

Disability Access Fund (DAF)

Provision for disabled children and children with special educational needs (SEN)

Providers must have arrangements in place to support children with SEN or disabilities. Maintained schools, maintained nursery schools and all providers who are funded by the local authority to deliver early education places must have regard to the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice

In April 2017 the government introduced a new targeted early years Disability Access Fund. This fund provides an annual lump sum payment of £615, per eligible child, to be paid to early years settings that are providing a free entitlement place for three and four year olds in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA). The purpose of the Disability Access Fund is to support early year's providers to make initial reasonable adjustments, build on the capacity of their setting to support disabled children and aid access to places.

Eligibility

Three and four year olds will be eligible for the DAF if they meet the following criteria:

- the child is in receipt of child disability living allowance and;
- the child receives early education funding.

Please note that four year olds in primary school reception classes are not eligible for DAF funding. Children become eligible for free early learning at different points in the year depending on when they turn 3.

Entitlement

The settings of three and four year olds eligible for the DAF will be entitled to receive a one-off payment of £615 per year. If the child changes provider within the financial year, the new setting will not receive another payment of the DAF. The new provider will need to wait until the following financial year.

Identifying eligible children

Early years providers are ultimately responsible for identifying eligible children and providers are encouraged to speak to parents in order to find out who is eligible for the DAF. Providers will ask parents to complete a DAF application form and provide a copy of the child's DLA award letter.

Distributing DAF funding to early years providers

If a child eligible for the DAF is splitting their free entitlement across two or more providers the parent is only able to complete one application form which asks parents to nominate the main setting (usually setting where child accesses the majority of hours). This setting will be where Slough Borough Council will pay the DAF for the child.

In cases where a child who lives in one authority area attends a provider in a different local authority, the provider's local authority is responsible for funding the DAF for the child and eligibility checking.

All early years providers who are eligible to receive funding for the 3 and 4 year- old early entitlement education are also eligible to receive the DAF.

A DAF payment will be made to a provider following a headcount submission in line with the final funding payment for each term.

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