Claiming Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

What is Disability Living Allowance?
Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is a benefit available to help children with additional care or supervision needs and/or getting around. It is no longer open to adults.

Who is it available to?
DLA is available to children under 16 years old. Many people have successfully claimed DLA because their child needs help with, for example, washing, dressing or going to the toilet; someone to keep a close eye on them all the time during the day; someone to keep an eye on them at night; they cannot get around outdoors without supervision or they have a severe mental impairment. Children with conditions such as Attention Deficit Disorder, Attention Deficit hyperactivity Disorder, Autistic Spectrum Disorder, and Developmental delay can qualify, if their needs are significantly greater than other children of a similar age.

If I claim DLA will it affect any other benefits?
No, in fact it can mean you qualify for additional money on Income Support, Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit if you get any of these.

How is DLA awarded?
DLA comes in two parts - the care component and the mobility component. You can claim either or both components.
DLA care is awarded at three rates - a higher rate, a middle rate and a lower rate.
DLA mobility is awarded at two rates - higher rate and lower rate.

How do I apply?
Fill in a detailed application form specifically for children (DLA1 Children) available online on gov.uk website, from your local DWP office, or by ringing 0345 712 3456.

How you present your case is very important. It is important to give them as much relevant information as possible, including examples from your own experiences. Always keep a copy of your claim if you can.
How does a child qualify for the lower mobility rate?
To qualify you must show that the child usually needs help when walking in unfamiliar areas. In other words, without the help and guidance of an adult, s/he could not make real use of her/his ability to walk.

How does a child qualify for the higher mobility rate?
To qualify you must show that the child is:
unable or virtually unable to walk because of a physical disability
or
has a severe mental impairment and displays severely challenging behaviour and qualifies for DLA care component at the higher rate.

What is meant by 'virtually unable to walk'?
When assessing a child's ability to walk the DWP should take into account:
• The speed at which s/he can walk.
• The length of time s/he can walk.
• The manner in which s/he walks.
• The amount of discomfort s/he experiences as a result of getting from one place to another.

Does my child qualify for the care component of DLA?
You can claim the care component of DLA from when a baby is three months old. You may be needed at any time of day or night to help with washing, bathing or going to the toilet or close supervision due to behavioural issues. The care component is awarded if the amount of care the child needs is significantly greater than a non-disabled child of a similar age. (Comparison with older siblings at that age or peers at nursery or play-groups or school are useful)

How does my child qualify for the lower care rate?
To qualify for the DLA care component at the lower rate the individual needs to meet just one of the day time conditions listed below:
Daytime conditions
The child must need attention with bodily functions (for a significant portion of the day (an hour a day). This help may be needed for a single period or on a number of occasions during the day.

Note - you must show that the supervision they require is substantially greater than that needed by other children of the same age.
Does my child qualify for the middle care rate?
To qualify for the DLA care component at the middle rate the child will need to meet just one of the daytime conditions or one of the night-time conditions listed below:

**Daytime needs**
The individual must need frequent attention with bodily functions
or
Continual supervision throughout the day to avoid substantial danger to her/himself or others.

This could include a lack of awareness of danger, such as limited understanding of the dangers of fire, gas or electricity. You will need to show the potential for danger is substantial and that supervision is needed continually

or

**Night-time needs**
Prolonged or repeated attention at night in connection with bodily functions. A 'prolonged period' is defined as at least 20 minutes. Repeated' is defined as more than once.

Or

Prolonged periods of supervision, or supervision at frequent intervals, to prevent substantial danger to her/himself or others. Frequent intervals is defined as at least three times most nights, though not necessarily every night.

Does my child qualify for the higher care rate?
To qualify for care component at the higher rate the child must meet one of the daytime criteria and one of the night-time criteria too.

Other benefits
There are several advantages of qualifying for the middle or higher rates of DLA:

- It may increase the amount of Income Support, Council Tax Benefit and/or Housing Benefit paid (or the child caring for them).
- Someone caring for a child who is awarded the care component at the higher or middle rates can qualify for Carers Allowance
• If your child receives DLA at any rate you will qualify for the Child Tax Credit Disabled Child's premium.
• If your child receives the highest rate of the care component of DLA you may qualify for the Child Tax Credit enhanced disability premium.

What happens at 16?
Until a child is 16, DLA care component will be paid to the parent or carer. When a child is approaching 16 they are invited to apply for Personal Independence Payment in their own right. If they can manage their own affairs, the benefit application can be made out in their name. If not, it can be made out in the name of the parents/carers.

For further information, advice or support, please contact the Diverse Abilities Advice Service, and talk to one of our advisors. They can be contacted on 0300 3305514 or advice@diverseabilitiesplus.