

Disability Access Fund information sheet for providers

What is the Disability Access Fund?

The Disability Access Fund (DAF) is funding for early education and childcare providers to support children with disabilities or special educational needs. It aids access to Free Entitlement places for early years by supporting providers in making reasonable adjustments to their settings.

Eligibility

Both 3 and 4 year olds will be eligible for the DAF if they meet the following criteria:

- the child is the named recipient of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and;
- the child accesses the Free Entitlement places at an early years provider

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

Entitlement

Providers taking 3 and 4 year olds that are eligible for DAF will be entitled to receive a one-off payment per year in the first term the child becomes eligible for a Free Entitlement places. The 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 Free Entitlement places they are entitled to, in order to receive DAF. Children who qualify for DAF will be eligible when they take-up any period of Free Entitlement (Universal Funding).

Identifying eligible children

Early Years providers are encouraged to speak to parents in order to find out which children are in receipt of DLA.

Parents of children in receipt of DLA are required to provide evidence (usually the letter from the Department for Work and Pensions to the parent, confirming the award of DLA to the child) and complete the Disability Access Fund Declaration Form. Parents need to return both of these items to the provider.

Parents who access Free Entitlement place at more than one provider need to be aware that only one provider can be awarded the DAF the parent must nominate which provider that should be.

Providers need to email Eyvette.Palmer@towerhamlets.gov.uk with:

- Disability Access Fund Declaration Form
- DLA evidence
- Provider Name
- Ofsted URN

The Disability Access Fund Declaration Form will need to be completed each year to re-confirm eligibility and nominate which provider receives the payment.

How Early Years Providers will receive DAF

- The full allocation will be made for all eligible three year olds but a pro-rata amount will be paid for four year olds starting school in September until we have clarification from DfE regarding the annual allocation.
- DAF will not be offset against any other funding which the Local Authority (LA) may ordinarily be providing for eligible children.
- If a child eligible for DAF is splitting their (Universal) funded entitlement across two or more providers, the LA will ask the parents to nominate the main provider. The LA will then release the DAF for the child to the nominated provider.
- If a child receiving DAF moves from one provider to another within a financial year, the new provider is not eligible to receive DAF for the child within the same financial year. Also, DAF received by the original setting will not be recouped by the LA.
- If a child accesses their funded placement outside of the LA they reside in, the responsibility for eligibility checking and payment of DAF rests with the LA where the provider resides.
- DAF requests will be processed each term and for the Maintained Nursery Schools and Nursery provisions within the schools, the payment will be made the term after the application is made. For the Private, Voluntary and Independent providers, payment will be made together with Free Entitlement in the same term.