

Disability Living Allowance: A guide to filling in the claim form for deaf children under three years old)

We use the term 'deaf' to refer to all types of hearing loss from mild to profound. This includes deafness in one ear or temporary hearing loss such as glue ear.
We use the term 'parent' to refer to all parents and carers of children.

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Introduction

This is a step-by-step guide to help you fill in the Disability Living Allowance (DLA) claim form for your deaf child (under three years old).

We've only provided guidance on the sections of the form that are most relevant to deaf children, but if any of the other sections apply to your child – make sure you fill those in as well.

This factsheet supports but doesn't replace the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) guidance notes sent with the form.

Make sure you complete the form in your own words and based on your own situation. We give lots of examples of the different needs a deaf child may have between the ages of 0 and 3, but each child's needs will be different – our examples are just to get you thinking.

Still not sure if you should claim DLA?

Your child doesn't have to have all the needs listed in this factsheet or on the claim form in order to qualify for DLA.

If you're not sure if your child is eligible, for example if they:

- lip-read very well
- use British Sign Language (BSL)
- go to a residential school

You can find more information on our website, www.ndcs.org.uk/dla or by contacting our Freephone Helpline.

Tips for claiming DLA

- Compare your child's care and supervision needs to those of another child of the same age who isn't deaf. You need to show that your child's needs are greater than theirs.
- Make sure you explain all the help and supervision your child needs on a daily basis. Never assume a DWP decision maker will 'fill in the gaps'. You need to explain everything fully for each section even if it feels like you're repeating yourself.
- Remember that decision makers aren't experts on deafness. For example, you should explain things like listening fatigue (tiredness caused by the extra effort deaf children have to make to process the sounds around them) or that hearing technology doesn't mean your child can hear 'normally'.
- Don't just say what help your child needs – explain why they need this help and what would happen if they didn't get it.
- Only give information for the questions that are relevant to your child but repeat relevant information wherever it applies, even though this feels very repetitive.
- Give details of when equipment such as hearing aids isn't useful, e.g. where there's a lot of background noise, or when they can't be worn due to damage or an ear infection or when the child could put the hearing aid in their mouth (for example, in the car).
- Only write about help or supervision that your child needs now – the DWP can't look at help your child may need in the future.
- Send in supporting evidence.
- Keep a copy of the form and any supporting evidence you send.
- Make sure any supporting evidence or extra pages are clearly labelled with your child's name, date of birth and National Insurance number.
- If you're returning the form in the post, take it to the Post Office and get proof of postage.

Advice from parents

Filling in a DLA form can be hard work because you have to give details of all the things your child can't do, or finds difficult. So we've collected some encouragement and advice from parents who've already claimed DLA to help you get through it.

"Have photos of lovely times with your child to make you smile to balance out the hideous DLA form." Lisa, Wiltshire

"Set aside some quiet time and allow yourself to feel emotional if you need to... we spend 364 days of the year being very positive about our children. This form asks us to consider the areas where there are difficulties which may feel painful but it is vital you cover all the areas where your child experiences difficulty and needs extra support." Rachel, Hampshire

"Be honest about your child's needs no matter how big or small... at the end of it pour yourself a big glass of something strong and breathe a sigh of relief." Natalie, Lincolnshire

"Allow yourself plenty of time and maybe attempt it in sections, it can be very tedious!" Katy, Staffordshire

"It can feel like an uphill battle and it can make you feel down as you realise how different your child sounds on paper but just keep in mind, once it's filled in and sent off you just need to forget about it and carry on being brilliant as usual." Su, Yorkshire

How to get a claim form

If you live in England, Scotland or Wales contact the Disability Living Allowance Helpline

Phone: **0345 712 3456** (voice)

Phone: **0345 722 4433** (text)

Claim online or download the claim form from

www.gov.uk/government/publications/disability-living-allowance-for-children-claim-form.

If you live in Northern Ireland contact the Benefits Enquiry Line

Phone: **0800 220 674** (voice)

Phone: **028 9031 1092** (text)

Download the form from www.nidirect.gov.uk/publications/disability-living-allowance-dla-child-claim-form-and-guidance-notes-dla-1a.

