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# Disability Living Allowance for Children



# What is Disability Living Allowance?

Disability Living Allowance is tax-free cash help towards extra costs your disabled child may face. Your child can get it if:

- they have a physical or mental disability, or both (including developmental disorders or learning difficulties); and
- their disability is severe enough for them to need help with personal care or they have walking difficulties (or both).

Your child may get either a care component or a mobility component of Disability Living Allowance – or both of these.

This leaflet is about Disability Living Allowance for children aged under 16. If your child is aged 16 or over, they can claim as an adult. See our leaflet '**Disability Living Allowance**'.

Disability Living Allowance for your child is not affected by any income or savings your family may have and you do not have to have paid any National Insurance contributions.

Your child will not usually need a medical examination and your child's disability does not need to have been given a specific diagnosis, but you can send more information with your claim. This could be a report from your child's health visitor or a doctor, or a statement of special educational needs or something like this.

# Can my child get it?

## Care component of Disability Living Allowance

To get the care component of Disability Living Allowance your child must:

- have needed help with personal care because of their disability for at least three months; and
- be likely to go on needing this help for at least another six months.

Your child must need a lot more help or supervision than other children of the same age.

'Help with personal care' means that your child needs help with things such as:

- washing (and getting in or out of the bath or shower);
- dressing;
- eating;
- getting to and using the toilet (or using nappies at an age when he or she should be potty trained);
- communicating with other people; or
- settling in bed.

It may also mean that your child needs someone to supervise them so they do not put themselves or other people in substantial danger. This could mean help from someone to:

- keep an eye on their medical condition or diet (for example, things like help with therapy or medication);
- help them to communicate (because they are deaf or blind or some other condition means they have difficulty communicating); or
- protect them from danger that they may not know is there.

Your child may need help with personal care because they:

- have difficulty moving their arms or legs smoothly, or have no control over them;
- have problems with their behaviour or development; or
- have learning difficulties and need encouragement to communicate;

or something like this.

## Rates of care component

There are three rates of Disability Living Allowance care component.

### Lowest rate

Your child may be able to get this if they need help with personal care for some of the day.

### Middle rate

Your child may be able to get this if they need:

- help with personal care or supervision frequently throughout the day only;
- help with personal care or supervision during the
- night only; or
- someone with them when they are on dialysis.

### Highest rate

Your child may be able to get this if they need help with personal care or supervision throughout the day and also during the night.

### Special rules

We have arrangements called special rules to help children who are terminally ill (children who have a progressive disease and are not reasonably expected to live for more than another six

months). The special rules are to make sure children get their benefit as soon as possible. These children can qualify immediately for the highest rate of care component. You should claim straight away.

## **Mobility component of Disability Living Allowance**

To get the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance your child must:

- be unable, or virtually unable, to walk because of their
- physical disability; or
- need guidance or supervision from another person when walking outside in unfamiliar places because of their physical or mental disability.

They must also have had these walking difficulties for at least three months and be likely to have them for at least another six months.

## **Rates of mobility component**

There are two rates of Disability Living Allowance mobility component.

### **Lower rate**

Your child may be able to get this if they are aged five or over and can walk, but need guidance or supervision from another person when they are walking outside in unfamiliar places. This is to avoid danger to the child or other people.

## **This may be because they:**

- have problems with their behaviour;
- are blind or deaf;
- have a speech and language disorder; or
- need someone to keep a close eye on their condition;

or something like this.

## **Higher rate**

Your child may be able to get this if they are aged three or over and any of the following apply, even when wearing or using any aid or equipment they normally use (for example, a false leg).

- They cannot walk at all.
- They can only walk a short distance without severe discomfort.
- The effort of walking could threaten their life or seriously affect their health.
- They are both 100% blind and 80% deaf and need someone with them when outdoors.
- They have had both legs amputated at or above the ankle, or were born without legs or feet.
- They are entitled to the highest rate of care component and they are severely mentally impaired and have severe behavioural problems.

# What else should I know?

## Help for carers

If your child gets Disability Living Allowance care component at the middle or highest rate, and you are caring for them for 35 hours a week or more, you may be able to get Carer's Allowance.

You should make a claim for Carer's Allowance at the same time as you claim Disability Living Allowance for your child, so that you do not lose any benefit. For more information, see the leaflet '**Carer's Allowance**'.

You can get a Carer's Allowance claim form from the following places.

- From the Benefit Enquiry Line by phoning **0800 220 674** (see '**How do I find out more?**' in this leaflet).
- From the Disability and Carers Service, by phoning **028 9090 6186** (textphone **0800 243 787**).

You can ring these numbers between 9am and 5pm Monday to Wednesday, 10am to 5pm on Thursdays and 9am to 5pm on Fridays.

## Other help

You may be able to get other help for your child because they get Disability Living Allowance. You may get an extra amount for your child's disability in Income Support, Housing Benefit or Child Tax Credit.

# What do I do next?

## Making a claim for Disability Living Allowance

If you think that your child may be able to get Disability Living Allowance, please fill in the tear-off slip and post it to us. We will then send you a claim form and notes to help you fill it in.

Send your tear-off slip to us as quickly as possible.

You can also get a claim form:

- by phoning the Benefit Enquiry Line (see '**How do I find out more?**' in this leaflet);
- from advice centres like citizens advice bureaus; or
- from the Department for Social Development (DSD) website at [www.dsd.gov.uk](http://www.dsd.gov.uk). You should look at the section for '**Forms**'.

You can claim Disability Living Allowance for people under 16 on-line. The on-line service is available at [www.dsd.gov.uk](http://www.dsd.gov.uk). You should look at the section for '**Forms**' and '**Services and benefits on-line**'.

# How do I find out more?

## On the phone

The Benefit Enquiry Line can help you if you need:

- more information about Disability Living Allowance or other benefits you may be able to claim;
- help filling in the claim form; or
- a claim form.

Phone them on **0800 220 674**. There is also a textphone service on **0800 243 787** for people with speech or hearing difficulties. If you do not have your own textphone system, they are available in some libraries and some citizens advice bureaus. These textphone services do not receive text messages from a mobile phone.

You may want to arrange for a friend or family member to interpret for you.

## On the internet

Visit [www.dsdni.gov.uk](http://www.dsdni.gov.uk) for on-line information about benefits for disabled people and their carers.

This leaflet is only a general guide and is not a full statement of the law. We have made every effort to make sure that the information in this leaflet is correct at the time of going to print.

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# Claim Form Request

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**Please send me a claim form for Disability Living Allowance for a child under 16.**

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**Please use ink and write in BLOCK LETTERS.**

Tear here

**Name**

**Address**

**Postcode**

To send us your details;

1. Remove this page from the booklet by tearing the long perforation
2. Moisten as indicated
3. Fold in half to stick
4. Send to us in the post. Stamp required

A postage stamp MUST be affixed.  
The Social Security Agency will not  
accept mail with incorrect or no  
postage paid.

Please  
affix  
stamp  
here

Social Security Agency  
Disability and Carers Service  
Castle Court  
Royal Avenue  
Belfast BT1 1SG