



Provision for Children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND)

Disability Access Fund Early Years Policy (effective from 1st April 2026)

SEND Local Offer for Halton



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This guidance has been produced to give childcare providers advice/ideas on how to use the Disability Access Funding (DAF). It also includes a sample form, which can be used to record how the funding has been used and the impact it has had on the child/setting, in case Ofsted ask for details during an inspection

What is the Disability Access Fund (DAF)?



The Equality Act 2010 ensures that Local Authorities and settings must not discriminate, harass or victimise disabled children and must make reasonable adjustments. Local Authorities must ensure that children with a Special Education Needs and/or Disability entitled to a place are found suitable provision.

From April 2017, the Government introduced the Disability Access Fund (DAF) this is new funding for early years childcare providers to support children with disabilities or special educational needs.

DAF is to support access to early years childcare provision by supporting providers in making reasonable adjustments to their settings and/or help build inclusive capacity (this may be for the child in question or to benefit children as a whole attending the setting).

The Local Authority will notify all early years childcare providers with details on how to claim this funding.



Eligibility

Children aged over 9 months old, Two, Three and Four year olds will be eligible for DAF if they meet the following criteria:

- the child is in receipt of child Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and;
- the child receives Free Early Years Entitlement (FEYE) funding

Note: 4 year olds in primary and infant school reception classes are NOT eligible for DAF



Entitlement

Providers who offer early years funded childcare for eligible children aged over 9 months old, Two, Three and Four year olds will be entitled to receive a **lump sum of £975.00 DAF per year** (amount correct as at 1.4.26).

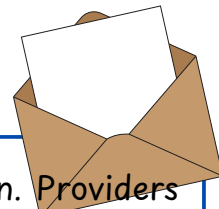
DAF is not based on an hourly rate and is an additional entitlement.

Children do not have to take up the full 570 hours of FEYE funded childcare for the provider to receive the DAF payment.

Children will be eligible to receive the DAF payment where they meet the criteria and they take-up any period of FEYE funding. **It cannot be used to pay for additional hours.**

Providers should discuss with parents/carers, how they intend to use the DAF payment to support their child's needs.

Identification - Eligible Children



Early years childcare providers are responsible for identifying eligible children. Providers are encouraged to speak to parents/carers in order to find out who is eligible for DAF.

Parents/carers of children qualifying for DLA are required to provide the original DLA Award Letter for providers to copy to document evidence of this entitlement.

The DAF payment will not be awarded until the signed DLA proof is received.



Declaration Form - Procedure

The following procedures must be followed:

Parents/Carers with legal responsibility

- You should discuss with your provider how they intend to use the DAF payment to support your child's needs
- Complete the Declaration Form
- Hand the Declaration Form to your provider with the child's original DLA Award Letter

Provider:

- Take a copy of the child's original DLA Award Letter and return the original to the parent/ carer
- Sign and date the copy
*‘I confirm that this is a true copy of the DLA Award Letter and I have seen the original.....(Signature and Date)’
- The DAF Declaration Form and proof of DLA must be returned by email to:
DAFApplication@halton.gov.uk

Payment of DAF



The Local Authority will fund all early years childcare providers providing a place for each child eligible for DAF within their Borough at the fixed annual rate of **£975.00** (amount correct as at 1.4.25) per eligible child.

DAF will not be offset against any other funding which the Local Authority may ordinarily be providing for children eligible for DAF.

DAF is payable as a lump sum once a year, per eligible child and is payable to the provider. It will be paid again during the anniversary term the following year, as long as the child is still in receipt of DLA and still claiming FEYE.

If a child eligible for DAF is splitting their FEYE funding across two or more providers, **the Local Authority will ask parents to nominate the main provider**. The Local Authority will then pay this provider the DAF for the child.

If a child receiving DAF moves from one provider to another **the new provider is not eligible** to receive DAF for this child until the anniversary term of the previous payment, e.g. if payment was made in summer term, the anniversary term will be the summer term the following year. DAF received by the original setting will not be recouped by the Local Authority.

The Local Authority will not provide DAF for eligible children accessing Out of Borough early years childcare provision - this is funded by the Local Authority where the provider is located.

The provider's Local Authority is responsible for checking the eligibility of the child for DAF.

All providers who are eligible to receive FEYE funding for children aged over 9 months old, 2, 3 and 4 year olds are also eligible to receive DAF.



Documentary Evidence - Expenditure and Outcomes

It is anticipated that providers will be required to collate documentary evidence to confirm how the DAF payment has been spent.