A bonus six weeks if you get a claim form by phone

If you phone for the claim form, there will be two dates stamped on it. The first is the date you requested the form and the second, six weeks later, is the date you have to return the completed form. If you return the form by the second date, any DLA your child is awarded will start from the first date.

If you claim online any DLA your child is awarded will only start from the date you submit the claim form. If you download a PDF the DLA will only start from the date the DWP receives the completed claim form.

What if I need help filling in the claim form?

The DWP provides a home visiting service to help with form-filling. If you want to be referred to this service please contact our Freephone Helpline.

Attention and supervision

Throughout the form you have to show that your child needs much more time or effort spent on attention or supervision than a hearing child of the same age.

Attention refers to practical help that you give to your child. For example, help with fitting, removing and maintaining hearing aids and cochlear implant processors, and help with communication and language development.

Supervision refers to watching over your child to avoid substantial danger to them or another person. For example making sure your child isn't putting their hearing aids or cochlear implant processors in their mouth.

If your child can't do things that a child their age would normally be expected to do, give details on the form. If you know a hearing child of a similar age it may help to make a comparison. For more information on child development see page 20.

Remember – you may do some things automatically. Think about all the things you do that you wouldn't need to do if your child was hearing and write these on the form.

Noting down how long it takes to provide extra care

Throughout this form you're asked to write down how often you help your child and how many minutes this takes each time. It's important to say how often each day you help your child, if you can. If you can't say how long it takes because the time varies or it's difficult to measure, leave the minutes box blank and explain this in the box underneath.

Claiming for a very young baby

All very young babies need a high level of attention and supervision. The younger the baby, the harder it is to show that they need a lot more care. In order to show that your child qualifies for DLA, you need to explain that the help or supervision you give is a lot more than an average child the same age would need. You may be able to do this in one of the following ways.

- If you can show that the help or supervision you have to give is something that you wouldn't do at all if your child wasn't deaf. For example, a hearing child wouldn't need to have hearing aids fitted or removed.
- If the help or supervision is much greater or more intensive than if your child wasn't deaf. For example, you might be able to leave a hearing child of the same age in a safe place for a few minutes while you leave the room, but it may not be safe to leave your deaf child for even a few minutes if they would be at risk of putting their hearing aids or cochlear implant processor in their mouth.
- If the help or supervision you need to give is something that you would only normally give to a child who is younger than yours.

The most straightforward way of getting DLA for a baby is on the grounds that they need continual supervision because of the risk of choking on hearing aids or cochlear implant processors. In this situation you should get the middle rate care component at least.

Filling in the form: About the child

14. In the last 12 months, has the child seen anyone apart from their GP about their illnesses or disabilities?

It's very helpful to give details of professionals who know about how your child's deafness or other disabilities affect their day to day life. You could include your child's Teacher of the Deaf, audiologist, speech and language therapist and any other professionals they see. Use the extra information box at the end of the form or attach some extra pages if you need to.

20. Statement from someone who knows the child

Ask someone who knows how deafness affects your child to fill in this statement. This could be a Teacher of the Deaf, a medical professional (as long as they're aware of how deafness affects your child in their daily life), a friend with a baby of the same age, a grandparent, etc.

Ask them to describe the extra help your child needs compared with hearing children of the same age. Show them this guide or our website (www.ndcs.org.uk/dla) if it helps. Make sure that you ask someone who knows how your child's deafness affects their daily life and about all the extra help they need.

You could also get a more detailed letter of support (this could be from the same person or someone different) outlining the support and assistance your child needs.

For more information on supporting letters, including guidance for audiologists and teachers on how to write an effective supporting letter, go to www.ndcs.org.uk/dla.

Filling in the form: About the child's illnesses or disabilities

22. List the child's illnesses or disabilities in the table below.

In the boxes, write details of your child's deafness and any other disabilities or medical conditions they may have.

23. Does the child use, or have they been assessed for, any aids or adaptations?

Explain that no hearing technology gives a deaf child 'normal' hearing

If your child uses hearing aids, a soft band or cochlear implants, explain that these technologies don't replace normal hearing. Explain that hearing technology can make it harder to hear in noisy situations because they magnify background sounds, which can mask the sounds your child needs to hear. Give details of times when your child struggles to hear even when wearing their hearing technology. If there are periods when your child can't wear their hearing technology for example because of an ear infection, mention how long this applies for here.

