

CHILD DLA MOBILITY COMPONENT

FACTSHEET

Disability Living Allowance is split into two parts, Mobility and Care, but you apply for both on the same form. Below you will find detailed information about the Mobility criteria for children under 16. This can be very useful if you are trying to work out if your child actually fits the criteria for either Low or High Mobility.

DLA Mobility can be paid at two rates.

- Lower rate can be paid from age five.
- High rate can be paid from age three.

Low Rate Mobility:

It's common for children with Autism/ADHD issues etc to qualify for low rate mobility because the criteria relates to the kind of extra help that a lot of children with these needs require. Lower rate can be paid if there is no physical difficulty with walking, but they need "guidance or supervision" to enable them to walk. 'Guidance or supervision' must be **'substantially in excess'** to that needed by non-disabled children of the same age.

For children on the autism spectrum, relevant factors may be;

- Lack of road safety
 - Sensory issues
 - Anxiety
 - Running off - getting lost
 - Lack of understanding of stranger danger
 - Needing someone to monitor the route ahead for potential dangers
- Encouragement to continue a journey or help returning home if becoming distressed.

If your child needs a lot of extra supervision to keep them safe outdoors, they are likely to qualify for the lower rate. It is important to explain the additional help that the child needs to enable them to safely and successfully make a journey on foot.

The low mobility criteria only looks at walking, and does not take into account any help needed with other forms of transport ie catching a bus.

High Rate Mobility:

High rate mobility is much more difficult and most children with autism + do not get awarded high rate mobility. The high rate mobility criteria is very specific, therefore it is crucial that you explain in detail how the criteria applies to your child. For example ;

- Due to a physical disability they are unable to walk even a few steps due to a physical disability.
- If both deaf and blind children who have 100% degree of disablement from loss of vision. If blind or Severely visually impaired they must be certified blind/severely sight impaired and meet additional criteria relating to their visual impairment.
- They have 80% loss of hearing, and cannot walk outdoors without another person.
- Child has no legs or feet: (from birth or amputation).
- Effort required to walk would lead to danger to life/serious deterioration in their health: Danger to health has to be caused by physical exertion, ie, a child with a very serious heart condition. This criteria does not apply to those whose behaviour **'causes'** danger.
- They meet the 'severe mental impairment' criteria.
- Due to a physical disability the child is 'virtually unable to walk'.
The 'severe mental impairment' and the 'virtually unable to walk' criteria sometimes apply to children with autism, and ADHD issues.

Severe Mental Impairment Criteria

To get high rate mobility under the severe mental impairment rules you have to meet each of the following points:

The Child Receives DLA High Rate Care.

- This means if your child qualifies for none of the care component of DLA, or low/middle rate care, the 'severe mental impairment' criteria cannot be considered.

The Child Has A State Of Arrested Development or

- Incomplete physical development of the brain which results in severe impairment of intelligence and social functioning. This rule is split into three parts to make it easier to consider:

The child must have arrested or incomplete physical development of the brain. Where the child has a

diagnosis of autism it should be accepted that they have arrested or incomplete physical development of the brain. If you are still going through the diagnostic process you might struggle to show that this point applies, however, there are other diagnoses such as Global Development Delay that could be accepted as being arrested or incomplete development of the brain.

The arrested development results in severe impairment of intelligence. This part of the criteria is the main reason that only a minority of children with autism qualify for high rate mobility, because many children with autism have average or near average intelligence and so do not meet this point. The impairment must be 'severe' and it must be the intelligence that is impaired. What sort of things is considered depends on the child's age, but issues to consider are:

- Does the child have a Learning Disability?
- What sort of specialist educational provision do they have?
- Has the child been significantly delayed in meeting developmental milestones such as developing speech, feeding themselves, toileting etc.?
- Does the child understand danger in a way appropriate to their age?
- What difficulty do they have applying the intelligence they have to the real world?

The arrested development results in severe impairment of social functioning. This part of the criteria is usually straightforward to meet because it so obviously applies to autism. The child's ability and interest in playing with other children is relevant to this.

Severe Behavioural Problems Rule

- The child has extreme disruptive behaviour. Provide examples about this behaviour. All behaviour is relevant, not just how the child is when outdoors.
- Due to disruptive behaviour the child regularly requires another person to intervene and physically restrain them in order to prevent the child causing physical injury to them/other or damaging property.
- Give examples of how and when you have to restrain the child. It is not things that just happen outdoors that count but from when at home and school also.
- Physical restraint means physically stopping the child from doing something, so holding a child's hand to physically hold them back from doing something that would cause injury could count, but holding a child's hand to keep them calm would probably not count.
- Disruptive behaviour is so unpredictable the child requires another person to be present and watching over them whenever they are awake.
- Give details why someone needs to be with them all of the time, and what dangers could happen if they were left in a room alone.

Virtually Unable To Walk:

This criteria is for children with a physical disability that makes their ability to walk extremely limited. If behavioural issues are caused by something with a physical origin, these problems can be taken into account. Autism is a disorder of brain development and so has a physical cause. If behaviour from autism means that their practical, physical ability walk is so limited that you can say 'virtually unable to walk' then they can qualify for high rate mobility under this rule.

Issues of safety, and the need for guidance and supervision, are not relevant to this part of the criteria. Interruptions in walking, or refusing to walk, can be taken into account if it is so frequent that most days they are physically limited to how far they can walk.

There is no set distance in the law, generally if the child is limited to less than approximately 50 metres they may qualify. If you feel that the 'virtually unable to walk' criteria applies then it is important to provide a high degree of very practical detail about their physical walking ability. It is not essential to answer the following questions, but we hope they will help you to think about the sort of detail that shows whether a child qualified under these criteria:

Describe What Happens When Your Child Tries To Walk:

- How many steps do they normally manage?
- Do they walk in the right direction?
- When they stop do they sit or lie down - do you have to carry them?
- If they are too big to carry how long is it before they will get up again?
- Are there any sensory issues you think make them stop walking?
- Do you usually have to carry your child or put them in a buggy - how often does this happen?
- How do they travel to school?
- If they go by car how far away is it parked from your front door? How do they get to the car?

It is very important to provide this level of detail to show that the child is extremely physically limited in how far they can walk.