

When to apply

DLA is granted upon evidence that your child's needs are over and above those of a typical child of the same age. The earliest in which you can apply is 3 months.

What details should I include

Do not just state a diagnosis e.g. low muscle tone, detail what that means for your child e.g. how often you do physio activities with them, do they need extra support when bathing, adapted seating, how often you attend physio appointments etc.

It is advised that prior to applying that you keep a diary of what you are required to do each day to help your child (e.g. extra feeds, medicines given, waking for feeds, teaching them Makaton, physio appointments, play therapy, exercises and activities set by your physio, portage worker or anyone else. If your physio has given suggestions such as using a rolled up towel to aid their tummy time or sitting ensure you include this as it will be considered as additional things you have to do to help your child that you would not need to do for a typical child.

Detail what you do on your worst day so if you child wakes up through the night often detail that they do not sleep through.

Detail as much as possible what your child can not do compared to a typical child their age. This is really difficult mentally to do however this is what they are looking for. The DS inserts in your child's red book are a good starting point as detail areas such as crawling, walking etc.

Services that you are on a waiting list for such as Portage will not be considered.

Middle and high rate is usually awarded for prolonged (more than 20 minutes) and repeated disturbances during the night. This may include waking for night feeds, child not sleeping etc. Night is considered after we as parents have gone to bed rather than the child's bedtime.

Do not send one big block of text, split it up into headings so it is easy for the reader to follow and understand. They may have no understanding of Down Syndrome or associated conditions so stating your child has low muscle tone may not mean anything to them.

Supporting evidence

Anyone can provide supporting evidence such as your portage worker, physio, consultants, health visitors etc. You can prompt them on what you would like including. For example if your physio is detailing what your child can do ask them to reword it to what they are unable to do for a child of their age and the additional support they require.

Mobility

You can claim mobility from the age of 3. If they can take a few steps but cannot confidently walk, tired easily or often fall over then you will be eligible to apply.

Appealing the decision

You have 30 days from the date of your decision letter to ask them to relook at it. You can ask for details as to why it has been turned down however, they often give a generic reason. If it is still

rejected, you can then appeal it. They will however only review your child at the age of your application so if your child has more needs it will not be taken into consideration. You may be best to submit a new application with more up to date thorough details rather than asking them to reconsider the details originally submitted.

Updating your child's needs

If your child's need increase prior to your renewal date then you should contact them to notify them as your entitlement may increase.

Upon receiving your decision you will have a renewal date on their as to when you will need to reapply if your child's needs have not increased before that you do not need to do anything.