Managing hearing technology

Explain the extra time and effort it takes to manage your child's hearing technology. Say how long it takes each time and how many times a day you have to do it. Help you give may include the following.

- Fitting and removing hearing aids or cochlear implant processors (with a full explanation of what this involves). Include all the times you have to do this, including if you have to remove them when changing, bathing or feeding your child. Include times when you have to refit them if your child has pulled them off.
- Cleaning and drying hearing aids and checking that they're working, including removing moisture.
- Checking and changing the batteries.
- Clearing wax and replacing cracked tubing.
- Tending to your child's ears if they become chapped or sore.
- Stopping your child fiddling with the hearing aids or cochlear implant processors and taking them out. Write down how many times a day your child takes their aids or processors off. If your child regularly hides, breaks or loses their hearing technology, write down how long this takes you to replace, what you have to do and how your child is affected by not having their hearing aids or cochlear implants in place.

It's a good idea to keep a record for a day just putting ticks and the time on a sheet of paper each time you have to fit or remove your child's aids or implants. You can send this with the claim form as evidence of the extra attention you have to give your child.

There won't be room for all the relevant information in this section, so continue it in the extra information box at the end of the form or attach extra pages.

24. When the child needs help

If your child's needs change, for example because their hearing levels fluctuate, it's useful to keep a diary covering times when their hearing is better and worse. Explain on the form how much help your child needs when their hearing is worse, how much when their hearing is better, and explain as far as you can how many days in the week or the month their hearing is worse or better.

If there isn't time to keep a diary because the form is due back, explain the situation as well as you can. It's still worth keeping a diary once you've returned the form as you can still send it to the DWP as further supporting evidence, or use it in case you have to challenge the decision.

If your child needs supervision because they try to put their hearing aids or cochlear implant processors in their mouth, you're likely to have to supervise them all the time they're wearing them. If this is the case, make sure you put this on the form. It's useful to explain what you would do if you were on your own with your child and you needed to go to another room for any reason. Explain if you would have to take your child with you to keep them safe if you left the room and say if you would do the same with a hearing child who didn't have a hearing aid or cochlear implant.

Filling in the form: Mobility

Questions 25–31 and 36

These questions are about the physical difficulties a child has walking and are only for children who are at least three years old.

Only answer if your child is three (or will be in the next three months) and meets one or more of the following criteria.

- Has a physical disability that means they can't walk or can hardly walk at all.
- Doesn't have feet.
- Is blind or severely visually impaired.
- Is blind and deaf.
- Has severe learning difficulties, severe behavioural problems and needs a lot of attention and supervision in the day and the night.

Questions 31–35

Do not answer these questions as they only apply to children over the age of five.

Filling in the form: Care

37. Do they need encouragement, prompting or physical help to get into or out of or settle in bed during the day?

If you have to give extra attention to wake your child in the morning because they don't get woken by the sounds around them, explain the extra help you have to give them and why you have to give it.

If your child needs extra help to settle at night because of their deafness, explain what you need to do and why you need to do it. Explain if this is extra to the attention given to a hearing child.

Explain if you have to take their hearing technology off and if they feel scared or isolated because they don't have their technology to help them pick up household sounds. Say if you have to spend a long time settling, reassuring and resettling them, or if you have to sit in the room with your child so that they can see you until they fall asleep. Explain if your child can't hear you call to them from another room.

Many children like a bedtime story to help them settle. Say if this takes a lot longer than with a hearing child, as you need to help them understand the story, either by using sign language or other methods, and if you need to repeat what you're reading because your child hasn't heard or understood.

38. Do they need encouragement, prompting or physical help to go to or use the toilet during the day?

If you need to remove your child's hearing aids or cochlear implant processors before changing their nappy, put that here and explain why you have to do this. Say if you have to fit and check the settings on the technology once you've changed the nappy.

Say if it's taken longer to toilet train your child because they haven't understood verbal messages or didn't have the language to cope with toilet training.

40. Do they need encouragement, prompting or physical help to wash, bath, shower and check their appearance during the day?

