after them.
- If the child goes into hospital or residential school the DLA payment for care or mobility may stop or be reduced but it should be reinstated if they return home even if it is only for a weekend.
- They must have needed extra care or had problems with their mobility for at least three months to qualify.

- DLA is normally paid to the main carer of the disabled child and is intended to meet the extra costs of the child's disability.
- Once the child reaches 16 the benefit can be paid to them instead of you, if they are able to manage their own finances. You will be contacted about this shortly before their sixteenth birthday.
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is paid in two parts – the mobility component and the care component. Either or both of these payments can be claimed.

Chris is 7. He has cerebral palsy. He needs help to walk wash, dress and get around the house and his school. He gets highest mobility and middle care DLA. His parents use his mobility component to pay for a motability car.

The Care Component

The care component is paid at three rates depending on the level and type of additional care needed. A child must have needed the extra help for at least 3 months to qualify and expect to need that help for a further 6 months.

Highest Rate - £77.45 per week

To qualify for the highest rate the child must need additional help during the day and night with things such as:

- Getting in and out of bed
- Playing and learning
- Going to the toilet

- Eating and drinking
- Washing and bathing
- Taking medicines
- Extra help at school
- Climbing Stairs
- Dressing and undressing
- Turning over in bed
- Communicating with other people and learning social skills

And/or

- They may need someone with them to stop them hurting themselves or other people, perhaps because of behavioural difficulties.
- They suffer from fits or blackouts, perhaps because of epilepsy or a similar condition and could injure themselves when these occur.
- They are unaware of dangers around them and need protecting so that they don't suffer an accident.

Remember

The child must have additional care needs above those of an average child of the same age.

Middle Rate - £51.85 per week

A child will qualify for the middle rate if they require the kind of care described above during the day or night but not both. This means extra help with personal care such as bathing, dressing or feeding. It can also mean extra supervision to make sure the child doesn't hurt themselves or other people or if they have problems with their behaviour or development.

Lower Rate - £20.55 per week

If the child doesn't need as much help as described above but needs help for around an hour a day, perhaps with some extra support at school or getting up in the mornings and going to bed at night, they may **qualify** for the lowest rate.

Louise is 11 yrs old, she has Downs Syndrome. She needs supervision to keep her safe when out of doors and extra support at school. She lives with her grandparents. She gets the lower rate of mobility and lowest care component of DLA.

Children who are terminally ill

There are special rules that apply to children and babies who may not have longer than 6 months to live because of an illness. Getting paid under these special rules means the child automatically gets the highest care component whether or not they need any additional help, plus they do not need to have required help for the last three months, so a baby can claim DLA from birth. Claims are also dealt with much more quickly.

The Mobility Component

The mobility component can be claimed from the age of 3 if the child has had difficulty in walking for at least 3 months. The 3 month qualifying period can be the 3 months prior to the child's third birthday.

Higher rate - £46.75 per week – from age 3

This is payable if the child has difficulties with walking such as:

- Their walking is slow, difficult or painful – due to something such as partial paralysis or needing splints.
- The effort of walking could be a serious risk to their health – if they have for example a serious heart complaint and can only walk short distances out of doors.
- Walking makes them breathless or very tired after only a short distance – for example because of severe asthma or a lung condition.
- They are deaf and blind – they should qualify automatically.

- They are unable to walk at all – if they use a wheelchair, or are confined to bed they can qualify if you can show they will be able to go out, even if it is only once a year.
- If they are registered blind **and** their visual acuity or field of vision is below certain levels they will qualify for the higher rate.
- They may also be entitled to the higher rate mobility component if they are severely mentally impaired with behavioural problems and also receive the highest care component of DLA.

William has Asperger's Syndrome and behavioural problems. He needs watching over day and night to make sure he is safe and to stop him running into the road when out of doors. He gets the higher mobility and highest care components of DLA

The lower rate - £17.75 per week from age 5

This is payable if the child needs someone with them when they are outdoors to make sure they are safe, such as:

- They have impaired hearing or are partially sighted and need guidance to walk out of doors safely.
- They have little road sense and could be at risk out of doors. This might be children with learning disabilities or those on the autistic spectrum.
- They have mental health problems and find it difficult to deal with crowds, for example if they get anxious and panicky.

How to claim DLA

You can obtain an application form by telephoning free on 0800 882200 (text phone 0800 243355) between 8.30am and 6.30pm Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 1.00pm Saturdays. You can also go to www.direct.gov.uk. The DLA form for a child is called

the DLA1CH Child. They are also available from local Jobcentre plus offices.

If you are refused DLA

If the child is refused DLA or only awarded a lower rate you can ask for the decision to be looked at again. If they are still refused and you disagree with the decision you can appeal to an independent tribunal. Don't be put off if they are turned down at first, ask for advice to help you challenge the decision.

Olivia is 4. She suffers from sickle cell disease. She gets very tired easily and needs extra help and supervision at nursery, with dressing, playing and taking her medication. She gets the lowest care component of DLA

If you need further advice on claiming Disability Living Allowance for children you can find out where your nearest advice centre is located by contacting Nottinghamshire County Council on the contact details provided below or visit our benefit advice pages at www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/benefitsadvice

Contact information:

Phone: 0300 500 80 80
Monday to Friday: 8am to 8pm
Saturday: 8am to 12 noon

Email: enquiries@nottscc.gov.uk
Website: www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk
Minicom: 01623 434993

Phone 0300 500 80 80 if you need the information in a different language or format.