This may also include maintaining evidence of any impact on the child's development that the funding has provided, in particular in terms of outcomes.

It is recommended that providers collect and maintain this type of evidence/information.

The following list aims to provide ideas and suggestions on how DAF funding can be used to purchase resources to engage children in their learning. The list provided is not an exhaustive list.

Communication and Interaction

Cause and Effect toys:

- Click Clack Tracks
- Pop-up Pirate
- Bubbles/bubble machines
- Noisy shape sorters
- Talking buttons/tiles/toys
- Magic power ball/multi-spinner
- Frog in box
- Pop up pegs
- Switch/pressure toys
- Ball/marble runs
- Posting/inserting toys
- Light wands/spinners
- Flashing balls
- Board Books/flap books/audio/braille
- Musical instruments
- Sensory bucket toys (e.g. balloons, party blowers, horns, fidgets, squeeze balls)

Augmentative devices:

- 'Switch' toys
- Touch screen choosing board
- Communication board
- Big Mac button
- Whisper phone/talking tube
- Recording devices/voice recorders
- Fidget toys
- Visuals to support choice
- Communication Friendly Spaces bags (Elizabeth Jarman)
- Babbling Babies, Chatter Matters and Toddler Talk cards
- Puppets
- Story apron/story boards
- Story sacks, song baskets, nursery rhyme baskets/song box
- Traffic light fans
- Ear defenders
- Attention Autism/Bucket Therapy
- Training (STAS)
 - Augmentative Alternative Communication
 - Makaton training
 - Gestalt Language Processing Training
 - Early Years Good Autism Practice
 - Intensive Interactions

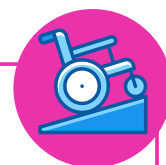


Physical Access

- Ramps
- Handrails/suction grab rails
- Steps/non-slip paint
- High visibility tape
- Blackout blinds/anti-glare film to create contrast
- Low level doorbell/handles, coat hooks and cubbies
- Changing tables/mats
- Hoist
- Footrests
- Captain chairs
- Corner seat/corner guards for furniture
- Sitting wedge
- Fidget floor mats
- Adjustable tables
- Walker/rollator
- Bumpons - tactile marking resource
- Specialist seating prescribed by OT
- Adaptations to bathroom (e.g. taps, flush)

Outdoor Play

- Smooth play surface
- Gates
- Adapted trikes
- Weighted balls
- Adjustable swings
- Outdoor clothing
- Tuff trays
- Sensory garden equipment, bell ball
- Accessible sand/water tray



Cognition and Learning

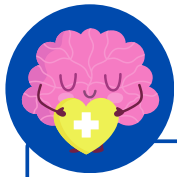
When considering resources to support Cognition and Learning, think about increasing the range of current toys and resources, rather than looking for a 'special' resource. Our 'best practice resources' are usually all that is necessary to enable full cognitive development, but you are likely to need more of them.

Toys that promote:

- Problem-solving (eg fixed piece jigsaws, posting, connecting parts...)
- Matching and sorting (eg natural objects, trays to help focus...)
- Extra resources so that they can be transferred from one environment to the other (eg from the doll's house to water play...)

Other resources include:

- Treasure boxes
- Torches and lenses
- Toys which require two people
- Simple board games
- Memory games
- Musical instruments (sound differentiation, following and inventing pattern...)
- Attention and concentration games
- Small world duplicates
- See and Learn resources
- Replication inside and out (change in scale eg sheet over table tent indoors, sheet over washing line outside)
- Pretend tent inside, real tent outside
- Mini milk crates inside, real crates outside
- Road sign cards/real road signs
- Mark making scale up (charcoal twig/charcoal branch etc)
- Numicon



Social, Emotional and Mental Health

- Role play equipment
- Weighted blanket
- Light/bubble tube
- Cosy basket
- Cosy/calm area (e.g. beanbags, dens/tents)
- Sand/water play
- Calming sensory toys
- Safe space outside (e.g. tent, wigwam)
- Dolls/soft toys
- Sensory mood lights
- Persona Dolls
- Sensory bag/box for calming and de-escalation
- Box of feelings, including pictures and mirror
- Emotion stones/emotional fans
- Ginger Bear - SEMH intervention resource
- Emotional Literacy Support Assistant
- A range of feelings and emotions books
- Special boxes
- Soft toys
- Zones of regulation
- Lola the Leopard