Explain if your child needs extra attention when bathing because their hearing aids or cochlear implant processors have to be taken off, making communication more difficult. Say if this means that you spend more time washing and bathing than with a hearing child. If your child uses BSL or a type of signed communication, explain if it's difficult to sign and hold your child in the bath at the same time.

Explain how long it takes to look after their hearing aids or cochlear implant processors. For example, if you have to take out the aids, make sure their ears are really dry, check the aids for wax or condensation, check the batteries and replace the aids after they've had their bath.

41. Do they need encouragement, prompting or physical help to dress and undress during the day?

Say if this takes longer because you have to remove and refit your child's hearing aids or cochlear implant processors when dressing or undressing. Say if communication is difficult when the aids are removed or when clothes are pulled over your child's head, causing noise from the clothes rubbing on the microphone to be picked up by the aids or processors.

Say if you take the cochlear implant processor off before your child uses a plastic slide, ball pits or trampolines because of the danger of static electricity damaging the implant.

42. Do they need encouragement, prompting or physical help to eat and drink during the day?

If you're breastfeeding your baby, say if it takes longer than with a hearing baby if your baby pulls away to look at your face for reassurance, for example. Say if you can't comfort them with your voice while you're preparing a bottle or their food. If you use BSL or another sign system to communicate with your child, explain any difficulties you may have signing and holding your baby at the same time.

Explain if you have to take your child's hearing aids out when feeding them if:

- the aid rubs against your breast or clothing causing feedback
- the milk runs from their mouth towards their hearing aid.

Explain any difficulties of communicating while eating. Explain if you need to stop eating and put down your knife and fork to communicate so your lip patterns or signs are clear. Explain if your child needs extra help to follow the conversation when different people are talking and if your whole family may have to give extra time and effort to include your child.

43. Do they need encouragement, prompting or physical help to take medicine or have therapy during the day?

Give information about any medicines your child has to take and the help that they need to take them. For example, they may need eardrops to soften the wax in their ears or require medication for ear infections.

Give details of any therapy your child receives from a professional support worker or from the family. This could include speech and language therapy, music therapy, play therapy, help with learning to lip-read or to sign, or help from a Teacher of the Deaf.

Explain the help that your child gets from the professional and give details of any exercises that you do with your child.

Filling in the form: Difficulty hearing, speaking or communicating

45. Do they have difficulty hearing?

46. Do they have difficulty speaking?

47. Do they have difficulty and need help communicating?

The decision maker at the DWP may not know a lot about the needs of deaf children. Give as much information as you can when answering these questions to help the decision maker understand the needs of your child. You need to explain the extra attention that your child needs to help them communicate.

Take time to answer the questions and fill in the extra information boxes as well as the tick boxes. The extra information boxes are very small and as these questions are some of the most important on the form for deaf children, use the extra information box at the end of the form or attach extra pages if you need to.

How long does it take to help your child communicate?

It can be very difficult to work out how many times you help your child with communication and how long it takes each time.

If you spend extra time and effort helping your child with communication lots of times all the way through the day, just put “frequently throughout the day” in answer to this question. You don’t have to measure the minutes it takes to help your child with communication each time because this will vary.

If you only have to help your child with communication at certain times, for example if your child needs extra help when it’s noisy but can manage when it’s quiet, try to give a bit more information about this. For example keep a diary of the sorts of situations your child needs help communicating in, how often this happens and how long it takes to give your child the extra help they need.

Important – try to say how often your child needs help with communication during the day, both at home and at nursery or other childcare. A diary of their day may give you a way of working out the help that they need.

For an example diary to support a DLA claim go to www.ndcs.org.uk/dla.

45. Do they have difficulty hearing?

Explain any situations where your child finds it hard to hear or understand. Explain about any limitations your child has with their hearing, even when wearing their hearing aid or cochlear implant.

Explain if there are situations where it’s hard for your child to pick up sound clearly, for example when there’s background noise, if they’re outdoors or if the speaker hasn’t attracted their attention first.

Explain if you need to have good eye contact to communicate with your child. Explain if you have to move around after your child, pick your child up or get down to their level to communicate with them.

Explain if you need to make sure your face is in good light and can be clearly seen and that you aren't eating or drinking when you communicate with your child. Explain why this is important.

Explain if you need to speak slowly and clearly if your child lip-reads and use natural gestures to help them to understand.

