**Disability Access Funding (DAF)**

**Guidance for Childcare Providers**

**Financial year 2024 – 2026**

**Additional funding for providers to support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities aged two, three and four years old.**

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# 1.0 Introduction

Childcare providers have a legal duty to ensure they make reasonable adjustments to ensure they support the equity of access of all children to their provision under the Equality Act 2010. Knowsley Borough Council is committed to ensuring that all children have equal access to learning and as part of this commitment. The fund is for childcare providers/schools/academies with two, three- and four-year-olds who are in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and taking up the universal 15 hours of Early Education Funding (EEF).

The purpose of the fund is to help providers make those reasonable adjustments within their provision to support children with a disability. DAF is not based on an hourly rate and will be paid as a one-off payment per academic year to the chosen provider of each eligible child. The amount paid can be found on the website under the funding rates section - [Headcount | Knowsley Info](https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/knowsley-childcare-early-education-information-childcare-providers/headcount)

For the purpose of this guidance, ‘provider’ refers to any establishment offering Early Education Funding for two, three- and four-year-olds.

# 2.0 Definition of ‘Access’ and responsibility to make ‘Reasonable Adjustments’

For the purpose of DAF and early years, access refers to:

* the means or opportunity to enter the provision of space where early education is to take place. This includes either domestic or non-domestic premises1.
* the means or opportunity to engage with the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)2 with reference to the seven areas of learning and development and welfare requirements.

Substantial disadvantage can be avoided by making reasonable adjustments for children with SEND. This means making positive steps to ensure that children with SEND can fully participate in early education and enjoy the other benefits, facilities and services offered by the provision.

The reasonable adjustment duty comprises of three requirements:

* Provision, criteria, and practices
* Auxiliary aids and services
* Physical features

1 As determined by Ofsted (p4 & 5)

[Early years inspection handbook - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-inspection-handbook-eif)

[Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for group and school providers (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_based_providers.pdf)

# 3.0 Definition of ‘Disability’

A person is disabled if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day activities. (Equality Act 2010).

A physical or mental impairment includes learning difficulties, mental health conditions, medical conditions, and hidden impairments such as dyslexia, autism and speech, language, and communication impairments.

*It is important to note that because a child has a disability; it does not necessarily mean that he/she has special educational needs.*

# 4.0 Eligibility

4.1 Providers in Knowsley are eligible to receive DAF where a two, three or four-year-old child is taking up a place and;

* the child is in receipt of DLA3; and.
* the child is taking up EEF (either some hours or all hours of their entitlement)

4.2 Four-year-olds in primary school reception/foundation stage classes are not eligible for DAF funding.

4.3 Providers are encouraged to raise awareness of DAF with parents to identify eligible children. The parent declaration form can be used to ascertain if a child meets the relevant criteria for DAF.

4.4 If a child, eligible for DAF, is splitting their free entitlement across two or more providers, their parent(s) will need to nominate the provider to whom they wish the payment to be made. This needs to be completed on the parental agreement form (see appendix 2). This will usually be the provider where the child is accessing the majority of their free entitlement hours.

4.5 If a child receiving DAF moves from one provider to another within the same academic year, the new provider is not eligible to receive DAF for this child within the same academic year. The new provider will need to wait until the following academic year to be able to apply for funding for the child. Any equipment or resources purchased by the original provider should transfer to the new provider if the child transfers during the same academic year.

3 Criterion as determined by the Department for Education. More information about applying for Disability Living Allowance (DLA) can be found at: [Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for children: Overview - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/disability-living-allowance-children)

# Making an application

# 5.1 Parents with an eligible child must provide a copy of their current DLA award letter to their chosen childcare provider.

5.2 Knowsley providers can submit DAF applications for eligible children who attend their provision but reside outside of the boundaries.

5.3 A copy of the current DLA award letter can be uploaded by the childcare provider onto the EYES (Early Years and Education System) online portal at any time however, payments will be made at the time of processing the termly headcount providing documentation has been submitted as per 5.1.

# Utilising DAF to support children with SEND

6.1 Providers should consider what reasonable adaptations are required to ensure the child has the same equity of access to the provision as any other child. Resources required to ensure basic entry and reasonable adjustments to the learning environment should be the priority for DAF.

6.2 Providers should involve the child’s parent(s) and engage with other professionals working with the family to ensure DAF is spent appropriately. This is not limited to but may include: Early Years Service; Health Visitor, Paediatrician; Occupational Therapists; Physiotherapists and Sensory Impairment Team.

6.3 Providers are encouraged to forward plan in utilising DAF to ensure a child’s needs are met for the duration of time that the child will be attending their provision before they start school. However, providers should try to spend the DAF within the term it is awarded. Any resources purchased as part of DAF remain the property of the child and should follow the child when they move setting either during the same academic year or when they move onto school. Should the resource or equipment be no longer needed by the child, at this point the setting can retain this resource / equipment for use with other children. The parent / carer should agree to this, and it should be documented. Providers may wish to allow parents to take resources home for weekends and holiday periods if they feel they would benefit the child.

6.4 Providers MUST spend the entire funding on the eligible child and meet the shortfall for any items over this amount. Knowsley Council will not meet any additional requests for funding above the standard DAF grant.

6.5 DAF should not be used to fund trips, assessments, 1:1 support or additional staffing, staff training or any other activity outside the definition of ‘access’ as outlined in section 2.

# Purchasing equipment and undertaking adaptations

7.1 A list of potential’ resources / equipment which could be purchased with DAF are included in Appendix 1. This section should not be treated as an ‘exhaustive’ list but should provide some ideas and suggestions on how funding can be used to support eligible children.

