

Claiming Disability Living Allowance for children

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is the main benefit for children with a condition or disability. Any ill or disabled child may qualify. It helps to meet the extra costs that you might have as a result of your child's disability. DLA is made up of two parts.

A care component

For a child who need extra attention or supervision. This can be paid from the age of three months or from birth if the child is terminally ill. This funding is paid at one of three rates depending on the extra care needed for that individual child.

When they consider whether your child qualifies, the DLA unit will compare your child's needs with those of a child of the same age who has no disabilities. If your child needs substantially more attention— either because the care they need is different, or takes longer, or is needed more frequently – then your child should qualify.

A Mobility component

For children who need help with getting around, this is paid at one or two rates depending on the nature of the mobility problems.

Higher rate– Can be paid from age three years and is for those with severe walking difficulties, those who are deaf blind or severely visually impaired and some children with severe behavioural problems.

Lower rate– For children who need extra guidance or supervision out of doors and can be paid from age five.

Can I get both components?

You can depending on the circumstances of your child. DLA is not means-tested so it does not matter what income or savings you have. Any decision to award DLA will be based solely on your child's condition and how this impacts of their need for help with personal care and/or getting around.

Do I need a diagnosis?

You **can** DLA even if your child **does not** have a diagnosis– it is sufficient that their need for extra care or supervision is caused by a physical or mental condition, even if that condition has not yet been formally diagnosed.

Is my child's condition severe enough to get DLA?

DLA is paid at different rates depending on how much extra help a child needs with their personal care, or getting around.

While severely disabled children may get the highest rates of DLA, a child with less severe needs may still qualify for DLA at lower rates. For example, needing extra care during the night for as little as 20 minutes could mean your child qualifies for DLA.

If you are in any doubt as to whether your child will qualify for DLA or not, **make a claim.**

Extra help because your child gets DLA

If your child is in receipt of DLA your childcare provider can claim Disability Access Funding (DAF) to support your child and make reasonable adjustments to the environment.

Getting DLA can help you qualify for extra amounts of means-tested benefits and tax credits. Depending on the rate of DLA awarded, it can also help you to qualify for other benefits, such as carers allowance. If you are getting universal credit rather than child tax credit, make sure that you tell the office paying you universal credit about any DLA award or increase to the highest rate care component.

If your getting Child Tax Credit and your child is awarded DLA (or if an existing DLA is increased to the highest rate for personal care), make sure you tell the tax credits office within one month of getting the DLA decision. So long as you do this, any extra tax credits should be backdated in line with the DLA award.

For more information about these and other benefits, including how to claim them, please visit our benefits pages. For a full list of benefits you may be entitled to if you have a child, please visit the Disability Rights UK website.

Special rules

If your child has a terminal illness and is not expected to live for more than six months, you can claim under a FastTrack procedure known as the special rules, and DLA can be paid straight away.

There are also specific rules for some kidney patients who need renal dialysis. The qualify your child must have this treatment regularly for two or more sessions a week.

Claiming DLA

There is a specific form that is used for claiming DLA for a child, called DLA1A Child. This form is different to the one used by adults aged 16 and above, so make sure you are given the right form to fill in.

You can call and ask for a form DLA1A.

Telephone: 0800 121 4600
Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm

If you return the completed form within six weeks, your child's award can be backdate to the day you asked for the form.

You can download a Disability Living Allowance claim pack at www.gov.uk

Get help with the form

The form can be off-putting to complete but it is important that you complete all the relevant sections.

Contact Mencap for support and guidance on completing the DLA1A Child form, you can book an appointment and receive guidance on all aspects of benefits and support your child may be eligible for.



If your child already gets DLA and they need more help

If your child already gets DLA but their circumstances have changed and now need more help, it may be possible to get their award increased. You can contact the DLA office and ask them to look at your child's award again.

It is helpful to gather evidence from any

professions involved to back up your claim. If their needs have changed and you ask for their DLA to be looked at again, there is a risk their award could go down rather than up, so it is always best to get advice from a Citizens Advice Bureau or local welfare rights service.

What if I'm turned down?

Please don't be disheartened. If your child is refused DLA or awarded at a lower rate than you expected, it can be worth challenging the decision. To back up your challenge, you can send in additional information from professionals involved in your child's care. There are two possible stages to challenging a decision.

First you can ask for the decision to be looked at again. This is known as a reconsideration request.

Then, you can appeal if you're not happy with the outcome of a reconsideration decision.

You can contact Mencap for support and guidance during this appeal process.



Further information on DLA

- **Download your free DLA guidance from Cerebra.org.uk**
- **Mencap.org.uk**
- **www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children/how-to-claim**
- **ww.disabilityrightsuk.org/how-claim-dla**
- **Contact Helpline 08088083555**

Information correct at the date of press