Explain if you need to try to use a different word or sign with the same meaning if your child doesn't understand the word or sign you used first.

Explain if you need to try to keep a small distance between you and your child so that they can clearly see the signs or lip patterns that you make.

Explain if you need to make a deliberate effort to keep your child's attention.

Explain if you can't reassure your child from a different room using your voice as you would with a hearing child.

46. Do they have difficulty speaking?

Your child's speech may be difficult to understand or they may use BSL or another sign system to communicate. Explain what happens when your child tries to communicate; include details of their communication with family, friends and at playgroup or nursery.

Explain if one member of the family understands your child best or becomes your child's interpreter when they want to communicate with someone else. Explain the extra time they spend helping your child with communication.

Make sure you explain about any help with communication, for example a BSL interpreter that you think your child needs, even if they don't get help at the moment.

Explain if your child becomes tired and frustrated when trying to make themselves understood.

Explain if even at this very young age your child becomes embarrassed when communicating with other people. Explain if your child needs support and prompting to encourage communication, for example if they refuse to communicate and close their eyes or turn away. Explain any extra attention that they need.

47. Do they have difficulty and need help communicating?

Explain that while hearing children learn language naturally by hearing conversation around them, this process may not happen for a deaf child.

Explain if your child needs to be specifically taught everything that a hearing child will pick up easily from people around them. Whether you're using spoken or sign language, explain if this requires more attention and effort than that required for a baby or a child who isn't deaf. Try to give examples of times when you give extra help to teach your child words or language. If you've

been given exercises to do with your child by a speech and language therapist or other professional, give details of these.

Explain if you not only have to be in the same room, but in a position where your child can see you clearly to communicate with them.

Explain if your child has a language delay and the problems this causes them, for example they might find it difficult to follow instructions. If professionals have carried out any tests it's useful to send copies of the results if they provide evidence of a language delay.

If your child uses hearing aids or cochlear implants, explain that it's crucial that the hearing aids are clean, working and that they use their aids or implants for as much of the day as possible to help with communication and development of language.

If your child uses speech and lip-reading to communicate, explain if they need to be taught this. Explain that it isn't possible to completely lip-read word for word because lip patterns for different words are often similar, and people with different accents may have different lip patterns for the same words.

Explain if your child needs to know what the conversation is about before they can begin to understand through lip-reading, and if they need someone to explain the conversation to them.

If your child uses BSL or another type of signed communication, for example Makaton or Sign Supported English (SSE), explain that they'll need extra attention to teach them the language. Explain if they need an interpreter to help them communicate with people who can't sign.

Explain if your child needs access to the speaker's face to understand what they're saying. Give details if this means you need to give extra time and attention. For example, at bath time you may have to stop washing your child to communicate. If you're in a car, you may have to stop driving and turn to them or have someone else in the car to respond to their needs. Explain that if your child is in a buggy that faces forwards, you may have to stop, go to the front of the buggy and make eye contact with your child before you can communicate with them.

A deaf child may not know that you're in the room unless they can see you. Every time you want to communicate with your child, you may have to get their attention by:

- making sure you're in the same room
- making light physical contact, such as gently touching their hand or cheek
- flashing the lights on and off.

Explain if other children don't realise your child is deaf or don't understand their communication needs. Give details if you need to make extra effort to help other children communicate with your child.

49. Do they need to be supervised during the day to keep safe?

The most straightforward way babies get DLA is to show that they need continual supervision to prevent the risk of choking on hearing technology.

Hazards of hearing technology

Explain that all parts of hearing aids and cochlear implant processors are dangerous to young children and that young children can't be left alone with them because they're a choking hazard. Enclose the safety warnings from the aids or implants instructions if you have them.

Give details if your child or baby tries to put the aid or implant processor or any parts in their mouth. Describe how quickly your child can get these into their mouth. Say if you have to supervise your child continuously throughout the day to prevent them getting the aid, processor or parts into their mouth.

If your child is able to pull small parts off the aid or processor, give details of this. Say whether your child has ever managed to get the batteries out of the hearing aid or implant processor. Say if your child could put the whole processor, which has the battery encased in it, into their mouth.