7.2 Providers must ensure that any equipment purchased meet the relevant safety requirements. Electrical items must be PAT tested yearly.

# Keeping evidence/proof of spend

8.1 Providers must keep receipts and proof of spend for audit purposes by Knowsley Council.

8.2 Providers will be monitored to ensure that the DAF funding has been spent accordingly as per 6.4. This audit will take place annually where you will be required to show receipts for any expenditure as well as impact of the spend. Paperwork that could be used to show the evidence of spend can be found on the website - [EYPP / DAF Audit Forms | Knowsley Info](https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/headcount/eypp-daf-audit-forms)

# 9.0 Further documents and publications/links that providers may wish to refer to

SEND Code of Practice 0-25 – January 2015 - [SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25)

Statutory Framework for EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) – January 2024 - [Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage for group and school providers (publishing.service.gov.uk)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65aa5e42ed27ca001327b2c7/EYFS_statutory_framework_for_group_and_school_based_providers.pdf)

Equalities Act 2010 – <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

Appendix 1 – Resource list

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| **Physical access*** Gates/child gates
* Steps
* Box for feet
* Chairs/seating
* Walker/rollator
* Outside equipment – different swing seat, adapted trikes, trikes with waist straps, resources to support to access the outdoor area (must be able to be moved with the child)
* Soft play equipment
* Sitting wedges
* Corner seats
* Visual support for sitting e.g., carpet spot
* Equipment for marking steps etc.
* Big physio balls
* OT equipment e.g., spinning mat, ‘bilabos’
* Diverse types of scissors (e.g., tabletop scissors)
* Gross motor skills equipment
* Portable hoists
* Recording switches
* Bibs/dribble bibs
* Complete waterproof suits etc.
* Tough spots etc. – allowing physical/sensory play
* Chunky crayons/finger crayons
* Rulers with handles
* Rompa helmets
* Early Pencil grips
* High visibility jackets/bibs
* Shazbah trollies [John Care catalogue]
* Push chair for trips [McLaren]
* Resource booklet for PD
 | **Communication needs/ASD*** Feelings faces
* Visual support
* Sensory tent
* Sensory toys
* Portable dividers – create different spaces
* Autism friendly materials – social stories book, weighted lap blankets
* Board maker/Communicate in Print CD or I-pad app.
* Sound area – headphones and DVD player etc. – calming or S+L
* Communication support – Makaton symbols, choice boards,
* DVDs for songs, simple, picture books
* Big books and little books
* Story sacks
* Chunky books
* PECS books,
* Storage for symbols (boxes or shelves)
* Chewigems etc.
* Mirrors for SLT
* Mini trampolines
* Persona dolls
* Enclosed chairs
* Key fobs – play doctor website
* Feely bags
* Early language objects (doll, brush, cup etc.)
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| **Hearing needs*** Sign language books, cards, and games
* Light and sound toys
* Talking tins
* Acoustic modification:
	+ fabric for tables
	+ hanging mobiles
	+ acoustic clouds
	+ rugs
	+ felt pads for bottom of toy boxes to reduce sounds
	+ audio equipment – listening checkers, listening leads, stettoclip, splitter cables,
* Velcro
* Story sacks
* Listening games
* iPad – communication/pictures
 | **Visual needs*** VI list – advice from VI team to settings
* Books with sound buttons, tactile patches
* Touch Braille letters
* Coloured glue sticks
* Giggly Wiggly balls/sensory balls
* Tactile books
* Story sacks
* Musical instruments
* Light and sound buzzers
* Scented playdough
* Scented pens and pencils
* Vibrating cushions
* Plate guard/plate surround
* Scooping bowl
* High contract tape
* Dark tent/cosy cave
* Dark room kit
* Be Active box
* WOWee
* Tactile Vibrations Sensory Starter Tub
* Simple Switches
* UV Dark Den Multi-Sensory Glow Kit
* Fibre Optics
* Lightbox
* iPad
* Tactile letters with braille
* Torches
* Subscription for 3-d books
* Survival blanket/space blanket
* Talking Tins
* Wikki Sticks
* Braille Maths Blocks
* Braille ABC blocks
* Numicom
* Desk slopes
* iPad stands

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| **Self-care*** Toilet access, portable changing table etc., changing mats, kneeling pads for staff, storage, toilet frames, toilet steps, toilet inserts, potties with arms/backs [Smirthwaite]
* Feeding materials: non-slip mats, angled plates, cutlery, appropriate height tables. chairs, specialist cutlery, grasp bar, cups, mini food processor
 | **General developmental needs*** Sensory toys
* Cause and effect toys
* Stage-not-age toys e.g., cause and effect, inset puzzles, shape sorters.
* Large, handled brushes
* Musical instruments/hand bells
* Light weight rattles
* Peg men/spring pegs
* Stacking toys with magnets
* Bubbles
* Switches and cause and effect toys
* Sensory materials
* Construction toys
* Treasure baskets – exploration toys
* Playdough
* Tactile materials/water beads/slime
* Posting boxes
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| **Dietary / allergy appropriate**● ⦁ Messy play materials – e.g. gluten free flour, sugar free jelly, dairy free products such as cake mix. ● ⦁ Suitable storage containers to keep special dietary items separated from everyday food products in cupboard / fridges etc. |  |

**Appendix 2** - Parental Agreement. The parental agreement can be found on the website - [Headcount | Knowsley Info](https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/knowsley-childcare-early-education-information-childcare-providers/headcount)