Visual Impairment

- Bumpons - tactile marking resource
- Sensory balls/light up balls/ bell balls
- Tactile books, sensory stories and audio books
- Light tables/light writing board - boards light up when drawn on
- Light box
- Auditory cause and effect toys
- Light up toys/touch activated light and sound equipment
- Mirror den/blackout tent/space blanket
- UV colour rods
- Glitter storm set/Wikki Sticks
- Touch and Match board
- High visibility tape to create clear boundaries/ pathways



Hearing Impairment

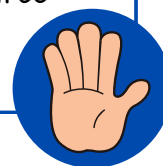


- Bead drum
- Noisy pillows
- Thunder shaker
- Resonance bean bag

Multi-Sensory Impairment

- Move 'n' sit cushions, Big Mack switches, Jelly Bean switches, switch boxes
- Cause and effect toys
- Sensory toys/coloured glue sticks
- Dycem matting
- High vis paint
- Vibrating cushions
- Therapy balls/hedgehog balls, aero balls
- Liquid floor tiles

- Mirrors
- Sensory blocks/magnetic drawing boards/abacuses/ 3D shape sorters
- Sensory bags
- Sensory mood lights
- Slime/foam
- TAC/PAC - communication resource using touch and music



Physical Disability

- Adjustable tables/seats/reading slopes and stands
- Appropriate seats (eg arm rests)
- Outdoor equipment
- Non-slip mats/Dycem matting
- Caring Cutlery - size appropriate
- Easy-grip scissors/ long loop scissors/ double loop scissors
- Left-handed tools/scissors/triangular pencils
- Range of pencils and pencil grips

- Threading
- Soft play equipment
- Mini trampoline
- Balancing beams
- Construction
- Back wedge
- Ride-on toys/hand-operated
- Threading toys - variety of thickness/ firmness
- Fine motor equipment, clothes pegs/peg boards
- Staff accessing 'Manual Handling' training



Self-care

- Toilet frames/steps/seats
- Kneeling pads for staff
- Potties with arms and backs
- Feeding materials
- Non-slip mats
- Specialist cutlery
- Angled plates
- Variety of cups

Disability Access Fund (DAF) Declaration Form

Provider Name:

Child's Details (to be completed by the parent/carer with legal responsibility)

	First Name	Middle Name(s)	Last Name
Legal Name:			
Date of Birth:	____/____/____	Gender:	Male / Female

Disability Access Fund Declaration

Childcare aged over 9 months, Two, Three and Four year olds who are in receipt of child Disability Living Allowance and are receiving Free Early Years Entitlement (FEYE) funding are eligible for the DAF. DAF is payable as a lump sum of **£975.00** once a year per eligible child and is **payable to the provider**. You should discuss with your provider how they intend to use the DAF payment to support your child's needs.

Is your child eligible and in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA)?	☐ Yes	☐ No
Is the FEYE split across more than one childcare provider?	☐ Yes**	☐ No
** If yes, you must nominate main provider to receive the DAF payment for on behalf of your child	Name of nominated main provider:	

Declaration (to be completed by the parent/carer with legal responsibility)

Please tick to show that you understand and agree with the following conditions of the entitlement to funding:

- ☐ I confirm that the information I have given on this form is complete and accurate. I will inform my provider if any of these details change. I understand that if I have given false information on this form, I may be asked to reimburse the provider.
- ☐ I understand that personal information on this form is held on a secure database by Halton Borough Council for the duration of the time that my child receives Free Early Years Entitlement funding and will be used only for Local Authority purposes.

Data Protection Act: Personal information on this form is treated in confidence and complies with the requirement of the Act.

Declaration: I confirm that the information I have provided above is accurate and true. I understand and agree to the conditions set out in this document and I authorise funding to be claimed, as agreed above, on behalf of my child.

Parent/Carer with legal responsibility	
Signed:	
Print Name:	
Date:	

Submission Procedure

Parent/carer with legal responsibility

- Complete this Declaration Form and hand into your Provider with the child's **original** DLA Award Letter

Provider

- Follow the process outlined in Section 5 of the Disability Access Fund Early Years Policy
- Email this form and a copy of the DLA letter to: DAFApplication@halton.gov.uk
- Ensure you write on the copy of the DLA letter '**I confirm that this is a true copy of the DLA Award Letter and I have seen the original.....(Signature and Date)**'



DISABILITY ACCESS FUND (DAF) IMPACT SHEET

NAME OF SETTING:

Name of child eligible for DAF	Term DAF was received and the amount (£)	How was the funding spent?	What impact did it have on the child?	What impact did it have on the staff and/or setting?	Any other comments regarding DAF:

PLEASE EMAIL THE COMPLETED FORM TO: Jackie.durr@halton.gov.uk by Friday 28th April 2023

Thanks for your help