Explain that the batteries are toxic if taken into the mouth or swallowed and could also be lodged up noses and in ears. As part of your supporting evidence send a copy of NHS England's Patient Safety Alert (reference number: NHS/PSA/W/2014/017), which warns of the risk of death or serious harm from the ingestion of button batteries. You can find a copy of the Patient Safety Alert by searching online for 'Patient Safety Alert NHS/PSA/W/2014/017'.

Explain what happens if you need to leave the room for any reason. Do you have to either take the aids or implants off your child, which may leave them upset and isolated, or alternatively take your child with you? If you take your child with you, say if you would have done the same if your child didn't have a hearing aid or cochlear implant.

Emotional impacts of being deaf

Explain if your child gets frustrated and upset because of their difficulties with communication.

Explain if it takes longer for them to be able to express how they're feeling if they have a language delay. Explain if this causes them to behave in ways that are aggressive or withdrawn.

Give details if your child feels anxious, frustrated, embarrassed, isolated, depressed, lonely or shy and needs encouraging or comforting because of this.

Explain if your child needs help with relating to other children because they don't understand or aren't patient with your child's communication needs. Explain if this affects your child's confidence.

Explain if your child is withdrawn because of their communication needs or if they try to compensate by being over-friendly.

Explain if it takes longer to calm your child if they have a tantrum. Explain how difficult it is to communicate with your child if they aren't calm enough to watch your face or follow signing.

Understanding safety

Explain if your child takes longer than other children their age to grasp concepts and ideas. Explain if your child doesn't understand the concept of danger and has to have everything explained to them more carefully than a hearing child their age would need.

Explain if your child is unable to hear a tone of disapproval or concern in a voice, or hear warning shouts if they're in danger.

50. Do they need extra help with their development?

Explain if your child has a developmental delay because they have to rely on others to teach them language and concepts and can't pick these up from incidental sounds.

Explain if your child can't absorb and learn language as a hearing child would do from sounds going on around them, such as people speaking or the television. Explain if your child needs extra attention to help them learn language that a hearing child wouldn't need.

If your child uses BSL or another type of signed communication, explain about the extra attention that your child needs to learn the language. Include any support or teaching that your child gets from support workers, such as a Teacher of the Deaf, and all the extra help you have to give at home to help them learn sign language.

If your child uses speech, explain the extra attention that your child needs. Explain if you have to teach your child every word individually face to face over and over again because, unlike a hearing child who will hear common words used repeatedly in conversations around them, your child only hears repeated words if someone makes the effort to repeat them directly face to face.

Explain if you have to teach your child how to listen and make sense of sounds. Explain if you have to make an extra effort to teach your child to make the sounds of words.

Say if your child has speech and language therapy. Give details if the speech and language therapist or Teacher of the Deaf has given you any exercises to do with your child.

Give details of all the extra effort and time you have to give to help your child learn language that you wouldn't have to give if your child was hearing.

Explain if your child gets tired and closes their eyes so they can't see what you're saying, or turns away. Explain if your child gets frustrated if they can't understand or can't make themselves understood. Explain about any encouragement you have to give your child to communicate if they're tired or frustrated.

51. Do they need encouragement, prompting or physical help at nursery?

It's very important to give details of any extra attention or supervision that your child may need in a pre-school setting, for example a playgroup, nursery or childminder.

Give details if you have had any difficulty getting a place for your child at a playgroup, nursery or childminder, either because of their communication difficulties or because of the extra supervision required to keep them safe if they're wearing hearing aids or cochlear implant processors.

Give details of any extra support that's provided at nursery or playgroup or if your child goes to a specialist nursery or playgroup.

Explain about any difficulties other carers have understanding your child or difficulties your child has understanding them.

Explain if your child finds it harder to hear and to follow what's going on in the noisy environment of a nursery or playgroup.

52. Do they need encouragement, prompting or physical help to take part in hobbies, interests, social or religious activities?

There are two boxes both asking the same question about at home and going out.

At home

Give details of any other extra help you give your child at home that you haven't already mentioned. Some examples could be:

- watching TV – your child may need to have programmes explained to them
- playing games that will help your child develop language and social skills – explain if these games take much longer to play with a deaf child than with a hearing child
- playing with toys or games that involve sound – explain what you have to do to make them accessible for your child.

When they go out

If your young child needs communication support and constant supervision wherever they go, give examples of places you go and the attention and supervision that you give to your child.

You can also mention places you would go if your child had the help that they needed.

For example:

- visiting friends or family
- going to the dentist, doctor or hospital
- swimming
- attending audiology clinics or cochlear implant assessments
- attending specialist parent and child groups
- going to the park
- going to activities/toddlers' gym, etc.

Refer back to the information that you gave about your child's need for help with communication. Explain again how it relates to these particular activities. Include anything you have to do with hearing aids, cochlear implants, radio aids and any other equipment they may need when they're out.

53. Do they wake and need help at night or need someone to be awake to watch over them at night?

For DLA, the night starts when the last person in the household goes to bed and finishes when the household normally gets up. If you have to get up earlier than you normally would to help your child, that help may count as night-time care or supervision.

Only fill in this section if your child needs a lot more attention during the night than a hearing child the same age would.

Although your child may need feeding or their nappies changing the same amount of times, say if they need much more attention each time than a hearing child would, for example if they're unsettled because they aren't wearing their hearing aid or cochlear implant processor and can't hear you comforting them.

Explain if you have to stay with your child until they go back to sleep because they can't hear you once you leave the room. Explain if you would use a story or a song tape to settle a hearing child but you can't do this with your deaf child.

Explain if you have to put the light on to calm your child because they can't respond to your voice and explain if this means that it's harder to settle them back to sleep because they think it's time to play.

Say if your child wakes up during the night frightened by nightmares, made worse by the darkness and their lack of access to sound. Explain what you have to do, how frequently and how long it takes. If your child wears hearing aids or a cochlear implant, explain if communication at night is more difficult because they aren't wearing their hearing technology.

54. Extra information about care

Include anything else on this page that you haven't been able to put anywhere else on the form. You can also use this section to continue from other pages where there wasn't enough space.

Here are some examples of extra information you might want to include.

Explain if your child has difficulty making sense of the world, either because they don't hear conversations going on around them or because of language delay. Give examples of their difficulties and explain how you give them extra attention to help them to make sense of new words and ideas.

Explain if you often carry them around the house to name objects, either by using your voice or by sign. Explain if you do this more than you would for a hearing child because a hearing child will hear words repeated many times but your child only hears them again if someone makes the effort to repeat them. Explain if you draw pictures, use gesture and mime, repeat words many times and rephrase sentences, using spoken or sign language, in order to help your child to understand.

Explain if your child needs extra attention with educational materials such as computer games, DVDs or online videos, etc. that use spoken instructions, for example needing someone to explain what's being said.

Explain if instructions can't be given from across the room, because the person giving the instructions needs to be near your child to get their attention and to make sure that your child can see them clearly.

You could mention here that the government brought in hearing screening for newborn babies because research has shown the importance of the early diagnosis of deafness to the language development of deaf children.

If your child has a cochlear implant or is going through the implant assessment programme, include any extra needs they have because of this. Write down how much more supervision and care they need because of the implant.

55. When did the child's care needs that you have told us about start?

Your child needs to have had extra needs because of their disability for three months before you can apply for DLA. This is called the qualifying period. For example, if your child was given hearing aids at the age of three months and has needed extra help and supervision because of this, you may be entitled to DLA when your child has been wearing the hearing aids for three months, i.e. by the age of six months.

Filling in the form: About you

Questions 56–69

Complete **your** details here.

71. Declaration

The person claiming for the child must sign and date here.

Supporting evidence

It's important to send in as much supporting evidence as possible.

- If your child has a cochlear implant, or is going through the implant assessment process, ask your implant centre for a supporting letter that explains everything that your child needs due to their implant and include it with your evidence. Ask the implant centre to explain the difference between the sound your child receives through the implant and

normal sound. Ask the implant centre to explain the process of teaching your child to interpret the sounds they receive and to say how long it will take and how much extra help you and the professionals will need to give your child.

- Ask the Teacher of the Deaf or speech and language therapist to explain how important it is to develop language skills at an early age and to explain about the extra help deaf babies and children need to learn language.
- Don't forget the other types of supporting evidence suggested in this factsheet:
 - > a supporting letter from someone who knows how your child's deafness affects their daily life
 - > a diary showing exactly what assistance and supervision you provide on a typical day and when, that a hearing child of the same age wouldn't need
 - > a diary covering a week or month showing how many days your child's hearing was better or worse (if your child's needs fluctuate)
 - > a record of how many times a day you have to fit and remove your child's hearing aids or implants (simple ticks on a piece of paper with the time of day by them)
 - > the safety warning from your child's aids or implants
 - > a copy of NHS England's Patient Safety Alert warning of the risks of ingesting button batteries
 - > results of any tests showing your child has a language delay.

For more information on supporting evidence, including example diaries, suggestions for writing your own supporting letter and guidance for teachers and audiologists on writing an effective supporting letter go to www.ndcs.org.uk/dla.

Remember

Keep a copy of everything you send – this includes the form and all supporting evidence.

Make sure the supporting evidence doesn't contradict what you've said on the form.

Make sure supporting evidence and extra pages are labelled.

If you're returning the form in the post make sure you get proof of postage from the Post Office.

Appealing a decision

If you aren't happy with the decision that the DWP in England, Scotland and Wales or Disability and Carers Service (DCS) in Northern Ireland has made about your child's DLA claim, please contact our Freephone Helpline.

Important

You will only have one month to challenge the decision made by the DWP/DCS. As soon as you get a decision, contact the DWP office for your area in England, Scotland and Wales, or the DCS in Northern Ireland, and ask for full written reasons for their decision. This will give you an extra 14 days to challenge the decision.

For more information on appealing a DLA decision go to www.ndcs.org.uk/dla.

More information

- ***Disability Living Allowance: A guide to filling in the claim form for deaf children over three years old***
- ***Writing Reports for Non-Specialist Audiences*** (guidance for audiology professionals)
- ***Medical guidance for DLA and AA decision makers (child cases): staff guide*** is used by DWP decision makers to help them make DLA award decisions. It can be helpful to see what the decision maker who assesses your case may be basing their decision on.

Our DLA webpages (www.ndcs.org.uk/dla) include:

- information on eligibility criteria
- guidance on writing your own supporting letter
- guidance for teachers on writing a supporting letter
- example diaries for a deaf child aged under three and aged ten
- information on appealing a decision or making a complaint.

Note: Information correct at time of publication. This information is about benefits, which changes in line with Government policy. For the most up-to-date information on benefits and financial support, visit the gov.uk website.

Rough guide to child development

Age	Hearing/language development	Social behavior
Birth	When not crying, responds to loud noises. When crying, may quieten to noises.	
Six weeks	Watches when mother speaks. May begin to respond to sound by making noises. Startles to loud noises.	Begins social smiling. Stops crying when picked up or spoken to.
Three months	Babbles when spoken to.	May make excited noises when given a toy or on hearing social noises around them.
Six to eight months	Uses voice to babble tunefully. Responds to sound from behind. Talks using babble. Listens to everyday sounds.	Apprehensive with unfamiliar people; responsive to familiar people. Responds to different emotional tones in parents' voices. Takes everything to their mouth. Uses hands to reach and grab.
Nine to 12 months	Begins to have meaningful babble as a means of communication. May have one or two words that are recognisable. Can imitate animal noises.	Wary of unfamiliar adults. Waves bye-bye. Can play simple games such as peek-aboo. Responds to 'no'. Will turn on hearing their name. Starts to attract attention, e.g. by shouting.
15 months	Uses 10 or more words. Asks for objects by pointing.	Begins to tell parents about wet pants. Displays negative behaviour.

Two years	Combines two or more words in short sentences. Obeys simple commands. Uses the words 'I', 'you', 'me' appropriately.	Obeys simple commands. Often remains dry at night if woken up and nappy changed late in evening. Others can understand some of the child's words. Listens to simple words and stories.
Two years six months	Knows their name. Can name one colour. Can name five common objects, e.g. 'car'.	Climbs onto toilet seat. Attends to toilet needs without help, except for wiping.
Three years	Vocabulary of several hundred words. Others can understand majority of child's words. Child can recite rhymes.	Knows own gender. Sociable, friendly, helpful. Is toilet trained by day and, in most cases, by night.

This information can be requested in large print or as a text file.
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For resource references or to give us your feedback email
informationteam@ndcs.org.uk.

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